

## Itinerary at a glance

Day	Location	Supplier	Meal Plan	Activity
1	Nairobi	Sarova Stanley Hotel	BB	Trsf
2	Samburu Game Reserves	Elephant Bedroom Camp	LDBB	P
3	Samburu Game Reserves	Elephant Bedroom Camp	LDBB	EP
4	Lake Nakuru National Park	Sarova Lion Hill Lodge	LDBB	P
5	Lake Naivasha	Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge	LDBB	Boat ride
6	Masai Mara Game Reserve	Tipilikwani Luxury Tented Camp	LDBB	EP
7	Masai Mara Game Reserve	Tipilikwani Luxury Tented Camp	LDBB	EP
8	Serengeti National Park	Serengeti Sopa Lodge	LDBB	P
9	Serengeti National Park	Serengeti Sopa Lodge	LDBB	EP
10	Serengeti National Park	Serengeti Sopa Lodge	LDBB	EP
11	Ngorongoro Conservation Area	Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge	LDBB	Oldupai Gorge
12	Lake Manyara National Park	Escarpment Luxury Lodge	LDBB	Crater Tour
13	Lake Manyara National Park	Escarpment Luxury Lodge	LDBB	At leisure
14	Nairobi		-D	Trsf

L-Lunch, D-Dinner, BB-Bed and breakfast, LDBB-Lunch, dinner, bed and breakfast, Trsf-Transfer, E-Early morning game drive, A-Morning game drive, P-Afternoon game drive, HDS-Half Day sightseeing, FDS-Full Day Sightseeing

## Quotation Full Itinerary

### Day 1 28/04/2018 Arriving Nairobi

**JAMBO - KARIBU!!** Twiga Tours representatives will warmly meet you upon arrival at the Jomo Kenyatta International airport with our traditional, unique & special welcome (champagne, hot/cold towels and presentation of authentic safari hat and souvenirs). We then transfer you to the Sarova Stanley Hotel, located at the heart of the central business district. Our representative will help you through check-in. *Dinner on own arrangements.*  
Overnight at the Hotel.

#### Sarova Stanley Hotel BB

### Day 2 29/04/2018 Samburu Game Reserves

Our guide driver will warmly meet you after breakfast at the hotel, help you load your luggage into the safari land cruiser then drive further north to Samburu National Reserve, set in the rugged semi-arid northern region with spectacular scenic landscape. We arrive at the intimate 12-tent Elephant Bedroom Camp to a warm welcome then lunch, short siesta before heading for an afternoon game viewing drive. The verdant riverine forest is a stark contrast to the arid thorn studded plains. The Samburu region is the best place to find several endemic Northern species; including the Gerenuk (twiga gazelle) due to her long neck, the beisa Oryx, the Reticulated Giraffe, the Somali ostrich and Grevy's Zebra. Samburu is also an ornithological paradise, home to many birds including local species such as the Palm Nut Vulture and the Vivacious Dove. Leopards are often seen at dusk. The Samburu culture is a truly fascinating one, sharing a great deal of ancestral and linguistic ties to the Masai. The entire Samburu region is a place of breathtaking and magical beauty, a place where the vision of a deep red sunset silhouetting the doum palms along the river as a leopard emerges to hunt brings the perfect end to a day on safari..... Dinner and overnight at our camp.

#### Elephant Bedroom Camp LDBB

### Day 3 30/04/2017 Samburu Game Reserves

Full day of game viewing in both Samburu and Buffalo Springs game reserves. Today we will enjoy a visit to a local Samburu Village. The landscape is similar to nearby Samburu with riverine forests, acacia and doum palms. This area is famous for the association with Kenya's most renowned conservationists, George and Joy Adamson. Rugged and remote, this game reserve provides some of the best and most colorful game viewing in the country. The Ewaso Nyoro River which meanders through the vast, dry, doum palm dominated reserve brings life along the green, scenic river banks, home and refuge to many wildlife. Meals and overnight at our camp.

