



RIDE WORLD WIDE KENYA OFFBEAT SAFARIS 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

Offbeat Safaris has been operating top quality adventurous horse safaris in Kenya for thirty years and prides itself on taking you (as the name suggests) far off the beaten track. Founded by the late Tristan Voorspuy, a great horseman and enthusiastic conservationist, and still very much a family business, Offbeat routes cross some of East Africa's best, yet much of it little-touristed, big game country. Nights on safari are spent at wonderfully situated and secluded private safari camps, and riding each day is through a far reaching landscape where game thrives in abundance and the going is ideal for horses. A route from place-to-place, an authentic safari camp, forward going horses, knowledgeable guides and game, game, game - the epitome of a riding safari and, we think, one of the best you can do in Africa!



DATES

Set date safaris are run between January and March, and June and December for 7 or occasionally 8 nights (safaris do not usually operate during the rainy seasons April, May and November). Mara Safaris follow a route between the Loita Plains and northern edge of the Masai Mara Game Reserve in southern Kenya using private mobile camps which are moved every couple of nights. Laikipia Safaris cross private land on the Laikipia Plateau in central Kenya in the foothills of Mount Kenya. As well as set date safaris, private and tailor-made departures can be arranged on request, a super option for a group of friends or 2 or 3 families. Please see set dates overleaf and contact us at Ride World Wide to discuss your plans and availability.

HORSES

The horses used, all of which are owned by Offbeat, are between about 14.2 and 16.2hh. They are a mixture of polo ponies, thoroughbred and thoroughbred crosses, and as well as being ridden on safari, many are used for local polo, three phase events and cross-country competitions. Offbeat currently has about 45 safari horses, many of which have been home bred by the Voorspuy family to produce a line with the energy, athleticism and stamina, as well as the all-round 'bush sense' that makes a perfect safari mount. They are a responsive, forward going and thoroughly enjoyable ride, well-schooled for safaris, sensible to handle and at home in the bush. They are looked after with great care at Deloraine Estate by Lucinda Voorspuy (who herself is a successful local race and 3 phase event rider) and a team of grooms. Grooms accompany each safari seeing to the horses in camp and preparing them for rides.

TACK

Tack is good quality English style and most of the horses are ridden in snaffles. Saddles are English GP leather or Wintec, with some Australian Stock saddles on request. Saddlebags are provided where needed and some seat savers are also available.

RIDING

Safaris usually include about 5 or 6 hours in the saddle each day, either riding from camp to camp (one long moving day can be up to 7 hours), with rest stops en-route to watch game, for refreshments and a picnic lunch, or split into early morning and late afternoon rides when the game, and light for photography, is often best. Set date safaris are run for minimum of 5 and generally limited to a maximum of 12 riding guests. Tailor-made safari can be run for 2 to 12 guests on request. Teenagers aged 14yrs and over who are competent, confident riders may join set departure safaris and tailormade safaris can be organised for groups which include younger children (riding tailored to suit).



WEIGHT LIMIT

The rider weight limit is a strict 95 kgs / 15 stone although occasionally fit and experienced heavier riders can be accommodated by prior arrangement. Please note this is only by prior arrangement as it depends on availability of suitable horses (it may involve a fee for an extra horse). Please contact us to discuss and check that suitable horses are available if your weight is close to this.

PACE

The riding on safari is generally at a moderate to fast pace overall, with lots of long trots and long, fast canters although it varies according to local ground conditions, weather, game movements and so on. Much of the going underfoot is excellent for horses with vast, grassy plains providing wonderful opportunities for long, exhilarating canters - although you must always watch out for aardvark and hidden spring hare holes as you ride! You may also need to weave your way carefully through thorny bush and tread lightly across crusty black cotton soil, which means a slow, careful pace. Where the going is good, riders are encouraged to spread out and take their own line rather than following one behind another to fully enjoy the open country and superb sense of space.

RIDING EXPERIENCE

To join a safari you must be a reasonably experienced confident rider as you will be riding in open country where there is a variety of terrain and 'big game', including elephant and lion. You are expected to be comfortable and secure in the saddle, able to control a well-schooled horse in open country at all paces. You do not need to be an expert over fences or in competition and so on, but you do need to feel confident that you can stay on your horse if it reacts suddenly or has to move quickly out of trouble. With up to 35 miles to cover a day, you will also enjoy your safari much more if you are fairly fit. If you do not ride regularly at home we strongly recommend you accustom yourself to the time spent in the saddle with regular training in the weeks and months before you go.



