



Orientation Manual | Malawi

Country Information for Trip Participants

1. Country Information

Full Name of Country	Republic of Malawi
Population	Malawi is home to roughly 19 million people. 84% of the population lives in rural areas. The life expectancy is 61 years, and the median age is 16.4 years (one of the lowest median ages in the world). Roughly 50.7% (2014 est.) live below the international poverty line.
Time Zone	GMT +2 (7 hours ahead of EST in the winter, 6 hours ahead in summer)
Capital	Lilongwe
Ethnic Groups	The African peoples in Malawi are all of Bantu origin. The main ethnic groups ('tribes') are the Chewa, dominant in the central and southern parts of the country; the Yao, also found in the south; and the Tumbuka in the north. There are very small populations of Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Korean and Chinese), white Africans and European people living mainly in the cities.
Major Languages	The official language of Malawi is Chichewa and English. English is widely spoken, particularly in main towns. The different ethnic groups in Malawi each have their own language or dialect.
Major Religions	Most people in Malawi are Christian (82.6%), usually members of one of the Catholic or Protestant churches founded by missionaries in the late 19th century. There are Muslims populations primarily in the south and central region (13%), especially along Lake Malawi - a legacy of the Arab slave traders who operated in this area. Alongside the established religions, many Malawians also hold traditional animist beliefs (2%).
President's Name	In 2014, Peter Mutharika of the DPP followed his older brother Bingu wa Mutharika's footsteps to become the current Malawian president. Main exports- The economy is predominately agricultural with about 85% of the population living in rural areas. Agriculture accounts for one-third of GDP and 90% of export revenues. The performance of the tobacco sector is key to short-term growth as tobacco accounts for more than half of exports.
Weather & Climate	Subtropical; rainy season (Nov-May), dry season (May-Nov). Evenings are cool and comfortable while peaks of the day are humid and hot in the mid-80s.

2. Nation History

British Protectorate

Although the Portuguese reached the area in the 16th century, the first significant Western contact was the arrival of David Livingstone along the shore of Lake Malawi in 1859. Subsequently, Scottish Presbyterian churches established missions in Malawi. One of their objectives was to end the slave trade to the Persian Gulf that continued to the end of the 19th century. In 1878, a number of traders, mostly from Glasgow, formed the African Lakes Company to supply goods and services to the missionaries. Other missionaries, traders, hunters, and planters soon followed.

In 1883, a consul of the British

Government was accredited to the "Kings and Chiefs of Central Africa," and in 1891, the British established the Nyasaland Protectorate (Nyasaland is the Yao word for "lake"; it was also known as the British Central Africa Protectorate for several years around the turn of the century). Although the British remained in control until 1964, this period was marked by a number of unsuccessful Malawian attempts to obtain independence.

In 1953, pressure for independence increased when Nyasaland was joined with Northern and Southern Rhodesia (current day Zambia and Zimbabwe) to form the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In July 1958, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda assumed leadership of the NAC, which later became the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). In 1959, Banda was sent to Gwelo Prison for his political activities but was released in 1960 to participate in a constitutional conference in London.

On April 15, 1961, the MCP won an overwhelming victory in elections for a new Legislative Council. It also gained an important role in the new Executive Council and ruled Nyasaland in all but name a year later. In a second constitutional conference in London in November 1962, the British Government agreed to give Nyasaland self-governing status the following year.

Hastings Kamuzu Banda became Prime Minister on February 1, 1963, although the British still controlled Malawi's financial, security, and judicial systems. A new constitution took effect in May 1963, providing for virtually complete internal self-government. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved on December 31, 1963, and Malawi became a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth on July 6, 1964. Two years later, Malawi adopted a republican constitution and became a one-party state with Dr. Banda as its first president.



