

A PRIVATE GUIDE FOR OUR GUESTS

Kenya — Where the Safari Was Born

Everything to know before you travel: the land, its story, the Maasai Mara, and how best to prepare for a journey of quiet luxury.

THE LAND

A Geography of *Extremes*

Kenya sits astride the Equator on Africa's eastern seaboard, a country of striking contrasts compressed into a single itinerary. The Great Rift Valley cleaves the highlands in two, its escarpments framing soda lakes, volcanic craters and the freshwater expanse of Lake Naivasha.

To the west, the land rises toward the Maasai Mara and the Mau forests; to the east, it falls through savannah and semi-desert toward a 500-kilometre Indian Ocean coastline of coral reef and white sand. At its centre stands Mount Kenya, Africa's second-highest peak, its glaciers a rarity so near the Equator. Nairobi, the capital, is one of the very few cities in the world with a national park — home to rhino, lion and giraffe — within sight of its skyline.

42+

ETHNIC
COMMUNITIES

8

NATIONAL PARKS
& RESERVES

1,500m

AVG. MARA
ALTITUDE

A BRIEF HISTORY

A Story *Older* Than Nations

Some of humanity's oldest fossil evidence has been found in Kenya's Rift Valley, a region often described as the cradle of mankind. For millennia it has been home to the Maasai, Samburu, Kikuyu, Luo, Swahili and dozens of other peoples, each with distinct language and tradition.

Arab and Persian traders shaped the coast from the first millennium onward, building the Swahili city-states of Lamu and Mombasa. Britain declared Kenya a colony in 1920; independence followed in 1963 under founding president Jomo Kenyatta. Today Kenya is East Africa's most established safari destination — the very place where the concept of the photographic safari, and much of the language we use to describe it, first took hold in the early twentieth century.

THE RESERVE

The *Maasai Mara* National Reserve

Named for the Maasai people who still graze cattle along its boundaries, the Mara is the northern extension of Tanzania's Serengeti — together forming one continuous ecosystem of some 30,000 square kilometres. Its open, short-grass plains make it arguably the finest big-cat viewing in Africa, with an exceptional density of lion, leopard and cheetah.

The reserve is bordered by a constellation of private conservancies — Mara North, Naboisho, Olare Motorogi and others — where guest numbers are strictly limited and off-road, night driving and walking safaris remain possible. This is where SafariExperts places most of our guests: fewer vehicles, closer access, and a wilder, more personal experience of the Mara.

- ♦ Highest lion density of any East African reserve
- ♦ Year-round resident wildlife, independent of the migration

- ♦ Hot-air balloon safaris at dawn over the plains
- ♦ Authentic Maasai cultural visits by arrangement



GRANT'S ZEBRA ·
MAASAI MARA

When to Travel & the Great Migration

Kenya is a year-round destination, but timing shapes the experience considerably. Below: what each season brings to the Mara, including the Great Migration — the annual circuit of roughly two million wildebeest and zebra between the Serengeti and the Mara.

MONTHS	SEASON	HIGHLIGHTS & MIGRATION
Jan – Feb	Short dry spell	Herds calving on the Serengeti's southern plains, well south of the Mara. Excellent Mara game viewing, warm and dry, thinner crowds.
Mar – May	Long rains, low season	Migration remains in the southern/western Serengeti. Lush, quiet landscapes and the best rates of the year; some camps close in April.
June	Onset of dry season	Herds move north through the western Serengeti corridor, building toward the Mara.
Jul – Aug	Peak / high season	Herds arrive in the Mara. Dramatic Mara River crossings begin, most frequent from mid-August. Skies clear, game concentrated at waterholes.
Sep – early Oct	Peak / high season	Height of the migration within the Mara ecosystem; most reliable window for river crossings, herds moving between reserve and conservancies.
Late Oct – Nov	Short rains	Herds begin the return south; landscapes green again. Good value, fewer vehicles, migration sightings still possible into early November.
December	Short dry spell	Herds continuing south toward the Serengeti. Festive season demand lifts rates; excellent resident wildlife throughout.

Migration timing follows rainfall, not the calendar, and shifts by several weeks year to year — we track conditions closely and advise on the best window as your dates approach.

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL

High Season, in Brief

July–October is high season — the finest balance of dry weather and migration spectacle; book six to twelve months ahead. Late December–February is similarly reliable with fewer visitors.

March–May and November offer a quieter Mara at excellent value.

GETTING THERE

Entry & Documents

- ♦ All visitors need an approved **Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA)** before departure — apply via the official portal at least two weeks out.
- ♦ Passport valid 6 months beyond travel, with two blank pages.
- ♦ Yellow fever proof not required arriving direct from the US/Europe; required if transiting 12+ hours through an at-risk country.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Medical Precautions

- ♦ Book a travel health consultation 4–6 weeks ahead to confirm vaccinations and malaria prevention for your route.
- ♦ Yellow fever vaccination is commonly recommended for the Mara even where not mandatory — your physician can advise.
- ♦ Antimalarials are advised for the Mara and Naivasha; carry repellent and use the mosquito net provided at camp.
- ♦ Bring personal medication in original packaging, with a physician's letter for anything injectable.

PEACE OF MIND

Travel Insurance

- ♦ **Comprehensive travel insurance is essential** and should be arranged as soon as your safari is confirmed.
- ♦ Cover should include **emergency medical treatment and air evacuation** — light-aircraft transfers between camps make this the single most important line item; many camps require proof of it.
- ♦ **Trip cancellation, curtailment and delay** cover, given the value of a bespoke, pre-paid itinerary.
- ♦ Cover for **personal effects** — cameras and optics — with a "single item" limit sufficient for your equipment.
- ♦ If a balloon safari, walking safari or light aircraft transfer is included, confirm your policy covers it. We are glad to recommend specialist providers on request.

PREPARING TO TRAVEL

What to Pack — EU & US Perspective

- ♦ Neutral-toned layers for game drives, plus a warm layer for cool mornings and evenings — and something smart-casual for dinner.
- ♦ Wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, high-factor sun protection, and comfortable closed walking shoes.
- ♦ Binoculars and camera gear, with a compact power bank; UK/Kenya three-pin adaptor (Type G), 220–240V.
- ♦ A soft-sided duffel, not a hard suitcase — light-aircraft transfers hold strict weight limits (typically 15kg).
- ♦ US dollars in small, post-2013 notes for tips; cards are rarely usable in the bush.
- ♦ Printed and digital copies of your eTA, passport, insurance certificate and itinerary.