TERRAIN

The rolling hills and wide, grass-covered sandy plains of Masailand and Laikipia provide excellent going for horses allowing plenty of space for long canters. At its highest the Soit Olololol Escarpment reaches a little over 6,000 feet (approximately 1,900 metres) and there are some rough, rocky paths both here and on the Laikipia plateau which you will climb to admire wonderful panoramic views or descend, perhaps dismounting to lead your horse over the rough ground. There are also some areas of thick thorny bush and occasional rocky or difficult river crossings to negotiate - your horse may need to scrabble up or jump down a steep bank into or out of the Mara River, which the horses often ford.



WILDLIFE

For those who wish to see game when riding, these are some of the best safaris to choose. The Mara area is full of game year-round, with animals wandering freely in and out of the Mara Game Reserve and on the migration route from the Serengeti in Tanzania. On any safari here you can usually expect to see abundant plains game - zebra, giraffe, wildebeest, hartebeest, topi, gazelle and impala, often in spectacularly large numbers - and you should also see 'big' game such as elephant, buffalo and hippo. Predators, including lion, jackal and hyena, are often seen and frequently heard at night and if lucky, you may see other cats such as cheetah, leopard or serval. As well as watching game at close quarters, there are often chances to ride amongst the herds, perhaps cantering alongside zebra, wildebeest or giraffe which has to be one of life's most exciting and exhilarating experiences! Between July and October, Mara Safaris may also coincide with the annual migration of wildebeest when animals head in their thousands to the good grazing on the Mara plains - an incredible, memorable experience. On Laikipia safaris, although game is a little less numerous overall, the diversity is unique, with special and unusual species including Jacksons Hartebeest and the beautifully marked Reticulated Giraffe, Beisa Oryx, Grevy's Zebra, Gerenuk and Somali Ostrich. There are also huge numbers of elephant in Laikipia, as well as all the more-common plains game, big cats - Laikipia landowners have diversified away from exclusive cattle ranching and their tolerance of large predators means lion, leopard, and wild dog have become more abundant - and both black and white rhino, which are thriving because of dedicated conservation efforts. On all safaris, game drives by day and at night with a spotlight, are included and are a wonderful way to get closer to some of the big game than you might wish to on a horse.



GUIDES & SAFETY

Offbeat is renowned for its excellent guiding and back-up, with many long standing and experienced safari staff. Safaris are usually led by Simon Kenyon who was brought up on a ranch in Laikipia and formerly managed Sosian Lodge. Always fantastic company, Simon is an excellent, enthusiastic and very approachable guide, with a deep love and knowledge of the bush. He manages to combine a tremendous sense of fun and adventure - traits fundamental to the Offbeat brand and instilled by Tristan, its founder - with a sympathetic, reassuring guiding style that ensures safaris are an exciting but relaxing treat for all! Other lead guides include Milo McConnell, also brought up on Laikipia in a Kenyan ranching and safari family and Joss Craig whose family were one of the first in Kenya to host visitors on their ranch at Lewa Downs and pioneered the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Mara safaris would not be complete without a Masai spotter/guide and Netty is an inspiration in this role. When riding, lead guides are accompanied by a back-up rider or local groom(s) and a radio, cell phone(s) and first aid kit for emergencies, are carried. Safari vehicles have radios for communication and a comprehensive medical kit is kept in camp.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation on safari is in a private tented camp set up especially for the group. Spacious, walk-in double safari tents are used, furnished with comfortable 'stretcher' beds with pillows, cotton sheets, blankets and towels, provided. Camps have shared shower tents (usually 3 showers for the group, depending on numbers), a private long drop loo a short way behind each sleeping tent and chairs and a basin for hot water set up outside, at the front of each tent. Hot water for washing and shaving will be brought with your morning wake up call, and a traditional hot 'bucket and pulley' shower will be prepared for you by staff when you return to camp after a long day in the saddle or at any other time you wish. Camps also have a spacious central dining / mess tent for candlelit dinners, or if the weather is fine, the long dining table will be set up outside under the stars. Although the camp is relocated every few nights and the overall feel is of living out in remote bush, the standard of service is high, with everything you need, thought of and provided - from polish (and a polisher!) to clean your shoes to ice to cool your drinks!



