



10 Day Best of Kenya & Tanzania Safari – Nairobi to Nairobi

Experience the highlights of East Africa on this 10-day camping safari through beautiful, wild Masailand and the plains of the Serengeti.

A varied and interesting camping tour encompassing a classic route through the Great Rift Valley and East Africa's most prominent national parks, including the Masai Mara, the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater. From mighty elephant to dung beetle there will be plenty to enjoy in this remarkable part of the world.

Tour Highlights: Great Rift Valley, Masai Mara National Reserve, Lake Nakuru National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, Olduvai Gorge, Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater

Meals: 9 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 6 Dinners

Accommodation: Small local hotels (tourist class standard) and camping on twin share basis. Most camps used have showers and washing facilities although please note running water may be in short supply at some times of the year. Hotels are small and locally owned with twin share rooms, bar/ restaurant.

Tour Includes: Tour highlights, road tolls & taxes, transport, accommodation, camping equipment, park fees, meals as indicated & services of guide/driver

Tour Excludes: Visas, travel insurance, flights, airport transfers, sleeping bag & pillow, optional activities, drinks, laundry, meals not mentioned in itinerary, gratuities, drinks & items of a personal nature.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Great Rift Valley, Masai Mara National Reserve (L / D)

We depart Nairobi this morning for the Masai Mara. En route, we travel across the Great Rift Valley, descending the steep eastern escarpment wall (fantastic views over the valley below) and cross the Valley floor to the rolling hills of Masailand and the provincial centre of Narok. Road conditions can be difficult as we continue to the west, driving past the Loita Hills and into the Masai Mara area passing the occasional Maasai manyatta (traditional village) as we go. As we approach the Reserve we may see grazing animals to the side of the road. Eventually we reach the park gate and turning off just before entering the Reserve we arrive at our camp. We should have time to unpack and unwind before our first game drive into the park (or optionally, a visit to one of the local Maasai manyattas). Finally we return to camp for dinner and overnight.

Day 2: Masai Mara National Reserve (B / L / D)

We spend the whole day in and around the Masai Mara. There is usually time for two game drives (morning and afternoon) with time to relax at camp in middle of the day, when most wildlife is less active. The landscape in the Reserve accords with many people's idea of 'classic' Africa, with its rolling grasslands, open vistas, distant horizons, and herds of zebra, antelope, giraffe and other large mammals. The 'Big Five' (elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion and leopard) are all found here and we would hope to see at least some of these. If you are travelling between June and October you are seeing the park at its peak and may see one of nature's most inspiring spectacles: the annual migration of thousands of grazing animals (mainly wildebeest and zebra) as they move from the dry southern Serengeti in the south north in search of the fresher greener grasses of the 'Mara'. The number and concentration of grazers attracts predators (lion, leopard, hyena amongst others) hoping for some

'easy pickings'. This is an inspiring sight but the precise time varies slightly from year to year and such is the wealth of the wildlife, the 'Mara' is worth visiting at any time of year, and the day we have here provides an interesting insight into the park's wildlife.

Day 3: Lake Nakuru National Park (B / L / D)

We leave the grasslands of the Mara, drive back past the Loita Hills, through Narok and across the Rift Valley before turning north along the Rift Valley to Lake Nakuru. Although small by African standards Lake Nakuru National Park is a real jewel in Kenya's crown of game reserves. The shallow (alkali) lake dominates the park and is one of a string of such lakes in the Rift Valley. From a game viewing point of view, the lake acts as a magnet for birdlife. The alkali waters of the lake make a perfect habitat for the blue-green algae upon which flamingos feed and at times the birds gather in such numbers that they form a pink 'fringe' to the lake shore. Our game driving encircles the lake giving ample opportunity to view the birds - not only flamingos, the park contains pelicans, storks, ibis, kingfishers, jacanas, rollers, the beautiful glossy starling and many other bird species - as well as the larger game: buffalo, rhino, zebra, impala, baboon, colobus monkey, and the rare Rothschild giraffe. More difficult to spot but nevertheless present are leopard (normally nocturnal) and lion. After game viewing we leave the park and make our way to nearby Lake Elementeita for dinner /overnight (on some departures we may make use of small tourist class hotel instead).

