



RIDE WORLD WIDE

KENYA

SOSIAN LODGE 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

Sosian is a privately owned game ranch on the Laikipia Plateau in central Kenya, an area bordered by the Great Rift Valley to the west, the Aberdares Range to the south and Mount Kenya to the southeast. It offers a highly personalised safari experience with a choice of game viewing by horse, by vehicle and on foot as well as other activities that include camel safaris, fly camping, fishing and swimming. Itineraries are tailor-made and a stay at Sosian is a superb choice for anyone looking for a flexible and relaxed safari holiday, with a variety of activities. It is one of our top picks for families and mixed groups (add a few days on the Kenyan coast and you have the ingredients for one of the best holidays imaginable!) but also suits individuals and couples wanting good quality riding. Access to Sosian is either by private charter from Nairobi to Sosian airstrip; or by scheduled flight from Nairobi to Loisaba or Nanyuki (about a 40 minute flight) followed by a 1 or 2 hour vehicle transfer to the lodge; or by road (5 hour transfer from Nairobi).



DATES

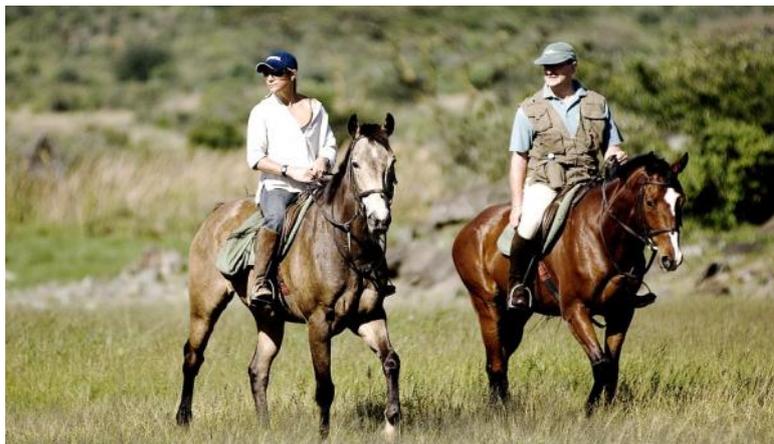
Stays at Sosian are possible pretty much year-round (the lodge usually closes in May for seasonal rains) and are organised to suit, for anything from 2 to 14 nights. At certain times of year a night 'fly camping' is an option, and on request we can tailor-make riding itineraries that include a route from Sosian to some other Laikipia lodges. Walking to the neighbouring Laikipia Wilderness Camp may also be possible or spend a few days at Sosian and then a few days at another camp or lodge in the Mara area of Kenya. There are lots of options. Please contact us to discuss your plans and to check availability.

HORSES

There are about 25 horses permanently stabled at Sosian, all kept under the expert eye of Charlotte Outram and her team. The horses are between around 14hh and 16hh with a couple of smaller ponies that are ideal for children. They are of varying breeds and include thoroughbreds, TB crosses, ex-polo ponies and Somali crosses. They are responsive, reliable and enjoyable to ride as well as being sensible to handle, used to game and at home in the bush.

TACK

English tack is used with a few Australian Stock saddles (more similar to a western in style) available and most of the horses ridden in snaffle bridles. Grooms look after the horses at the lodge and prepare them for rides.



RIDING

The amount of riding you do at Sosian is entirely up to you. Riding is optional but if you wish, you can ride out every day to explore the area around the lodge and track game. Rides are usually early morning and or afternoon for a maximum of 2 - 3 hours, so you can ride for up to 6 hours per day if you wish, with bush breakfasts or sun-downers along the way. For the keen riders there is the option of riding to 'fly' camp (there is a small extra charge for this), spending a night (or 2) out in the bush and riding back to the lodge the following day, and for small groups week long rides spending nights at other Laikipia camps & lodges are also possible. Riding groups are small, generally a maximum of about 6 guests, accompanied by a guide with a groom/back up rider for support.

WEIGHT LIMIT

The weight limit for riders is about 15 stone (95kgs) although there is some flexibility as long as prior notice is given. If you are close to this weight please contact us to check suitable horses are available.