#### Elephant Bedroom Camp LDBB

#### **Day 4 01/05/2018 Lake Nakuru National Park**

This morning after breakfast, depart to Lake Nakuru national Park. We enjoy a brief stop at the 7800 feet Thompson's Falls for a breath-taking view of the great scenery. We arrive at our lodge to warm welcome, check-in then lunch. This afternoon we depart on a game viewing drive. The environment here is welcoming, one of the best places to relax, to unwind, to enjoy nature's beauty. The park is one of the best game viewing parks with various animal species including prides of lion, Cape buffalo, waterbucks, wart hogs, the endangered Rothschild giraffes, the black & white Rhino, the Burchell's zebra, impalas, and the elusive leopard among many others. Over 300 bird species have been recorded here too. This one of the best places to see the endangered black and white Rhino. Dinner and overnight at our Lodge.

#### **Sarova Lion Hill Lodge LDBB**

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#### **Day 5 02/05/2018 Naivasha**

After a leisurely breakfast at the lodge, you will have a short drive to Naivasha with its commanding setting at the foot of the Rift Valley Escarpment. Lake Naivasha is an important horticultural area of Kenya. Arrive at your lodge for check in and some leisure time followed by lunch. Afternoon **boat ride on the lake**. Return to the lodge for dinner and overnight.

#### **Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge LDBB**

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#### **Day 6 03/05/2018 Masai Mara Game Reserve**

A hearty early morning breakfast then drive to the Masai Mara National Reserve, offering wonderful scenery and plenty of game. We arrive at the intimate 20-tent Tipilikwani Camp to a very warm welcome for lunch, some leisure. Our guide driver will drop you at the camp then return to Nairobi. This afternoon is the moment we have been longing for – we depart with the camp's guide driver & vehicle an exciting game viewing drive. The Rolling plains and grasslands, stretching far into the horizons as far as the eye can see is home to the black-manned lion, the savannah elephant, the Cape buffalo, wildebeests, the elusive leopard, cheetah, the spotted & striped hyena, the rhino, topi, burchelle's zebra, the Maasai giraffe among many others. The Mara game reserve is one that can never disappoint. One is spoilt by the variety of bird and wildlife species in this game reserve..... For a long time, Mara Game Reserve has stubbed her authority as the 'granary' of wildlife in Kenya. We return back to the lodge for dinner and overnight.

#### **Tipilikwani Luxury Tented Camp LDBB**

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#### **Day 7 04/05/2018 Masai Mara Game Reserve**

Full day of game viewing drives and bush adventure. We will visit Irbaan Primary School which Twiga Tours supports. We mingle with these amazing children, perhaps enjoy a live song performance by them. Their daily drive is hope, united in vision and the dream for brighter days ahead. We are right in time for the greatest spectacle on earth; the eighth wonder of the world – the wildebeest migration. Be on the look-out for the big five that Masai Mara is famous for. These include the lion, savannah (African) elephant, the Cape buffalo, the leopard and the black rhino. In the early 20th century, Kenya was a famous hunting destination. Killing any of the big five game one pride, a sense of class, a feeling of heroism. We may even be so lucky to witness a leopard or a cheetah sprint and make a kill! Dinner and overnight.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:** Balloon Safari over the Mara plains followed by a champagne breakfast or visit a traditional Masai Manyatta (off the beaten track) and experience the culture of this world famous community. The Masai still live as they did for centuries -interact with these nomadic people and experience their way of life as you learn about their customs and traditions.

#### **Tipilikwani Luxury Tented Camp LDBB**

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#### **Day 8 05/05/2018 Serengeti National Park**

Breakfast then depart for Serengeti National park with **picnic lunches**. Serengeti National park is one of the BEST game parks in Tanzania.covering an area of 14,763 square kilometres, the world famous Serengeti National Park is Tanzania's oldest park, and one of the world's last great wildlife refuges. It stretches as far as Lake Victoria to the West. Its name comes from the Maasai word Siringet, meaning 'endless plains'. The park's vegetation ranges from the short and long grass plains in the south, to the acacia savannah in the center and wooded grasslands concentrated around the tributaries of the Grumentu and the Mara rivers in the park. The Serengeti ecosystem supports the greatest remaining concentration of plains game in Africa, including more than three million large mammals. Dinner and overnight at our lodge.

