

ONLY LOVE + LEARNING TRIP

AFRICAN  ROAD

*Hands
Free*
MAMA
Rachel Mary Soffel



YOU'RE GOING ON THE ONLY LOVE + TOGETHERNESS LEARNING TRIP, HOSTED BY THE NON-PROFIT: AFRICAN ROAD!

A brief overview to answer some initial questions.

East Africa, here we come! We want you to be as prepared as possible for the amazing journey ahead. The more you learn before travel, the richer your experience will be. It is an honor to have you join the team for an unforgettable learning trip.



FUNDS

These funds will cover your room, your meals, all your ground travel costs, visa, as well as payment to cover our partners' and Changemakers' costs to receive and host us. Air travel (if you are booking your international flights with African Road) will be booked with your approval, and will be invoiced upon booking. Alcoholic beverages and souvenirs will be covered by each traveler individually.

For beverages, plan on what you might spend at home on a holiday and you'll be more than prepared. Handcrafts are not expensive. We recommend between \$50 and \$200 for shopping depending on how much you wish to bring back.

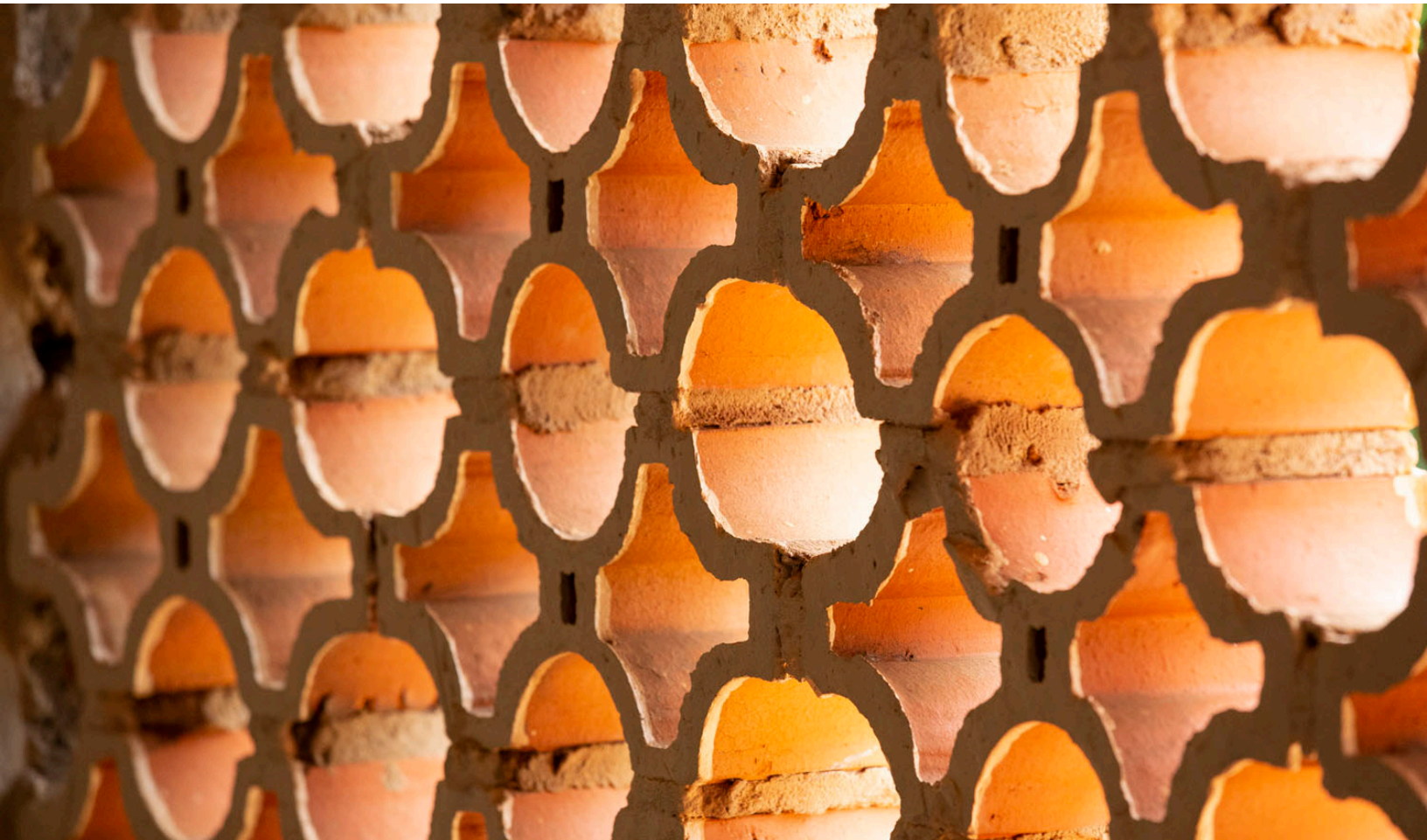
More expensive items for those who might be inclined (art and custom-tailored clothing) can run higher but can be paid for with a credit or debit card. We've also had travelers come with only \$50 for all spending and keep it simple. Since all needs will be covered it's possible to be budget wise. ATM machines are available if you find you don't have enough money with you but, please do try to bring what you think you might spend as the machines aren't always reliable or can take extra time to find and use. **Bring \$50 bills or \$100 bills that are 2009 or newer** and in good condition with no pen marks or tears. Crisp and clean is important.