PACE

As the riding from Sosian is tailored to suit, the pace varies, although it is always subject to terrain, weather and riders' ability. The area around the lodge is uncultivated bush; it is thick in places and in others, acacia and thorn scrub are scattered across open sandy plain. Sometimes you have to ride slowly, weaving in and out of thorn trees, following game trails through the bush and perhaps dismounting to lead your horse over rocky ground. At other times, there are good opportunities to trot and canter along sandy tracks and on plains where the bush thins out. Overall the riding pace is varied and there are usually plenty of chances for trots, canters and to jump small fallen logs and trees pushed over by passing elephant if you wish.

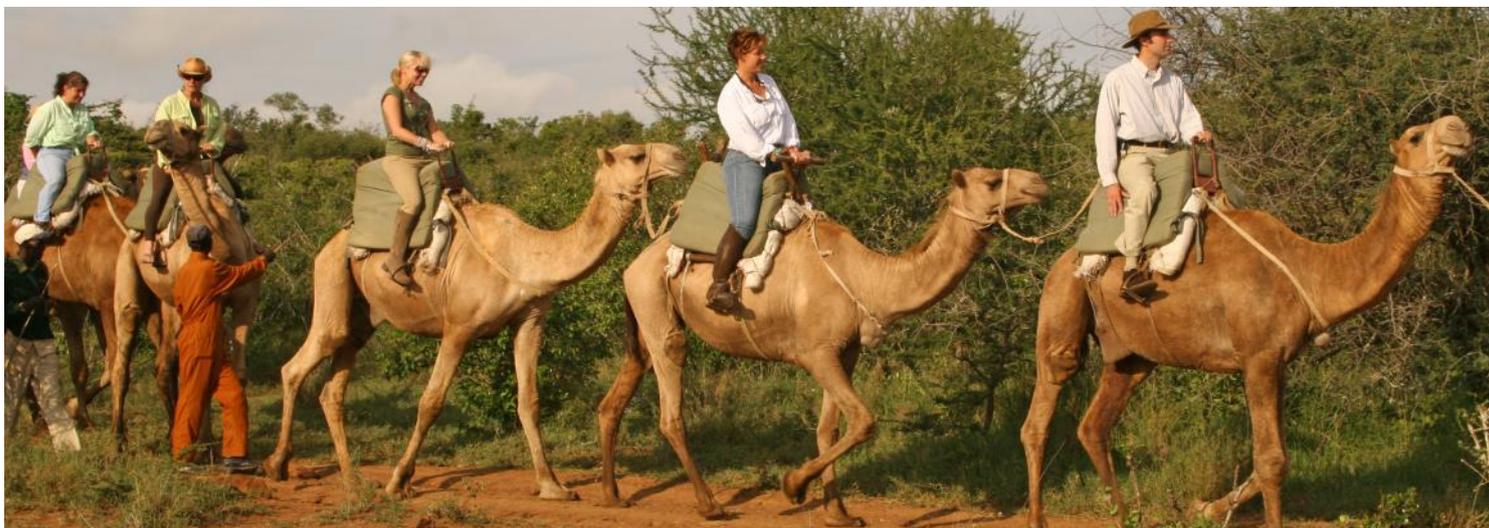
RIDING EXPERIENCE

Sosian caters for riders of all standards with riding hours and pace tailored to suit - but as the lodge is in an area where there is big (and potentially dangerous) game including elephant and lion, those wishing to ride out should have some previous riding experience. As a minimum, to do more than just a short trial ride, you should be well balanced and secure in the saddle and able to control a well-schooled horse in open country at a walk, trot and steady canter. There is a small arena for novice riders and a few show jumps and simple cross-country jumps for the experienced. Riding fitness is important and will greatly enhance your enjoyment, comfort and safety, so if you do not ride regularly at home, we recommend concentrated practice in the months before you go. Families with children are very welcome at Sosian and it is a wonderful place for a family safari holiday. Children who wish to try riding can have a short lesson in the enclosed arena and then a short hack of about 20 minutes either on or off leading rein. Confident, strong child riders, can ride off-leading rein. If there are both novice and more experienced riders at the lodge, two rides can be organised and groups split according to ability.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Sosian suits both riders and non-riders and makes a perfect base for a mixed group, for couples and also families with children. As well as riding, game drives (both day and night with a spot light) and walks with an experienced guide and local trackers are always available. Walking is a wonderful way to see the bush and can be exciting and adventurous or serenely peaceful, depending on what happens at any particular time. Camels are a common sight in northern Kenya and Sosian has its own string, all well trained in carrying people with comfortable saddles and a team of handlers from various local tribes to lead them. They provide a wonderful vantage point and rides can last anything from 30 minutes to a full day with overnight camping at the end. If you prefer, you can also walk alongside the camels learning about local culture and bush-craft from their handlers. Whether your preferred mode of travel is a horse, your feet, a vehicle or camel, overnight fly-camping trips are not to be missed and are an exciting way to really get to know the bush. They also make a wonderful contrast with the luxury of the lodge!