#### **Serengeti Sopa Lodge LDBB**

### **Day 9 06/05/2018 Serengeti National Park**

Full days of game viewing drives on the vast Serengeti plains. In the early morning and evening light, the Serengeti landscape is stunningly beautiful. The central Serengeti plains is home to the black-maned lion, the savannah elephant, the Cape buffalo, wildebeetes, the elusive leopard, cheetah, the spotted & striped hyena, the rhino, topi, burchelle's zebra, the Maasai giraffe among many others. Serengeti National Park is one that can never disappoint. One is spoiled by the variety of bird and wildlife species in this game reserve with game-viewing drives. Serengeti is also home to hundreds of bird species; among them ostrich and bizarre secretary bird, the black eagles among others. All meals and overnight at our game lodge.

#### **Serengeti Sopa Lodge LDBB**

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### **Day 10 07/05/2018 Serengeti National Park**

Full day game drive. We are ready to look for the migration of the wildebeest

### **Day 11 08/05/2018 Ngorongoro Conservation Area**

After breakfast, we depart to Ngorongoro. We stop at the Oldupai Gorge, one of the most important prehistoric sites in the world to learn on human evolution. We will enjoy an on-site talk on the interpretation of the gorge by the resident guide. We arrive at our crater rim lodge to a warm welcome, check-in then lunch. This afternoon we relax at our lodge enjoy the breath-taking scenery around us, the fresh cool breeze – the beauty of Africa. Ngorongoro Crater has the largest unbroken caldera in the world. It has been described as one of the great natural wonders of the world. Eight million years ago, the Ngorongoro Crater was an active volcano but its cone collapsed, forming the crater that is 610 meters deep, 20 kilometers in diameter, and covers an area of 311 sq. km. Spectacular as it is, the crater accounts for just a tenth of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The crater is home to many species of wild game and birds. With the exception of impala and topi (due to fierce competition with the wildebeest) and the giraffe (because there is not much to eat at tree level), almost every species of African plains mammal lives in the crater, including the endangered black rhino, and the densest population of predators in Africa. The birdlife, which includes the flamingo, is mainly seasonal, and is also affected by the ratio of soda to fresh water in Lake Magadi on the crater floor. Dinner and overnight at our lodge.

**NOTE:** Warm jacket/cardigan is highly recommended.

#### **Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge LDBB**

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### **Day 12 09/05/2018 Ngorongoro Conservation Area**

After breakfast we descend some 600 meters into the crater, which is home to an abundance of wildlife and a photogenic paradise, for a full day of game-viewing drive with **picnic lunch**. Ngorongoro Crater, the largest intact caldera in the world teams with an abundance of wildlife permanently resident on the crater floor. Prides of lions, herds of Cape buffalo, impala, Thompson gazelles, rhino, giraffes, golden & black-backed jackal, zebra, cheetah, leopard and the spotted hyena. Unmatched for its natural variety & breath-taking beauty, there are few places on earth where such a tremendous diversity of landscapes exist inside a region this size. Apart from its wildlife riches, the crater is also of great archaeological importance, with the remains of some of mankind's earliest ancestors discovered in the area, also a home to hundreds of bird species, refreshing in the small lakes in the crater floor. Around 1530Hrs, we drive to the magnificent Escarpment Lodge for check-in, dinner and overnight.

#### **Escarpment Luxury Lodge LDBB**

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### **Day 13 10/05/2018 Lake Manyara National Park**

A leisurely breakfast at the lodge. We have the full day at leisure, enjoying the breath-taking scenery and beauty around us, or the comfort of our rooms. We can go shopping, anything exciting we would like to do today.

#### **Escarpment Luxury Lodge LDBB**

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**Day 14 11/05/2018 Zanzibar**

This morning we enjoy our breakfast then check-out. We now return to Nairobi. We shall a short stop at Arusha for lunch before cross the border. Upon arrival, we shall have day use at Stanley Hotel. The owner of Twiga Tour (our land operator) will host farewell dinner for us at his downtown Villa.

**Asante Sana and Kwaheri!**

## Vehicles we use on Safari

### Specially designed 4x4wd Safari Land cruiser

Custom designed safari land cruiser with pop up roof for maximum game viewing. All vehicles equipped with long range two way HF radios linked to our main offices, cool boxes and fridges, reference guide books & **UNLIMITED** bottled water.



