



Fairly Easy

# KENYA KALEIDOSCOPE



*This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.*



*Lake Nakuru flamingos*

- An exceptional African experience!
- Superb Rift Valley wildlife viewing – Maasai Mara
- Meet the Maasai and the less visited Samburu people
- Bush trekking with local guides
- Walk high on Mount Kenya

*"Haraka haraka haina baraka" - In hurrying there is no blessing - Kiswahili proverb*

## **The trip**

Our 'Kenya Kaleidoscope' is a fascinating, varied and experience-packed holiday. It includes a relaxing start wildlife viewing in the world famous Maasai Mara, trekking through the remote Loita Hills with Maasai guides, a Lake Naivasha boat trip, a village interlude, a foray into northern Kenya to meet and walk with the Samburu and finally an exciting trek to a high point on Mt Kenya.

This itinerary has been designed to let you experience a wide range of African environments, see the best of its wildlife and make real contact with the local people, their customs and culture. A highlight will be the close encounters with local 'sustainable Tourism' ventures. Always an active holiday but consistently at a not-too-strenuous pace.

## Walking

On the trekking section of this trip we walk for about 3-5 hours each day, although options are flexible and can be tailored to suit the group. There is no backpacking on this trip. All our baggage is carried in support vehicles that meet us at each night's camp. On Mt Kenya we use local porters to carry all the gear and food. This is a normal job for the locals and a valuable way of earning money. For us it is an important contact with the local culture and they are a valued part of the team. On Olololokwe donkeys are used as well. We carry only daypacks with waterproofs, camera, snacks, water and personal gear.

## Accommodation

In true safari style, we camp throughout the bush walking sections of the trip and in the Maasai Mara and Samburu areas we use tented camps. Midway through the trip we spend two nights in a hotel close to Mt. Kenya. On the mountain itself we stay in a comfortable but basic mountain hut owned by our Kenya company with padded mattresses, toilets etc. In Nairobi we use a comfortable hotel.

## Food

On trek and on safari, all meals are provided and prepared by our own cook. We are happy to cater for vegetarians. This gives you a chance to sample some local Kenyan cuisine. All meals are provided except for the first and last day. Allow approx £6-10/US\$10-18/NZ\$15-26 for dinner, less for lunch.



*Elephants on the move.* Photo Mike Cosgrove

## Tipping

Tipping in East Africa has been customary since explorers and safari seekers first started travelling there and using the services of local people. It is a sensitive issue, and High Places do not automatically accept the practice of tipping, as we prefer to make honest and fair payments for services received. However, here in Kenya there is a strong local tradition of tipping which is difficult to avoid without upsetting local staff, who work extremely hard to make your trip successful. Last year most people spent approx £100/US\$165/NZ\$230 total on tips.

## Seasons and climate

Our Kenya trips run during, July/August and February. These are the dry seasons in East Africa, when conditions for walking and travelling are at their best. The rains have finished, the climate is generally warm and pleasant, the skies are clear, and the vegetation is luxuriant. Daytime temperatures in the lower lands and foothills are warm, around 20-30°C (we often walk in shorts and T-shirts) although evenings can be chilly and afternoon showers are not unknown. On the high mountain sections, it feels very warm with the sun out but chills rapidly if it clouds over, while at night and in the early mornings temperatures can drop well below freezing. Also, even in the dry seasons, rain may occur at any time on the mountains. In the Loita Hills and Maasai Mara the days can be quite warm, up to 30°C but it is a comfortable dry heat. Nights are often surprisingly cool but not freezing. A range of clothing to cope with these conditions is necessary.

