



## *Essential Holiday Information*

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What are the daily treks like?**

Due to the fact these are trekking expeditions, no day is ever the same! Our safari days typically begin with a delicious full African breakfast in camp before setting out on the trail. We enjoy 4-5 hours of trekking per day with frequent stops to admire the amazing scenery and to watch wildlife - and a relaxing lunch en route at a beautiful viewpoint. The treks are conducted at a leisurely pace which will suit the pace of the group as a whole, and should anyone feel tired at any stage, we have 2 trained riding mules on which you may hitch a lift! We generally reach camp in the mid afternoon and there will be time for an evening game walk in the forest glades surrounding the camp.



Wild animals such as elephant and buffalo may cross our path at any time and Peter and the warriors are armed at all times for your protection.

#### **Will I have to carry anything?**

No!! Only your camera and perhaps a light waterproof for the forest sections. We are accompanied on our safaris by a team of 15-25 trained donkeys and mules, who each carry a small share of our camp equipment and supplies. The donkeys are looked after by skilled Samburu warriors and are the traditional animals utilised on any safari in this area - the rugged terrain is wholly unsuitable for either vehicles or camels.



### What are our camps like?

Our campsites are very carefully chosen - all are in spectacular locations, often at the top of an escarpment overlooking the plains, or by the banks of a river in a beautiful wooded valley. Camps are completely organised for you - an "advance party" of Samburu warriors reach the campsite at least an hour before us and by the time we arrive all the tents are set up and there is a blazing fire and hot water for tea and coffee!

The camps are very comfortable and provide everything you could possibly wish for in the heart of the wilderness! They are not however over-the-top luxury in the style of certain top-end safari operators - this is simply not practical in this wild and rugged country where all supplies are carried in. The tents are however spacious and contain comfortable mattresses with sheets and blankets. If you are travelling alone you will have a tent to yourself. Each tent has a wash hand basin and a paraffin lamp.



One of the highlights of our camps are the showers! Water from the stream is heated over the fire and poured into a specially constructed bucket with shower-nozzle attachment. The shower enclosure is typically situated on the edge of camp with 3 walls of natural vegetation and a 4<sup>th</sup> wall which is open and looks out over an incredible view - there can be nothing better than enjoying a hot shower while watching the African sunset!

### What happens in the evenings? What is the food like?

We generally reach camp in the mid to late afternoon, where we enjoy an afternoon tea of fruit juices, home baking and tea or coffee as the donkeys unload.



While we enjoy a relaxed game walk in the late afternoon/early evening, Rosalie and her team are preparing a delicious 3-course dinner, which is later served on a dining table by the camp fire. Local produce is used wherever possible including fresh fruit and vegetables, game meat and African herbs and spices. *Continued...*



Following dinner, tea and coffee are served. A selection of alcoholic drinks are available and we usually sit up for a couple of hours recalling the day's events round the camp fire.

## Essential Holiday Information

The following essential information should assist you in planning for your forthcoming holiday to Kenya. Please read this very carefully and do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss any aspect of the holiday.

### Equipment

Wilderness Scotland and our Kenyan partners will provide all the relevant group equipment for the holiday. You are required to bring minimal personal equipment only. Most international airlines impose a 20kg baggage allowance (+ hand luggage of 6kg); however as we are travelling on internal flights in Kenya the baggage limit is only **15kg**. Furthermore, keeping your main baggage below 15kg will greatly assist the carrying of loads by donkeys on the trek. ***We recommend that your luggage is packed in a durable soft holdall or rucksack - rigid suitcases are especially awkward for the donkeys to carry.*** It will be possible to leave any items which you would not plan to take on the trek (e.g. swimsuits!) in safe storage during this section.

On the trek you will only be required to carry items for use during the day e.g. camera, water bottle, fleece, waterproofs etc. For this purpose we recommend that you bring a small to medium sized rucksack (25-40 litres) with waterproof liner, as although unlikely, there is a possibility of rain in the mountains. All camp and group equipment will be carried by the donkeys and mules.

Please note also that it will be possible to have your rucksack carried for you or indeed to ride on a specially trained riding mule complete with comfortable saddle at any point during the trek.

The following is a recommended kit list; any item of which we are happy to discuss in detail:

### Clothing

- Comfortable 3 season walking boots (leather or fabric)
- 4 pairs of walking socks (ideally Thorlos or similar) to complement the above
- lightweight socks for wearing in the evenings/travelling (laundry will be possible at all times, even on the trek!)
- Sandals or Trainers
- 4 t-shirts/base layers
- 2 long sleeved shirts (polypropylene/cotton)
- 2 pairs of lightweight trousers (and skirt/sarong)
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Swimming costume
- Warm fleece, down jacket or pile jacket for the evenings on the trek
- Waterproof Jacket and Trousers (Gore-Tex, Triplepoint or similar)
- Sun hat or baseball cap/bandana (must provide the neck with cover)