## Accommodation Information

### Sarova Stanley Hotel

The design concept of the Stanley takes on a Victorian theme, retaining the high ceilings and old world charm of the era while incorporating every comfort and luxury for the traveler of today. Hotel facilities at the Stanley include 225 luxurious rooms with private bathroom and shower, hair dryer, three telephones, TV with CNN, BBC, M-Net, Super-sport and three movie channels. The rooms are all individually air-conditioned and have double-glazed windows, safe and minibar in the rooms. There are sixteen suites with three whirlpool tubs, 38 Sarova Club rooms, three restaurants, valet service, 24 hour room service, security service, chemist, travel desk, large shopping complex and a fully equipped health club with a sauna, steam bath, swimming pool and daily fitness classes.



### **Elephant Bedroom Camp**

Set on the banks of the Ewaso Nyiro River in Samburu National Reserve surrounded by doum palms and other beautiful indigenous trees and shrubs sits this small and exclusive camp of 12 luxury tents - all furnished in rustic African style while offering all the comforts expected of a luxury Camp (hot & cold running water, electricity and herbal products).

The lounge and dining area offer vibrant safari colours with original oil paintings, soft intimate lighting designed to relax guests returning from an exciting game drive. Huge herds of elephant, prides of lion or the solitary leopard amongst other game are regular visitors around the camp providing excellent game viewing in spectacular scenic background of rugged rolling hills.

Dining is a culinary experience with al-fresco breakfast, 3 course lunch and 4 course candle lit gourmet dinner set either under the African sky or inside the well appointed dining area.



### **Sarova Lion Hill Lodge**

Situated at the heart of the Rift Valley, the Lake Nakuru national park is home to one of the most amazing ornithological spectacles in the world - the flight of the flamingoes! Aside from the flamingoes, the park has over 450 species of birds – a heaven for avid bird watchers. The park is also sanctuary to the great-endangered Black Rhino and abounds with other game such as buffalos, tree climbing lions and the elusive Leopard.

Sarova Lion Hill is one of only two lodges situated within the park. Each of the recently refurbished chalets are equipped with private en-suite facilities and have an astounding view of the pink rimmed lake, enjoy your staff in privacy of our lake suits.

Enjoy country-style dining at the flamingo restaurant or if you like, the chef can set up something special under one of the beautiful acacia trees where you can enjoy your lunch as you have unobstructed view of the lake. The rift valley bar is just the right spot for that magical sundowner.

Lie by the pool or have a refreshing out-door massage after that amazing game drive and in the evening, join our cultural dancers as they teach you the origins of true African dance. Let you spirit take flight.



### **Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge**

On the southern shores of Lake Naivasha is Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge. The lake is the only freshwater lake within Africa's Great Rift Valley. The lake teems with freshwater fish and bathing hippo. This is the safari traveler's place of relaxation and rejuvenation; a perfect blend of luxury and safari spirit. Here the avid bird watcher sees paradise in a vast

array of exotic bird life. The lake region is host to distinctive herds of plains game and the elusive black faced colobus monkey.

Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge has panoramic views of the environs and the lake. Luxuriously appointed rooms feature spacious sunken lounges, while upper floor rooms have their own private balcony on which to relax, sunbathe or view game. The main restaurant serves a multi-ethnic combination of European, African and Asian dishes, all made with fresh produce. The lodge is guarded 24 hours a day by Masai warriors who will also escort guests to their rooms, particularly after dark.



### **Tipilikwani Luxury Tented Camp**

As the maxim goes: Location! Location! Location! Set on the banks of the Talek River and overlooking the Mara plains, Tipilikwani Camp has one of the most spectacular views available. Set in the middle of what is considered the greatest wildlife reserve in Africa, Maasai Mara is home to one of the modern wonders of the world; the wildebeest migration as well as home to the Big Five. Enjoy an alfresco breakfast by the Talek River or a cold refreshing drink over a spectacular sunset or experience fine dining by candlelight all overlooked by carefully trained attentive staff. During the day, search for lions, cheetah, elephant, leopard, black rhino, giraffe, zebra, hippo and over 500 resident bird species including larks, sunbirds and the Lilac- Breasted Roller This is the Tipilikwani Experience.