After an exhilarating afternoon ride, walk or game drive, you arrive at a simple fly-camp set up ahead in a picturesque spot. A hot bucket shower, drinks and dinner, freshly cooked over the fire, set the scene for an atmospheric night out, enjoying the simplicity of nature and the night sounds of the bush, then waking to see the sunrise and Mount Kenya on the horizon. Back at the lodge, another popular way to spend late afternoons is with a rod and local expert at the river, at pools below the waterfall or one of the dams, casting for Tilapia, Catfish or Barbel. The lodge has spinning rods for adults and children with fly-fishing another option. Bird shooting trips can also be organised - Kenya has big populations of Guinea fowl (both helmeted and vulturine) and Sand grouse, both excellent game birds and day or overnight trips to Kalacha, an oasis in northern Kenya's Chalbi Desert with one of the highest populations of Sand grouse in Africa, are possible on request. There is a hard tennis court (racquets and balls supplied) and 'tubing' down the river or, for the brave, jumping 30 foot off the Ewaso Narok Waterfall into the deep pool below, are great ways to cool (or show) off afterwards.



CHILDREN AT SOSIAN

Sosian is a special place for families and after the excitement of riding, game drives, fly camping, fishing, jumping off the waterfall, tubing, picnics, archery, collecting eggs from the chicken house, feeding the pet eland and above all having space to run wild and be free, expect to have to drag your children away at the end of their stay. There are lots of opportunities for learning as well - check-lists of game and birds, a chance to learn about animal tracks and other signs in the bush and to visit local tribes-people to learn about their customs and traditional ways of life. Special mealtimes can be organised for children if required and there are staff available to child mind or sit outside rooms at night so parents can relax and enjoy a peaceful dinner.

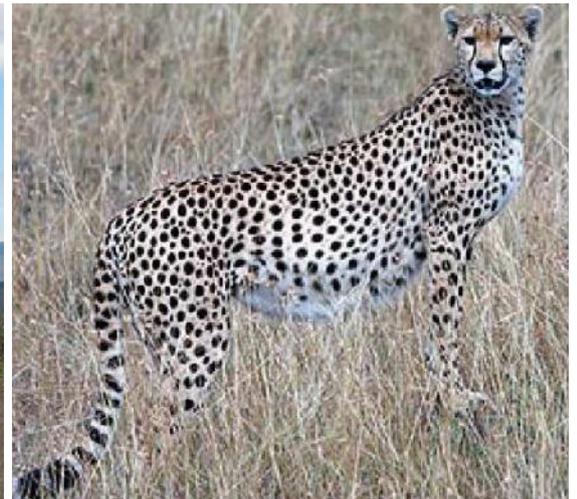
GUIDES & STAFF

Sean Outram currently manages the game and cattle ranching and Charlotte, his wife, oversees the stables. Charlotte is from a racing background in the UK and an experienced horsewoman having spent much time hunting and eventing. She has lived in Kenya for nearly 10 years and has been managing the riding at Sosian for much of that. Sean her husband, who is Kenyan born and bred, took overall charge of the ranching at Sosian after Agricultural college in the UK and he and Charlotte now live full time on the ranch with their two children. The lodge is currently managed by Megan Hodgson and Albie Venter. Megan has been working with Offbeat for many years, managing the safari horses and accompanying rides to the Mara. She and Charlotte guide most of the riding. Albie studied conservation in South Africa and is a member of the Field Guide Association. He brings a great wealth of guiding experience and is head guide for other activities.