Malawian Independence

In 1970 Dr. Banda was declared “President for Life” of the MCP; in 1971, Banda consolidated his power and was named “President for Life” of Malawi itself. The paramilitary wing of the Malawi Congress Party, the Young Pioneers, helped keep Malawi under authoritarian control until the 1990s. Increasing domestic unrest and pressure from Malawian churches and from the international community led to a referendum in which the Malawian people were asked to vote for either a multi-party democracy or the continuation of a one-party state. On June 14, 1993, the people of Malawi voted overwhelmingly in favor of multi-party democracy. Free and fair national elections were held on May 17, 1994, under a provisional constitution, which took full effect the following year.

Bakili Muluzi, leader of the United Democratic Front (UDF), was elected President in those elections and formed a coalition government with the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD). That coalition disbanded in June 1996, but some of its members remained in the government. Malawi's newly written constitution (1995) eliminated special powers previously reserved for the Malawi Congress Party. Accelerated economic liberalization and structural reform accompanied the political transition. In June 1999, Malawi held its second democratic elections. Dr. Bakili Muluzi was re-elected to his second five-year term as President.

Malawi in the Twenty-First Century

Malawi saw its first transition between democratically elected presidents in May 2004, when the UDF's presidential candidate Bingu wa Mutharika defeated MCP candidate John Tembo and Gwanda Chakuamba, who was backed by a grouping of opposition parties. The UDF, however, did not win a majority of seats in Parliament, as it had done in 1994 and 1999 elections. Through the politicking of party chairperson and former President Bakili Muluzi, the party successfully secured a majority by forming a "government of national unity" with several opposition parties. President Bingu wa Mutharika left the UDF party on February 5, 2005 citing differences with the UDF, particularly over his anti-corruption campaign, and began his own party, The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

In April 2012, President Bingu wa Mutharika died suddenly. His Vice president, Joyce Hilda Banda, became Malawi's fourth president and its first female president. Following former President Mutharika's death, the government failed to notify the public of his death which caused conflict due to suspicions that Mutharika's family wanted to maintain power. There continued to be some political conflict over Banda's transition to power, but the situation remained peaceful. In 2014, Peter Mutharika of the DPP followed his older brother Bingu wa Mutharika's footsteps to become the current Malawian president.

3. World Relief History in Country

1989 - WR Malawi begins in Southern Malawi, doing Relief Program Lower Shire Valley floods.

1990 - Women in Development Income Generation Projects in South Malawi

1991 - Community Health and Safe water supply with boreholes in Nsanje and Dowa districts

1991 - Relief Program for victims of the Phalombe flash floods

1992 – HIV and AIDS Program in partnership with the Free Methodist Church.

1992 - National training program in disaster preparedness / drought survival to church leaders

1993 - Protected Wells Construction workshop in Chiradzulo district

1993 to 1995 – Introduction of Self-Help projects in all the three regions of the country.

1995 to 1998 - WR's programs transferred to the oversight of the Evangelical Association of Malawi (then, Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi).

1998 - Support to EAM for emergency flooding response in Southeast Malawi (Phalombe)

1999 – WR re-establishes a direct staff presence in Malawi, HIV and AIDS response among 10 local churches in Nkhotakota district.

2000 – Rolling out Child Survival Program in Mzimba, Rumphi districts began

2000 – 2014 Expansion to 4 districts with Church Empowerment, Child Survival, Child Development, Nutrition, Agriculture and Food Security, HIV and AIDS programs

2014 – Start the first CEZ in Vuso Jere region in Ntchisi district.

2015 – Rolling out Savings for Life program began

2016 – Rolling out Families for Life began

4. World Relief's current programs in Country

Church Mobilization and Development

World Relief's mission is to equip and empower local churches to serve the most vulnerable in their communities. Churches in every district are brought together to form a deeper understanding and appreciation of holistic ministry, called Integral Mission. Then churches are organized into Church Empowerment Zones (CEZ), with committees that guide the CEZ's initiatives and coordination. The churches will respond to real needs in their communities within a sustainable model that promotes local ownership, unity among churches, and integrated word and deed ministry.

Child Development

The goal of our child development programs is to mobilize, encourage and engage churches to develop cutting-edge, holistic children's ministries that address the complex needs of orphans and vulnerable children. This involves child feeding programs, sunday schools, training vulnerable youth in skills to earn a livelihood, and continually building capacity among the caregivers who oversee children's clubs and centers.

