



# HARTLEY'S SAFARIS

FINDING YOUR AFRICA



## Kenya

Masai Mara  
Laikipia  
Amboseli and Chyulu Hills  
Lewa Downs  
Meru, Shaba and Samburu  
The Rift Valley Lakes  
Nairobi



# INTRODUCTION

In Swahili the word “safari” means “long journey” and it was in Kenya that the term was first used to refer to wildlife viewing holidays. These days a safari could also include snorkelling on coral reefs, birding expeditions or even a trip in a hot air balloon and Kenya offers all of these opportunities and more.

There are over forty National Parks and game reserves in Kenya, all offering their own unique landscape and individual character. Kenya is renowned for the “big five” - elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard and rhino but many other equally intriguing species are common. The grasslands of the Rift Valley, one of world’s most dramatic geological fault-lines, and the deep blue waters of the crater lakes provide a spectacular backdrop to game viewing. No less spectacular are the snow-capped peaks of Mount Kenya and the tropical beaches of the Indian Ocean.

Further north the arid and remote Northern Frontier District presents a myriad of beautiful landscapes and plentiful game and birdlife.

Kenya covers some 583,000 km<sup>2</sup> (225,000 mi<sup>2</sup>), it is slightly larger than France and is bisected by the equator. Although wildlife and the long beautiful coast form the mainstay of Kenya’s tourism many visitors are enthralled to learn about the culture of the Maasai, Samburu or some of the 40 other indigenous tribal groups.



Kenya’s climate varies inland and at higher altitudes but it is usually cool at night and in the mornings. The rainy season known as “the long rains” occurs from March till June and “the short rains” season occurs from October to early December with February and March being very hot.





# HISTORY

Human history in Kenya goes back to some of the earliest hominids known to science and in the year 2000, scientists discovered fossils showing that a type of early hominid lived in the Tugan Hills in north-west Kenya some six million years ago.

Over the past 4,000 years migrants from central and north Africa settled in Kenya, forming the foundation of the culturally diverse society that exists in the country today. Arab traders from the Middle East began exploring the Kenyan coast about 2,000 years ago, creating the basis for commerce which still thrives. As a result Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu and many other East African ports have strong ties to Islamic culture. Traders from as far afield as India and Indonesia also did business with these ports. Portuguese sailors and business people began trading along the coast in the early 16th century but European exploration of the interior of what is now Kenya only began in the mid 19th century.

In 1895 the British government set up the East African Protectorate with Kenya later becoming a British colony. Campaigns of both the First and Second World War were fought from Kenya. During the First World War British forces campaigned against German forces in what is now Tanzania and in the Second World War troops saw conflict with Italian soldiers in Somalia and Ethiopia. Soon after the Second World War the Mau Mau movement took up arms against colonial authorities, a conflict which lasted from 1952 until 1960. Kenya became independent in 1964 and has held regular elections since.

## PEOPLE, CULTURE AND ECONOMY

Kenya has more than 40 tribal groups as well as a small Arab, Indian and European population. The Kikuyu 22%, Luhya 14%, Kalenjin 12% and Kamba 11% are the most numerous groups. Many other Kenyans have strong links to

their culture and traditional beliefs are, particularly in rural areas, strongly followed.

Like many rural parts of Africa cattle play an important role in local culture. Traditionally Maasai people use the milk and blood of cattle, which is tapped directly from the cow without killing it. Meat is also consumed on special occasions. Tourism, including cultural tourism, plays an important role in Kenya's economy as the country has few mineral resources and limited manufacturing capacity. Vegetables, fruit and flowers are grown for international markets but most rural Kenyans rely on subsistence farming.

## KENYA IN BRIEF

- Capital City: Nairobi
- Area: 582, 650 km<sup>2</sup> / 224,960 mi<sup>2</sup>
- Population: 42 million
- Time zone: GMT +3
- Currency: Kenyan shilling (KES)
- Electricity: 240V
- Geography: Low coastal plains and central highlands bisected by the Great Rift Valley.
- Language: English and Swahili



## WHEN TO GO

In general there is plenty of sunshine all year round. However it is usually cool at night and early in the morning. The equator cuts through the country from east to west so there are almost equal hours of day and night year round.

