

World66's guide to Kenya

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Kenya

Kenya has something for any traveler. There are many different landscapes and cultures, all quite different and beautiful. There is the desert of the north, and The Rift Valley where evidence of protohumans was first found. There are many brilliant Lakes , including Lake Victoria in western Kenya, Lake Naivasha and many more. Kenya has the second highest peak in Africa, the great Mt. Kenya . It has twenty National Parks and Reserves packed full of the exclusive Big Five (Elephant, Leopard, Lion, Cape Buffalo, and Rhinoceros).

Of course, there is also The Coast , very picturesque, with white sands, emerald water, and the Swahili culture, a unique mix of Arabic and Bantu influences. Compound the incredible scenery and limitless travel options with friendly and welcoming people, and visiting Kenya becomes a great vacation.

The best places to start your travels in Kenya are probably Nairobi N.P. the capital and South of Mombasa the second largest city, located on the coast. Both are served by international flights and have a very good tourist infrastructure.

Kenya – History

Fossils found in East Africa suggest that protohumans roamed the area more than 20 million years ago. Recent finds near Kenya's Lake Turkana indicate that hominids lived in the area 2.6 million years ago.

Cushitic-speaking people from northern Africa moved into the area that is now Kenya beginning around 2000 BC. Arab traders began frequenting the Kenya coast around the first century A.D. Kenya's proximity to the Arabian Peninsula invited colonization and Arab and Persian settlements sprouted along the coast by the eighth century. During the first millennium A.D. Nilotic and Bantu peoples moved into the region and the latter now comprises three-quarters of Kenya's population.

The Swahili language a mixture of Bantu and Arabic developed as a lingua franca for trade between the different peoples. Arab dominance on the coast was eclipsed by the arrival in 1498 of the Portuguese who gave way in turn to Islamic control under the Imam of Oman in the 1600s. The United Kingdom established its influence in the 19th century.

The colonial history of Kenya dates from the Berlin Conference of 1885 when the European powers first partitioned East Africa into spheres of influence. In 1895 the U.K. Government established the East African Protectorate and soon after opened the fertile highlands to white settlers. The settlers were allowed a voice in government even before it was officially made a U.K. colony in 1920 but Africans were prohibited from direct political participation until 1944.

On October 19, 1952, British Colonialist Government declares state of emergency; the next day Jomo Kenyatta, Achieng Oneko and others are arrested. (October 20th is now a public holiday, Kenyatta Day). This officially marked the start of the Mau Mau uprising. According to the Corfield report, 13,423 Africans were killed, thousands wounded and several dozen Europeans and Asians lost their lives. African casualties were so high because the British Government hired other tribes (mostly Kamba and Kalenjin) to act as the Colonialist army. This unit, called the Home Guard fought extensively with the Mau Mau fighters, whom were mostly of the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu tribes.

The Mau Mau fighters fled to the forests of Mount Kenya and the Aberdare Mountains. They were outnumbered and out armed by the Colonialists and Home Guard, yet their guerilla tactics allowed them to hold on until the Colonialist Government realized this war would not be easy to win, and eradicating the Mau Mau would take more resources than the British Government would send to Africa. Slowly the Mau Mau gained support of other tribes, such as the Luo and Masai. Jomo Kenyatta wrote letters from prison to gain international support for the freedom movement. Because of all these reasons, the Colonists started to back down and allowed Africans to take part in the government.

The first direct elections for Africans to the Legislative Council took place in 1957. Kenya became independent on December 12 1963 and the next year joined the Commonwealth. Jomo Kenyatta a member of the predominant Kikuyu tribe and head of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) became Kenya's first president. The minority party Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) representing a coalition of small tribes that had feared dominance by larger ones dissolved itself voluntarily in 1964 and joined KANU.

A small but significant leftist opposition party the Kenya People's Union (KPU) was formed in 1966 led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga a former vice president and Luo elder. The KPU was banned and its leader detained after political unrest related to Kenyatta's visit to Nyanza Province. No new opposition parties were formed after 1969 and KANU became the sole political party. At Kenyatta's death in August 1978 Vice President Daniel arap Moi became interim President. On October 14 Moi became President formally after he was elected head of KANU and designated its sole nominee.

In June 1982 the National Assembly amended the constitution making Kenya officially a one-party state and parliamentary elections were held in September 1983. The 1988 elections reinforced the one-party system. However in December 1991 parliament repealed the one-party section of the constitution. By early 1992 several new parties had formed and multiparty elections were held in December 1992.

President Moi was reelected for another five-year term. Opposition parties won about 45% of the parliamentary seats but President Moi's KANU Party obtained the majority of seats. Parliamentary reforms in November 1997 enlarged the democratic space in Kenya including the expansion of political parties from 11 to 26. President Moi won re-election as President in the December 1997 elections and his KANU Party narrowly retained its parliamentary majority with 109 out of 122 seats.

Kenya – Language

English and Kiswahili (the language of the Swahili people) are the official languages of Kenya. Both are taught in school from nursery through Form 4. Neither, however is the most common language spoken at home, and most rural Kenyans speak their tribal language. In the cities, however, most Kenyans know English well enough to get by. Most Kenyans prefer Kiswahili to English, however, because it is closer to their Bantu tribal languages. Kiswahili is used extensively between tribes also, and there is hardly a place in Kenya where someone does not know a bit of Kiswahili. There are many places, however, where no one in the village knows English.

Therefore, a limited knowledge of Kiswahili can be very helpful in rural Kenya. In addition to getting your point across or asking an important question, speaking Kiswahili will give you additional respect from Kenyans. Most will laugh surprisingly and make them more willing to do you a favor.

Sheng is another language you may hear in Kenya. Sheng (the word coming from a combination of the words SwaHili and ENGLISH) is a language that has grown out of Nairobi that is used almost exclusively by the younger crowd. It is a mix of Kiswahili, English, and the Bantu tribal tongues. Sheng is regarded almost as a secret language of the youth, and when spoken by a tourist, it is sure to impress any young adult in any big city. It is hard to differentiate from Kiswahili without knowing the language, but it can still be fun to substitute a Sheng greeting for a Kiswahili greeting if you run into a young adult. Common Sheng greetings are: Sasa? which is answered by fit or fiti, and Mambo? (or Mambo vipi? or just Vipi?), which is answered by poa.

What follows is a list of Kiswahili vocabulary that will allow you to have a working knowledge of the language. This could be useful to get you of a fix, order food, or just impress a local.

Pronunciation:

One of the reasons Kiswahili is not a difficult language is that it is very grammatical and pronunciation never changes from word to word.

A as the a in father

E as the e in best or the a in hay

I as the ee in bee

O as the o in cold

U as the ou in you

Dh as the th in this

Ng as the ng in sing

All other consonants require no explanation.

Greetings and Civilities:

Greeting is extremely important in Kenyan culture. Before talking to anyone, it is polite to greet them first. After a greeting, some Kenyans may even carry on with small talk for ten good minutes before getting to the topic at hand.

Welcome Karibu How are you (greeting a singular person)? Habari yako? or Habari gani?

How are you (greeting many people)? Habari zenu? or Habari gani?

Im fine Nzuri, Salama, or Njema

What is your name? Unaitwa nani?

My name is _____	Ninaitwa _____
Where are you from?	Unatoka wapi?
Im from _____	Ninatoka _____
Where do you live?	Unakaa wapi?
I live in _____	Ninakaa _____
Thank you very much	Asante sana
Yes	Ndiyo
No	Hapana
Goodbye	Kwaheri
No problem	Hakuna matata
White person (foreigner)	Mzungu
White people (foreigners)	Wazungu
Finding your way around:	
I want to go to _____	Nataka kwenda mpaka _____
Is this the way to _____?	Hii ni njia mpaka _____?
Is this the car to _____?	Hii ni gari ya kwenda _____?
How much is it to go to _____?	Ni pesa ngapi kwenda _____?
bus	basi
train	gari la moshi
vehicle	gari
boat	meli
taxi	teksi
ticket	tikiti
Wait a little!	Ngoja kidogo!

Stop here!

Simama hapa!

Where is _____?

Wapi _____?

hotel

hoteli ya kulala

bank

benki

restaurant

hoteli ya chakula

post office

posta

toilet

choo

hospital

hospitali

police station

stesheni ya polisi

Accommodation:

Where is a hotel?

Wapi hoteli ya kulala?

Do you have a room for one person?

Kuna chumba kwa mtu moja?

Do you have a room for two people?

Kuna chumba kwa watu wawili?

Is there hot water?

Kuna maji ya moto?

How much is the room?

Chumba ni pesa ngapi?

I want to see the room please.

Nataka kuona chumba tafadhali.

For one day

siku moja

For one week

wiki mzima /moja

key

ufunguo

Animals:

bird –

ndege

crocodile –

mamba

elephant –

ndovu/tembo

giraffe –

twiga

hippopotamus –	kiboko
hyena –	fisi
insects/bugs –	wadudu
lion –	simba
monkey –	tumbili
mosquito –	mbu
rhinoceros –	kifaru
snake –	nyoka
water buffalo –	nyati

numbers:

1 moja

2 mbili

3 tatu

4 nne

5 tano

6 sita

7 saba

8 nane

9 tisa

10 kumi

11 kumi na moja

12 kumi na mbili

20 ishirini

30 thelathini

40 arobaini

50 hamsini

60 sitini

70 sabini

80 themanini

90 tisini

100 mia moja

200 mia mbili

1000 elfu moja

4567 elfu nne mia tano sitini na saba

Emergencies:

Im sick mimi mgonjwa

I need a doctor ninahitaji daktari

Im pregnant nina mimba

hospital hospitali

pharmacy duka la dawa

medicine dawa

Security:

Help! Saidia!

Im lost nimepotea

Ive been robbed nimeibwa

Dont bother me. usinisumbue

Go away kwenda kabisa

I have no money sina pesa

At the restaurant:

Vegetables and Grains:

beans (pinto, kidney)	maharagwe
cabbage	kabichi
carrots	karoti
cassava	muhogo
kale	sukuma wiki
lettuce	salad
onions	vitunguu
potatoes	viazi
rice	wali
tomatoes	nyanya
vegetables (greens)	mboga

Meat:

beef –	nyama ya ngombe
goat –	nyama ya mbuzi
kebabs – mushkaki	
meat – nyama	
mutton – nyama ya kondoo	
pork – nyama ya nguruwe	
crab – kaa	
fish – samaki	
lobster – kamba	
chicken – kuku	

Fruit:

bananas – ndizi

coconut – nazi

dates – tende

fruit – matunda

guava – pera

limes – ndimu

mangoes – maembe

oranges – machungwa

papayas – paipai

passion fruit – pashoni

pineapples – mananasi

sugar cane – miwa

Other useful words and phrases:

boiled – chemsha

bread – mkate

butter – siagi

cold – baridi

cup – kikombe

Do you have ____? – Kuna _____?

eggs – mayai

food – chakula

fork – uma

fried – kaanga

glass – glasi

hot – moto

hot(spicy) – kali

knife – kisu

napkin – kitambaa

pepper – pilipili

plate – sahani

raw – mbichi

ripe – mbivu

roast – choma

table – mesa

salt – chumvi

spoon – kijiko

soup – supu

sweet – tamu

without meat – bila nyama

Kenya – Getting There

Kenya – Safety and Security

Safety and Security:

As in any country, there are a few safety and security issues in Kenya. Kenya is a poor country, and there are many people who are forced to make a living by illegal means. Normal Kenyan citizens are definitely targets, but rich, naive tourists are an even bigger temptation for thieves, pick pockets, and con artists. Crime is not so common in rural areas, but in big cities, especially Nairobi (known as Nairobi robbery in travelers circles), theft has made a name for itself.

By taking necessary precautions, however, the risks of a security incident can be reduced drastically. By decreasing the temptation for thieves, staying away from bad areas, and being aware and using common sense, you can have a safe trip. Luckily, violent crime is rare in Kenya, even in Nairobi. Violence exists, but thieves care only of a victim's goods, and will not inflict harm unless necessary. An important part in eliminating the risk of being hurt is remembering this: Always try to never fight with a thief, or chase a mugger, although it may go against your instincts.

There are many forms of prevention that can be used. A prospective threat can sometimes be noticed before the incident. If you think you're being followed or eyed by a suspicious person or people, duck into a shop and wait it out. If you make them aware that you are on to them, they will usually give up. Incidents can also be prevented by the way you act. Always act confident and look like you know where you're going, even if you don't. Stop in a shop to look at a map or ask directions. Another obvious form of prevention is never to show large amounts of money. Someone who pulls out a stack of 1000 shilling notes to pay for one item is asking to lose it all. Here are some other tips for having a safe trip.

Theft:

Your bags and valuables are at the most risk when you are on the move. Hotel rooms are usually safe, except for the cheaper brothels. If the hotel has a safe deposit box, use it for your most valuable possessions. When moving in between places, such as from the airport to the hotel, or from the hotel to the bus stage, using a taxi is your best bet. When in rough areas of Nairobi, remember to keep the doors locked and don't open the windows. If you're taking public transportation, try to keep your bags in view. Your bags are usually always safe in the boot of a bus, but I've heard of touts taking items from a bag on top of a bus.

There are several measures you can take to eliminate the risk of losing items while traveling. First, put small locks on your baggage. If you have a backpack, lock the main compartments. Losing the entire piece of luggage is very rare, so this deters thieves from rooting through your luggage. Also, never keep your valuables in your bags, but on your person, preferably next to your skin. Money belts or pouches around your neck or waist is your best bet, although not fool-proof by any means. As a general rule, never walk anywhere at night. Taxis are sometimes expensive, but the price is worth it. If you are forced to walk, stay in groups and pay a night guard on the street to escort you.

Mugging:

Of all of the security incidents I heard of in two and a half years in Kenya, most cases were mugging. In the vast majority of cases, the person lost only a small amount of money. Anyone can get mugged, but if you carry only essential items, and hide those items well, you won't have much to fear from muggers.

Preventing getting mugged or pick-pocketed is simple: don't carry anything you can't bare to lose. Of course, it's necessary to carry some items, such as money and a passport, but if those are well placed on your body, you should have no fear of losing anything to muggers. Don't go out with more money than you need, and keep the money you do need split up in many places on your body. For example, keep a little money in your pocket for spending, some between your foot and sock, and the rest in your money belt.

Never wear items of value, such as watches or other jewelry. Desperate thieves have been known to rip off earrings, so they definitely won't hesitate to snatch a bracelet or necklace. Nice sports caps are hot items, and it is common for thieves to snatch a cap and run. In bad areas, sunglasses can even be grabbed. If you must carry

a camera out when walking around a big city, put it in your small bag or purse, and only take it out when you take a picture.

Being mugged or having items stolen is still possible after taking all these preventions. If are a victim of crime, I again encourage you to cut your losses and let the thief go. Some gangs will send one member to take an item, then after being chased by the victim, lead him or her into an alley where the rest of his friends await to take everything. Being chased also gives them reason to use violence. Be careful about yelling thief after being mugged. Mob justice is common in Kenya, and one assumed thief is killed by citizens in Nairobi every day. If thieves are caught, you'll end up seeing him beaten, perhaps even killed. Think about if your \$9.99 watch is worth it. Unfortunately, thieves are hardly ever caught by police, and it usually isn't worth your time to report the incident unless it is required for theft insurance.

Harassment:

Harassment is the most common form of security risk. I include harassment because it can make travelers feel very uncomfortable and unsafe. Harassment ranges from being taunted to being touched inappropriately. When you're laughed at, taunted or called names, the easiest thing to do is ignore it.

Taking action is necessary, however, when being sexually harassed. It is quite common for Kenyan men to make rude comments to women tourists. Even men are subjected to sexual harassment by prostitutes. There is no excuse for someone, either woman or man, making a sexual comment or touching someone inappropriately. All Kenyans know better, so let the harasser know his or her actions are not wanted, and don't be polite. Others around you may come to your aid if you tell them. If the harasser is not embarrassed enough to stop at this point, leave the scene. If the person follows, ask the help of a guard or store owner.

Con Artists:

It's quite common to run into someone in Nairobi who has a plan to separate some gullible tourist from his or her money. They take on the role of a political refugee and request money for their family. They'll pretend like students collecting contribution for their schools. Men dress up as beggars, then after you give them a coin or two, plain clothed police will tell you it's illegal and ask for a fine. They come up with stories that they know you from somewhere and just need a little something for some petrol, then they'll pay you back. They may even drop money, then after you return it, claim that you have taken some and threaten to tell the police. Con artists think of new stories every day, and it can be quite entertaining to listen to them. Use of common sense is your main weapon against confidence tricks. If you're not sure whether to believe it, you're surely right. Never give money to any stranger.

Street Kids:

Homeless are very common in Kenyan cities, especially young boys, some that can be very big boys. These boys band together in large groups and can make one feel unsafe even if they're only begging for change. The best way to get rid of a single street kid, or a small group, is to ignore them and walk on. If they follow, it may help to tell them you have no money, or that you'll give them something later. Giving money is hardly ever dangerous, but remember that giving money encourages more kids to work the streets and the money may be used to buy glue, which is sniffed by the boys to escape their harsh reality. If you must give something, buying homeless a meal is always a good way to lend a hand.

Violent crime:

Violent crime can be prevented by not resisting, chasing, or fighting thieves. Walking around at night, especially alone, increases your chances of violent crime. Fortunately, if you take these precautions and use common sense, you can almost completely eliminate all chance of being a victim of violent crime.

Kenya – Safaris

Safaris are one of the major tourist attractions of Kenya. Kenya's many National Parks and Reserves provide all the infrastructure to make a good safaris with loads of opportunities to see some Big Game.

all

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Kenya – Getting Around

By Air:

Kenya has about 250 airports (of vastly varying quality) and plenty of airlines connecting Nairobi with Mombasa, Kisumu, Nanyuki, Malindi, Lamu, and the national parks/reserves of Amboseli Masai Mara and Samburu. While many flights are heavily booked flying around Kenya during the high season, it is a relatively safe and relatively cheap way to cover a lot of ground. Always buy your tickets in advance. If you are going on a safari with an organized tour, the company will usually book your tickets to the national parks for you, and the price will be included in the total amount.

By Rail:

Kenyan Railways is a section of the government that runs the train in Kenya. The train is a luxurious way to travel, with comfortable beds and good meals, and is by far the safest way to travel on the ground. A passenger line runs inland from Mombasa to Nairobi and on to Malaba on the Kenya–Uganda border. There are three classes: First Class, which is the most expensive. You get your own bed and get good service, with free drinking water. Second Class is mostly the same, without all the pampering and free water, but still with a bed and meals. Third Class is very cheap, but passengers have only seats, if they are lucky enough to get one. The train is a good way to get to and from Mombasa from Nairobi, although it is slow and long waits and delays are expected.

