



Visitor Guide – 2018/2019

A reference for visitors to the Kalahari Meerkat Project

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1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to this KMP Visitor Guide, aimed at people willing to visit the Kalahari Meerkat Project's field site in South Africa, to meet their favourite meerkat groups, the researchers and the project.

As a visitor, you will get the chance to observe the KMP meerkats from eye to eye, join the KMP researchers and discuss your questions with them, and learn everything you ever wanted to know about meerkat behaviour and ecology.

You will spend your days at the KMP research station in the field, greeting the meerkats when they come out of their sleeping burrow to catch the first sun rays and walking with them while they forage, play, fight or mate. You can help the researcher with establishing role calls, weighing, or performing focal and ad lib observations, and other experiments. After lunch at the farmhouse and some rest you again go out to track your meerkat group, and follow the meerkats through their evening rituals. The evenings are spent back at the farmhouse.

During your time at the reserve, you will stay in your own "rondavel", a round little 'African style' house with bed, table and chair, cupboard, cold water sink, electricity and heater; toilets and hot showers are shared. You can use a fully equipped kitchen and dining room to prepare and enjoy your meals.

1.2 About this document

This Visitor Guide intends to give visitors an overview about what to expect from their visit, how to prepare, and how to organise the trip. It will give the most important facts about staying at the KMP, travel and logistics, or health requirements. Furthermore, it links to other important or useful information. Please read it carefully, and do not hesitate to contact the FKMP if you have questions.

Another useful source of information is the www.kalahari-meerkats.com/kmp website. This is the official website of the research project, and it contains information about the study site and research. These websites may give you a lot of background on what to expect.

2 Meerkat work and other activities

2.1 A day with the meerkats



Visitors will usually spend the days in the field, observing meerkats in the morning and late afternoon.

Meerkats rise with the sun, i.e. around 05:30 a.m. in summer (December) or around 07:30 a.m. in winter (July). This means you will have to get up while it's still dark, for your breakfast and drive to the researchers' farm house "Rus en Vrede" where all meerkat excursions start. In groups of two to three visitors, you join a volunteer/researcher who will take you to your meerkat group. Some groups' burrows may be within walking distance but others require another drive.



Waiting at your group's sleeping burrow, you will see one meerkat after the other poke its head out of the hole and start the day with sunning, grooming and playing. There will be plenty of time to enjoy the meerkats, take pictures, or discuss meerkat behaviour (and much more) with the volunteer. You can observe the researcher's work and methods, but you can also help with some of the tasks at hand, by working with the volunteer to support him or her with role calls, weighing procedures, GPS tracking, and above all ad-lib sampling.

Once the meerkats leave the burrow, you will follow them while they forage for about three hours. Digging is now their most frequent activity – to a chorus of begging calls if pups are present in your meerkat group. It is often difficult to follow a certain individual in the rainy season (approx. December to April) when the grass is high. You will probably get the chance to see meerkats go on sentinel duty, or experience predator alarms. Some visitors even witness the action-packed clashes with neighbour groups or male visitors, or the interactions of meerkats with snakes, tortoises or lizards.

The walk with the meerkats is most of the time at slow pace, but it may be that you'll have to run to keep up with them after an interaction with a neighbouring group, or climb over a fence after they have gone through the fence. Be prepared for a fair bit of walking, or even exercise!

You will be back at Rus en Vrede farm house late in the morning, and drive back to your farm house (“Gannavlakte”) for lunch (self-catering), followed by a few hours at your leisure - you can go for wildlife walks, read, chat with other visitors or researchers, or just relax before you resume your meerkat observations in the afternoon. There is no specific programme organised for visitors in between the morning and afternoon meerkat session; your time off can be anything between 3 and up to 9 hrs (depending the season and on how long you stay with the meerkats) – so bring a good book or two, or your laptop to sort pictures etc. You’ll then drive back to Rus en Vrede for the afternoon session.



The afternoon meerkat session is usually shorter, and it starts with radio-tracking your group. You’ll often find them while they still forage, but sometimes they’re already heading for their burrow. Once there, their evening rituals contain lots of grooming, cuddling and a bit of play – the perfect time for taking pictures in the soft evening sunlight. It’s usually well after sunset (5:45 p.m. in June, 7:30 p.m. in December) when the last meerkat disappears below ground, and the researcher and you return to the Rus en Vrede farm house.

You will drive back to Gannavlakte, for dinner (self-catering). Upon agreement, you may be joined occasionally by the project manager, volunteers or independent researchers (PhD students) for short lectures about their research subject, or to just spend the evening together.

Sunday is traditionally the day off for the researchers. They will do morning and evening weights and group compositions, but won’t follow the group while they forage. You can join them for the weights and be with the meerkats, but you may as well enjoy a day at your leisure.

