

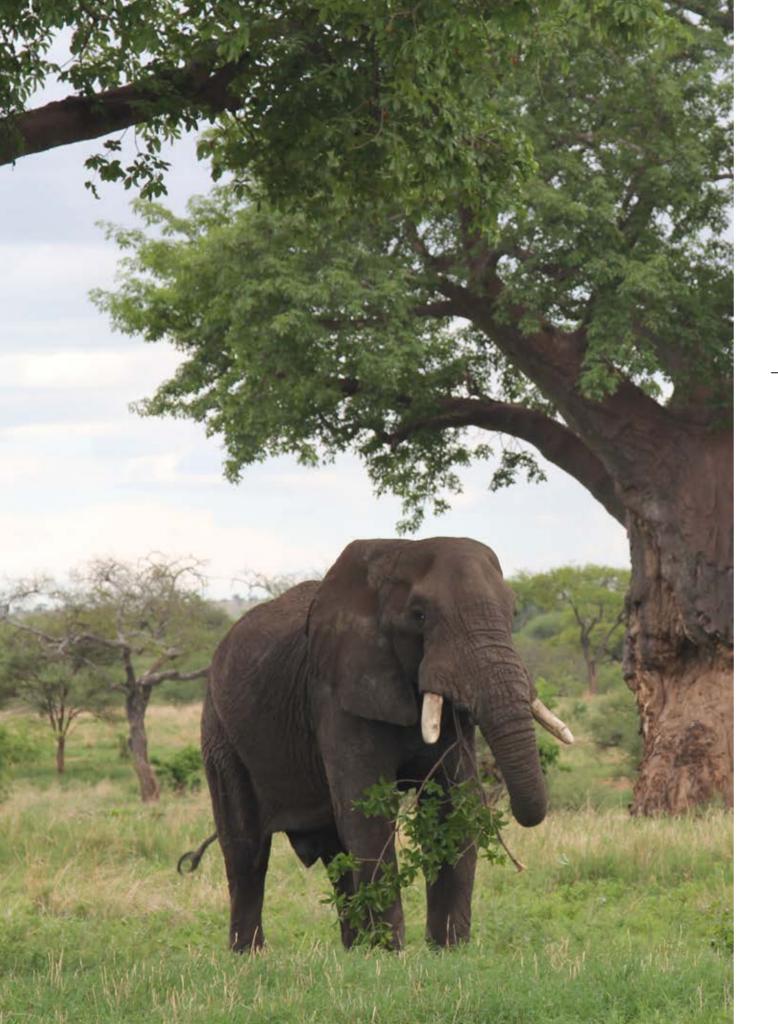




Kenya is the birthplace of African safari and at the heart of this legendary destination lies its capital city of Nairobi. Founded in 1899, Nairobi began as a rail depot and trading centre for Kenya's coffee, tea and sisal industries, and later grew to become the country's administrative capital as well as East Africa's main safari portal. Its original Swahili name was Ewaso Nai'beri – which means 'Place of Cool Waters' because the city's position on the plateau makes it much cooler than its tropical coastal cousin, Mombasa. Ewaso Nai'beri was contracted to Nairobi and today this massive metropolis

is also fondly known as, 'The Green City in the Sun'. It is the largest city between Johannesburg in South Africa and Cairo in Egypt, and the only one in the world that has its own game reserve – Nairobi National Park. Proclaimed in 1946, it stretches 113km²/70mi² across plains, cliffs and forest, providing habitat for rhino, cheetah and lion. Nairobi has long been the safari gateway to the world-famous Masai Mara and is ideally equipped for safari goers who would like to spend a night or two here recovering from or preparing for a long-haul flight. English and Swahili are widely spoken,

and Go2Africa will ensure that you are met at the airport and that all your transfers, activities and accommodation are taken care of. There is also fantastic shopping, especially for beautiful glass, bronze and bead wares. We have been bringing travellers to Africa since 1998. Because we are 100 percent independent, we only recommend the best, tried-and-tested suppliers to you. We don't call our consultants African Safari Experts lightly – they earn this title through regular travel, training and written examinations. We love inspiring and informing the Go2Africa travel community.



