

# Destination East Africa

East Africa's allure is legendary. It has a string of charming old Swahili towns, some of Africa's most evocative safari destinations and the world's last remaining mountain gorillas. Wildebeest pound over the savannah in the Serengeti-Masai Mara ecosystem, rhinos stand in the shade in Ngorongoro Crater and chimpanzees brush past visitors in western Tanzania's Gombe Stream and Mahale Mountains parks. Dotted the coast are moss-covered ruins and the magical archipelagos of Lamu and Zanzibar, while inland, verdant landscapes rise into rolling hills and stunning mountain panoramas. Red-garbed Maasai warriors rub shoulders with seminomadic Hadzabe hunters and the bead-bedecked Turkana – all part of a vibrant kaleidoscope of cultures where over 300 tribal groups live within close proximity in an area roughly a quarter of the size of Australia.

Yet, it is only too recently that East Africa's powerhouse, Kenya, erupted in post-election ethnic violence, shaking the region's upwards-oriented image and sending visitor numbers plummeting. Northern Uganda, although increasingly stable, continues to be plagued by conflict. Parts of Burundi are still shadowed by scattered rebel elements, and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC; formerly Zaire) is as shaky as ever. HIV/AIDS – although slowly declining in many areas – continues to ravage the younger generation, and has left over two million children orphans, while malaria claims the lives of countless East Africans daily.

What is the real picture? Is East Africa moving up and on, its allure still intact? Or is it mired down in conflict, corruption and poverty? After spending a combined total of six months visiting all its corners, our vote is resoundingly with the first scenario. Not only is East Africa on the upswing, but its pull on travellers is as addictive as ever.

The topography alone is a huge draw: there are few other places where it's possible within a radius of about 1200km to go from lazing on white sands and snorkelling in turquoise seas to wandering down cobbled alleyways past donkey-drawn carts or shivering on the snow-dusted upper slopes of Mt Kenya or Mt Kilimanjaro. Flamingo-studded lakes and acacia-dotted plains mix with rolling hills and lush rainforest, while elephants, lions, zebras and more treat visitors to ever-changing glimpses of nature's magnificent rhythms.

Urban life has its appeal and energy as well. Overflowing *matatus* (minibuses) careen wildly along crowded city streets, young and not-so-young wait in line at crowded internet cafes, overflow crowds pack churches on Sunday mornings and mosques at midday on a Friday and sidewalk vendors hawk everything from fresh pineapples to mobile phones. Massive billboards tout the virtues of condoms and abstinence, tree-planting campaigns and anti-plastic bag legislation put the region firmly in the running with the rest of the world to go green, and each day East Africans shake their collective head about the deplorable antics of some of their politicians.

Yet, in the end, East Africa's legendary allure – the quality that makes the region so memorable for visitors – is East Africans themselves, with their exuberance, energy and unique way of looking at life, with their warmth and hospitality, their spirit and their cultural diversity.

If all this appeals, plan your East Africa travels early, and allow as much time there as possible – there's so much to see and do. Our bet is that no matter how much time you spend in the region, you'll wish it had been more.

## FAST FACTS

Area: 1,816,753 sq km

Highest Point: Mt Kilimanjaro's Uhuru Peak (5896m)

Lowest Point: Floor of Lake Tanganyika (358m below sea level)

Famous for: Serengeti-Masai Mara wildebeest migration; wildlife & safaris; Africa's highest mountain; gorillas and chimpanzees; traditional cultures; islands; dhows

Languages: Swahili, English, French and many other African languages

# Getting Started

Hotel and restaurant selection in East Africa varies considerably throughout the region, with tourist areas and major towns offering a variety of options for all budgets. In off-the-beaten-track places, choice is considerably more limited. Midrange and top-end travellers can travel comfortably. If you're travelling on a shoestring, things get more rugged. Expect to stay in basic guesthouses, and to put in time bumping over rough roads on crowded buses. The rewards: experiencing more fully the pulse of East Africa, and seeing how most locals live. Throughout the region, costs range from high for upscale safari lodges (especially in Tanzania, which is generally East Africa's most expensive destination) to modest for living local style.