IMMUNIZATIONS

It is time now, if you have not yet, for you to schedule your immunizations. On occasion there is a wait for the inoculations to be ordered and to arrive, and so it is important to begin the process as soon as possible. Tell the clinic or doctor's office which countries you will be visiting so that they will know which immunizations you will need.

Be sure to have antimalarials. Make an appointment with your local travel clinic. Request a medication with the least side effects. Some options can cause stomach problems or disturbed sleep. Please also ask your doctor for a broad-spectrum traveler's antibiotic just in case.



HOUSING

We will stay in small hotels or small guesthouses in the vicinity of the African Road Changemaker projects. The accommodations will be simple, clean, safe and comfortable. Rooms will have bottled water and flush toilets, electricity that works most of the time, Wifi sometimes

and private baths with (generally) hot showers. All have 24-hour security, and you can leave valuables in your room, locked in a suitcase (remember a suitcase lock.) Your trip cost covers a private room for your full time in Rwanda.

TRANSPORTATION

African Road will rent a van, large cars or a small bus, depending on the size of our team & where we are going. We hire professional drivers for the entire trip.

African Road friends will meet us at the airport & be with us throughout the trip.



APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

You are representing African Road while traveling, and many times the friends we will visit will choose to dress in their best clothing while they are with you. Culturally, you are showing respect by looking your best. With that said, you need to be comfortable as some of the days are long. For women, a short sleeved (or wide strapped tank top) shirt with a nice knee length skirt or pants and flat shoes works well, with a scarf tucked in your purse to wrap around shoulders if needed. For

men, a collared, short sleeved button shirt and long pants (not shorts) would be appropriate. Comfortable clothing for leisurely mornings or late evenings are fine. See a suggested packing list along with this email package.

Temperatures in Rwanda are pleasant with warm afternoons and cool mornings and nights. A sweater and light layers for evenings in Rwanda is recommended.



SAFETY

Rwanda is known today for being a peaceful and easily navigated country. While this is the case, please know that we make your safety a priority. We will always be accompanied by African Road friends and will stay in secure housing. As with any international travel, we will use common sense and not intentionally place our group in known, unsafe situations. Do not bring anything that is irreplaceable. Leave all expensive jewelry at home (besides a simple wedding band or simple earrings). Electronic devices (iPod,

phones, etc) are fine to bring, as long as you understand African Road is not liable for loss, theft or breakage. Laptops are OK and can be locked in the room. **You must purchase trip insurance.** We recommend Travel Guard insurance as we have had excellent service and coverage through them: www.travelguard.com. Please provide record of trip insurance upon payment of your trip fee as we will be making deposits on rooms and transportation.



FOOD

We will eat a variety of foods, both western and traditional East African food. We'll enjoy breakfast every day at the guest house: fruit, coffee/tea, eggs to order, toast. For lunch, we'll most likely eat something simple on the go, and save our bigger meal for the evening. Our days are long and you will need energy. It's recommended that you pack some small protein-heavy snacks: beef jerky, trail mix, granola or protein bars are all good options. If we're on the road and not able to get our meal in before you get hungry (with jet lag, you may be hungry at odd times), you will be able to fill the hunger until we can eat our meal. Meals in Africa take much longer to arrive than we might be used to, and it's helpful to be prepared for that. Sometimes having a little snack before ordering our meal makes sense to help with the waiting time.

Local foods are fresh, simple and enjoyable. Beans and rice, cooked vegetables, a little meat or fish, bananas, eggs. Kigali, Rwanda has a great variety of restaurants which we will visit on occasion too.