EVERYTHING YOU **NEED TO KNOW**

- **3 Why go:** More than a layover
- **4 Top tips:** Getting Around & What to Pack
- **5** Where to stay: Comfortable to Luxurious Hotels
- **11 Where to Eat:** Nairobi's Best Restaurants
- **16** What to See & Do: Visit top animal sanctuaries
- **20** Where to Shop: Arts, Crafts & Mementoes





GETTING AROUND

Jomo Kenyatta International Airport is the regional hub and if you're catching a flight to another major airport, then you'll do so from there. If you're on your way to Kenya's game reserves or Diani Beach (also known as Ukunda) on the coast, then you will fly via Wilson Airport. One of the reasons we recommend up to two days in Nairobi is because the traffic is very heavy — it can take a long time to travel from one side of the city to the other, which has an impact on how many places you can see or things you can do in a day. It is impossible to experience everything Nairobi has to over during a layover between flights. We will arrange all your transfers for you: when you land at Jomo Kenyatta, an accredited, English-speaking driver will be waiting to whisk you to your hotel.

WHAT TO PACK

The climate in Nairobi is relatively temperate and differences between seasons are fairly minimal. Winter evenings are chillier, especially in June and July when temperatures can drop to about 9°C/48°F. The mean maximum temperature for summer months from December to March is 24°C/75°F. The annual rainy season is from about March to May, while intermittent drizzle falls from about November to January. Depending on when you are travelling, we recommend packing comfortable, closed walking shoes, a hat or peaked cap, a fleece or a warm or waterproof jacket, and sun-protection lotion. If you are eating out at a fine-dining restaurant, pack one smart-casual outfit. Kenyans are modest so try to keep everything from your shoulders to your knees covered – long shorts and T-shirts are perfectly acceptable.

WHERE TO **STAY**

Choosing where to stay in Nairobi depends on the itinerary you create with your Africa Safari Expert. The city has accommodation to suit all travellers, from modern airport hotels and historic grand dames to tented camps that give you your first taste of safari.

Most of Nairobi's upscale hotels are in the ambassadorial enclave known as Karen, which has plenty of restaurants and other 'must-see' hotspots nearby. For overnight stays without any sightseeing, an establishment close to the airports will be more convenient.



THE BOMA HOTEL

The Boma Hotel is a modern establishment near both Jomo Kenyatta and Wilson airports, making it ideal for a short layover when you have no sightseeing planned. Unwind from a long flight in the Zoezi Spa or solar-heated rooftop swimming pool, catch up with friends and family on the Wi-Fi, enjoy a good dinner at either Johari Restaurant or Tembo Bistro and a comfortable night's sleep before catching your next flight in the morning.

The rooms have blackout curtains and double glazing, insulating you from the everyday sounds of the city and making for a peaceful night.



EKA HOTEL

Another establishment with easy access to both airports and a host of facilities is the Eka Hotel on Mombasa Avenue. Once again, you can expect up-to-date suites with air conditioning, satellite television and Internet access, two on-site eateries (The Galaxy hosts your three meals a day and there is also a laidback steakhouse for burgers, fries and so forth) and a sparkling swimming pool surrounded by a sunny pool deck. The layout of suites means that the bathroom and bedroom areas are almost merged, something to bear in mind if you prefer not to get to know your travel companion too intimately!

















NAIROBI TENTED CAMP

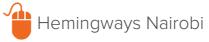
To get a true feel for Nairobi, consider staying beyond the city limits and airport district. Nairobi Tented Camp is located inside Nairobi National Park in a beautiful riverine forest. This comfortable and down-to-earth tented lodge offers a glimpse into Kenya's untamed wilderness and is a great way to ease in or out of your East African safari. For first-timers, this is the perfect way to maximise your safari experience or go on a few 'practise game drives' before heading out for the real deal.



HEMINGWAYS NAIROBI

Hemingways Nairobi is a sprawling grand hotel set in a beautiful garden estate in Karen, overlooking the Ngong Hills. The Daphne Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage and the Giraffe Manor are located nearby so you can be back after a morning's excursion in time for high tea on the lawns (or your butler can arrange sundowners for you).

Hemingways' architecture harks back to a classic era of exposed beams, clapboard walls and wide verandas that catch the cooling breeze. Rooms are tastefully furnished with comfortable armchairs, 4-poster beds swathed in netting and private balconies. The en suite bathrooms have similar old-fashioned glamour: sink back into a petal-strewn tub as you unwind by candlelight.







HOUSE OF WAINE

House of Waine is charming and is also located in Karen - as a boutique hotel, it delivers a good dose of old-world hospitality in an intimate setting. The owner's family has deep roots in Kenya – one ancestor founded a traditional coffee shop (known as an 'mkahawa') at Mwiria near Mount Meru in the 1950s.

The gardens cover over two acres and are filled with mature trees that shelter the large freeform swimming pool, which is surrounded by sun loungers. Suites are individually decorated and named after aspects of Kenya (The Manyatta room refers to a Maasai village or home, while the Tembo room reflects the Swahili word for elephant).