Regardless of budget, there is a wide range of activities available, from mountain trekking, wildlife safaris and chimpanzee tracking to exploring coastal ruins, relaxing on palm-fringed beaches and hiking.

It's quite easy to set your itinerary as you go, but especially for organised safaris and treks you'll get better quality and prices by doing some advance planning. When charting your route, one of the most important things to keep in mind is East Africa's size – avoid the temptation to try to take everything in on one visit. While major destinations are connected by reasonably good air connections and reliable (albeit often rather gruelling) bus routes, it takes plenty of time to cover the long distances. It's much better, more satisfying and more culturally and environmentally friendly to focus on one or two areas, and save other attractions for another time.

For more information, see Climate (p606) and the Climate sections in the country Directories.

## WHEN TO GO

East Africa can be rewardingly visited at any time of year, with the main tourist seasons (and peak-season hotel prices) during the warmer months of mid-December through January, and the cool, drier months from late June to August. Climate varies considerably, and in general shouldn't be a major determinant of when to schedule a visit. That said, there are a few considerations to keep in mind. During the March through May seasonal rains, expect fewer tourists, decreased accommodation prices, scenic green landscapes and

### DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

You can buy almost anything you'll need in major cities except specialist trekking and sporting equipment, and certain toiletries such as contact lens solution. However choice is generally limited and prices are high. Some things to bring from home:

- binoculars and a field guide for wildlife watching and birding
- torch (flashlight)
- passport
- mosquito repellent and net (p631)
- zoom lens for wildlife shots; a spare battery and extra storage chip for digital shots
- sleeping bag and waterproof gear for trekking
- sturdy water bottle
- travel insurance, including medical evacuation (p609)
- wind- and waterproof jacket, especially for highland areas
- yellow fever vaccination certificate (p632)

### CUTTING COSTS

Some tips if you're trying to cut costs:

- Travel in the low season.
- Always ask about children's discounts.
- Travel in a group (four is ideal) for organised treks and safaris.
- Keep your schedule flexible to take advantage of last minute deals.
- Carry a tent, and camp when possible.
- Focus on easily accessed parks and reserves to minimise transportation costs.
- Use public transport.
- Eat local food.
- Stock up on food and drink in major towns to avoid expensive hotel fare and pricey shops in tourist areas and national parks.
- Offer to pay in cash – sometimes this may result in a discount.

muddy or sometimes impassable secondary roads in affected areas (although main routes usually remain open). Hiking isn't recommended during the long rains, and some coastal hotels may close for a month or two.

For wildlife watching, very generally speaking, animals can be more easily spotted during the dry season, when vegetation is less dense, when getting around within the parks is often easier and when, in some ecosystems, the animals tend to congregate around the limited remaining water sources. However, there are many exceptions to this – Tanzania's southeastern Serengeti, with its massive concentrations of wildebeest in the wetter months from February to April, is a classic example. Birding is also generally prime in wetter months throughout the region. Check out the individual national park entries for more information on tailoring your trip to optimise wildlife watching.

### COSTS & MONEY

Travel in East Africa is considerably more expensive than in Asia, India or South America, and you'll need to work to stick to a shoestring budget. That said, it's quite possible to get by on limited funds, and in so doing you'll be able to immerse yourself more fully into local life. At the other end of the spectrum, the region has an array of expensive lodges and hotels, with all the corresponding comforts. Tanzania is generally the most expensive country in the region for travel, especially around the northern circuit parks, and Uganda the cheapest. Accommodation in Rwanda and Burundi tends to be expensive, thanks in part to the large international presence in these countries.

At the budget level, plan on spending from US\$25 to US\$40 per day, staying at budget guesthouses, eating mostly local food, travelling with local transport and excluding safaris and other organised activities. For midrange hotels, western-style meals and more travel comfort, a realistic budget begins at around US\$60 per person per day excluding 'extras' such as park entrance fees, visa fees, the price of vehicle rentals or safaris, plus any airfares. Top-end luxury lodge travel costs from US\$150 to US\$500 or more per person per day, with prices at the upper end of this spectrum usually for all-inclusive safari packages.

ATM machines are relatively widespread in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. In Rwanda and Burundi, you'll need to rely on cash and (in capital cities only) travellers cheques or cash advances on credit cards. In rural areas throughout the region, cash is the only realistic option. For more, see p610 and the country chapters.

