

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)**

### **ABOUT A SAFARI IN EAST AFRICA**

#### **When is the best season to go on a safari?**

Kenya and Tanzania are both all year-round destinations. However, the most popular seasons are mid-December to mid-March and July to the end of October. This is because of the demand for Christmas and winter holidays and the summer school breaks. An increasing number of visitors are realizing that June and November is ideal, benefiting from lower visitor numbers.

Also, safaris in the month of April and May have a greatly reduced price or no single supplements at all.

#### **What is the climate like?**

East Africa enjoys one of the most favourable climates in the world. Kenya lies along the equator and elevations vary from 3,000 to 7,000+ ft. above the sea level at the coast. The altitude should be taken into consideration especially for those who live on or near sea level. Proper precautions against the sun should be taken at all times due to proximity of the Equator. Sunscreen, hat and long sleeves are recommended. Generally, the days are warm and pleasant with cooler nights. In some areas, such as the Maasai Mara and Mt. Kenya, nights can be very chilly and in the northern regions days can be quite hot. The coast region is hot and humid. There are two rainy seasons, triggered by the sun crossing the equator; the long rains in April and May and the short rains in November and December.

#### **How far in advance should I book my safari?**

It is better to book as far in advance as possible to ensure availability at the time you wish to travel (4-6 months), especially during the peak seasons (July & August and Christmas/New Year). This is especially important for those wishing to travel on private custom made safaris.

#### **Can I take my children on safari?**

Children are very welcomed to accompany their parents on safari as most camps and lodges do not have a problem with that. However, there are some restrictions with some high-class properties that do not take children; again, these you'll have to confirm with us before booking your safari.

#### **How do we get around?**

Transport is either in specially outfitted mini-vans, which seat six passengers comfortably and have pop-up roofs for game viewing, or in four-wheel-drive vehicles with roof hatches. One of these types of vehicles will be used for game drives and depending on your itinerary; transfers between destinations will either be by road or light aircraft on scheduled or chartered service.

## **What do we do all day?**

The main focus on safari is wildlife observation and photography within the game reserves and national parks. There are also cultural opportunities such as visits to tribal villages and festive dancing performances. Many lodges have a pool and library, and offer nature walks or other day-time activities with slide shows, lectures or videos in the evening.

## **What happens on a game drive?**

Game drives start early to enhance possibilities of observing the wildlife while it is still active. Morning tea or coffee and biscuits are served before dawn and then off to the vehicles to see what adventures await. The vehicles are comfortable and modified with special roof openings. They contain cool boxes which can be stocked with drinking water and soft drinks as per the client's request. Vehicles also have guide books for species identification. We suggest you slow down the pace and take time to observe the behaviour of the animals. Often this will result in an unusual or unexpected surprise. Most game drives last about 3-4 hours before returning to camp for meals. Mid-morning drives are offered in some locations and in others one can watch game right from the lodge or camp. Late afternoon affords another opportunity to explore until sunset.

## **What is the food like?**

The food on safari is excellent and prepared to the highest standards. European cuisine is standard fare. Due to our wonderful climate, the fruits and vegetables are excellent and feature frequently in menu preparation. Kenyan-grown coffee and tea are served universally. Breakfast usually consists of eggs cooked to order accompanied by bacon, sausage, potatoes, grilled tomatoes and baked beans. Also served are cereals and toast, as well as a large selection of fresh tropical fruits and juices. Lunch is often buffet with soup, a selection of salads, several main courses such as roasted meats or casseroles, pasta and vegetables and an unbelievable assortment of desserts. Depending on the lodge or camp, dinner will also be buffet or frequently table d'hôte with starters, soup, salad, choice of main course and dessert. Occasionally, game meat such as crocodile or ostrich is offered, along with traditional african foods like ugali and sukuma wiki (corn meal and greens). The most common complaint about the food is the over-abundance of it!

## **Can special dietary requirements be accommodated?**

Yes. Special dietary requirements are catered for in almost every East African establishment. However advanced notice is required so that arrangements are made with the lodges and camps you are scheduled to stay in. Most restaurants offer selections for vegetarians, depending on their forte. Local specialties can be surprisingly good! With the exception of a few lodges, halaal and kosher food is not available at most camps/lodges

## **Is it ok to drink the water? What about Ice?**

While water in major towns is chlorinated and relatively safe to drink, it is safer to drink sealed bottled water available in most hotels and lodges and also sold locally in supermarkets. Destination Kenya also provides water to its clients while on safari. Ice at the lodges is made with treated and filtered water and should be considered safe.