### **Serengeti Sopa Lodge**

Looking out over the seemingly endless Serengeti plains, this hillside lodge is a tranquil oasis set in over 14,000 sq kms (5,000 sq miles) of National Park. The Serengeti plains are host to a dramatic annual migration of hundreds of thousands of wildebeest and numerous other species of animals indigenous to the area

Opened in 1992, the lodge can accommodate 170 guests in 79 suites, each enjoying wall-to-wall carpeting, a private lounge with a mini bar, a bedroom with two queen size beds and ample room for a third, an en-suite bathroom with shaver sockets and a hair dryer, and a private verandah which offers stunning views over the plains.

The lodge has direct-dial satellite telephone facilities as well as satellite television and wildlife-video-film options. A numbers of lodge electrical generating systems provide 240volts, 50 cycles 24 hours a day. Our water supply comes from nearby springs but guests are advised not to drink from the taps. Instead, complimentary bottled mineral water is provided in the mini bars while further stocks are available for sale in the main bar. We welcome kids of all ages and can provide both special meals at convenient times and baby sitters on request. Our guest shop stocks a wide selection of curios, gift items, clothing, film, sweets, postcards, personal requisites and toiletries, while the other offers gemstones, jewellery and other more unusual items. The double size pool offers a refreshing interlude between game drives as well as wonderful views over the rolling plains of the Serengeti. Also, we can supply diesel and can carry out most minor repairs.



### **Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge**

Spread out along the uppermost, eastern rim of the Ngorongoro World Heritage Site, the lodge offers breathtaking views of the crater floor far below. A day's safari through this unique conservation area provides you with spectacular and memorable game viewing experiences.

The lodge is located on Lemala Hill on the uppermost, eastern rim of the Ngorongoro Crater, a World Heritage Site, in the volcanic highlands of northern Tanzania. The crater forms part of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area which covers 8,300sq kms (3,200 sq. miles).

Opened in 1992, the lodge can accommodate 190 guests in 92 suites, each enjoying wall-to-wall carpeting, central heating, a private lounge with a mini bar, a bedroom with two queen size beds and ample room for a third, an en-suite bathroom with shaver sockets and a hair dryer, and a private solarium which offers stunning views either down into the crater floor below or of the setting sun over the western horizon.

Communications: The lodge has direct-dial satellite telephone facilities as well as satellite television and wildlife-video-film options. A number of lodge electrical generating systems provide 240volts, 50 cycles 24 hours a day. Our water supply comes from nearby springs but guests are advised not to drink from the taps. Instead, complimentary bottled mineral water is provided in the mini bars while further stocks are available for sale in the main bar. Kids of all ages are welcome to the lodge, special meals at convenient times and baby sitters are provided on request. Guest shops stock a wide selection of curios, gift items, clothing, film, sweets, postcards, personal requisites and toiletries. A swimming pool is situated on the very edge of the crater itself and the water is bracing, even invigorating to say the least, at any time of year. However, for those who would prefer the warmth of a shower or bath in their suite, the pool is a perfect area to unwind and relax while enjoying the views of the crater floor below or of the sunsets in the evenings.



### **Escarpment Lodge**

Escarpment Luxury Lodge boast 16 excellently appointed and private chalets offering double, singles and triples. Each chalet has its own private deck from which you can view the lake below you and watch wildlife as it drifts through the lodge grounds. Abundant bird life fills the trees and bushes which grow right up to your deck – affording you the sense of being immediate with the natural bush of Africa whilst luxuriating in your private chalet.

Wooden floors and wide windows and doors add to the natural feel of the lodge and every effort has been made to ensure comfort and luxury: large beds with sumptuous linen, leather sofas in your own small lounge area, handmade and recycled finishes in keeping with our intention to encourage an eco-friendly environment and a large, deep bath from which you can survey the bush and the lake.

Wake in the mornings to the gentle sound of a wooden cow-bell, straight from the neck of a Masaai cow, take your tea or

indeed any meal on your deck and enjoy sundowners as you watch the sun set and the gorges and hills surrounding the area grow dark against the sunset.

