

## **Where is Kenya?**

Kenya is located on the Eastern side of the African continent. It is bordered by Uganda on the west, the Sudan and Ethiopia to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east. It straddles the Equator and is roughly a nine hour flight from London.

## **Can I travel alone?**

We would suggest that you don't. Kenya, while a heavily trafficked country with millions of tourists every year, is still a third world country. The roads are bad and dangerous, the police might not always be there to help you and the culture is nothing like you are used to. We suggest that you go with a group or guide, someone who has your safety in mind. Sure, you can walk around Nairobi for the afternoon alone or go to Mombasa alone, but we would highly recommend that you not rent a car by yourself and take off into the bush on your own "wild safari." Obviously the same goes for hitch hiking. It might be a warm climate and seem friendly enough but, in the end, you are in a very very foreign land and one that does not have the basic security of a first world country.

## **How to I get around once there?**

There are quite a few options available to you, everything from hiking around with a pack on your back to going on a luxury tented safari. It depends on your budget and your thirst for adventure. You can stay in a hotel for as little as ten dollars a night or spend up to a thousand. There are hotels that could be just about anywhere in the world and there are wonderful and unique camps. There are privately owned ranches that take in guests and there are do it yourself camping outfitters. For transportation there are taxis and buses. There are also "matatus," a sort of local mini van. These are cheap, but we personally would rather walk. It's safer!

## **Is there a place to change money at the airport?**

Yes, but it is not the best rate. The best rate you will probably get will be in Nairobi at the central bank. It does not matter if your doing small amounts but if your thinking about bringing in major cash the best bet is to go for the best rate. It will add up. Also consider keeping the very smallest amounts of cash on you at all times. It is a third world country after all. Your mere \$20 is a couple days wages

## **When is the best time to go?**

There are two rainy seasons that you should probably avoid to make the most of the good weather in Kenya. The short rains are in November and the long rains start at the end of March and go through to the end of May. Although, having said that, we will add that its not really that big a deal, people are used to it and manage to carry on rain or no, and sliding around in a Land Rover in and out of the mud can actually be a lot of fun. August and October are just about the best times but to see the wildebeest migration in the Maasai Mara you will want to come around the end of July through September.

## **When is the rainy season?**

The long rainy season is from March to May which brings heavy downpours at times during the day. The Short rainy season is from October to December and is only called "short" because of the duration not the amount of rain.

Even though they are called the rainy season, there are still wonderful sunny days during that time. It might open up a huge downpour while you zip around in your LandCruiser, but other than that you will be fine.

There also might be some discounts on air and hotel in those seasons.

## **Bugs?**

Yes and no. There are insects of all varieties in Kenya and of course there are mosquitoes, mostly on the Coast however, but nothing worse then you have seen anywhere else. In fact the twilight hour in the Adirondacks is far more apt to send you running for cover than anything you will encounter in Kenya. If the sight of a gecko sends you flying though, maybe a trip to Kenya is best avoided. Probably the worst thing is the moisture seeking flies in the very dry areas of Kenya. They are very annoying, but then again most people never get to those remote places and so you are very unlikely to encounter them. You will not however, walk into huge swarms of killer bees or step across acres of crunching bugs under your feet. Snakes do exist of course, but are rarely seen. By anyone. This is, after all, not the set of Indiana Jones.

## **Why should I go to Kenya?**

Believe it or not hundreds of thousands of people travel to Kenya every year just to see the animals. There are lions, leopards, elephants, cape buffalo, rhino, giraffe, gazelle and wart hogs , just to name a few, that are alive and well and walking around in the game parks. Although you can no longer kill them (thank God) you can get mighty close to them to either photograph or just enjoy

watching them go about doing whatever it is they do. There is also a huge variety of bird life. To add to all that, the land itself is some of the most gorgeous on the planet and extremely varied. There are mountains, deserts, savanna's, rivers, oceans and forests. The air is clean, the scenery fantastic and the joys of getting that close to both Nature the place where man was born is hard to describe. Just being there seems to do something to many a visitors soul. A night spent under canvas in Kenya is said to cure a host of problems known to mankind.

### **Can you tell me about my passport and visa requirements ?**

International visitors require a valid passport together with onward travel documents. All passport holders should verify with their relevant consulate concerning visa entry requirements. If you are extending your journey to other countries, please establish entry requirements for those countries as well. Please ensure that you have all the necessary visas prior to departure (unless available on entry) as we cannot be held liable for any errors on your side.