By Road (Public Transportation):

Public Transportation is very extensive in Kenya, perhaps more so than many other African Countries. Some form of public transportation leaves every hour to major cities, and even several times daily to rural areas. There are several types of public transportation. These include buses, the train, and matatus. Matatu is the general name for smaller forms of public transportation, i.e., mini-buses, vans (called "Nissans"), or box matatus, which are simply a 2-wheel drive pick-up with a shell on the back. People are then crammed inside and you're off to your destination.

Buses:

Buses are comfortable, some what reliable, and fairly cheap. They are quite slow, however. Buses usually leave every morning from major cities such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Eldoret. Night buses are also available to some cities. Good bus companies will not overload their buses will not allow passengers to stand. The best, safest and most reliable bus companies are Coast, Akamba, and Stagecoach. Buy your tickets in advance at the ticket office near the bus stage.

Matatus:

Matatus are by far the most common means of transportation in Kenya. Matatus leave from designated spots called stages. Passengers get seated, then the matatu leaves when it is full. Matatus can also be caught from

the road. If one is passing, stick out your arm with your palm down. This is the sign you want to be picked up. If the vehicle is not full, the driver will pull over to let you in.

There are at least two people that run every matatu: a driver and a tout, who is usually a young man dressed in the current fad. A driver's job is self explanatory, but the work of a tout needs a bit of explanation. First, his job is to get customers to enter his particular matatu. Some times there are several matatus to the same destination, so touts will "fight" over you. Some may even grab you luggage and force you to follow him to his matatu. Touts can be very aggressive and rude. Don't let a tout take your bag, and make your own decision about what vehicle to take. Touts are actually good guys if you get to know them. Try joking around and speaking a bit of Kiswahili with them. Once you befriend a tout, they are a valuable ally.

In major stages, you pay for a ticket before you get on a matatu. It is common, however, to be asked for your money after the matatu is on its way. It's a good idea to ask the fair before entering the matatu. Ask other customers what they're paying. Some touts may try to cheat you!

Of all the types of matatus, "Nissans", or mini-vans are the most comfortable and the fastest. Of course they are a bit more expensive than mini-buses or box-matatus, but worth the price for comfort. Kenyans say that a matatu is never full, and unfortunately, this is usually true. No matter how many people, goats and chickens are crammed into a matatu, the driver will always stop for more people and the tout will shove them in. This makes for unsafe conditions and slow progress.

Some other tips for traveling by public transportation:

1. Always try to have your luggage in view.
2. Keep your wallet in your front pocket, and remove all valuables. Pick pockets love to work in matatus, especially mini-buses.
3. Although it is tempting to sit in the front seat next to the driver because it is comfortable, try to resist. This is called the "death seat," since if there is an accident, it is the passengers in front that are usually killed.

If you really want the flavor of Kenya, to experience it as only locals do, take at least one trip on a matatu. It can be very stressful, uncomfortable, and a security risk if you don't be careful, therefore I do not suggest it for the mild-at-heart. For the adventurous tourist, however, it can be quite an experience and a lot of fun.

By Car:

If you're bringing your own vehicle to Kenya you should get a free three-month permit at the border on entry as long as you have a valid carnet de passage for it. Keep in mind there are certain routes in north-east Kenya where you must obtain police permission before setting out. Hiring a vehicle in Kenya (or at least the national parks) is a relatively expensive way to see the country but it does give you freedom of movement and is sometimes the only way of getting to the more remote reaches. Generally Kenyan roads are in good condition.

Renting a vehicle is quite easy, but fairly expensive. Estimate just over \$100 a day for a car, and up to \$150 per day for a 4-wheel drive vehicle. There are many agencies in the major cities where you can rent vehicles.

Hitch Hiking:

Hitching, or getting a lift as it Kenyans call it, is relatively easy in Kenya, depending on your company and your location. Hitching has many advantages: It is safer to travel in a private vehicle, it is fast once you get a lift, and it can be fun to talk to locals that pick you up. If you are willing to try, heres some pointers.

Hitch hiking is safe, but always try to hitch in pairs! I have heard of many women hitching alone and together for over two years, and have not heard anything bad happen even once. I do, however, caution against a woman hitching alone. A pair of one man and one woman is your best bet to get picked up quickly. A pair of two women is just as good, if youre comfortable. Two or more men together will have a difficult time getting a lift, due to Kenyans worried about security.

To hitch hike, find a nice place on a major highway. Start as early as possible, say around 7:00 or 8:00 am, depending on how far you are from a major city where vehicles are leaving, heading your direction. Stand a few yards before a turn-out, so the vehicle has room to pull over after seeing you. Make sure you are clear of any matatu stopping point, or every one will stop for you. When a private vehicle approaches, stick out your arm, just like getting a matatu, but face your palm up instead of down. This means that you want a free lift.

Most lifts are free, although sometimes a driver will ask for money. Its up to you to decide how much you are willing to pay. More times than not, however, your driver will take you for free and buy you lunch. Good luck!

By Sea:

For the more maritimely minded sailing on a dhow along the East African coast is one of Kenya's most worthwhile and memorable travel experiences. Some of the most popular and most expensive dhow cruises leave from Nyali on the mainland opposite Mombasa Island.

Kenya – Books

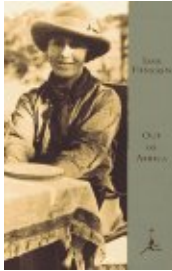
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Out of Africa and Shadows on the Grass



author: Isak
Dinesen
isbn: 0679724753
subject: travel

Out of Africa



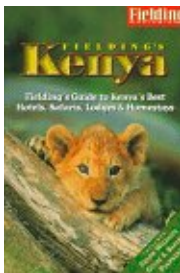
author:
isbn: 0679600213
subject: travel

Lonely Planet Kenya: A Lonely Planet Travel Survival Kit



author: Hugh Finlay, Geoff Crowther
isbn: 0864424604
subject: travel

Fielding's Kenya: Best Hotels, Lodges and Homestays



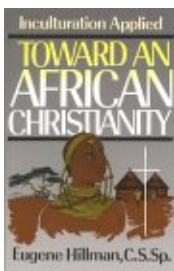
author: Bridget Glenday, Susan Southwick, Joan Westley
isbn: 1569521468
subject: culture

Making Ethnic Ways : Communities and Their Transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800–1950



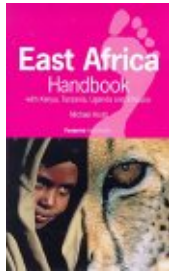
author: Bill Bravman
isbn: 0325001049
subject: culture

Toward an African Christianity: Inculturation Applied



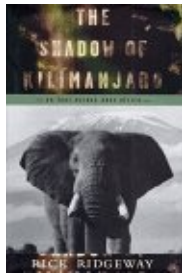
author: Eugene Hillman
isbn: 0809133814
subject: culture

East Africa Handbook 1999 with Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia



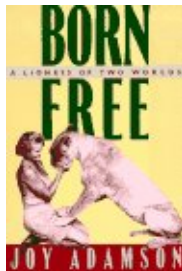
author:
isbn: 0844249785
subject: history

The Shadow of Kilimanjaro: On Foot Across East Africa



author: Rick
Ridgeway
isbn: 0805053891
subject: history

Born Free: A Lioness of Two Worlds



author: Joy
Adamson
isbn: 039474635X
subject: history

Kenya – Eating Out

traditional Kenyan foods. *Kenyeji* (also called *mukimu* or *irio*) is maize and beans inside mashed potatoes, which is then fried in onions. A common staple seen all over Kenya is *ugali*, a pasty substance made from only white corn meal. It takes quite a while to accustom a taste for *ugali*, but give it a try. Kenyans eat it with *mboga* (boiled greens), fish, or *nyama choma*.

Nyama choma (or burnt meat in Kiswahili) is most Kenyans favorite dish. Its goat, sheep, or cow meat barbequed over charcoal.

Food from the Coast of Kenya is quite different from that of up-country. Swahili food is loaded with spices and flavors from Asia and the Middle East. Common foods include *chapatti* (fried bread), *samosa* (mince meat in a triangle pastry), kebabs, and rice pilau. Although originally from the Coast, these treats are common even in up-country Kenya. As far as foreign foods go, excellent Indian food is available in most cities. Other

ethnic food is found only in Nairobi, Mombasa and other big cities.

Other snack foods available are roasted maize on the cob, *mandazi* (fried doughnut), peanuts, chips, and lots of fresh fruits.

all

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Kenya – Festivals

There is always something going on in Kenya. Kenyan people are very sociable by nature, and fun festivals are known to sprout up anywhere at any time. To keep up on festivals, concerts, sports tournaments, and parties, read the *Daily Nation* Newspaper. For a few shilling you can get all the latest local and international news, as well as some tips on festivals all over the country. See the Links section for the Daily Nation on the Web.

Here are a few annual festivals to give you an idea of the fun to be had in Kenya.

International Camel Derby:

Perhaps the most fun possible in one weekend is the annual International Camel Derby. The Derby is held every July in a town called Maralal in northern Kenya and everyone is invited for a hell of a good time. The area is the traditional homelands of the Samuru tribe, close relatives to the Maasai of southern Kenya and Tanzania. They wear red cloth, as the Maasai do, but the Samuru are incredibly clean, and are by far the smartest dressers of Kenya. The race is based at Yare Club and Campground, a few km out of town, where you are free to camp for KSh 200, or get a nice room.

There is an amateur competition and a professional race. The amateur class is open to anyone wishing to ride. Get there on Friday or early Saturday if you wish to register for the race. All camels available to ride hang out outside of the Yare Club. You, the prospective rider, must pick a good one. For a few thousand Kenyan shillings, you can pick your own camel, hire a handler to run behind your camel and hit it with a stick, and take a chance at winning a lot of money. You can be sure that every camel is ornery, and many are known to

sit down in the middle of the race. No matter how you do, you can be sure of two things: You'll leave with a hang-over from celebrating for two days straight, and you'll be so sore you won't be able to sit comfortably for days.

See the section entitled *Maralal* under Northern Kenya for more information on the town itself.

The Nakuru Rugby Tournament:

Every May in Nakuru there's a Rugby Tournament. A dozen or so teams of ten players from all over Kenya show up to strut their stuff. There are many excellent players and everyone plays hard. There's tons of beer for sale starting at 8:00 am, a bar with music blaring and people dancing, and people hitting each other at high speeds. I ask you, what else could a guy want?

There are other Rugby and Football tournaments throughout the year in several major Kenyan cities. Keep an eye out in the Daily Nation for sports action in your area.

The ISK 4th of July Party:

Every July 4th, the American Embassy puts on an Independence Day party at the International School of Kenya outside of Nairobi. Everyone is invited, not only Americans. The party is made up of mostly of Embassy employees, Peace Corps Volunteers, and U.S. Marines, all trying to prove they're the best and toughest in Kenya by who can drink the most beers in a day (Peace Corps always wins). There's tons of American food for sale, like hamburgers, hotdogs, and pizza, and you can even buy a Budweiser from the Marines. Food and drinks are expensive, and you must purchase coupons on the gate that you use to buy stuff. You must buy KSh 300 worth of coupons to enter. There's softball, Frisbee, and a swimming pool to keep you busy. There is also a raffle, where you can buy tickets for a chance to win a round-trip ticket to anywhere from Swiss Air, or free weekends at nice resort hotels across the country. Those left standing at 4:00 pm arrange more fun that night.

Kenya – People

Population: 28 337 071 (July 1998 est.)

Age structure:

0–14 years: 44% (male 6 248 260; female 6 109 443)

15–64 years: 54% (male 7 609 631; female 7 607 810)

65 years and over: 2% (male 333 881; female 428 046) (July 1998 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.71% (1998 est.)

Birth rate: 31.68 births/1 000 population (1998 est.)

Death rate: 14.19 deaths/1 000 population (1998 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.35 migrant(s)/1 000 population (1998 est.)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

15–64 years: 1 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.78 male(s)/female (1998 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 59.38 deaths/1 000 live births (1998 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 47.57 years

male: 47.02 years

female: 48.13 years (1998 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.07 children born/woman (1998 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Kenyan(s)

adjective: Kenyan

Ethnic groups: Kikuyu 22% Luhya 14% Luo 13% Kalenjin 12% Kamba 11% Kisii 6% Meru 6% other African 15% non-African (Asian European and Arab) 1%

Religions: Protestant (including Anglican) 38% Roman Catholic 28% indigenous beliefs 26% Muslim 6% other 2%

Languages: English (official) Swahili (official) numerous indigenous languages

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 78.1%

male: 86.3%

female: 70% (1995 est.)

Kenya – Economy

Economy overview: Since 1993 the government of Kenya has implemented a program of economic liberalization and reform. Steps have included the removal of import licensing and price controls removal of foreign exchange controls fiscal and monetary restraint and reduction of the public sector through privatizing publicly owned companies and downsizing the civil service. With the support of the World Bank IMF and other donors these reforms have led to a turnaround in economic performance following a period of negative growth in the early 1990s. Kenya's real GDP grew at 5% in 1995 and 4% in 1996 and inflation remained under control. Growth slowed in 1997. Political violence damaged the tourist industry and the IMF allowed Kenya's Enhanced Structural Adjustment Program to lapse due to the government's failure to enact reform conditions and to adequately address public sector corruption. Moreover El Nino rains destroyed crops and damaged an already crumbling infrastructure in 1997 and on into 1998. Long-term barriers to development include electricity shortages the government's continued and inefficient dominance of key sectors endemic corruption and the country's high population growth rate.

GDP: purchasing power parity \$150,590 (2004 est.)

GDP real growth rate: 34.2% (2004 est.)

GDP per capita: purchasing power parity \$5400 (2004 est.)

GDP composition by sector:

agriculture: 34%

industry: 20%

services: 46% (2004)

Inflation rate consumer price index: 8.8% (2004)

Labor force:

total: 8.78 million (2004 est.)

by occupation: agriculture 75%–80% non-agriculture 20%–25%

Unemployment rate: 54% urban (2004 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$1 billion

expenditures: \$3 billion including capital expenditures of \$638 million (FY96/97 est.)

Industries: small-scale consumer goods (plastic furniture batteries textiles soap cigarettes flour) processing agricultural products; oil refining cement; tourism

Industrial production growth rate: 3.8% (2004)

Electricity capacity: 808 000 kW (2004)

Electricity production: 2.47 billion kWh (2004)

Electricity consumption per capita: 134 kWh (2004)

Agriculture products: coffee tea corn wheat sugarcane fruit vegetables; dairy products beef pork poultry eggs rice beans cocoa

Exports:

total value: \$2.1 billion (f.o.b. 2004)

commodities: tea 18% coffee 15% petroleum products (2004)

partners: Uganda 22.8% UK 20.1% Tanzania 19.1% Germany 14.0% Netherlands 7.6% US 6.1%

Imports:

total value: \$2.9 billion (f.o.b. 1996)

commodities: machinery and transportation equipment 31% consumer goods 13% petroleum products 12% (1995)

partners: UK 21.3% UAE 18% Japan 14% Germany US

Debt external: \$7 billion (1994 est.)

Economic aid: South Africa

Currency: 1 Kenyan shilling (KSh) = 1 dollar

Exchange rates: Kenyan shillings (KSh) per US\$161.164 (January 1998) 58.732 (1997) 57.115 (1996) 51.430 (1995) 56.051 (1994) 58.001 (1993)

Fiscal year: 1 July 30 June

Kenya – Things to do

all

Seeing animals

Seeing the big 5

Kenya – Map

Mumias

Kenya – Accommodation

Transportation.

The common man's means of transport is bikes. Like in the western kenya Busia, Nambale, Malaba, Mumias, Kakamega, Bungoma and Kisumu, bikes are the primary means of transport.

Kenya – Practical Information

kenya's largest cities

all

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Kenya – Internet Cafes

Kenya – Sights

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Notes:

Central Highlands

Kenya's Central Province is home to the country's largest tribe, the Kikuyu. The highlands, composed of Mt Kenya and the Aberdare Range, are among the most fertile lands in the country. The first white settlers saw the agricultural potential of the area and grabbed much of the land, dubbing it the White Highlands. This, of course, was one of the reasons the Mau Mau Rebellion broke out, and most of the fighting took place in the Central Highlands.

Central Highlands – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Aberdare Mountains

For information on The Aberdares, see the *National Parks & Reserves* section.

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Notes:

Embu

Embu is located on the southeastern slopes of Mt Kenya, but is actually the provincial headquarters of Eastern Province. Its home to the Embu people, close relatives of the Kikuyu and Meru. There's little reason for tourists to stay here, unless you're on your way to Chogoria to climb the mountain. If you're looking for a good meal while you're in town, the *Arkland Cafe* near the roundabout has excellent Kenyan food. If you stay in town, try the *Valley View Hotel* which has singles/doubles for KSh 400/700 including breakfast. If you have more cash to spend, stay at the *Izaak Walton Inn* north of town. It's a very nice place with singles/doubles costing KSh 1200/1500.

Embu – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Isiolo

Isiolo is a small town north of Meru inhabited mostly by Somali people resettled after WWI. You may stay in Isiolo on your way up to Samburu/Buffalo Springs National Reserves or the desert east of Lake Turkana. You can reach Isiolo most easily from Meru and Nanyuki. Transportation going north from Isiolo will depend on demand, which is usually low. Also keep in mind that traveling north of Isiolo can be risky due to bandits. If you stay in Isiolo, try the *Jamhuri Guest House* which has singles/doubles for KSh 200/260, or the *Bomen Hotel* which offers singles/doubles costing KSh 900/1300.

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Notes:

Meru

Meru is a fairly big town northeast of Mt Kenya. Its home to the Meru people, close relatives of the Kikuyu and Embu. There's little reason travelers would stay in Meru, but if you do, it can be a fun place. Meru is famous for its *miraa*, twigs of a plant that has stimulant properties. It is grown legally in large amounts here, so you won't get fresher miraa anywhere. After chewing the bark of the twigs for an hour or so, you'll feel like you've drunk two or three strong cups of coffee. Stay at the *Milimani Hotel* on the junction north of town. It has nice singles/doubles for KSh 600/800 including breakfast and the bar turns into a disco on the weekends. There's a museum in town if you have any free time.

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Notes:

Nanyuki

Nanyuki is a medium sized town northwest of Mt Kenya. The town has one of the most beautiful views of the mountain, and is a hub for trekkers climbing the Sirimon and Burguret routes.