Families for Life

The goal of the Families for Life program is to support couples to have healthy and flourishing families as God intended. The program trains couples with universal Biblical truths and best practices on issues such as conflict resolution, valuing women and girls, joint decision making between couples, prevention of abuse, biblical sex, and parenting. These couples then reach out to train other couples in their churches and communities, bringing the hope of restored relationships to hundreds of families.

Health & Nutrition

World Relief's health and nutrition program focuses on reducing maternal and child mortality, improving nutrition, promoting hygiene and sanitation, and addressing the constellation of issues that impact community health. Our largest health and nutrition programs utilize volunteer mothers to reach hundreds of thousands of children under 5, expecting and new mothers, and adolescent girls with critical messages to not only promote their welfare, but the welfare of whole families and communities.

HIV/AIDS Care and Support

This program empowers communities to address the problem of HIV/AIDS by strengthening relationships, encouraging healthy behaviors, reducing stigma, and caring for those affected by AIDS. Teenagers are equipped to make wise choices; parents are taught about mutual faithfulness, which prevents the spread of HIV. Community members are empowered to sacrificially care for people living with HIV/AIDS and children affected by it. And support groups help those living with HIV experience community, significance, and skills to maintain positive and productive lives.

Savings for Life™

Savings for Life (SFL) empowers the most vulnerable who lack access to even the most basic financial services. Through training, SFL creates access for the poor to safe and reliable savings services and appropriately-sized loans. Savings helps the world's poorest – who've shown tremendous capacity and willingness to save – to build and protect their financial assets in climates where financial institutions can't serve them.

Agriculture

World Relief has previously implemented agricultural development programs that help farming households generate income and use their products to support others in their community. World Relief is no longer implementing independent agriculture programs, but applies agricultural development within other broader, holistic projects.

5. World Relief Malawi Country Director



Gibson Nkanaunena, Country Director

Gibson has served with World Relief for 14 years. He has Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Agriculture and Rural Development from the University of Malawi, and Masters in Organizational Development from Eastern University. Formerly a Director of Programs, he took the role of Country Director in June 2012.



Yamikani Mawaya Binali, World Relief Malawi's Executive Assistant.

Yamikani first joined World Relief in 2013, after working at a public institution in Malawi and earning her diplomas in Business Management and Secretarial studies. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at Malawi Institute of Management. Yamikani is married with two children, and believes in hard work, innovation, and serving sacrificially. Upon earning her Bachelor's degree, she aspires to get a Master's Degree in either Strategic Management or Business Administration.

6. Culture

Dos & Donts

When *meeting someone new*, a warm hand-shake is appropriate. Some people will greet with a hug and kiss on each cheek. In the more rural areas a person will extend their right hand to shake the others and with their left hand they will place it under their right hands elbow as a gesture of "you can trust me".

In the states when someone asks you how you are doing we usually respond with a kind hello. In Malawi when someone ask you this, they are usually wanting to know your full name, where you are from and what you are doing here. It is also common to hear the direct phrase “Do you want to be my friend?” This is a common exchange and should not be seen as a sarcasm nor as inappropriate. Please be aware that it is inappropriate to demonstrate any kind of affection towards the opposite gender.

Drinking alcohol in Malawi is considered sinful or taboo, especially for Christians. This is because casual or social drinking does not exist; if you drink, you drink to get drunk. Therefore all consumption of alcohol is associated with drunkenness and alcoholic consumption while in the country should be avoided.

You will also notice *street-kids and homeless* individuals wandering the streets and asking for money. It is often a hard to know how to respond. In general, keep a heart of compassion, and follow these rules: Always treat them like a person (greet them, touch them, talk to them); Don’t give money (doing so is counterproductive as it is often used to fuel destructive drug and alcohol habits); Give what you have (time, love, some bread or fruit, etc.)

