



Kenya



Anthony Ham,
Shawn Duthie, Anna Kaminski

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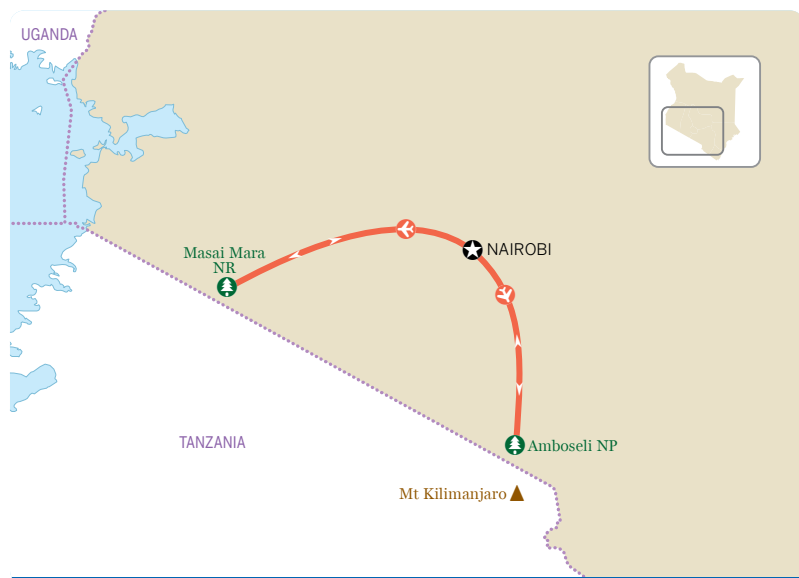
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Itineraries



1
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. To do it in a week, you'll need to fly between the three destinations. *Safari njema* – have a good trip!

Begin in **Nairobi**. Kenya's (in)famous capital is not without charm – track down endangered giraffes, orphaned elephants and four of the Big Five set against a backdrop of not-so-distant skyscrapers. Plan on one full day, then fly from the capital's Wilson Airport to the **Masai Mara National Reserve**. Between July and October, the Mara hosts the annual wildebeest migration, one of the greatest wildlife concentrations on earth, but it's worth visiting any time. Three days is a minimum; spend four if you can.

From Maasailand fly, possibly via Nairobi, 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. After two nights, you'll fly back to Nairobi, wondering why you're not staying longer.

4
WEEKS

Big Five & the Best of the Parks

Kenya has some of the best national parks and reserves in Africa and seeing the Big Five (elephant, lion, leopard, rhino and buffalo) is something of a mantra for many first-time visitors to Africa. With three weeks to cover all this territory, you could easily get around in your own rented vehicle.

Many Kenyan safaris begin in **Nairobi** and this one's no exception. You can see four of the Big Five in much-underrated Nairobi National Park, before heading north to **Ol Pejeta Conservancy**, up on Laikipia Plateau – it's the closest place to Nairobi where you can see the Big Five and, at last count, they had 111 black rhinos. Ol Pejeta has plenty of organised activities to get you lion-tracking, cycling within sight of rhinos or simply walking out into the wild. Stay at least three days to make the most of it.

Before leaving Kenya's Central Highlands, allocate a week for one of East Africa's most rewarding adventures – the trek to the summit of **Mt Kenya**, Africa's second-highest peak, will leave you gasping for both air and superlatives. A roughly southwesterly trajectory takes you down to **Lake Nakuru National Park**, one of Kenya's most compact and excellent parks for buffalo, lion, leopard and rhino.

A loop down to Kenya's far southwest takes you onto one of Africa's most celebrated terrains with the **Masai Mara National Reserve**. Allow at least three days to explore and consider a few extra days in a luxurious tented camp in one of the surrounding conservancies. It's a long day's drive back to Nairobi, with another half day to **Amboseli National Park**, home to lions, cheetahs and elephants in the shadow of Mt Kilimanjaro.

From Amboseli it's a short hop to wildlife- and wilderness-rich **Tsavo West National Park**, which is home to all the Big Five – see them in one day and you've hit the safari jackpot. Close to the southern fringes of Tsavo West, **Lumo Community Wildlife Sanctuary** is also good for the Big Five, before a visit to the outstanding **Tsavo East National Park**.

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.



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Top: Gede ruins (p250)

Bottom: Zebras in
Tsavo West National
Park (p190)



3
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. Three weeks is a minimum for this journey, which can be made on public transport. Check the security situation before setting out.

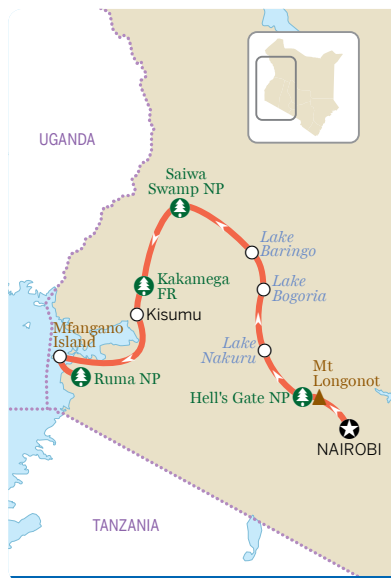
First explore the coastal gateway of **Mombasa**, one of the truly great port cities and the essence of East Africa. It gets steaming hot here, so after a few days your first stop heading south should be **Tiwi Beach**, a tranquil white-sand paradise popular with independent travellers. Just down the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

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. Allow at least a week in this area.