2.2 Other activities

There is no set programme other than the meerkat visits – but there are several activities you might want to pursue; please discuss this with the Field Site Manager if you are interested. Here’s a selection of activities (even though not everything might be feasible at all times).

You have the opportunity to visit the other research projects that operate at the KMP field site, to learn about their study animals, and the Kalahari ecology in general. Species currently studied include Damaraland mole rats, ground squirrels, Southern pied babblers, Southern yellow-billed hornbills and Fork-tailed drongos – yet this list can change with each new project at the farm.

Activities at the KMP field site not related to research include soccer or volley ball matches with the researchers (usually on Sundays), or unguided walks; the Field Site Manager can give you information to a GPS-based self-guided walk through the reserve, to get to know the local flora (and maybe fauna), but also a few famous Meerkat Manor sites.

In the evenings you can enjoy sundowners on Big Dune, or have a “braai”, i.e. a South-African barbeque. The KMP staff may occasionally organise evening/ night game drives through the reserve, to get a glimpse of the clandestine, but equally interesting Kalahari nightlife.

Advice on excursions to the local town at Van Zylsrus (school visit, library visit, basic shopping, lunch and/or swim at the [Van Zylsrus Hotel](#)) or a picnic at a scenic spot in the Molopo riverbed (at the border to Botswana) is available from the KMP staff. If required, we can help with organisation, or provide a guide (subject to a nominal fee).

3 Getting to our field site

Confirmed visitors will receive a detailed guide on how to get to the field site.

3.1 Travelling via Upington

Most visitors from abroad travel to our field site via [Upington](#) (Northern Cape province). Apart from the airport, Upington also offers accommodation of all levels, car rental agencies and shopping opportunities.

Airport: Upington Airport (code UTN) is serviced by South African Airlines' daughter company [AirLink](#) twice or three times a day depending on season, both from Johannesburg OR Tambo International Airport (JNB) and Cape Town International Airport (CPT). You should arrive in Upington with an early morning flight (arriving no later than 11 am) if you wish to reach the field site on the same day, or better schedule one night in Upington.

Car rental: Car rental agencies have their offices either at the airport or in town (a 20 min drive from the airport). International agencies with offices in Upington include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Europcar, Hertz, National or Sixt, but there are several local rental companies with good rates, including [Bidvest](#), [DriveSouthAfrica](#), [First](#) or [Tempest](#). The drive to the KMP field station is perfectly feasible in a normal 2WD sedan car, though many people travelling in the region – including those who wish to combine their KMP visit with a trip to Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park – prefer a high-clearance car, or a 4x4 car. There are also companies offering 4x4 cars with full camping equipment, including [desert4x4](#) or [DriveSouthAfrica](#). They come at a higher price though, so you may wish to rent a smaller car for the duration of your visit to the KMP.

Please note that cars drive on the left side/lane of the road, in South Africa, so the driver seat in your rental car will be on the right. For those used to driving on the right, a car with automatic gears may be more convenient.

Shopping: We suggest you stock up on food and other necessities in Upington. [Kalahari Mall](#) is the largest shopping mall, including a Superspar with the broadest selection of food, but also non-food articles. Alcoholic beverages are only available in bottle stores, e.g. in the Kalahari Mall. Locally grown products, apart from fresh fruit and vegetables, include dried fruit (wide selection at the [Kalahari Dried Fruit & Coffee Shop](#)), biltong (beef or venison jerky) or wine ([Orange River Cellars](#) is one of South Africa's largest producers). Other articles, including electronics and camera gear, camping equipment or clothing, may be available in specialized shops in Upington, but the selection may be smaller than at home. Please note that the shops in Van Zylsrus (30 km from the KMP field site, shop and bottle store) and Askham (120 km, shop) usually just have a very basic (though interesting!) offering, so you will have to bring food for your entire visit from Upington.

Accommodation and restaurants: There is a range of accommodation options in Upington, including the larger Protea Hotel, but also several guest houses, some of them with excellent

reviews. Please consult your travel agency or online reservation portals for suggestions.

3.2 From Upington to the KMP field site

The journey between Upington and our study site at the Kuruman River Reserve (KRR) is 300 kilometers/186 miles on the most comfortable route via Askham, and it takes approximately 4 hours. It will be very easy to find your way: drive North on the R360 for 180 km to the small town Askham, there turn right and drive East on the R31 for 120 km until you reach the KMP field site – but we will provide directions once your visit is booked!

