Best of East Africa

**Valid for departures until 31 December.**

# Introduction

Welcome to Sojourn real life experiences... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do.

Embrace the full spectrum of colours, smells and sounds on this brilliant adventure showcasing the best that East Africa has to offer. From the vibrant red robes of the Maasai to the emerald-green mountains of Tanzania and the luminous golden glow of a Serengeti sunset, Africa is bursting with enticing sights and enriching experiences. Meet proud warriors, enthusiastic children, welcoming villagers and hard-working crop-growers - the faces of modern-day Africa. Encounter cunning predators and majestic mammals while on safari, graceful birds while camping near shimmering lakes and colourful fish off the balmy coast. East Africa's temperatures are as warm as the people are - experience this personally on this memorable trip.

To save you money and the hassle of booking multiple trips, this journey is a combination of some of our most popular adventures. As this is a combination trip your leader and group may change.

# Style

The best value adventures on the planet! On a Basix trip, you can expect some amazing experiences, but none of the inclusions or 'extras' that you may not want. Which means simple and often multishare accommodation and a lot of local transport. These trips are ideal for first time travellers seeking fun and independence with the security of a group leader at hand and for backpackers wanting minimum hassle and maximum flexibility at the lowest possible price.

# Trip Map



# Itinerary

## Day 1 Nairobi

Jambo! Welcome to Kenya.

You can arrive at any time on day 1 as there are no activities planned until the welcome meeting tonight at 6pm. Your leader will leave a note at reception telling you where this important meeting will take place. Please ask a member of reception for this information. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport and insurance details at this meeting.

After the group meeting there is the option of joining the group for dinner.

Nairobi - a Masai word for 'Place of Cool Waters' has a cosmopolitan atmosphere. There are plenty of good bars and restaurants. Markets and shops have most things you could need or want, as well as various arts and crafts from the region.

If you arrive early why not head out and explore the National Museum of Kenya, the Karen Blixen Museum (author of Out of Africa), or Bomas (displays of traditional homesteads of several Kenyan tribes in an outdoor village).

## Day 2 Lake Nakuru

Leaving Nairobi in the morning, we drive north-west to Lake Nakuru National Park (170 km, approx. 3-4 hours). On the way, we will visit New Hope Children Centre - an orphanage that assists the less fortunate in society and gives them hope. The children here appreciate very much when they get reading and writing materials. You have a chance to give the children anything you have brought; from toys to pens, pencils, story books, etc (of course these will be handed over to the proprietors).

The lake is nestled in a beautiful park of light acacia forest, a habitat which attracts large flocks of white pelicans, cormorants and a huge number of flamingos that transform the lake into an incredible shimmering pink haze. The savannah areas of this park also boast many fascinating mammals including giraffes, leopards, waterbucks and rhinos. We set up camp, and then enjoy an afternoon game drive before returning to our exclusive camp outside the park.

Tonight's campground is well situated and has flush toilets and showers.

## Days 3-4 Lake Naivasha

After breakfast, we head off to a nearby village where our guide will tell us about the local life here. This is the best time and place to interact with the local villagers. Afterwards, we drive to Naivasha and our camp situated near the lake (110 km, approx 3-4 hours).

Lake Naivasha, one of the few freshwater lakes in the Great Rift Valley, has floating islands of papyrus reeds and a border of flat-topped acacias. It is also home to a healthy population of hippos and a tremendous variety of birds.

The following day, you are free to take part in some of the many optional activities available or to relax in the beautiful lakeside surroundings.

Our campsite for these two nights has showers and flush toilets.

## Day 5 Loita Hills

We depart Lake Naivasha in the morning and do a spot of food shopping, taking our lunch break en route to our camp site at Loita Hills (220 km, approx. 5-6 hours).

Today's drive crosses the Great Rift Valley, Africa's immense and spectacular great divide, takes us into the remote region of Loita Hills, home of the traditional Maasai people. Here, we visit the Maasai, known for their vibrant red dress and elaborate jewellery, and gain an insight into the culture and ancient ways of this proud East African Community.

After setting up our tents, it is time to meet our Maasai hosts as we receive a fascinating talk offering insights into this remarkable and ancient culture from a local elder. Enjoy being shown around a traditional Maasai home and cattle enclosures, and we may even have the opportunity to participate in the milking of the precious cattle.

Tonight we stay in a bush camp with drop toilets and bush shower facilities.