There are many hotels in and around Nanyuki. For a bottom–end hotel, try the *Josaki Hotel* (# (0176) 2181) which has singles/doubles with attached bathrooms and hot water for KSh 400/600 including breakfast. Cheaper but not as nice is the *Jambo House Hotel* (# (0176) 22751) which offers singles/doubles for KSh 140/250 and KSh 380 for a triple.

If you have a bit more to spend, try the *Nanyuki River Lodge* (# (0176) 32523) in the middle of town. Singles/Doubles including breakfast cost KSh 550/850. One step up is the *Sportsmans Arms Hotel* (# (0176) 22598) across the river in the eastern end of town. It has several kinds of cottages costing between KSh 1100/1500 to KSh 2500/4500 for a single/twin. There is also a swimming pool, three bars, a fitness club and a nightly disco.

There are also several nice lodges outside of Nanyuki town. *Mt Kenya Safari Club*, the *Ol Pejeta Ranch* and the *Sweetwaters Tented Camp* are all owned by the Lonrho group in Nairobi (# (02) 216940). They all have nice facilities and offer different kinds of safaris. Singles/Doubles cost fro US\$ 64/120 in the low season up to US\$ 239/310 in the high season. The only more affordable place is the *El Karama Ranch* (# (02) 340331). Its a campsite with bandas with all necessary supplies either provided or available to rent. Beds cost KSh 500 per night. Bring your own food, as meals are not available.

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Notes:

Naro Moru

Naro Moru is a small town west of Mt. Kenya and is the most common starting point for trekkers attempting to climb the mountain. Otherwise, Naro Moru is but a village and there's no reason to stop here.

There are a few cheap places in Naro Moru town to camp or get a bed. The four hotels charge KSh 150–300 for a bed. The *Mt. Kenya Hostel & Campsite* is in a good location if you're attempting the climb without a safari company. It's a 12 km walk up the Naro Moru trail, giving you a good head start on the climb, and a day to adjust to the elevation. Camping here is KSh 150 and dorm beds are KSh 200. They have all kinds of facilities, and you can hire guides, porters, and cooks here.

If you want a little luxury before or after the climb, most travelers opt for the *Naro Moru River Lodge* (# (0176) 62622). The lodge owns all the mountain huts along the route up the peak, so you need to book ahead here if you're planning on staying in the huts (which is a very good idea; the ground gets VERY cold towards the top). A night at the *Met Station* will cost you US\$ 8 and a roof over your head at *Makinders Camp* is US\$ 11. Accommodations at the River Lodge include campsites, dorm beds, standard rooms and superior rooms. A camp spot with access to bathrooms and showers runs US\$ 4 and dorm beds are US\$ 6. In the low season (11 April to 30 June and 16 September to 15 December) standard rooms are US\$ 30/55 for a single/double, and superior rooms are US\$ 40/65. In the high season, a standard single/double room costs US\$ 72/94 and a superior is US\$ 82/114. All rooms come with half board.

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Notes:

Nyahururu (Thomson's Falls)

Nyahururu is one of Kenyas highest cities, at 2360 m above sea level. Just outside of town lies **Thomsons Falls** on the Ewaso Narok River. It falls 72 m, the mist feeding the dense forest below. You can check out the falls from above, or theres a trail down to the bottom of the ravine. The most common way to reach Nyahururu is from Nakuru, but you can also get here from Nyeri, Nanyuki, or Naivasha. Likewise, all these places can be reached from Nyahururu, including Maralal.

If youre camping, *Thomsons Falls Lodge* charges KSh 300 per person with access to their facilites, hot showers, and firewood. If you need a cheap bed, try the *Stadium Lodging* (# (0365) 22002), which offers singles/doubles with bathrooms for KSh 200/300. Theres also the *Nyaki Hotel* (# (0365) 2213) which has singles/doubles costing KSh 400/750.

The nicest place in town is the *Thomsons Falls Lodge* (# (0365) 22006) over looking the falls. For KSh 1600/2000 you can get a single/double with breakfast, or a triple for KSh 2800.

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Notes:

Nyeri

Nyeri is the Provincial Headquarters and biggest city of Central Province. It is nestled in between Mt Kenya and the Aberdares, lying just east of the Aberdare Mountains. The Nyeri area is very fertile and is the center of Kenya's coffee industry. Tourists are most likely to see Nyeri on their way to Aberdare National Park. The city has many accommodations and places to eat.

You can get public transportation directly to Nyeri from Nyahururu, Nakuru, Thika and Nairobi. In Nairobi, the stage to Nyeri and most towns in Central Province (Nanyuki, Nyahururu, Meru, Embu) is called the Tea Room. It is located on Accra Road just off of Tom Mboya.

Nyeri – Accommodation & Eating out

The *Nyeri Star Hotel* (# (0171) 4213) near the bus stage is a good cheap place to stay. It has singles/doubles with attached bathrooms for KSh 250/400. Also affordable is the *New Thingira Guest House* (# (0171) 4769) down off of the road to Karatina. It offers singles/doubles with attached bathrooms for KSh 300/450.

The most popular mid-range place to stay is the *White Rhino Hotel* (# (0171) 30934). It has several bars and a restaurant and a guarded car park. Singles/Doubles with breakfast are KSh 650/1000 and triples are KSh 1300. A cheaper mid-range hotel is the *Central Hotel* (# (0171) 4233) at the northern end of town. Singles/Doubles here cost KSh 450/550.

The nicest and most expensive place to stay is the *Aberdare Country Club* (# (02) 216940) in Mweiga, just north of Nyeri town. Singles/Doubles with full board run US\$ 120/156 in the high season and US\$ 74/123 in the low season. The Club is the meeting place for going into The Arc in the Aberdare National Park, and trips can be arranged from here. Just north west of town is the other lodge, the *Outspan Hotel* (# (0171) 2424). In the high season, expect to pay US\$ 66/101 for singles/doubles with half board, and US\$ 73/113 for single/twin cottages. In the low season prices are about half of this. For a cheap place to eat, try the *Uptown Cafe* or the *Peoples Cafe*. Two places serving good mid-priced meals are the White Rhino Hotel and the Central Hotel.

Nyeri – Internet Cafes

all

Wanga Cyber Hut

Located on 1st Floor new Bavian Cinema Bldg, Nyeri town. Gakere Road.

Full Internet access. High speed browsing. All comps have MSN and Yahoo! Messengers. soft drinks – good services located in Damascus down town.

price: Ksh120.00

email: wanga@wananchi.com

hours: 8am to 6:30pm weekdays

address: P.O. Box 810, Nyeri

url: www.wananchi.com

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Notes:

Lakes

There are numerous lakes throughout Kenya, mostly lying in the great Rift Valley. Most of these are shallow soda lakes, but there are also a few freshwater lakes, including Lake Victoria, Africa's largest. Several lakes have been designated National Parks or Reserves, which hold a great variety of birds and other wildlife. For specific information on Kenya's beautiful lakes, click on the locations below.

Lakes – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Lake Baringo

Lake Baringo is a big shallow freshwater lake north of Marigat. Once a productive lake for fish, it has been severely over-fished in recent years. There are still plenty of birds, however, and the many islands make it a nice place to visit. You can arrange boat trips to the islands through Roberts Camp or Lake Baringo Club.

To get to Lake Baringo, take B4 north outside of Nakuru. Continue 15 km past Marigat and you'll see a signpost for the village of *Kampi ya Samaki* and Lake Baringo Club. There is direct public transportation to the lake from Nakuru. However, it should be faster for you to first take a matatu to Marigat, then from there take another to the lake.

There are several places to stay on Lake Baringo. The most comfortable and pleasant place is *Roberts Camp*. You can camp there for KSh 200 per person, with access to showers and toilets. There are also a few double bandas (huts) for KSh 660 per person per night. There's a store with a good variety of groceries and a bar on the grounds. If Roberts is full, try the *Bahari Lodge* where you can get a bed for KSh 100.

If you're looking for an upper-end hotel, there's Block Hotels *Lake Baringo Club*, which has singles/doubles for US\$ 39/78 in the low season and US\$ 83/128 in the high season. The club has a badminton court, dart boards, a swimming pool, a library, and an excellent restaurant. *Island Camp Baringo* (# (071) 374069) is a nice tented lodge on Ol Kokwa Island. There are singles/doubles with full board for US\$ 69/138 in the low season and US\$ 141/187 in the high season.

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Notes:

Lake Bogoria National Reserve

Lake Bogoria is a shallow soda lake north of Nakuru. If you're lucky and the conditions of Lake Nakuru are not quite right, Lake Bogoria could be covered with flamingos. If not, there's still other attractions, like hot springs and geysers. The surrounding habitat is drab scrub, so there's not much chance of seeing wildlife. I suggest visiting the lake only if you're in the area, or seeing it together with Lake Baringo. This is a National Reserve, so you will be charged a modest fee to enter.

To get to Lake Bogoria National Reserve, take B4 north, just outside of Nakuru, towards Marigat. The road to the gate is signposted about 2 km before Marigat. It's about 20 km from the turn off to Lobo Gate. You need your own vehicle to reach the lake, as there are no matatus that run there.

If you want to stay at the lake, there are several accommodations nearby. There are two campsites south of the lake, but make sure to bring your own food and water. If you don't want to camp, try the *Papyrus Inn* just outside of the Lobo Gate. They have singles/doubles with breakfast from KSh 400/600. Two km before the same gate is the Lake Bogoria Hotel (# (037) 42696). The hotel is very nice, with rooms costing US\$ 105/130 for singles/doubles with half board, or US\$ 120/160 with full board.

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Notes:

Lake Elmenteita

Lake Elmenteita is a shallow soda lake near Lake Nakuru. The lake is frequented by flamingos, but you won't see as many here as Lake Nakuru or Lake Bogoria. This is not a National Park, so you can walk around the lake, although there is a whole lot of wildlife. If you stay, the only hotel is *Lake Elmenteita Lodge* (# (0367) 5040), which has singles/doubles for US\$ 40/80 in the low season, and US\$ 110/140 in the high season.

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Notes:

Lake Naivasha

Lake Naivasha is one of the few freshwater lakes in Kenya. Many species of fish, birds, and plants, not forgetting hippos, call Lake Naivasha home. There is days worth of fun exploring the region around the lake.

Lake Naivasha – Sights

If you have your own transportation, check out Crater Lake on the western side of the lake. It is part of the Crater Lake Game Sanctuary and it will cost you KSh 100 to enter. Another popular attraction is Crescent Island, a bird sanctuary that you can reach by boat.

Lastly, visit Elsamere, the former house of Joy Adamson, about two km past Fishermans Camp on the Lake Road. It has been turned into a conservation center that is open to the public from 3 to 6 pm daily. The entrance fee is KSh 250, which includes afternoon tea. You can also stay here with full board for KSh 3200 per person per night. Bookings can be made by calling (# (0311) 21055).

Lake Naivasha – Getting There & Getting Around

Getting there:

All locations on the lake can be accessed by matatu. They run to the Lake Road junction, then continue all the way past the lake. The stage in Naivasha town is on the corner of Kenyatta Ave and Kariuki Chotara Rd. Just tell the tout where you want to go and he will let you off there.

Getting around:

You can hire boats from the Safariland Club, the Lake Naivasha Country Club, or Fishermans Camp.

Lake Naivasha – Accommodation

If you're planning to spend a lot of time visiting the sights around Lake Naivasha, you should consider staying on the lake. There are many affordable places as well as upper-end resorts.

If you want to camp or stay in an affordable banda (hut), try *Fishermans Camp* (# (0311) 30088). You can camp for KSh 150 per person per night and tents are available to rent. There are also self-contained bandas with four beds available for KSh 500 per person, or dorm beds for KSh 350. Fishermans Camp has a central building complete with a bar and restaurant. The area is beautiful, so even if you're not staying, check it out some afternoon.

Another place to camp is *Burchs Campsite* (# (0311) 21010) about 1 km past the Lake Rd junction. You can camp for KSh 150, or stay in one of their large bandas for KSh 450.

There are a few upper-end places as well. The *Safariland Club* (# (0311) 21013) offers singles/doubles for US\$ 83/121. One bedroom cottages run US\$ 161 and two bedroom cottages are \$322. These prices go down drastically during the low season. Facilities are nice, including horseback riding, lawn tennis, and a swimming pool.

There's also the *Lake Naivasha Country Club* (# (0311) 21004), part of the Block Hotels chain. The grounds are beautiful, with all the facilities of the Safariland Club. Singles/Doubles cost US\$ 118/181, and two bedroom cottages run US \$451. Prices will drop during the low season.

Lake Naivasha – Eating Out

The *Yellowgreen Bar and Restaurant* just past the Lake Rd junction offers cold beers and affordable food. Also try Fishermans Camp or any resort hotel.

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Notes:

Lake Turkana

See the section entitled *Northern Kenya* for information on Lake Turkana and its surroundings.

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Notes:

Lake Victoria

Lake Victoria is largest lake in Africa, measuring almost 70,000 square km. The lake is a very integral part of the lives of the Kenyans around the lake, namely the Luo tribe, famous fisherman. Lately the fishing and transport on the lake has suffered greatly from the invasion of water hyacinth, an aquatic weed that robs fish of oxygen and blocks waterways. Remember that bilharzia is prevalent in the lake, so dont swim in it, or walk on its banks without shoes.

The lake itself is not that spectacular, although there are several island you can visit. *Rusinga Island* is connected to the mainland by a causeway. From Kisumu, take a matatu to Homa Bay, where youll be able to get transportation to the island. Theres a mausoleum for the famous statesman Tom Mboya on the island, and not much else.

If you really want to get off the beaten track, go to *Mfangano Island*. You can take a ferry from Homa Bay. Theres nothing on the island except for a local community and one very expensive resort. Arrange to stay with some locals, or go to *Mfangano Island Camp* where a bed with full board costs US\$ 125. You can arrange fishing trips from here through Mutiara Ltd. in Nairobi (# (02) 331871).

The lake is so large that it is bordered by other countries such as Tanzania and Uganda. In Tanzania, *Speke Bay Lodge* has a variety of accommodation including permanant tents and four –person bungalows. The owners will arrange boat trips, visits to a nearby Sukuma village and bird walks. It is very close to the Ndabaka Gate into the Serengeti.(028–262 1236)

Lake Victoria – Internet Cafes

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Notes:



Mt. Kilimanjaro

Treks up the mountain

Mt. Kilimanjaro – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Nairobi

Nairobi Kenya's mile-high capital is only 90 mi/145 km south of the equator. Founded by the British little more than a 100 years ago, the city now has a population of more than 2 000 000. It's a modern commercial center with some interesting high-rises and lots of bustle. Visitors can find things not so common in other parts of Africa, such as nice theatres showing the latest films, expensive restaurants serving every type of food, as well as E-mail facilities, faxes and any other sort of modern technology you may want to use. The city is constantly alive, especially at night. Unfortunately, Nairobi has acquired a reputation of being a dangerous city and petty crime is rampant.

Besides being a convenient place to take care of administrative matters and contact people back home, Nairobi has much to offer to travellers. If you want to hang out, there is a wide array of restaurants, clubs, pubs and discos to choose from. While in Nairobi, be sure to visit the City Market, the National Museum, the Arboretum (excellent collection of East African flora) and the superb Kenya Railway Museum. Exhibits about the period leading to independence can be seen at the Kenya National Archives. There are casinos at the Safari Park Hotel and the Inter-Continental Hotel and there's also Sunday-afternoon horse racing.

For those who can't wait to see animals (or who are only visiting Nairobi), the nearby Nairobi National Park has lions, giraffes, impalas and more wild animals in addition to an animal orphanage. Or you can take a rather pricey taxi ride to the Giraffe Center in the suburb of Langatta where the Rothschild giraffe was saved from extinction. At the facility, you can feed the giraffes and the gift shop has some of the best prices we found in Nairobi. However, the Giraffe Manor (the manor house turned into a hotel) elsewhere on the grounds has some of the steepest daily rates in the city but then it's the only place where giraffes may join you for meals.

This excursion to Langatta is often combined with a visit to the former home of Karen Blixen (who wrote under the pseudonym Isak Dinesen), author of *Out of Africa*. Blixen's farmhouse, which was presented to the Kenyan government by Denmark, is now a museum it's located next door to the Karen College. Langatta also has The Bomas of Kenya which is a terrific cultural center that regularly hosts traditional song and dance performances.

A day trip (a two-hour drive each way) can be made to Lake Magadi to visit Olorgesailie in The Hague for its prehistoric campsite. The scenic region inhabited by Masai farmers has a wide variety of birds.

Nairobi – Eating Out

There are literally hundreds of places to eat in and around Nairobi. Most are small *hoteries* that serve traditional Kenyan foods at cheap prices that locals can afford (KSh 50–100). I urge travelers to find one that is quite busy and try some of the local cuisine. If the hoteli is well frequented, the food will be hot and the conditions will be clean. Most tourists can't handle meal after meal of ugali, however, so here are some suggestions on some nicer places in town.

