

THREE SIXTY EXPLORER

Kenya Safari: Highlands, Samburu & the Mara

12 days / Kenya



Garden city mornings, northern wilderness and the wide-open Mara.

Dates and price on request. Final availability, transport, accommodation and the quotation are confirmed by the travel team.

Your journey, day by day

Day 1 / Nairobi — A Warm Arrival in Kenya's Capital

Arrive at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, where you are met by your safari team and transferred to your hotel in Nairobi. After the long journey, the day is intentionally relaxed, giving you time to settle in, rest, and ease into the rhythm of Kenya.

For guests arriving in the morning, lunch can be arranged before spending the afternoon at leisure. The hotel's garden setting offers a peaceful place to unwind, while nearby neighborhoods and viewing points may be explored with your guide if time and energy allow.

Nairobi is one of Africa's most dynamic capitals — a city where business, culture, conservation, and safari energy meet. It is also the only major city in the world with a national park on its doorstep, making it a memorable starting point for your journey.

- Airport meet-and-greet
- Private transfer to hotel
- Relaxed arrival day
- Optional guided neighborhood walk if time allows

Overnight: Fairview Hotel Nairobi – Standard Room

Day 2 / Nairobi: Giraffe Centre, Karen Blixen & Kazuri Beads — Conservation, Storytelling & Local Craft

After breakfast, depart for the Karen neighborhood of Nairobi, a leafy and historic part of the city known for conservation, culture, and artisan experiences.

Your first visit is the Giraffe Centre, created to protect the endangered Rothschild giraffe. This stop offers a close and memorable encounter with one of East Africa's most beloved animals while also highlighting Kenya's conservation work.

Continue to the Karen Blixen Museum, once the home of the Danish author whose life and writing helped shape the global imagination of Kenya. The house and grounds offer a glimpse into a different period of Kenya's history, set against the backdrop of the Ngong Hills.

After lunch at or near the Karen Blixen area, visit Kazuri Beads, a workshop and shop known for handmade ceramic jewelry and crafts. It is an excellent place to support local artisans and select meaningful gifts to take home.

- Giraffe Centre visit
- Karen Blixen Museum
- Lunch in Karen
- Kazuri Beads artisan stop

Overnight: Fairview Hotel Nairobi – Standard Room

Day 3 / Nairobi to Aberdares — Highlands, Forests & the Ark Experience

After breakfast, travel by road from Nairobi through Kenya's central highlands toward Aberdare National Park. The scenery shifts into a cooler, greener landscape of farms, forests, mountain slopes, and rural towns. Along the way, you may visit a typical Kenyan open market in Karatina, offering a lively glimpse into everyday trade and community life before continuing toward the Aberdares.

Arrive at Aberdare Country Club, the base hotel for The Ark. After lunch, transfer to the famous tree-style lodge, taking only an overnight bag while your main luggage remains securely at the base hotel.

The Ark overlooks a floodlit waterhole and salt lick, allowing guests to watch wildlife from viewing decks and lounges. The experience is quiet, atmospheric, and ideal for travelers who enjoy the anticipation of animals appearing from the forest.

- Scenic drive through the central highlands
- Optional Karatina market stop
- Lunch at Aberdare Country Club
- Transfer to The Ark

Overnight: The Ark – Standard Room

Day 4 / Aberdares to Ol Pejeta — Equator Crossing & Conservancy Wildlife

After breakfast, transfer from The Ark back to Aberdare Country Club, where you rejoin your safari guide and continue toward Ol Pejeta Conservancy near the equator.

Pause at the Equator crossing for photos, a short demonstration, and the chance to mark this memorable geographic moment. On clear days, Mount Kenya may rise beautifully in the distance.

Continue to Ol Pejeta, one of Kenya's most important conservation areas and home to the Big Five. Arrive with an en-route game drive, check in, enjoy lunch, and take a short siesta before your afternoon safari activities. Later, enjoy a game drive that may include visits to the rhino and chimpanzee sanctuaries. Ol Pejeta is known for strong conservation work, excellent wildlife density, and meaningful encounters with endangered species.

