

THE WALKING PARTY

ITINERARY FOR 'A TASTE OF KENYA'

Price: around £3990 per person but to be discussed
Suggested dates 2012/2013: 5th – 17th December and 26th December – 9th January 2017

Walking distance: 60 miles approx.



Day 1 ARRIVAL You arrive at 20.45 at Jomo Kenyatta airport where you will be met by James and Diana and driven to the Fairview Hotel just on the outskirts of Nairobi. This is a wonderful hotel in Nairobi and is a relaxing way to start the Kenyan experience in comfort before we start moving into the wild bush!

Day 2 LANGATA We awake to the lovely sounds of birds before we join for breakfast in the Fairview dining room. Time to relax before we take the vehicles to the elephant orphanage of Daphne Sheldrick. This has gained a great deal of celebrity through the BBC and Daphne Sheldrick has been made a dame of the British Empire through her fantastic work with elephant orphans that she successfully rears and reintroduces to a herd in Tsavo East Game Park. Lunch at Diana's father's house with old time Kenyan friends and hopefully Daphne herself, overlooking the Ngong Hills and the Croton and Eucalyptus tree forest. In the afternoon a visit to Giraffe Manor before returning to the Fairview for dinner. Dinner at the Fairview.

Day 3 MASAI MARA We drive down to the Masai Mara in the early morning for the start of our ten day safari from the Mara to Magadi. This is stunningly beautiful countryside. A typical African safari drive ... maybe a little bumpy, dusty! We will do an evening game drive before sitting down to a good dinner before a roaring fire.

Masai Mara National Reserve was established in 1961 and covers some 1,510 km² in south-western Kenya. It is the northern-most section of the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem which covers around 25,000 km² from north Tanzania into southern Kenya. The Mara is bounded by the Serengeti Park to the south, and Masai pastoral ranches to the north, east and west. The Masai are permitted to graze their cattle in the exterior section, but the interior park of 518 square km is reserved strictly for the fauna. Masai Mara is a succession of undulating plains and rivers lined with acacia trees, where we can observe an exceptionally rich variety of wildlife. Here we find the largest lion population in Kenya, but even more spectacular is the enormous concentration of antelopes, zebras, and wildebeest, and of course all the hyenas, lions, cheetah and other predators that follow these herds and hunt the more venerable.

Days 4 and 5 MASAI MARA We set off early morning after breakfast to explore the varied ecosystems of the game reserve in your safari vehicles, with some of the best wildlife viewing possible. The best times for game drives are early morning and late afternoon when the light is at its best for photographic enthusiasts. Lunch can be taken back at the camp or picnics arranged under a shady acacia tree. The game is extraordinary here as is indeed both bird life and insect life. The cool of the evening is perfect for a stroll or climbing a rocky outcrop to admire the views and absorb the total tranquillity of the bush at dusk. On return to the camp hot showers are available. A fire is lit and we will dine around the fire with drinks and stories.



Day 6 LOITA HILLS We drive into the Loita Hills via Moriyo leaving the reserve with game viewing on the way. Tucked into the south western corner of Kenya, the Loita Hills form an island of indigenous forest and rolling hills rising up into the western escarpment of the Rift Valley. We take a small track up into the hills passing small traditional Masai villages and groves of thorny acacias. Picnic lunch en route. Arrive at Il Turot Camp in the afternoon. Evening walk on the edge of the forest, accompanied by a Masai Guide, time permitting. Overnight Il Turot camp.

Day 7 ENGARE NANYUKI Waking up at dawn is becoming a beautiful habit and the thought of another safari breakfast shines bright as you sip your tea and listen to the distinctive sound of the emerald spotted wood dove. A mournful song indeed where she is supposed to be crying “You’re house is on fire and you’re children are all gone, gone, gone, gone!” This morning we will meet our Masai guides that will accompany us for the next few days. Leaving the vehicles behind we head across the hills on foot. The surrounding landscape is magnificent. The forest with green grassy clearings reminds us somehow of the English countryside but not for long however, as we are brought back to reality and Africa by the sight of a Masai armed with his spear. Our day's walk takes us through the forest where we discover giant trees covered in moss and native orchids. We set up camp overlooking a stream where crested crane and sacred ibis search for insects amongst the long grass. We must beware of walking in the dark however as the nearby swamp is frequented by buffalo and elephant live in the surrounding forest. Picnic lunch en route & dinner at camp. Camping.

Day 8 TIAMANAGEN We follow the edge of the Nguruman forest for 5 to 6 hours. There are many Colobus monkeys with their long black and white fur coats, as well as Hartlaubs turaco. We pass many waterholes on our passage and with a bit of luck can catch a glimpse of some antelope or buffalo. We are now very close to the Tanzanian border and the forest has given way to open fields. There are many Masai villages in the area and we frequently meet with herdsmen and warriors. We have joined an important track that is used by the Masai to herd their cattle to the highlands for grazing during the dry season. The Masai who live on the escarpment use the track to take their cattle down to Lakes Magadi and Natron for the salt

and minerals. On this high open plateau we stroll easily whilst appreciating rock formations and the magnificent view of the Loliondo Hills in Tanzania. The surrounding hills are now much more populated. On our way we visit several Masai villages. We pass many waterholes and with a bit of luck can catch a glimpse of some antelope or buffalo. Camping.

