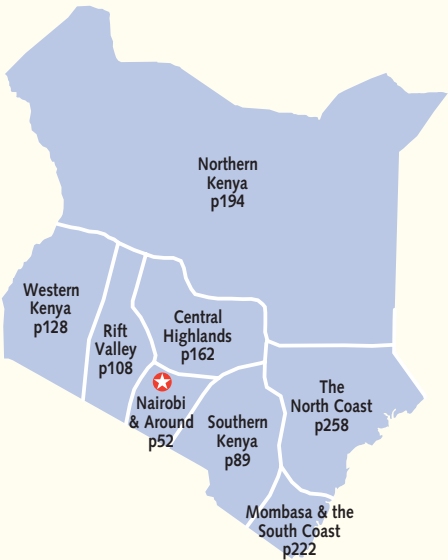


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ON THE ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE
In-depth reviews, detailed listings
and insider tips



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SURVIVAL GUIDE

VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO
HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Anthony Ham, Stuart Butler, Dean Starnes

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first.

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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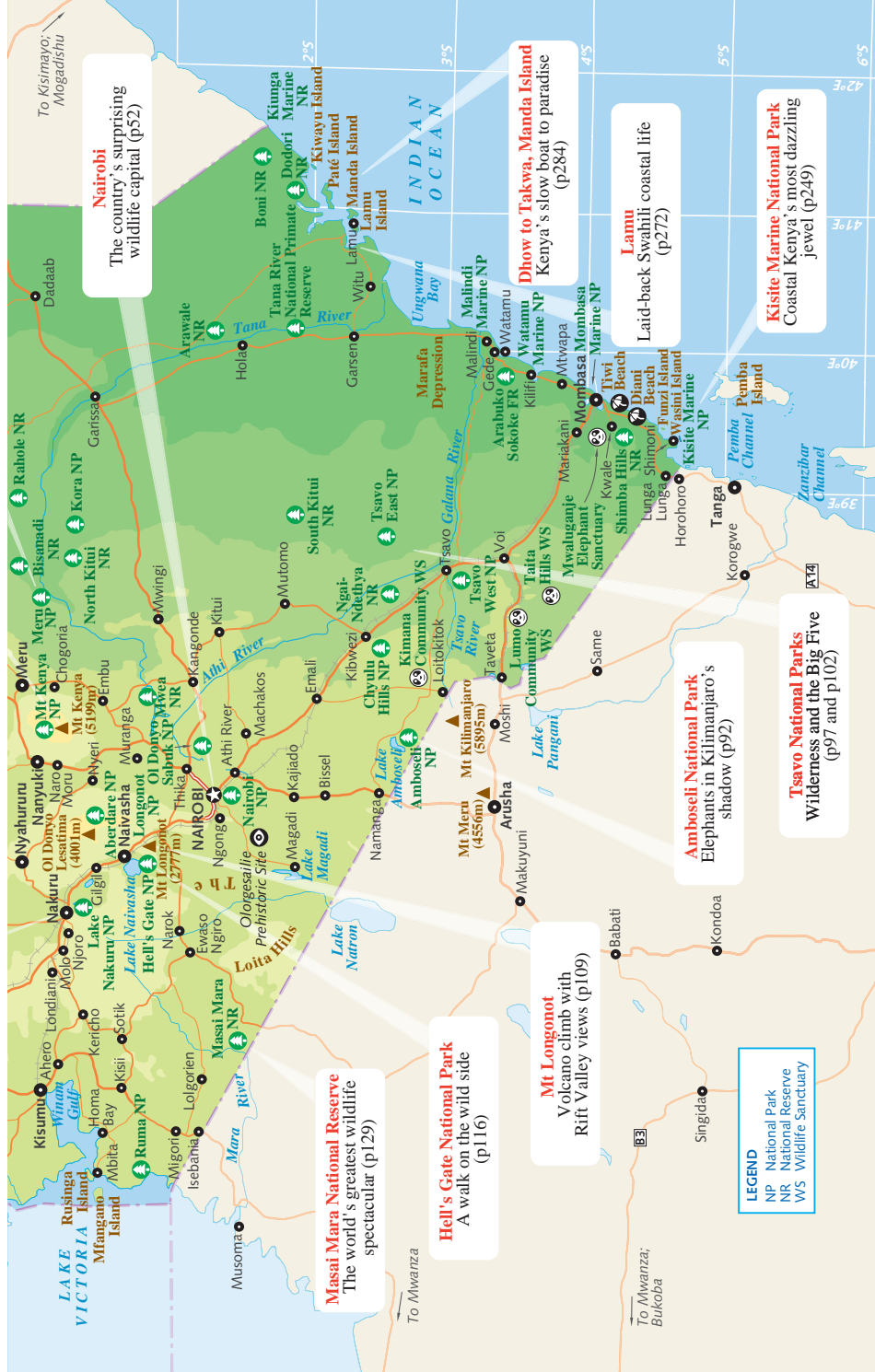
Lake Nakuru National Park
Wildlife-rich Rift Valley
lake (p122)