The roads are mostly gravel roads that can be driven in a normal 2WD car, though a 4WD may be more comfortable. Please take extra care if you're not used to driving on gravel roads, and do refrain from driving this route at night (very high risk of wandering humans, sheep, donkey carts, wild life etc. on the road).

3.3 Reaching the KMP from elsewhere

South African visitors or tourists who combine the KMP visit with a trip to other destinations in the region may want to reach the KMP field site from elsewhere.

Arriving from Gauteng or Eastern South Africa: The KMP field site is located on the R31 that connects Kuruman with Askham/Kgalagadi. The journey from Gauteng (e.g. from Johannesburg OR Tambo Airport) to the KMP field site is approx. 750 km and takes 8 hours. Kuruman offers good shopping options underway.

Arriving from Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (South African side) or Namibia: The direct drive from Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (Twee Rivieren Camp) to the KMP field site, via Askham, is approx. 195 km and takes 3 hours. Travelling from Namibia, the closest border posts are Rietfontein or Mata Mata. Please note that there are no decent shopping options underway, so you may have to drive via Upington to stock up on food for your stay at the KMP.

Arriving from Botswana, or the Eastern (Mabuasehube) side of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park: The closest border post to Botswana is Middelputz. Basic shopping and fuel may be available in Tshabong, though you may have to drive via Kuruman for decent shopping.

Arriving from Cape Town, Southern or Western South Africa: Travel via Upington (see directions above).

KMP researchers occasionally fly to Kathu, a small mining town with smaller shops, which is however closer to the KMP (2 hrs drive). South African Airlink and CemAir operate from Sishen Airport, near Kathu. Please contact us if you wish to travel via Kathu.

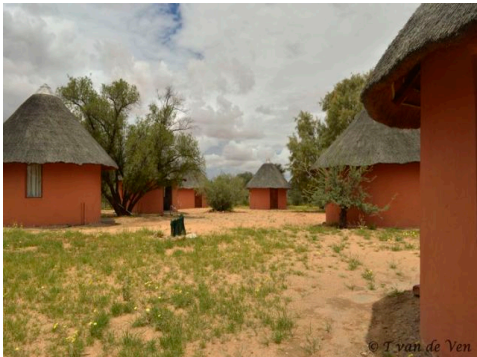
3.4 Driving while at the KMP field site

Visitors are required to have their own car for the transfers between the accommodation site (Gannavlake farm house) and the research site (Rus en Vrede farm house) where the meerkat excursions start from, in the morning and in the afternoon.

The drive between the two sites is approx. 5 km and takes 5-10 minutes, using the public R31 road and the access roads to the farm houses. Visitors are not allowed to drive on other roads or tracks within the reserve unless authorised in writing by the field site manager. Please note that there is a speed limit of 40 km/h for the access roads and any other private roads in the research area, to prevent meerkat fatalities!

4 Staying at the KRR field site

4.1 Accommodation



Visitors and part of the project staff reside on the Gannavlake farm house within the reserve. You will be accommodated individually in thatched, brick and mortar huts (rondavels) approximately four meters/13 feet in diameter.

Each rondavel is equipped with a single bed, desk, chair, cupboard and trunk. Although only single beds are available, rondavels can accommodate two single beds if couples so desire (please inform FKMP in advance). Bedding, towels, a reading lamp, a fan, a small electric heater, an electric kettle, a desk and chair, and a reading lamp are provided. Each rondavel is supplied with electricity (220 volts, takes South African standard three-prong plugs) and you are welcome to bring adapters and chargers for cameras, etc.

There are sinks with cold water in the rondavels, whereas flush toilets and hot showers are available in separate male and female ablution blocks.

It will be possible to wash laundry onsite. Please note that there is no cleaning/maid service.

4.2 Kitchen



The Gannavlake farm house includes a large kitchen with stove and oven, and a pantry with space to store your food supplies, including fridge and freezer. There is a separate dining room to enjoy your meals, and a lounge for drinks. A barbeque/braai grill is available in the yard. You can use these facilities at any time, but we ask you to clean everything after use.

The tap water at the KMP is from our own borehole and it is safe to drink.

4.3 Language

There are 11 official languages in South Africa, with Setswana being the predominant language in our region - but the language spoken at the KMP field site is English. Most people you'll encounter will speak fluent English. Afrikaans and German are the other languages that at least some of the staff and researchers speak.

To fully profit of your visit, it will be essential for you to have good command of English.

4.4 Communications to the outside world

There is no landline telephone. There is mobile reception for the MTN network at some locations on our farm, and to a lesser extent for Vodacom. The signal strength usually allows for sending text messages, but phone calls are not always feasible.