Day 4: Nairobi (B)

After breakfast we leave Nakuru and drive over the eastern Rift Valley escarpment and return to Nairobi, normally arriving late morning. Say goodbye to your Kenyan 'crew' here as the next section of the trip is by shuttle bus service to Arusha and you will have new tour guides in Tanzania. In the meantime you have the afternoon at leisure in Nairobi. Check into our centrally located hotel, before deciding what to do. Relax by the pool or hire a taxi (or walk) into the city. The City Market is nearby - well worth a visit, either to bargain for souvenirs or simply wander and browse. Nairobi also has numerous coffee shops and craft shops and one or two very good bookshops. As in any large city, care must be taken with personal security but Nairobi has a variety of very reasonably priced restaurants if you wish to venture out for the evening, but as when travelling in any foreign country care must be taken when trying local foods especially salads, drinks and uncooked foods.

Day 5: Moshi (B)

An early start as we travel by scheduled shuttle bus to Moshi via Arusha. You will be collected between 07h15 and 07h30. The Shuttle crosses the Athi Plain and makes its way through 'Masai-land' to the busy border crossing point at Namanga. Once formalities are complete we continue to Arusha where there may be a change of vehicle for the final stretch (approx 90 minutes) to Moshi and your hotel for the evening. Once checked in, there is time to relax. Moshi is not a large city and our usual recommendation is to eat at your hotel which has very reasonable meals and a comfortable garden bar area.

Day 6: Lake Manyara National Park (B / L / D)

We depart Moshi and pass through Arusha and across the Rift Valley to the first of three magnificent national parks. We set up camp in the village of Mto Wa Mbu (sometimes called 'Mosquito Creek'), located just outside the national park at the foot of the Rift's western escarpment. 'Mto' has a host of souvenir and craft stalls within walking distance of the campsite, but our main focus is the nearby Lake Manyara National Park and we spend the afternoon in the area game driving. The park is dominated by its soda lake and is known for its birdlife. However there are also larger game here, including lion and hippo - an interesting and exciting introduction to Tanzania's wealth of wildlife. We return to the campsite this evening for dinner.

Days 7 & 8: Olduvai Gorge, Serengeti National Park (B / L / D)

We leave 'Mto' and ascend the escarpment - ask your driver to stop for the spectacular view over Lake Manyara and the Rift Valley. Noticeably cooler at the top we pass through the fertile Tanzanian highlands and enter the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Once inside the National Park we make our way around the rim of the crater and descend to the Serengeti and briefly visit the famous Olduvai Gorge - the site of archaeological digs of pre historic man. We finally enter the Serengeti itself where we shall spend the next two nights. The park's wide horizons and open plains provide perhaps the most evocative images of Africa. The name 'Serengeti' derives from the Masai 'Siringitu' - 'the place

where land moves on forever'. By day we game drive around the flat rift valley floor, following our experienced guide's intuition and knowledge of recent sightings. Between June and October there may be the chance to see wildebeest and other grazers moving in their thousands across the valley floor to the greener pastures in the north. 'The migration' as it is called, is a phenomenal spectacle and attracts many predators including lion, leopard and hyena that prey on their young when they calve later in the year. While in the Serengeti, we camp in official campsites but wildlife - including lion, elephant, hyena - may roam through our camp at night - an unforgettable experience!

Day 9: Ngorongoro Crater (B / L)

From the wide expanses of the Serengeti, we return to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and ascend the outer wall of the crater. The Ngorongoro is a World Heritage Site with a biosphere of concentrated fauna and flora second to none. The view from the rim is definitely 'photo material' and after stopping to admire the fantastic scenery below, we descend the steep access road onto the crater floor for an afternoon game viewing. Most of the major mammals can be found here and we hope to view lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo, gazelle, wildebeest and zebra, as well as a variety of birdlife, attracted by the crater's soda lake. As the afternoon draws to a close, we drive back up the wall for our last night at camp.

Day 10: Nairobi (B)

We journey back across the Rift Valley to Arusha in time to catch the afternoon shuttle to Nairobi. Our normal time of arrival back in Kenya's capital is early evening (traffic permitting) where arrangements end.