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. It has prolific birdlife, forest elephants and the golden-rumped elephant shrew.

Further north are the ruins of **Gede**, 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. It has bucketloads of charm once you get beyond the beach.

This itinerary ends at the wonderful **Lamu Archipelago**, a veritable tropical paradise and Swahili heritage gem.



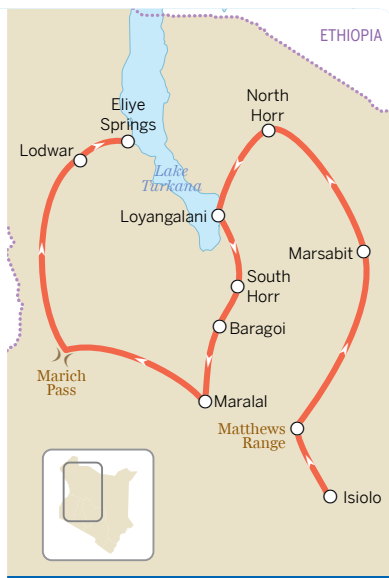
2 WEEKS Rift Valley & Wetlands

Kenya's Rift Valley ranks among Africa's defining geological marvels. To complete this itinerary in two weeks, you'll need your own set of wheels. You're covering a lot of places, but many are quite close together.

Begin near **Nairobi** at the Oleopolos Country Club, contemplating the Rift's glory while nursing a Tusker. Drive north to, and then climb, **Mt Longonot**, one of the Rift's prettiest vantage points, and walk amid the dramatic rock forms of **Hell's Gate National Park**. Allow a couple of days around here. Then it's an easy hop to Lakes **Nakuru**, **Bogoria** and **Baringo**; spend a further two days here.

Take the loop through the Cherangani Hills to the lovely **Saiwa Swamp National Park**, a real wetland treat.

Heading south, explore the lush **Kakamega Forest Reserve**, then pass through **Kisumu** on your way to **Mfangano Island**, arguably Lake Victoria's most rewarding island escape – plan on spending a couple of nights resting from life on the road. Finally, visit tiny **Ruma National Park**, a rarely visited gem. From here you can either make for the Masai Mara or head down into Tanzania.



3 WEEKS Desert Frontiers

This adventurous trail winds through the barren but beguiling landscape around Lake Turkana. You could take forever exploring the area by public transport – rent a 4WD with a driver to get around.

The eastern gateway to this region is **Isiolo**. As you make your way north, the **Matthews Range** is great for walkers. Back on the road, **Marsabit** is a dusty tribal centre, home to a fine national park, and is a quintessentially northern Kenyan outpost.

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 search for traces of Wilfred Thesiger.

If the remote north has you under its spell, 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 **Elieye Springs**.

Behind the Scenes

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Cover photograph: A herd of zebras, Masai Mara, Kenya, Mohammed Alnaser/500px ©

THIS BOOK

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author David Lukas (Wildlife & Habitat).

This guidebook was produced by the following:

Destination Editor
Matt Phillips

Product Editors Hannah Cartmel, Elizabeth Jones, Sandie Kestell

Senior Cartographer
Diana Von Holdt

Book Designer Wibowo Rusli
Cartographer
Mick Garrett

Assisting Editors Janet Austin, Sarah Bailey, Judith Bamber, Michelle Bennett, Melanie Dankel, Rosie Nicholson, Kristin Odijk, Maja Vatrić

Cover Researcher
Naomi Parker

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- Eating

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- Drinking & Nightlife
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- Shopping

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- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, 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

Nairobi, Southeastern Kenya, Southern Rift Valley, Western Kenya Anthony is a freelance writer and photographer who specialises in Spain, East and Southern Africa, the Arctic and the Middle East. In 2001, after years of wandering the world, Anthony finally found his spiritual home when he fell irretrievably in love with Madrid on his first visit to the city. Less than a year later, he arrived there on a one-way ticket, with not a word of Spanish and not knowing a single person in

the city. When he finally left Madrid 10 years later, Anthony spoke Spanish with a Madrid accent, was married to a local and Madrid had become his second home. Now back in Australia, Anthony continues to travel the world in search of stories. Anthony also wrote the Plan, Understand and Survival Guide chapters for this book.



Shawn Duthie

Central Highlands & Laikipia, Northern Kenya Originally from Canada, Shawn has been travelling, studying and working around the world for the past 13 years. A love of travel merged with an interest in international politics, which led to several years of lecturing at the University of Cape Town and, now, as a freelance political risk consultant specialising in African countries. Shawn lives in South

Africa and takes any excuse to travel around this amazing continent.



Anna Kaminski

South Coast, North Coast Originally from the Soviet Union, Anna grew up in Cambridge, UK. Her restless wanderings led her to settle briefly in Oaxaca and Bangkok and her flirtation with criminal law saw her volunteering as a lawyer's assistant in the courts, ghettos and prisons of Kingston, Jamaica. Anna has contributed to almost 30 Lonely Planet titles and has had her share of memorable

experiences – from seeing the sun rise from the top of Borneo's Mt Kinabalu and riding all day on horseback to visit the Tsaatan reindeer herders on the border between Mongolia and Russia, to spending the night in a Latvian Soviet-era prison and attending a Vodou ritual in Haiti.

David Lukas

David wrote the Wildlife & Habitat chapter. He is a freelance naturalist who lives next to Yosemite National Park in California. He writes extensively about the world's wildlife, and has contributed to wildlife chapters for eight Lonely Planet guides on Africa, ranging from *Ethiopia* to *Africa*.

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