Fast WiFi internet access via satellite is available at the farmhouse (fee per gigabyte), though it experiences occasional outages. Adapters/dongles for internet access via a SIM card can be purchased from MTN at Johannesburg airport, but they operate with low bandwidth (EDGE). A Vodacom booster is installed at Gannavlake, so for using a dongle with laptop for internet access, a Vodacom SIM is recommended. For calls and internet in the field a MTN SIM card is recommended.

4.5 Other notes to life at the farm

The Kalahari Meerkat Project is situated "in the bush", a 2 to 4 hr drive from the next city. This seclusion, and one-ness with nature, are highly appreciated by many who come to the farm.

However, this also means that there is no other diversion than the people staying at the project, and nature. You will be part of a team with the researchers and possibly other visitors for the full duration of your visit. You will spend your entire days together; you will enjoy the meerkats and other highlights of your visit together, but you will also have to solve issues or problems as a team, should they arise.

Especially in the hot hours around noon, it's usually siesta time for everyone. Researchers often spend this time with data entry and other chores, at Rus en Vrede farmhouse. Visitors will spend this time back at Gannavlake. There is no programme during this time, so you usually spend this time alone with a book, sorting photos, doing your laundry, or in the company of other visitors. Depending on the duration of your meerkat sessions, this time can sum up to up to 6 to 9 hours, on occasion. Also in the evenings, there is no set programme. You may be joined by one or two researchers on some of the evenings, but probably not all the time.

Furthermore, please note that life in the bush comes with a certain lack of creature comforts; a trip to the Kalahari is never a leisure luxury cruise. Bumpy roads, dust everywhere, the occasional power outage, creepy-crawlies in your room – if this is not something you easily accept, then a KMP visit is maybe not the right thing for you.

5 How to prepare for your KMP visit

5.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to give you practical information about the preparation of your visit, to help you remember everything that needs to be done before you leave. However, it is general in nature and may not apply to your specific situation.

It is important that you clarify your specific situation as early as possible, best just after booking. Both the vaccinations you may need as well as getting passport, visa and insurances in place may require several weeks to months.

5.2 Passport, visa, insurances

All visitors to South Africa must be in possession of a passport valid for at least six months past the date of entry; it must contain at least two consecutive blank (unstamped) pages. You may be refused entry if you do not comply with these requirements.

South Africa tightened immigration laws in 2014, but there's still a fair number of countries whose citizens will be granted a temporary visitor visum upon entry, allowing them to stay (but not work) in the country for 90 days. Please consult South Africa's [Department of Home Affairs visa website](#) or check with a travel or visa agency for specific visa and entry requirements. When asked about the purpose of your visit, in visa application or immigration forms, please state that the purpose is vacation, holiday or travel (not volunteering, research or similar, to avoid misunderstandings with customs officials). We can send you an invitation letter that will state the duration and purpose of your visit, if required in your visa process. Please contact us if you require such an invitation letter. Please note also that children/minors travelling with you will require a full birth certificate to enter South Africa.

Travel medical and emergency evacuation, as well as cancellation insurance are not covered in the visit contribution, and are at the responsibility of the visitor. Companies offering such insurance can be found by googling the terms “travel medical insurance” or “cancellation insurance”, respectively.

5.3 Health considerations

Important notice: Each first-time visitor is required to hand in a health statement completed by a physician, at least 30 days before the trip starts. Please contact your physician or travel clinic well in advance (best is about 3 months before the trip starts).

You find this health statement as Appendix 1 to this Visitor Guide.

The health statement will give you and your physician detailed information about the physical requirements of your visit, but also recommendations regarding vaccinations.

However, medical decisions are the responsibility of each participant. The information given in the health statement may thus serve as a guideline, but your physician’s recommendation may diverge for whatever reason.

5.4 Packing considerations

A packing checklist is attached in Appendix 2 to this document. When packing, please consider the following:

Pack for diverse weather conditions: Be ready for hot and dry weather, rains, cool nights, and a lot of sun.

You will need outdoor/bush clothes for the meerkat work, and a set of casual wear for evenings, a trip to Van Zylsrus, or your return trip. There is not really any opportunity to wear dressy attire, jewellery etc. Remember that you can wash laundry on site.

It is a good idea to wear long trousers and sturdy hiking shoes while in the field even if it’s hot – you will suffer less from the ever-present thorns, hippo fly bites, or the acrid liquid the sour-grass exudes in March/April.

Don’t pack more than you alone can carry; it will be necessary to collect any checked bags at the airport where you first arrive in South Africa (Johannesburg or Cape Town). After proceeding through Customs, you will have to recheck your luggage before flying on to your final destination (Upington).

Also consider your airlines’ luggage regulations; please note that the checked-in baggage allowance for South African Airlink (your flight to Upington) is 20kg /44 lb for Economy flights – this may be lower than your international flight. The fee for excess baggage is low compared to other airports (approx. 30 ZAR per kilogram) however.