Home visits have very specific purposes to help assess the physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs of the targeted household members with the aim of offering assistance. The assistance can be in form of knowledge, skill, encouragement, prayer or material things. When accompanying World Relief Malawi staff or volunteers on a home visit, please observe the following guidelines:

- At the visited home, wait to be invited to a place to sit and be ready to sit wherever offered.
- Let the volunteers do the introductions of both parties.
- Take your cues from the volunteers.
- Greet the family and inquire about their general well-being. Be sensitive to privacy, confidentiality and emotions as deep conversation progresses.
- Ask open-ended questions, talk less and listen attentively from the speaker.
- Pause a while, with good eye-contact, then offer counseling or encouragement or refer to the World Relief staff or volunteer who is with you.
- End the visit by asking for prayer requests; pray together and thank the family for allowing you into their home.
- Present a gift as you are about to leave.
- Accept any food offered. If that is not possible or unsafe, thank them for the offer and tell them next time you will.

Travel during Election Season

Please note that when traveling with World Relief, you are representing the organization. If you/ your team are traveling during election season in Malawi, be mindful of your interactions with locals and your posts on social media. When traveling with World Relief, any negative public stances you make will be viewed as stances made by World Relief Malawi. Do not speak against the political or social systems of Malawi in a public way. The office is intentionally keeping a low profile during these seasons as not to create attention or scandal. If, for example, World Relief Malawi were to comment on the human trafficking industry or of people in positions of power, the office could be reprimanded and/or dismissed from operating in-country. This has occurred in the past to other NGOs.

Table western vs. eastern

It is also seen as rude if you openly eat while others aren't and you will be often asked to join people eating, to share with them. Visitors are almost always offered a drink and perhaps something to eat. Eating usually is done without utensils, but only with the right hand, because the left hand is considered dirty. The men usually eat separately from the women.

When enjoying a meal in Malawi, the time surrounding the meal is not to be used for down time. It is considered rude to be by oneself or unengaged while the meal is being prepared. Participate in conversation and linger around the table prior to eating.

How men and women interact

Men and women in main cities and villages can have a great contrast in the way they walk, relate and speak to each other. In the cities there is a lot of change occurring. In Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu and Zomba you can see men and women walking and talking together and sometimes holding hands. In the villages life is much different between the sexes. Most women walk behind the man and are often carrying most of the heavy items. Men and women would never hold each other's hands. More likely you will see two men holding hands as a mark of friendship.

Friendships are highly valued and lifelong, based on mutual love, respect, and unconditional obligation. In general most Malawians are not expressive. Of course they are more open to share what is on their mind with a fellow Malawian than a Mzungu (foreigner).

Most Malawians are not direct. They usually want to keep the peace. Many questions are answered with "yes" when you are pretty sure it should have been "no." It's best to ask a question a couple times in different ways so that both sides are clear.

Holidays

January 1 New Year's Day	January 15 Chilembwe Day
March 3 Martyrs' Day	March or April Good Friday and Easter
May 1 Labor Day	May 14 Kamuzu Day
June 14 Freedom Day	July 6 Republic Day
Eid al-Fitr (Last day of Ramadan), changes yearly	October 15 Mothers' Day
December 25 Christmas Day	December 26 Boxing Day

Entertainment

Malawian artists who have achieved recognition for their work inside the country and abroad include Cuthy Mede (probably the best known), Kay Chirombo, Willie Nampeya and Louis Dimpwa. They work in various media, producing carvings in stone and wood, batiks and paintings.

Like most other African countries, Malawi has a rich oral tradition. Since independence, a new breed of Malawian writers has emerged. The despotic rule of President Hastings Banda sent many of the country's best writers into exile until the mid-90s. Notable Malawian poets include Frank Chipasula and Steve

Chimombo, whose most highly acclaimed work is *The Rainmaker*. The country's leading novelists include Legson Kayira, whose semi-autobiographical works on travelling in Africa brought acclaim in the 1970s, and Sam Mpasu, whose work (like that of several other Malawian writers) landed him in jail for a few years.