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Endangered species conservation
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The country's surprising wildlife capital (p52)

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Elephants in Kilimanjaro's shadow (p92)

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LEGEND

- NP National Park
- NR National Reserve
- WS Wildlife Sanctuary



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Anthony Ham

Coordinating Author, Nairobi, Southern Kenya, Rift Valley Anthony brings to Kenya more than a decade's experience in Africa. His love affair with the continent began in North and West Africa, where he has spent the last decade exploring the Sahara with Tuareg nomads and tracking down endangered elephant herds from the Malian Sahel to remote corners of southern Chad. In addition to coordinating Lonely Planet's *West Africa*, *Africa* and *Libya* guides, Anthony writes and photographs for numerous newspapers and magazines around the world, primarily covering conservation issues, nomadic and indigenous peoples and countries in conflict. When he's not in Africa, Anthony lives in Madrid with his wife, Marina, and their two daughters, Carlota and Valentina.

Read more about Anthony at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/anthonyham



Stuart Butler

Northern Kenya, Mombasa & the South Coast, The North Coast Stuart Butler grew up listening to stories of his father's childhood in Kenya and his grandparents' tales of working on the earliest English-language editions of the *Daily Nation* newspaper. When Stuart finally stepped foot in Africa, it was Kenya he chose. It didn't disappoint. Stuart now calls the south of France home. His travels, for both Lonely Planet and various surfing magazines, have taken him beyond Africa from the coastal deserts of Pakistan to the jungles of Colombia.

Read more about Stuart at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/stuartbutler



Dean Starnes

Western Kenya, Central Highlands Dean first backpacked through Kenya in 2004 as part of a greater East African adventure. After racing camels in Maralal (despite a backwards facing start, he came a respectable 14th) and dhowes near Lamu, he fell in love with the diversity, culture and humour of the Kenyan people and vowed to return. Since then he has worked on Lonely Planet's *Ethiopia* (4th edition) and *East Africa* (9th edition). Dean lives in New Zealand with his wife and his wife's cat. When he's not writing for Lonely Planet, he works as a freelance graphic designer and plots new ways to shirk his responsibilities.

Contributing Author

David Lukas wrote the Wildlife & Habitat chapter. David is a freelance naturalist who lives next to Yosemite National Park in California. He writes extensively about the world's wildlife, and has contributed wildlife chapters to eight Africa Lonely Planet guides ranging from *Ethiopia* to *South Africa*. He also wrote *A Year of Watching Wildlife*, which covers the top places in the world to view wildlife.

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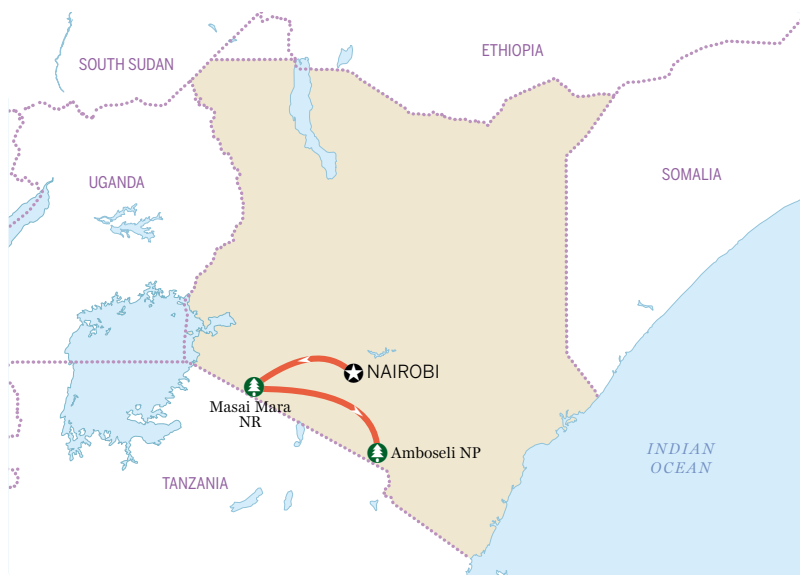
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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



One Week Safari Njema

➤ Ideal for those with limited time, this classic safari route brings you face to face with the continent's most charismatic creatures. *Safari njema* – have a good trip!

