

Karen Garden Cottage

Here is some information and advice to make your stay as enjoyable as possible. As part of the Airbnb community you are sharing our house, and we kindly ask you to treat it and our belongings with respect. In exchange, you have full use of the house for the duration of your stay.

On the same one acre plot there is also another rental unit we call The Banda and a main house further down the drive. Please respect the occupants of these properties too.

In alignment with our efforts to minimise our carbon footprint, please work with us to keep water and electricity usage sensibly low.

If necessary, you can contact us via WhatsApp on +254 722 755196.

Access

For arrivals, taxis or deliveries, the address is: Third Gate, marked 28R, Quarry Lane, off Bogani Road, Karen.

The gate operates from a remote control and is set to close automatically after 20 seconds. Please do not get caught in a closing gate. Pressing the remote repeatedly can confuse the system. Please be sure the gate is fully closed, especially after visitors have left and at night.

In the event of any failure, the caretaker can manually release the gate and call out the service technician. In extreme difficulty, you can ask the ground staff if you may use the next gate No. 28.

Water

Nairobi's water supply is erratic and it is advisable to be sparing with water usage. Water to the Cottage is supplied from two 500 litre tanks, which is ample for normal needs. The supply should be topped up from time to time from a switch on the adjacent Banda which powers a pumped supply from an underground tank near the gate. Please check there is water in this tank before pumping and do not leave the pump on for more than an hour or so. The caretaker should do this regularly for you.

Hot water is provided by means of an insulated electric immersion heater controlled from a timer switch in the kitchen. On arrival, **please switch this timer on, and again off on departure (the red light stays on all the time and a green light illuminates when the water is heating)**.

You may need to allow water to run for a few minutes in the bathroom shower before it runs hot. Kindly note the electric shower unit is not connected.

Laundry

Guests have access to the laundry room at the back of the Cottage where there is a washing machine, drying lines and an ironing board. Kindly note the washing machine temperature should be set to 30 or 40 degrees and not the default 60. The machine uses large amounts of water so please use it only when necessary and remember to top up the water tanks afterwards.

Electricity

Mains power in Kenya is notoriously unreliable and may cut off from time to time, usually for a few minutes but sometimes for hours. Voltage is usually 220-230v.

Familiarise yourself with the location of candles and other back-up lights just in case.

The wifi router is on an uninterruptible power back-up.

Wifi

Reasonable signal strength is available on most networks and a good broadband speed on the wifi.

The wifi password can be found on the back of the wall-mounted router on the veranda.

The wifi may occasionally slow down and it can help to reset the router by simply switching it off and on again.

The service is provided by Zuku and their customer service is on 0205 205 205. The account number is 89573 in the name of Steve Shelley.

Fireplace

The chimney does not draw well unless very dry wood is burned with a hot flame. If you need warmth, it may be more advisable to use charcoal in the 'jiko' provided.

Please do not use electric heaters without specific agreement with us since electricity costs can soar out of control and excessive use will be charged to your account.

Waste collection

Please put your waste into the dustbin outside, which will be emptied from time to time by the caretaker. It is collected on Thursdays.

Security

The compound is protected by an electric fence and remote controlled gates, and the Ultimate Security van usually parks nearby. You have the use of a portable 'panic button' alarm in case of emergency.

However, you must take personal responsibility for all aspects of your personal safety and security. In particular, please do not allow unknown people into the compound and be sure not to leave the gate open.

We do not advise walking or jogging alone. If you do go out on foot, do not carry any valuables. Avoid being drawn into random conversations: a number of common scams start with a friendly greeting or a plea for help, often from mature well-dressed ladies or men. Do not let unknown people approach you directly. Cross to the other side of the road rather than pass too closely to stopped or broken down vehicles. Be wary of motor cycles carrying passengers that swerve too close..

When driving, check the road is clear behind you before opening the gate. If a vehicle seems to be following you, continue down Quarry Lane to the junction with Kibo Lane. Turn left and simply go round the block.

Safety

This is Africa and we cannot guarantee safety standards in the way that is expected in Europe and America. We cannot take responsibility for any injury or loss however caused. You are responsible for your own safety and should exercise due care and attention. Be aware that there may be sharp edges, protruding nails, thorns, splinters and other hazards on floors, walls and in the garden.

Please note too that the surrounding vegetation can get very dry and that any open flame may present a fire risk.

No smoking

In consideration of both safety and future guests, smoking is not permitted inside the Cottage.

The garden and wildlife

You have the use of your own fenced and landscaped garden which is part of our wider plot on which we have planted more than 50 trees and many more shrubs, flowers and other specimen plants to create an entire ecosystem. This is part of our mission to offset greenhouse gas emissions and to help maintain biodiversity. As well as a great range of birds and butterflies, you may see chameleons, squirrels and monkeys and at night you will surely hear the hyraxes and bush babies.

Out and about

There are several good pubs, restaurants and shopping malls nearby. Taxis are readily available within a few minutes using hailing apps such as Uber and Bolt. If you are using an overseas phone, bear in mind the driver may wish to call you to confirm the pick up.

Shopping centres are located at The Waterfront (3km), Karen Crossroads (4km), The Hub (5km) and Galleria (7km). There is also a café and small supermarket at Hardy Shopping Centre (4km).

Recommended restaurants include:

- Karen Blixen Coffee Garden - bar and restaurant on Karen Road
- Open House Indian curry house in the Crossroads Centre
- Que Pasa pizzeria and bar in the Karen Shopping Centre
- Talisman on Ngong Road about 1km from the Karen roundabout towards Ngong
- Hemingways Hotel (3km) offers a particularly fine jazz brunch on Sundays
- Cultiva Farm in Pofu Road.

On Saturdays, the Farmers' Market at the KSPCA grounds on Langata Road is highly recommended for food, produce and crafts.

On departure

Please arrange in advance to hand over the keys and gate key fob, especially if you are leaving at unsocial hours.

Please wash all used utensils and leave to dry. Ensure the water heater is switched off, as well as all lights. Leave the fridge switched off with the door open. Also turn off the gas regulator. Place all waste in the dustbin outside.

Disclaimer

Our guests always enjoy their stay and we hope yours is as memorable. But please note that your visit here is fully at your own risk. The owners disclaim any responsibility for loss or injury however caused and you hereby absolve them from any claim whatsoever.

The owners cannot take any responsibility for the continuity of supply of water, electricity or internet, nor for any noise or disturbances.

Contacts

The owners travel frequently and your first call should be to the caretaker. But you are welcome to contact us directly at any time using WhatsApp or e-mail.

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