TERRAIN

The lodge overlooks miles of unspoilt bush and is set in 24,000 acres of ranch land, once a derelict tract of over grazed farmland that has been regenerated by 10 years of careful management and now provides a sanctuary in which game and cattle co-exist. The landscape varies from dry lowlands dotted with patches of thick scrub and acacia thorn to winding river valleys, sheer cliff faces and rocky gorges. The beautiful Ewaso Narok river which runs through the ranch is lined with Yellow Fever Acacia trees and provides a lifeline to game in this normally dry environment. Cattle are still farmed at Sosian and the ranch has between 500 and 1000 head of pure and cross-bred Boran cattle, a hardy breed that originated in the deserts of Northern Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.



WILDLIFE

Sosian is one of a group of ranches on the Laikipia plateau covering about 24,000 acres of diverse ecosystem. Over 70 species of mammal, over 30 species of reptile and over 300 species of birds have been found in the ranch's different habitats, which range from open plain to thick bush, river valley and cliff. The plains are home to game such as oryx, Grants gazelle, wildebeest, ostrich and cheetah. There are rare Grevy's Zebra and Jackson's Hartebeest, hippo in the river and to the south, the thicker bush and acacia woodland hide many elephant **cont.**

WILDLIFE cont.

(Laikipia has the second highest elephant population in Kenya with around 6000 resident elephant of which several hundred can be seen at Sosian at one time), buffalo, reticulated giraffe, wild dog, lion and leopard. Sosian is very active in predator research, especially lion and wild dog, which were almost wiped out of Laikipia in the 1900s. Packs returned to the area in 2000 and there are now estimated to be well over 150 wild dog in the Laikipia and Samburu regions. A resident pack roam between 3 local ranches and are expected to breed on or near Sosian soon. There are also many smaller game species on the ranch, including warthog, rock hyrax, monkeys, baboons, duiker, impala, jackal and nocturnal species such as bush-babies, genet, porcupine, a strong population of hyena (both striped and spotted) and aardvark.



ACCOMMODATION

Sosian lodge, once the original manager's homestead, has been thoughtfully renovated and converted to a stylish 'bush home'. It is comfortable, yet overwhelmingly, the atmosphere is relaxed and informal, hitting just the right note between the welcome informality of a home and the facilities, comfort and service of a stylish guest lodge. The main house includes a large comfortable sitting room with open fireplace, sofas and armchairs and a dining room with fireplace and long dining table that is beautifully set for dinner at night. The front of the house is surrounded by a wide, covered veranda that is a fabulous place for breakfast and lunch, or for relaxing when not out riding or down by the swimming pool. Bedrooms are in separate 'cottages' overlooking the tropical lawns and gardens, a short walk from the main house. There are 7 in all, 4 twins and 3 with double beds. The honeymoon cottage is set by itself and the other cottages house 2 bedrooms, each with its own en-suite bathroom (with shower, bath and loo,) that adjoin (but do not inter-connect). All cottages have their own veranda, set with chairs, and are individually furnished and decorated.

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ACCOMMODATION cont.

At certain times of year fly camping is an option and if you choose this, you will sleep out under the stars, either in the open air or under a light custom-made gauze tent, on a mattress with fresh linen and bedroll. Fly camps do not attempt to re-create the luxury of a night in the lodge, rather to contrast with it and provide a simple natural home with just the basic comforts you need - bedrolls on the ground, a hot bucket shower, chairs for sitting whilst eating a delicious dinner around the camp fire and canvas washbasins for an early morning wash or shave. Loos when fly camping are 'long drop'. Thoughtful extras, such as soap, towels and ice for drinks, are all provided. Accommodation is based on two sharing with one single room allowed per booking at no extra charge - if more than one single room is requested in a group, a single supplement is payable.