Traditional music and dance are deeply rooted in social functions in Malawi. Most tribes have their own tunes and dances. Musical instruments include drums such as the hand-held *ulimba*, made from gourd, and ceremonial giants carved from tree-trunks; and the *mambilira*, similar to the western xylophone. Various rattles and shakers called *maseche* are tied to dancers' legs and arms. The most notable traditional dance in Malawi is the Chewa tribe's *Gule Wamkulu*, which reflects indigenous beliefs in spirits and is connected to the activities of secret societies.

Church services

Church buildings vary depending on which part of the country you are in, but most are simple. They tend to be one large room made of brick, mud, or sticks with a cement or dirt floor. "Pews" are often cement, wood or dirt piled up to make a bench. Men usually sit on one side of the church and women sit on the other side. A place of honor is often reserved in the front of the church for visitors or elders. A typical church service is between 2-4 hours.

AFRICAN	EUROPEAN
Religious – God the Creator (though far away). All things are related.	Secular – A set order in the universe, independent existence, naturalistic view.
Spirit-World – Many factors in life cannot be known, controlled or predicted. Humans are at the mercy of the forces of life. Resignation to conditions.	Scientific Approach – Describe, Control, Manipulate; Change your destiny. Aggressive. Frustration with failure.
Dynamic – An active world seen in relational terms.	Mechanical – Static, Cause-effect. Linear concepts. Productivity; Organization.
Relationship – Truth is in Experience and Relationship.	Knowledge – Facts are important. Truth is in correlation of statement to observable, testable phenomena.
Event – Meaning Centers in the Verb: Event Primary.	Substance – Noun-Adjective: Entity and Description primary.
Focus on Present – The world is uncontrollable. Immediacy. Presence of an individual takes precedence over plans.	Predictability – Reproducible phenomena, Probability. Planning a high value. Same result from same factors every time.
Group Identity--Obligations. Commitment to the Group.	Individualistic -- Rights. Commitment to Principle.

First published in the book *Dealing with Differences: Contrasting the African and European Worldviews*, 1991.

7. Societal Structures

Family Structure

Families tend to be large, with 5-10 children. This is due to both high infant/child mortality rates and to the fact that children help with house and field work, lightening the load on mothers. Similarly, polygamy is not uncommon, especially in the Muslim culture. Children are valued highly but tend to be expected to be “seen and not heard.” Breast-feeding is almost the sole means for feeding children and is, therefore, extremely common in public. While working, mothers use large pieces of cloth, called “chitenje”, to carry their babies on their backs.

As a whole, Malawians place a high value on family, community, and self-in-relation-to-others and understand their identity within their relations as opposed to as an individual. Wisdom and knowledge are gained from the experience of others, usually elders, and people generally rely on the goodwill and obligations of friends and family to take care of them, as opposed to depending on their own personal resources.

Government structure

The Malawian government is a multiparty democracy that celebrated its independence from Britain on July 6, 1964. The country is divided into 28 administrative districts within three regions. A presidential election is held every five years. Many areas within the districts in are overseen by the government sanctioned Traditional Authority (“Head men”) and the area itself is called a Traditional Authority (T/A).

Economy

Malawi ranks among the world's most densely populated and least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural with about 85% of the population living in rural areas. 83% of farmers grown maize. Due to this, irregular weather patterns can be devastating on the Malawian economy. Agriculture accounts for one-third of GDP and 90% of export revenues. The performance of the tobacco sector is key to short-term growth as tobacco accounts for more than half of exports. The economy depends on substantial inflows of economic assistance from the IMF, the World Bank, and individual donor nations.

Literacy & Education

65.8% of Malawians over 15 years of age can read and write. The rate is higher among males than among females (15% higher rate). Girls more so than boys have limitations in their attendance to school. Due to dangers along the road and the difficulty of managing one’s menstrual cycle, girls are often absent. Because of a lack of trained teachers, children generally only go to school for a morning or afternoon session so that more children can be taught by the personnel available.

