

UNLEASHED IN KENYA ITINERARY

DAY ONE

NAIROBI

Participants will arrive at Nairobi, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta Airport and will be met and transferred to the Giraffe Manor. Originally built by a coffee magnate in the early 1930s, this lovely stone manor house and its vast manicured grounds will be ours exclusively for our first evening in Africa. The Giraffe Manor, known for its elegance and warm hospitality, is famous for its resident herd of endangered Rothschild Giraffe who love to be fed from the second floor windows, over the breakfast table or through the front door. Our celebratory welcome dinner will be served in the formal dining room joined by Bryony and Rick Anderson, the great grandson and wife of the Scottish earl who founded the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife and bought the manor in 1974.

DAYS TWO AND THREE

MAASAI MARA

After breakfast we'll have an opportunity to walk across the 120-acre grounds to visit the nearby Giraffe Education and Conservation Center. Additionally, and later visit the nearby David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust where elephant orphans are reared, rehabilitated and then successfully returned to the wild. Then we will catch a flight to the game-filled Maasai Mara and Richard's Camp, a small and exclusive tented camp located on the edge of a small forest. Our Hemingway-style tents, which have each been individually decorated, feature ensuite bathrooms and steaming hot showers. Elephant and plains game are regular visitors at Richard's Camp. During our time in the Mara, we will enjoy traditional game drives by four-wheel vehicles in search of elephant, lion, cheetah, rhino, buffalo, reticulated giraffe, red-tailed monkeys, oryx, gerenuk, zebra, hippos, crocodiles, topi, Somali ostrich,ulturine guinea fowl and that most elusive of cats, the leopard. At day's end we will enjoy sundowners and indulge in a Victorian bath tucked away in the forest where the canopy of trees opens to reveal the breathtaking African night sky, surrounded by flickering candles and the sounds of the bush.

DAYS FOUR, FIVE AND SIX

NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT

An early morning game drive sets us out onto the Reserve for one final exploration of the unforgettable wildlife in the Mara. We will then depart on an extraordinary flight across Kenya from its southern border with Tanzania to its isolated Northern Frontier District, situated just south of bordering Ethiopia. During the flight we will glimpse this country's rich topography, a kaleidoscope of coffee fields, vast arid deserts and scrub-covered plains. When we land we will be greeted by the legendary Helen Douglas Dufresne, a herd of some 50 camel and a contingency of two dozen Samburu warriors, each outfitted with a hand-crafted machete (used for clearing paths and killing birds) and long spear (for defending against animal attacks). Their slim, elegant figures are decked out in traditional tribal finery including large ivory earplugs, colorful beaded necklaces and scarlet cloaks draped over slim torsos. The camels will carry all the gear for our three-day walk; among these items: fine wines, fresh fruit, chocolates and ice for our drinks. Helen, together with her warrani, has become an expert in this remote region of Kenya, having lived and guided camel safaris in the area for over a dozen years. She is well versed in folklore, botany, ornithology and astrology and her enthusiasm for the area and its people is contagious. Tonight we will settle into our tents under a canopy of equatorial stars as our teams make the final preparations for our early morning camel train departure. We will fall asleep to the unforgettable sounds of the African night – the whooping of a hyena, the crack of a twig under an elephant's foot, the low rumbles of a lion on the prowl echoing in the valley. For a total of three days we will experience a traditional nomadic camel train, traversing down the luggas (dried river beds) into an area without roads or permanent human settlement, traveling in the early hours of the morning, when it is cool and when we are most likely to see wildlife. By foot and camel, we will penetrate the fascinating and rich culture and world of the nomadic inhabitants of this harsh region. Each morning we will walk