If you want fast food, there are several options. There is a group newly built restaurants on the corner of Moi Ave and Mama Ngina St. There's a *Creamy Inn*, *Pizza Inn*, *Nandos* and *Chicken Licken* all next to each other. There are also two burger chains in Nairobi: *Steers* and *Wimpys*. There are three *Steers* and even more *Wimpys*.

in several locations around town. Expect to pay from KSh 200–350 at these fast food places. For the cheapest chicken in town, go to one of the many *Kenchic Inns*, where you can get a quarter, half, or full chicken for KSh 75, 150, or 300. Its a favorite of the locals, and the chicken is deliciously good.

all

Cafe Latina

Especially on Saturdays, live music and dancing the night away after one of the spaghetti specials.

address: Limuru Road 522–661

openinghours: 12:30–3:30 pm and 7:30–11 pm

Trattoria Restaurant

If Italian is what you want, *Trattoria Restaurant* on the corner of Wabera and Kaunda Sts is the best in town. There is a diverse menu of meat, chicken, pasta and desserts ranging from KSh 400 to 800 per person.

address: Wabera Street

tel: 340–855

Stopitalia

A busy, informal Italian eatery. The owner, Mario, lends a personal touch to the service by making the rounds and checking on his customers. Try a Trastevarina Pizza or one of the delicious homemade ice creams.

address: Westlands 445–234

tel: 12:30–3 pm and 5:30–9:30

La Galleria Restaurant

Superb food. In the same complex, one can also eat at the (cheaper) Toona Tree which serves excellent food as well.

address: International Casino, Museum Hill

openinghours: noon–2:30 pm and 7–10:30

tel: 742–600

Chowpaty

Combination of Indian and Chinese dishes.

address: Diamond Plaza, Parklands

tel: (254)–02–747575

Dragon

address: Bruce House, G/F, Standard Street

tel: (254)–02–223194

Furusato Japanese Restaurant

address: Next To Sarit Centre, Along Karuna Rd
tel: (254)–02–442508

Fu–Yong

Nice atmosphere and good service. Day specials and buffet.

address: Chaka Place
tel: (254)–02–726818

Great Wall Restaurant

address: Dhanjay Centre
tel: (254)–02–567025

China Jianguo Restaurant

Known for its desserts and food that is worth your money.

address: 2/F, Soin Arcade Westlands Road
tel: (254)–02–446748

Golden Fork Restaurant

Everything from Indian to Chinese to Japanese dishes.

address: Kenya Cinema Plaza
tel: (254)–02–243273

Mayur restaurant

There are many good Indian Restaurants in Nairobi, but my favorite is the vegetarian *Mayur Restaurant* above the Supreme Restaurant near the River Road roundabout. There's an all–you–can–eat buffet for lunch or dinner for a cheap KSh.

address: River Road
tel: 229999

Carnivore

For barbecue and big game meat, there is no other place than the famous *Carnivore* out of town on Langata road just past Wilson Airport. They cook some of the best meat in the world at the Carnivore, ranging from the normal chicken, pork, lamb and spare ribs to exotic game meats. Every night there are four different game meats being served, such as ostrich, giraffe, zebra, crocodile, hartebeest, and wildebeest. The meat is cut off onto your plate from huge spears and the waiters keep coming around until you surrender by lowering your white flag on your table. The all–you–can–eat extravaganza will run you about KSh 1,300. If you can still stand afterwards, there's the *Simba Saloon* next door! **andrew munyao:** the very best. keep up the good job **Lena Ampadu:** Food is great—very tasty. Service can be slow, though, as the place is very popular and gets crowded. **Erik:** Crowded, with slow service, but worth the wait. Excellent food!! Definitely try the game meat.

address: Langata Road

tel: 338959

Crooked 'Q'

Swahili dishes.

address: Woodvale Groove, 2nd Floor Westlands

tel: (254)-02-449317

Addis Ababa

Ethiopian specialities.

address: Pride Tower, Woodvale Grove

tel: (254)-02-447321

Daas

Ethiopian restaurant with various African dishes.

address: Lenana Road, Lenana Square

tel: (254)-02-712106

African Heritage

Traditional African food. A good place for a fresh lime drink after a look at Africa's best crafts. It serves traditional African food

address: Banda Street

tel: 337-507

African Heritage

Traditional African food. A good place for a fresh lime drink after a look at Africa's best crafts. It serves traditional African food.

address: Banda Street

tel: 337-507

Highland Restaurant

address: Afya Centre, Tom Mboya Street

tel: (254)-02-221836

Generations Grill

Traditional African dishes in an original setting.

address: City Centre

tel: (254)-02-241197

Daas Ethiopian Restaurant

A very popular place serving great Ethiopian food. If in doubt, order the mixed dish and sample a variety of tastes. Try the Ethiopian wine tej, made with honey, and the strong Ethiopian coffee roasted in the restaurant and served with rue. If you wish, traditional singers and dancers will perform at your table. Daily noon–3 pm and 8–11 pm. \$. No credit cards.

address: Lenana Road

Hooters

For American food, I suggest the new *Hooters* on Kaunda St. *Hooters* is a sports restaurant/bar, with several TVs playing VH1 or soccer games. The service is maybe the best in town, although meals are a bit expensive, from KSh 250 to 400 per person. Meals range from sandwiches, hamburgers, and pizza to excellent milk shakes, a rarity in Kenya.

Pasara Cafe

About the only place to get a good sandwich in Nairobi is *Pasara Café* on Kaunda, just down from Trattoria. There are a variety of sandwiches in several sizes, and an excellent salad bar. Plan on spending from KSh 150–300 to get full.

Flame Tree

International cuisine. Buffets in the weekends.

address: Panafric Hotel, End of Kenyatta Ave & Valley Rd

tel: (254)–02–714444

Flame Tree

International cuisine. Buffets in the weekends.

address: Panafric Hotel, End of Kenyatta Ave & Valley Rd

tel: (254)–02–714444

Mandhari

Charming restaurant with excellent staff.

address: Nyerere Road 725–111

tel: 12:30–3:30 pm and 7:30–11:30

Angus Restaurant

address: Uchumi House – Mezzanine, Aga Khan Walk

tel: (254)–02–339295

Nairobi – Accommodation

Note: These prices are as of 1998, so expect to pay more in 2001, especially since the shilling dropped dramatically in 1999.

all

Iqbal

If a cheap hotel is what you're looking for, I recommend the *Iqbal*. The Iqbal (#220914) on Latema Road offers dorm beds for KSh 210. There are rooms with any number of beds, so your group can take up one whole room. *chris*: it's a friendly establishment and very good if you're in a large group as you can normally just turn up and claim a whole room for your group! Be warned though, the owners don't tend to like it if you consume alcohol inside the hotel as they are muslim. Also it is of note that this hotel is favoured by gap year students who arrive back from late nights out very noisily and without concern for other guests.

New Kenya Lodge

The New Kenya Lodge on the corner of River Road and Latema offers accommodation for KSh 200 per person. Both places are clean and comfortable, but expect hot water only in the morning, and they are known to be quite noisy at all times of the day and night. Bring your own toilet paper!

Upper Hill Campste

The most popular camp spot is the *Upper Hill Campste* (#720290) on Menengai Rd., off of Hospital Rd. Camping is KSh 150 per person, and dormitory beds are available for KSh 250. There is a bar, restaurant, storage facilities, and a small library on the green compound. Hot showers are available at all hours. Staff is friendly, and say hi to Ras Dan, who does excellent batik work on the compound.

address: Menengai Rd

Youth Hostel

The *Nairobi Youth Hostile* (#721765) on Ralph Bunche Rd. offers cheap dorm beds for KSh 350. The place is clean and well run and has hot showers.

dirk lambrechts:

address: Ralph Bunche rd.

Terminal

The *Terminal Hotel* (#228817) on Mokhtar Dahha is a good value. For KSh 880 you can get a single room, and a double for 1100. All rooms have attached bathrooms and there's hot water at all times.

address: Mokhtar Dahha

Parkside Hotel

Also a nice place is the *Parkside Hotel* (#214154) on Monrovia St. across from Jeevanjee Gardens. Single/double rooms are KSh 1380/1780 and triples are 2600. The staff is very friendly and there's a

restaurant next door, and breakfast is included. This is the unofficial hotel of the Peace Corps Volunteers, and you're sure to meet one there any given day.

Embassy Hotel

The *Embassy Hotel* (#224087) on Biashara St is also a good value. Singles/Doubles are KSh 900/1000. The *Solace Hotel* (#331277) on Tom Mboya St. offers nice singles/doubles for KSh 1320/1650, although Tom Mboya can be a very noisy street in the morning.

address: Biashara St

Meridian Court Hotel

One step up is the comfortable *Meridian Court Hotel* (#333961) on Murang'a Rd, just off of Moi Ave. Rooms have TVs and room service at affordable prices. Singles/doubles are KSh 1950/2650, and triples are 2950.

New Stanley Hotel

The *New Stanley Hotel* (#333133) in the center of town on the corner of Kimathi St and Kenyatta Ave is probably the best deal for the money. Rooms are comfortable, with TV and telephones. Also in the building is a swimming pool, two restaurants, shops, and a bar. Normal rooms are priced at US\$103 for a single and US\$138 for a double. More expensive suites are also available.

Hilton

There's also a *Hilton Hotel* (#334000) in Nairobi on Mama Ngina St. by Moi Ave. It has all the luxuries of a Hilton and singles/doubles go for US\$225/257, plus tax.

Norfolk Hotel

The *Norfolk Hotel* (#335422) on Harry Thuku Rd behind the University is famous for an old but very nice hotel. Singles/doubles are US\$210/220 plus there are suites and cottages for up to US\$570.

Nairobi – Sights

all

Karen Blixen Museum

The residence of the author of *Out of Africa* is on Karen Rd, 2 km from Langata Rd. The farmhouse has been set up as a museum and is open from 9:30 to 6:00. Entry costs KSh 200.

Langata Giraffe Center

The Giraffe Center is on Gogo Falls Road about 1 km from the Langata shopping center. Adult and young giraffes can be fed by visitors and it's an excellent opportunity to have a closer look of these beautiful animals. Admission is KSh 250, 70 for children.

Lee: I visited there in May of 2002. It was fantastic! The giraffes are kept behind a fence in a large field, but there is a feeding building where you can stand on the balcony and they come right up to you. Admission was a little pricey, but worth it. The gift shop was very nice as well. Expect to spend 1 – 2 hours at the center. It's best if you can go there with someone who has already been. I can't wait to go again! **Hilda:** going there

Nairobi National Park

See National Parks section.

Kenya National Museum

The museum on Museum Hill Rd. off of Uhuru Highway offers hours of enjoyment to tourists. The museum is so big, and there are so many educating sections, that one could easily spend all day there. If you only have a few hours to spend, take a look at the guide in the entryway and decide which sections you want to tour first. I personally recommend starting upstairs in the people section, where you can get a good idea of the cultures of the various tribes in Kenya. The Nairobi Snake Park is just opposite the museum, and is recommended to all people interested in all sorts of reptiles. The museum and Snake Park are open from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm and admission is KSh 200 to each.

Railway Museum

The Railway Museum is on Station Rd. near the Haile Selassie Ave roundabout. The museum does not only exhibit replicas of old steam engines, but also a lot of material showing the history of Kenya. It is open from 8 am to 4:45 pm and costs KSh 50 to enter.

National Archives

The National Archives is another place loaded with Kenyan history. It contains artwork and handicrafts, as well as some historical documents and photos. It is right across from the Hilton Hotel on Moi Ave. It is freely accessible and is open from 8 am to 5 pm on weekdays.

The Bomas of Kenya

The Bomas of Kenya (#891801) is a cultural center in Langata, just past the Nairobi National Park. The Bomas offer traditional songs and dances of the many Kenyan tribes. There are daily performances, good food, and lots of curio shops nearby. Admission is KSh 300.

Nairobi – Getting Around

Nairobi is not a huge city and most places in town can be reached by walking less than 20 minutes. Moi Avenue is Nairobi's major road inside the city, splitting it nearly in half. It is intersected by Kenyatta running West to East. It's nice to walk around some in Nairobi to get a taste of the city. It is fairly easy to navigate, and if you ever get lost, just duck into a shop to ask directions or check your map.

To reach places outside of town, you can take a bus, matatu, or taxi. There are very many buses and matatus in Nairobi, so getting on the right one can be a bit confusing. Ask some one at your hotel which number to take, and where to get it. Most stages are in a bad part the capital, so be careful. For traveling in the Nairobi area, expect to pay KSh 15–30.

Taxis are the easiest way to get around Nairobi, but they can be very expensive. As a general rule, expect to pay KSh 200 to get around town, even if it's only two blocks. A trip outside of town, such as to the airport, could cost up to KSh 1,000. Be sure to bargain fares with drivers—their first offer is higher than what they will eventually accept.

Nairobi – Internet Cafes

Mawa Byte, Hazina Towers, Ground Floor, Nairobi, Kenya.

all

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Nairobi – Nightlife and Entertainment

During the day, do all those things listed in the Sites section, or go see a movie at one of Nairobi's three major theatres. Consult the Daily Nation Newspaper for daily listing of the movies and times. If you're the type who wants to explore a bit of the Nairobi nightlife, check out these clubs and bars. It may be wise to start at bar first, since the clubs and discos in Kenya don't get busy until around midnight and don't close until the sun rises. Prostitution is very common in developing countries including Kenya. Be forewarned that you will see some at every bar or club you go to.

Other clubs you may want to check out include *Gypsys* in Westlands and the new *Mambas* near Museum Hill.

also there are a lot of gay bars see things to do for more!!!!

all

Pavement

A Cafe runs during all opening hours – however the main attraction is their lively nightclub.
Mlevi@hotmail.com: Dancefloor on bottom level. 2 bars inside lounge upstairs one bar outside w/a sportsbar atmosphere. Russian dancer shows every night at 1 am. for about an hour. Entrance is about 300/= per night.
More about Nairobi

There are so many other nightlife joints:– 1.Klubhouse 1 and 2 2.choices 3.kengeles New food joints:– 1.Kengeles–its the best so far 2.Bakers pie 3.Chicken lickin was shut down for some reason nobody knows i mean there are just too many more.You have a very nice website.Atleast for once i have seen a positive side of kenya on media.KEEP UP.Do more investigations and you will be headed high.This web made me feel proud to be kenyan...i must admit.I suggest thst you should advertise it because not many people know about it.

Florida 2000 Discotheque pictures

The Florida 2000 Discotheque on Moi Ave near City Hall Way is Nairobis most popular disco. Its very comfortable inside with sofas and two separate bars. The clientele consists of mostly local women looking for a date, and white men looking for the same thing. No matter what you are looking for, though, Florida 2000 is a fun place to spend the night. Entry is KSh 120, 80 for women. **bb king:** I like that place and also that is the place where i spend most of my time **kendall:** The Florida's perched like a spaceship above a petrol station, with a decor inside that continues the intergalactic theme. There are plenty of hookers inside but they don't pester you too much. Quite a few expats in crowd, some of them tragic, plus occasional airline staff on stopovers waiting for their next Gulf Air flight. Highlight for us was the amazing dance routines, especially the ones performed by the hired dancers each night around midnight – does anyone remember the Solid Gold dancers? These are far sexier.

New Florida

Also fun is the New Florida or Mad House on the corner of Koinange and Banda Sts. The club is a sphere on top of a petrol station, and is small but very lively. Clientele and cover charge are the same as Florida 2000.

Zanze Bar

A club more frequented by local couples and middle class Kenyans is Zanze Bar on Moi Ave in the Kenya Cinema Plaza. Tuesday and Thursday are karioki nights, and the Congolese music Lingala is popular here every night. Entry is free on weekdays up to 9:00 or so, and on weekends the cover may be KSh 100

Simba Saloon

The nicest disco in Nairobi is by far the Simba Saloon at the Carnivore Restaurant on Langata Road. The place is huge, with three separate bars, room outside and a large dance floor. This club would even be impressive if it was in America. The disco is frequented by upper class Kenyans, expats, and tourists. Needless to say, its expensive. Cover charge ranges from KSh 280 to up to 1000, depending on the attraction for the night. Wednesday night is Rock Night, or as locals call it, White Night. Sunday night is Soul Night and Friday night is Bombay Night.

Modern Green Day & Friendship Corner

If youre more into the cheap local scene, I have two bars for you. The Modern Green Day & Night Bar and Friendship Corner, both across from each other on Latema Road are maybe the most entertaining bars in town. Instead of buying beers for KSh 100 like you would at the Floridas or Simba Saloon, they sell for a measly KSh 65. The bars are periodically shut down for health standards, but if theyre open, give them a try! Remember to be careful, theyre in a partly dangerous part of town.

Nairobi – Getting There

Most traveler fly directly into Nairobi, since it's a convenient place to start your travels in Kenya, and air fares into Nairobi are cheaper than to anywhere else in Kenya. If you arrive in Mombasa and want to go to Nairobi,

see the Mombasa section.

all

Conditions in Nairobi

As an older single white woman who was born and brought up in Kenya, and whose parents are buried in the cemetery at Langata, I would like to revisit just one more time. But I am having trouble getting information as to whether this would be safe. Also I am curious to hear what conditions are like in Nairobi today, f.x. the water and electricity situation. I notice that there are very few stories out of Kenya these days (for a reader of the NY Times) which I presume to mean that the correspondents have fled. I would be grateful for any information that you can provide.

Nairobi National Park

From airport to nairobi national park

Nairobi – Safety

As mentioned before, Nairobi is famous for petty crime. Its important to never walk anywhere at night and to avoid bad parts of town at all times of the day.

As general rule, everywhere West of Moi Ave. is safe during the day. As you go East of Moi, however, Nairobi becomes more dangerous. Tom Mboya St. is moderately risky, and it gets increasingly more so as you go eastward. The infamous River Road and everything east of it is the most dangerous part of town. However, it can be enlightening, fun, and sometimes necessary to see this bustling part of town. If youre smart, you will have no trouble on River Road. Dont wear any jewelry, keep a firm grip on your bag if you must carry one, and never take anyones invitation to enter a building. Use your common sense.

The ghettos surrounding the city, such as Mathare and Kibira, are some of the poorest slums in the world. Needless to say, if you venture into one, you will be lucky if you escape in nothing but your underpants. Also, be wary of the parks in Nairobi, as thugs love to gather and work there. Watch yourself and only enter if necessary. Dangerous parks include Central Park and Uhuru park west of Uhuru Highway, and Jeevanjee Gardens on Muindi Mbigu St.

The traditional tourist circuit like the Nairobi Museum, Giraffe Center, Animal Orphanage, etc are not safe from petty crime either. There have also been come cases of armed robbery (in daylight) in traditionally safer neighborhoods of Nairobi. Watch out for unscrupolous children on intersections and on the highways. Never encourage beggars or roll down your window.

Nairobi – Things to do

all

Muthaiga Golf

If you are a golf enthusiast, there are a couple of spectacular courses in and around Nairobi. Check out the Muthaiga Golf Course about 10 minutes from the city center and also the majestic Windsor Golf Course outside Nairobi.

Nairobi – History

music

Nairobi – Practical Information

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Notes:

National Parks and Reserves

If Kenya is famous for anything, its surely its many national parks and reserves. These beautiful spots offer a wide array of landscapes, plants, and animals. You can trek the slopes of the Aberdares, Mt. Kenya, or Mt. Longonot, or go on a game drive on the plains of the Masai Mara or below Mt. Kilimanjaro at Amboseli National Park.

You need to be in a vehicle to enter most national parks and all national reserves, so you either need your own car, or you need to book your safari through one of the many companies in Kenya. The good news is that there are so many of these safari companies that competition drives the prices down. Most any tourist that can afford an airline ticket to Kenya can afford to see at least one or two parks. Two affordable companies in Nairobi that offer quality safaris are *Gametrackers* (# 338927) on the first floor of the Kenya Cinema Plaza, and *Lets Go Travel* (# 340331) on Standard Street near Koinange St.

