

Central Highlands & Laikipia

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Best of Nature

- Meru National Park (p176)
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- → Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (p162)
- Mt Kenya National Park (p165)
- Aberdare National Park (p150)

Best Luxury Lodges

- Segera Retreat (p159)
- Sanctuary at OI-Lentille (p161)
- → Mount Kenya Safari Club (p157)
- Lewa Safari Camp (p163)
- Elsa's Kopie (p177)

Why Go?

The Central Highlands are the green-girt, red-dirt spiritual heartland of Kenya's largest tribe, the Kikuyu. This is the land the Mau Mau (p304) fought for, the land the colonists coveted and the land whose natural, cyclical patterns define the lives of the country's largest rural population. These highlands form one of the most evocative sections of Africa's Great Rift Valley. It is here that Mt Kenya, Africa's second-highest mountain, rises into the clouds climbing it is one of the great rites of passage of African travel. In its shadow lie two of Kenya's most intriguing national parks: rhino- and lion-rich Meru National Park; and Aberdare National Park, home to some of the oldest mountains on the continent. And then there's Laikipia. fount of so much that's good about modern conservation. It's also the scene for some of the best wildlife-watching anywhere in Kenya.

When to Go

Mid-Jan-Feb & mid-Jul-Aug Your best chance of favourable weather to bag Mt Kenya.

Mar-early Jun
The long rains fall
everywhere.

Oct & Nov The short rains make a brief appearance.



Central Highlands Highlights

- 1 Holding a frozen Kenyan flag in your frozen hands atop the frozen summit of Point Lenana, 16km from the equator on **Mt Kenya** (p165)
- 2 Doing a David Attenborough with an orphaned rhino then getting up close and personal with its wild cousins at **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** (p162)
- Spending an evening

- learning how to track lions at **OI Pejeta Conservancy** (p160)
- Ocommuning with the ancestors of some of Africa's most famous lions on safari in Meru National Park (p176)
- 5 Trekking through the otherworldly forests where elephants and bongo

- antelopes lurk in **Aberdare National Park** (p150)
- 6 Fishing for your supper then climbing a tree at one of Kenya's most original restaurants, **Trout Tree Restaurant** (p173)
- 7 Indulging in *Out of*Africa nostalgia alongside contemporary art at the sublime **Segera Retreat** (p159)

ABERDARES

The cloud-kissed contours of the brownand-grey slopes of the Aberdare Range, dubbed Nyandarua (Drying Hide) by the Kikuyu, stretch 160km from South Kinangop, east of Naivasha, up to the Laikipia Escarpment northwest of Nyahururu. In doing so, they form the solid spine of western Central Province.

But there's more to this soulful range of mountains than its geography, and the Aberdares still evoke strong feelings. In colonial times, this was a bastion of white settlement - the area was often referred to