between five to ten miles, setting off after an excellent bush breakfast. We will wind our way around the gentle slopes and flat beds of the luggas, where a record of the night's wildlife activity will still be clearly visible in the sand. We may see shallow circular depressions, each about the size of a dinner plate, marking the route of an elephant herd. Superimposed upon them might be the tracks of a hyena, a pair of jackals, a civet cat, or a porcupine, all perfectly preserved. We will encounter local Samburu going about their daily business or pass by a manyatta, a small village of thatched huts surrounded by thorn fencing. With the men out herding, manyattas are most often occupied by bare-breasted Samburu women, proud and dignified, wearing elaborate beaded necklaces and armbands, their naked young nearby, neither of them adorned with a single artifact that could be associated with the 20th, let alone the 21st, century. Behind us, the camp will be packed up and loaded onto the camels that will soon catch up as we continue our walk, finding a place to camp after mid-day. The camels are then relieved of their 150-pound burdens and set free to browse for the rest of the day. After a good lunch, the afternoon is ours to do as we would like – often a siesta is called for, lulled by the clunk of wooden camel bells and the beautiful songs of the warrani. The cool of the evening is perfect for an additional stroll or climbing a rocky outcrop to admire the views and absorb the total tranquility of the bush at dusk, the vast landscape of the Northern Frontier District stretching to infinity in all directions. On return to camp each day, we will enjoy an array of safari luxuries – sundowner cocktails, hot showers and a delicious candlelit dinner before retiring to our comfortable safari tents. Our final night in the Northern Frontier District will be celebrated as personal guests at Helen's prized homestead, Elkanto, a treat beyond words.

DAY SEVEN AND EIGHT

GREAT RIFT VALLEY

Soon after breakfast we will bid farewell to Elkanto and fly in private charters south to Shompole where we will spend our last two evenings at the extraordinary group ranch called Shompole, southern Kenya's newest luxury outpost, overlooking the Great Rift Valley on the Tanzanian border. This slice of heaven, with its compelling mix of rustic African design and calm Japanese-inspired interiors, is located on the Tanzanian border of Kenya in the Great Rift Valley. Geographically, this extraordinary group ranch is nestled in a place of staggering diversity on the side of the towering Nguruman Escarpment overlooking Shompole Mountain. Within a relatively small area, you can see everything from flamingo-covered soda lakes to glistening white salt plains, thick forests, papyrus swamp, mountains and acacia-strewn grassland. Shompole was created as a unique joint eco-tourism project with the local Maasai and consists of seven staggeringly beautiful thatched guest rooms each featuring a series of indoor spring-fed plunge pools and waterways, 180-degree views and architecture that seems to defy geographical classification with Arabian tents, Oriental rock gardens and Mediterranean walls. While visiting Shompole we will enjoy early morning and evening game walks/drives, fabulous dining, spa treatments, and visits to the flamingo-filled Lake Natron and nearby Maasai villages. Before retiring each night we will celebrate with a traditional sundowner: cocktails served from unimaginable vantage points as the colorful African sun slips behind the horizon.

DAY NINE

NAIROBI

With time for one last game drive, a massage or just a few relaxing hours prior to our journey home, we will savor Shompole's remote slice of heaven for just a little longer. After lunch we will bid farewell to Shompole and its beautiful people, rich game-filled plains and luxurious hospitality and fly by private charter back to Nairobi where we will spend the afternoon visiting the home of one of Kenya's most colorful characters, Karen Blixen, better known as Isak Dinesen, author of the novel *Out of Africa*. Now a museum, the home, originally a coffee plantation, is set at the foothills of the Ngong Hills surrounded by lovely gardens and features an exhibit of her life and work. We will also have some time for shopping and dinner before boarding our individual overnight flights home. Arrival times into the U.S. will be at midday of the following day.

OPTIONAL DAY:

For those choosing to extend their trip by one extra day, we will spend an extra night at the elegant Giraffe Manor with its resident Rothschild giraffe and adorable warthogs and fantastic hospitality. The real highlight of this extension is a day spent with the children of Nyumbani. Nyumbani, meaning "home" in Swahili, is a Nairobi-based care organization for children with HIV/AIDS. They have two different facilities in Kenya's capital city, one a slum-based community outreach clinic serving over 3,000 children struggling with the disease and a loving orphanage for 100 HIV+ children. In addition to meeting with the staff and children at one of the two facilities, our activities with the children might include: helping with a meal, coordinating a craft project or organizing a group sing-a-long. For many of our past clients, this day is one of the fondest spent in Kenya. Its impact long-lasting and very heart-felt.