- Transfer from The Ark
- Equator crossing experience
- Ol Pejeta game drive
- Rhino and chimpanzee sanctuary visit

Overnight: Sweetwaters Tented Camp – Standard Tent

Day 5 / Ol Pejeta to Samburu — Into Kenya's Northern Frontier

After breakfast, depart Ol Pejeta and travel north through Nanyuki, with Mount Kenya setting the tone for the day. The landscape begins to shift toward Samburu — warmer, drier, more dramatic, and beautifully remote. Along the way, pause at a wheat farm or small-scale farming community for a meaningful glimpse into everyday Kenyan life beyond the safari circuit.

Arrive in Samburu with an en-route game drive before checking in for lunch and a short rest. Later in the afternoon, return to the reserve for your first Samburu game drive, where golden light, rugged scenery, and rare northern species create an unforgettable introduction.

- Scenic drive through Nanyuki
- Local farm/community encounter
- En-route game drive
- Afternoon game drive in Samburu

Overnight: Ashnil Samburu Camp – Luxury Tent

Day 6 / Samburu — Wildlife, Culture & River Life

Today is dedicated to exploring Samburu, one of Kenya's most distinctive and colorful wildlife regions. Unlike the lush southern parks, Samburu has a rugged beauty — open scrubland, acacia trees, rocky hills, and the life-giving Ewaso Nyiro River.

Game drives here are rewarding and often surprising. Watch for Samburu's famous northern species: Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, Beisa oryx, Somali ostrich, and gerenuk. You may also encounter elephants, lions, leopards, crocodiles, hippos, and plains game moving toward the river in the heat of the day.

If timing allows, visit a Samburu village for a respectful cultural exchange with the Samburu people, close relatives of the Maasai. This experience offers a window into traditional pastoral life, dress, music, and community.

- Morning and afternoon game drives
- Rare northern wildlife species
- Optional Samburu village visit
- Evening return to camp by sunset

Overnight: Ashnil Samburu Camp – Luxury Tent

Day 7 / Samburu to Lake Naivasha — From Rugged Wilderness to Rift Valley Waters

After breakfast and check-out, begin a scenic drive south through Kenya's countryside toward Lake Naivasha. The journey offers a beautiful transition from the arid northern landscapes of Samburu into the greener highlands and dramatic Rift Valley.

En route, stop near Nyahururu for lunch close to Thompson Falls. Take a short walk near the falls, where cool mist and lush vegetation provide a refreshing break from the drive.

By late afternoon, arrive at Lake Naivasha, a freshwater lake set at the foot of the Rift Valley Escarpment. The atmosphere is peaceful and restorative — a perfect place to slow down after several days of safari movement. At the lodge, you may see giraffes, zebras, and other wildlife grazing near the grounds.

- Scenic countryside drive
- Lunch near Thompson Falls
- Short walk near the falls
- Relaxed arrival at Lake Naivasha

Overnight: Naivasha Sopa Lodge – Standard Room

Day 8 / Lake Naivasha & Crescent Island — A Walking Safari by the Water

This morning, enjoy the beauty of Lake Naivasha from the water with a boat transfer to Crescent Island. As you cross the lake, keep your eyes open for hippos, waterbirds, and the wide views that make this region one of Kenya's most peaceful safari settings.

Crescent Island offers a rare and intimate safari experience — the opportunity to walk among grazing wildlife in a calm, open landscape. Zebra, gazelle, waterbuck, wildebeest, and other plains animals are often seen here, while the surrounding shoreline attracts pelicans, cormorants, fish eagles, and countless other birds.

Unlike a traditional game drive, this experience invites you to slow down. You feel the land beneath your feet, hear the sounds of the lake, and experience wildlife from a more personal perspective.

- Boat transfer across Lake Naivasha
- Guided Crescent Island walk
- Birdwatching along the shoreline
- Peaceful wildlife viewing on foot

Overnight: Naivasha Sopa Lodge – Standard Room

Day 9 / Lake Naivasha to Masai Mara — Into Africa's Legendary Plains

After breakfast, depart Lake Naivasha and travel via Narok toward the world-famous Masai Mara National Reserve. As the road unfolds, the landscape widens into sweeping grasslands — the kind of scenery many travelers imagine when they dream of East Africa.