#### HOW MUCH?

Midrange safari US\$150-

US\$250/person/day

Safari Lager US\$1

Plate of *ugali* US\$1

National Park Entry Fees

US\$15-US\$100/person/day

Short Taxi Ride US\$2.50

## TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Tourism is big business in East Africa, especially in Tanzania and Kenya, and making environmentally- and culturally-sensitive choices can have a significant impact. Following are a few guidelines. For tips on etiquette, see p36. For more on deforestation and other environmental problems, see p54. Community and environmentally friendly entities in this book are listed in the Greendex on p662.

**ResponsibleTravel.com** ([www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)) has a good selection of East African itineraries.

- Support local enterprise, buy locally whenever possible, and buy souvenirs directly from those who make them.
- Choose safari and trekking operators that treat local communities as equal partners, and that are committed to protecting local eco systems.
- For cultural attractions, try to pay fees directly to the locals involved, rather than to tour company guides or other middlemen.
- Always ask permission before photographing people.
- Avoid indiscriminate gift giving. Donations to recognised projects are more sustainable, less demeaning and injurious to local cultural values and have a better chance of reaching those who need them most.
- Don't buy items made from ivory, skin, shells etc.
- Save natural resources, especially water and wood, and don't take hot showers if water is heated by firewood. To wash yourself or your clothing, fill a container with water and carry it elsewhere.
- Respect local culture and customs.
- Don't litter! On treks, in parks or when camping, carry out all your litter, and leave trails, parks and campsites cleaner than you found them.
- Try to maximise your 'real' time with locals: take advantage of cultural tourism programs where they are available, and choose itineraries that are well-integrated with the communities in the areas where you will be travelling.
- A major danger in parks, especially in Kenya, is land degradation resulting from too many vehicles crisscrossing the countryside. Keep to the tracks when on safari.

### FAVOURITE FESTIVALS

The best festivals and events are often the unannounced ones, such as a small-town wedding, a rite of passage celebration, or local market day. Larger-scale happenings include:

- The Serengeti–Masai Mara wildebeest migration (p186) – one of Earth's greatest natural spectacles.
- Ziff/Festival of the Dhow Countries (p255) – taking place in Zanzibar around July, and part of the Festival of the Dhow Countries, this is one of East Africa's major cultural gatherings.
- Sauti za Busara Swahili Music Festival (p255) – a celebration of all things Swahili, held around February in Zanzibar, and featuring artists from throughout East Africa.
- Maulid – (p332) – marking the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed, and best experienced in Lamu in Kenya
- Eid al-Fitr (p609) – the end of Ramadan fasting, and especially colourful in Zanzibar and elsewhere along the coast.
- Kenya Music Festival (p288) – Kenya's major music and cultural festival, held in Nairobi and other venues, currently in August
- Lamu Cultural Festival (p332) – In Lamu Old Town; dates vary

# TOP PICKS



## ECO-LODGES

Relax for a day or few at these lovely lodges and camps, and know your money is supporting the local community and environment.

- Chole Mjini (p241)
- Chumbe Island Eco-Bungalows (p142)
- Basecamp Masai Mara (p367)
- Virunga Lodge (p562)
- Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge (p572)
- Clouds Lodge (p491)
- Boomu Women's Group (p514)

## CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

East Africa's allure lies just as much in its people and cultures as in its wildlife. Here are some ways to get introduced to local life.

- celebrate Maulid on Lamu (p332)
- share a plate of *ugali* (East African staple made from cassava or maize flour) and sauce with locals (p40)
- listen to church singing
- watch traditional dancing
- sail on a dhow
- travel with local transport

## MUST-SEE MOVIES

East Africa's stunning panoramas and turbulent human history have featured in many films. Among the highlights:

- *War/Dance* (2007) – An anguished but beautiful glimpse into northeastern Uganda
- *Kibera Kid* (2006) – Life in Kibera, Nairobi's largest slum
- *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) – A real-life story from the Rwandan genocide
- *Africa – The Serengeti* (1994) – Classic footage of the annual wildebeest migration
- *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) – The film version of a best-selling novel set during the Idi Amin era

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

Three classics, all of which provide atmospheric introductions to the region, are Peter Matthiessen's *The Tree Where Man Was Born*, which offers a timeless portrayal of life on the East African plains; Ernest Hemingway's *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, which deals with some of the larger questions of life in an East African setting; and Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa*, a nostalgic perspective on life in colonial-era Kenya. Elspeth Huxley's *The Flame trees of Thika* is another East African classic, filled with snippets that help convey the region's magic.