## Altitude

Only on Mt Kenya at the end of the trip will altitude be an issue but by then you will already have spent time at reasonable altitudes and everyone should be reasonably attuned. Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m. Many people have some minor side effects from altitude, such as headache, nausea or general lassitude. The optional use of 'Diamox' has proved useful for some people, as this drug can reduce

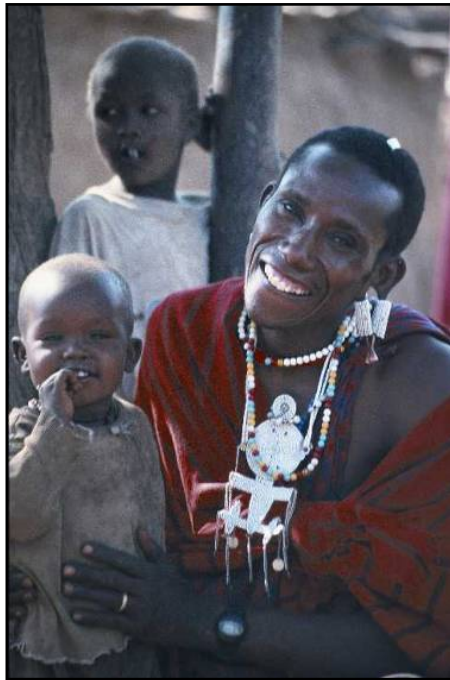
these symptoms. You will be given more information on 'Diamox' with your Final Information, between 8 and 10 weeks before departure.

### **Transport**

The areas where we walk are often remote and inaccessible, so on each trip we use specially designed safari vehicles to cope with the steep mountain approach routes and rough tracks. For safety reasons, we also use the vehicles for wildlife viewing in the Maasai Mara, and they are also essential to transport us between the various walking areas. When we are walking, any extra clothing or gear not required can be safely stored in the vehicle.

### **Language**

Swahili and English are the national languages of Kenya. Many people speak English, including most of our local staff.



*Maasai family. Photo Maggie Graham*

## DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

**This trip is 15 days ex NAIROBI. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival and departure in NAIROBI, and may not be the days you depart from or arrive back home.**

DAY 1 Arrive Nairobi. Hotel.

DAY 2 From Nairobi we travel northwest through farmland and Great Rift Valley floor to reach the Maasai town of Narok for lunch. After lunch we proceed to Maji Moto eco-camp run by the local Maasai community at the northern end of the Loita Hills. Maji-Moto means hot water in Swahili - a hot natural spring pours out of the rocks within the village. A relaxed walk with our Maasai hosts reveals some of their way of life and we have a chance for a dip in the hot springs. Overnight today is in spacious permanently set tents. Dinner and Maasai folk tales round a campfire under the starlit skies. We have arrived in East Africa! (B,L,D)

DAY 3 An early walking safari to the Loita hills led by Maasai morans (warriors). Much of the rest of the day is spent in and around the village. We meet the women and children, visit a typical homestead and watch a range of crafts and customs, jewellery making and beadwork, body decoration and ceremonial performances. In the late afternoon we drive to Masai Mara and our own Safari Camp. (B,L,D)

DAY 4 The Maasai Mara, now the seventh wonder of the world, is a land of breathtaking vistas and vast rolling plains that teem with wildlife. We spend the whole day within the reserve on game drives where we hope to see elephant, buffalo, lion, zebra, giraffe, rhino, hippo, crocodile and a whole ark-full of other animals and birds in their natural surroundings. In the evening return to camp and relax or option to hike up nearby Naunare Hills and watch a spectacularly stunning sunset over the Mara. Overnight again in our safari camp. (B,L,D)



*Maasai guides*

DAY 5 A pre-breakfast game drive to spot any animals and birds that have eluded us yesterday or there can be an option to take a hot air balloon ride (cost not included) After breakfast we journey to Hell's Gate National Park for another walking safari experience. This amazing Park is situated on the floor of the Rift Valley and features towering cliffs and rock towers, rolling grassland, water worn gorges, a volcano or two and belching plumes of geothermal steam. On the walking safari we hope to get close to zebra, eland, hartebeest, gazelle, giraffe, buffalo and also birds such as augur buzzards, vultures and verreaux eagle. Camping inside the park adds to the experience. (B,L,D)