5.5 Other Advice / Information

The following information may further help you prepare your visit.

Electricity: 220/230 volts, 50 Hz; the large three-prong South African plug is only used in Southern Africa, so visitors from abroad will most probably need an adapter. Two-prong

European plugs may work though.

Time zone: GMT +2

Local currency: South African Rand (ZAR). See [Oanda or similar](#) for currency information and exchange rates.

Personal funds: Cash machines/ATMs are available in downtown Upington and Kuruman but not at the field site or in Van Zylsrus. Upington Airport does offer an ATM, but it may be out of service... So it is better to get local currency before you arrive. Both Johannesburg and Cape Town International Airports offer foreign exchange services. Major credit cards are accepted in many of Upington's or Kuruman's stores and accommodation as well as the Van Zylsrus Hotel, yet the KMP or the Van Zylsrus shop are not equipped to do so. Cash will also be required for any out-of-pocket expenses while on the project (e.g. private phone calls, internet access).

Personal security: The project area and its surroundings (including Upington and Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park) are generally considered secure, though incidents of petty crime occur in the region.

While most visits to South Africa are trouble-free, crime can be a problem, particularly in cities such as Johannesburg. If you travel into downtown Johannesburg or Cape Town, use sensible precautions: avoid carrying money conspicuously (e.g. in bulging wallets or bum-bags/fanny packs); avoid walking alone whenever possible and ignore persons who approach to solicit for donations; avoid wearing jewelry, "tourist outfits" such as safari shorts, jackets, cameras and binoculars, and very short skirts or shorts, tank tops, etc. (more conservative clothing is recommended); always take an official taxi when going out after dark; pre-book your accommodation; and select and use ATMs with caution.

Tip: when using an ATM, press cancel straight after inserting your card for the first time to make sure it comes back out, then insert the card again and draw money. Some machines have been tampered and you don't want your card to be stuck after your PIN has been entered.

Calling codes: 27 (country code), 53 (Vanzylsrus city code), 54 (Upington city code), 11 (Johannesburg city code). When making calls from within South Africa, drop the country code (27) and dial 0 before the number.

Emergency number in South Africa: 112

5.6 What else to see & do before or after your visit

South Africa is a country of breathtaking beauty, for travelers interested in nature, wildlife, landscape, action sports, wine & dine, culture, history - it's like a continent rolled into one country. Furthermore, people are friendly and open towards visitors, making South Africa a comfortable travel destination. It would be a pity to come to South Africa, and not see other parts of the country!

Game viewing is often very high on our visitors' list. [Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park](#) (KTP), reachable from the KMP within 2 hours, offers some of the best self-drive game viewing of the arid national parks, with several accommodation options: fully equipped campsites and wilderness camps (upmarket cottages) in the South African part and more adventurous campsites on the Botswana side. Furthermore, the San-owned [!Xaus lodge](#) offers luxury accommodation within the KTP boundaries, with the option for walking in the park. Another 2

hours drive from the KMP is [Tswalu](#), South Africa's largest private game reserve and a superb place for excellent game viewing in understated luxury.

The area surrounding the Kalahari Meerkat Project is serviced by three major towns: [Upington](#), [Kuruman](#) and [Kathu](#). This area hosts many more fabulous tourist attractions and activities including beautiful natural wonders such as the [fresh water spring in Kuruman](#), [Augrabies waterfalls](#), or the [Kimberley "Big Hole" diamond mine](#). July to September is the best time to see the [Namaqualand desert in flower](#). In addition there are many adventure sports and tours offered. All of these attractions are accompanied by luxurious but affordable accommodation and catering set against the beauty of the Kalahari desert.

Other famous destinations in South Africa include:

- [Cape Town](#), [Table Mountain National Park](#) with the Cape of Good Hope, world-renowned [Kirstenbosch botanical gardens](#), [Robben Island](#) (the Alcatraz of Cape Town, where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated), and the [winelands](#)
- Kruger National Park, and a host of other national parks in various habitats, with their abundant wildlife ([sanparks.co.za](#)).
- The [Garden Route](#) on the South-Eastern shoreline, including everything from splendid golf courses, fresh oysters, and family hideouts to unspoilt wilderness in the [Tsitsikamma](#) forest.
- [Durban](#) and [Kwa-Zulu Natal](#), for beach and diving holidays at the Indian ocean.
- And much more...

Please contact your travel agency to organise an extension of your stay in South Africa, or a neighbouring country like Namibia (deserts & wildlife), Botswana (deserts & wildlife), or Mozambique (beaches & diving). The FKMP is also glad to help you with suggestions.