More recent titles include *The Shadow of Kilimanjaro – On Foot Across East Africa* by Rick Ridgeway, a close-up look at East Africa from a hiker-conservationist's perspective and *The Worlds of a Maasai Warrior – an Autobiography* by Tepilit Ole Saitoti, a fascinating glimpse into Maasai life and culture. If you're travelling with children, look for the similar but easier to read *Facing the Lion – Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna* by Joseph Lemasolai Lekuton. *I Laugh So I Won't Cry – Kenya's Women Tell*

*the Stories of Their Lives* by Helena Halperin is on the academic side, but readable and full of insights into local life.

Photojourney books focusing on the region include *Africa Adorned* by Angela Fisher and *Africa's Great Rift Valley* by Nigel Pavitt.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Afrol.com** ([www.afrol.com](http://www.afrol.com)) News and current affairs.

**ArtMatters** ([www.artmatters.info](http://www.artmatters.info)) Focuses on Kenyan arts, but also has many regional cultural links.

**East Africa Living Encyclopedia** ([www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/neh.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/neh.html)) Part of the University of Pennsylvania's African Studies Center, with country information and lots of links.

**Integrated Regional Information Network** ([www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)) Regional news and humanitarian issues.

**Kamusi Project** ([www.kamusiproject.org](http://www.kamusiproject.org)) An internet 'Living Swahili Dictionary' and an East Africa focused discussion forum

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Travel tips, the Thorn Tree forum, and helpful links to other sites.

**Pambazuka** ([www.pambazuka.org](http://www.pambazuka.org)) Articles on regional social and humanitarian issues.

The For Tourists page on [www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk) is full of tips and info for responsible travel.

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### WILDLIFE & BEACHES

Two to Three Weeks / Serengeti–Masai  
Mara to the Coast

This combination mixes wildlife watching with beaches and the Swahili coast. It's possible to squeeze in the essentials in seven to 10 pressed days, but doubling this allows you to explore at a more leisurely pace.

After arriving at Tanzania's Kilimanjaro airport and **Arusha** (p170), head to **Serengeti National Park** (p186) and **Ngorongoro Crater** (p192), or alternatively **Tarangire** (p185) and **Lake Manyara** (p183) national parks. Then, travel eastwards to the **Zanzibar Archipelago** (p121) for diving, snorkelling and relaxing, plus taking in the charm and historical attractions of Zanzibar island's old **Stone Town** (p125). Fly out of Zanzibar or **Dar es Salaam** (p92).

A Kenya variant starts in **Nairobi** (p279), from where you can head to **Masai Mara National Reserve** (p363) or **Amboseli National Park** (p295), continuing then via **Mombasa** (p305) to the ruins at **Gede** (p322) and on to Lamu (p328).

With extra time, take in more en route – hiking in Tanzania's Usambara Mountains around **Lushoto** (p155), trekking on **Mt Kilimanjaro** (p166) or, in Kenya, and with a bit more detouring, visiting the otherworldly **Lake Turkana** (p394).



Travel from acacia-studded savannahs and stampeding wildebeest to the romance and magic of the Swahili coast. The itinerary can be easily trimmed or extended, depending on the time at hand. The distance: about 850km, although detours can considerably lengthen this.

**OVERLANDERS' CLASSIC** Two to three Months / Dar es Salaam to Nairobi

This itinerary is recommended if you want to expand on the popular safari-island circuit described on p19 and experience East Africa in more depth. Unless you have plenty of time, you should focus on one or two segments, rather than doing the whole route.