On Laikipia Safaris, the group may be joined at dinner by owners of the land being crossed and stories of Kenyan life are always a fascinating addition to evenings around the campfire. After (or before) any safari, if you have time, we highly recommend adding a couple of nights either at Offbeat's base, Deloraine House or at Sosian Lodge on the Laikipia Plateau. Deloraine, which was built in the 1920s by Lord Francis Scott, is one of Kenya's loveliest colonial houses. Set in the middle of a 5,000 acre estate, it has been brought back to life by the Voorpuys, has magnificent colourful gardens that are worth a visit in themselves, a pool, its own polo field and a cross country course. Sosian is a 24,000 acre ranch that was bought in the early 2000s as a conservation project and has been carefully restored. The ranch house, with its graceful drawing room, wide verandas set with planters' chairs, open lawns and swimming pool, is an incredibly refreshing place to stay and a couple of days here or at Deloraine is a wonderful, atmospheric way to begin or end a safari. Accommodation on all safaris is based on two sharing a tent / room and a single supplement is payable if you are not prepared to share with another same sex guest if numbers require.



MEALS

Safari food is tasty, plentiful and freshly cooked by staff who are experts at producing delicious fare over an open fire. There is plenty of fresh fruit, salads and vegetables, and bread is baked in camp every day. Days might start with fruit, porridge, toast and a full English breakfast for those who wish. Lunch will be a picnic out riding, either with home-made bread rolls or sandwiches and fruit carried in saddlebags so you can stop and eat wherever you please or, more usually, you will be met by the back-up vehicle with an extensive lunch of salads, quiches, pizza or perhaps a BBQ to be followed by a siesta. A welcome cup of tea, or if you prefer a cold beer or gin and tonic with ice and lemon, will greet you when you return to camp in the late afternoon and after evening showers, drinks by the fire are accompanied by appetising snacks to keep you going until dinner. Dinner is a substantial three courses, perhaps soup to start followed by perfectly roast beef and then a home-made pudding, served at a long table by candlelight in true colonial style. There is always a good, varied bar with a selection of spirits, wine, beer and soft drinks all included.

WEATHER

The Mara and Laikipia areas of Kenya are quite high and daytime temperatures are generally very pleasant for riding at around 20-25 degrees Centigrade year-round. Historically the rainy seasons are late March to May, when there may be intermittent downpours with sunshine in between, and November / early December when there may be short, but sometimes heavy, bursts of rain. Rain showers are, however, possible at any time (and in recent years the seasonal boundaries seem to have become more fluid and harder to predict!). It is usually hottest in January and February but even then temperatures are generally pleasant, with a breeze on the plains meaning it never really gets too hot. June to August are the coolest months, though nights can be cool year-round, especially in the hills.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.



ITINERARIES

Itineraries The following is an example itinerary for a 7 night Mara Safari. 8 night Mara Safaris will generally use the same 4 campsites (with an extra night in one of them). 8 night Laikipia Safari usually use 3 or 4 different camp locations or a mix of camps and lodges - please contact us for a detailed itinerary. **Please note that the following** is only an example itinerary. Safaris are organised a long way ahead and day-by-day arrangements, riding routes and camp locations may be changed if movement of game, weather or other local conditions require. You may also ride the route in reverse if this works best. All these arrangements are left to the discretion and experience of your guides.