DAY 6 Moving on and an exciting boat ride on Lake Naivasha where we hope to see

numerous flocks of hippos, storks and cranes and other colourful birdlife. From here it's a short drive to Lake Nakuru National Park for a game viewing drive. Here there is an excellent chance of seeing the rare rhino (both black and white species), vast herds of gazelle and the unusual Rothschild's giraffe. There are over 400 species of birds recorded within the park. After our game drive we drive to the nearby Lake Elementaita and stay in small private bungalows by the lakeside. (B,L,D)

DAY 7 A walk around this small lake reveals not only the rich birdlife but also allows us to meet the local community who frequent the lake shores to collect ornament making flamingo feathers and dig natural salt used as salt-lick for their cattle. Afterwards we journey north via Thompson's Falls for a picnic and then to our hotel base on the forested slopes of Mount Kenya, in the heart of the Central Highlands (B,L,D)

DAY 8 Some easy walks around this predominantly Kikuyu area, visiting local farms and villages and perhaps local schools. We can gain a privileged insight into the lives of the people who live on the slopes of Mt Kenya and know that our visit is contributing towards their local economy. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 A free morning at the hotel with some relaxing options - nature walks into the forest, horse riding, trout fishing, biking or bird watching or we can visit a nearby small wildlife sanctuary where recent arrivals include a family of chimpanzees rescued from war-torn Congo. After lunch we head towards our new destination, the land of the Samburu and our camp at Olololokwe Mountain in the Namunyak conservation area. Namunyak is a land of endless hills and wonderful hiking opportunities. On arrival we meet our local hosts, the Samburu tribesmen who will happily tell us more of their land and culture. In the evening we sort out logistics of guides and donkeys for the next day's trek. (B,L,D)

DAY 10 Olololokwe Trek: Olololokwe is the summit of an extensive upland massif and is an ideal objective as we set off with donkeys, two days provisions and our guides, the local Samburu tribesman. The trail rises through various vegetation belts. acacia trees, pencil cedars, cycad palms and podocarps before continuing to the summit (2000m). The views are awesome and breathtaking in every direction- this area, the Namunyak

Conservation area is a Samburu community- run conservancy that acts as a dispersal area for the wildlife from Samburu and Meru Parks. Our visit to this conservancy goes a long way to help the local people and encourage them to conserve and protect the environment.

(B,L,D)



*Olololokwe summit*

DAY 11 After a 2 hour descent back to our base camp, we say goodbye to our Samburu guides and donkey handlers then drive to Samburu National reserve via a Samburu village. The Reserve is a semi-arid ecosystem that teems with a host of wildlife endemic to the northern part of Kenya chief among which are reticulated giraffes, grevy zebras, oryxes, Somali ostriches and long necked gazelles. We spend the

rest of the day walking and viewing the wildlife with a local guide. Our stay overnight is in a comfortable camp managed by Samburu womenfolk. (B,L,D)

DAY 12 We begin with a morning game drive before a 2 hour journey to Mount Kenya. On arrival at the Sirimon Park gate, we meet the Mountain crew, have a picnic lunch and proceed on a 3 hour afternoon trek toward the mountain, passing through zones of dense forest, bamboo, giant heather and finally open moorland. Total ascent 690m. Overnight at the Oldmoses mountain hut. (B,L,D)



*Game drive*

DAY 13 We trek higher to the spectacular Likii ridge – passing among beautiful high altitude plants such as ostrich plume lobelia, cabbage and giant groundsel, always on the lookout for the iridescent sunbird. We are aiming for a high point of 4000m – hard work but it will be worth it with great views of the high peaks of Mt Kenya. An exhilarating descent, a short drive and we can enjoy hot showers a final dinner and perhaps some Kikuyu folk dances to bring our kaleidoscopic adventure to an end! (B,L,D)

DAY 14 Drive to Nairobi. (3 hours). Hotel. (B)

DAY 15 Transfer to the airport for your flight home or continue with your own arrangements (B)

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