Begin in **Nairobi**. Kenya's (in)famous rough-and-ready capital is not without charm; if nothing else, it's the only capital city with a national park on its doorstep – watch lions, leopards and cheetahs against the backdrop of distant skyscrapers. This is just a taster for the world-renowned **Masai Mara National Reserve**. Between July and October, the Mara hosts the annual wildebeest migration, which offers an iconic slice of safari Africa, and one of the greatest wildlife concentrations on earth. If you can't time your visit to coincide with this epic event, the Mara is worth visiting any time.

Staying in Maasailand and tracing its trajectory across Kenya's south, head to **Amboseli National Park**, where you can get closer to elephants than almost anywhere else in Africa. From here, the views of Mt Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, are without rival in Africa.



SEAN GATREY/LOVELY PLANET IMAGES ©



» (above) White rhinos, Lake Nakuru (p122)
 » (left) Leopard, Masai Mara National Reserve (p129)

CHRISTOPHER FREDRIKSSON/LOVELY PLANET IMAGES ©



Three Weeks In Search of the Big Five

Seeing the 'Big Five' has become a mantra for African wildlife watchers, but few know it was coined by white hunters for those five species deemed most dangerous to hunt: elephant, lion, leopard, rhino and buffalo. Seeing all five is relatively easy in Kenya; it's even possible to spot them all in a single day, although you'd have to be pretty lucky.

Start your search at **Lake Nakuru National Park**, a stunning alkaline lake in the Rift Valley. The lake's population of many thousands of pink flamingos and pelicans is one of Kenya's signature images – the sort to make you gasp at the sheer beauty of it all. This vitally important national park also protects the country's largest population of endangered black rhinos, as well as large herds of buffalo; the black rhino is present elsewhere, but sightings are almost guaranteed here.

From Lake Nakuru, your next stop is the obligatory safari in **Masai Mara National Reserve**, which is lion country – your chances of seeing lions on a kill are nowhere higher than in the Mara during the annual wildebeest migration from July to October. With a little luck, you can also spot leopards lounging in trees, and cheetahs prowling around the savannah. From the Mara, head southeast, passing through Nairobi, to **Amboseli National Park** for a wildlife drive in the shadow of Mt Kilimanjaro. Here you'll see elephants at nearly every turn (there are around 1200 in just 392 sq km), while lion sightings are also common; buffaloes lurk in the swamps, although generally in small numbers.

From Amboseli it's a straightforward drive to **Tsavo West National Park** and **Tsavo East National Park**, Kenya's largest wildlife parks and a real taste of the African wilderness. The chances of spotting wildlife are higher in Tsavo East, where the vegetation is less dense, but Tsavo West has the advantage of being home to all of the Big Five – see them all in one day and you've hit the safari jackpot.

From here you can head down the highway to the ancient Swahili port of **Mombasa**, where you can either fly straight home, or start a whole new journey exploring the Kenyan coast.



Two to Three Weeks

Sun, Surf & Swahili

Whether you're interested in exploring the remaining vestiges of Swahili culture or simply kicking back on the beach for days on end, don't miss the chance to explore Kenya's sun-drenched coast.