Living Conditions

The majority of the population lives without running water or electricity in homes of mud, brick, or thatch, especially in rural areas. Water has to be pumped from boreholes or carried from nearby lakes or rivers. Pit latrines and “bucket baths” are the norm for “bathrooms,” and cooking is generally done over a fire.

Day in the life snapshot

The day begins as soon as the sun has risen. Businesses are open from 7:30 to 4:30, with a break around 12:30 for lunch and an afternoon nap. Most shopping is done in an open-air market, where you can find almost anything. Produce, fish, clothing, household goods, even furniture can be purchased along the

road or in organized market areas. In the evenings there is limited entertainment. After sunset residents keep travel to a minimum for safety concerns.

8. Before You Go

Visa

US citizens are not required to purchase a visa for entry into Malawi, but will be issued a 30-day visa upon arrival. *If you or a member of your team is a passport holder from a country other than the USA, please see contact the Malawian Embassy for Visa requirements. More information can be viewed [here](#).*

Preventative care- Vaccinations

See your doctor at least 6 weeks prior to departure to allow time for shots to take effect (please note the timing for Hepatitis A and B). Check with the [CDC](#) and your private physician for the latest shot recommendations.*

Packing List

Each traveler should pack entry [documents](#), [medicine](#), [basic toiletries](#) and a [change of clothes](#) in his/her carry-on in case of delayed baggage arrival. We do not recommend buying items that you won't use apart from the trip.

Please keep in mind that the more rural the area, the more important it is to dress modestly. While comfort is important, it is also important to look your best. What you wear sometimes communicates more than what you say. Looking too relaxed and “campy” can send the wrong message. Please be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences when preparing for your trip, using the following guidelines to inform your packing choices:

Women

Skirts (2-3) - knee-length or lower (particularly for church)
Short and long-sleeved shirts (5-7).
Lightweight trousers or capris
Be modest about use of jewelry

Men

Comfortable, light-weight trousers (2-3) shorts only for the beach
Polo shirts and T-shirts (5-7)
Tie (minimum 1)

Both

Light windbreaker/sweater for evenings
Comfortable/washable walking shoes or sandals
Sandals/flip-flops for shower, beach, etc.
Underwear
Sleepwear
Swimsuit
Long-sleeves to avoid mosquitoes at night

Other Items

Toiletries: sunscreen, chapstick, hand sanitizer, repellent (non-aerosol), aloe or after-sun lotion
Medications (as needed/desired): antibiotics, band-aids, vitamins, Dramamine, anti-malaria pills
Bible, notebook/journal, pen
Reading material
Suitcase locks (for leaving baggage)
Hat/sunglasses
Water bottle

Optional Recommendations

Camera, extra batteries
Plug adaptor/ voltage converter
Ear plugs/eye mask
Small flashlight
Pictures of your family/friends to show people (be mindful of clothing in pictures and settings that aren't too extravagant)

Documents

Passport!
4 extra passport photos
Contact information: names, addresses, important phone numbers, e-mail addresses of family members
Yellow health card with vaccine records
Documentation of important health information (allergies, conditions, medical history if necessary)
Driver's license or copy of your ID

Copy of your passport
Credit Cards (VISA is best) and cash (\$20 and smaller bills are recommended) - for personal purchases and souvenirs.

What NOT to pack Survival gear, mosquito nets, bedding (sleeping bags), alcohol or tobacco, lots of extra food (hosts are very hospitable), candy to pass out, loads of technology (take this opportunity to "un-plug").

Electricity & Voltage

Electrical current is 220/240 volts, 50Hz. Three-pin, rectangular blade; British plugs are standard throughout Malawi.

Recommended reading & helpful websites

Travel and Health New sites

www.travel.state.gov – State Department issued travel warnings, passport & visa info.

www.cdc.gov/travel - Recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

www.cbp.gov – U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Borders Protection.

International News and Information

www.tcci.org – Short-term mission training videos covering a wide range of subjects.

www.lonelyplanet.com – Basic country information geared towards travelers.

www.countrywatch.com – up-to-date information and news around the world.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm - Country Profiles courtesy of the BBC.

