

# safaris *un*limited

## KENYA HORSEBACK SAFARIS



### THE KENYA SADDLE SAFARI WITH WENDY MURDOCH

15 ~ 23 SEPTEMBER 2008

#### THE MASAI MARA GAME RESERVE & GREATER MARA CONSERVANCIES

Altitude 5,000 -6,000 ft. ~ Area 5,000 sq. km ~ Gazetted in 1961.

The Masai Mara Game Reserve and Greater Mara Conservancies represent most people's idea of East Africa. The landscape is one of rolling savanna, intersected by dark green veins of riverine woodland on the banks of the Mara and Talek rivers. This wilderness is an extension of the Serengeti (Tanzania) ecosystem and is considered by many to be Kenya's best wildlife sanctuary, where animals can still be seen in vast numbers. Lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, hippo, crocodile, antelope and gazelle are some of the many species to be found. The annual migration of up to one million wildebeest is most dramatic and considered to be one of the greatest wildlife spectacles in the world. Needless to say, both wildlife and bird viewing are phenomenal. The Mara is also home to the colourful and handsome Masai people who, with their herds of livestock, are synonymous with the region.

#### SAMPLE ITINERARY

Monday 15 September ~ On arrival in Nairobi you will be met by Safaris Unlimited at your Nairobi Hotel at about 08.00 a.m. and transferred to our small home and farm near the Ngong Hills. Over a cup of Kenyan tea or coffee your professional guide, Gordon Church, will give you a briefing on your safari. We then drive for approximately 5 hours out through the fertile Kikuyu highlands to the edge of the Great Rift Valley, into which we descend 2,000 feet. The panorama of grassland studded with volcanic mountains is home to an animal kingdom unrivalled anywhere else in Africa. Our route takes us up over the Mau Escarpment and through the Masai trading town of Narok. We fork south onto rough roads, reaching our private camp at the foothills of the Loita Mountain Range in time for a late lunch. Camp is established beneath giant yellow- fever acacia trees and is a popular roost for olive baboons and vervet monkeys. The afternoon is spent settling-in, followed by a short ride to familiarise ourselves with the horses.

Meal Plan : Lunch and dinner in camp.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Barkitabu, Masailand.



Tuesday 16 September ~ The morning and afternoon is spent on horseback exploring the beautiful Loita Hills and the surrounding countryside. We ride through acacia thickets and open plains in search of Burchell's zebra, East African eland, warthog, Cape buffalo, Grant's & Thomson's gazelle and Masai giraffe. There is a variety of birdlife to enjoy, including the African Scops owl, superb starling, secretary bird and the white-backed vulture.

Meal Plan : All meals in camp.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Barkitabu, Masailand.

Wednesday 17 September ~ Our first full day in the saddle takes us across the Loita Plains, past Kaitapini Hill and down onto the Shangalara lugga (dry river bed) for a picnic lunch. We enter the Olare Lamun valley and find our camp situated near a spring used by the Masai to water their cattle, a favourite haunt for both lion and leopard. Herds of impala, white-bearded wildebeest, Coke's hartebeest and topi inhabit the neighbouring scrubland.

Meal Plan : Breakfast and dinner in camp. Picnic lunch in the bush.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Olare Lamun, Masailand.

Thursday 18 September ~ After an early breakfast we saddle up and trek across the open savanna, interspersed with acacia, wait-a-bit brush and leshwa (wild sage) woodland. We ride along the base of Oloiburmut Hill, before returning to camp for lunch. This area is home to a number of Masai manyattas (villages). Throughout the safari we have several opportunities to learn about, and, most importantly, enjoy the company of the Masai - a tribe of semi-nomadic people to whom the land belongs. Those who are interested may visit a small and remote primary school for the Masai children and in the late afternoon we visit a nearby manyatta of the local Masai "chief". His constant company is a highlight of the stay here - a great friend of Gordon's, he loves to serenade guests with stories of Masai tradition and lore.

Meal Plan : All meals in camp.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Olare Lamun, Masailand.

Friday 19 September ~ A pre-dawn wake-up call prepares us for a long ride over vast rolling plains skirting the southern end of the Bardamat Hills. We canter across the Koiyaki Plains to a picnic site on a small escarpment overlooking the Masai Mara Game Reserve. Now riding within the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, the increase in the abundance of wildlife is immediately apparent. We reach camp located in a glade of riverine forest on the Olare Orok river. A large campfire and extra vigilant syces (grooms) keep watch at night to make sure that nocturnal predators remain at a safe distance!

Meal Plan : Breakfast and dinner in camp. Picnic lunch in the bush.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Olare Orok, Masai Mara.



Saturday 20 September ~ A day of rest for the horses, we set off in our customised 4x4 safari vehicles to photograph the wildlife at close quarters. We can expect to see spotted hyena, cheetah and elephant. An afternoon walk with the Masai morran (warriors) is also an option. After dinner we may go out by safari vehicle with a spotlight, to search for illusive nocturnal animals.

Meal Plan : All meals in camp.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Olare Orok, Masai Mara.

Sunday 21 September ~ We ride in a northerly direction through a spectacular secret valley, gently winding our way along the southern bank of the Mara River, looking out for the crocodiles and large pods of hippo that frequent this area. The riverine forest is home to a variety of tropical birds including the rare Ross's turaco. The concentration of game, especially during the wildebeest migration (July to October) is breathtaking. We arrive in camp in the middle of the afternoon.

Meal Plan : Breakfast and dinner in camp. Picnic lunch in the bush.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Kiboko Bend, Mara River, Masai Mara.

Monday 22 September ~ We explore the Masai Mara by horse or vehicle to photograph wildlife including lion, leopard, silver-backed jackal, impala and waterbuck. If water levels permit, we may cross the Mara River on horseback and ride underneath the spectacular Siria Escarpment ~ a small wilderness area rarely visited.

Meal Plan : All meals in camp.

Overnight : Private Mobile Tented Camp ~ Kiboko Bend, Mara River, Masai Mara.

Tuesday 23 September ~ After saying "goodbye" to the horses and camp staff, we return by aircraft to Nairobi departing Mara Shikar airstrip with Safari Link at 11.00 hrs. On arrival at Wilson airport at 12.15 hrs you will be met and transferred to the Fairview Hotel. Day rooms and overnight rooms are booked so that one may shower and relax before international flights home. For those interested in shopping, a trip to find East African gemstones, bronze sculptures, Africana jewellery and other curios can be arranged.

Meal Plan : Breakfast in camp. SAFARI ENDS.

Safaris Unlimited (Africa) Ltd.

P. O. Box 24181, Karen 00502,  
Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: (254 20) 890435 / 891976 Fax: (254 20) 891113

E-mail: [info@safarisunlimited.com](mailto:info@safarisunlimited.com) Website: [www.safarisunlimited.com](http://www.safarisunlimited.com)