Occasionally travelers will experience stomach issues. Please let us know if you feel ill or need extra care or special food. We can accommodate you if we know you have some needs.

We will have some opportunities to share local meals with community members. In some situations, you will find that mealtimes aren't generally times for chatting or making conversation. We, who are used to talking a fair bit over our meals, may be surprised by this.



PACKING

If you are traveling from Portland, we ask you to check TWO bags: One regular-sized suitcase for yourself, and one bag for African Road to be able to carry over and back supplies (this may vary depending on your point of origin.) There is no charge for these two checked items. You can also

take one small carry on suitcase or bag. We'll be discussing packing at length so you can feel confident about what you wish to bring.

Travelers outside the Portland area have a standard two bag allowance checked.



TEAM SPIRIT

“Go with the flow” attitude: The key to success lies in understanding the importance of being flexible on this trip—from start to finish. You are going on an amazing adventure and will be meeting incredible people. This will be the trip of a life time, and still...traveling can be stressful. Working collectively and experiencing a new culture can require adapting. When we release expectations about how things should be done or what we will accomplish, we are bound to be able to travel with more sense of

ease and well-being. There is a certain amount of “unfolding” and shifting plans that happens on these trips. Be prepared to go with the flow every day. During the course of this trip, from the first planning stages to the time you arrive home, plans will change. Schedules and activities and plans may change. Please be patient and understanding, and go with the flow. Your experience as a team will be as important and joyful as your experience as an individual.

LEARNING

The purpose of this trip is to learn, first hand, the work of African Road Changemakers and to create connections and build relationships with the people and projects. Approach this trip with a heart that is open and willing to learn. Be

willing to try new things, and to experience the unknown. Remember, you may feel a little challenged by immersion learning, as well as excited and inspired and genuine. You will feel surrounded by love and welcome even as you navigate new cultural contexts.



AGREEMENTS AND BOUNDARIES

Part of the purpose of our trip is to build relationships with the people and projects of African Road in East Africa. Though you will be making connections that feel very meaningful to you, please do not give out your personal contact information to wonderful people you will meet. Team members are asked to not give out their email addresses, phone numbers, or accept East African “friends” on Facebook. If you find yourself considering this, please speak with the team leaders so they may advise you. While it may go without saying, please come with a commitment not to start your own great project. Working within the framework of what African Road has strategically and carefully crafted over years of relationship and learning has the best long-term

impact. Again, ask us if you have any questions.

As an American, you are perceived as being wealthy; compared to most of those we are with, you are. Please do not make promises or say that you will try to help—this is perceived as a guarantee in East Africa. Words like “maybe, possibly, potentially, perhaps” have a different connotation to Africans and indicate a future promise or obligation. When you say “Oh, maybe someday you can come visit me in America,” this is heard as a promise. Probing questions about ‘what do you need’ or, ‘what do you want’ also raise hopes. We’ll discuss how to navigate the desire to help.



PERSONAL LEARNING & GROWTH PROCESS

One very important thing that we'll be doing on the trip is connecting with the African Road Changemakers, their friends, and the culture of the East African country where we are visiting. This requires thoughtful observation and reflection. Things are not as always as they appear on the surface. Realize that you are just seeing a snapshot of what is going on in a situation and that there is a whole backstory and rich cultural tapestry that also shapes the situation.

Think of yourself as a sponge, absorbing everything you can. You'll be encouraged to personally journal daily, and talk with the group about what you're experiencing.

Every night we'll take time as a group to debrief. Please keep in mind that as you encounter new sights and smells, these are real people with thoughts and feelings and this is their world! It may be hard not to blurt out things as you see them for the first time, "Hey, why is traffic like this? It would be so much better if they..." "Look at that!" "Why don't they...?" You'll have dozens of questions and observations as you experience this culture for the first time. We can discuss everything, but let's be sensitive to what we discuss in front of our new friends.



We are privileged to enter into the lives of our African Road friends for the days we are with them, and need to keep in mind their own emotions and reactions. You will be seeing and experiencing many new things, probably for the first time, and it is normal to want to engage and express as you experience things. But let's plan to do

this as a group... We will talk more about what this means in preparation for the trip and will be connecting and processing the events of the days as we move through our learning trip together!

Here is a one-minute video to inspire you and some resources to help you prepare.

<https://youtu.be/DWaLrq1Le5A>



RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

For general preparation before the trip:

Check out African Road website: <http://www.africanroad.org/>

Watch African Road YouTube films: 2019 Woven Together, Rwanda Film
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=cbv4lc5WPIA>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrRR6BIZJHyMR31HwPMYSiQ/videos>

Volunteering and Thoughts about Respectful Interaction: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/11/26/565694874/volunteering-abroad-read-this-before-you-post-that-selfie> READ THIS ONE FOR SURE!