### **So what do you suggest?**

We have covered all of Kenya in many different ways and when all is said and done we have to say that we find sleeping under canvas, listening to the sounds of the African night as we fall asleep, the absolute best. To hear the lions roaring at night and to sit around a camp fire, is, to us anyway, utter bliss. And it doesn't have to be the most expensive option

### **Do you have any safety tips for me?**

It's sensible to take the same precautions in major cities as you would in any of the world's metropolitan areas. Never leave luggage unattended in front of the hotel or in the lobby. Deposit your valuables in the hotel's safety deposit box. Don't stroll around the streets after dark. Always lock your car doors and keep the windows closed. Do not walk around the city looking like a tourist and keep your camera concealed. Do not walk around with large amounts of cash and with cameras around your neck.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Geography

Kenya lies on the equator and shares common borders with Tanzania and Uganda, which make up the region of "East Africa". Kenya is roughly the size of Texas or Spain.

#### People & Language

There are 52 tribes in Kenya, each with their own tribal language though most people in the country speak Kiswahili as well as their own tribal language. English is the commercial language, therefore is commonly spoken in the major towns and at all lodges and hotels.

#### Climate

Kenya is on the equator therefore we do not have seasons. The climate is very pleasant and variations in altitude and terrain can create contrasts. Generally in the Highlands the climate is cool, elsewhere the temperatures can reach approximately 35°C during the day. The coast is humid and balmy.

Over most of the country there are two rainy seasons:

- ☐ the 'Short' rains which occur from late October through November
- ☐ the 'Long' rains which occur from late March to early June.

It is possible to visit Kenya during the rainy season, few roads are affected, the parks are fresh and green and there are fewer people and vehicles. Rain usually falls in the late afternoon preceded by bright, sunny and fresh days. July and August are the coolest months and are often overcast especially in the morning.

December – Mid March is the warmest time of the year.

#### Passport / Visa

A valid passport is required. Visitors require a visa to enter Kenya. If you have any queries please contact your nearest Kenyan Consulate or your travel agent. Visas can be obtained on arrival at the airport.

#### Health Precautions

Kenya is considered a generally healthy place to travel. Cheli & Peacock clients automatically become members of the Flying Doctors Rescue Service for emergency evacuation. However, you should carry your own complete holiday/medical insurance. Malaria, protection is imperative. There are no mandatory inoculations required for Kenya but clients should contact their doctor or a specialised travel clinic for further advice. As with travel in any part of the world, it is advisable to know your blood type in case of an emergency.

Please note that in Kenya, we do have good medical facilities and good hospitals, all of which are private.

#### Insurance

Comprehensive medical insurance is mandatory for safari participation. There is no national welfare scheme and visitors to Kenya are responsible for their own medical expenses. We insist on our clients being covered by the Flying Doctors' Service (further information available in this manual). All clients are requested to leave a copy of their travel insurance with us at their briefing, along with copies of their airline tickets and passports.

#### Food & Water

Although tap water can be reasonably safe, whenever possible, we recommend you drink bottled water; this is available in all lodges and camps.

Meals include full English breakfasts and / or continental breakfasts with fresh local fruits; lunches are either buffet or picnic lunches, and dinners are generally table d'hôte.

#### Photography

Visitors should respect the attitude of the local people towards photography and only use cameras if they have permission by "the models" to do so. Never try to "steal" a photo against the will of the person concerned. Let your guide help negotiate terms before you start shooting! It is a good rule never to take photographs of border posts, persons in uniform, at airports and of course military installations.

#### Money & Exchange

The monetary unit is the Kenyan Shilling. There is no limit to the amount of currency or traveller's cheques that a client may bring into the country. Traveller's cheques are also recommended; please always carry your passports when you would like to change them. Most of the hotels, lodges and shops in Kenya will take the major credit cards. Reverting your Kenyan shillings into hard currency is easily done at the airport, hotels and banks. As there is no longer "exchange control" the rate of exchange varies between banks, foreign exchange bureau and hotels. It is recommended that visitors DO NOT change money on the black market as they are more likely to receive a lower rate of exchange or fake notes.

It is illegal to destroy Kenyan currency.

### **Voltage**

Voltage is 220-240 A.C. Most of the safari vehicles have a cigarette lighter socket operation on a 12-volt system. Please bring sufficient batteries for photographic equipment, many lodges have limited power supply, but all are capable of re-charging your electrical goods for you. **Please also bring adapter plugs (square pin, English standard).**

### **Theft**

The first thing most visitors notice is that Kenyan's as a whole are extremely friendly, helpful people. Much of Kenya's population is extremely poor though so take good care of your valuables, especially money and travellers cheques. In the lodges NEVER leave money and travellers cheques in your room. We CANNOT accept responsibility for them and all hotels and lodges have a security box for valuables and lock-up rooms for excess luggage storage. Nairobi is a large city with its fair share of pickpockets and confidence tricksters. During the day do not walk around with flashy jewellery or an open purse. Do not walk around at night; always take a taxi.

