

A. Business Customs

Portuguese is the official language of Angola. Few Angolans speak English at a level appropriate for business transactions; competent interpreters are often necessary. Business cards are essential and developing personal relations will be extremely helpful.

B. Travel Advisory and Visa Requirements

Please consult the US Department of State's latest Consular Information Sheet on Angola and the Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>.

U.S. citizens are required to obtain visas before arriving. Be aware that visa approvals may take a few weeks or a few months. U.S. citizens are strongly advised to register with the US Embassy upon arrival. An American passport serves as proof of residence. Registering for the Warden system can be done at the American Consulate located at Rua Major Kanhagulo, 134/136. For further information, call 371645 or 371697 or email luandaconsular@yahoo.com. Travelers must also demonstrate proof of inoculation against yellow fever with a World Health Organization immunization card or face mandatory vaccination upon arrival. Vaccination at the airport may carry significant risk.

C. Travel Information

US State Department Travel: <http://travel.state.gov>

US Embassy in Luanda: <http://www.angola.usembassy.gov>

Angolan Embassy to the US: <http://www.angola.org>

D. Holidays

The official holidays in Angola are listed below. Dates may be subject to change depending on proximity to a weekend. The government has also been known to declare national holidays or celebrations with very short notice.

January 1: New Year' Day

February 4: Beginning of Armed Fighting Day

February or March: Carnival (Mardi Gras)*

April 4: Peace Day

April or May: Good Friday*

May 1: International Worker's Day

June 1: International Children's Day

August 1: Dia das Forças Armadas, Armed Forces Day

September 17: National (Hero's) Founder's Day

November 2: Memorial Day

November 11: Angolan Independence Day

December 25: Christmas Day

* Changes according to Easter

E. Transportation Infrastructure

1. Roadway Transportation:

Of the 72,000 kilometer of road, less than 20,000 is paved. Even those paved are frequently unusable due to downed bridges (at least 300 need to be replaced) and landmine infestation.

The general condition of all roads and related infrastructure is poor, even within the city limits of Luanda. Gasoline is available in most urban areas. Rental cars are available for hire in Luanda. Driving outside of metropolitan areas can be very dangerous, especially at night and when done alone. All travelers are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy.

Like American car rental agencies, Angolan rental agencies have price schedules that vary depending upon length of rental and class of car. Agencies rent cars ranging from small Daewoos to Nissan Minivans. Most prices include insurance. An international driver's license is not required but preferred.

2. Air Transportation:

Most air traffic to Angola arrives via the 4 de Fevereiro International Airport in Luanda. Air France, British Airways, TAP (Portugal), South African Airways, TAAG (the Angolan national airline) and a few regional carriers service Luanda. The Houston Express is a private charter service operated by U.S.-based World Airways for the national oil company's subsidiary, Sonair, and is available only to members of the U.S-Africa Energy Association. TAAG, Air Gemini and other smaller charter or air taxi companies provide domestic flights.

Airport departure taxes have been sporadically enforced in the past but are generally included in the price of the ticket. Crown Agents is now conducting customs work at the Luanda International Airport and enforcing Angolan customs laws. Revision and modernization of these laws and regulations is expected to begin in the near future.

3. Railway Transportation:

Little of the once extensive railway infrastructure currently functions due to destruction during the war. The rail link to the port of Luanda is not currently operational and service from Luanda is limited to Viana (35 kilometers). The Benguela railroad, which formerly ran 1,340 kilometers, currently runs only the 30 kilometers between Lobito and Benguela. Only the service between Namibe and Matala (320 kilometers) comes close to pre-war levels. Rehabilitating the lines is a priority for the government of Angola.

