



Southern Rift Valley

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Best of Nature

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Why Go?

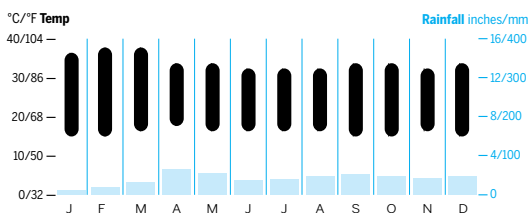
It's hard to believe that the geological force that almost broke Africa in two instead created such serene landscapes. But this southern slice of Africa's Great Rift Valley is cool and calm, swathed in forest and watered by moody mineral lakes that blanch and blush with the movements of pelicans and flamingos. There's no gold in these valleys and hills; it's green all the way, from pretty Lake Naivasha to Elmenteita's forest halo.

The altitude peaks and dips all the way from Nairobi to Nakuru, ensuring pleasant weather almost year-round. Only Lake Baringo, further north, feels the heat, although the hippos, crocodiles and fish eagles don't seem to mind.

Come for the green and the peace but don't miss the peaks that push skywards; Mt Longonot and, to a lesser degree, the Menengai Crater, offer some of the most exciting views around. Perhaps that's why this region is a birdwatcher's dream. And at Lake Nakuru National Park, the lions seem to agree; they've taken to climbing the trees. The Southern Rift Valley may be serene, but there's plenty to talk about around the campfire.

When to Go

Nakuru



Nov–Mar Migratory bird species abound; weather is clear, dry and hot after November rains.

Jun–Oct Generally fine weather, no rains until October; good for climbing Mt Longonot.

Apr & May Avoid as rains drench the valley, mosquitoes proliferate and some roads are impassable.

Rift Valley Highlights

- 1 Viewing the slinky silhouettes of tree-climbing lions, as well as black and white rhinos at **Lake Nakuru National Park** (p102)
- 2 Watching self-conscious hippos shuffle into the spume, and then drifting off to their baritone song, at wild **Lake Baringo** (p108)
- 3 Trying to out-sprint a buffalo against the red-cliffed gorges of **Hell's Gate National Park** (p96)
- 4 Spotting pea-green chameleons beneath a disco ball sky at **Kembu Farm** (p106) in Njoro
- 5 Scaling the volcanic rim of **Mt Longonot** (p89) for a kestrel's-eye view of the great Rift Valley
- 6 Feeling pure, plutonic water soften your skin at the natural pedicure pools of **Lake Elmenteita** (p98)
- 7 Visiting the former home of Joy Adamson (of *Born Free* fame) then taking a boat out onto **Lake Naivasha** (p92)