August to October: this is the dry season when game congregates by rivers and waterholes, an excellent time to see the migration in the Mara.

November to December: the short rains, a good time for birding.

December to March: good time to escape the European winter with clear blue skies and warm sunny days, ideal time for the beach and wildlife.

April to June: the long rains when Kenya receives most of its rainfall, seasonal camps close.

June to July: wonderful migratory birds, flowers on the plains, cool temperatures.

## CLIMATE

Mombasa	Temp °C		Rainfall
	Min	Max	mm
Jan	24	30	20
Feb	24	31	10
Mar	25	31	60
Apr	25	30	180
May	23	28	270
Jun	22	27	100
Jul	21	26	80
Aug	21	27	60
Sep	21	27	60
Oct	22	28	90
Nov	23	29	90
Dec	24	30	60

Nairobi	Temp °C		Rainfall
	Min	Max	mm
Jan	14	25	40
Feb	14	26	40
Mar	15	26	70
Apr	16	24	160
May	15	23	110
Jun	13	22	30
Jul	12	21	10
Aug	12	22	10
Sep	12	24	20
Oct	14	25	40
Nov	15	23	110
Dec	15	23	70





# HIGHLIGHTS

## MASAI MARA

The Masai Mara National Reserve covers some 1,510 km<sup>2</sup> (583 mi<sup>2</sup>) of open plains, woodlands and riverine forest and forms part of a far larger ecosystem that includes the neighbouring Serengeti. The Mara is home to a breathtaking abundance of wildlife, its vast grassland plains scattered with herds of zebra, giraffe, gazelle and topi. A patchwork of other habitats including acacia thickets, the Musiara Swamp and the Mara and Talek rivers contribute to sustaining the regions prolific birdlife.

Each year the vast wildebeest migration from the Serengeti, head north towards the Mara in their search for life-giving grass. At the Mara River the wildebeest mass together on the banks before finally plunging into the water, creating frenzy as they try and deal with the deep water and waiting crocodiles.

Large numbers of lion frequent the Mara, taking advantage of their abundant prey. Cheetah are also commonly sighted, as are hyena and smaller predators such as jackals.