6 Contribution and smallprint

6.1 Visitor contribution

The cost of participation on the visit, referred to as your contribution, is on a per-person basis.

No. of visitors	For 1 week	For 2 weeks
Minimum contribution (for 2 visitors)	2200 GB£	3500 GB£
Contribution per additional visitor	1100 GB£	1750 GB£

The minimum contribution is 2200 GB£ for two persons (since the minimum group size is two persons) for one week. Each additional person will add 1100 GB£ to the contribution. A discount applies for visit durations of two weeks and longer.

6.2 What does the visitor contribution cover?

The contribution covers the following:

- The meerkat expeditions and related activities at the KMP reserve led by KMP or FKMP staff.
- Accommodation at the KMP reserve.
- A free one-year pup membership at the Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project (FKMP, friends.kalahari-meerkats.com).

Not included are, in addition to anything not mentioned above:

- Transport to the KMP field site, and all transport between the farm houses.
- Meals and drinks.
- Excursions, day trips etc. from the field site.
- Visa; travel, health and cancellation insurance; vaccinations.
- Personal expenses.

6.3 Payment

- A down-payment of 20% of the visitor contribution is required to reserve your space. This down-payment is non-refundable unless we cancel your visit.
- Your place is confirmed once you receive the confirmation email from the FKMP.
- The full payment is due one month before the visit starts.
- All payments must be submitted in British Pounds (GBP) to the FKMP bank account in Switzerland.

6.4 Cancellation policy

If the visit is to be cancelled by the FKMP or KMP, the full visitor contribution is reimbursed.

If you cancel your participation or if we have to cancel due to you not meeting the health requirements, the following cancellation fees will be due and retained by the FKMP, unless a stand-in participant is provided by you:

- Up to 31 days before the trip starts: 20% of the fee, i.e. the down-payment will be retained.
- 30-11 days before the trip starts: a total of 50% of the visitor contribution.
- 10 or less days before the trip starts, if you do not appear at field site, or depart early: a total of 100% of the Friends visit contribution.
- Any funds retained due to late cancellation will support the KMP research, and will be considered a charitable donation to the FKMP.

Fees for travel arrangements or personal expenses are in the full responsibility of the participant and are in neither case reimbursed by the KMP or FKMP.



6.5 Is the visit contribution tax deductible?

Unfortunately, as the legal setup of non-profit tax-exempt organisations in multiple countries is very complex and expensive for a small venture like the KMP and FKMP, contributions are not tax-deductible as charitable contributions in all countries.

We will on request send you a receipt for your contribution, which you can use for tax matters, if tax laws in your country allow this. Such a receipt will be available after year end, or on request.

6.6 Can I be removed from a KMP visit?

The FKMP reserves the right to refuse reservations for the visit, if the applicant fails to meet the health requirements.

The FKMP will support the right of the KMP management to send visitors away from a visit, once in the field, should their behaviour compromise the safety, research objectives or general performance of the field site.

Self misrepresentation in any way, including but not limited to age, health, intentions etc. will be grounds for rejection of reservations or dismissal from expeditions. In the case of self misrepresentation, visitors will not be eligible for a refund.

6.7 Photographing and filming KMP meerkats

Most of our visitors are keen to take photos of our meerkats, or film them. You may do so under the following conditions:

- You must not disturb the meerkats, other fauna or flora while photographing/filming; touching meerkats is strictly forbidden.
- You must not interfere with research while taking photos/filming, and always comply with instructions given by the researcher/volunteer or KMP staff.
- Photos/videos are for your own personal use; you may publish them online under the condition that you link to the Kalahari Meerkat Project (www.kahalari-meerkats.com).
- Any commercial usage of photos/videos (e.g. selling photos online or offline, screening videos on TV) is prohibited unless authorised in writing by the KMP or FKMP. A fee may apply.

This KMP visit package is not available to professional filmers or photographers; please enquire [with the KMP](#) if you are interested in filming or photographing our meerkats for commercial purposes.

6.8 Legal note

All services mentioned as part of a Friends visit are delivered by the Kalahari Meerkat Project (KMP) which thus serves as your contract partner.

The Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project society (FKMP) is procured by the KMP to manage the administration of bookings and payments.



7 Appendix 1: Health Statement

7.1 Introduction

Please show this section to your physician when he/she is completing your health statement. Be sure to discuss vaccination requirements with your physician well in advance of your departure date. Please contact us if you require a German version of this document.