The Masai Mara is one of the most celebrated wildlife destinations on the continent, known for dramatic skies, big cats, open plains, and extraordinary wildlife density. If timing allows, visit a Maasai village en route for a cultural encounter before continuing into the reserve.

Enjoy packed lunch inside the reserve and begin your first Mara game drive as you make your way toward camp. The day ends with arrival at Ashnil Mara Camp, where the sounds of the wilderness welcome you into one of Africa's most iconic safari landscapes.

- Scenic drive through the Rift Valley region
- Optional Maasai village visit
- Packed lunch inside the reserve
- En-route game drive in Masai Mara

Overnight: Ashnil Mara Camp – Luxury Tent

Day 10 / Masai Mara — The Great Safari Day

Wake up in the heart of the Masai Mara, where morning light moves slowly across the plains and wildlife begins another day of movement. Today is dedicated to game viewing across the reserve's rolling hills, open savannahs, and riverine habitats.

The Mara offers excellent opportunities to see elephant, buffalo, giraffe, zebra, antelope, cheetah, leopard, and the famous black-maned lion. With more than 450 bird species and a rich diversity of animals, every drive brings the possibility of something unexpected.

Today may also include a visit toward the area near the Kenya-Tanzania border, where guests can enjoy a picnic lunch and, subject to permission and ranger guidance, a short escorted walk near the border landscape.

- Full-day game viewing
- Big cat and plains wildlife opportunities
- Picnic lunch experience
- Optional ranger-escorted border-area walk subject to permission

Overnight: Ashnil Mara Camp – Luxury Tent

Day 11 / Masai Mara — Sunrise, Wildlife & Optional Balloon Safari

Enjoy another full day exploring the expansive Masai Mara. For those who wish to elevate the experience, an optional early morning hot-air balloon safari may be arranged locally.

Floating above the plains at sunrise offers a breathtaking perspective — golden light, winding rivers, grazing herds, and the quiet majesty of the Mara from above.

The rest of the day is devoted to game drives and relaxed safari pacing. Your guide will follow wildlife movement and seasonal conditions, giving you the best chance to see the reserve at its most active. As evening settles, return to camp for dinner and time to reflect on the journey's most memorable wildlife encounters.

- Optional sunrise balloon safari
- Flexible game-drive pacing
- Wildlife tracking with your guide
- Evening return to camp

Overnight: Ashnil Mara Camp – Luxury Tent

Day 12 / Masai Mara to Nairobi — Farewell to the Wild

After breakfast, check out and begin the journey back to Nairobi with your safari guide — now a familiar companion after days of shared roads, wildlife sightings, and unforgettable moments.

Arrive in Nairobi in time for a farewell meal at The Carnivore Restaurant or a suitable alternative for vegetarian guests. If time permits, last-minute shopping or optional Nairobi activities may be arranged before your airport transfer.

Later, transfer to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport for your onward international flight, carrying with you the sights, sounds, and stories of Kenya.

- Morning departure from Masai Mara
- Scenic return drive to Nairobi
- Farewell lunch or dinner
- Airport transfer for international departure

Your accommodation

Fairview Hotel Nairobi

Set on Nairobi Hill, Fairview Hotel offers a calm and welcoming start to the safari. Established in 1946, the property blends classic charm with modern comfort and remains known for its gardens, warm service, and convenient location. After a long international journey, Fairview provides the kind of gentle arrival experience travelers appreciate — space to rest, enjoy the gardens, and ease into Kenya before the safari begins.

- Peaceful garden setting
- Convenient Nairobi location
- Comfortable pre-safari base
- Historic character with modern facilities

The Ark

Set in Aberdare National Park, The Ark is one of Kenya's most distinctive safari lodges. Designed to resemble Noah's Ark, the lodge overlooks a floodlit waterhole and salt lick, attracting wildlife throughout the day and night. Guests can watch animals from viewing decks, lounges, balconies, and a ground-level hide designed for close photographic opportunities. The experience is quiet, atmospheric, and unlike a typical safari lodge.

