

Kenya

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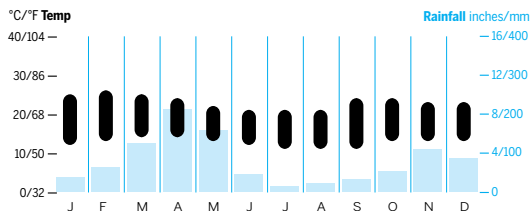
Why Go?

When you think of Africa, you're probably thinking of Kenya. It's the lone acacia silhouetted against a horizon stretching into eternity, the lush, palm-fringed coastline of the Indian Ocean, the Great Rift Valley. Peopling that landscape, adding depth and resonance to Kenya's age-old story, are some of Africa's best-known peoples, among them the Maasai, the Samburu, the Turkana, Swahili, the Kikuyu. Drawing near to these cultures could just be a highlight of your visit.

Then, of course, there's the wildlife. This is the land of the Masai Mara, of wildebeest and zebras migrating in their millions with the great predators of Africa following in their wake, of the red elephants of Tsavo, of the massed millions of pink flamingos stepping daintily through lake shallows. Africa is the last great wilderness where these creatures survive. And Kenya is the perfect place to answer Africa's 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 3.36 MILLION / ELEV 1661M

Telling people that you like Nairobi is like voicing a guilty secret. Yes, Nairobi's reputation precedes it. And yes, it's a city where it pays to keep your wits about you. But there are many people who don't just like Nairobi but who actually wouldn't want to live anywhere else. For those who call it home, the city's muscular, cosmopolitan charms include a vibrant cultural life, fabulous places to eat and exciting nightlife. If you're just passing through, this melting pot of people and attractions includes the intriguing National Museum, an unlikely national park (black rhinos and all), an irresistible elephant orphanage, the ground zero for the Rothschild's giraffe, Karen Blixen's former home and so much more. Welcome to one of Africa's most dynamic cities, a place you'll almost certainly pass through, and one that you could learn to like if you give it half a chance.

Sights

City Centre

★ National Museum MUSEUM
(Map p220; ☎ 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 who 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.

Snake Park ZOO
(Map p220; www.museums.or.ke; Museum Hill Rd; adult/child KSh1200/600, combined ticket with National Museum KSh1500/1000; ☉ 8.30am-5.30pm) In the grounds of the National Museum, the zoo-like Snake Park has some impressive snake species, including the puff adder, black mamba, African rock python and the Gaboon viper (which rarely bares its 4cm-long fangs, the longest in the world). There are also local fish species, lizards, turtles and some sad-looking crocodiles.

KENYA AT A GLANCE

Area 580,367 sq km

Capital Nairobi

Country Code ☎ 254

Population 45 million

Currency Kenyan Shilling (KSh)

Languages English, Swahili

Money ATMs in major towns; credit cards widely accepted

Mobile Phones Local SIM cards widely available; mobile coverage extensive but patchy in wilderness areas

Visas Available on arrival; valid for three months

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	KSh70
Canada	C\$1	KSh73
Euro Zone	€1	KSh104
Japan	¥100	KSh78
New Zealand	NZ\$1	KSh67
UK	UK£1	KSh138
USA	US\$1	KSh92

For current exchange rates see www.xe.com

Kenyatta Conference Centre LOOKOUT
(Map p224; viewing platform adult/child KSh500/250; ☉ viewing platform 9am-6pm) Towering over City Square on City Hall Way, Nairobi's signature building was designed as a fusion of modern and traditional African styles, though the distinctive saucer tower looks a little dated next to some of the city's newer and flashier glass edifices. Take the lift up to the **viewing platform** and helipad on the roof for wonderful views over Nairobi.

Railway Museum MUSEUM
(Map p220; Station Rd; adult/child KSh500/100; ☉ 8am-5pm) The main collection here is housed in an old railway building and consists of relics from the East African Railway. There are train and ship models, photographs, tableware, and oddities from the history of the railway, such as the engine seat that allowed visiting dignitaries such as Theodore Roosevelt to take potshots at unsuspecting wildlife from the front of the