Women's Empowerment- Complexities and Progress in Africa:
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/07/29/487360094/invisibilia-no-one-thought-this-all-womans-debate-team-could-crush-it>

RWANDA

Books:

We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We will Be Killed with Our Families by Philip Gourevitch

Running the Rift by Naomi Benaron

Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda by Romeo Dallaire

Left to Tell: One Woman's Story of Surviving the Rwandan Genocide by Ilibagiza Immaculee (faith based)

Movies and Documentaries:

Frontline: "Ghosts of Rwanda" (2004) watch at this link: <http://freedocumentaries.org/documentary/ghosts-of-rwanda-pbs-frontline-season-22-episode-6>

"Sometimes in April" (2005) available on Amazon and HBO

"Hotel Rwanda" (2004) available on Amazon

"Kinyarwanda" (2011) available on Amazon prime video

"Sweet Dreams" (2012) see trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lBzFo-pXtU>

"Sweet Dreams" watch at this link: <http://www.sweetdreamsrwanda.com/>

"Munyarungabo" (2007) available on Amazon prime video

Rwandan Development

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/12/world/africa/east-africa-rwanda-used-clothing.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/28/world/africa/rwanda-plastic-bags-banned.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/24/world/africa/rwanda-reaches-for-new-economic-model.html>

<http://ktpress.rw/2016/07/after-failing-3-times-biggest-regional-convention-center-opens-in-kigali/>

<http://www.mindsky.com/magazine/news-and-trends/6-cool-facts-you-didnt-know-about-the-kigali-convention-center-complex>

GOODNESS FUND

As you prepare for travel you have the special opportunity to 'invite friends and family to join you' by contributing to a group Goodness Fund that will be distributed to the Changemaker partners we spend time with. This gives us a chance to express appreciation and, as a travel team together, respond to a need and learn first-hand about the impact of strategic relational investment. Your friends back home become connected to the stories and people you meet when they give, and, will appreciate hearing your updates on return, knowing they've helped to make a difference.

We encourage each trip participant to aim to gather a minimum of \$200 each --not from your own funds--this translates to inviting ten people to each give \$20, four people at \$50--whatever works for you.

All Goodness Funds are pooled and, we seek guidance for use of fund, from the Changemakers we are with. If each team member aims to collect at least \$200, together we'll have a special fund to guide our thinking and process about healthy development and to bring some practical encouragement. Ten friends giving \$20 each is doable!

Here are some pointers and suggestions for inviting people to join in the goodness fund.

How to Give

1. If people want individual tax receipts, their funds will need to be sent to African Road (online or by check- they can give checks to you to mail if they'd rather not mail

themselves) If friends give online they can add a note in the memo box, mentioning your name and Goodness Fund.

2. If your friends simply want to give you cash and are not looking for a tax receipt that's okay too.

3. It is helpful if you can send the cash donations to African Road prior to travel (online works great to save time) so we can pool the funds. Goodness funds will be sent to Rwanda by bank wire.

Make your invitation to join in personal. If you use social media and want to start an African Road Facebook Fundraiser to raise your Goodness Funds, you can easily invite other Facebook friends to join in.

Some teams have been so enthusiastic in their preparation, that they have raised up to \$1,000 per person thus providing a Goodness Fund of \$5,000-\$10,000. You'll be surprised how much people want to join in if invited.

Mailing letters to friends is another approach. You can share what is motivating you to make this trip and invite them to join in with their gift.

Sometimes friends will want to make a larger gift. Of course, that is welcome too.

Natalie Stafford will share her approach and inspire you about what is possible when we invite people to bring what we can to make a difference.

A sample email or letter might include this information, along with instructions how to give and, if emailing, a direct link to the African Road donation page. Feel free to modify or simplify this email so it suits you.

Hi _____

I have been selected to participate in a Learning Trip experience to Rwanda July 2020 with the non-profit organization African Road. We will be learning from communities who are lifting themselves and others out of extreme poverty through development initiatives led by the people themselves.

We'll travel to Rwanda where we will spend our days immersed in the life of the Togetherness Cooperative, a community of young people who were orphaned and came together after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Led by a remarkable local leader, this cooperative of young people has been on a strategic journey toward sustainability, moving from poverty to now being recognized as inspiring leaders who work for the benefit of their village. We will also learn from Reach Rwanda, an organization working with genocide perpetrators and survivors in an inspiring and challenging process of forgiveness and reconciliation.

