



Zimbabwe Basics

Official Name	Republic of Zimbabwe
Total Area	390,580 sq km
Total Population	11.3 million
Capital Cities	Administrative Capital – Harare Tourist Capital – Victoria Falls
National Symbols	<p><u>The Zimbabwe Flag</u> The yellow bird is the country’s national symbol and represents the long history of the country (it is based on soapstone carvings found at the Great Zimbabwe Ruins). The red five-pointed star in the centre of the triangle symbolizes peace. The colour bands symbolise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green = agriculture • Yellow = mineral wealth • Red = blood shed to achieve independence • Black = the native people <p>The National Flower = the Flame Lily The National Animal = the Sable Antelope</p>
Official Languages	English is the official language but is only spoken as a first language by a small percentage of the population. Several indigenous languages are spoken including Shona and Ndebele (Sindabele).
Religion	Predominantly Christian which is often practiced alongside other indigenous belief systems. There is a small Muslim following.
Public Holidays	<p>New Years Day – 1 January Good Friday – variable Easter Monday – variable Independence Day – 18 April Worker’s Day – 1 May Africa Day – 25 May Heroes Day – 10 August Defence Forces Day – 11 August Unity Day – 22 December Christmas Day – 25 December Boxing Day – 26 December</p>
Provinces	Bulawayo*, Harare*, Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Midlands (*Cities with provincial status)
Time	Local time is GMT +2

Electricity	Electrical current is 220 volts, 50Hz. Round 3-pin plus and rectangular 3-blade plugs are common.
Money	The official currency is the Zimbabwe dollar (ZWD), which issued in denominations of up to ZWD 100 billion. Foreign currency, especially US dollars, is hard to come by, but widely accepted and always preferred. Many prices are given in US dollars. Hard currency is required to pay for entry to Victoria Falls and many national parks. Banks and major hotels have foreign exchange facilities and many lodges, travel agencies and shops accept travellers cheques. Visa and Mastercard credit cards are accepted in most hotels, restaurants and shops but Diners Club and American Express are not as widely accepted. ATM facilities are available in the cities. US dollars should be considered the de facto currency of Zimbabwe for tourists at the present time.
Communications	The international dialling code for Zimbabwe is +263. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0027 for South Africa). International Direct Dialling is available. City/area codes are in use, e.g. (0)4 for Harare. Telecel, Econet and Net*One operators provide GSM 900 network mobile phone coverage in most cities, towns and tourist areas throughout the country. Internet and Email facilities are available in Harare and at some of the tourist centres in the country but connectivity can be unreliable.
Entry Requirements	<u>USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia & New Zealand</u> A valid passport and visa is required. A 90 day holiday visa or 30 day business visa can be obtained for a fee charged in US Dollars. Procuring your visa prior to arrival is recommended. <u>South Africa:</u> South Africans must have a passport valid for at least the period of stay in the country. A visa is required – a 90-day holiday visa or 30-day business visa can be obtained free of charge. Visit: www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw/entryrequ.htm for visa application contact information.
Passport / Visa Note:	All visitors require tickets and documents for return or onward journeys, as well as sufficient funds for the duration of their stay. Visa charges are payable in US Dollars and have been known to fluctuate so it is recommended that visitors confirm visa costs before arrival in the country.
Duty Free	Travellers to Zimbabwe do not have to pay duty on items to the value of US\$250 provided this allowance is not claimed more than once in a 30-day period. These include goods for personal consumption, including tobacco and alcohol up to 5 litres (a maximum of 2 litres being spirits). Prohibited items include narcotic and amphetamine drugs, honey, indecent or obscene reading material, toy firearms and blade knives.
Health	Travellers passing through countries affected by yellow fever require a vaccination certificate. Precautions against Hepatitis A, typhoid, polio, bilharzias and rabies are also recommended. Zimbabwe has a high prevalence of AIDS/HIV. Malaria is a year round risk in most of the country, particularly in the Zambezi Valley, Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park and in the Eastern Highlands; the risk is very small in Harare and Bulawayo. Precautions against mosquito bites should be taken to avoid mosquito-borne diseases. Prophylactic medication is advised but note that mosquitoes in this region are chloroquine resistant. Cholera outbreaks can occur especially during the rainy season when flooding and contamination of water sources takes place. Visitors are advised to take food and hygiene precautions. The standard of tap water in urban areas is considered low but bottled water is available. There is a shortage of medication and staff in public hospitals so it is advisable to bring a supply of personal medication and ensure that you have adequate medical cover before travelling. Private clinics expect cash payment and medical costs can be high.