GIRAFFE MANOR

If you're looking to really pamper yourself, The Giraffe Manor is sophisticated and luxurious, and you can also share your crumpets with a giraffe at breakfast! The Manor is home to the endangered Rothschild's sub-species of giraffe that are known to poke their heads through the windows and doors at breakfast time, looking for treats. Needless to say, this is a firm favourite with children and honeymooners.

Because it is housed in an old manor house, no two suites at The Giraffe Manor are alike. Set in 12 acres of gardens in 140 acres of forest in the Langata area of Nairobi, the giraffes share their home with plenty of birdlife.











WHERE TO **EAT**

Nairobi's cuisine is an exciting combination of traditional African foods like *ugali* (a type of polenta), colonial English influences (reputable bars should serve good gin and tonics) and India (think samosas and chapatis or flatbreads). But the No 1 Kenyan meal is *nyama choma* or roasted meat, washed down with an ice-cold Tusker beer (named for the country's massive elephants) and rounded-off with a cup of freshly ground Kenyan coffee.

Of course you can eat at your hotel but if you want to venture out, ask your Africa Safari Expert to help make bookings for you — she can also arrange your transfers to the restaurant and back. Most of the top eateries are in Karen, making them ideal if you're staying in the area.







TALISMAN

Talisman is well known for its exciting fusion menu, good service and beautiful garden setting in Karen. Dine on classic dishes like braised pork belly, pick something from the seasonal menu, or try delectable specialities like feta-and-coriander samosas or 5-spice yellowfin tuna.

This Boho-chic restaurant is perfect for romantic candlelit dinners, while the cosy cocktail bar is well-stocked and has around 20 wines to choose from. It's also a family-friendly venue located with lovely grounds for children to explore and leafy courtyards for alfresco dining. When you've had your fill, take a stroll around the vegetable and herb garden or browse local artwork at the onsite gallery.



THE CARNIVORE

In keeping with the national fervour for *nyama choma*, The Carnivore is a world-famous Nairobi establishment that offers a unique African dining experience. There's no menu or buffet table – instead, your party is treated to a 'Beast of a Feast' that includes almost every cut of barbequed meat from crocodile and venison to leg of pork, rack of lamb, beef spare ribs, sausage and spicy chicken. The meat is roasted on traditional Maasai swords over a central charcoal pit and is carved at your table onto a sizzling cast-iron plate.

This movable feast continues until you raise 'a white flag of surrender', at which point a selection of desserts and Kenyan coffee are served. There is a healthy list of South African wines, and a small selection of Italian, French and Chilean wine. The Carnivore is located next door to the Simba Saloon ('simba' means 'lion' in Swahili) where you can top off your evening with traditional dancing and live music.



'The Carnivore is one of those legendary restaurants that everyone should experience: eat your fill here and enjoy the lovely vibe.'

Lauren Johansson, African Safari Expert

A very authentic, African restaurant experience that is worth the visit if you have the time and love to eat meat. It has a vibrant African atmosphere; the food was good but it is the whole experience that makes it worth the visit. The staff are amazingly friendly.'



Mary Keet, African Safari Expert



Africa is quite fun and a bit different to an ordinary restaurant.'

Anja Naude, African Safari Expert









TAMAMBO KAREN BLIXEN COFFEE GARDEN

Also set in Karen, the Tamambo Karen Blixen Coffee Garden is much more than just a coffee house. Open throughout the day, you can enjoy a selection of dishes from across the African continent like Moroccan lamb tajine, Zanzibari seafood curry or Madagascan peppercorn duckling. If you're after something more familiar, try classics like Norwegian salmon or a prime cut of Kenya's finest highland steak. Tamambo Karen is located at the site of Karen Blixen's former farmhouse - one of the oldest estates in Nairobi with a beautifully established garden. Dine indoors, on the terrace, on the grounds or book the Grogan House for intimate and private dining with friends and family.





'This is a great venue! With lovely gardens and large trees, Tamambo has a very lush outdoors feel to it. It just makes you want to sit, relax and enjoy the surroundings.' Anja Naude, African Safari Expert



HEMINGWAYS NAIROBI BRASSERIE

Hemingways Nairobi Brasserie has brought contemporary European cuisine and state-of-the-art cooking technology to Kenya's burgeoning capital. Specialities include a *la plancha* steaks grilled over imported charcoal, handmade pastas, sous vide duck, ginger crab and Watamu prawn masala. The cellar promises a fine collection of old and new world wines, and you can also enjoy rare cognacs and single malt whiskeys.

