Hi everyone,

It’s less than a month now before you set off on your expedition! This is an important update about copies of your documents that we would like you to supply us with and take with you on trip. This is probably the least exciting part of your preparations, but it is essential!

Also included are details of your Local Payment and general spending money as well as information about keeping in touch, passenger liability insurance, government travel advice and your own travel insurance.

**SCANNED DOCUMENTS TO SEND TO US IN ADVANCE**

If you haven’t already, please send the following to us at info@oasisoverland.co.uk by 10th January. See below for the correct way to scan your documents (border officials can be very particular about this!):

* **Scanned colour copy of passport**

We require a scanned colour copy of the passport you will be travelling on. If you have two passports, please send both copies, with the main passport you intend to travel on labelled as ‘Passport 1’, followed by your second copy of ‘Passport 2’ as your back up passport. This will be required in order to arrange some necessary paperwork beforehand.

* **Scanned colour copy of Yellow Fever Certificate**

Please also send a scanned colour copy of your Yellow Fever Certificate.

(Please note: as mentioned previously, the Yellow Fever vaccination is considered to be valid for life. However, some of you may have had the vaccine some time ago when it was deemed valid for 10 years and so it will show a validity of 10 years on your certificate.  Border officials may take this as being out of date if you had the vaccine more than 10 years ago which could mean difficulties and delays at the border.  [Nomad Travel Clinics](https://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/) can issue replacement certificates which state ‘life of person vaccinated’ for a cost of £20 and we would recommend you do this if possible.  Please contact them directly or a travel clinic in your home country for more details).

* **Scanned colour Passport photo**

Passport photo of standard size. Maximum file size 200KB. Image Format JPEG.

* **How to scan your documents**

Please follow these instructions to ensure your documents are scanned correctly and will be accepted by officials:

Place your passport face down on a scanner with the opposite page open and showing.  Put a sheet of blank white A4 paper behind it, with the passport positioned in the middle.  Scan the whole sheet of paper. This should make your copy at %100/True size, of the passport scanned. This is the same for your Yellow Fever certificate and passport photos. Copies with fingers showing holding the passport for example will not be accepted.

Please ensure that your copies are in colour and that they are of good quality and legible. Please

only scan one document per page.

You can also take a photo of your passport with your phone using Cam Scanner or a similar app and then convert them to a PDF file (Cam Scanner does this automatically on request to share the document) and send that. Please do the same thing with the passport on a white paper background, scan at %100 / True size and ensure there are no flash reflections or fingers.

* **Other information to send us:**
* Mother and Fathers full name – required information by some immigration and border officials along the way.
* Your profession
* Please advise us if you have any medical or dietary conditions if you have not already done so.

**Document copies to take with you on the expedition**

In addition to the electronic document copies listed above, please could you bring the following number of copies on A4 paper with you. These will be used in obtaining visas en route and your crew will collect them at the start of the trip. Your paperwork will be stored in the crew’s safe on the truck. Finding colour photocopiers in some parts of West Africa is very difficult, hence this requirement!

* **Passport and Yellow Fever photocopies**

Please provide your tour leader with 20 (UK starters) / 10 (Accra starters) colour copies and 10 black and white copies of your passport (of each passport you hold if you have more than one), and 10 (UK starters) / 5 (Accra starters) colour copies of your Yellow Fever certificate. Please also have another couple of copies on hand with you.

* **Credit card photocopies**

2 copies of your credit card, showing both the front and the back of the card. You can black out some of the main card number (but not the expiry date), this is just to show you have access to funds.

* **Covid vaccination record**

Please ensure you have several copies of your Covid Vaccination record.

* **Digital copies**

Please have digital copies of your passport, Yellow Fever Vaccination certificate, Covid Vaccination record and passport photo documents (scanned as above) stored on your email or on a device you may be travelling with as they may be needed for online visa applications.

Please also note the specific requirements for your Angola visa application and ensure you have scanned copies in the correct format:

* Passport photo = Width 381-571 pixels, height 496-744 pixels, maximum 200kb file size and in JPEG format
* Passport = Width 480-1000 pixels, height 340-720 pixels, maximum 300kb file size and in JPEG format
* Yellow Fever Certificate = scanned in gray scale, minimum resolution of 100dpi and maximum of 150dpi. Must be in JPEG or TIFF format. Maximum file size for TIFF – 10240kb (10mb), maximum file size for JPEG – 150kb.
* **Bank statements**

Some consulates require recent bank statements to accompany your visa application. This is to show proof of funds. Please ensure you will be able to access your banking online during the trip in order to download and print a statement. Your statement should show that you have approximately US$1000 or the equivalent in your account.

* **Passport Photos**

Please bring with you the following number of passport photos. They must be with a white background:

* 35 Passport Photos for UK to Cairo
* 30 Passport Photos for UK to Cape Town and UK to Nairobi
* 25 Passport Photos for Accra to Cairo
* 15 Passport Photos for Accra to Cape Town and Accra to Nairobi
* 12 Passport Photos for UK to Ghana

Please do not cut any documents or photos down to size but keep as A4 size. Please also make sure they are good clear scans in the centre of the page and nice and flat so no shadows! These are needed for visas, hence the good clear copies.

**MONEY**

You will find information about your Local Payment, Visa Kitty and general spending money in the attached documents.

**KEEPING IN TOUCH**

It is possible to buy local Sim cards for your mobile phone very cheaply in various countries. Please just make sure that your phone is unlocked. Sim cards work on a top up basis and top up cards are readily available. Please be aware that Micro sims are difficult to obtain outside of big cities with posh phone shops and you’ll be even more unlikely to find a Nano sim. But regular sims are available everywhere!  WiFi is available in some of areas that we visit – but the efficiency or speed in connection is never a guarantee!! The prices of using the facilities can range considerably, from free WiFi to up to £4 pounds per hour.

