



7 Day Kenya Wildlife Safari – Nairobi to Nairobi

A 7-day safari taking you from remote and dramatic Samburu to the lakes of the Great Rift Valley and the world famous Masai Mara. Journey across plains teeming with big game, enjoy the welcomes of the Maasai people, marvel at the birdlife of the Rift valley Lakes and perhaps come face-to-face with the comical rare long-necked gerenuk!

Tour Highlights: Samburu National Reserve, Great Rift Valley, Lake Baringo, Lake Bogoria National Reserve, Lake Nakuru National Park, Masai Mara National Reserve

Group Size: Minimum 2

Meals: 6 Breakfasts, 6 Lunches, 6 Dinners

Accommodation: Camping in the Masai Mara is in twin share permanent tents with beds and bedding provided. In Samburu, the most remote area we visit, campsite facilities are very 'basic', especially in regard to running water (which can be very short supply at times); at Baringo we stay in tourist class hotel selected for cleanliness and security, at Nakuru we camp at the nearby Lake Elementeita. Please do not expect western standard of camping facilities.

Tour Includes: Tour highlights, transport, accommodation, bed and bedding, camping equipment, park fees, meals as indicated, services of an English speaking guide/driver

Tour Excludes: Visas, travel insurance, flights, airport transfers, optional activities, laundry, gratuities to guide and camp crew, passport & visa fees, drinks & items of a personal nature.

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Days 1 & 2: Samburu National Reserve (Bx1 / Lx2 / Dx2)

We leave Nairobi and journey north, passing the iconic, snow-capped Mt Kenya en route. We pass through wheat and dairy farmlands before the landscape begins to change and we enter the semi-arid Northern Frontier District, homeland to the Samburu people, pass through the town of Isiolo to the Samburu National Reserve.

Our campsite is set up near the Ewaso Nyiro river (sometimes written as Uaso Ngiro, 'dark waters'), a simple camp setting with basic facilities. Depending on road conditions we arrive in the early afternoon, perhaps in time for a siesta during the heat of the day. Later in the day we will take our first game drive in this (normally) arid but beautiful national reserve. Catching sight of your first lion - or elephant - in the wild is an exciting experience but Samburu also contains rare and endemic species such as the reticulated giraffe, 'Grevy's' zebra, the Beisa oryx, the Somali ostrich and the gerenuk as well as, antelope, and a variety of birdlife. By the time the sun edges toward the horizon most of the group will be looking forward to dinner and we return to camp for the evening and overnight.

The following day is spent in the Reserve. We usually divide the day into morning and afternoon gamedrives (wildlife is normally more active at these times) with a rest during the heart of the middle day.

Day 3: Great Rift Valley, Lake Baringo (Bx1 / Lx1 / Dx1)

This morning we return south, passing back through Isiolo and around the 'shoulder' of Mt Kenya, before turning off to Thompson Falls and the Great Rift Valley. Lake Baringo is one of two freshwater lakes in the Rift Valley and is home to crocodile, hippo and over 400 species of birds. The lake is also well stocked with fish, so much so that the local people - the Njemps - say the crocodiles are so well fed (on fish) that they have forgotten the taste of mammal flesh! We have the afternoon here and the option of hiring a boat for a cruise on the lake (see below for costs) to view some of the wildlife. Alternatively enjoy a guided nature walk around the lake shore. The evening is spent at our tourist class hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 4: Lake Bogoria National Reserve & Lake Nakuru National Park (Bx1 / Lx1 / Dx1)

This morning drive the short distance to Lake Bogoria National Reserve. This is a relatively small and shallow alkaline lake in the northern Rift. The eastern shore abuts the Rift Valley escarpment and in various places there are hot springs - remnants of the volcanic activity that formed the Great Rift Valley millennia ago. Regrettably the springs are too hot for swimming but they and the lake do attract water-birds such as flamingos, cormorants, pelicans and kingfishers. Bogoria is one of Kenya's lesser known (and less visited) parks, but is well worth effort and the time involved to get there.

Leaving Bogoria we travel further down the Rift Valley to the town of Nakuru and Kenya's most well known lake dominated gamepark: Lake Nakuru National Park. The shallow alkaline lake acts as a magnet for birdlife, being the perfect habitat for the algae on which flamingos (in particular) feed. At times these birds gather in such numbers that they form a pink 'fringe' around the lake shore. Our game drive encircles the lake giving ample opportunity to view the birds - not only flamingos, there are usually good numbers of pelicans, storks, ibis, kingfishers, jacanas, rollers, the beautiful glossy starling - as well as the larger game such as rhino, buffalo, zebra, impala, baboon, colobus monkey, and the rare Rothschild giraffe. More difficult to see but present nevertheless are the more elusive leopard and lion. Finally, we make our way out of the park to the nearby Lake Elementeita to our camp for dinner and overnight.

Days 5 & 6: Masai Mara National Reserve (Bx2 / Lx2 / Dx2)

We rise early for our drive to the Masai Mara. This is a long (ish) drive crossing the Rift Valley, passing through undulating grasslands to the town of Narok, and then continuing past the remote and windy Loita Hills in Kenya's remote south-west. As we approach the Reserve we may begin to notice wildlife to either side of the road even though we are still well outside the park boundaries. Road conditions are not always good and particular prone to disturbance after the rains but eventually we arrive at camp. After unpacking and - depending on time of arrival - lunch and a short rest we venture out into Kenya's best known wildlife reserve.

We spend the next two days in and around the Masai Mara. There is usually time for two game drives/ day (morning and afternoon) with time to relax at camp in middle of the day (when wildlife is usually less active). The landscape in the 'Mara' accords with many people's idea of 'classic' Africa, rolling grasslands, open vistas, distant horizons, with zebra, antelope, giraffe, wildebeest and other large mammals grazing the open plains. The 'Big Five' (elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion and leopard) are all found here and we would hope to see at least some of these over the two days we are in the area.

If you are travelling between June and October, you may see the park at its peak with one of nature's most inspiring spectacles: the annual migration of grazing animals from the dry southern Serengeti plains (in the south) north in search of the fresher greener grasses of the 'Mara'. The number and concentration of grazing animals attracts predators (lion, leopard, amongst others) hoping for some 'easy pickings', followed by nature's 'scavengers' (particularly hyena and vultures). However the precise time of the migration varies from year to year and it is not always possible to be in the Mara at that time. But such is the natural wealth of the area that the 'Mara' is worth visiting at any time of year, and the two days we have here provides a short but worthwhile insight into this marvellous Reserve.

The Masai Mara area is also the traditional homeland for the Masai people. In colonial times the Masai were a highly warlike tribe and in many ways is still the tribe that - at least outwardly - resists the influx of western culture, as can be seen in their distinctive dress and way of life which sets them apart from other Kenyan peoples. In recent years however the Maasai have become reconciled to the growth of tourism and indeed learned to benefit from it. The Masai Mara reserve is largely subject to

their control and administration and (on a smaller scale) with time permitting it may be possible to arrange a (optional) visit to one of the Maasai manyattas (villages) to gain an insight into their traditional way of life. If you are interested please speak to your guide who would be pleased to arrange it.

Day 7: Nairobi (Bx1)

After breakfast we drive out of Nakuru, climb out of the Rift Valley over the eastern escarpment and back to Nairobi, where we arrive in the early /mid afternoon and end of our tour.