### **Communications**

Most lodges do have a mobile phone signal (Safaricom and / or Celtel) in the lodge or nearby (under a tree or on a hill) which can be weak, so please do not always rely on it. Most lodges and hotels also have limited and very slow internet access in case of emergencies. The outside world is of very little interest or consequence to us on safari.

### **On Safari**

When you are out on safari our schedule is completely flexible. Our staff and vehicles are there exclusively for your safari. You are able to spend the day exactly as you wish but we do recommend what we feel would be best. The best times for viewing animals are in the cool hours of the early morning and late afternoon. Our usual routine will be to rise early to a cup of tea or coffee before leaving camp. You will then either return for breakfast or have a 'bush breakfast' and return to your 'home' just before or in the heat of the day. Our guests usually have lunch in camp unless they are out for a full day's game drive, when they will have a picnic lunch. If you have stayed in camp, you are then able to go out again after tea in the afternoon. Your guide will be with you to plan your day, tell you about Kenya, our history, traditions, the area you are visiting, what you see; he will take you to the loveliest places; he will look after any formalities or negotiations with the local people, and take care of your safety and comfort.

All our guides speak English, their tribal language and Kiswahili, the common language in Kenya; they are all proficient in bush craft, and can tell you about the animals, identify the birds and help you learn more about the world around you.

### **Vehicle**

Your vehicle will be a specially equipped 4WD-safari vehicle, not a 'pop-top' minivan. Our vehicles are all comfortable, excellent for game viewing, equipped with VHF radio and are prepared for any eventuality.

### **Luggage**

Please ensure that baggage is packed in soft bags and should weigh no more than 15 kg (33 lbs.) per person. It is possible to store luggage not required during the safari either at your hotel if you are returning there after your trip or with us at our offices. Most lodges have laundry facilities. Please see our recommended packing list.

78

## **INFORMATION ON NAIROBI**

### **National Museums of Kenya Open (9.30 am – 6.00 pm)**

The National Museums of Kenya, Museum Hill, Westlands was founded by the East African Natural History Society (E.A.N.H.S) in 1910 and the Society's main goal was to have a critical scientific examination of the natural attributes of the East African habitat. It has, throughout the years, grown into an institution of both regional and international importance. The museum has become a leading centre of excellence, housing the finest museum collections and exhibits in the world.

As a custodian of the country's national and cultural heritage, the principal mission of the National Museums of Kenya is to *"collect, document, preserve and enhance knowledge, appreciation, management and use of these resources for the benefit of Kenya and the World."*

### **Karen Blixen Museum Open (9.30am – 6.00pm)**

*"I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills..."*

The Karen Blixen Museum is about 30 minutes outside of Nairobi and for those lovers of "Out of Africa" the museum will help take you back in time to breathe the spirit of the writer and the lives she immortalized. The Museum, originally built in 1912, was the home of the Danish author Baroness Karen Blixen and in 1986 it was converted into one of the National Museums of Kenya.

### **The Nairobi Snake Park Open (9.30am- 6.00pm)**

The Nairobi snake park is not a snake park per se, in actual sense it is a reptile park as it displays the representatives from all the members of the reptile group. A visit to the National Museum is not complete without making a visit to the snake park situated in the same grounds.

**The Giraffe Centre Open (9.00am – 5.30pm)**

Situated just outside of Nairobi, this education centre gives guests and opportunity to get up close and personal with Rothschild giraffes. The objective of the centre is to provide free environmental education to the Kenyan youth and provide conservation for endangered species.

**Daphne Sheldrick's Orphanage and**

**The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Open (11.00am – 12.00pm)**

*"A lifetime dedicated to the protection and preservation of Africa's Wilderness and its denizens, particularly endangered species such as elephants and black rhino."*

This is where Daphne Sheldrick has perfected the raising and re-integrating of orphaned elephants into the wild. She is involved in many conservation projects across Kenya and has a great understanding of orphans. The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust is a small, flexible charity, established in 1977 to honour the memory of a famous naturalist, the founder warden of Tsavo East National Park. It only opens to the public from 11.00am until 12.00 daily.

**Nairobi National Park Open (6.00am – 6.00pm)**

Only a few minutes drive from Nairobi, this park is as wild and eventful as any of the other game sanctuaries in Kenya. Though Elephant are absent, the rest of the big five can be found. Nairobi National Park is unique by being the only protected area in the world with a variety of animals close to a capital city.