



Kenya

POP 47.7 MILLION / 📄 254

Includes ➔

Nairobi	603
Lake Naivasha.....	611
Mt Kenya National Park	613
Naro Moru.....	615
Loyangalani.....	618
Masai Mara National Reserve	620
Mombasa	622
Malindi	626
Understand Kenya.....	631
Survival Guide.....	633

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Pili Pan (p628)
- ➔ Baby Marrow (p627)
- ➔ Shehnai Restaurant (p624)
- ➔ The Fort (p625)
- ➔ Tin Roof Cafe (p606)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Kobe Suite Resort (p628)
- ➔ Dea's Gardens (p611)
- ➔ Basecamp Masai Mara (p621)
- ➔ Camp Carnelley's (p611)
- ➔ Wildebeest Eco Camp (p603)

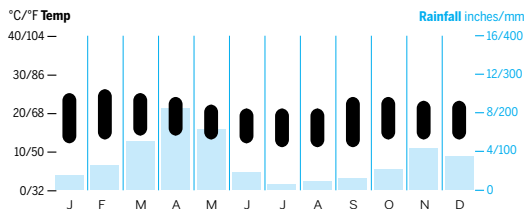
Why Go?

Kenya is the Africa you always dreamed of: a land of vast savannah, immense herds of wildlife, and peoples with proud traditions rooted in the soil where human beings emerged. The Maasai, the Samburu, the Turkana, the Swahili, the Kikuyu: these are the peoples whose histories and daily struggles tell the story of a country and of a continent – the struggle to maintain traditions as the modern world crowds in, the daily fight for survival, the ancient tension between those who farm and those who roam.

Then, of course, there's the wildlife. From the Masai Mara to Tsavo, this is a country of vivid experiences – elephant families wallowing in swamps in the shadow of Mt Kilimanjaro, the massed millions of pink flamingos bathing in lake shallows, the landscape suddenly fallen silent and brought to attention by the arrival of an as-yet-unseen predator. There's nowhere better than Kenya to answer the call of the wild.

When to Go

Nairobi



Jul–Oct The annual wildebeest migration arrives in the Masai Mara in all its epic glory.

Jan–Feb Hot, dry weather with high concentrations of wildlife in the major parks.

Nov–Mar Migratory birds present in their millions throughout the country.

NAIROBI

POP 3.5 MILLION / ELEV 1661M

East Africa's most cosmopolitan city, Nairobi is Kenya's beating heart, an exciting, mad-dening concrete jungle that perfectly counterpoints the untrammelled natural beauty to be found elsewhere in the country.

Nairobi's polarising character ensures that the city is reviled and loved in equal measure, and even those who love it might well admit that it's the kind of place many rave about only once they're away from it. For those who call it home, the city's charms include a vibrant cultural life, fabulous places to eat and exciting nightlife. Its detractors point to its horrendous traffic, poor safety levels ('Nairobi' is a common expat nickname) and its less-than-gorgeous appearance.

However, with a fantastic national park on its doorstep, the excellent National Museum and a series of quirky sights, Nairobi's reality – like that of so many places with a bad reputation – will often come as a pleasant surprise.

Sights

★ **Nairobi National Park** NATIONAL PARK
(☎ 020-2423423; www.kws.go.ke/parks/nairobi-national-park; adult/child US\$43/22) Welcome to Kenya's most accessible yet incongruous safari experience. Set on the city's southern outskirts, Nairobi National Park (at 117 sq km, it's one of Africa's smallest) has abundant wildlife that can, in places, be viewed against a backdrop of city skyscrapers and planes coming in to land – it's one of the only national parks on earth bordering a capital city. Remarkably, the animals seem utterly unperturbed by it all.

★ **Giraffe Centre** WILDLIFE RESERVE
(☎ 020-8070804; www.giraffecenter.org; Koitobos Rd; adult/child KSh1000/500; ☎ 9am-5pm) This centre, which protects the highly endangered Rothschild's giraffe, combines serious conservation with enjoyable activities. You can observe, hand-feed or even kiss one of the giraffes from a raised structure, which is quite an experience. You may also spot warthogs snuffling about in the mud, and there's an interesting self-guided forest walk through the adjacent Gogo River Bird Sanctuary.

★ **David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust** WILDLIFE RESERVE
(☎ 020-2301396; www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org) Occupying a plot within Nairobi National Park, this non-profit trust was established in 1977, shortly after the death of David

Sheldrick, who served as the anti-poaching warden of Tsavo National Park. Together with his wife Daphne, David pioneered techniques for raising orphaned black rhinos and elephants and reintroducing them into the wild, and the trust retains close links with Tsavo for these and other projects. The centre is one of Nairobi's most popular attractions, and deservedly so.

★ **National Museum** MUSEUM
(☎ 020-8164134; www.museums.or.ke; Museum Hill Rd; adult/child KSh1200/600, combined ticket with Snake Park KSh1500/1000; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) Kenya's wonderful National Museum, housed in an imposing building amid lush, leafy grounds just outside the centre, has a good range of cultural and natural-history exhibits. Aside from the exhibits, check out the life-sized fibreglass model of pachyderm celebrity Ahmed, the massive elephant that became a symbol of Kenya at the height of the 1980s poaching crisis, and who was placed under 24-hour guard by Jomo Kenyatta; he's in the inner courtyard next to the shop.

★ **Karen Blixen's House & Museum** HISTORIC BUILDING
(www.museums.or.ke; Karen Rd; adult/child KSh1200/600; ☎ 8.30am-6pm) If you loved *Out of Africa*, you'll love this museum in the farmhouse where author Karen Blixen lived between 1914 and 1931. She left after a series of personal tragedies, but the lovely colonial house has been preserved as a museum. The museum is set in expansive gardens, and is an interesting place to wander around. That said, the movie was actually shot at a nearby location, so don't be surprised if things don't look entirely right!

Sleeping

You can expect to pay a bit more in Nairobi than you would for the same facilities elsewhere in Kenya. However, in a city where personal safety is something of an issue, it's worth shelling out more for secure surroundings. The majority of midrange and top-end places also tend to throw in a hearty buffet breakfast.

★ **Wildebust Eco Camp** TENTED CAMP \$
(☎ 0734770733; <http://wildebustecocamp.com>; 151 Mokoyeti Rd West, Langata; dm tents KSh1500, garden tent s/d from KSh4000/6000, luxury safari tents s/d/tr KSh10,000/12,500/15,000; ☎ ☎) This fabulous place in Langata is arguably Nairobi's outstanding budget option. The atmosphere is relaxed yet switched on, and the accommodation is spotless and great