### Sleeping

Mattresses and bedding will be provided at all stages of the holiday for the Classic El Bogoi Route and the Tilia-Lep Lep traverse. **For the expeditions to the Mountain of Birds and the Seiya River Valley, you are required to bring your own lightweight sleeping bag and sleeping mat.**

### Other essential equipment

- Good quality UVA protection sunglasses
- Head torch with spare battery/bulb (Petzl Zoom or similar)
- Watch/Clock with alarm
- Camera and film (see guidance notes below)
- Binoculars
- Small pocket knife e.g. Swiss Army
- Trekking poles (entirely optional but useful for trek section)

- Small towel
- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit (see guidance notes below)

## **Transport**

Transport will be by a combination of comfortable minibus and landrover. Roads and the driving of other road users are not always up to western standards, however we will be using trusted local operators to provide our transport.

## **Medical Information**

A comprehensive first aid kit will be carried by your guides at all times. This kit can be used for treating any minor injuries and illness. In the event of an emergency, all clients are recommended to take out a Flying Doctors of East Africa emergency evacuation policy for the duration of the holiday. In addition, a regular international worldwide travel insurance policy will cover all medical expenses and if necessary, repatriation to your home country.

We do however encourage you to bring your own small first aid kits including the following items:

- any glasses and/or contact lenses, solutions and spares
- any prescription medicines, including anti-malarial drugs
- paracetamol or aspirin and ibuprofen for a headache, fever, pain etc
- antidiarrhoeals e.g. Imodium
- antihistamine tablets for treating of hay fever, other allergies and itching
- high factor sunscreen and lip salve
- after sun/skin moisturiser
- insect repellent (DEET or natural based)
- a supply of antiseptic wipes and plasters
- a general purpose course of antibiotics for treating traveller's diarrhoea e.g. ciprofloxacin
- any other medicines used for the treatment of particular allergies

You should consult with your doctor or local travel clinic regarding necessary immunisations and anti-malarial drugs for Kenya. The safari section and the trek will take place in non-malarial areas, however as malaria is present at Lake Naivasha and at the coast, we recommend that anti-malarials are taken for the duration of your holiday. Exactly which type of malarial drug you take should be a decision made in consultation with your doctor or travel clinic, as some are known to have side effects for certain individuals.

You may have the necessary immunisations from previous holidays to remote areas and again, advice should be taken from your doctor or travel clinic as to which immunisations are necessary. If you have any outstanding queries or concerns please contact us and we will try to assist. Please consult your doctor or travel clinic at least 2 months prior to the holiday as it is far better to spread any vaccinations over a period of a few weeks.

## **Travel and Medical Insurance**

It is a condition of joining this trip that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicopter rescue services) and appropriate insurance is included in the holiday price.

Our chosen insurance company are reputable UK insurers, Worldwide Travel Insurances Ltd. Full details of their policy are provided in the leaflet sent under cover of my letter dated 25 February. The level of cover provided for everyone is the "Worldwide - Super" category.

If you choose not to take this policy, you must ensure that the policy you do take provides an equivalent level of protection. In the event of any queries regarding the policy, please contact ourselves or the insurers directly.

Flying Doctors of East Africa emergency evacuation cover is compulsory for this holiday. This policy will cover evacuation from anywhere in Kenya by plane or helicopter and will allow air evacuation as far as Nairobi, from where the Worldwide policy (or your own) will be sufficient to cover further international repatriation and all additional medical and other expenses.

### Visa/Passport Information

UK and Republic of Ireland citizens require a tourist visa for Kenya, valid for up to 3 months. The cost is GBP 35 or \$US 50. Other citizens should consult their nearest Kenya embassy or consulate.

There are 2 possible ways of obtaining a visa:

- 1) Visas may be purchased on arrival at the airport in Nairobi with cash US dollars or GBP Sterling. This is reasonably quick and easy. Please bring a passport photo and the necessary amount of cash.
- 2) You may obtain a visa by contacting the Kenya High Commission in London). This involves the following procedure:

Visas are obtained from the Kenya High Commission, 45 Portland Place, London W12 4AS. The phone number is +44 (0)20 76362371 or alternatively, read the instructions and download an application form from [www.kenyahighcommission.com](http://www.kenyahighcommission.com)

You will require so send the following:

- A completed form which can be downloaded from the above website or can be requested by writing or telephoning the Kenya High Commission
  - Valid passport (check date)
  - 1 recent passport photo
  - Stamped addressed envelope with a recorded delivery slip made out to your address for them to return your passport to you
  - A brief written itinerary - as follows with the relevant dates according to your holiday itinerary
1. Arrive Nairobi
  2. Trekking and Wildlife Safari, Samburu region
  3. Lamu
  4. Depart Nairobi
- a **postal order** or **bank draft** for £35 or \$US 50 payable to "Kenya High Commission"

**Allow 7-10 days for processing.**

**It is entirely up to you which method you prefer. We are happy for you to obtain visas on arrival and this is certainly the simplest method. However, you may wish the peace of mind of having them beforehand and therefore instructions have been provided.**

We recommend that you take photocopies of your passports and visas and other valuable documents with you while on holiday. A copy should also be left at home with a relative or friend (ideally the same person for whom you have given as the appropriate emergency contact). In the event that any documents are lost or stolen, this will greatly assist the process of replacement.