Artifacts used in Masaai culture complete the look of your chalet where you are afforded the luxury of chandeliers and soft linens and leather sofas as well as the ethnicity of local goods.

Each chalet boasts both an inside and outside shower – imagine the glory of taking a shower under African stars as you listen to the night sounds of the bush around you – or early morning outdoor showers to the rising sun and the sound of birds waking.

Escarpment Luxury Lodge has taken every care to provide attention to detail and to meet your needs for comfort and luxury whilst enjoying the immediacy of the African bush right at your window or doorstep. In your private chalet you will truly...escape the world.



## Location and park information

### Nairobi

It is impossible to believe that just over 100 years ago the only visitors to the area which is now Nairobi were the Maasai tribe, who used to water their cattle at a "boggy waterhole". They called it Enkare Nyarobi – literally 'the place of cold water'. In the dying years of the 19th century as the Uganga railway forged its way through Kenya, the area became a railhead for the assault on the eastern wall of the escarpment. Because of the swampy surroundings, the railway workers camps rapidly turned into a shanty town, inhabited by rats which brought the plague, and it is doubtful if anyone could envisage that one day this would become the 'City in the Sun'

Between the 1903 and 1908 potential settlers arrived in Kenya responding to the promise of cheap agricultural land (which did not strictly belong to the government to give away) and many wealthy sportsmen arrived to hunt the game. Hotels sprang up to cater for the visitors and the base for the valuable tourist industry was laid during those early years.

In 1950 Nairobi became a City by Royal Charter, the streets ablaze with flowering trees and shrubs and to this day the flowering jacaranda trees in the later months of the year are one of Nairobi's great attractions.

Nairobi is now a city of around 3 million people and the heart of the commerce and industry for the whole of East Africa. Over the years the city has developed with modern infrastructure, the expected high rise buildings, tourist hotels and many places of entertainment. Additionally Nairobi has a near perfect climate, lying 144 km south of the equator at an altitude of 5451ft (1662m) and 494 km from the shores of the Indian Ocean. The city has maintained its cosmopolitan ambience which is apparent, not only in the different races and communities who work in and around the city, but also in the architecture and variety of religious buildings, churches, temples, mosques, synagogues.

The range of attractions and places to visit are amazing. A typical day could perhaps start with a tour of the city, including visits to the excellent Railway Museum with its records of the history of the railway (which is also the history of the country). Here visitors may see the carriage from which an unfortunate Superintendent for the Railway was dragged by a man-eating lion in the year 1900.

The National Museum of Kenya has fine exhibits of East African fauna, birds, fish and reptiles as well as collection of cultural merit. An organised tour may also include visits to the City Hall and Law Courts, the bazaars and the markets with their colourful displays of locally grown fruit and flowers as well as handicrafts and many different centres of worship, including the spectacular Jamia Mosque. A visit should be paid to the Memorial Park, created in memory of the many victims of the inhumane bombing of the American Embassy and nearby buildings on 7 August 1998. This is the only city in the world which has a National Park on its doorstep, and within a short drive visitors enter completely a different world – the Nairobi National Park. Lion, cheetah, buffalo and rhino as well as more common plains game like gazelles, zebra, ostrich and giraffe live within the park.

Many will have heard of the film 'Out of Africa' which starred Meryl Streep as Karen Blixen and Robert Redford as her lover, Denys Finch Hatton. The well developed suburb of Karen takes its name from the author, and any visit to this area should include a visit to her old home set 'in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills'.

A short distance away, the Giraffe Centre, where the history of the endangered Rothschild Giraffe (which include the famous "Daisy Rothschild") can be studied and the descendants of the family can be fed, will also appeal.

A morning visit can be paid to the famous Daphne Sheldrake orphans, tiny elephant, rhino and occasionally a kudu which have been rescued from the wilds and are brought up until they are capable of returning to the bush.

Within the environs of Nairobi there are several excellent golf courses (one running alongside the main highway opposite the city centre); a proliferation of social clubs offering facilities for cricket, tennis, field hockey, squash, rugby and swimming and a popular race course set alongside the indigenous forest.

