

7-Day Kenya Safari Itinerary: Nairobi, Masai Mara & Lake Naivasha

Kenya's classic safari circuit in a week: orphaned elephants and giraffe feeding in Nairobi, big-cat game drives and a sunrise hot air balloon over the Masai Mara's endless grassland, and a slower close on the shores of Lake Naivasha — with real lodges, licensed operators, and 2026 prices for every stop.

DURATION

7 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

July – October

peak dry season, when the Great Migration crosses the Mara River

FROM

\$2,050 USD / person

for 2 people

Day 1

Arrive in Nairobi

Land at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and settle into Nairobi's Langata suburb, overlooking Nairobi National Park — with time in the afternoon to meet the neighborhood's giraffes before a classic Kenyan feast after dark.

Private Airport Transfer — JKIA to Langata

~35 minutes · From \$30–\$40 USD one-way, per vehicle

A short, direct drive on Mombasa Road from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to the Langata hotel district — most hotels and safari operators arrange the transfer directly, no need to book separately.

Giraffe Centre

~45 minutes, self-guided · \$15 USD / person

A conservation sanctuary in Langata where Rothschild's giraffes amble up to a raised feeding platform for hand-feeding — the last population of this endangered subspecies bred back from near-extinction here since the 1970s.

Giraffe Centre (AFEW) · +254208070804 · www.giraffecentre.org

Dinner — The Carnivore Restaurant

~2 hours · \$40 USD / person, all-you-can-eat

Nairobi's famous open-air "beast of a feast" since 1980 — skewers of meat carved tableside off Maasai swords until you lower the white napkin flag to signal you're done.

The Carnivore · +254205141300 · tamarind.co.ke/locations/carnivore

Overnight — Ole Sereni

From \$110–\$150 USD / night, for 2 people

A design hotel on Mombasa Road with rooms looking straight over the Nairobi National Park fence line — zebra and buffalo graze within view of the pool.

Ole Sereni · +254732191000 · ole-sereni.com

Day 2

David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Karen Blixen Museum & Fly to the Masai Mara

A morning with orphaned elephants and Nairobi's colonial-farm history, then a light-aircraft hop across the Rift Valley to the plains that make Kenya's safari reputation.

David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

11:00 AM–12:00 PM daily, book ahead · \$20 USD / person

An hour with the Trust's orphaned elephants and rhinos at their daily public mud bath and bottle-feeding — the world's most successful elephant rescue and rehabilitation program, founded in 1977.

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust · +254202301396 · www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org

Karen Blixen Museum

~1 hour, self-guided · \$17 USD / person

The farmhouse at the foot of the Ngong Hills where the Out of Africa author lived from 1917 to 1931, restored with her original furniture and coffee-farm outbuildings.

Karen Blixen Museum · museums.or.ke

Safarilink — Wilson Airport to Maasai Mara

~45 minutes · From \$180 USD / person, one-way

A scheduled light-aircraft hop from Nairobi's Wilson Airport straight onto a Mara airstrip, buzzing the plains on final approach — no need for the 5–6 hour road transfer.

Safarilink · +254206690000 · www.flysafarilink.com

Overnight — Mara Serena Safari Lodge

From \$377–\$577 USD / night, for 2 people

A round, thatched lodge on a hilltop inside the Masai Mara National Reserve overlooking the Mara River — one of the best-placed camps for spotting migration river crossings in season.

Mara Serena Safari Lodge · +254736595900 · www.serenahotels.com/mara

Day 3

Full-Day Masai Mara Game Drive & Maasai Village Visit

A full day out on the reserve's open grassland tracking the Big Five, followed by an afternoon visit to a working Maasai homestead just outside the park boundary.

Full-Day Game Drive — Masai Mara National Reserve

~7 hours with picnic lunch · Included in your lodge's full-board rate

Two game drives bridged by a bush picnic lunch, tracking lion, elephant, and — with luck — leopard and cheetah sightings in the morning light. Guides radio between vehicles to converge on sightings.

Maasai Village Visit

~1 hour · \$40 USD / person, arranged through your lodge

A guided walk through a Maa-speaking manyatta just outside the reserve, with a welcome dance, a tour of a dung-and-timber home, and a chance to buy beadwork directly from the women who made it.

Overnight — Mara Serena Safari Lodge

From \$377–\$577 USD / night, for 2 people

Second night on the hilltop, timed for an early game drive before tomorrow's sunrise balloon launch.

Day 4**Sunrise Hot Air Balloon Safari & Transfer to Lake Naivasha**

A pre-dawn balloon launch over the plains, a champagne bush breakfast on landing, then an afternoon drive up out of the Mara escarpment to the shores of Lake Naivasha.

Sunrise Hot Air Balloon Safari — Governors' Balloon Safaris

~1 hour flight, champagne bush breakfast included · \$450 USD / person

A silent float over the Mara at first light, drifting low enough to watch wildebeest herds and grazing giraffe from above, followed by a full breakfast laid out on the plains where you land.

Governors' Balloon Safaris · +254741752749 · www.governorsballoonsafaris.com

Private Road Transfer — Masai Mara to Lake Naivasha

~4 hours · From \$100 USD / person, shared 4x4 safari vehicle

A scenic drive back up the Rift Valley escarpment, crossing the valley floor with viewpoint stops before dropping down to Naivasha's freshwater lake.

Overnight — Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort

From \$235–\$335 USD / night, for 2 people, full board

Lakefront cottages set in gardens that hippos wander through after dark — a slower, cooler close to the trip after two nights on the open plains.

Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort · +254799863970 · www.sopalodges.com/lake-naivasha-sopa-resort

Day 5**Lake Naivasha Boat Safari & Hell's Gate National Park**

A morning on the water followed by Kenya's only park where you can cycle or walk freely among the wildlife — no vehicle required.

Lake Naivasha Boat Safari — Katrue Boat Rides

~1 hour · \$12 USD / person, shared boat

A slow cruise past hippo pods and fish eagles nesting in the yellow-barked acacia along the shoreline, with a stop at Crescent Island's walking sanctuary for those who want to disembark.

Katrue Boat Rides · www.katrueboatridenaivasha.com

Cycling Safari — Hell's Gate National Park

~2.5 hours · \$27 USD / person park entry + ~\$4 USD bike rental

Pedal beneath the red sandstone cliffs that reportedly inspired Disney's The Lion King, past zebra, giraffe, and buffalo grazing free of the usual vehicle barrier.

Hell's Gate National Park (Kenya Wildlife Service) · www.kws.go.ke

Overnight — Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort

From \$235–\$335 USD / night, for 2 people, full board

Second and final night on the lake before heading back to Nairobi.

Day 6**Return to Nairobi & Nairobi National Park**

A drive back down into Nairobi, with the afternoon free for the one safari most travelers skip entirely — a game drive inside the city limits.