## Days 6-7 Masai Mara National Reserve

It is 70 km from Loita to Masai Mara which will take us approximately 1-2 hours. The road is dusty when dry and could be slippery and soft when wet.

After setting up camp (outside the park) and having lunch, we enter the world-famous Masai Mara and explore this diverse environment While we hope to discover the "big five" there is a multitude of wildlife to view including, if we are lucky the elusive leopard.

We spend our entire second day in the reserve. After a pre-dawn coffee and snack we head off in our wildlife spotting quest. We take our brunch/lunch by the side of the Mara River - a great chance to spot crocs and of course hippos.

An optional balloon ride over the Masai Mara at sunrise is an unforgettable experience. If you have pre-booked this activity (please see Important Notes) you will be picked up and driven to the launch site, receive a safety briefing from your pilot and help inflate the balloon. You then glide through the dawn, sometimes at tree height, providing amazing wildlife photography opportunities, sometimes ascending to get an overview of the enormity of the Masai Mara plains and the early morning movements of the teeming herds of wildlife. Upon landing and before being returned to your vehicle and group you'll be treated to a five star bush breakfast. Please note if you are taking a balloon ride over the Mara you will be taken to the launch place from our campsite before dawn and returned to the group when you have finished your ride.

Our campground has flush toilets and showers.

## Days 8-9 Nairobi

Today we leave the open expanses of the African bush behind and return to the urban environment of Nairobi (270 km, approx 6-7 hours).

We expect to arrive back in Nairobi around 1pm in the afternoon.

Please note that this is a combination trip and the composition of your group and leader may change this evening. There will be another short group meeting at 6pm on Saturday night where you can meet your new travelling companions and hear more about the second part of your trip.

In Nairobi we stay in a simple hotel with swimming pool, restaurant and en suite rooms.

## Day 10 Arusha

We set off early today, heading for the border with Tanzania. We are able to spend some time in Arusha, before heading to our campsite on the out skirts of the city, Meserani (400 km, approx 8-10 hours).

Arusha is the gateway to some of Tanzania's most popular tourist destinations including the Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara and Mount Kilimanjaro.

Tonight we stay at a campsite with flush toilets and showers.

## Day 11 Karatu

This morning we drive for 1.5 hours to reach the village of Mto Wa Mbu where we participate in a local community village program. A local guide will take you on a leisurely stroll around the farming areas visiting a kindergarten, milling machine, local homes and farmlands. A great way to have fun, interact and find out more about life of the locals.

Later we take time to explore the market in this small village. Many crafts and fabrics are found here and the batiks and makonde wood carvings are particularly good.

After lunch, we then travel on towards Karatu, our base for launching into our Serengeti and Ngorongoro safari (approx. 1 hr).

Tonight we stay at a campsite with flush toilets and showers.

## Days 12-13 Serengeti National Park

Today we are up very early, leaving our truck behind, putting our camping and personal gear into 6 person jeeps and heading out for our three day excursion.

The wide, open plains of the Serengeti, green after the rains, brown and burnt in the dry season, and home to thousands of hoofed animals and fierce predators, is perhaps the quintessential image of Africa. Flat and rolling with long grasses and dotted with acacia trees, the plains get their name from the Masai word Siringitu - 'the place where the land moves on forever' (170 km, approx. 4-5 hours).

Game viewing in the Serengeti is amazing and as you camp out at night, don't be surprised to hear lions in the distance as you recount your amazing sightings from during the day. In normal circumstances we would expect to see the Big 5 during our stay in the Serengeti.

For an unforgettable experience you might like to do an optional sunrise balloon ride over the Serengeti. If you have pre-booked this activity (please see Important Notes) you will be picked up, driven to the launch site, receive a safety briefing from your pilot and help inflate the balloon. You then float over the Serengeti as the sun comes up, gaining an overview of the immensity of the Serengeti, seeing the abundance of wildlife in their early morning activity, and sometimes descending to tree height providing amazing wildlife photography opportunities. Upon landing and before being returned to your accommodation you'll be treated to a five star bush breakfast.

The bush camps where we stay are very simple (showers and flush toilets) but are located in the middle of the plains, surrounded by animals and the nocturnal noises - something to experience. Your leader will outline the basic safety rules to be followed when camping in an unfenced location where wild animals are present.