Miscellaneous

www.kropla.com – International telephone and electrical guides.

www.friendsofmalawi.org – Cornucopia of Malawi information gathered by the Peace Corps Malawi

Online Travel Arrangements

www.fellowship.com - Full-service travel provider, specializing in mission and church travel.

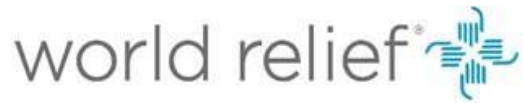
www.mennotravel.com – MTS Travel, a travel service especially geared for the Christian community offering mission-specific fares.

www.kayak.com – Search engine that pulls airfares from every major travel site

Relief/Development Related

These books are recommended for those interested in learning more about relief and development work and the approach of World Relief.

The AIDS Crisis: What We Can Do: Deborah Dortzbach & W. Meredith Long



Walking With the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Dev: Bryant L. Myers
When Helping Hurts: Alleviating Poverty w/o Hurting the Poor...or Yourself Steve Corbett
The aWAKE Project: Uniting against the African AIDS Crisis: Various Contributors
Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting in Around the World: Duane Elmer
Good News About Injustice, Gary Haugen
Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot - And Cold - Climate Cultures, Sarah Lanier
Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures, Darrow L. Miller;
A Community Guide to Environmental Health, Jeff Conant and Pam Fadem

[On Africa \(or specific countries\)](#)

Africa in Chaos: George B.N. Ayittey
The Africa Bible Commentary: Tokunboh Adeyemo (General Editor), ABC Editorial
African Religions and Philosophy: John S. Mbiti
Unbowed by Wangari Maathai
Strength in What Remains by Tracy Kidder
African Friends and Money Matters, Second Edition, David Maranz

[Economic Development, Agriculture](#)

The Mystery of Capital Hernando De Soto
Biblical Holism and Agriculture, Cultivating our Roots, Darrow L. Miller
God is at Work: Transforming People and Nations Through Business, Ken Eldred
Business as Mission: The Power of Business in the Kingdom of God, Michael R. Baer
Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, edited by Stephen Devereux and Simon Maxwell
Plowing the Sea: Nurturing the Hidden Sources of Growth in the Developing World, Michael Fairbanks and Stace Lindsay
Amaranth to Zai Holes: Ideas for Growing Food Under Difficult Conditions, Laura S. Meitzner and Martin L. Price (Author)

[Helpful words and phrases](#)

Inde (Yes)
Iyayi (No)
Zikomo (Thank you)
Moni (hello)

9. In Transit

[Information to carry:](#)

World Relief Headquarters
7 East Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
(443) 451-1900

Gibson Nkanaunena, Country Director
Cell: +265 991710480
Email: gnkanaunena@wr.org

Office P: +265 887 029446
Alternative: +265 177 3251
[World Relief Country Address](#)
Area 12/461
Area 12
World Relief Malawi
Lilongwe, Malawi

[Upon arrival](#)

You will be asked to fill out an immigration form. Use the WR Malawi office address and the office phone number.

Customs Declaration: You must declare all goods **except** personal items and merchandise not exceeding \$200. If you are sending or carrying items (i.e.: equipment, electronics, medicine, items in bulk, donations, etc.) for ministry or donation to World Relief, these items must be accompanied by a letter on official letterhead from your church or organization detailing the content, quantities, and value of the items donated to/through World Relief. The items must be consigned to World Relief as an organization, not to individuals within World Relief.

10. During the Trip

Communications

Phone calls:

Calling out of Malawi is extremely difficult and expensive. Currently, there are no calling cards that you can use to call to the States. There are two costly options if you must call home. If you have a Cingular or T-Mobile phone you can use it in Malawi. The costs average about \$4 per minute. Please check with your carrier to verify the specific costs and hidden fees. The second option is to bring your own unlocked (about \$45) Cingular or T-Mobile phone to Malawi. When you arrive you can buy a SIM card for \$5 and buy additional minutes for \$10. When you call home this way, you only pay \$1 per minute.