Safety	<p>A new coalition government was formed following elections in 2008. Political tensions still prevail but the situation is improving and the social and economic infrastructure of the country is slowly being rebuilt. Many tourist centres have been largely unaffected by political and social unrest but opportunistic crime still occurs.</p> <p>It is advisable to travel with a recognised tour operator to established tourist destinations. Tourists are advised to avoid displays of wealth. Valuables and passports should be kept out of sight or preferably left in a hotel safe. Visitors should be cautious at ATMs and after dark. A low political profile is advised and in the event of unrest, visitors are warned to leave the area immediately and make no attempt to watch or photograph an incident, or use a mobile phone, even from a safe distance.</p>
Business	<p>Business in Zimbabwe is conducted in English and is fairly informal. Lightweight suits or casual jackets are more suited to the hot climate than formal business wear. It is customary to shake hands with men and women at the beginning and end of a meeting. Business hours are generally Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30pm, although some businesses close at 11am on Wednesdays and some are open on Saturday mornings.</p>
Customs	<p>It is against the law to take photographs of public buildings or government institutions as well as any roadblocks and illegally occupied farms, as this could lead to arrest. It is also illegal to take photographs of police and military, as well as of demonstrations. It is a criminal offence to make insulting comments about the President and his government. It is also an offence to continue driving when the President's motorcade goes past, no matter which side of the road you are on.</p> <p>Visitors should be aware that an open hand is the political symbol of the main opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change so a friendly wave may be misinterpreted as a provocative gesture. Homosexuality is illegal. Civilians are not permitted to wear camouflage clothing.</p>
Climate	<p>Summer runs from November to April and has hot, sunny days in the main centres and hotter weather in the low-lying areas such as the Zambezi Valley, Kariba and Victoria Falls. Summer coincides with the rainy season when afternoon thunderstorms are possible, although the Eastern Highlands experience rain throughout most of the year. Winter runs from June to August with warm dry days but a vast drop in temperature at night. Being the most pleasant time to travel and the best time for game viewing and white water rafting, winter is also the peak tourist season.</p>
Tipping	<p>A service charge is usually included in the bill. Otherwise a 10% tip is customary but also discretionary. Tour guides and game rangers depend largely on tips for their income.</p>
Useful Contacts	<p><u>Tourism</u> Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Harare: +263 (0)4 752570 / www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw</p> <p><u>Zimbabwe Embassies</u> Zimbabwe Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 332 7100 Zimbabwe Embassy, London, United Kingdom (also for Ireland): +44 (0)20 7836 7755 Zimbabwe High Commission, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 237 4388 Zimbabwe Embassy, Canberra ACT, Australia (also for New Zealand): +61 (0)2 6286 2281 Zimbabwe Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 342 5125</p> <p><u>Foreign Embassies in Zimbabwe</u> United States Embassy, Harare: +263 (0)4 250 593/4 British Embassy, Harare: +263 (0)4 772 990 Canadian Embassy, Harare: +263 (0)4 252 181/5 Australian High Commission, Harare: +263 (0)4 852 471 South African High Commission, Harare: +263 (0)4 753 147/8/9 Honorary Consulate of Ireland, Harare +263 (0)4 771 949 New Zealand High Commission, Pretoria (also responsible for Zimbabwe): +27 (0)12 342 8656</p>

Zimbabwe AirportsHarare International Airport (HRE)

Location: situated 7 miles (12km) south east of Harare

Time: Local time is GMT +2

Contacts: Tel: +263 (0)4 575 164/8

Getting to the city: Taxis and coaches to the city centre are available

Car rental: Car rental companies include Europcar, Hertz and Avis

Facilities: include a bank, bureau de change and auto exchange machine, restaurants, bars, duty-free, various shops, first aid, post office and parking

Departure Tax: US\$20, payable in US dollars or Pounds Sterling only

Website: www.caaz.co.zw

Victoria Falls Airport (VFA)

Location: situated 13 miles (22km) from Victoria Falls town

Time: Local time is GMT +2

Contacts: Tel: +263 (0)13 4394, (0)13 4255, (0)13 4428

Getting to the city: Buses and taxis are available from the airport

Car rental: Europcar, Argus and Budget offices

Facilities: banks, bureau de change, restaurants, bars, VIP Lounge, duty free shop, Tourist Help Desk, first aid and parking

Departure Tax: US\$30, payable in US dollars or Pounds Sterling only