## LAIKIPIA

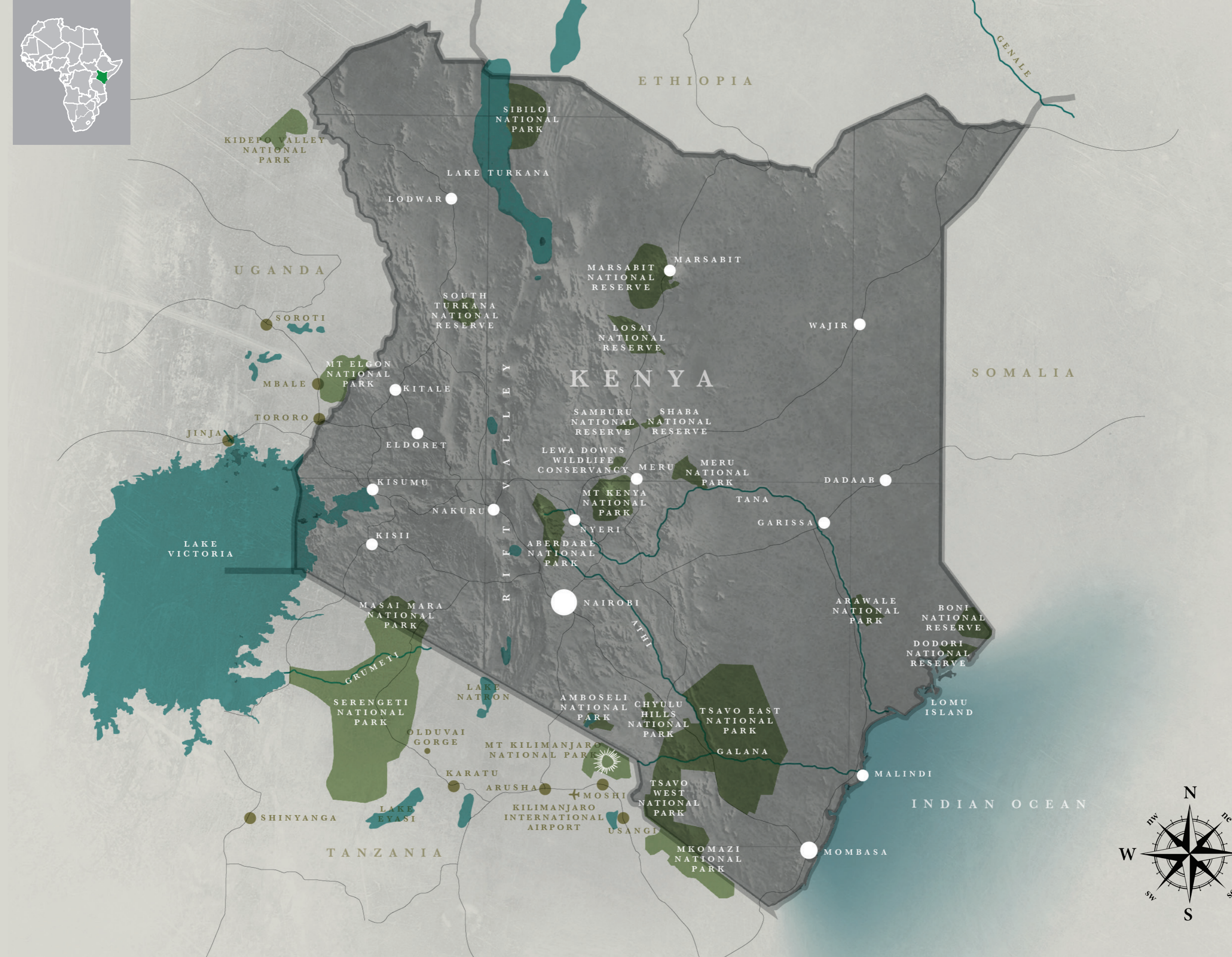
The Laikipia Plateau stretches from the foothills of the Aberdare Mountains, across vast open plains to the Northern Frontier District and the Mathews Mountain Range. The region nurtures exceptional wildlife and cultural diversity and is home to many communities including the Laikipia Maasai and the Samburu tribes. Around Sabuk the area is hilly, with dense acacia bush and an abundance of wildlife including reticulated giraffe, buffalo, impala, elephant, klipspringer, zebra, eland, waterbuck, lion and leopard.

Much of Laikipia is covered by large privately owned ranches covering a wide range of landscapes, with high plains and low forested valleys. Staying on a private ranch gives a wide range of options for both activities and relaxation. Game viewing tends to be more intimate and adventurous. The emphasis here is on personal service, backed up by excellent local knowledge and guiding.



Kenya's wildlife is unrivalled by any other in the world, both in terms of numbers and variety of species. Thousands of tourists visit Kenya every year to view the wild life particularly the wildebeest migration. Animals such as lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant, rhino, giraffe, zebra, crocodiles, hippopotamus, gazelles, cheetah, hyena and a wide range of bird species can all be found in Kenya.

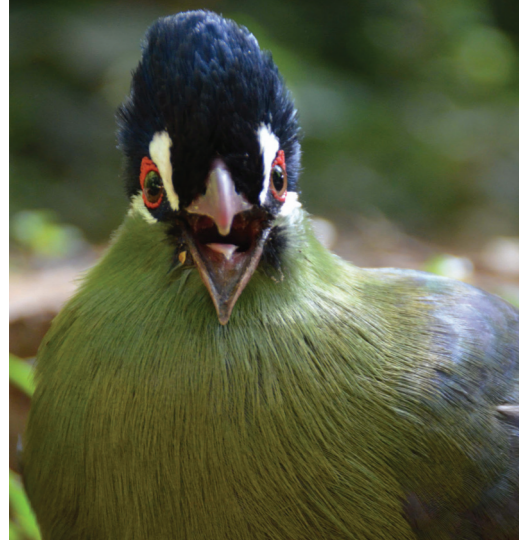




## MERU NATIONAL PARK

Meru National Park, one of Kenya's least known and visited reserves, is spectacular in its own way and made up of mainly thorny bush land in the North, wooded grasslands in the West and open grassland elsewhere. The park also offers dense riverine forests of Doum and Raffia palm.