- Unique tree-lodge style
- Floodlit waterhole viewing
- Multiple observation decks
- Strong sense of wilderness atmosphere

Sweetwaters Tented Camp

Sweetwaters Tented Camp sits within a private reserve in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, offering excellent wildlife viewing and a peaceful tented-camp atmosphere. With views across open plains toward Mount Kenya, the setting feels both intimate and expansive. The camp is arranged around a waterhole and salt lick, drawing wildlife close to the property and giving guests a memorable safari experience even between game drives.

- Private conservancy setting
- Views toward Mount Kenya
- Comfortable tented accommodation
- Excellent access to rhino and chimpanzee experiences

Ashnil Samburu Camp

Ashnil Samburu Camp is set along the Ewaso Nyiro River, surrounded by the dramatic landscapes of Samburu Game Reserve. The camp's tented rooms offer comfort while keeping guests close to the sights and sounds of the wilderness. The river is central to the experience — drawing elephants, birds, and other wildlife, while also shaping the rhythm of life in this arid and beautiful region.

- Riverside setting
- Spacious tented accommodation

Strong access to Samburu wildlife
Cultural atmosphere and evening entertainment

Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge

Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge is located near the shores of Lake Naivasha, one of the most scenic freshwater lakes in Africa's Great Rift Valley. The lodge offers a restful break in the itinerary, with spacious grounds, lake views, and wildlife often seen nearby. This is a place to slow the pace — watch birds, enjoy the gardens, and take in the cooler atmosphere of the Rift Valley.

Peaceful lakeside setting
Spacious grounds and lodge-style comfort
Excellent access to Crescent Island
Birdlife and wildlife around the property

Ashnil Mara Camp

Located in the Masai Mara National Reserve, Ashnil Mara Camp places guests close to one of Africa's greatest wildlife stages. The camp features luxury tents designed for comfort while preserving the spirit of safari. Its location near the Mara River makes it especially appealing during migration season, though wildlife viewing in the Mara is rewarding throughout the year.

Prime Masai Mara location
Luxury tented accommodation
Close to classic game-viewing areas
Strong safari atmosphere

Included in the supplied itinerary

2 nights at Fairview Hotel Nairobi – Standard Room, Bed & Breakfast
1 night at The Ark – Standard Room, Full Board
1 night at Sweetwaters Tented Camp – Standard Tent, Full Board
2 nights at Ashnil Samburu Camp – Luxury Tent, Full Board
2 nights at Naivasha Sopa Lodge – Standard Room, Full Board
3 nights at Ashnil Mara Camp – Luxury Tent, Full Board
Meals where mentioned in the itinerary
National park entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary
Airport transfers
Overland safari transportation in a 6-seater 4x4 Land Cruiser with pop-up roof
Professional English-speaking driver/guide
Activities mentioned in the itinerary
Flying Doctors emergency evacuation cover during safari, subject to terms and conditions
Safari hat, welcome pouch, and 1 litre mineral water per person per day in the safari vehicle

Not included

Lunch and dinner except where included in the itinerary
International airfare
Domestic flights unless specifically mentioned
Visa or electronic travel authorization fees
International departure taxes unless included in the airline ticket
Tips for hotel/lodge staff and porters
Driver/guide gratuities
Laundry, drinks, and personal expenses
Optional activities not listed as included
Any services not specifically mentioned under inclusions

Planning your journey

Send your preferred dates and party size to Three Sixty Explorer. Review the written quotation and booking terms before accepting arrangements. Optional activities carry additional charges where stated. The six-seater safari vehicle described in the itinerary is a vehicle specification; a departure capacity has not been published.

Source: the Kenya Safari Brochure supplied for this project. This booklet reformats that itinerary; it does not add prices or departures. Destination photography illustrates Kenya and is not an exact photograph of each hotel.

Photography credits

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