4. Marine Transportation:

International shipping can reach Angola via the ports of Luanda, Lobito and Namibe. No reliable, organized river-borne passenger transport companies operate in Angola today. Shipments bound for Angolan ports require a Certificado de Embarque, a Loading Certificate, to unload cargo upon arrival. It is the responsibility of the shipper to obtain the document before the cargo leaves port bound for Angola from the Conselho Nacional de Carregadores (CNC) representative at the port of origin. Most major shipping ports have a CNC representative from whom a Loading Certificate can be obtained. For more information, contact the Angolan Embassy in the U.S. or the U.S.-Angola Chamber of Commerce. Crown Agents is now working with the port to enforce Angolan customs regulations. With reportedly 95 percent of Angolan imports passing through the three ports, delays in loading and unloading, customs clearance, and movement of cargoes at port are common.

F. Languages

Portuguese is the official language of Angola, although some Angolans do not speak it. Native languages include Kimbundu (primarily in the northwest), Kikongo (primarily in the northeast) and Umbundu (primarily in the central and southern highlands). French is often spoken in the northern border regions with English occasionally spoken in communities near the Zambian border. Interpreters are often necessary because few Angolans speak English fluently.

G. Communications Facilities

Approximately 1 in every 1,000 Angolans has access to a personal computer at home or at work and according to a 2003 survey, approximately 25,000 people use the Internet in Angola. There are 20 licensed Internet service providers (ISPs) but only five currently operate in Angola: Ebonet (Pacom), NetAngola (Sistec), Multitel, SNET (NCR), and Mercury (Sonangol). Angolan Telecom (AT) is the former monopoly that has maintained its dominant position and close ties to the government. Unitel, established in 2001, has captured over half of the mobile market from AT. The GRA estimates that as of 2002, there were 75,000 fixed lines and 90,000 mobile customers, giving Angola one of the lowest teledensity rates in Africa. Both domestic and international telecommunications are difficult. Connections are frequently lost on both conventional landlines and cellular telephone lines. Most corporate offices and tourist class hotels have telephones and many have faxes. Many large corporations and humanitarian organizations also rely on high frequency radios for routine communication.

H. Lodging and Housing

Expatriate residents in Angola generally live in rehabilitated housing in urban centers or custom-built compounds outside of the city. The market for such housing is tight and expected to worsen. Prices are correspondingly high, with rents of \$5,000 to \$8,000 per month and higher being paid for the 1500-2000 square foot range. Power and water are generally available in Luanda but supply interruption is frequent. Many homes use generators during the frequent black outs. Water supplied to homes is not potable. Bottled drinking water or water purification systems are a necessity.

Short-term visitors to Angola most likely will stay in tourist-class hotels. Such facilities are becoming more common in Luanda but are still rare in the provinces. Tourist-class hotels are comfortable but expensive.

I. Health

Angola's national health facilities are far below western standards. Some private clinics in Luanda provide acceptable levels of care. See *add link to medical page here* for contact information. Full immunizations and the use of malaria prophylaxis is recommended while in Angola. Lariam/Mefloquine, Chloroquine and Doxycyline are commonly used malaria prophylaxis that must be taken starting prior to arrival in Luanda and continue briefly after returning home. The Angolan Government requires a yellow fever vaccination. Those who come without vaccination run the risk of vaccination at the airport in Luanda. Several other immunizations are recommended before entering the country including: Hepatitis A and B, polio, rabies, typhoid, tetanus and meningitis. Contact your physician for information regarding current vaccination suggestions.

Water quality in major urban areas is poor. Boiling water may be insufficient to guard against illness; the Embassy recommends only imported bottled water. Raw, unpeeled fruit should be avoided. WHO estimates HIV/AIDS infection rate of between 1.5 and 8 percent varying by province. Surveillance of tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases is insufficient to generate meaningful statistics but surveys of hospitals and clinics have shown infection rates to be climbing.

J. Food

Grocery stores in Luanda tend to be stocked with very few American goods. Most foodstuffs and other products are imported from Europe and South Africa. Luanda has some membership-only grocery stores in addition to a growing number of grocery stores that accept local and hard currency and do not require membership. Foodstuffs tend to be expensive and of limited variety although both price and selection are improving. Luanda offers a variety of restaurants. The most popular dishes are fresh seafood. Prices are typically higher than in the U.S.