To the examining physician:

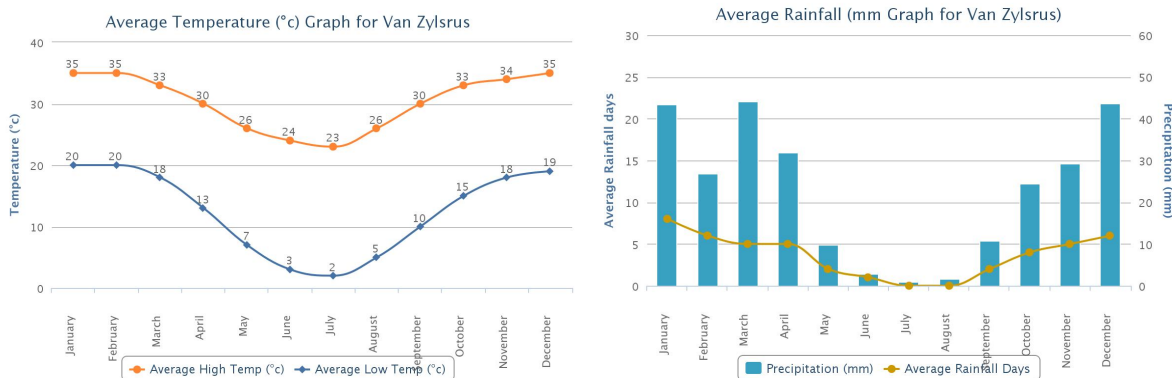
Your patient has volunteered to join a field research team that has specific physical demands of which you and your patient should be aware. We require your accurate evaluation of your patient's ability to meet the conditions detailed below in order to safeguard his/her health and safety and ensure that he/she can participate fully and effectively.

7.2 Climate Conditions at the Research Site

The KMP field site is at an altitude of approx. 750 m above sea level. The climate is arid, with cold to cool nights and hot days. Temperatures can drop to -5°C/20°F in winter nights (June - August), and exceed 43°C/110°F on summer days (November – April). People working in the reserve generally rest during the hottest time of day. Humidity is typically very low and nighttime temperatures are usually comfortable; the heat is therefore easy to bear.

The rainy season is from November to March; rains usually come in the form of short but occasionally heavy thunderstorms. Vegetation will flourish during this time, covering the Kalahari dunes in green, high grass. The rest of the year is usually dry, and the grass will eventually be gone by August.

The following charts show average temperature and rain fall for our region.



7.3 Physical demands, health risks and access to medical care

- Physical demands: The patient MUST be able to do the following without adverse health effects:
 - Up to 5 km walking in soft sand, over dunes
 - Up to 500 m running in soft sand, over dunes
 - Climb fences 2-3 m (10-12 ft) high (vertical wooden ladders often available)
 - Repeatedly stand up/sit down during 1-3 hours
- Health risks – potential hazards:
 - High probability: Heat stroke, dehydration, sun burn, traveller diarrhea.
 - Medium probability: traffic incidents.
 - Low probability: potentially lethal bites/stings by venomous snakes (puff adder, cape cobra) and scorpions (*Parabuthus granulatus*, *P. capensis*); infectious diseases (see next page); attacks by ostriches, large antelopes, farm dogs.
- Access to medical care:
 - Nearest hospital (with medical doctor on site): Kathu Mediclinic, Gamagara, 3 hrs drive
 - Bush clinic (Primary health care by a nurse): Van Zylsrus 25 minutes, Tswalu 90 minutes drive
 - Emergency doctor or evacuation with a bush plane or car: 1-2 hrs drive or fly

Health attest	
You, the signing medical doctor, hereby confirms that patient	
(Name)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	... meets the conditions set forth in this statement, and can participate from medical viewpoint.
<input type="checkbox"/>	... does not meet the conditions set forth in this statement, and should not participate from medical viewpoint.
<input type="checkbox"/>	... does not fully meet the conditions set forth in this statement, but can participate from medical viewpoint. He/she can participate under the following conditions/precautions:
Name of physician:	
Location of physician:	
Date of examination:	Signature:

7.4 Vaccination recommendations

The following vaccination recommendations are valid for short-term visitors to the field site of the Kalahari Meerkat Project, based on recommendations for previous visitors and based on the assumption that the visitor is in good health and complies with safety regulations.

Individual recommendations are in the responsibility of the treating physician, in any case.

The table below is to be filled in by the physician unless the patient provides a vaccination certificate.