MEALS

Meals at Sosian are delicious, freshly made and plentiful. Almost all ingredients are grown on the ranch, which has an organic vegetable garden, or purchased locally from small community farmers. Days usually start with tea or coffee and a light snack brought to your room before an early morning ride, walk or game drive. On return to the lodge, there is a substantial breakfast, usually a choice of fruit, perhaps porridge, toast and a full cooked breakfast for those who wish. Alternatively you may opt for a leisurely start with morning tea or coffee to wake you and a relaxing breakfast on the veranda or, if you go on an early morning ride or drive, you might stop half way for a picnic brunch cooked and served at tables set up out in the bush. Lunch is often on the lodge veranda or in the pool-house or might be a picnic out riding or walking, perhaps a BBQ (the ranch beef is excellent) or a combination of salads, quiches, cold meats and freshly baked bread. Tea helps revive you from a traditional African after-lunch siesta and after riding or a late afternoon game activity, evening drinks are accompanied by snacks and followed by a three course candle-lit dinner. Meals are usually served family style at a long table in the dining room, outside on the veranda or in the pool house, but if you wish there is generally the option of a private dinner for two or for your own group. Special mealtimes can be organised for children, who can also eat with parents if preferred. There is a varied bar with a selection of spirits, good wine, beer and soft drinks (with plenty of ice) all included.

SAFETY

Rides are lead by an experienced guide, usually accompanied by an English speaking groom / back up rider. Guides carry a hand held radio for communication with the lodge (there is a mobile signal at a few points on the ranch, but not at the lodge itself, which has normal landline 'phones). A basic first aid kit is taken in saddle-bags, with a more comprehensive kit kept at the lodge. When walking, the guide carries a rifle, a radio and full first aid kit and is accompanied by a Samburu or Turkana tracker who provides an extra pair of eyes and ears. Flying Doctor Air Ambulance cover is recommended for all guests (as well as standard travel insurance) in case of an emergency - this is available for a small extra charge and is normally automatically included in safaris we book.

WEATHER

Daytime temperatures on the Laikipia Plateau are generally very pleasant for riding at around 20 to 25 degrees C year round. The wet seasons (as in the whole of East Africa) are late March to May when there may be intermittent downpours with sunshine in between, and November / early to mid December when there may be short, but sometimes heavy, bursts of rain. Sosian is at about 6000 feet and can feel quite cool during the **cont.**



WEATHER cont.

rains because of the altitude. It is usually hottest in late January and February but even then temperatures are generally pleasant and there is often a breeze on the plains so it never really gets too hot. June to August are the coolest months.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARIES

The following is an example itinerary for a 7 night stay at Sosian, including a night in a fly camp (fly camping is only available from June onwards and does depend on the season so if you definitely want to do this please check in advance). This itinerary can easily be followed by a trip to the Kenyan coast to make a wonderful 2 week holiday. Please note that fly camps using horses are generally for one night only and may only be offered during low season or if sufficient extra guides are available because of staffing requirements. At other times you can walk, drive or use camels when fly camping. The itinerary below is only an example - stays are individually organised and will be tailored, as far as possible, to individual wishes when at the ranch. Day-by-day arrangements also may be varied by your guides and hosts in their discretion, if the movement of game, weather or other local conditions require.



[Flight to Nairobi (eg Kenya Airways departing London Heathrow at about 20.00 and arriving Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi early the next day)]

Day 1 - You will be met on arrival at Nairobi International Airport and [driven across town (30 - 40 minutes) to Wilson domestic airport for a scheduled Air Kenya flight to Nanyuki (about 35 mins) or Loisaba. Met at Nanyuki and driven about 1 ½ to 2 hours to Sosian Ranch]. Shown to your rooms and lunch on arrival. Relax by the pool and in the afternoon a first game viewing activity for those who wish - perhaps a first ride, game drive or evening walk for your first experience of the Laikipia plateau. Dinner and overnight at Sosian. (L,D)

Day 2 - A full day at Sosian, perhaps setting off for an early morning ride when game is at its most active. Return to the lodge for an early lunch and the early afternoon relaxing by the pool. Then after tea set off on another ride, walk or game drive, perhaps stopping for a sundowner on the plains before returning to the lodge for hot showers, drinks on the veranda & dinner. Night Sosian (B,L,D)

Day 3 - After breakfast mount up and head off riding, hopefully encountering a variety of game such as giraffe, elephant, antelope, zebra and buffalo. A break to cool off under a shady tree then head back to the lodge by a different route in time for lunch and a siesta by the pool. In the afternoon you might try one of the other activities available - tennis, tubing down the river, fishing, archery or jumping off waterfalls. Return to Sosian for dinner & night. (B,L,D)



ITINERARY cont.

