



Safari *capital of the* World



Cool, clear and cosmopolitan Nairobi is the natural departure point for most safari itineraries. A city of contrasts it is simultaneously the largest, the youngest, the most modern, the highest and the fastest growing city in East Africa.

Nairobi (Nyrobi meaning 'the place of cool waters' in the Maasai language, Maa), came into being in May 1899 as an artificial settlement created by the European builders of the East African railway, halfway between Mombasa and Uganda. Set in bleak swamps, it began life as a supply depot and campsite for the thousands of Indian workers, who were employed to build the so-called 'Lunatic Line'.

Whether you begin or end your trip in Nairobi, there's plenty to do and see: for an hour, a morning, a day or a week. Here are just some of the suggestions; for more information visit: www.magicalkenya.com



Have a *blow out* at Kitengela Glass

The Kitengela Glass Foundry clings to the side of a riverine gorge on the fringe of Nairobi National Park. Mosaics and glass sculptures line the pathways leading to a gallery stacked with glass treasures. What's more, you can watch the glass blowers at work and snap up the best of the one-off pieces. For more information: www.kitengela.com



Go beady-eyed

Kazuri Beads is a Nairobi institution. Founded in 1975 by the late Lady Wood, it began life in her potting shed and ended up as a factory with a flourishing export market. In between it has provided an income for thousands of single women struggling to bring up their children. To appreciate the full range of colourful ceramic jewellery and pottery, take a tour of the factory, or visit one of their retail outlets. For further information: www.kazuri.com

Photo © Annabel Onyango



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Out of Africa

Perhaps the greatest single influence on Kenyan tourism came from the Danish writer, Karen Blixen, whose hitherto relatively unknown book *Out of Africa*, was transformed into the film of the same name, thus prompting an entire generation to yearn to visit Kenya. Both the book and the film begin with the words 'I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills', and both the farm and the Ngong Hills can be seen in the Karen district of Nairobi, where Karen's house has been turned into a museum. Further information: www.museums.or.ke

The library of Bogani House where Danish author Karen Blixen lived during the 1920s and is now the site of the Karen Blixen Museum in the Nairobi suburb of Karen. December 2017 marks 32 years since Sydney Pollack's Oscar-winning film Out of Africa, projected Kenya onto the big screen and around the world.

Jurassic Park

If you're in Nairobi, and you have a few hours to spare, why not take in Kenya's very own Jurassic Park: Olorgesailie Prehistoric Site. 71 kms out of Nairobi, Olorgesailie was once the site of a vast prehistoric lake. Here our earliest ancestor, Homo erectus, hunted for giant pigs, hairy mammoths and gigantic baboons. Excavated by archaeologists, Louis and Mary Leakey, the site remains littered with vast bones and strewn with stone axes. Indeed it is almost exactly how it was 1.2 million years ago: give or take the odd Tyrannosaurus Rex. Visit: www.museums.or.ke



Olorgesailie is unusual because of the large number of handaxes found there, along with other bifacial tools (flaked on two sides to create an edge).

© Chip Clark / Smithsonian Institution



The Nairobi 'City Tour'

Discover the vibrant diversity of this historic city, the uncontested 'Safari Capital of the World' and self-styled 'Green City in the Sun'. Travel straight to the heart of Kenyan culture by visiting art galleries, handicraft centres and bustling markets. Gain a unique insight into Kenya's past and present by seeing the Parliament Building, Jomo Kenyatta's mausoleum, the Kenyatta International Convention Centre, the Railway Museum (background to the 'Lunatic Line' and man-eaters of Tsavo), or the stunningly renovated National Museum of Kenya with its Arboretum and Snake Park. Most hotels offer a city tour, which can be booked from reception.