The unique and popular Carnivore spit roast complex on the edge of the game park offers game meat as a speciality, in addition to the more normal roasts expected by dedicated meat-eaters.

As a 'Safari capital' of East Africa, Nairobi has more than enough to entertain any visitor for several days, either before of after their planned safari.

### **Samburu, Shaba & Buffalo Springs Game Reserve**

In the arid North of Kenya, water means life. The waters of the great Ewaso Nyiro River draw wildlife in great numbers to its banks, creating an oasis of green. This river flows through three great northern reserves, Samburu, Buffalo Springs and Shaba. This is spectacular country, set against a backdrop of the mighty Mountain Ol Olokwe. The verdant riverine forest is a stark contrast to the arid thorn studded plains. Samburu is visited by large herds of Elephants, drawn by the promise of water. In the dry season, the elephants use their tusks to dig deep into the dry river beds, unearthing precious water. These waterholes then become a focal point for other game. The Samburu region is the best place to find several endemic Northern species, including Gerenuk, the Reticulated Giraffe, and Grevy's Zebra. The forests along the river banks are home to many birds, including local species such as the Palm Nut Vulture and the Vinaceous Dove. These forests are also home to many Leopards, often seen at dusk. The sight of one of these beautiful and elusive creatures is always a rare treat.

Lions are also frequently seen on the riverbanks, and Cheetah can be found on the open plains. On rare occasion, packs of African Hunting Dogs are sighted passing through the reserve. Shaba was where Joy Adamson, author of Born Free spent her final years, returning a leopard to the wild. This was the subject of her final book, Queen of Shaba. More recently, Shaba served as the location for the hit series Survivor Africa, which pitted its contestants against the challenges of this wild remote country.

The Ewaso Nyiro is also an important water source for the Samburu villages surrounding the reserves. The Samburu culture is a truly fascinating one, sharing a great deal of ancestral and linguistic ties to the Maasai.

The Samburu are herders of Camels and Goats, and are often seen on the reserve boundaries bringing their animals to water.

In areas around the reserves, there are several private sanctuaries working closely with the Samburu to protect both their tribal lands and the local wildlife. These sanctuaries are open to guests, and are well worth visiting for those interested in Samburu culture.

The entire Samburu region is a place of breathtaking and magical beauty, a place where the vision of a deep red sunset silhouetting the doum palms along the river as a leopard emerges to hunt brings the perfect end to a day on safari.....

### **Lake Nakuru National Park**

Lake Nakuru National Park covers 188 sq kms and is dominated by the shallow waters of the lake at its centre. The lake itself is about 62 sq km and the birdlife is superb, with over 450 species recorded. Lake Nakuru is especially famous for its concentrations of greater and lesser flamingos and pelicans, which at certain times of year number in the millions.

The landscape surrounding the lake is a picturesque combination of savannah, marshes and woodland which supports a good variety of wildlife. Tree climbing lions, buffalo, waterbuck, Burchell's zebra, hippo, baboons, impala and Rothschild's giraffe can all be seen, and Nakuru is recognized as one of the best places in the country for daytime leopard sightings. The national park is also one of Kenya's premier rhino sanctuaries, with good numbers of breeding white and black rhino.

Lake Nakuru national park is 2 hours drive north of Nairobi, and is accessible using 2-wheel-drive vehicles. A leisurely drive around the lake takes about 3 hours.

### **Masai Mara Game Reserve**

Probably the most famous of the reserves, the Masai Mara, in Kenya's south western corner, boasts an astonishing amount of game. Unfenced, the Mara is bounded in the east by the Ngama Hills and in the west by the Oololo or Siria Escarpment. Gazelle, wildebeest and zebra graze in large numbers and where prey is found so are predators. Not only is this a great place in which to find game, but the wide greeny-gold savannahs spotted with thorn trees make it ideal for photography. The Mara, as it is known in Kenya, is ravishingly beautiful and also offers long, undisturbed views and utterly dramatic panoramas. The weather really means something here. The sun may beat down unforgivingly, huge clouds in fabulous shapes may sweep across the widest of skies, the wind ripples the grasses as though they are stroked by a giant hand. The landscape is stunning.