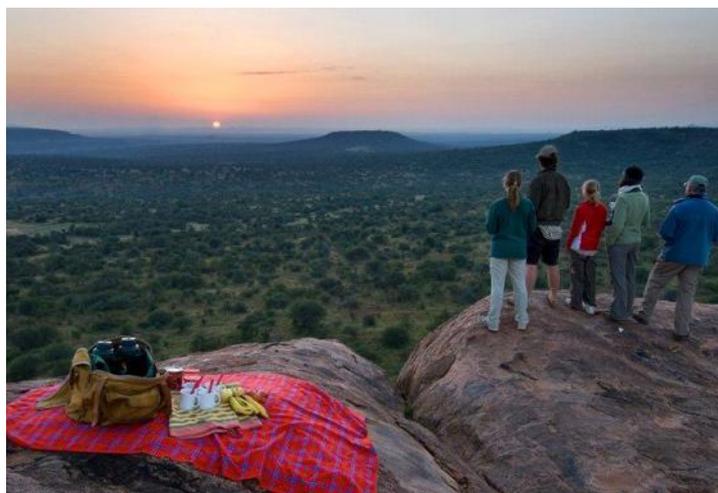
Day 4 - Perhaps set off from the lodge after breakfast, riding 2 to 3 hours before stopping for a picnic lunch out in the bush. In the afternoon continue riding, heading up to the northern plains, to arrive at fly camp which will be set up ahead of you by the back-up team. With bedrolls on the ground, a long drop loo and a traditional hot safari shower, you can settle in for the night. The horses spend the night close by in a second stable block. After a welcome hot shower, watch the sun go down with a cold drink before an atmospheric dinner around the camp fire. Night in camp to the sounds of the African bush. (B,L,D) *Fly camps with horses must be pre-booked with a surcharge of \$150 per person.

Day 5 - Early morning tea in camp, then head out riding across the plains. Turn southwards towards the lodge, and stop for a bush breakfast before riding on to the lodge in time for lunch at the pool and a chance to cool off after the long morning's ride. In the afternoon perhaps a break from riding and a walk along the scenic Mutara river valley, an area of large trees, birds and abundant wildlife. Being on foot means you can see so much more detail - tracks on the ground, scratch marks on trees, droppings, a fresh kill, birds calling in alarm at the sound of a nearby snake, baboons shouting as they catch sight of a leopard. Africa is all around - in the smell of an acacia in blossom, the scent of long, dry grass underfoot on an early morning walk - a completely different experience and a wonderful way to see the bush. Climb onto some huge rocks which overlook miles of western Laikipia and from where giraffe, elephant, impala and eland are often seen. Black eagles nest in this area and the birdlife is prolific. The rocks and this section of the river are home to leopard which are often heard calling and are even sometimes seen. Arrive back at Sosian on foot in time for lunch and a refreshing dip in the pool. Dinner and the night at the lodge. (B,L,D)



Day 6 & 7 - Two full days at the ranch with your choice of rides out, game drives and walks, perhaps tracking game on foot, cantering across the open plains or just relaxing by the pool! Elephant, lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena, buffalo, wild dog, zebra, warthog, hippo and many different antelope species are all common sightings at Sosian as well as some unusual species such as Grevy's zebra, Striped hyena, Beisa Oryx and aardwolf. The birdlife is particularly good and there is a huge diversity of habitats from open plains, to riverine valley and cliff faces. Night drives with a spotlight will also be possible and you may be able to track radio collared wild-dog or leopard under the guide of the local predator research project. Overnight Sosian. (B,L,D).

Day 8 - Breakfast before the drive [back to Nanyuki or Loisaba for your scheduled flight to Nairobi Wilson Airport. Connect with onward flight / transfer to JKIA]



DATES & RATES 2024

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

Stays at the lodge are flexible. The lodge is closed during May for the rainy season. Tailor-made mobile safaris, riding a circuit with nights spent at other lodges en-route, are possible on request for small groups.

Sosian rates are per person per night, **assume twin accommodation and** are seasonal.