7 night Mara Safari - Example itinerary

Day 1 Collected from your Nairobi hotel or Nairobi international airport and transferred to Wilson Domestic airport for a flight, usually departing 10.00, to the Masai Mara. Met at the Mara airstrip and driven by 4-wheel-drive vehicle to the first night's camp, set up close to the Mara River. A late lunch in camp then a little time to relax before meeting the horses and setting off on a first evening ride of about 2 hours to try them. Return to camp at sunset for hot showers, drinks and a candlelit dinner listening to the grunt of hippo wallowing in the river. Dinner and night Mara River Camp. (L,D)

Day 2 Morning wake-up call and after tea, coffee and a light breakfast, set off on an early morning ride, crossing the Mara River for the first time. After riding for 2 to 3 hours return to camp for a cooked breakfast, then head out on a game drive if you wish. Driving provides better photographic opportunities than a horse and its always fun to see what you can find in this northern part of the Mara area. Return to camp for a late lunch and siesta before setting off on an afternoon ride at about 4.30pm. Arrive back in camp at dusk, time to shower and perhaps set off in the vehicles once more for a sun downer and night game drive before supper. Dinner and night Mara River Camp. (B,L,D)



ITINERARY cont.

Day 3 After breakfast, mount up and set off at about 09.00 on the first moving day, riding south towards the Park boundary. Meet the river at a place where the horses can ford and after crossing the river (unless in complete flood), head on south-west across the Mara Triangle. A car will meet you with lunch at around 12.30 and there is time for a siesta before heading off again at about 16.00. Following a winding path up the Soit Olololol Escarpment and after a ride of about 1 ½ hours, arrive at a new camp set up in a forest glade overlooking the whole Mara ecosystem. Tea as you watch the sun set, time to settle in and relax before hot showers, dinner and the night at Soit Olololol camp. (B,L,D)



Day 4 Breakfast and at about 09.00 mount up to set off down the escarpment heading to the same wildebeest crossing on the river. Then, after fording the river, ride west and into the enchanting Olare Orok valley. Today's lunch stop, usually at around 12.30, may be in the shade by a clear stream with inviting rock pools that are perfect for a refreshing dip. After drying off in the sun, lunch and a siesta, ride on at about 15.30, to reach the new camp at around 17.00 in time for tea. There may also be time for an evening game drive with sundowners if you wish. Dinner and the night at Olare Orok camp. (B,L,D)

Day 5 Today will be spent at the Olare Orok camp with a combination of rides, game drives and if you wish, perhaps a chance to explore on foot – all wonderful opportunities to see the game that thrives here and wanders freely in the area around the Mara Reserve. Game drives are a great chance to photograph lion and elephant close up, often getting closer than you may want to on a horse and in the evening after riding, you might head out with a spotlight, hopefully spotting aardwolf, bush babies, spring hares, perhaps leopard and other nocturnal game. Dinner and night at Olare Orok camp. (B,L,D)



Day 6 An early morning wake-up call with tea & coffee and after a quick breakfast, leave camp at around 07.00 for the longest ride of the safari, covering nearly 35 miles. After about 3 hours riding, stop for a picnic breakfast. Then heading off again at about 11.00, ride onto the Ol Kinyei Conservancy. The route takes you across the open grassy plains of the Mara ecosystem where game is always plentiful and as well as the herds of wildebeest, impala, zebra and gazelle that congregate on the plains, you have a good chance of seeing both elephant and buffalo. Ride on until about 13.30 when there will be a welcome break for lunch and a siesta. At about 16.00 mount up again, riding for another 1 ½ hours or so to the last camp, set up at Olare Lamun (the 'rhino salt lick') in a grove of acacia trees by a small stream at the southern edge of the Loita Plains. Dinner and night at Olare Lamun camp. (B,L,D)

ITINERARY cont.

Day 7 A full day to explore this remote area with its abundant game. Head off on an early morning ride at about 06.30 when the light is fantastic and game often at its best, riding back to camp for a hearty breakfast. Then after a cooked breakfast back in camp, you might set off on a game drive, followed by a beautiful walk up the nearby hill called 'Oloiburmut', returning to camp for lunch and a siesta. After tea in camp, ride out again at about 16.00, perhaps to a local Masai village. Drinks, dinner and the final night at Olare Lamun camp. (B,L,D)

Day 8 A last early morning ride for those who wish, heading out at about 6.30 am, before breakfast and time to pack up. You will then be driven to the airstrip to meet the flight that will take you back to Nairobi (usually departing about 11.00 arriving Nairobi about 12 noon). A taxi will meet you at Wilson Domestic airport and take you to a hotel where a day room will be booked (included, shared). A relaxing afternoon by the hotel pool or head out for some last-minute souvenir shopping, before being collected in the evening and driven to the airport for your onward journey. (B)