Starting from **Dar es Salaam** (p92), head up the coast to **Tanga** (p152), detouring en route to **Saadani National Park** (p149), **Pangani** (p151) and possibly the **Zanzibar Archipelago** (p121), before continuing to the **Usambara mountains** (p154), **Moshi** (p159), **Arusha** (p170) and the northern safari circuit. Allow enough time here to visit at least one or two of the parks and the **Ngorongoro Crater** (p192) before continuing northwest to **Mwanza** (p201), **Lake Victoria** (p201) and **Rubondo Island National Park** (p206). Once in this part of Tanzania, it's relatively straightforward to continue on into Rwanda. **Kigali** (p548) merits at least several days, as does the stellar **Parc National des Volcans** (p562) and the **Nyungwe Forest** (p579). The route then continues northwards into Uganda, where there's lovely **Lake Bunyonyi** (p494), and the beautiful **Murchison Falls National Park** (p511) with its wildlife and waterfalls. **Kampala** (p427) and the adrenalin chargers of **Jinja** (p451) and **Bujagali Falls** (p456) are ideal spots to re-energise before continuing eastwards into Kenya.

Once in Kenya, the **Kakamega Forest Reserve** (p376) is well worth a stop, as are **Masai Mara National Reserve** (p363), **Amboseli National Park** (p295) and enchanting **Lamu** (p328), **Mombasa** (p305) and other destinations on the **Kenyan coast** (p303) before turning inland again and finishing up in **Nairobi** (p279). Security situation permitting, also consider a detour northwards for a **Lake Turkana** (p394) safari, including stops at **Maralal** (p392), **South Horr** (p394), **Loyangalani** (p395) and perhaps even **Marsabit** (p391).

This classic overland itinerary gets in all the essentials, but much more as well – optimal if you're seeking to feel East Africa's pulse. Travel as rough or luxuriously as you wish – the main requirement for covering the 3500km-plus route is time.





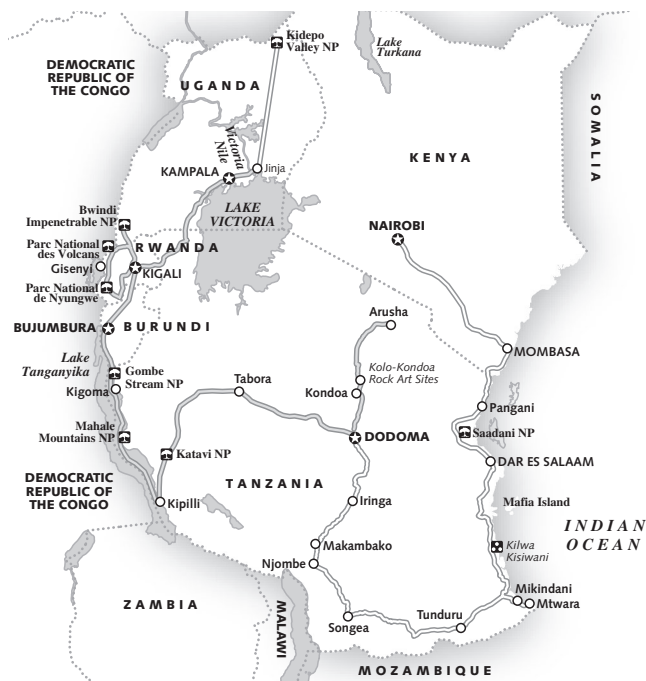
# ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

## OFF-BEAT EAST AFRICA

### Three Months / Kampala to Nairobi

If you've been to East Africa before and are now keen to delve in more deeply, try all or part of this journey. After arriving in **Kampala** (p427), begin with gorilla tracking in **Bwindi Impenetrable National Park** (p488) or white-water rafting at the source of the Nile (p451) close to **Jinja** (p451). Adventurous travellers could also visit the lovely **Kidepo Valley National Park** (p469), security situation permitting.