This chic hotel restaurant is located in Karen and its carefully manicured lawns overlook the Ngong Hills – the perfect spot for high afternoon tea. Join the Brasserie for this age-old safari tradition between 3pm and 5pm to sample treats like gâteau opéra, fruit delice, and scones straight from the oven with Cornish clotted cream and home-made strawberry jam.



'Hemingways Brasserie was superb. It offers a very classy fine-dining experience. The venue and dining room are beautiful and the gardens are lovely.'

Anja Naude, African Safari Expert











WHAT TO SEE & DO

Nairobi is a sizable city with plenty to see and do, although the heavy traffic means planning your time carefully. Our highlights allow you to meet some of Kenya's city-dwelling wildlife.

DAPHNE SHELDRICK ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE

The Daphne Sheldrick Elephant Trust is one of the most loved and applauded conservation projects in Kenya. The sanctuary was founded in 1977 and has been the most successful orphan-elephant rescue programme in the world, raising over 150 elephants since then. Daphne Sheldrick has dedicated her life to hand-rearing and reintegrating orphans back into the wild, and was made a Dame by Queen Elizabeth II for her accomplishments in elephant conservation.

The sanctuary is open daily to the public for feeding time between 11am and 12pm - try to get there a little earlier to avoid the queues and get a front-row spot. For those who would like to adopt an elephant orphan, foster parents are invited to visit at 5pm. Private visits can also be arranged where you are permitted to enter the shed, feed the elephants and interact with them.







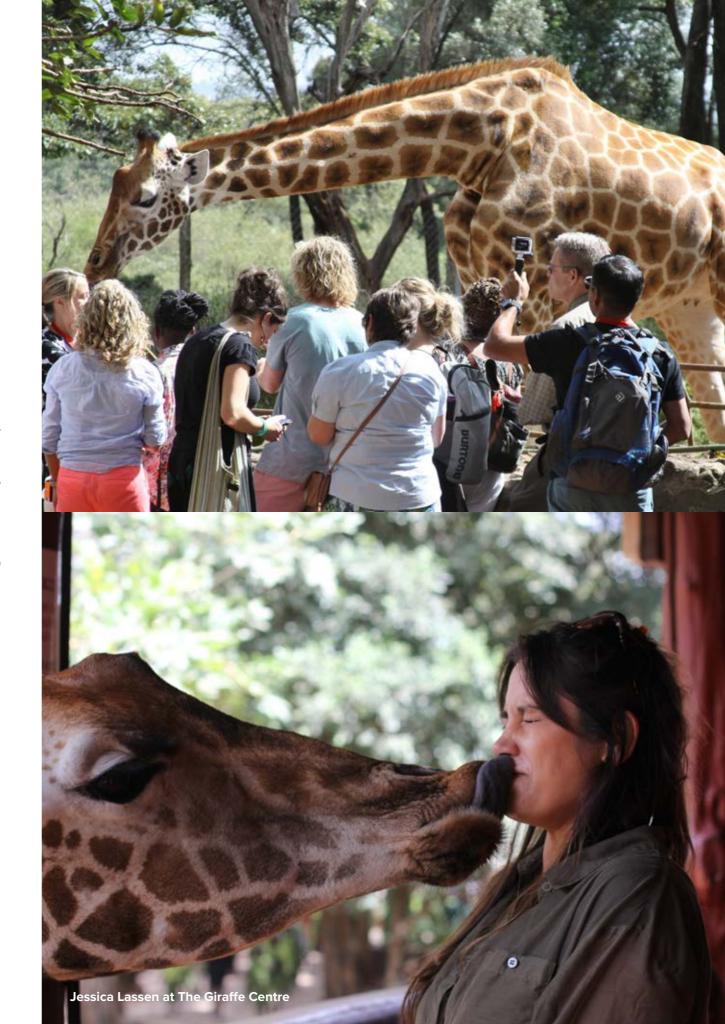


THE GIRAFFE CENTRE

Enjoy fun and interactive encounters with habituated giraffes at this non-profit conservation centre. This is a great activity for the whole family: you can even help to feed the giraffes and, if you have time, you can explore the centre's short nature trail. Ticket sales contribute to the breeding programme for endangered Rothschild's giraffes, and also toward providing free conservation education to Kenyan school children so that they also develop an appreciation for nature.







NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

Located a short drive from the city, Nairobi National Park has an extraordinary setting where big game roam freely against a distant backdrop of high-rise buildings. It is home to endangered black rhino, lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena, buffalo, giraffe and 400 recorded bird species. Take a guided game drive into the park or explore the various walking trails and picnic sites, or book a night at one of the nearby lodges or Nairobi Tented Camp to stay close to the action.



'This is an excellent option to begin your Kenyan adventure and is great if you want to be outside the city before you begin continue on your journey. We saw white and black rhino, lions and zebra.' **Ashley Gerrand, African Safari Expert**













'Where else can you take photos of giraffe in the foreground with the Nairobi skyline in the background? Don't just do a day safari here, book a night if you have the time to spare - there are some wonderful options on accommodation and you get to see wildlife from the minute you set foot in Kenya!'

Lauren Johansson, African Safari Expert



WHERE TO **SHOP**

ARTS, CRAFTS & MEMENTOES



ONE OFF ART GALLERY

One Off is a contemporary art gallery that exhibits some of East Africa's most established artists. As one of Nairobi's oldest modern art galleries, it provides support to local talent. There is a large permanent stock of paintings and sculptures to enjoy as well as a new feature exhibition each month from exclusive and associated artists.



UTAMADUNI CRAFT CENTRE

Utamaduni Craft Centre showcases the best of Kenya's traditional art and craftwork, and offers a tranquil shopping experience in Karen. The 2-storey building has 19 artisanal shops selling fine-quality, locally-made goods including beadwork, jewellery, clothing, sculptures, fabrics, baskets, kitchenware and more.

Staff are welcoming and prices fixed. Goods can easily be shipped to the destination of your choice. There is a tea garden outside as well as a playground to keep children entertained.





KITENGELA GLASS

KAZURI BEADS

BOMAS OF KENYA

Kitengela Glass is a household name in Kenya and produces beautiful blown glass, dalle de verre, lighting, beads and mosaic furniture. Kitengela Glass is sold throughout Kenya but it's worth driving the bumpy road to the workshop where you can browse the wholesale store and take advantage of great discounts not available at other outlets. Another advantage is that you get to see where all the magic happens at the red-brick dome where local artisans do glassblowing and colouring.

Kazuri Handmade Ceramic Beads & Pottery provides permanent employment to over 340 Kenyan women who are skilled in creating beautiful beads, jewellery, dinnerware and collector's pieces. Unique Kazuri products are hand-crafted to reflect the culture and wildlife of Kenya and are hand-painted in rich, vibrant colours. They compete in both the local and international marketplace and the organisation's strong philanthropic approach has resulted in a very beautiful and successful range of products.

Although the Maasai are the best known of all Kenya's various tribes – their red robes against the golden savannah of the Mara are a quintessential Kenyan image – there are many other tribes who've long called the country home. At Bomas of Kenya ('boma' is a Swahili words that means 'homestead'), you can see the traditional homes of the Orutu, Nyatiti, Mwoboko and several other groups, ducking inside thatch huts to see how people lived for centuries.

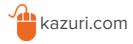
'Kitengela glass can be found at many safari camps in East Africa but a visit here is well worth it - if I could fill up my suitcase just with this glassware, I would!'



'Kazuri beads has grown from strength to strength over the years and the beadwork here is completely unique, beautiful and great for gifts.' 'If you are spending more time in Nairobi, Bomas of Kenya – which has life-size replicas of the different tribes of Kenya's traditional houses - offers a great cultural experience.'

Lauren Johansson, African Safari Expert















MATBRONZE GALLERY

The Matbronze Gallery is an extraordinary place. The building is more English castle than traditional Kenyan village and the gardens are a riot of crocodiles and acacia trees — all made of bronze by sculptors at the foundry. Inside, expect more wonders: everything from perfectly rendered lilac-breasted rollers perched delicately on a branch to life-size gerenuks, the antelopes found in Samburu with extra-long necks that stand on their hinds legs for minutes at a time to graze. Don't worry about only being able to fit some jewellery into your luggage — Matbronze ships their fantastic beasts across the world.



OCEAN SOLE

400 000. That's how many flip-flops washed up onto Kenya's beaches the artisans at Ocean Sole aim to reuse and recycle ever year. The result takes unsightly and dangerous pollution and turns it into two beautiful outcomes: the clearing of Kenya's Indian Ocean from items that choke and kills sea creatures, and the creation of quirky sculptures. Made from several flip-flops artfully glued together and then skilfully carved to reveal the layers of colour beneath, the sculptures are very lightweight and durable – perfect for popping in your luggage as a gift for grown-ups and children alike.