### Currency and Spending Requirements

The currency of Kenya is the Kenyan shilling (KSh) which is made up of 100 cents. Notes in circulation are KSh 1000, 500, 200, 50 and 20. US dollars and Kenya shillings are the most useful form of currency in Kenya. Dollars are accepted in towns and cities, however in rural areas shillings are the only method of currency. Dollars can be changed to local currency at foreign exchange bureaus and banks. There are a small selection of ATMs in Kenya and credit cards are accepted at certain places

throughout the country. However, there are occasional problems with data links to Europe and certain credit cards may not work.

In respect of spending money we suggest that the equivalent of \$US 500 will be sufficient to pay for any gratuities, tips, drinks, souvenirs and other items of a personal nature. As this is a virtually all-inclusive trip, we don't anticipate your needing nearly as much as this, however it is best to bring more than you require. If you intend to buy special items or presents then consider bringing more cash/travellers cheques and/or credit card.

Due to the remote nature of the areas we will visit, the only likely opportunities to change money while in Kenya will be on Day 1 in Nairobi and on Day 13 prior to flying to Lamu island.

***We recommend that spending money is carried in a combination of Kenya shillings cash and US dollars cash which should be arranged with your bank prior to departure. Please also bring some US dollars travellers cheques. A credit card is useful for emergencies and purchasing special presents.***

#### Language

Swahili and English are the dominant languages in Kenya. In northern Kenya the local people speak their tribal language (Samburu and Ndorobo in the regions where we are going). Most people will have a good knowledge of Swahili and many will know a little English, even in very remote areas. At the coast, the local language is almost exclusively Swahili, however again, most will know some English. Whilst it is not strictly necessary for the holiday, any attempt to speak the local Samburu or Swahili language will be greatly appreciated. Learning the very basics e.g. hello, goodbye, thank you etc is encouraged and most general-purpose guide books for Kenya can assist in this regard.

#### Time

Kenya is 3 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

#### Climate Information

The climate in Kenya varies widely due to the differences in topography. In general, the weather in Kenya in early November is sunny, warm and dry as this falls at the end of the dry season and just before the "short rains". There is however, a chance of rain showers in the mountains at any time of year and weather patterns have been severely irregular in Kenya over the past 3-4 years.

In the Samburu region, the heat is tempered by the altitude (we will be trekking between 6-8,000 feet) and we can expect to enjoy pleasant daytime temperatures between 20-25 °C (68-77 °F). At night the temperature falls to around 12-15 °C (54-59 °F).

At the coast the climate is far more humid, with daytime temperatures averaging between 28 - 34 °C and temperatures at night falling to between 22 - 24 °C. The sea and the pool however are close at hand to cool off!

#### Photography

Kenya offers outstanding opportunities for landscape, wildlife and people photography. For the keen photographer an SLR camera with a range of focal length lenses will be required with perhaps a fixed telephoto lens for wildlife shots. A small tripod will be useful if using longer lenses.

Whether to use print or slide film is a matter of personal choice and experience - if you have a digital camera you needn't worry! For clear daylight conditions ASA/ISO 50 and 100 speed film works well (perhaps even slower for slide film) whereas a faster speed ASA/ISO 200 or 400 is better in low light conditions early and late in the day.

***It is best to bring a range of film from home and plenty of it too as it will not be possible to purchase film in the areas we visit. Spare batteries are also a good idea along with a robust and padded bag to protect your equipment from dust and damage whilst on the move.***

As noted in the equipment list above, a pair of binoculars, although not essential, is highly recommended for wildlife observation.

## **Background Resources and Reading**

The following books, maps and websites are all recommended for learning more about Kenya and for getting you in the mood for the trip!

### Guidebooks

Lonely Planet - East Africa; Kenya; Trekking in East Africa; Watching Wildlife East Africa; Swahili Phrasebook

J Dorst and P Dandelot - A Field Guide to the Larger Mammals of Africa  
JG Williams and N Arlott - The Collins Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa  
R D Estes - The Safari Companion: A Guide to Watching African Mammals

### Travel

John Hillaby - Journey to the Jade Sea  
Ernest Hemingway - The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Green Hills of Africa  
Rick Ridgeway - In the Shadow of Kilimanjaro: On Foot Across East Africa  
Nigel Pavitt - The Samburu

### Internet Resources

[www.kenyaweb.com](http://www.kenyaweb.com)  
[www.kenya-wildlife-service.org](http://www.kenya-wildlife-service.org)  
[www.africanwildlife.org](http://www.africanwildlife.org)  
[www.jambokenya.com](http://www.jambokenya.com)

We hope this information is helpful and please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss any aspect of the holiday.

Enjoy your African adventure!

*The Samburu Trails Team*

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