Walking the walk

Nairobi Safari Walk and Animal Orphanage is a hybrid. A cross between a zoo and an orphanage, it is an excellent educational facility for children and adults alike. It also promises a superb introduction to Kenya's wildlife. A refuge for abandoned and orphaned animals, it also offers a wooden boardwalk that meanders through examples of savannah, forest and wetland areas and gives an overhead view into the holding pens of the many animals – all of which are designed in such a way that the animals appear to be in the wild.

For more information: www.kws.go.ke

A taste of Kenyan culture

For a one-stop introduction designed to deliver the full flavour of Kenyan culture, you might like to take in a visit to the Bomas of Kenya. A dedicated cultural entertainment centre, the 'Bomas' is situated in the Nairobi suburbs (very close to the gates of the Nairobi National Park). Home to the famous 'Harambee' dancers and musicians, who perform daily, it also offers a traditionally-built Kenyan village for your exploration; and the *Nyama Choma Boma* restaurant, serving traditional Kenyan food. For more information: www.bomasofkenya.co.ke



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A crocodile steak... and make it snappy

No trip to Nairobi is complete without a visit to the world-famous Carnivore Restaurant (frequently listed as one of the best restaurants in the world). In entirely unique surroundings, you can get your safari off to a really intrepid start (or a truly carnivorous end) with a famous 'dawa' cocktail (lemon, honey and vodka) followed by such hunter's delights as: ostrich, eland and crocodile steaks seared over red-hot furnaces and served on skewers at your table. For the more faint-hearted there are plenty of fish and vegetarian choices too. For more information: www.tamarind.co.ke



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a city *penned in by* a park

NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

Legend has it that Nairobi National Park was founded because the colonial settlers grew increasingly exasperated by lions. It wasn't just that they wandered the streets by night and filled the graveyard with stones reading 'killed by lions'. It was that they trampled the flowerbeds.

The lions, the settlers said, would have to be penned up.

But it was the rapidly growing city of Nairobi that was finally penned in. In 1945, the 117 square kilometres of rolling plains that lay to the south of the city were made into a wilderness sanctuary. It was East Africa's first national park. And its establishment made Nairobi unique. No other city in the world can boast a natural wilderness, teeming with wildlife and home to over 400 species of birds and over 100 recorded species of fauna just seven kilometres from the city centre. No other city looks out over a rhino sanctuary with one of the highest densities in Africa. No other city stages its own mini migration of the wildebeest; and nowhere else on earth do lions, leopards and cheetahs hunt so close to the restaurants of the glittering new shopping malls. And in no other city on the planet do the skyscrapers fight for skyline space with a forest of giraffe necks.

It's a park with many faces and many moods. There are rocky gorges where baboons swing and rolling plains where buffaloes roam. There are pools where hippos snort and blow and there are dams beside which huge monitor lizards bask. There are picnic sites where city-dwellers gather for barbecues and there are hilltop sites where weddings and events can be staged. It's one of the few places on Earth where man and beast seem to coexist so calmly; and one of the few stopping places on their long flight south where Europe's migrating birds feel safe to land.

It's a park with a purpose – a conservational stronghold and a place where man can recall his roots.

And there's more. Immediately adjacent to the park lies the magnificent **Safari Walk**, a rolling boardwalk that skims over a series of carefully constructed wilderness enclosures where the animals behave exactly as they would in the wild. There's also the **Animal Orphanage**, which shelters a shifting population of orphaned, abandoned or wounded animals. Finally, there's the exquisite **David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust** where you can watch the antics of the orphaned baby elephants as they're fed, bathed and gently prepared for their return to the wilderness.

Best of all, if you're in Nairobi for business, you can take an early morning breakfast in the park and still arrive back at your hotel in time for your first meeting.

For further information visit:
<http://www.kws.go.ke/parks/nairobi-national-park>

The perfect vantage point © Paras Chandaria



Family of Black Rhino © Paras Chandaria



Nairobi Safari Walk



The famous David Sheldrick elephant orphanage



One of the Park's resident leopards - the beautiful Koko © Paras Chandaria



© Paras Chandaria