Disease	Recommendation	Immunisation state /Date
Tetanus: Immunisation is highly recommended due to frequent work in the field.	Vaccination recommended	
Yellow fever: Required on immigration into South Africa, if arriving from a yellow-fever-infected area.	As necessary	
Tuberculosis: Meerkats may be carriers of a species-specific tuberculosis strain whose transmission to other species has not yet been investigated. Furthermore, South Africa has a very high prevalence of human TB. However, the risk of a TB infection during a visit according to the itinerary is minimal, based on our 20 yrs experience.	Not necessarily required	
<p>Rabies: Meerkats and other wildlife may be carriers of rabies (one known case in the past 20 years), and meerkats occasionally bite the researchers who touch them. Visitors are asked though to not touch the meerkats.</p> <p>A time-critical treatment after rabies exposure cannot guaranteed, and it requires an evacuation of the patient.</p> <p>However, the risk of a TB infection in our field site is minimal, based on our 20 years experience.</p>	Not necessarily required	
Malaria: The malaria vector does not occur in the region unless after several very wet years (not applicable for 2015/2016). Other regions in South Africa, including Kruger National Park, require a malaria prophylaxis.	Prophylaxis if travelling into risk regions.	
Diphtherie, Pertussis, Tetanus (DPT)	Routine vaccinations for South Africa	
Polio		
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)		
Hepatitis A		
Varicella		
Typhus, Cholera – no known cases in the past 20 years		
Others:		

8 Appendix 2: Packing checklist

The following list helps you pack; please see the packing considerations in chapter 5.4. Items in the list below marked with an asterisk are usually available in Upington.

Documents

- ☐ This Visitor guide
- ☐ Photocopies of your passport, flight itinerary, credit cards and insurance statements in case the originals are lost or stolen; the copies should be packed separately from the original documents
- ☐ Valid Passport and/or visa (if necessary)
- ☐ Certification of inoculation

Clothing/Footwear for Fieldwork

- ☐ Lightweight, quick drying, long-sleeved shirts and pants/trousers
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ Set of heavier weight/warmer clothes (April-September)
- ☐ Well worn-in and comfortable hiking boots
- ☐ Windproof jacket with hood (essential in April-September)
- ☐ Warm wool or synthetic fleece sweaters/sweatshirts/jumpers
- ☐ Hat with wide brim to protect from sun
- ☐ Warm hat and gloves (April-September)
- ☐ Underwear, thermal underwear (April-September)

Clothing/Footwear for Leisure

- ☐ One set of clothing to keep clean for non-field days and return trip
- ☐ Sandals to wear around the accommodation site during the day
- ☐ Close-toed shoes (required) to wear at night to avoid contact with scorpions and snakes

Food

- ☐ *Food and beverages for your use, for your entire stay

Field Supplies

- ☐ Rucksack/backpack for daily use (to carry fleece, water, camera, GPS, sunscreen, etc.).
- ☐ *Drybag or plastic sealable bags (good for protecting equipment such as camera from dust, humidity, and water)
- ☐ *Insect repellent spray
- ☐ Water bottle (able to hold a minimum of two liters)
- ☐ *Sunscreen lotion with SPF 30 or higher
- ☐ *Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries and extra bulb

Personal Supplies

- ☐ **Note: The project will supply bedding and towels.**
- ☐ *Personal toiletries (biodegradable soaps and shampoos are encouraged)
- ☐ *Antibacterial wipes or lotion (good for “washing” hands while in the field)
- ☐ *Personal First Aid kit (e.g. anti-diarrhea pills, antibiotics, antiseptic, itch-relief, pain reliever, bandages, blister covers, etc.)

- ☐ Personal medications
- ☐ *Moisturizing lotion and lip balm, especially in winter (April-September)

Miscellaneous

- ☐ Personal spending money (see Chapter 5.5)
- ☐ Camera, film/memory card(s), extra camera battery, battery chargers, converters if necessary, multi-plug (to charge your devices in parallel, there is just one power plug in your room)
- ☐ *South African plug adapter

Optional Items

- ☐ Binoculars are strongly recommended (8 x 30 or larger are good for wildlife viewing)
- ☐ Work gloves
- ☐ *Earplugs for light sleepers
- ☐ Travel guide
- ☐ Field guides (a selection of relevant field guides are available at the study site, but participants may wish to bring their own)
- ☐ Books, games, journal, art supplies, etc. for recreational/rest time and travel

Project Wish List

- ☐ Maps, photographs or books (especially those showing your country/province/town of origin or pertaining to your local environment): These materials will be useful if visiting the Van Zylsrus school, and with your permission could be donated afterwards to the Vanzylsrus school or public library; the Vanzylsrus community is very isolated and would benefit from access to these geographical materials
- ☐ Sports gear for children aged 7-16, such as soccer and basketball/netball balls, trainers/sneakers, shorts, t- shirts, socks, etc.
- ☐ *Games, stationery and maps for the primary school
- ☐ *Rechargeable* nine-volt and AA batteries
- ☐ Recent newspapers and/or magazines for the severely out-of-touch researchers