Responsible Travel Note:

You will notice many Masai villages in the region of the Serengeti and Ngorongoro crater. While it is of course fascinating to visit different cultures, past experience has shown that these villages exist primarily as businesses. You will be charged an entry fee of approx. US$20 and the Masai will try very hard to sell souvenirs to you. While many clients still enjoy the experience, others have found it artificial and uncomfortable. We would very much prefer that Sojourn clients choose to bypass this activity as we feel it negatively impacts the Masai culture and your perception of this culture. Unfortunately the tourist village business is such a high earner that we have been unable to find an "Sojourn" Masai experience in Tanzania, which is disappointing for all.

## Day 14 Ngorongoro Crater

We are up with the sun as we make an early start, exiting the Serengeti and heading for the world famous Ngorongoro Crater (approximately 3 hrs drive). After a picnic lunch we descend onto the floor of the Crater. We make the most of our safari in the crater, spending between four and five hours exploring this area

A huge, perfectly intact volcanic crater, Ngorongoro is home to some 30,000 animals including endangered black rhinos, lions, leopards, elephants, impalas, zebras and hippos. The crater floor offers excellent game viewing all year round and the photographic opportunities here are unrivalled.

Departing the crater late in the afternoon, we return to our campsite at Karatu for an evening relaxing at the campsite's bar reliving our safari experience.

Tonight we stay at a campsite with flush toilets and showers.

## Day 15 Marangu

Back on board our truck we climb high onto the slopes of Kilimanjaro and to the village of Mshiri (300 km, approx 5-7 hours).

In Moshi we will meet the very special kids of the Amani Children's Home. Amani supports street children giving them a safe place to stay and educational and emotional support. Check out the new school which has been built with the help of donors and be inspired by this project which is changing these children's lives.

We then drive on to the village of Marangu where we set up camp for the night. Our campground is basic with flush toilets and showers.

## Days 16-17 Usambara Mountains

We spend this morning with the team at the Village Education Project. Beginning with a walking tour of Mshiri Village, the base for the Village Education Project, we can witness the day-to-day life of the Chagga people, long established as crop-growers on the fertile slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro. We visit their homes, walk around the shamba (farm), and may visit a primary school as well as the other institutions where local young people are taught various skills. Lunch provides more opportunity to sample the local Chagga food, which is very filling. We also visit nearby waterfalls and stop to admire the view of the plains below. For more information on the Village Education Project visit www.kiliproject.org.

Then it's time to get off the well beaten track and head into the remote Tanzanian Mountains (270 km, approx 7-9 hours).

We have a two night stop in the beautiful Usambara Mountains to explore this lovely unspoilt area of Tanzania. Unlike the coast and the north, very few tourists visit this area and so it has a freshness that can be hard to find elsewhere. The mountains are located in the north east of Tanzania between Kilimanjaro and the Indian Ocean and overlook the vast Masai steppe. They are wonderfully lush and green and the area has been dubbed the Galapagos of the plant world. The forests stretch across the mountains and are ideal for easy hikes and guided walks. As beautiful as the place is, its real jewels are the local peoples and villages. The area has a reputation for gentle hospitality and we will visit some of the small communities. From our base we will organise a short day's walking trip out to the beautiful Irente viewpoint. On our way back we visit a local village cultural and ecological project based at Irente farm where we will have a picnic lunch.

We base ourselves at the old German colony of Lushoto where we stay in the grounds of one of the earliest hotels in Africa. Our campsite has flush toilets and showers.

## Day 18 Dar es Salaam

Leaving the mountains behind we have a long travel day today we travel further south towards the coastal city of Dar es Salaam (380 km, approx 9-11 hours).

Once in Dar es Salaam, we set up camp on a balmy beach outside of the city. The camp is on the grounds of a hotel and has flush toilets and showers. Feel free to jump in the ocean and have a swim before dinner.

## Days 19-21 Zanzibar

Today we catch a ferry to the "Spice Island" of Zanzibar (approx 90 minutes). Filled with idyllic beaches, winding cobblestone alleyways and fragrant bazaars, Zanzibar's rich history involves everything from slave traders to Arabian sultans and fruit exporters. The sight of traditional dhows sailing along the coast makes it easy to imagine what the island was like back in the days of Livingstone.

Our first night is spent in the exotic port town of Stone Town in a basic inn with double/twin share rooms.

The best way to see Stone Town is on foot exploring the bazaars, shops, mosques, palaces, courtyards and myriad intricate alleyways. When the sun is setting, why not enjoy a sundowner from a bar overlooking the seafront, before trying one of the island's local seafood curries for dinner at one of the town's many restaurants.