Entrance fees may or may not be included in your companys total price. The major parks, such as Masai Mara, Amboseli, Samburu, and the Aberdares will cost nonresident adults US\$ 27 per day. The other parks ask between US\$ 23 and \$15 per day. One day is considered to be a 24-hour period, so if you enter the park at 5 pm, you are expected to leave by 5 pm the next day. There also may be a camping fee if you are not spending the night in a lodge.

National Parks and Reserves – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Aberdare N.P.

The Aberdare Park covers most of the Aberdare mountain range in central Kenya. The range has Kenya's 2nd and 3rd highest peaks, extraordinary waterfalls, and some of the most scenic flora in the country. In fact, although I'm biased because I lived a half hour from the Aberdares, I think the Aberdare Forest is the most beautiful forest in all of Kenya.

The park is not so commonly visited by tourists for several reasons. First, it gets huge amounts of rain and the roads turn to mud slides during the rainy season. This also means that you need your own 4WD vehicle, and if you're planning to camp, you need good equipment. If you don't want to camp, you only have two options for lodges, Treetops and The Ark, and both are expensive. You cannot drive into these lodges yourself, but have to make reservations and be driven into them by the lodges transport.

The *Treetops Lodge* isn't all that special, with small rooms and shared bathrooms. In the high season (Dec 16 to Jan 3), singles/doubles run US\$ 124/248 with full board. In the low season (April 9 to June 30, also the rainy season), prices drop to US\$ 62/124. Any other time during the year, expect to pay somewhere in-between these prices. You have to book in advance through Block Hotels in Nairobi (# (02) 540780). You then have to meet at the Outspan Hotel in Nyeri the day you arranged.

The other lodge is *The Ark*, which is nicer but more expensive. Singles/Doubles with full board and transportation are US\$ 270/321 in the high season and US\$ 147/173 in the low season. Again, you must book in advance through Lonrho Hotels Kenya in Nairobi (# (02) 216940). Turn up at the Aberdare Country Club in Mweiga, a town 12 km north of Nyeri, the day you arranged for transport to the lodge. You can arrange game drives from the *Aberdare Country Club* if you want to see the park but don't want to stay inside it.

Even if you choose to camp, you need to make reservations at Park Headquarters at Mweiga (# 24 in Mweiga).

If you're a backpacker looking to explore the Aberdares without the hassle, there is another way. If you're interested, email me at: nikobesti@yahoo.com and I'll tell you how.

Aberdare N.P. – Sights

The Ark inside Aberdare National Park is an absolute wonder. It is set beside a water hole which is frequented by elephants, rhinos, herbivores, hyenas and even lion. It is expensive but definitely worth the money and an experience you can hardly ever get again!

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Notes:

Amobseli N.P.

Amboseli National Park is probably Kenyas second most visited park behind Masai Mara. The main attraction is its backdrop of Mt. Kilimanjaro. If conditions are right you can get amazing shots of elephants or lions with the tallest mountain in Africa in the background. The park probably has more elephants per square km than any other, so you're sure to have close encounters with the huge animals.

To get to the park, most visitors cut south just outside of Nairobi and go through the town of Namanga. Its also possible to approach from Tsavo to the east, but you should have a 4WD vehicle.

Theres only one campsite in the area on the southern boundary of the park. As lodges go, there are several options inside the park, or if you want to save on park fees, there are also several places outside of the park. Inside the park try *Tortilis Camp* (# (0154) 22551), situated in one of the most beautiful spots in the park. During the high season expect to pay US\$ 170/264 for singles/doubles and US\$ 100/200 in the low season. Theres also the *Amboseli Lodge* (# (02) 227136 which has singles/doubles for US\$ 160/210. The *Kilimanjaro Buffalo Lodge* (# (02) 227136) is located about 30 km east of the park. It offers singles/doubles for US\$ 160/200 in the high season, and US\$ 70/140 in the low season.

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Notes:

Hell's Gate N.P.

Hells Gate is a mellow little park with incredible geology near Lake Naivasha. A great thing about the park is that you can hike around on foot. There are few to no major predators here, which is actually good, because its one of the few parks where you have the feeling of being very close to the wildlife, unprotected by a vehicle. It gives you a genuine experience and you can have several days of fun in this park.

From Naivasha town, take a matatu to the lake. Just tell the tout to let you off at the turn-off to Hells Gate. Its before Fishermans Camp. From the sign posted turn-off its 2 km to Elsa Gate. The entry fee is relatively cheap, and so is the camping fee.

Attractions include Fischers Tower, Central Tower, Obsidian Caves, Ol Karia Geothermal Station, and the Hells Gate Gorge. Its a long walk from Elsa Gate to Central Tower at the end of the park and back, so you may want to stay the night and explore the following morning. There are 3 major camp sites not far from Elsa Gate. If you enjoy technical mountain climbing, you can do it here. Also, if you want to explore the park by mountain bike, ask the people at Fishermans Camp where you can rent them.

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Notes:

Kakamega Forest Reserve

The Kakamega Rain Forest is a little patch of virgin forest in Western Kenya. The dense vegetation and gaigantic indiginous trees are spectacular, and one of a kind in Kenya. In addition, the reserve is home to many different bird and monkey species. There are many trails you can walk, as well as some beautiful places to stay.

One such place is the *Forest Rest House*. It has four double rooms which cost a few hundred shillings, or you can comp. Its possible to eat beans and rice at a nearby shop, but you should brink your own food and means to cook it. A bit further down the road is the top–end *Rondo Retreat* (# (0331) 20425). It costs KSh 4400 per person per night with full board, or KSh 2500 if you want to fend for yourself. The last place to stay inside the forest is the *Udos Bandas & Campsite* in the northern part of the reserve near Isiukhu Falls. Theres seven bandas with two beds and a communal kitchen. Beds run KSh 250 per night. Bring your own food.

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Notes:

Lake Bogoria N.P.

Lake Bogoria is a shallow soda lake north of Nakuru. If you're lucky and the conditions of Lake Nakuru are not quite right, Lake Bogoria could be covered with flamingos. If not, there's still other attractions, like hot springs and geysers. The surrounding habitat is drab scrub, so there's not much chance of seeing wildlife. I suggest visiting the lake only if you're in the area, or seeing it together with Lake Baringo. This is a National Reserve, so you will be charged a modest fee to enter.

To get to Lake Bogoria National Reserve, take B4 north, just outside of Nakuru, towards Marigat. The road to the gate is signposted about 2 km before Marigat. It's about 20 km from the turn off to Lobo Gate. You need your own vehicle to reach the lake, as there are no matatus that run there.

If you want to stay at the lake, there are several accommodations nearby. There are two campsites south of the lake, but make sure to bring your own food and water. If you don't want to camp, try the *Papyrus Inn* just outside of the Lobo Gate. They have singles/doubles with breakfast from KSh 400/600. Two km before the same gate is the Lake Bogoria Hotel (# (037) 42696). The hotel is very nice, with rooms costing US\$ 105/130 for singles/doubles with half board, or US\$ 120/160 with full board.

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Notes:

Lake Nakuru N.P.

Lake Nakuru is a soda lake south of Nakuru in the Rift Valley. Its the most visited Lake in Kenya because of the variety of quantity of wildlife. The lake is famous for its flamingos, but youll see a lot of mammals too, and your chances of seeing a rhinoceros are better than any other park.

You dont necessarily need your own vehicle to see Lake Nakuru. You can always hire a taxi from Nakuru town to take you to the park and then drive you around for a few hours. Bargain with many drives for a long time, but expect to pay KSh 2000 to the driver, plus all the park fees. There is also a WWF bus that tours the lake every Saturday, taking anyone for a few hundred shillings. Im not sure where the bus leaves from, so ask around town, maybe at the Midland Hotel.

If you want to stay in the park instead of in Nakuru, there are some camp sites as well as nice lodges. The *Backpackers Camp Site* and the *Njoro Camp Site* are not far from the Main Gate. They have fresh water and toilets and run about US\$15 for a night.

The *Sarova Lion Hill Lodge* (# (02) 333248) has the usual facilities like a swimming pool, bar and restaurant. Singles/Doubles with full board are US\$ 135/165 in the high season and US\$ 55/110 in the low season. The *Lake Nakuru Lodge* (# (02) 224998) has the some facilities for almost the exact same prices.

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Notes:

Longonot N.P.

Mt. Longonot (2886 m) is a dormant volcano near Naivasha. You can climb to the rim in less than an hour, then walk around the rim in about 2.5 hours. The view down on Rift Valley is magnificent, as is the view down into the crater of the volcano. If you bring technical equipment, you can descend down into the crater with a guide.

If you have a vehicle, take the newly re-built road to Nairobi. By following signs and maybe asking for directions, you can get to the park gate/trailhead. If you don't have a car, you can take a matatu to Longonot town, then walk about 7 km to the trailhead. It may be possible to camp near the gate if you ask the authorities, but the trip is pretty easily done in a day.

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Notes:

Masai Mara N.R.

The Masai Mara is definitely Kenyas most popular tourist attraction. The Mara had become the countrys most visited park or reserve because of the amount of game within a fairly small area. Here you have the best chance of seeing a leopard or cheetah, and youre sure to see lions, elephants, buffalo, giraffe, hyena, and many types of ungulates, such as impala, Thomsons gazelle, topi, and hartebeest. The annual migration of wildebeest is an extraordinary sight, where millions of the animals move in from the Serengeti in July and August.

The only draw-back of the Masai Mara is that it is too crowded with tourists. You literally cannot look anywhere without seeing a white Nissan filled with other travelers. Game is located by finding the groups of tourist vehicles, some times up to 20 or more surrounding one cheetah or lion. It detracts from the experience making you feel like youre in a zoo without cages. Still, theres nowhere in Kenya where you can see this many animals with so little effort.

Most visitors that visit the Mara have booked trips with a travel company. There are many companies that offer different deals. Most are 2 or 3 nights, with two or more game drives in the park a day. Prices for a tented camp safari average about US\$ 200 per person for the trip, including meals and lodging in tents. *Gametrackers* and *Lets Go Travel* are two companies which can give you a good safari for a decent price. Their contacts are at the beginning of the National Parks section.

There are many upper-end deals as well, where youll stay at very expensive resort hotels or tented camps. There are more than a dozen such resorts, some inside the park boundaries. If youve booked your safari with a tourist company, youll have no choice where you stay. If you have your own vehicle and a lot of money, you have several options. *Mara Intrepids Club* (# (02) 338084) offers tents for US\$ 223/304 for singles/doubles with full board and game drives. Low season rates are an excellent value at US\$ 100/160. Nearby also on the Talek River is the *Fig Tree Camp* (# (02) 221439), which is also a tented camp. For US\$ 125/170 you can get a single/double with full board, or US\$ 50/100 in the low season. The *Mara Serena Lodge* (# (02) 711077) lies on the Mara river in the center of the park. They have singles/doubles with full board for US\$ 120/160, or US\$ 50/100 in the low season. If you want to stay outside of the park and save money on expensive park fees, try the *Mara Safari Club* (# (02) 216940), or the more affordable *Mara River Camp* (# (02) 331191).

The high season is usually considered to be from December through January, then June until mid August.

Masai Mara N.R. – Visiting a Maasai Village

The Masai Mara is the traditional home of the famous Maasai people. They are relatively unaffected by western influence, unlike the major tribes in Kenya. They still dress in traditional garb, consisting of red cloth and beautiful bead jewelry. They have kept much of their culture, including their dances, where the men jump straight up into the air. If youve even looked into Kenya at all, you have seen Maasai. Unfortunately, here at the Mara is not the best place to see Maasai as they really live. Just as it seems like the wildlife is in a zoo, most of what tourists see of the Maasai seems like an act. For example, there is a traditional Maasai village just outside the Oololaimutiek Gate which is opened to tourists. If you pay a small fee of KSh 350, you can walk around and take pictures. Of course this is nothing close to traditional, and you wont get any peace from people bothering you to buy trinkets.

There are ways to see a real, uncontrived Maasai village, however. Find a different village that is not commonly visited by tourists, and stay with a Maasai family. Your guide or someone working for your tourist company can help arrange this for you. If you pay the family, they should be glad to welcome you into their home for a meal. Use one of your guides as a translator. Make sure you first arrange with the locals and ask their permission before you take pictures, as most will rightly want some sort of compensation.

Masai Mara N.R. – Narok Town

No matter if you are touring the Mara with a company, or with your own vehicle, you will pass through the town of Narok. The town is loaded with souvenir shops and hawkers, so you will not get one minute of peace without harassment. If you need to spend the night here, go to the *Spear Hotel* which offers singles/doubles for KSh 250/350. For cheap food, go to Kims Dishes, opposite the Agip petrol station. Next to Kims is the stage where you can get a matatu to Nairobi.

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Notes:

Mount Kenya N.P.

Mt. Kenya at 5199 m is Africa's second highest peak, next only to Mt. Kilimanjaro in nearby Tanzania. The mountain lies within the Mt. Kenya National Park, which is surrounded by the Mt. Kenya Forest. Trekkers from all over the world come to hike Mt. Kenya, which is famous for being one of the more challenging, yet beautiful mountains on the continent. The two highest peaks, Batian (5199 m) and Nelion (5188 m) can only be reached by climbers with technical skills. However, the third highest peak, Lenana (4985 m), can be reached by foot.

The Mt. Kenya area is home to the Kikuyu people and their close relatives, the Embu and Meru. The Kikuyu believed that their god and creator, *Ngai*, lived at the top of the mountain. Most Kikuyu today have adopted a more westernized Christian view, but the mountain is still an extremely important part of the Kikuyu culture.

Mount Kenya N.P. – When to climb

The time of year you plan to hike Mt. Kenya is important. Obviously, if you choose to make the trip in the rainy season, your trip will at least be miserable, maybe a disaster. Of course weather is hard to predict, and you run the risk of being rained on anytime, but if you are serious about coming to Kenya to climb its highest mountain, plan on coming at a time of the year when you'll have nice weather.

The best months to attempt the climb are late December through mid February, or mid July through mid September. The long rains start in March and can run until July. The short rains start in October and run into November.

Mount Kenya N.P. – Who to climb with

Trekkers have many options in who to go with. Experienced climbers may want to go by themselves, or with only one guide. Others may want to book a package deal with a travel company, which would entitle you to a whole group of guides, cooks and porters. You are not required to be accompanied by a guide like you are on Mt. Kilimanjaro, but obviously it is a good reason for inexperienced climbers.

If you are a bit unsure of your physical limits or trekking knowledge and you have the extra money to use, book your climb through a tour company. Mt. Kenya is not an easy hike, so don't take anything for granted. Any tour agency in Nairobi (as well as in Naro Moru) can set up an organized climb for as many people as needed. This will include a guide and enough porters to carry all of your needed food and gear. Porters double as cooks and all your meals will be taken care of. Hot drinks will await you at your next camp, as the loaded-down porters go ahead of the group to set up in advance. In Nairobi, arrange trip with Lets Go Travel (# (02) 340331) or The Mountain Rock Tours & Adventure Safaris (# (02) 210051).

Of course it's possible to do the mountain without help. Never climb alone, but if you are in a group of experienced trekkers, you may not need any help. The trail is fairly clearly marked, so if you're proficient in using maps, you may not need a guide. If you feel like taking one just in case, or hiring a few porters to ease your load a bit, you can hire them independently, without going through a travel company. The best way to do

this is to hire them at the town at which you start. There are many qualified candidates who approach tourists in Naro Moru, Nanyuki, and Chogoria that are willing to accompany you for a small fee. Your best bet, however, would be to go to any tourist lodge and hire guides or porters from there. If you're starting from Naro Moru, check at the Naro Moru River Lodge. Expect to pay guides about KSh 500 per day and porters KSh 300 per day. Remember that if you descend the mountain using a different route, you will have to pay for their transportation back to where you started. Make sure you make all your plans clear to your guides and porters before you agree on a price.

Mount Kenya N.P. – What to bring

Clothing:

Temperatures on top of the Mountain may fall to –10 degrees C, so bring plenty of clothing. Remember headgear and gloves, as well as a decent pair of boots and some sandals or light shoes to wear at night. Wearing several layers of clothes is advisable, with waterproof clothing on the outside if the weather is wet. Sun glasses are important to protect your eyes from the bright sun.

Equipment:

If you can't bring your equipment over to Kenya, everything you need can be hired in Nairobi or around Mt. Kenya. In the capital, try Atuls (# (02) 225935) on Biashara St or the National Action Mountain Center (# (02) 740214). In Naro Moru go to the Naro Moru River Lodge. They rent out everything from sleeping bags, tents and stoves to wool socks and rain pants. Don't go without a foam mat.

Food:

Remember that you will eat more food than normal because of the physical strain on your body, so don't skimp on the food. You will need a small camp stove, as it's not recommended to pack only dried foods. Bring foods high in carbohydrates, such as pasta, bread, and grains you can boil, such as couscous. Be warned that at high elevations rice and lentils will not cook because water boils at less than 100 degrees. Dry foods can be useful, such as soup mix or dried mashed potatoes. Take some chocolate and fruits also, to keep your sugar levels up.

Most important, make sure to drink a lot of water. Water helps your body adjust to high altitudes, so drink even more than you would trekking at low elevations. I suggest at least four liters a day. Hot drinks such as coffee, tea, or chocolate can be great in the morning or evening, but remember that caffeine dehydrates you.

Maps/books:

Never climb Mt. Kenya without a guide or map. Maps can be purchased at any bookstore.

Mount Kenya N.P. – The Routes

There are several routes up to Point Lenana. The three routes are Naro Moru, Sirimon and Chogoria. Of course you can ascend on one trail, then descend on another. The length of time required depends upon how fast you walk and how many kilometers you trek per day. Also, if you have access to a vehicle, you can drive from the forest boundary to the National Park boundary, eliminating a lot of time. This can be expensive, makes it harder for your body to adjust to the elevation, and you can miss the beautiful Mt. Kenya forest where you have a good chance of encountering wildlife.

The Naro Moru route is the most popular route, especially with tour companies. Its also the shortest route, taking only 3 to 4 days to make the climb and descend, but the least scenic. Just outside the town of Naro Moru on the way to Nanyuki lies the trailhead. If you have your own vehicle, you can drive to the meteorological station, cutting one day off of your trip. From there, most trekkers spend the next night at Mackinders Camp. Some people split the hike from there to Lenana in half by sleeping in Austrian Hut, then ascending to the peak in the early morning.

The Sirimon route starts north of the Mountain. From Nanyuki, head towards Timau and Isiolo and tell the tout you want to be dropped off at the start of the Sirimon trail. You can also stay the night at the Mountain Rock Hotel and they can take you to the trailhead in the morning. The first day you walk from the main road to the park entrance gate, or farther to Old Moses Camp. The next day, hike to Shiptons Camp. From Shiptons Camp, you can get to Point Lenana via the North Face, American Camp, or Austrian Hut. Allow 4 to 5 days to climb and return on the Sirimon route.