Journey into Rwanda, where essential stops should include **Kigali** (p548), **Parc National des Volcans** (p562), **Gisenyi** (p572) and **Parc National de Nyungwe** (p579). Security situation permitting, continue on into Burundi, with a few days in **Bujumbura** (p598) to get acquainted with the country. The next stop is Tanzania, where both **Gombe Stream National Park** (p215) and **Kigoma** (p213) merit several days. From Kigoma, board the MV *Liemba* (p262) and cruise down Lake Tanganyika to **Mahale Mountains National Park** (p216), or **Kipili** (see boxed text, p220). Make your way to **Katavi National Park** (p219), and then to **Tabora** (p210) and on via train to **Dodoma** (p195). Here, there's the option of heading north to the **Kolo-Kondoa rock art sites** (p199) and onwards to **Arusha** (p170), or south to **Iringa** (p226) and then via **Makambako** (p231) to **Njombe** (p237), **Songea** (p238), **Tunduru** (p239) and over to **Mikindani** (p249), **Mtwara** (p247) and the coast. Travel up the coast via **Kilwa Kisiwani** (p246) and **Mafia Island** (p239) to **Dar es Salaam** (p92) and your flight home. Or, continue north via **Saadani National Park** (p149) and the beaches south of **Pangani** (p151) over the border to **Mombasa** (p305) and other destinations in Kenya before flying out of **Nairobi** (p279).



The safari circuits and Zanzibar are wonderful, but those just scratch the surface. If you were hooked on an earlier visit and are back for more, try all or part of this 4000km-plus trail to immerse yourself in East Africa well away from the crowds.

## BEST OF THE WEST

Two months / Kigali to Kampala

East Africa's western edge is very much off beat, but fascinating to explore. **Kigali** (p548) is a good first stop, with a lush, mountainous setting, lively nightlife and upbeat vibe. In addition to taking in the city's vibe and beauty, also allow time to visit the **Kigali Memorial Centre** (p552), the sobering genocide memorial. Next, head southwest via **Huye (Butare)** (p576) to **Parc National de Nyungwe** (p579), with its chimpanzees and other primates, and then via **Cyangugu** (p583) to the scenic inland beaches on Lake Kivu around **Kibuye** (p584) and **Gisenyi** (p572). From here, it's just a short hop on to **Musanze (Ruhengeri)** (p559) and the mountain gorillas of **Parc National des Volcans** (p562), and then back to Kigali.

In Burundi, **Bujumbura** (p598) makes an agreeable introduction to the country, and merits a several-day detour, security situation permitting.

Moving on from either Rwanda or Burundi into Tanzania, **Kigoma** (p213) is the first town of note, from where you can make a detour to **Gombe Stream National Park** (p215) to observe the chimpanzees. Then take the MV *Liamba* steamer south to **Mahale Mountains National Park** (p216) or, alternatively, to **Kipili** (see boxed text, p220) for a few days relaxing and exploring the lakeshore. From Kipili, you can make your way to **Katavi National Park** (p219) and then via **Tabora** (p210) northwards to **Mwanza** (p201) and **Bukoba** (p207), from where you could continue on to **Kampala** (p427), **Murchison Falls** (p511), **Queen Elizabeth** (p484) or **Kibale Forest** (p475) national parks, or (security situation permitting) through Karamojaland to **Kidepo Valley National Park** (p469) before finishing up again in Kampala.

Another option: head from Kipili to **Sumbawanga** (p221) and then up the Tanzam highway to **Dar es Salaam** (p92) and the coast.

Travelling around East Africa's western edge is guaranteed to be rough, remote and the adventure of a lifetime. Even if you don't have time for all of this approximately 2000km route, try to get in a section or two.



## TAILORED TRIPS

### THE SWAHILI COAST

East Africa's Swahili heritage fuses African, Arabian, Indian, Asian and European influences, and exploring brings you on a journey through the continents and the centuries.

**Zanzibar** (p122) and **Pemba** (p142) are worth as much time as you can spare, although to immerse yourself in things Swahili, you'll need to get away from the resorts and into the villages. Across the Zanzibar Channel is **Dar es Salaam** (p92), where modern-day urbanity is only a thin veneer over long Swahili roots. From here, it's an easy detour to **Bagamoyo** (p147) or **Pangani** (p151), both once major coastal ports. Alternatively, continue south to the ruins at **Kilwa Kisiwani** (p246) – silent witnesses to the days when this part of the coast was the centre of far-flung trading networks. Further south are pretty, palm-fringed **Lindi** (p247), and tiny **Mikindani** (p249), a charming Swahili village. If there's time remaining, follow old trade caravan routes inland to **Tabora** (p210), and to **Ujiji** (p215), with its Swahili-style houses and flourishing tradition of dhow building.