Peak Season (20th December 2024 to 5th January 2025)

Adult USD 900; Child 12 to 17 yrs - USD 675; child under 12 yrs - USD 450

High Season (1st July to 31st August)

Adult USD 850; Child 12 to 17 yrs - USD 640; child under 12 yrs - USD 425

Mid Season (6th January to 28th February; 1st to 30th June & 1st September to 31st October)

Adult USD 700; Child 12 to 17 yrs - USD 525; child under 12 yrs - USD 350

Low Season (1st March to 30th April & 1st November to 19th December)

Adult USD 650; Child 12 to 17 yrs - USD 485; child under 12 yrs - USD 325

Single supplement - ONE single allowed per group at no extra charge; for additional singles a supplement of USD 250 to USD 350 per night applies (varies with season).

NOTES: A compulsory Conservancy Fee of USD 130 per adult per night; USD 100 per teen (12 to 17 years) & USD 65 per child (4 to 11 years) will be added to all bookings. This is used to fund work to protect and manage game on the reserve.

Check out time is usually 10am. If you wish to stay on and transfer out in the afternoon this is usually possible but you may need to vacate your room. Late departure (after 12 noon) with morning activity and lunch is charged at USD 65 per adult; USD 45 per teen; USD 35 per child.

Rates INCLUDE: All riding, shared game drives (day and evening), walks, fishing on the property, birding, camel safaris, cattle ranch activities, guiding by lodge staff, twin accommodation (extra single rooms only if paying supplement or otherwise only if available), fly camping without horses, meals, drinks (except champagne and premium spirits / cellar wines), transfers to / from Sosian airstrip and laundry service.

Rates EXCLUDE: International flights to Nairobi and taxes, local departure taxes, transfers between Nairobi and the lodge (these are by private charter plane, scheduled safari-link flight and / or by vehicle and are organised on request - included for mobile safaris), personal medical / travel insurance (which you **must** have), visa fees, Conservancy fees, personal items such as telephone calls etc, some activities (eg bird shooting safaris, cartridges, visits to local villages, light aircraft trips etc), fly camping with horses (extra USD 150 per person per night, must be pre-booked), exclusive use of vehicles (this may be possible subject to availability at a cost of USD 350 per vehicle per day), guiding fees if a specialist guide is required and any tips you may wish to leave staff.

Discounts:

Early Bird - 5% discount if booking deposit is paid more than 9 months before travel (applies to all seasons).

Families - 3rd child (4-11 yrs) sharing a triple pays conservation fees only (applies to all seasons).

Honeymooners - 25% accommodation discount for Bride (applies to all seasons).

5 nights for the price of 4 (applies mid season only).

4 nights for the price of 3 (applies low season only).

Note - Conservation fees will still apply, are payable for all nights and are not discounted on any of the above.



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The closest international airport to Sosian is Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta. Kenyan Airways and British Airways have direct flights from London to Nairobi every day, either with Kenyan Airways overnight departing London in the evening and arriving Nairobi early the next morning (which are ideal) or day flights with British Airways departing in the morning and arriving Nairobi in the evening (this means spending an extra night in Nairobi before your stay at Sosian Lodge - there are several lovely lodges and hotels and we help arrange this). On the return, British Airways currently fly back to London direct overnight. Kenya Airways fly back during the day, or combine with KLM overnight via Amsterdam. Several other airlines such as Air France and KLM also have flights via Europe. Airfares vary with the airline and season but expect to pay around £650 to £850 for an economy return. Generally an overnight flight (e.g. Kenyan Airways) arriving Nairobi in the morning at around 7 to 9am on the first day of your stay at Sosian Lodge and a return flight, leaving late in the evening on the last day of your stay, works best. **If you would like 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).**

Transfers between Nairobi and Sosian are by private charter flight, by scheduled safarilink flight to Nanyuki or Loisaba and onward vehicle transfer to the lodge or by private vehicle. Rates depend on the method of transfer, the number in your group and the dates. **Please contact us ask for a quote.** By way of example (NB charter rates vary from time to time and may increase with fuel costs etc.) a one way transfer Nairobi Wilson to Sosian in a Cessna 206 charter plane seating up to 4 guests is approximately USD 1200 for the plane. A smaller Cessna 182 may be available at lower cost. Scheduled safari link flights Nairobi to Nanyuki are approximately USD 225 per person, each way, or to Loisaba approx USD 240 each way. Vehicle transfers Nanyuki / Sosian are USD 300 per vehicle each way and Loisaba / Sosian USD 120 vehicle each way.

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 16/10/2023)**

