

## Kenya Safaris

It is hard to believe the startling contrasts of landscape and the outstanding natural beauty that Kenya has to offer.

Further inland, few places on earth can claim such a dense profusion of wildlife in such spectacular surroundings. From the legendary wilderness of Tsavo where the man eaters originated, to the majestic peak of Kilimanjaro, the rain forests of Mount Kenya to the stunning savannah of the Masai Mara.

The coastal belt of Kenya is home to some of the world's finest beaches. Kenya has a wide selection of beach holidays along its coast, ranging from 5 star hotels to private beach villas.

The hotels are luxurious in nature with nearly all facilities such as swimming pool, fitness center, sauna, and conference rooms among others, all within the hotel premises. Every room is air conditioned with private bathroom, balcony and telephone. All beach hotels overlook the white sands of Kenya's coastline. The indigenous old trees and vegetation fronting the Indian Ocean have been preserved pristinely.

This attracts the birds to the lodge, hence beach and bird life experience.

### Parks and Reserves

#### The masai mara

The mara is home of East Africa's once most feared ancient warriors, the maasai. With the adjoining Serengeti National Park in Tanzania to the south, they make home to a huge population of elephants, hippo, buffalo, giraffe, gazelle and impala.

Predators are plentiful especially the cheetah, crocodile, leopard, and lion.

#### ABERDARE NATIONAL PARK

The Aberdare national park is part of the Aberdare Mountain Range which forms the steep eastern edge of the Rift Valley. The park lies approximately 170kms north of Nairobi and has an altitude of 7,000 to 14,000 ft. The scenery in this region is spectacular and impressive as is the range of wildlife. Wildlife viewing on this park takes some searching due to the dense forest vegetation.

The park has a wide variety of game including; elephant, lion, black rhino, waterbuck, gazelle, giant forest hog, genet cats, leopard, buffalo and the rare spiral-horned antelope known as the bongo.

#### AMBOSELI NATIONAL PARK

Amboseli National Park, although smaller than the likes of Tsavo and Masai Mara, at approx 395 sq km, is one of Kenya's most popular parks. Amboseli is known for its large elephant herds and is often referred to as elephant country. The views of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak on a clear sky day, coupled with the variety of game to be found, draws many wildlife lovers to this park. The park which lies approximately 140kms south of Nairobi on the border with Tanzania. A combination of factors such as drought, increased tourism, and over-grazing of land by the locals has had a hard-hitting effect on the western side of the park, the land has become dry, dusty and barren and the animals that were once there have moved into areas of shrub forest and marshland. Still there is plenty to see in this wildlife paradise.

#### LAKE NAKURU NATIONAL PARK

Situated approximately 6km from Nakuru town with the main attraction being Lake Nakuru is a very shallow strongly alkaline lake 62 km<sup>2</sup> in extent and set beneath the high cliffs of the eastern Rift Valley. It is an ornithologists' paradise offering the spectacular view of up to 2 million flamingos. The flamingos feed on algae, created from their droppings mixing in the warm alkaline waters, and plankton. But flamingo are not the only avian attraction, also present are other large fish eating birds mainly pelicans and cormorants.

Lake Nakuru was first gazetted as a bird sanctuary in 1960 and upgraded to National Park status in 1968.

Today an area of 190 sq km around the lake has been fenced in as a national park and has been made a sanctuary for Rothschild giraffes and black

rhinos which were once poached almost to extinction.

## MOUNT KENYA

Mount Kenya National Park lies approximately 170kms northeast of Nairobi and covering an area of approximately 700 sq kms. This park consists mainly of forest vegetation. The mount from which this national park gets its name, Mount Kenya is an extinct volcano straddled across the equator, and is the continent's second highest peak. The altitude ranges from between 11,000 to 17,058ft, with the highest peaks being Batian at 17,058ft and Nelion at 17,022ft. These can be attempted. Peaks such as Lenana can be climbed without the use of specialist equipment. Climbers are often accompanied by a guide, with ports being available. There are climbers huts to rest up in, but plenty of food and warm clothes should be taken for those wishing to attempt this great mountain. The best time of the year for climbing is from mid-January to late February and from late August through September.

The scenery is panoramic. It is also a botanist's paradise, with a wide variation in flora as the altitude changes.

The park is home to a variety of wildlife including some unique species, such as Black and White colobus and Sykes monkeys, bushbuck, elephant, Olive baboon, waterbuck, black rhino, leopard, hyena, bongo and at high altitudes zebra and eland can be found. Buffalo too can be seen here in plenty.

### About the Author

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