This is where George and Joy Adamson released several hand-reared animals, including the famous lioness Elsa, immortalised in the book and film Born Free, and their cheetah, Pippa.



## AMBOSELI & CHYULU HILLS

Dwarfed by the majestic snow-capped peak of Mount Kilimanjaro, Amboseli is one of the premier locations in Kenya for elephant watching, with large herds being drawn to its series of large, lush swamplands. The park also has a large concentration of Masai giraffe, buffalo, zebra, eland, waterbuck, gazelle and impala with cheetah and lion among the big cats that roam freely throughout the area.

The park sprawls around a large hill, with great views of the surrounding plains, often crossed by whirlwinds that send winding columns of dust into the sky during the dry season. This is open country and consequently, ideal walking territory, with many of the camps and lodges organizing game walks and trips to spend time in local Maasai villages.

The Chyulu Hills are volcanic hills but the last activity occurred about 600 years ago. They are situated halfway between Tsavo and Amboseli National Parks on a concession of 125,000 ha (300,000 acres) of communally owned Maasai land, known as Mbirikani Group Ranch.

## NAIROBI

Nairobi, one of Africa's largest cities, is noisy, colourful and busy. Its lure of business and bright city lights attracts people from all across East Africa who combine to add to the cosmopolitan nature of the city. The altitude of the city, it is about 1,680 metres (5,500 feet) above sea level, gives it a moderate climate and it can be fairly cool in winter, especially at night.

There are several museums and other places of interest including the National Museum, the Snake Park and numerous markets selling traditional crafts, especially the busy Maasai market. The Nairobi National Park is close to the city and has a good variety of wildlife. The Langata Giraffe Centre, which also runs a conservation education programme, offers visitors the chance of close-up views of endangered Rothschild giraffes which are part of their breeding programme.



## LEWA DOWNS

The privately owned Lewa Wildlife Conservancy is a 25,833 ha (63,834 acres) wildlife sanctuary situated on the northern slopes of Mount Kenya and consists of five very diverse ecosystems - open savannah, acacia forest, rocky gorges and ravines, mountain forest and the Lewa swamp. This diversity combines to support many different species of birds and mammals, including rhino, reticulated giraffe and an important population of the threatened Grevy's zebra population.

At night leopard are frequently encountered as are bush babies (galagos), aardvarks, bat-eared foxes, caracal and various mongooses, genets and civets.



## OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

For a unique holiday experience, there are few better ways to discover the real heart and soul of a country than to travel away from the traditional tourist destinations and go 'off the beaten track'. With the wealth of experience we have gained through our many years creating luxury safari holidays to Africa, Hartley's Safaris offer an extensive portfolio of experiences that allow you to embrace the true spirit and adventure of this magnificent country in a safe and secure manner.