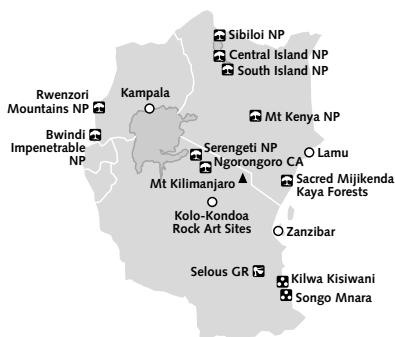
In Kenya, the narrow streets of **Lamu** (p328) are an ideal place to start, followed by visits to **Pate Island** (p334) and nearby islands. **Mombasa** (p305), with its fascinating old town, the mystery-shrouded ruins at **Gede** (p322) and the equally intriguing **Mnarani ruins** (p319) at Kilifi are other essential stops.

### WORLD HERITAGE SITES

To sample East Africa's wildlife, culture and history, consider a trip focused on Unesco World Heritage sites. In Tanzania, these range from the heights of **Mt Kilimanjaro** (p166) to the plains of the **Serengeti** (p186) and the expanses of the **Ngorongoro Conservation Area** (p190), and from the **Kolo-Kondoa Rock Art Sites** (p199) to the vast **Selous Game Reserve** (p242). On the coast, the ruins at **Kilwa Kisiwani** (p246) and **Songo Mnara** (p246) carry you back into the centuries, while the winding, cobbled alleyways of Zanzibar's **Stone Town** (p125) draw you deeper into history with every turn.

In Kenya, divide your time between magical **Lamu** (p328), with its preserved Swahili lifestyle and time-warp atmosphere; the **Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests** (see boxed text, p318); the glacier-clad summit and forested slopes of **Mt Kenya National Park** (p349); and the remote Lake Turkana national parks in the far north – consisting of **South Island National Park** (p395), **Central Island National Park** (p399), and **Sibilo National Park** (p396), with its wealth of ancient archaeological finds.

In Uganda Unesco sites include the rugged heights of **Rwenzori Mountains National Park** (p481), the misty **Bwindi Impenetrable National Park** (p488) and the mystery-shrouded **Kasubi tombs** (p431) in Kampala, which are at the spiritual heart of traditional Uganda.



## ACTIVE TRAVEL

There's plenty to do in East Africa if you're not keen on spending your visit cooped up in a bus or minibus. The region's mountains are an obvious draw – trek to the top of Africa in **Mt Kilimanjaro National Park** (p166); enjoy sunrise while making your way up **Mt Meru** (p182) or the snowy peak of **Mt Kenya** (p349); or watch the mists roll back from the summit of Mt Stanley in Uganda's **Rwenzori Mountains National Park** (p481). For trekking that's almost as rewarding as in the Rwenzoris, but easier and at only a fraction of the price, try Uganda's **Mt Elgon National Park** (p462), but check on security first.

An alternative to mountain trekking areas is the easy, rolling terrain around Tanzania's **Lushoto** (p155) – walking country, where it's possible to hike for days along winding paths past picturesque villages. The **crater lakes** (p473) area near Uganda's Fort Portal also offers village-to-village walking. More rugged is Tanzania's **Ngorongoro Conservation Area** (p190), with its range of volcanoes and calderas, stunning, varied topography and often challenging hiking.

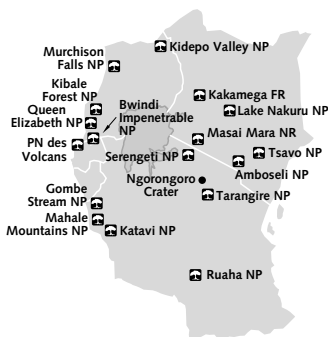


Other active pursuits include white-water rafting, kayaking or mountain biking at the **source of the Nile** (p451) near Jinja; diving around the **Zanzibar Archipelago** (p121), **Malindi** (p324) or **Watamu** (p320) in Tanzania; rock-climbing at Kenya's **Hell's Gate National Park** (p337); or walking and cycling near Tanzania's **Lake Manyara National Park** (p183).