(NB the route may be run in reverse, starting at the Olare Lamun campsite and ending at the Mara River)



DATES & RATES 2024

Set safari departures 2024:

6th to 13th January	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
1st to 8th February	- Mara safari (7 nights)
20th to 28th February	- Laikipia Safari (8 nights)
9th to 16th March	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
15th to 22nd June	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
22nd to 29th June	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
6th to 13th July	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
13th to 20th July	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
10th to 17th August	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
17th to 24th August	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
7th to 14th September	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
14th to 21st September	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
5th to 12th October	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
12th to 19th October	- Mara Safari (7 nights)
7th to 14th December	- Mara Safari (7 nights)

Closed Seasons - April, May & November

DATES & RATES 2024 cont.

RATES 2024:

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, safari rates are now quoted in USD. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

7 night Mara Safari: USD 9,870 per person

8 night Laikipia Safari: USD 11,130 per person

Contact us for rates for tailor-made safari rates

Prices quoted above assume a minimum of 5 riding guests on the safari.

Rates INCLUDE: all riding, guiding services and equipment, game drives / walks and other safari activities offered during itinerary, 7 (or 8 as appropriate) nights' accommodation (based on two sharing) in a private safari camp with all meals (lunch first day to breakfast last day) and drinks / alcohol; collection and return to Nairobi International airport (or Nairobi hotel) on the first and last day; internal charter flights from Nairobi to the safari start point and back as a group on first / last day; day room in Nairobi on last day if required; flying doctor ambulance cover and laundry service.

Rates EXCLUDE: International flights to Nairobi and taxes, personal medical insurance (which you **must** have), any extra nights' accommodation before / after safari itinerary, special transfers from / to Nairobi at times other than with the group, visa fees and tips.



Single Supplements: Rates quoted assume twin accommodation and a single supplement of USD 100 per night is payable if you are not prepared to share a twin safari tent / room with another guest. Please note that this supplement is **not** compulsory for people booking alone - it is not charged if you are willing to share with another guest of the same sex if necessary. Single travellers will not always have to share (it will depend on numbers and the mix on safari) but if you are not prepared to share, the supplement is payable to guarantee a single tent.

Private groups / Tailormade safaris - Private departures (usually for a minimum of 5 nights) can be arranged on request for 2 to 12 riders and are an excellent option for a family or group of friends. Rates are charged per person per night and depend on the number in the group – please contact us for details.

Extra nights Deloraine or Sosian Lodge - Arranged on request. Please ask us for rates / details.

FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The meeting place for safaris is Nairobi. British Airways has direct flights between London and Nairobi every day and you can also fly, usually via Europe, with Kenyan Airways. On the way out, the British Airways flight is a day flight departing London in the morning and arriving Nairobi in the evening (this means spending an extra night in Nairobi before the safari - there are several lovely lodges and hotels and we can help arrange this). On the return, BA have a direct overnight flight back departing Nairobi late evening and arriving London around 6.30am. Kenyan Airways usually have overnight options both ways, generally via Amsterdam in combination with KLM and there are also options with other European airlines such as Air France and KLM. Airfares vary with the airline and season but expect to pay around £700 to £850 for an economy return. **For further advice on flights, a quote for a flight inclusive holiday or to book flights, please call us (our ATOL number for flight bookings is ATOL 6213).**

GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking.)

Visas British Passport holders DO require a visa to visit Kenya as a tourist and travellers will need to apply for their visas in advance of arrival in Kenya via the e-visa portal, www.ecitizen.go.ke

The fee for a single entry visa, is currently USD 51.

Health The TravelHealthPro website (NaTHNaC) recommends most travellers are vaccinated against **Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A**. Vaccination against **Yellow Fever** may also be recommended and if you are travelling from another tropical country you will need to carry a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate (all Yellow Fever vaccination certificates are now valid for life - a certificate is required when entering Kenya from another Yellow Fever tropical country, because of an episode of transmission in Kenya during the last five years). Rabies, Cholera, Hepatitis B, Tuberculosis (TB) and Meningococcal Disease may also be recommended in certain situations. You will also be advised to take **anti-Malaria** tablets - you should consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice about this.

(DRAFT 13/11/2023)