Please prepare your family for the fact that you may have stretches of time where you will not be in contact – generally this means you are having fun!

**PASSENGER LIABILITY INSURANCE**

As a company we do our best to have the best possible level of insurance in place to protect our travellers and our operations. That includes a comprehensive tour operators liability insurance policy which protects all of our trips. We also try to obtain passenger liability insurance to cover our liability for your time on the vehicle itself, including any accidents. However, as we make clear in our booking conditions, this type of insurance is not always available or adequate in some countries.

We have done extensive research over the last year through insurance companies and brokers both here in the UK and in several different African countries, and unfortunately the situation is that there simply is not any passenger liability insurance cover available at all now for us to purchase in advance for most of North and West Africa. We do have coverage for South and East Africa in place. The main policy that used to provide cover for overland companies like us before Covid is simply not available any more. We will attempt to purchase insurance at each border we cross, and sometimes this is possible (albeit with a very low level of cover), but this will not be available everywhere. As a responsible operator we wanted to bring this to your attention before the trip starts.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE AND GOVERNMENT TRAVEL ADVICE**

As previously mentioned in our first email, the British Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) as well as governments of other countries aim to provide advice and security information for their citizens and this advice could affect your travel insurance policy. For example, if the FCDO is advising against ‘all or non essential travel’ to a particular country, your travel insurance may not cover you for travel through that country or a specific area of a country highlighted by the FCDO.

Please remember to check that your personal travel insurance is valid for travel through each and every country on the expedition.   Please also check the **cover will continue after you have been through any countries en route that currently have travel restrictions in place.**  We have been informed that some travel insurance companies will void a policy if you go against any of the British FCDO advice.

**Travel insurance that includes cover for areas the FCDO advises against travel to**

If you already have travel insurance and it doesn’t cover areas with travel advisories in place, SafetyWing’s Nomad Insurance can offer a policy for your time in each of them. As these areas can change at short notice, you can take out this cover during the trip, as and when needed. You will need to create an account on the [SafetyWing Nomad Insurance website](https://safetywing.com/nomad-insurance) and purchase a policy for a minimum of 5 days each time.

If you haven’t yet purchased a travel insurance policy for your trip, or wish to cancel and change your existing policy, you can also get cover through Safety Wing Insurance for the whole trip. This will prove more cost effective and a lot less hassle. Their insurance is specifically designed for long-stay travellers and digital nomads, so can work well (and be cost effective) for a trip like this, though the level of coverage (payout amounts) are not as high as other insurance providers. Again, you can arrange this online through their website. Please note that they do not include cover for cancellation, for example, if you incurred cancellation fees because you cancelled your trip due to illness. Please also note that if you wish to do White Water Rafting, Tandem Skydiving or Quad Biking, these are not covered. If you wish to do any of these activities and you have the Safety Wing insurance, you will need to find additional cover for them.

As always, and whichever insurance policy you take out, please read the policy carefully – it’s always a long read with a lot of small print but it’s important and your responsibility to know what you are covered for and that it will be adequate for the trip you are undertaking.

**More on Government Travel Advice**

It’s important to remember that the advice for the different countries and areas through which we operate trips is forever changing and we are constantly reviewing information as it comes to hand.  Additionally, our intended routes may change whilst on the road. Oasis Overland have been travelling through these areas for approximately 20 years and have gained a lot of experience and local knowledge. We have local contacts in many areas and others who travel these routes (which may be companies and/or individuals) readily share information. We are also able to contact the FCDO directly and have in the past met with them to pass on information of areas we have travelled through.

First and foremost, the safety of our clients and crew is paramount and we take it very seriously. Most of the areas mentioned have had travel advisories in place for many years and we have had no problems travelling through them, e.g. Angola Cabinda. Things can change and our local contacts on the ground can inform us should an area become unsafe to travel through, often more quickly than the FCDO. One of the advantages of travelling overland in our own expedition vehicle and being flexible is that we can change our itinerary on the rare occasions this is needed. When this is not possible, then the group would need to fly over at their own expense but this is extremely rare. It did however happen for Sudan this year. We amended our itinerary in northern Kenya and Ethiopia, and then flew to Cairo, leaving the truck behind. The Egypt section was then run with local transport – overnight trains, and coaches – and staying in hotels and guesthouses. This ran well and if necessary we will do the same on this trip.

Current areas on our route with levels of advice in place to note are:

[Nigeria](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nigeria)

The FCDO is advising against ‘all but essential’ travel to various areas of southern Nigeria. Our route may take us on a short transit (approximately 50km) through one or more of these. If you wish to fly over this section, there are flights from Benin to Cameroon where you can re-join the expedition vehicle.

[Cameroon](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cameroon)

The FCDO is advising ‘against all travel’ within 40km of the Nigerian border. We pick a border crossing with the shortest affected route and with the best situation on the ground at the time. If you wish to fly over this section, you will be able to do so from Lagos in Nigeria and re-join the expedition vehicle in Douala in Cameroon.

[Angola (Cabinda)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/angola)

The FCDO is advising against ‘all but essential travel’ to the province of Angola (Cabinda) which is a relatively short drive of one day between Congo and DRC.  If you wish to fly over this section, you will be able to do so from Pointe Noire or Brazzaville (depending on the route we take in Congo) to Luanda in Angola.

From Cape Town north to Cairo, the two areas of concern are parts of Ethiopia and then Sudan. As we will not be reaching these for over 7 months, we will update you closer to the time with information on the situation there, as we expect things to have changed by then.