## EAST AFRICAN WILDLIFE

East Africa is home to an unparalleled collection of national parks and reserves. An undisputed highlight is the magnificent **Serengeti-Masai Mara** (p186 and p363) ecosystem, famed for the annual wildebeest migration. Nearby are Tanzania's wildlife-packed **Ngorongoro Crater** (p192) and **Tarangire National Park** (p185), with its baobabs and elephants. Serene **Ruaha National Park** (p229) has evocative topography and a wealth of animals, while **Katavi National Park** (p219), in Tanzania's far west, is one of the region's last great frontier areas. For observing chimpanzees at close range, make your way to **Mahale Mountains** (p216) or **Gombe Stream** (p215) National Parks.

In Kenya, don't miss the lush **Kakamega Forest Reserve** (p376), which is known for its birds; **Amboseli National Park** (p295), with elephants, giraffes and other wildlife in a lovely setting framed by Mt Kilimanjaro in the background; **Lake Nakuru National Park** (p340), with birds, rhinos and hippos; and **Tsavo National Park** (see boxed text, p299), with its sweeping plains and the 'Big Five'. In Rwanda, the star attraction is **Parc National des Volcans** (p562), with its gorillas, while Uganda's offerings include **Kibale Forest National Park** (p475), with its chimpanzees; thundering falls and wildlife at **Murchison Falls National Park** (p511); **Queen Elizabeth National Park** (p484), with its tree-climbing lions and hiking; remote and beautiful **Kidepo Valley National Park** (p469); and the gorillas at **Bwindi Impenetrable National Park** (p488).



# The Authors



## MARY FITZPATRICK

**Coordinating Author, Safaris, Tanzania**

Mary is from the USA, where she spent her early years in Washington, DC – dreaming, more often than not, of how to get across an ocean or two to more exotic locales. After finishing graduate studies, she set off for several years in Europe. Her fascination with languages and cultures soon led her further south to Africa, where she has spent the past 15 years living and working all around the continent, including extended periods in Tanzania. She has authored and coauthored many guidebooks and articles on the continent, speaks Swahili and is convinced she holds an unofficial record for kilometres travelled in buses along Tanzania's roads. Mary also wrote the Destination East Africa, Getting Started, Itineraries, History, Culture, Environment, East Africa Directory and East Africa Transport chapters.



## TIM BEWER

**Mountain Gorillas, Uganda**

While growing up, Tim didn't travel much except for the obligatory pilgrimage to Disney World and an annual summer week at the lake. He's spent most of his adult life making up for this, and has since visited more than 50 countries. After university he worked briefly as a legislative assistant before quitting capitol life in 1994 to backpack around West Africa. It was during this trip that the idea of becoming a freelance travel writer and photographer was hatched, and he's been at it ever since, returning to Africa several times for work and pleasure. He lives in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

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**MATTHEW D FIRESTONE****Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo**

Matt is a trained anthropologist who is particularly interested in the health and nutrition of indigenous populations. His first visit to East Africa in 2001 brought him deep into the Tanzanian bush, where he performed a field study on the traditional diet of the Hadzabe hunter-gatherers. Unfortunately, Matt's promising academic career was postponed due to a severe case of wanderlust, though he has relentlessly traveled to more than 50 different countries in search of a cure. Matt is hoping that this book will help ease the pain of other individuals bitten by the travel bug, though he fears that there is a growing epidemic on the horizon.

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**CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS**

**Dr Caroline Evans** wrote the Health chapter. Having studied medicine at the University of London, Caroline completed general practice training in Cambridge. She is the medical adviser to Nomad Travel Clinic, a private travel-health clinic in London, and is also a GP specialising in travel medicine. Caroline has acted as expedition doctor for Raleigh International and Coral Cay expeditions.

**Dr David Lukas** wrote the Wildlife & Habitat chapter. He is an avid student of natural history who has travelled widely to study tropical ecosystems in locations such as Borneo and the Amazon. He has also spent several years leading natural history tours to all corners of Costa Rica, Belize and Guatemala. He also wrote Wildlife chapters for the Lonely Planet guides to Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa.

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