

Hints & Tips for Visits to Angola

To be read in conjunction with [ALMA Guidelines for Visits](#)

These hints & tips have been developed from the experience of several visits to Angola from the UK, with thanks to those who have shared these visits and their suggestions.

Flights

Flights will often require a change as only BA fly direct from London to Luanda. I have flown Air France, BA, Iberia, KLM and TAP; other routes I'm aware of are also listed.

- **Air France** – Recommended. 2 x 23 kg luggage allowance. Great food. Easy to use web site. Good amount of leg room and seat design e.g. in-flight entertainment control where it doesn't get knocked. Was previously half TAP price if booked well in advance (but not in 2013). Travel via Paris – long walk at Charles de Gaulle airport.
- **BA** – Recommended. 2 x 23 kg luggage allowance. Good food. Easy to use web site. Shortest journey time, but direct flights arrive Luanda around 5am. Depending on day of travel one or both directions may end up as Iberia. Prices around £1200. If flying Iberia in both directions, it will probably be cheaper to book direct with Iberia.
- **Iberia** – Adequate. 2 x 23 kg luggage allowance. Seats not very comfortable for overnight flight. Price around £850+. Travel via Madrid – with interchange between terminals by transit. Food and drinks only included in price on Madrid to Luanda leg.
- **KLM** – Adequate. 2 x 23kg luggage allowance. Food ok but nothing exciting. Restricted leg room, and poor seat design e.g. in-flight entertainment control in seat arm gets knocked. Half TAP price if booked well in advance, otherwise similar to TAP. Travel via Amsterdam – short walk for connection at Schipol airport.
- **TAP** – Poor. 1 x 20kg luggage allowance. Food adequate but nothing exciting. Restricted leg room. Price around £900. Travel via Lisbon – short walk for connection unless you want restaurants and shops which are a long walk and need adequate time for entry and exit to Portugal.
- **Lufthansa** – Has been recommended to me but not tried yet. Travel via Frankfurt.
- **South African Airlines** – Long. Travel via Johannesburg.
- **Ethiopian Airlines** – Long. Used to be the cheapest route but price is now around £900. Travel via Addis Ababa – includes overnight in hotel provided by the airline.

Accommodation

Soleme Guest House in Luanda – Recommended. Family-run guest house in Maianga area, with colonial buildings and modern government offices. Oasis at top of city, main house surrounded by courtyard. Half the price of hotels. Popular with NGO's so there's normally interesting people to talk to. 15 minutes walk from the diocesan office. Avoid Room 6 next to the kitchen and bakery as it's too noisy.

Visa Applications

The key document which enables a visa application to be submitted is an official letter from the Department for Religious Affairs to the Angolan Embassy in London requesting them to issue a visa.

This letter can only be requested for you by the Diocese of Angola, which the ALMA Link Officer in Angola will arrange. The request must be submitted at least 2 months before the planned visit in order for you to be sure there will be sufficient time to obtain a visa.

You will need to send a scanned copy of your passport plus the names of both your parents to the ALMA Link Officer in Angola, as they need this data in order to submit the request to the Department of Religious Affairs.

Expect it to take 3 – 4 weeks to receive a scanned copy of the official letter.

Whilst you are waiting for the letter of invitation, you should ask via the ALMA Office for an “Employer’s Letter” to support your visa application. This letter will state you are travelling on behalf of the Diocese of London and will be issued by the Ven Rachel Treweek, who is Archdeacon of Hackney and Chair of the ALMA Strategy Group.

You will need to print both these letters when you get them. The rest of the process is a formality but you must still produce all required documents.

There is extensive information on the embassy web site; I have found the key points are ...

Applications can only be submitted on Mondays and Tuesdays between 9:30 and 11:30, and you will normally be able to collect 3 weeks later on Thursdays and Fridays between 9:30 and 11:30. To get to the front of the queue and minimise waiting time, you need to arrive at 8:30! Inside ask for visas and you be given a numbered ticket (there’s a separate queue for Angolan nationals documents). Just watch the number on the screen for your turn.

Application Form – Has to be completed online, then printed and signed. The submit button in the PDF document doesn’t do anything yet. When completing the form:

- Type of Visa – Select Ordinary
- Occupation – Put missionary or minister of religion (if appropriate)
- Position held – Put your role within the church e.g. Vicar, Curate, Licensed Lay Minister, ALMA Parish Representative, PCC member or Church member.
- Place of work – Name and address of parish
- Person Responsible - Rt Rev André Soares, Anglican Church in Angola, Trav D Antonio Saldanha N° 134, Av Lenin, Luanda
- Address of stay – If staying at the Soleme Guest House, the address is Residencial Soleme, Rua Kwamme N’krumah N° 1, Luanda
- Reason for visit – Visit to linked parish of

Invitation Letter – Scanned copy of letter from the Department for Religious Affairs

Employers’ Letter – Scanned copy of letter from the Archdeacon of Hackney

Travel itinerary – quote from web site is sufficient

Bank Statement – Doesn’t need to be a photocopy as you will get it straight back

Visa Fee - Receipt for visa fee from Barclays Bank (which must be paid in advance)

What to take

- Guide Book – Bradt Guide to Angola is the only one so far but is now a bit out of date
- Map of Angola & Luanda – will help you orientate yourself but is not essential.
- Torch with new batteries - as electricity supplies are not completely reliable.
- Liquid anti-bacterial gel or wet wipes – to clean hands from the dust and the residue of anything you’ve touched.
- Anti-malarial tablets – obtain via the nurse at your GP’s surgery or from [InterHealth](#)

- Roll-on mosquito repellent – can be obtained from [InterHealth](#)
- Mosquito net

Whilst you are there

- Water – Only drink from sealed bottles, and take a bottle when you go out.
- Photos – Be cautious about what and who you take photos of in Luanda. Avoid taking photos of government buildings (they are all painted pink). It's best to ask if you want to include people in your shot as some people don't like it and get angry.
- Meals – Be aware the basic food is funge, which is made by mixing powder from a grain with hot water; light-coloured semolina or maize funge is perfectly edible in small quantities, but do avoid the grey cassava funge which is very heavy
- Fruit & Salad – Bananas are great anywhere as they come ready wrapped! Be careful with other fruit and avoid salad unless you are sure it has been washed in distilled water.
- Teeth - Keep enough safe drinking water to clean your teeth at night.

Leaving

When booking flights, try to avoid leaving during the working day because traffic in Luanda is very heavy! Leaving the City Centre 3 hours before a late evening flight is recommended.

At the airport you will probably experience having to join more queues than you might expect, but have confidence the process does work!

After you have checked-in, it is possible to leave the passenger area and go to a restaurant with those who are accompanying you. Just walk back out through the route you entered the passenger area to re-join your friends. If you have any Angolan Kwanzas left, now is the time to either spend them or give them to whoever has accompanied you to the airport.

After refreshments / farewells, you can re-enter and continue through Security & Immigration.

After Immigration, you will be asked to declare to Customs what currency you are taking out of the country. Exporting Angolan Kwanzas is not allowed and they will be confiscated, so you need to be in a position to state you have no Kwanzas but do have e.g. US Dollars, Euros, UK Pounds.

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