The Chogoria route is the longest but most scenic of the three routes. Start from Chogoria town, then start at the Forest Gate. From there you can either drive the 20 km to the Park Gate, or drive it. After camping there, walk to Mintos Hut or camp half way. From Mintos Hut you can pace it to Austrian Hut, then accent to Point Lenana the next day. The trip will take 4 to 5 days.

Mount Kenya N.P. – Practical Information

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Mt Elgon National Park

Mt. Elgon National Park is located on the Kenyan–Ugandan border. Mt Elgon is an extinct volcano. Its highest peak is Wagagai (4321 m), but its on the Ugandan side. The highest peak on the Kenyan side is Koitoboss. The main attraction of Mt Elgon is its spectacular caves in its slopes. These saline caverns are beautiful by themselves, and theres a chance you could even see elephants inside them, getting their daily allowance of salt. The three caves open to tourists are called Kitum, Chepnyali, and Mackingeny.

You need a vehicle to enter the park. A ranger must accompany you on all hikes. Make sure to bring warm clothes, as it is quite cold at higher elevations, and it rains a lot on the mountain. The driest time to visit is from December through February, or August and September. Park entry is US\$ 10 per day, and theres a camping fee as well. Theres one lodge near the park, *Mt Elgon Lodge*, which is one km before the Chorlim Gate. Singles/Doubles here with full board run KSh 2750/4250.

Mt Elgons flora is incredible, and there are a few ways to experience Elgons beauty on foot. Most trekkers start from a town called Kimilili, 36 km south of Kitale on the road to Kisumu. From here get a matatu to Kapsakwany, then hike five km to Kaberua Forest Station. From here its another 20 km to Chepkitale Forest Station, which is abandoned. Seven km past this station is an ugly mountain hut. From this hut, its about a four hour walk to Lower Elgon Tarn, a small lake. From here you are close to Lower Elgon Peak, and around the crater rim lies Koitoboss peak and the Suam hot springs. Make sure to get a map, and follow the safety guidelines I have outlined in the Mt Kenya section.

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Notes:

Nairobi N.P.

The Nairobi National Park was the first Kenyan national park. It was opened in 1946. It is now the headquarter of the Kenya Wildlife Service. The National Park is close to the city center and daily tours are organised by tour operators. The best times to visit the park in the morning or later in the afternoon when game viewing is the best. A tour should take about three hours at least. Due to the encroaching civilization the park may disappear in the near future. So do not be surprised to hear the planes from Jomo Kenyatta Airport.

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Notes:

Samburu & Buffalo Springs N.P.

Samburu and Buffalo Springs are small parks, measuring 300 square km together. They hold a large variety of landscapes, however, ranging from savanna and hills to the banks of the Ewaso Nyiro River. It also has some of the most unique wildlife in Kenya, like the reticulated giraffe and Grevys zebra, as well as plenty of lions, leopards, and cheetahs. Some say Samburu/Buffalo Springs is the best park in Kenya because of the sites and the fact that it isnt crowded with tourists. I say its definitely one of the best 3 in the country. One unfortunate thing is that these reserves are separate ad require separate park fees, although they are much the same. If you want to visit both, do it in two separate days. You either need your own vehicle or you need to book a safari with a tourist company to visit the reserves.

To get there, go through Embu and Meru to Isiolo, or go around the northern side of Mt. Kenya, through Nanyuki to Isiolo. The reserves are just a few km north of Isiolo.

If you choose to stay in Buffalo Springs, there are 4 public camp sites near the Gare Mara gate. Theyre not completely safe, however, so pack up you belongings and take them with you on game drives. The only lodge is *Buffalo Springs Tented Lodge* (# (0165) 2234) in the north eastern part of the reserve. In the high season tents and cottages cost US\$ 120/160 for singles/doubles with full board. In the low season prices drop to US\$ 50/90.

In Samburu, there are public camp sites near the Samburu Lodge, and two special camp sites further west. There are four expensive lodges in the reserved. *Samburu Lodge* (# (02) 540780) has singles/doubles with half board for US\$ 100/153. In low season rates are US\$ 39/78. Also try the *Samburu Intrepids Club* (# (02) 335208) which runs US\$ 121/183 for singles/doubles with full board.

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Notes:

Tsavo N.P.

Tsavo is the largest of Kenya's national parks, covering over 20,000 square km. It is split into two sections for administrative purposes, Tsavo East and Tsavo West. Because the park is so big, you can spend a lot of time driving around in the bush without seeing much wildlife. There are some beautiful, uncongested attractions within the parks, however, and there's enough to see to keep you busy for several days.

If you're planning to safari in Tsavo on your own (without a Safari Company), you will need a 4WD vehicle if you plan to get off the main roads. The main entrance gates to Tsavo West and East are sign posted on the Mombasa highway. Be advised that Tsavo West and East are separate parks and you'll need to pay separate entrance fees.

Tsavo N.P. – Tsavo West

Most of the sights in Tsavo West center around the watering holes near the Kilaguni and Ngulia lodges. *Mzima springs*, next to Kilaguni Lodge has plenty of hippos and crocodiles, and even an underwater viewing chamber, where you can check out the aquatic life in the springs. North of the lodges is Shetani lava flow and caves. There's also the *Chaimu Crater* just south of Kilaguni Lodge, which you can climb. Lastly, not far from Ngulia Lodge lies the *Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary*, where you have a chance to see one of up to 30 black rhinos inside a 70 sq km fence.

If you're traveling on a budget, Tsavo West has several normal camp sites near its 3 main gates. It also has some cheap accommodations near the lodges. You can get a fully equipped banda for Ksh 500 per person (minimum Ksh 2000 per banda) at the *Ngulia Safari Camp* or the *Kitani Safari Camp*. The bandas have a bathroom, kitchen with supplies, and lanterns. Bring your own personal supplies, food, and drinking water.

There are also several lodges to choose from. The *Ngulia Lodge* (# (02) 336858) offers singles/doubles with full board for US\$ 120/150 in the high season and US\$ 60/120 in the low season. There's a watering hole outside the lodge which attracts wildlife every night.

The *Kilaguni Lodge* is owned by the same company, and prices are exactly the same. It too has a watering hole. Other lodges include the *Lake Jibe Lodge* by itself in the southern tip of the park, and the *Tsavo Inn*, just outside of the Mtito Andei Gate.

Update: the Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary is open only for a limited period daily, all visitors have to be out by 16.30hrs. The rangers carry out a census every full moon, where they stay out overnight to count the Rhinos when they visit the waterholes. They were part way through the count during my visit in June 2004, and we were told that they had counted 58 on the last census. So they are obviously doing a great job for conservation, by the way on 2 visits now I have failed to see one whilst in the Sanctuary. Though was fortunate enough to spot one from the viewing point at Ngulia Lodge in 1999. A site that almost made up for the disappointment was a pair of Cape Hunting Dogs, one of the rarest species left in Africa.
<http://www.szgdocent.org/aa/a-wildog.htm>

Tsavo N.P. – Tsavo East

The vast northern two-thirds of Tsavo East is closed to the public. The Kenyan Government is actively trying to eliminate poaching in the region. There's still much to see south of the Galana River, however, such as the *Kanderi Swamp* and the *Aruba Dam*.

There are campsites near most gates to Tsavo East, as well as one right by the Kanderi Swamp. The *Voi Safari Lodge* (# (02) 336858), just east of Voi has singles/doubles with full board for US\$ 150/200 in the high season and US\$ 60/120 in the low season. The very beautiful *Tsavo Safari Camp* (# (02) 338888) is located further north on the banks of the Athi River. Singles/Doubles with full board cost US\$ 50/100 in the low season and US\$ 152/190 in the high season.

Tsavo N.P. – Voi and Taita Hills

The town of Voi on the Mombasa highway is the base for exploring Tsavo. It's the major transportation hub between Mombasa and Nairobi, and you'll be able to get a bus to either city from here. You can try also to get a lift with a truck, just walk out of Voi onto the highway. If you stay in Voi, try the *Voi Restpoint Hotel* (# (0147) 2079).

In between Tsavo West and East lies the beautiful Taita Hills. The flora is some of the most scenic in Kenya, and wildlife is plentiful, especially birds and monkeys. There are two lodges in the Taita Hills: *The Taita Hills Lodge* and the *Salt Lick Lodge*. Both are on A23 west of Voi. If you're a backpacker looking to do some trekking in Taita Hills, email my friend Scott Sweet at . Tell him you read by page and you would like some information on trekking in the area. He will tell you the best places to hike and how to access them.

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Notes:

Northern Kenya

The northern half of Kenya is a vast, sparsely populated desert. The dry shrub lands and rocky wasteland is home to some of Kenya's most interesting people, such as the Turkana, Samburu, Marakwet, Pokot, and El Molo tribes. These tribes have been influenced very little by the west, and unlike the Maasai, have had very little contact with tourists as well. They live as they did years ago by herding livestock and fishing. The people as well as the awesome scenery make Northern Kenya a nice place to visit.

The current atmosphere between the tribes of Northern Kenya is very touchy, and tribal violence has become quite common. Livestock raids between Marakwet, Pokot, and Turkana have turned violent due to use of automatic weapons, and a vicious cycle of revenge killings has emerged. This is mainly a problem with tribes west of Lake Turkana, but violence is also common east of lake, where bandits roam. The danger of bandits is so real that no one goes north of Samburu National Reserve without an armed escort.

Don't let this prevent you from seeing some of the most spectacular parts of Kenya, however. Despite the isolated tribal violence, the area west of the lake is still quite safe for tourists, although you may pass a few goat herders with AK-47s. From this side you can visit the town of **Lodwar** and camp on the shores of Lake Turkana. The only way to get east of the lake is with a tourist company, which travels with an armed escort. The companies offer safe 8-day trips, which include visits to several national parks and some of the most extraordinary desert scenery in the country.

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Notes:

Bungoma

Saint Crispin's Bungoma

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Notes:

East of Lake Turkana

As mentioned in the Northern Kenya section, there is the danger of encountering bandits, or *shiftas* in the desert anywhere north of Samburu National Reserve. Unless you want to get left in the middle of nowhere by Somali, Ethiopian, or Sudanese shiftas with absolutely nothing by your underwear, you need to travel in a convoy system with an armed escort.

Gametrackers in Nairobi (# (02) 338927) offers an excellent 8-day trip that covers much of the desert east of the lake. Starting in Nairobi, you'll pass Mt. Kenya and head north to Samburu and Buffalo Springs National Reserves. From there they connect with an armed convoy and continue north to Marsabit National Reserve. They then cut west towards Lake Turkana, passing the beautiful Chalbi Desert. They camp at Loyangalani on the shore of Lake Turkana, then return to Nairobi hitting a few other sites on the way down. Gametrackers rates are negotiable, if you're willing to bring your own food and beverages.

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Notes:

Maralal

Maralal is a small town north of Nyahururu and Nanyuki. Its in a beautiful spot, surrounded by Maralal National Sanctuary. The area is home to the Samburu people, relatives of the Maasai. They are perhaps the smartest dressed tribe in the country. The area is impoverished, so expect to be severely harassed by locals trying to sell trinkets or beg.

Maralal is not too frequently visited by tourists except for once a year at its annual International Camel Derby. The Derby is held every July and everyone is invited for a hell of a good time. The race is based at *Yare Club and Campground*, a few km out of town, where you are free to camp for KSh 200, or get a nice room.

There is an amateur competition and a professional race. The amateur class is open to anyone wishing to ride. For a few thousand Kenyan shillings, you can pick your own camel, hire a handler to run behind your camel and hit it with a stick, and take a chance at winning a lot of money. No matter how you do, you can be sure of two things: Youll leave with a hang-over from celebrating for two days straight, and youll be so sore you wont be able to sit comfortably for days. Get there on Friday or early Saturday to register for the race.

If youre looking for another place to stay besides the Yare Club, try the *Buffalo Lodge*. It offers rooms for KSh 400 and has two lively bars. *Kimaniki Boarding & Lodging* and the *Silence Hotel* are also good values. The only upper-end place is the expensive *Maralal Safari Lodge* (# (0368) 2060), 3 km outside of town towards Baragoi. It has a golf course, swimming pool, and a watering hole for attracting game. It costs US\$ 120/150 for singles/doubles with full board. The restaurant and facilities are open to the public.

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Notes:

West of Lake Turkana

If you want to really explore the attractions west of Lake Turkana, you need your own 4-wheel drive vehicle. You can get a matatu to Lodwar from Kitale, but you'll miss everything along the way, and you may not be able to get to the shore of the lake from Lodwar.

You can make your way up to Lodwar by going through Kitale, or by making your way through the Cherangani Hills. There are many routes through the hills, most starting from Iten. From Iten, travel north, then veer left across the hills to join up with the main highway to Lodwar around the town of Kapenguria. Bring a good map and ask for directions along the way. There are some spectacular views in the Cherangani Hills, and if you have time you can hike around for a few hours.

About 70 km north of Kapenguria lies the *Marich Pass Field Studies Center* (# (0321) 31541). It's a beautiful spot on the Weiwei River where you can get some food, or if you're taking your time on the way up to Lodwar, to stay the night. You can camp here for KSh 200, get a dorm bed for KSh 250, or stay in a double banda for KSh 400.

Just north of Marich Pass is *Turkwel Gorge*, the largest hydroelectric project in Kenya. The gorge and dam are impressive for African standards, but nothing too spectacular if you've seen it before. You can also get a room at the station, although it's expensive.

West of Lake Turkana – Lodwar

Lodwar is the only town of significance west of the lake. If you want to get to Lake Turkana from the west side, you will have to pass through Lodwar. The town is an adventure in itself. Because of the poverty in the area, you will be persistently hassled by people wanting to sell you trinkets, and begging takes on a whole new level here.

Still, I recommend staying at least one night here to get the feel of a unique town. The *Turkwel Hotel* (# (0393) 21201) is the best place to stay. The singles/doubles are cottages with fans, mosquito nets and bathrooms. They cost KSh 400/800 and include breakfast. Singles with shared bathrooms run KSh 300. The food here isn't bad and it's the center of the town's night life. Relax outside or step into the lively bar and cool off with a few cold beers.

If the *Turkwel Hotel* is full, or you're looking to stay at a cheaper place, try the *Mombasa Hotel*. Singles/Doubles are KSh 200/300.

West of Lake Turkana – Banks of Lake Turkana

There are two spots on the western bank of Lake Turkana which are accessible. The first and most popular is the fishing village of Kalekol, a few km from the lake shore. Matatus sometimes run from Lodwar to Kalekol, but only if enough people want to go. The place to stay in town is the *Safari Hotel*.

From Kalekol its a 1.5 hour walk to Fergusons Gulf, the most accessible part of the lake. There are a lot of birds here, as well as crocodiles and hippos. The only lodge here was shut down for renovation and is probably still closed. If you want to stay the night, youll have to stay with some locals. If you dont feel comfortable doing that, youll have to return to Kalekol for the night.

The second access to the lake is Eliye Springs. Its a beautiful spot, but to get here you need your own 4WD vehicle. The turn-off is sign posted about halfway to Kalekol. Theres no hotel here either, so youll need to camp. The locals will help to set you up in a nice spot on the lake shaded by palm trees. They offer to sell you nice hammocks that they set up comfortably between trees. No matter if you want the hammocks or not, expect to pay about KSh 400 per night. Locals try to suck every shilling out of you because they dont see tourists too often, but its worth it. Of the two and a half years I spent in Kenya, I never had a more genuine experience with natives. The Turkana will even perform a dance for you for a small fee. The women and girls will sell traditional Turkana baskets for insanely cheap prices. Youll need your own food and water, although fish is readily available.

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Notes:

The Aberdares

Tea Farming Region, bordering the Central Province and the Rift Valley. Highland climate with lots of rain. Most of the people living in this region have a moderate income

The Aberdares – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

The Coast

It sometimes seems as if the Swahili Coast is not part of Kenya at all. The culture of the Coast is a unique mix of African Bantu and Arab Muslim influences, a combination created by Arab traders who arrived on the Kenyan Coast before the 7th Century. By the 12th Century, permanent settlements were formed, and the Arabs took root. Arab men took African women as wives, and the Swahili people were born. Of course communication was necessary, so Kiswahili arose from the mixing of Africans tribal tongues and the traders Arabic.

The Coast is a main attraction for travelers. The white sand beaches are a beautiful place to dive, snorkel, or just relax. There are beaches just north and south of Mombasa, the capital of the Kenyan Coast. The best beaches, however, are farther north, near Malindi and Watamu National Marine Parks, and farther north still to the island of Lamu. The cities and towns themselves are attractions, ancient towns that emanate history and culture.

The Coast – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Kilifi

Kilifi is the first town north of Mombasa about half-way to Malindi. There is a nice beach in Kilifi, although its a bit hard to get to. While youre there, check out the well preserved Mnarani ruins overlooking Kilifi Creek.

Kilifi – History

Kilifi – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Lamu

Lamu, the oldest living town in Kenya lies on Lamu Island in the northern corner of Kenya. Lamu truly like a different country. More than 95% of the locals are Muslim, and you're just as likely to hear Arabic as Kiswahili.

Although the beaches near Lamu may be the best in all of Kenya, Lamu has not yet been over-developed, like Zanzibar. It still has the feel of a small town instead of a tourist trap.

As with any other town on the coast, or any in Kenya for that matter, remember to be considerate of the locals' beliefs. When sunbathing or in your hotel, it's not so important, but when you're in town, remember to dress conservatively, with tops that keep the shoulders covered, and skirts or pants that reach at least to the knees. Also, be aware that most people in Lamu and elsewhere on the coast do not want their picture taken. Always be considerate and ask permission first.

Lamu is 165 mi/265 km north of Mombasa.

Lamu – Getting Around

There is no beach at Lamu town, so you need to take a dhow to Shela Beach on the other side of the island. There are many dhow taxis that take tourists around to different beaches, islands, or day trips. Prices are very negotiable. Walking (or riding a donkey) is the only way to get around Lamu town. Like most old Swahili towns, Lamu is a maze which is difficult to navigate. Don't worry, though, Lamu town is quite safe.

Lamu – Getting There

By Air:

Flying is definitely your best bet to get to Lamu. You can fly from Nairobi, Mombasa, or Malindi. Flights from Malindi are not too expensive, and it will be worth it.