The famously black-manned Mara lions are possibly the stars of the Mara show, but cheetah, elephant, kongoni, topi, Thompson's gazelle, waterbuck, hyena, and primates are all here too. As with the rest of Kenya, the birding is good. There is no settlement within the reserve however; the Mara is in theory owned by the Maasai, pastoralists and, in earlier times, renowned lion-killers. Lodges and hotels offer the opportunity to buy their beadwork, checked cloths and copies of their spears. It is said that if lions scent approaching Maasai on the breeze they move swiftly in the opposite direction.

Famously, the Mara is the northerly end of the Great Migration, that great primeval surge of wildebeest, zebra and antelope that sweeps in from Tanzania's Serengeti to Kenya's Masai Mara as the Tanzanian grass starts to fail. They are tracked by the large predators who pick off the weak, the stragglers and the young. The great herds, nearing their destination by July, mass along the Mara River, pushing, shoving and fantastically noisy, just waiting for the first animal to cross so that they can all follow, lemming-like, on the final leg of the journey. However, crocodiles lie in wait, sluggishly cruising the waters, fully prepared for their best meal of the year. Many fail in the life-and-death struggle - drowned, eaten by the crocodiles or, made careless or weak by their stressful swim, brought down by lions. The Masai Mara is terrible yet wonderful, and not to be missed.

### **Serengeti National Park**

A vast expanse of flat savannah grasses stretching from horizon to horizon, broken only by an occasional gnarled acacia and rocky kopje, the Serengeti has some of the highest wildlife concentrations in the whole of Africa. Year round it is one of the best safari holiday destinations to see the "big five"; elephant, rhino, lion, leopard and buffalo, whilst the central Seronera area of the Serengeti has one of the continent's densest populations of the elusive leopard.

The short grass on the Serengeti plains makes it easier to see many of the smaller animals that are always present in the African bush but seldom observed. Fascinating creatures such as aardwolf, porcupines, badgers, jackals, mongooses, meerkats and pangolins can all be sighted.

Adding to the resident wildlife is the annual migration of the wildebeest. Their journey starts in December in the southern Serengeti and finally leaves the northern Serengeti in early August, heading into Kenya. Vast numbers of zebra, giraffe, buffalo, eland and gazelle species also get caught up in the wildebeest throng. Keeping them company is a travelling band of predators and scavengers taking full advantage of the extra food on offer.

### **Ngorongoro Conservation Area**

Popularly known as the eighth wonder of the world, the Ngorongoro crater is a spectacular micro-ecosystem that boasts almost all of East Africa's famous wildlife species. The Ngorongoro crater is 16 kilometres in diameter and with walls 610 metre high, it is the largest intact crater in the world. More remarkable still, its confines are home to over 25,000 large mammals.

Hemmed in by the forested walls, the crater floor has a combination of soda lakes, acacia forests, lush marshes, and dry savannah. These diverse habitats support the full cast of East Africa's brilliant animal and bird life; lions, elephants, hippos, buffalo, leopard, ostriches, flamingos, eagles, vultures... to name but a few. The teeming bird population includes more than 100 species not found in the Serengeti.

The Ngorongoro is a conservation area that is owned by the Masai – and in this part of Tanzania the Masai, in their striking traditional dress, are as much a part of the scene as the huge population of wild animals.

## **Lake Manyara National Park**

Stretched along the base of the rift valley escarpment, Lake Manyara national park covers an area of 390 km<sup>2</sup>. The lake is a ground water reservoir, which is partially fed by small rivers and hot springs. The park is well known for its tree-climbing lions, which spend hours in the branches of giant acacia trees up to ten metres above the ground. It also has a big elephant population and a wide range of other large mammals.

The stunning views of the flamingo-filled lake and the Rift Valley escarpment rising up behind it make Lake Manyara a particularly rewarding safari destination for artists and photographers. Bird-watchers will also find this park especially worthwhile with nearly 400 species present. Among them are bee-eaters, kingfishers, storks, hornbills, over 50 raptor species as well as huge flocks of pelicans and flamingos whose pink colours light up the waters of the lake.