## **What vaccinations are required?**

Currently none are required to enter Kenya, but yellow fever vaccination is mandatory for Tanzania and Zanzibar.

### **What if I get sick?**

We recommend that you be adequately insured both with medical and traveler's insurance with medical evacuation coverage out of the country should that become necessary. Healthcare services in Nairobi are quite good and up-to-date. Furthermore we recommend that our clients be enrolled in the Flying Doctors Society for a fee, which provides medical evacuation from the bush to the nearest hospital in the event of emergency.

### **What about malaria?**

Malaria prevention medication should be taken according to doctor's instructions before, during and after a visit to affected areas. Malaria is a serious tropical disease, which is spread by night-biting mosquitoes which transmit a parasite. Therefore, avoiding getting bitten is essential and the most effective means of preventing the disease. Long-sleeved shirts and trousers should be worn in the evenings and insect repellent used. Tents and lodge rooms are supplied with bug spray or "mizzie chips" for use at night.

### **What do I wear on safari?**

Comfortable, casual clothing is best for safari life. Light to medium-weight khaki trousers or shorts, skirts for women, and t-shirts work well. Generally, neutral colours are more acceptable in the bush. Sandals or sneakers are suitable footwear. There are few occasions for dressy clothes; "smart casual" (skirts or dressy trousers for women, and trousers with collared shirts for men) would be the most required. Laundry is available at all camps and lodges so avoid bringing too much gear - one medium-sized soft-sided duffel bag is ideal as space is limited in the vehicles and weight is restricted on all internal flights. Safari attire is available for sale in Nairobi.

### **What photography advice can you give?**

A good camera will make the difference between having photos of spectacular wildlife and having vague, little dots of animals to show family and friends. The more common "point-and-shoot" cameras are too small. On safari, you won't always be able to get up close to wildlife. A SLR (single lens reflex) camera with a 200-300mm lens is recommended. More serious photographers may choose telephoto lenses of 400 or 500mm. Larger lenses often require a tripod, which cannot be used on a moving vehicle. A 2x teleconverter is useful for doubling the focal length of your lens. A zoom lens, such as a 70 to 210 mm lens, is probably the best option for shooting a moving subject.

Important Note: Not all African cultures are familiar with cameras. Rural folks will often shy away from having their picture taken. Please be sensitive. Some locals may ask a fee for having their photograph taken. It is recommended you avoid photographing anything relating to government and military installations, including personnel (soldiers and police) and buildings (post offices, banks, airports, border posts, railway stations and bridges)

### **What about the electricity?**

Kenya's electricity supply is 210-240 volts. The outlets are designed for a three-pronged flat-pinned plug.

### **Can I charge my batteries on safari?**

Yes. Most of the lodges and camps have facilities for charging batteries.

### **Is it safe to go shopping?**

In all major cities and towns, it is unsafe to shop in the downtown sections. Like any big city, our towns too draw some criminal elements and so one need to exercise common sense. Most incidents involve purse snatching or stealing of watches and jewellery. We recommend that you go with a local escort who can guide you to appropriate areas. While out, don't wear any jewellery- in fact, it's a good idea to leave all your jewellery at home. Always take a taxi at night.

### **What kind of shopping is available?**

There is a full variety of shopping from fine art and jewellery to wonderful handicrafts such as textiles, stone and wood carvings, batiks and basketry to name a few. There are books on the people, landscapes and wildlife of Kenya as well as field guides to assist identification of species and enhance your knowledge on safari.

### **How much do I tip the drivers, waiters, porters and others?**

Tipping is always discretionary, however it is appreciated as acknowledgment of service well rendered. Most lodges have a tip box which is either distributed amongst the entire camp staff or to those behind the scenes. Check with camp management to discern the system. If the tips are distributed equally amongst the staff, please use the system to your own level of generosity. US\$ 1-2 per bag or local equivalent is satisfactory for portage as is \$3 per person per day for dining staff. Recommended tips for driver/guides is \$7-10 per person per day. If at any time along the way someone provides you with special services it is appropriate to express your appreciation with a gratuity.

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## **Destination Kenya**

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