By Sea:

It is possible to take a dhow from Malindi, but I would not recommend it. The trip can be longer than 12 hours, and there's a chance that you may not reach your destination at all, and you'll have to find another way to make the remainder of the trip.

By Road:

If the dirt road from Malindi is in passable condition, it's possible to drive to Lamu. Again, this is not recommended because of the frequency of bandit attacks north of Malindi.

Lamu – Sights

Lamu Museum:

The Lamu Museum in town on the waterfront is a great place to spend an hour or two. Its small, but packed with historical and cultural insights. Entry is KSh 200.

Dhow crews are ready and willing to take you to any sights around Lamu. For a chance of seeing dhows being built or repaired, take a trip to Matondoni Village. An even better day trip is to the famous Takwa Ruins on Manda Island. There's a mosque, tomb, and other abandoned buildings dating from the 15th century. Other day or half-day trips include snorkeling, diving, or fishing. Many endeavors come with a seafood lunch provided by the dhow crew. All prices are flexible and you need to bargain.

Lamu – Accommodation

There are many places to stay in Lamu town and some nice resorts in Shela. Water is a huge problem in Lamu, so don't expect water for more than a couple hours every morning if you're staying in a lower-end hotel. If you're planning on staying in Lamu for several days, tell the manager of your hotel before agreeing on a rate. Many places will cut you a deal if you're staying for several days. Lamu is possibly the hottest place on the Coast, and has more mosquitoes than about anywhere else except Malindi. Therefore, I recommend getting a room with a mosquito net and a fan. It will be worth you money.

Budget Travelers:

In Lamu town try the *Pole Pole Guest House* back from the waterfront. They have doubles, some with fans and nets, for KSh 300 including breakfast. Another cheap hotel is the *Lamu Guest House* directly in back of the Lamu Museum. Doubles with fans and attached bedrooms run KSh 550–650.

Mid-Range:

The *Casuarina Rest House* (#3123) is a good value. Doubles cost between KSh 1000 to 1500. More expensive, but quite nice is the *Yumbe House* (#33101) close to the Swahili House Museum. It's a traditional house with a beautiful courtyard, and rooms have nets, fans and include breakfast. Depending on the season singles/doubles/triples average about KSh 1000/1900/2750.

Top End:

In Lamu town the best place is *Petleys Inn* (#33378) next to the Lamu Museum. It has a swimming pool, bar, and a good rooftop restaurant. Standard rooms are KSh 2000/2750/3300 for singles/doubles/triples. There are also rooms facing the sea for about KSh 400 more. The *Lamu Palace Hotel* (#33272) is your second option. It offers singles/doubles/triples for US\$ 50/80/100, or about \$15 cheaper in the low season.

At Shela Beach, there are many top end resorts. The best by far is *Peponi Hotel* (#33421/3). Guests stay in cottages with verandahs facing the channel between Lamu and Manda Islands. Bed and breakfast rates in standard rooms are US\$ 130/170 for singles/doubles, and in superior rooms US\$ 150/200. For full board, add

\$20–30. Advanced booking is essential.

Lamu – Nightlife and Entertainment

Being a small Muslim town, there's not much of a night life in Lamu. The only places to get a beer in Lamu town itself are Petley's Inn and the Lamu Palace. It's also possible to go to Shella on the other side of the island, where alcohol can be bought at the Peponi Hotel. There's also the Police Club at the police station in Lamu, which is open to anyone. The Civil Servants Club has discos on some weekend nights that can be quite fun.

Lamu – Eating Out

During the month of Ramadhan, most restaurants will be closed all day until sundown. The more expensive restaurants catering to tourists, however, will remain open all day.

For cheap but good Swahili food, try the rice pilau or beans at the *New Star Restaurant*. *Hapa Hapa* and the *Bush Gardens* on the waterfront serve good food for about KSh 200–400. The restaurant on top of *Petley's Inn* have consistently good food for a bit more. The *Barbecue Grill* at Peponi Hotel is open to non–guests and is a bit expensive, but also good.

Lamu – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Malindi

Kenya is fortunate to have an abundance of protected coral reefs and beaches (250 mi/420 km of the stuff). Malindi on what's called the Coral Coast provides a very nice introduction to the area there are surfing snorkeling deep-sea fishing and other water sports. The Malindi Marine National Park is protected and has fine beaches clear water and very colorful fish. Malindi, the second major city on the coast lies about 100 km north of Mombasa.

Malindi – Getting There

In Mombasa, the stage to Malindi is located on Abdel Nassy Road, which turns into Digo Road as you move south. Matatus fill and leave to Malindi every 15 minutes or so.

Malindi – Accommodation

Budget Travelers:

The *Silversands Camp Site* (#20412) two km south of town on the coast road is the best place to camp. It has nice facilities and is right on a nice stretch of beach. Camping is KSh 150 per person, and there are also small bandas if you don't have a tent. The only problem is that it is a bit far out of town. You may want to hire a taxi to return home at night, especially if you're alone.

If you want basic lodging, try the *Jana Hotel* (#20657) or *Da Gammas Inn* (#30295).

Mid-Range:

Malindi Cottages (#20304), north of town on Lamu Rd offer nice fully furnished cottages with kitchens that sleep up to five people for KSh 1500 per night. Nearby are *Malindi Sea View Cottages* (#20439) which offer cottages for two to four people for around KSh 1200 per person per night.

Top End:

The *Eden Roc Hotel* (#20480) north of town on Lamu Rd has bungalows, deluxe rooms and private suites. Prices range from KSh 2000/2500 for singles/doubles to KSh 3000/4000 depending on the room.

Near the Silversands Camp lies the *Driftwood Club* (#20155). Rooms run KSh 800/1300 for singles/doubles to KSh 2900/3700.

Far to the south by the Marine National Park, on a beautiful piece of beach is *Stephanie Sea House* (#20720). Depending on the season, expect to pay between US\$25 to US\$50 per person per night.

Malindi – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Mombasa

Kenya's second largest city is not much like Nairobi at all. The hustle–bustle, cell phones, and expensive suits of the capital are replaced by a laid–back attitude, where locals dressed in traditional Islamic garb move as slowly as possible in the blistering heat. The Arabic influence is quite evident in the dress, architecture, and food of Mombasa.

Mombasa is just an hour or two from three nice beaches, with glorious white sands. When you're not in the water or soaking up the sun, take a stroll into Old Town to get a taste of Swahili culture and street food, then visit the historic Fort Jesus, or check out some of the hottest clubs in the country. Such as the Tembo (<http://www.tembo.net>) nightclub where the party never stops. A 24 hour outdoor bar and disco. Why not travel on safari there with jambosafaris (<http://www.jambosafaris.com>) and get a feel for the real Africa.

Mombasa – Getting Around

Mombasa has one of the most efficient public transport systems in Kenya. The streets are filled with Nissan matatus running several major loops around town, or north and south of Mombasa Island. You can get most of these at the Post Office on Digo and Makadara Roads, which is like a huge matatu stage. Hang around for a few minutes and listen to the matatu touts creatively yelling docks or ferry or other routes. Ask someone at your hotel where to get the Nissan you want.

If you can stand the heat, you can certainly walk around Mombasa. The main road is Digo Road, which turns into Nyerere Ave south of Moi Ave. Digo is intersected by the other three main roads, Jomo Kenyatta Ave to the north, then Haile Selassie Road, and finally the southernmost Moi Ave. Walking around Mombasa is considerably safer than Nairobi, but as always, watch what you carry around.

Mombasa – Getting There

By Air: There are several flights a day between Mombasa and Nairobi and rates can be quite cheap. The flight is less than one hour long, which is about 9 hours quicker than any other form of transportation. If you have to money, flying is the best way to avoid the horrible road, or the long train ride.

By Rail: Going to Mombasa by train is very comfortable, but quite long. A second class ticket costs about KSh 2100, which includes two meals and a bed. Third class will run you KSh 3,100 with a few more minor perks. The ride is about twelve hours, and expect delays.

By Bus: Many bus companies run several buses a day to and from Nairobi to Mombasa. If you're leaving from Nairobi, most the bus offices are on Accra Road. In Mombasa, most offices are on Jomo Kenyatta Ave, near the Shibu Rd roundabout. Buses leave both in the morning and at night and the trip takes between 9–11 hours, depending on the condition of the road, the sanity of the driver, and how many times the bus breaks down. The fare is between KSh 600–1000 depending on the bus company.

Mombasa – Sights

Old Town:

Old Town is a section of town situated in the eastern part of Mombasa Island, east of Digo Road and Jamhuri Park. Take Makadara Rd, Nkrumah Rd, or any smaller road off of Digo east a few blocks, and you'll find yourself in Old Town. It is a maze of narrow roads slicing between tall white buildings and stunning mosques dating back to the early 19th century. It's easy to get lost in this maze while exploring, so make sure you always know where west is. Old Town isn't that big, so you won't stay lost for long.

While checking out the Swahili architecture and beautifully dressed people, stop into a bakery, restaurant, market, or curio shop. After 6 pm vendors set up barbecue grills on the street corners and sell snacks for few shillings a piece. The street food beats most food you get in restaurants, for a fraction of the price.

Fort Jesus:

While in Old Town, don't miss its major attraction, Fort Jesus. Fort Jesus began as a Portuguese fort in 1593, then changed hands many times in the next three centuries. Today it has been turned into a museum that is open from 8:30 am to 6 pm. Admission is KSh 200.

Mombasa – Accommodation

Budget Traveler:

Two very affordable places are the *New Al Jazira Hotel* and the *Lucky Guest House* on Shibu Rd just off of Haile Selassie. Rooms are clean but without fans and cost KSh 150/300 for singles/doubles.

The *New Peoples Lodge* (#312831) on Abdel Nasser Rd near the matatu stage to Malindi is a good value. It can be noisy, but all rooms are clean and have fans. Rooms are KSh 120/290 for singles/doubles with shared bathrooms, or KSh 235/415 for self-contained singles/doubles.

Glory Bed & Breakfast (#314557) on Digo Rd at the junction of Hospital St. offers singles/doubles for KSh 400/500 with breakfast.

Mid-Range:

The most affordable of the mid-range hotels is the *Excellent Guest House* (#311744) on Haile Selassie Rd. Rooms have fans, mosquito nets, and bathrooms for KSh 700/900 for singles/doubles.

At the upper end is the nice *New Palm Tree Hotel* (#312169) on Nkrumah Rd. Rooms have fans, mosquito nets and bathrooms and include a breakfast. Singles/doubles are KSh 900/1200.

Upper End:

The *Hotel Sapphire* (#491657) on Mwenbe Tayari Rd offers singles/doubles for KSh 1800/2500. Rooms have air-conditioning and include breakfast.

Perhaps the best value is the *Oceanic Hotel* (#311191) off of Oceanic Rd near the Likoni Ferry. Rooms with a view of the ocean have air-conditioning. Singles/doubles are KSh 1500/1800, and triples are KSh 2100. On the beautiful grounds are three restaurants, a swimming pool, and a casino.

all

New Palm Tree Hotel

This hotel is in the very centre of Mombasa, and also very close to Fort Jesus, the most famous tourist attraction of Mombasa. The price, I don't exactly know, but it is around 1300/1900 for singles/doubles incl. breakfast. Very spacy, clean and friendly staff.

address: Nkruma Road, Mombasa, Kenya

Mombasa – Eating Out

The *Blue Room Restaurant*, on the Haile Selassie is a very popular fast-food, self-service place. There's a huge variety of Indian and American food. You can get better food, however, for the same price one of the many smaller restaurants. Try the *Splendid View Restaurant* on Maungano Rd across from the Hotel Splendid.

By far my favorite place to eat is the *Special Bokoboko* on the corner of Kibokoni Rd and Nyeri St in Old Town. It is newly built by two Muslim brothers named Fuad and Fakur, two of the nicest gentlemen in all of Mombasa. After about 6 pm, the brothers offer a huge variety of Swahili and Indian food for cheap prices. There's an air-conditioned room, many sauces on the each table, and excellent fruit juices. The famous Recoda Restaurant is just down Nyeri St, which also has good Swahili food. However, the prices are anything but fixed, and are at the discretion of the ever-rude man behind the counter who charges differently depending on your skin color. Stick with the Special Bokoboko, where you're served with a smile and a laugh and the food is unbeatable.

For a good hamburger, try the *Hamburger House* on Moi Ave near the tusks. Also near the tusks is the *Chinese Overseas Restaurant*.

Casablanca Restaurant & Bar on Mnazi Moja Rd directly off of Moi Ave is a nice place to get a meal, then stay for a few beers. It's an open-air double story building with a restaurant downstairs serving a wide range of continental food. Upstairs is a popular bar/disco with a dance floor, loud music, and cold beers.

If you are willing to spend the money, the *Tamarind Restaurant* (#471747), across the harbor is the best Mombasa has to offer. The food is excellent, of course, but expect to pay over KSh 1,200 per person.

Mombasa – Nightlife and Entertainment

If you have some extra energy after basking in the sun all day, there are several clubs around Mombasa that can be a lot of fun. The *New Florida Casino & Nightclub* on Mama Ngina Dr is a nice club with three bars, a big screen TV, pool tables and is right on the ocean. Cover is around KSh 150 for men and 70 for women. The clientele is much the same as Florida 2000 in Nairobi.

About a 10 minute drive north of Mombasa Island on Nyali Beach is *Mamba Crocodile Village*, an unlikely combination of a crocodile farm and disco. Cover charge changes depending on the night, but is usually around KSh 250.

Even more fun is the *Tembo Disco*, about 15 minutes north of Mombasa. Tembo is a huge multi-layered open-air club, packed with hundreds of locals and tourists looking to dance the night away. The atmosphere, lay-out, and music makes this the best club in all of Kenya. Open on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, cover charge averages KSh 150. There's public transportation to both Tembo and Mamba Village starting at about 9 pm. You can get the Nissan from the Post Office, or across from the Post Office. The fare is about KSh 30.

Mombasa – Internet Cafes

all

Blue Room

The Blue Room cyber cafe is located inside the Blue Room restaurant. You can buy a meal at the restaurant and eat it while surfing. Air conditioning, good internet speeds, and full multimedia make it a very pleasant place to surf. Charges are K.Shs. 2 a minute (June 2003)

hours: 7 am to 9 pm

price: K.Shs. 2 a minute

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Notes:

North of Mombasa

There are a few attractions and beaches between Mombasa and Kilifi. Listed are a few sights and accommodations north of Mombasa.

Mamba Crocodile Village:

Mamba Village (#(011) 472709) is a crocodile farm where you can see newly born to full-grown crocs. Entry is KSh 400.

Bamburi Quarry Nature Trail:

About 15 minutes north of Mombasa is a reclaimed and reforested area once a quarry for cement production. Today you can see the beautiful landscape populated with many animal species. If you have some time, I recommend walking around for a while. Take a Nissan to Mtwapa and tell the tout you want to get off at Bamburi Nature Trail. Its open from 2 pm to 5:30 daily and entry is a few hundred shillings.

If youre staying in a hotel north of Mombasa it will probably already be pre-arranged in a package deal. Walk-in rates are quite expensive for normal facilities. Prices depend on whether you visit in high season or low season. High season is January, April through the beginning of July, then August through the beginning of September, and December.

If youre traveling on a budget, there are a few choices. At Kikambala Beach you can stay at the *Continental Beach Cottages* (#(0125)32077) or *Kikambala Cottages* (#(0125)32032). Prices range from about KSh 700 to 1070 per person per night.

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Notes:

Shimoni and Wasini Island

Shimoni is a town about 80 km south of Mombasa near the Tanzanian border. Just off the Shimoni Peninsula lies Wasini Island. The Kisite Marine National Park is offshore of Wasini Island. The island itself is unblemished and a great place to relax. The reason people come to the area, however, is to dive. Diving off Pemba channel may be the best in East Africa.

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Notes:

South of Mombasa

There are three white coral sand beaches south of Mombasa. If you're traveling in the high season, it's smart to make advanced bookings. High season is January, April through the beginning of July, then August through the beginning of September, and December. Take a Nissan going to Likoni ferry from the post office to go anywhere south of Mombasa. If you just want to relax on the beach for the day, then return to Mombasa, most people at the resorts will allow you to cross through the resort to the beach.

Shelly Beach:

Shelly Beach is the closest beach to Mombasa. You can walk to the beach from the Likoni ferry in about 30 minutes, or hitch a ride short ride from a matatu.

The *CPK Guest House* (#(011)451619) close to the Likoni ferry is the only cheap place to stay on Shelly Beach. It is far from the beach, however, and beds are KSh 350. The *Shelly Beach Hotel* (#(011)451001), about 3 km from the ferry, offers average resort facilities. Singles/Doubles are KSh 1400/2000 with half-board.

Tiwi Beach:

The next beach south of Shelly is Tiwi Beach. Tiwi is the least developed of the beaches near Mombasa, therefore is the best bet for budget travelers. To get to Tiwi, take a matatu from the Likoni ferry. The tout will let you out at the gravel access road, about 3 km from the beach. Be careful about walking this if you're alone, it's notorious for muggings. Wait for a lift if you are alone.

If you're camping, or looking for cheap cottages, try *Twiga Lodge* (#(0127)51267). Set up camp in the shade right on the sand for KSh 120 per person. Single/Double rooms run KSh 500/1000 with breakfast, and there are cottages with four beds for KSh 1000. There's also a restaurant and a bar.

If you're looking to cook yourself, try *Coral Cove Cottages* (#(0127)51062) directly next to the Twiga Lodge. Prices are similar to those of Twiga Lodge. Also nearby is Tiwi Divers, where you can organize snorkeling or diving expeditions.

Diani Beach:

Diani, south of Tiwi, is perhaps the most developed beach in all of Kenya. Most resorts cater to tourists with package deals, and very few independent travelers can afford the resort prices. There are many matatus and buses that run every 15 minutes from Likoni ferry to Diani Beach.

The only cheap place to stay is *Dan Trenchs*, behind the Trade Winds Hotel. Camping is KSh 150 per person, rooms are KSh 250 per person, and apartments with kitchens are KSh 600. There are a few mid-range places also, mostly south of developed tarmac. *Diani Beachalets* (#(0127)2180), *Le Paradis Cottages*, and the *Vulcano Restaurant* are all together on the dirt road south of the paved beach road. *Diani Beachalets* offers rooms for KSh 400 to 1000 depending on the season. *Four Twenty South* (#(0127)2065) lies near where the dirt road begins and offers cottages with two beds for around KSh 1200. For more information about Diani Beach, go to <http://www.diani.info>

South of Mombasa – Accommodation

The other budget cottage in tiwi is Maweni beach cottages.