Day 9 OLJORO OIBOR A short walking day takes us to the edge of the Rift Valley. Donkeys will carry our camp from here and down to the floor of the Rift Valley, there are no roads in this area. Our Masai crew pack the luggage & tents onto the donkeys' packs. The view is magnificent. Lakes Magadi and Natron lie 1000 metres below us and to the south the Gelai and Lengai volcanoes which are the sacred home of the Masai God "Ngei". And a few hundred kilometres to the north on the other side of the Rift Valley we can discern the Ngong Hills. We spend a leisurely afternoon feeling on top of the world. Camping.

Day 10 PAKASE An early start for a hot descent to the Rift Valley floor, down a rocky escarpment and across the desert plains brings us to the cool shade of the Pakase River. We say farewell to our Masai crew, we are transferred by vehicle to Loisiijo Lodge Shompole on the banks of the Ewaso Ngiro river for a relaxed afternoon in the shade of giant fig trees & overnight. This is a lovely complex of cottages where we will sleep for the next two nights.



Day 11 SHOMPOLE GAME PARK Within the famous Rift Valley, the Ewaso Ngiro River flows from the highlands of the Mau escarpment into the soda lake of Lake Natron. Activities for the day commence with an early morning walk along the river banks observing the birds and the baboons coming for their morning drink and then moving across the surrounding plains in the cool morning air. In the afternoon we head off for a game drive in the Shompole Conservation Area. This conservation area is a fine example of Community owned conservation. You can see a wide variety of wildlife including oryx, elephant, buffalo, eland, giraffe, gazelle and lion, against the dramatic backdrop of the Nguruman escarpment. Nature walks and cultural visits accompanied by Masai guides are included in your stay at Loisiijo. Sundowners with magnificent views over the Lake Magadi as the hot sun fades to soft desert hues. Overnight Loisiijo.

DAY 12 NAIROBI / MALINDI Lake Magadi was discovered by English geologist, Gregory, and is certainly the most spectacular in the Rift Valley. An enormous pan of pink soda stretches into the horizon. Around the edge of the lake hot springs bubble from the ground at temperatures exceeding 50°. These springs produce microscopic aquatic life that feed a variety of local bird species, along with a number of migratory birds. A species of perch, "*Tilapia Grahami*" survive in these extreme conditions, reproducing in puddles of fresh water. Areas more concentrated in soda are favourable for the reproduction of algae which flamingos feed upon. It's not unusual for the flocks to number in the hundreds of thousands.

Back in our vehicles we visit Lake Magadi on our return to Nairobi. Heading south around the lake we stop at Bird Rock to watch the huge flocks of flamingos and pelicans against the changing colours of the soda lake as the sun rises higher in the sky. Near the hot bubbling springs we find many small fish which have adapted to the harsh conditions of the alkaline waters. The imposing Magadi Soda Factory towers over the lake's edge next to the small town which is our last point of contact with the lake. Climbing out of the Rift Valley we return to Nairobi on a good road arriving by the Ngong Hills. After our last vision of Hemmingway's Africa we continue to Wilson Airport to fly to Malindi for our last relaxing days on the Kenyan coast. Upon arriving at Malindi airport we shall be taxed to the Driftwood Club an old colonial affair on the beach where we will unwind from the heat of the safari and enjoy our last three nights of Kenyan bliss.

DAY 13 MALINDI COAST A relaxing morning before a walk down the beach to the sea pool for a gentle swim in the shallows before walking up the beach to Diana's father's beach house for lunch. We will have an informal lunch here with some of the Malindi old timers before we return to the Driftwood Club. Dinner at the Driftwood.



Day 14 MALINDI CORAL REEF After a lazy morning there is the chance for those interested in taking a boat out to the wonderful coral reef to snorkel. It is a very relaxing time one spends floating on the salt of the sea looking at the beautifully coloured fish looking at you looking at them. An indifference that can only lead to relaxation. The fish are so various: Butterfly, Angel, Clown, Lion, Bat, Moon, Trigger, Pipe all of different shapes, sizes and habits. There's a hierarchy down there! For those non swimmers the boats are glass bottomed so you can still see the coral and anyway just to be out drifting in the beautiful sea with the sun and breeze is a wonderful experience! In the afternoon after a lovely lunch on the terrace of the Driftwood Club, there is time to relax. A trip to the local snake farm for those restless folk or some voluntary deep sea fishing (this is a world famous area for this sort of fishing with Sailfish and Blue Marlins in plenty) or a walk about the Swahili town of Malindi for Kenyan artefacts.

Day 15 MALINDI / NAIROBI DEPARTURE We say goodbye. A relaxed beach morning before lunch at the Driftwood Club. We strongly recommend that you continue your safari towards the great safari parks that Kenya has to offer and will of course be there to suggest which particular park may be suited to your needs and which company might be the best to do this with.

NOTE: The itinerary is subject to change according to local conditions. All mileages shown are approximate.