Internet:

Access to the internet is extremely limited within Malawi and nearly impossible outside of Lilongwe. In Lilongwe there are a few internet cafés in Old Town. The Nico Center has a large café that offers access to multiple users at one time. The internet connections in Malawi are very slow, so be prepared to spend at least 30-45 minutes in order to check email.

Photography/Videography

Be sensitive when photographing local people and their villages. Feel free to take pictures within reason, but it is best to ask permission before taking anyone's photograph. Behave as you would when invited to a friend's home rather than as a tourist. Do not take pictures of military or "official" looking buildings, vehicles, or individuals. Ask before even taking out your camera at the airport or in municipal settings in order to avoid receiving a fine or having your camera confiscated.

Food & Water

Malawian cuisine varies depending on what part of the country you are in. Influences include some Indian spices and dishes, as well as some Asian influences in the cities. Along the lake, diet includes a lot of fish (chambo). Starches like maize, rice and cassava are often at the core of the menu—especially in the rural areas. Most menus will include chicken, chicken peri peri (Portuguese hot sauce), beef and sometimes lamb.

Bread and rice are eaten in some parts of the country though Maize/corn is the staple food. The corn is ground into maize flour and is used to make thick porridges. Nsima is the common thick cornmeal made

which is served with a side of meat and vegetables. Lake Malawi is a source of fish including chambo (similar to bream) usipa (similar to sardine), mpasa (similar to salmon and kampango).

Health & Safety

In general, the health habits you practice at home will keep you healthy here. Wash your hands frequently, don't touch/play with animals (especially to avoid more serious diseases like rabies and the plague), get lots of rest at night and drink plenty of water. It is also important to avoid swimming in Lake Malawi

To avoid getting sick, drink bottled water (provided by World Relief) and only eat food that has been fully cooked. As a rule, **boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it**. Food purchased from street vendors can be risky; it is best to stick to restaurants and home-cooked food. Even then, avoid fresh salads (unless you know how they were prepared), drinks with ice in them, and dairy products—basically anything that has been touched by unsafe water.

Security

- As a rule, it is important to be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times, but especially in market areas and the cities. More specific guidelines for safety include:
- Keep jewelry to a minimum to avoid calling extra attention to yourself.
- Never walk around at night, especially in the city. Walking during the day tends to be safer, especially in rural areas. It is advised to walk in groups of more than 2 and with at least one male.
- Do not carry more than \$20 USD on you in cash.
- Never carry your cell phone / wallet in a pocket where it is easily identifiable from the outside. These are easy to steal and often what thieves are after.
- Be willing to part with anything you have at anytime. If you are compliant with criminals in Malawi, they tend to not harm you.
- Streets are often crowded with people, bicycles, and/or animals; however, pedestrians do *not* have the right-of-way. It is therefore VERY important to be aware of your surroundings and only walk when the road is clear.

Medical facilities

Should any illness or emergency occur on trip, contact the following immediately. Do not travel to a local medical facility without the direction of WR Staff.

Malawi Country Director, Gibson Nkanaunena

Trips and Events Manager, Bethany Seremet

Money & Expenses

Currency: The Malawian kwacha is the currency.

Exchange link: is [here](#), the exchange rate is ~724 kwachas for every \$1.

Estimated spending money: Bring small bills \$1s - 20s to pay for souvenirs

Laundry

Limit luggage to one suitcase and one carry-on bag. Laundry services will likely be available, though you may be hand washing your clothes if needed.



End Notes

Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Malawi.

CIA Factbook. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publication/factbook/geos/mi.html>.

Destination Guide: Malawi. <http://sg.travel.yahoo.com/guide/africa/malawi/culture.html>.

Chitipa District Socio-Economic Profile. (2002). October.

Mzimba District Socio-Economic Profile. (2003). December.

Nkhotakota District Socio-Economic Profile. (2002). September.

Ntchisi District Socio-Economic Profile. (2001). October.

Salima District Socio-Economic Profile. (2002). September.

World Travel Guide. http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/158/public_holidays/Africa/Malawi.html.