I'd like to invite you to consider 'joining me' on this learning journey by contributing to a Goodness Fund. Each travel team member will invite their friends and family to 'come along' in this way. All Goodness funds are pooled together to make something impactful possible. Gifts given are tax deductible and will go directly to the communities we are spending time with. When I return, I'll look forward to sharing what your contribution helped make possible and, what these communities taught our team. If ten friends each chip in \$20, we'll add \$200 to the fund. Your donation of any size is appreciated!

If emailing, you can include this link which goes to the African Road donation page. The page provides mailing information, tax ID number and online giving options too. Ask friends who give online to mention you in the online giving memo!

[African Road Team Goodness Fund](#)

PACKING LIST

We are excited that you are joining us in East Africa!

In general, Africans are modest and traditional and admire a well-groomed person. Comfortable shoes are very important! You will do a lot of walking. Bring comfortable walking shoes/sandals.

Men's dress code: No shorts (except for the gym or swimming pool). Bring a dress shirt and necktie for the possibility of a semi-formal occasion.

Dress code for women: Pants and skirts that go to the knee or below are respectful though in Kigali city you will find that western style fashion is common and there

is more flexibility with clothing style. Bring one nice dress in the event we have a special invitation. Please do not plan to wear shorts. Tank tops that can be covered with a light over-shirt are fine. Ripped jeans fashion style clothing is considered disrespectful.

DO NOT bring:

Valuable jewelry or clothing that is expensive and requires dry-cleaning. White clothing may easily be stained by red dust - use your own discretion.

You'll be able to check two 50 pound bags per person and a carry on. Bags will be checked directly to Kigali (KGL) from your point of origin.

THINGS TO PACK

Carry-on

- Passport (and visa/visa paper work)
- Yellow Fever shot record
- Cash for spending money (for souvenirs, gifts, occasional meals, etc.)- crisp new \$100.00 bills (MUST be 2009 or newer).
- Credit and/or debit cards
- Your necessary medication if you have any
- Traveler's antibiotic recommended by your doctor
- Antibacterial hand sanitizer
- Items for contact lenses (can be difficult to buy there)
- Eyeglasses if needed
- One extra outfit and underwear in case checked bag is lost
- Toothbrush/paste/floss
- Deodorant
- Comb/brush
- Laptop
- Neck pillow for plane
- Earplugs
- Scarf, sweater and/or socks for if the plane is cold
- Malaria prophylaxis
- Electrical outlet converter (two prong UK used in Rwanda)

Checked bag

- Notebook for journal/pens
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Camera/batteries
- Hand wipes
- Tissues
- Personal travel-sized toilet paper
- Ziploc bags
- SUNBLOCK
- Personal medicines (consider vitamins, allergy tabs, lotion, aspirin, and diarrhea medicine.)
- Mouthwash
- Shampoo
- Flip flops/shower shoes
- Razor/Shaving Cream
- Feminine hygiene items
- Face washcloths if you like
- Shoes and sandals
- Sunglasses
- Hats - baseball, brim
- Nicer T-shirts, light weight blouses
- Pants (cropped pants ok)
- Women -knee length skirts one or two nicer dresses for any special events.
- Sleepwear
- Swimsuit
- Photos of your family, city and country (to show new friends)
- Small gifts for hosts from your home state
- Small daypack
- Snacks (suggestions - protein bars, granola bars, peanut butter in a well-sealed plastic jar, beef jerky, trail mix, nuts)
- Small board games (i.e. cards, Bananagrams, Apples to Apples)
- Small liquid laundry soap if you are going to do your own laundry, or money to pay to have your laundry done. This is quite inexpensive and provides work for local women. You will get sweaty and dusty. Rwandans value clean, crisp clothing (they even iron jeans and underwear - amazing.)
- Musical instruments, craft supplies as activities to do with others or to use in downtime
- Recreational reading material and/or music device
- Compact umbrella for sun and rain
- Extra batteries
- Flashlight

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Many places that we visit will have WiFi, and you will have access to cellular data in most places. If you have a smart phone that you would like to bring, you can contact your phone company before you leave, to set up for international calling. Add Whatsapp or use Facetime when we have access to internet for free and clear calling. Your team leader will have an African phone number and will always be available to receive emergency calls or to make calls home when needed.

Some locations will have ATMs. If you plan to bring a debit or credit card, contact your bank to let them know where you are going and your travel dates.