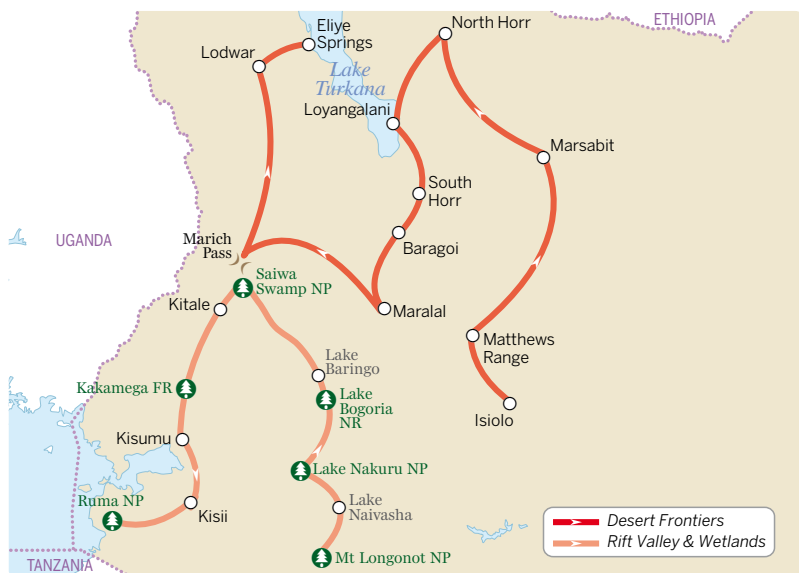
Before setting out, explore the coastal gateway of **Mombasa**, one of the truly great port cities on earth and the essence of East Africa. It gets steaming hot here, so your first stop heading south should be **Tiwi Beach**, a tranquil white-sand paradise popular with independent travellers. Just down the road, you can head on to the package-holiday destination of **Diani Beach** for a taste of the full-on resort experience.

Near the Tanzanian border, **Funzi** and **Wasini Islands** provide a dose of unspoilt coastal life; on the latter **Mkwiro** is somewhere close to paradise. These islands also afford easy access to the excellent **Kisite Marine National Park**. Whether you spot crocodiles along the banks of mangrove-lined rivers or dolphins crashing through the surf, a visit to the marine park is a wonderful complement to Kenya's terrestrial wildlife destinations. Offshore, humpback whales are a possibility from August to October. A trip in a traditional dhow is also a must.

Heading north back on the coastal trail, make a quick stop in the charming town of **Kilifi** before pressing on to **Arabuko Sokoke Forest Reserve**. One of the largest remaining tracts of indigenous coastal forest in East Africa, the reserve plays host to prolific birdlife and forest elephants, and is a last refuge of the golden-rumped elephant shrew.

Further north are the **Gede ruins**, an ancient Swahili city dating back to the 13th century. Another historic destination along the Swahili coast is **Malindi**, a 14th-century trading post that's now one of the country's leading beach destinations for Italian holidaymakers. While it can be something of a scene, it has bucketloads of charm once you get beyond the beach.

This itinerary ends (and peaks) at the wonderful **Lamu archipelago**, a veritable tropical paradise and Swahili heritage gem. However, you should check the security situation before travelling here (see boxed text on p279).



Two to Three Weeks Rift Valley & Wetlands

The Rift Valley is one of Africa's defining geological marvels. West and northwest of Nairobi lie some of the country's most fertile and scenic spots, characterised by still, tranquil bodies of water.

An excellent place to start is **Lake Naivasha**, a popular freshwater lake close to the starting point of the climb to the summit of **Mount Longonot**, one of the Rift's prettiest vantage points. Then it's an easy hop to **Lakes Nakuru, Bogoria** and **Baringo**, all of which support a wealth of birdlife.

Take the loop through the Cherangani Hills to the agricultural town of **Kitale** and the lovely **Saiwa Swamp National Park**, a real wetland treat.

Heading south, you'll come across the **Kakamega Forest Reserve**, an essential stop for walkers and bird lovers alike. Continue down the road to the region's main city, **Kisumu**, on the shore of Lake Victoria. Skirting the Winam Gulf, you reach busy **Kisii**, a handy hub for Lake Victoria's small islands, and tiny **Ruma National Park**, a rarely visited gem.

Two to Three Weeks Desert Frontiers

This adventurous trail winds through the barren but beguiling landscape around Lake Turkana. The eastern gateway to this region is the small town of **Isiolo**, just north of Mt Kenya; a side trip to **Matthews Range** is great for walkers.

Alternatively, plough straight into the desert route, heading up the rough road to **Marsabit**, the dusty tribal centre of this remote area, which boasts a fine national park.

Assuming you're not tempted to hop across to Ethiopia at Moyale, take the western loop to Turkana via **North Horr**, heading for the tiny lakeside settlement of **Loyangalani**, a base for trips into even more remote parts.

From here the trail leads south again, passing all kinds of scenic zones and the stopover towns of **South Horr** and **Baragoi**. It's worth stopping for a couple of days in **Maralal**, to replenish supplies and sample the joys of camel trekking.

You could end the trip here, but for the full effect head up to the other side of Turkana, passing through the lush western area around **Marich Pass** to reach sweltering **Lodwar** and the lovely lakeshore at **Eliye Springs**.

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