Located 18km south of mombasa along the unspoilt tiwi beach.

Self catering cottages with a perfect seaview from each of them.

Rates from 20 US \$ a night. with a restaurant adjacent.

040–51008

0722–328–365

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Notes:

Maweni Beach cottages– Tiwi

This one of the new budget cottages.

Self catering.

They pick and drop customers from the main road so you may save a few coins on this!

040–51225

0722–328–365

Rates from 20\$ a night

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Notes:

Watamu

Watamu is 20 km south of Malindi, famous for its Marine National Reserve. The National Reserve boasts a protected coral reef that makes for some the best snorkeling on the coast.

To get to Watamu, take a Nissan to Malindi, then tell the tout you want to get off at the Watamu junction. From there, wait for Nissan that takes you the few km into Watamu Village.

Theres not much to do in Watamu except to dive or snorkel in the Marine Reserve, or relax. Dhow crews will be glad to take you out to the Reserve for a prearranged price that includes park fees. Theres a nice beach here, but most the space is taken by the big resorts, so access can be a bit difficult.

For a nice cheap place to stay, try *Hotel Dante* in Watamu Village. Doubles have fans, mosquito nets, and bathrooms for KSh 500. More expensive, but also a good value is *Peponi Cottages* (#32434), where doubles run KSh 1000. The *Ascot Residence Hotel* is also a good mid-range hotel, offering doubles for KSh 1200 with breakfast. Many of the top-end resorts do not encourage casual bookings, so you may not feel welcome. Try the *Barracuda Inn* (#617074) or *Hemingways* (#32256).

Watamu – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

The Rift Valley

The Rift Valley is the dominant geological feature of Kenya. The Valley is huge, running from Ethiopia, through Lake Turkana, the Cherangani Hills, and down past the plains of the Masai Mara, into Tanzania. The Rift Valley is famous of its soda lakes, such as Lake Nakuru and Lake Bogoria .

The first encounter with the Rift Valley experienced by most travelers is the incredible view from the highway running from Nairobi to Nakuru .

Nakuru and Eldoret are the biggest towns in the valley and they are the best bases from which to explore it.

The Rift Valley – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Eldoret

Eldoret has been growing quickly and theres an on-going debate whether it has passed Nakuru to become Kenyas fourth largest city. President Moi has had a big part in the development of Eldoret and has even built an airport there. He is from around that area, and it is the traditional lands of his tribesmen, the Kalenjin. Theres little reason a tourist would stay in Eldoret unless its for a short stop-over. If you have to spend the night here, the *Mahindi Hotel* offers singles/doubles for KSh 300/400 with attached bathrooms. The *New Lincoln Hotel* is one step up, charging KSh 500/700 for their singles/doubles. The only top-end place in town is the *Sirikwa Hotel* which asks KSh 3500/4300 for its singles/doubles.

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Notes:

Eldoret

I prefer to stay in the Eldoret Club. It has old colonial feel about it. It has a great golf course, swimming pool, gym etc. It is tucked away just outside the main town center. It is very safe, good for women alone. Rates are around 2300 for a room, breakfast extra. South African sat TV (sometimes). Jim Bedford

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Notes:

Kericho

Kericho is a clean, beautiful city in the wet highlands of western Rift Valley. Kerichos landscape and economy is dominated by tea farming. Prolific tea farms surround Kericho for many kilometers, making the town the center of Kenyas huge tea market.

There are many cheap places to stay in Kericho town. Try the *Garden Lodge* (# (0361) 20878) on Moi Highway, which offers singles/doubles for KSh 300/450. The *Mwalimu Hotel* (# (0361) 30039) on Moi Road is also a good deal, with singles/doubles for KSh 400/520.

Also a nice place is the *Fish Resort*, about 20 minute walk outside of town. The turn is signposted on the main road. It has nice rooms, fishing by the river, good food, and very few customers.

The best upper–end hotel is the *Tea Hotel* (# (0361) 30004) on Moi Highway on the way to Nakuru. Singles/Doubles including breakfast are available for KSh 1725/2100, and triples for KSh 2,700. If you want to go out into the tea fields, the people at the Tea Hotel can arrange a tour for you. Theres also the *Mid–West Hotel* (# (0361) 20611) on John Kericho Rd, but it is overpriced and the service can be bad. Singles/Doubles run 875/1100 with breakfast.

On Friday and Saturday nights, theres a disco at the Mid–West hotel (say hi to the DJs, Matush and Amadi). Behind Mid–West is the *Urwa Inn*, with a pool table and nyama choma. Start here before going to Mid–West since the beers are cheap, the entry is free, and the atmosphere is nice. The *Mwalimu Bar*, at the Mwalimu Hotel is also a fun time, with a pool table and a lot of drunks that are good for a laugh or two. There are many other bars/discos in Kericho, but some, like the *Snow Day and Night Club*, are not safe after dark.

Kericho – Getting There

Kericho is about 4hours west of Nairobi. The turn–off Southwards to Kericho off the main Nakuru – Eldoret Road is at Mau Summit. Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria is approximately one hour west of Kericho.

Kericho – Sights

Merely driving towards Kericho from any direction will give one breath–taking views of the vast tea plantations that are the economic backbone of the local economy. Scattered among the tea plantations are neatly arranged housing complexes for the tea "pluckers" who every 2–4 weeks need to pick the tea from every square meter of the expansive plantations you see.

For some peace and quiet, consider spending a little time at the arboretum at Chagaik, about 10km from Kericho on the Nakuru Road. There is a small dam at the bottom of the valley.

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Notes:

Naivasha

Naivasha is a moderately sized town about 100 km northwest of Nairobi, halfway between the capital and Nakuru. There are a variety of things to do around Naivasha, like visit Hell's Gate or Mt. Longonot National Parks, or spend time relaxing on the banks of the beautiful Lake Naivasha.

Naivasha – Sights

Hell's Gate National Park:

Don't miss one of the few parks in Kenya where you're allowed to enter by foot. See the *National Parks and Reserves* section for information on Hell's Gate.

Mt. Longonot National Park:

See the *National Parks and Reserves* section for information on Mt. Longonot.

Lake Naivasha:

See the *Lakes* section for information on Lake Naivasha.

Naivasha – Eating Out

La Belle Inn is the only place you can get a continental meal in Naivasha. The food is not bad and not too expensive, but the place is usually full of rude ex-patriots and snooty upper-class tourists. Plus the beer is quite expensive.

Jim's Corner on Station Lane is one of the best African restaurants in Kenya. Both the inside and outside are full with locals during lunch time, but don't be afraid to share a table with someone. Every dish on the large menu is good, especially if you ask for *ketchumbari*, a chili sauce they make from scratch. If the food itself isn't enough of an incentive, you'll spend up to three times less than you would at La Belle.

The two best bars in Naivasha are *Sam's Holiday's Inn* at the norther end of town just past the market, and Othaya Annex on Kariuki Chotara Rd. SamHoliday's has a bar with a TV and VCR, a restaurant, and a separate pool room/bar.

There are also two small discos in town. *Scatman*, AKA *Club Sweat* next to Othaya Annex plays mostly hip-hop. *Scorpio* near the stage to Lake Naivasha plays mostly Lingala (Congolese music). Both places are fun on the weekends.

all

Burch's camp site

A delitful camp site on the lake at Naivasha,Kenya.Great for bird watching and comfortable chalets available. Wonderful place. Fishing and water sports a specialty. Safaris by arrangement.

Naivasha – Accommodation

There are many cheap hotels in Naivasha. The *Othaya Annex* on the corner of Station Lane and Kariuki Chotara Rd offers single rooms for Ksh 200. Also a good value is the *Silver Hotel* (# (0311) 20640) on Kenyatta Ave. It has rooms for Ksh 300/400 for singles/doubles.

The *Ken–Vash Hotel* (# (0311) 30049) behind the post office is an upper mid–range hotel offering rooms with breakfast for Ksh 800/1200.

The nicest place in town is *La Belle Inn* (# (0311) 20116) on Moi Ave. It has comfortable singles/doubles with shared bathrooms for Ksh 1100/1500. Singles/Doubles with private bathrooms are Ksh 1500/1900.

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Notes:

Nakuru

There's a controversy in Kenya whether Nakuru is the country's 4th or 5th largest city. Many people think Eldoret, farther west in Rift Valley Province, has passed up Nakuru. Either way, Nakuru is an important agricultural city, trade center, and transportation hub.

The area around Nakuru has been in the headlines in recent years due to tribal strife. In the elections of 1992 and 1997, the Nakuru region has erupted in violence. Traditionally, the entire Rift Valley Province has supported President Moi's ruling party of KANU. However, in the last decade many Kikuyu people have migrated to the rich farmlands in the area, bringing their opposition views with them. President Moi is not willing to give up his grasp on the province though, and tribal clashes between Moi's Kalenjin tribe and the Kikuyu have erupted. The clashes are strictly political, however, and unless you are in the area in 2002, there will be no violence.

Many travelers pass through Nakuru on their way west, and some stay a few days in town to see Menengai Crater or Lake Nakuru National Park, where your chances of seeing a rhino are better than any other park in Kenya.

Nakuru – Accommodation

The *Amigos Guest House* on Gusil Rd and the *Shik Parkview Hotel* (# (037) 212345) on the corner of Kenyatta Ave and Bondoni Rd offer cheap rooms for KSh 250/300 and KSh 230/400 respectively, for singles/doubles. They are both clean, and rooms at the Shik Parkview include breakfast.

Try the *Carnation Hotel* (# (037) 43522) on the corner of Mosque Rd and Mburu Gichua Rd for a good mid-range hotel. Singles/Doubles are KSh 360/700 including breakfast.

The nicest and most expensive place in town is the *Midland Hotel* (# (037) 212155) on Geoffrey Kamati Rd. It offers rooms with attached bathrooms and breakfast from KSh 2000/2500. There are 3 bars and 2 good restaurants on the compound.

Nakuru – Eating Out

If you like good Indian or Continental food, check out the *Tipsy Restaurant* on Gusil Rd. The selection is huge and the food is always good and affordable. For more of an Arabic feel, try the *Jamia Restaurant* or any restaurant close by on Mosque road near the mosque.

The *Nakuru Coffee House* on the corner of Kenyatta Ave and Moi Rd serves real (not instant) coffee and excellent pastries and snacks. Also look at the Accommodation and Entertainment section for more places to eat.

all

Nakuru Sweet Mart

One branch is a vegetarian Restuarant, located next door to Tippy Reastuarant, which offers a wide variety of indian cuzine, the second Branch located on Moi Road next to the post office is a coffee/pastry shop.

email: karimsunderji@msn.com

PriceOfMenu: about 200 ksh

address: Box 285

tel: 213238/216279

Nakuru – Nightlife and Entertainment

There are many places to go to have fun at night in Nakuru. There are more than 4 discos in town, and literally hundreds of bars.

Dimples Disco is small but always lively on the weekends. Its located at the west end of Kenyatta Rd, near the roundabout. Its upstairs, and directly across the hall is a great bar called *Mahogany* where you can listen to the latest tunes, shoot pool and eat nyama choma (barbecue).

The best place to get nyama choma, and the most biggest hang-out in town is the *Millennium Hotel* on Government Ave or Kipchoge Ave. At night they make room for a dance floor and place music. The place is mostly outdoors, with 3 separate bars, 4 pool tables, and seats about 100 people. On weekend nights the place is packed with twice that number.

Perhaps the most famous and fancy club is *Coco Savana Disco* on Club Road. It has a nice sound system and plays a variety of music. The clientele is mostly young Kenyan men and prostitutes. Theres a bar/restaurant upstairs that is full of people every night.

If you still want more fun, try the bar called *Tickles* on Kenyatta Ave upstairs of the *Piranha Restaurant*. The last disco, the *XTC* is above the *Oyster Shell Restaurant*, also on Kenyatta.

Nakuru – Sights

Lake Nakuru National Park:

See the section entitled National Parks and Reserves.

Menengai Crater:

Menengai is an extinct volcano 2490 m high, lying about 7 km north of Nakuru town. You can drive right to the edge if you have a vehicle, but if you dont, it isnt a bad walk. Take Menengai Drive at the eastern end of town, off of Showground Rd. The crater is not so spectacular, but the view is beautiful and its a nice hike to make if you want to buy some time in Nakuru.

Nakuru – Getting There

There are several matatu stages to Nakuru in Nairobi. They are all located back near River Road. Ask someone for directions. If you're traveling from Nairobi west past Nakuru, you may need to break the trip up by first going to Nakuru, then getting another vehicle to your final destination.

There's only one major bus and matatu stage in Nakuru. It's in the Eastern end of town, off of Mburu Gichua Rd. The stage is a nest of chaos, but you will attract several touts that will gladly drag you to the vehicle you want. From the Nakuru stage you can get vehicles to Nairobi, Naivasha, Nyahururu, Nyeri, Eldoret, Kericho, Kisumu, and many other towns and cities.

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Notes:

Western Kenya

The area of western Kenya is composed of Nyanza Province surrounding Lake Victoria, and Western Province, along the Ugandan border. Nyanza is the home to the Luo tribe, along the lake, and the Kisii people, who live in the highlands. The Luhya tribe and their relatives dominate Western Province. Kisumu is the hub of western Kenya. It is Kenyas third largest city, but like Mombasa across the country, it has a mellow feel to it, as opposed to the chaotic Nairobi. Besides going to western Kenya to experience its different culture, there is enough to keep travelers busy for a while. You can check out the largest lake in Africa, visit Kakamega Forest Reserve, or hike around on the slopes of Mt Elgon.

Western Kenya – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Cherangani Hills

For some information on touring the Cherangani Hills, see the section on getting to *West of Lake Turkana*, in the Northern Kenya section.

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Notes:

Kakamega

Kakamega is a small town in Western Province, about 65 km north of Kisumu. This is the base for trips into the Kakamega Forest Reserve. There are vehicles running south to Kisumu and north to Kitale every few minutes, but be wary of the touts, they could be the rudest in Kenya. If you stay in Kakamega, try the affordable *Franca Hotel* or the upper-end *Golf Hotel* (# (0331) 20125).or *Vikes Hotel*. The *Golf Hotel* has beautiful grounds, a bar and restaurant, and singles/doubles for 1750/2250. For more information on the Kakamega Forest Reserve, check the National Parks and Reserves section.

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Notes:

Kisumu

Kisumu is Kenya's third largest city and is the center of western Kenya. It feels more like Mombasa than Nairobi, being hot and humid, where locals move about their business at a leisurely pace. Like any big city, there's a wide range of accommodations suitable for any budget. There are several attractions in town, such as the huge market near the bus stage where you can get cheap soapstone carvings, and Hippo Point where you can watch the sun set on Lake Victoria. For more information on the lake and its sights, see the Lakes section.

Kisumu – Getting There

You can reach Kisumu from about anywhere west of Nairobi. There are buses and a few speed taxis that run from the capital to Kisumu every morning. If you miss those, you're best off going to Nakuru, then Kericho, then getting another vehicle from there. There's one main bus and matatu stage in Kisumu on the corner of Jomo Kenyatta Highway and Nairobi Road. You can get a vehicle from here going to any town in western Kenya and many towns in Rift Valley as well. The stage is huge, however, so the only hard part is finding the correct vehicle and keeping all your luggage in tact. Kisumu is a fairly safe city, but like all stages, there's the risk of muggers here, so stay aware.

Kisumu – Accommodation & Eating Out

The cheapest place offering a bed in Kisumu is the *YMCA* on the corner of Omolo Agar Rd and Nairobi Rd. It has dorm beds for KSh 150 with shared bathrooms. Also a good budget hotel is the *Razbi Guest House* (# (035) 44771), on the corner of Oginga Odinga Rd and Kendu Lane. It has clean singles/doubles for KSh 150/200 with shared bathrooms.

For a step up, try the *New Victoria Hotel* (# (035) 21067), on the corner of Kendu Lane and Gor Mahia Rd. Rooms with balconies in front have a nice view of Lake Victoria. Singles/Doubles with private bathrooms cost KSh 450/750 with breakfast. The *Hotel Inca* (# (035) 40158) just off of the Kenyatta Highway is also a good mid-range hotel. It has singles/doubles with attached bathrooms and fans for KSh 500/850.

A nice top end place is the old *Hotel Royale* (# (035) 21079) on Kenyatta Highway. Check out the room first, but most are quite nice and a good value at KSh 1080/1600 for singles/doubles. Perhaps the nicest place in Kisumu is the *Sunset Hotel* on Impala Lane south of town. It has a swimming pool, an expensive restaurant and rooms with a view of the lake for US\$ 50/60 for singles/doubles.

For good cheap Kenyan food, eat at the *Cafe Natasha* just off of Oginga Odinga Rd, or the *Kimwa Cafe Annex* just across the street. Also, on Ogada Street there's the *New Victoria Hotel* and the *Kimwa Cafe*, which have run-of-the-mill dishes at good prices. For an expensive meal, try the *Hotel Royale* or the *Imperial Hotel*, both on the Kenyatta Highway. They have good meals and good service averaging about KSh 600 per dinner.

There are many bars and quite a few discos in town as well, the most popular being the *Octopus Bottoms Up Disco* which is always packed on the weekends.

Kisumu – Internet Cafes

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Notes:

Kitale

Kitale is a good-sized town north of Kakamega in the western highlands, and is a very productive agricultural area. Its important to tourists because it serves as a base for traveling to Mt Elgon to the west and Lodwar to the north. Theres a museum in town which has a nice nature trail out back, and an agroforestry project next to the museum.

Matatus run to and from Kitale from Eldoret, Kisumu, Lodwar and many other spots. If youre coming from a town further east than Eldoret, take a vehicle to Eldoret first, as all matatus will stop here for a while anyway. You might as well be free to choose a nissan that is almost full and ready to go instead of waiting for your nissan to fill up.

Bottom end places to stay include the *New Kitale House* and the *Executive Lodge* which is a bit more expensive but has private bathrooms. For a nicer place, try the *Bongo Hotel* (# (0325) 20593) on Moi Ave. It has singles/doubles with shared bathrooms for KSh 300/500 or with attached bathrooms for KSh 550/700, including breakfast. The *Alakara Hotel* (# (0325) 20395) on Kenyatta St have rooms at about the same price. The nicest place to stay is *Sirikwa Safaris* 23 km north of Kitale. You can camp here with access to all the facilities, sleep in a furnished tent for KSh 900/1200, or stay in a room for KSh 1800/2700. The grounds are beautiful, and the owners are very welcoming and helpful.

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Notes:

Webuye

Need information on Webuye, Kenya Africa

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