The famous spices are grown in plantations outside of Stone Town and we head out on a Spice Tour which will include a local meal, a tour around the sites of the stone town, including some history on its former slave market. Next will be the drive to the spice plantations where you will receive a guided tour and the opportunity to touch, smell and taste various spices such as cinnamon, vanilla and ginger, and teas made with these spices. At the end of the day there will also be an opportunity to buy some of the locally grown spices.

On our second and third days here we head to the northern beaches and enjoy white sand and sparkling blue sea - the Indian Ocean at its best. Try snorkelling and diving, eat sumptuous seafood, or simply relax in a hammock underneath a coconut tree with a good book.

Our accommodation in Zanzibar is in twin share rooms.

## Day 22 Dar es Salaam

Today we transfer back to the ferry (approx. 90 minutes) and return to our campsite by the beach outside Dar es Salaam arriving in the late afternoon.

# Itinerary Disclaimer

The itinerary attached is correct at time of printing. Please note: occasionally our itineraries are updated during the year to incorporate improvements stemming from past travellers' comments and our own research. Our brochure is usually released in November each year. As such the information given in this itinerary may be slightly different to that in the brochure. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you print and review a final copy of your Trip Notes a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans. For the latest updated trip notes please visit our website.

## Physical Preparation

There are many long hours spent driving on rough roads on all Africa itineraries. While most people love the chance to watch the changing landscape and daily village life, feedback shows that long periods of inactivity does not appeal to all clients. We provide the approximate daily distance covered and how long this normally takes to drive in hours so that you can choose the safari experience which is right for you.

African conditions are extremely tough on vehicles. While we fastidiously maintain our vehicles at our workshops, you should not expect Africa to be your traditional touring experience. While it is certainly our aim to avoid them, it is important that you set off on your trip knowing that the occasional breakdown can happen and are best treated as part of the Africa adventure.

The step up into the overland truck, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down at least 8-10 times a day, as can the constant setting and packing up of camp.

# Included Activities

This is a list of included activities on this trip. All other activities are optional and at your own expense. For a list of optional activities and sightseeing available on this trip, see the optional activities section below. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

Game drives - Lake Nakuru National Park

Cultural talk and village visit - Loita Hills

Game drives - Masai Mara National Reserve

Community cultural activity - Mto Wa Mbu

Game drives - Serengeti National Park

Game drive - Ngorongoro Crater

Visit and donation to Amani Children's Home - en route to Marangu

Visit Village Education Project, village walk and lunch - Marangu

Day walk and local lunch - Usambara Mountains

Ferry, accommodation and spice tour - Zanzibar

# Optional Activities

We list the following optional activities for your information. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only.

They are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Sojourn nor included in price of this trip. If you do any of them, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Sojourn.

* Karen Blixen Museum, Nairobi - US$14
* Giraffe Centre, Nairobi - US$12
* NNP Animal orphanage & Safari walk, Nairobi - US$20
* Carnivore Restaurant, Nairobi - US$30-35
* Bomas, Nairobi - US$10
* National Museum, Nairobi - US$14
* Boat trip, Lake Naivasha - US$50 per boat (price dependent on numbers interested)
* Entrance Hells Gate National Park, Lake Naivasha - US$25
* Guide fee, Lake Naivasha - US$4
* Bike Hire, Lake Naivasha - US$12 per day
* Crater Lake Walk, Lake Naivasha - US$35
* Visit Elsamere Conservation Centre, Lake Naivasha - US$10
* Balloon ride, Masai Mara - US$475 (must be pre-booked see Important Notes)
* Warrior Dance, Masai Mara - US$10
* Balloon ride, Serengeti - US$485 (must be pre-booked see Important Notes)
* Bike excursion around Musoma with local guide (approx 3 hours), Lake Victoria - US$20
* Snorkelling day trip, Zanzibar - US$35
* Scuba dive, Zanzibar - US$80
* Dhow trip, Zanzibar - US$40
* Prison Island tour, Zanzibar - US$25

Got extra time before or after your Sojourn adventure? Maybe there is an URBAN ADVENTURE in one of the cities that you're visiting on your trip?

Sojourn's Urban Adventures are the city tour with a difference - there are more than 100 to choose from in over 30 cities around the world, with new trips added regularly. They are a great way to get under the skin of the city you're visiting, in just a few hours. To make a booking contact your local travel agent, Sojourn consultant.