### THE RIFT VALLEY LAKES

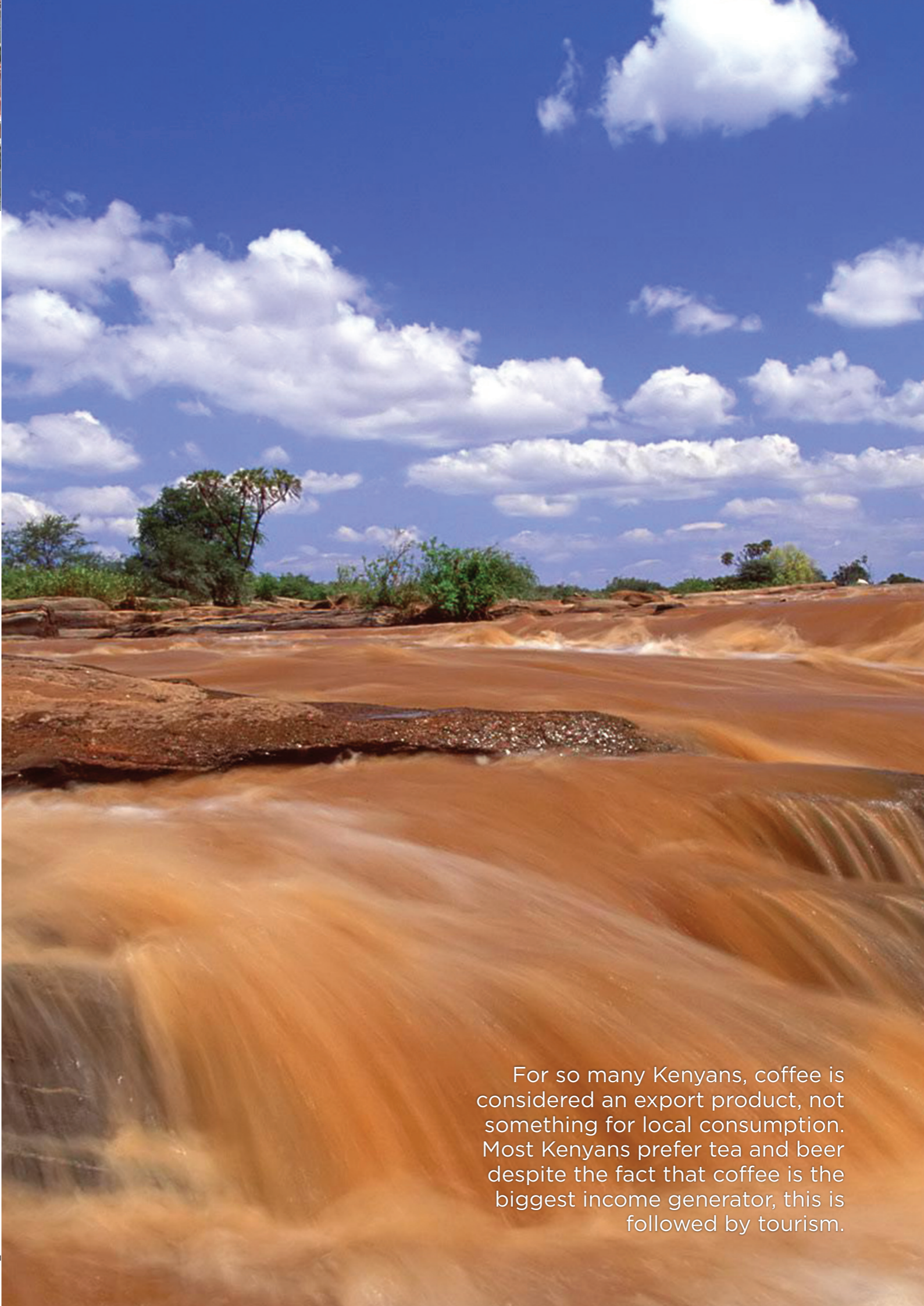
The Great Rift Valley, with its associated escarpments and mountains encompasses some of the most dramatic and varied scenery in Africa. The Great Rift Valley runs the length of Kenya from Lake Turkana in the north to Lake Natron on the southern border with Tanzania and is lined with a series of freshwater and soda-based volcanic lakes—Lake Barigo, Lake Bogoria, Lake Nakuru, Lake Elmentaita and Lake Naivasha. Lake Nakuru is recognised as being one of the natural wonders of the world. It is renowned for its flamingos and, in 1961, sections of the Lake were established as a sanctuary to protect the almost two million resident flamingos. Lake Nakuru is today also a sanctuary for black and white rhino.

Lake Naivasha is the highest of the Great Rift Valley lakes and is fringed with papyrus beds which create a favoured habitat for kingfishers, herons and other species of water-birds. With over 400 species recorded, Naivasha is favoured by birdwatchers. Crescent Island, at the south end of the Lake, is a private game sanctuary where walking is permitted.



### SHABA NATIONAL RESERVE, SAMBURU NATIONAL RESERVE AND BUFFALO SPRINGS NATIONAL RESERVE

These parks are close to each other and protect similar ecosystems in an area of remote arid terrain. They boast excellent game and birdlife that are dependent on permanent springs and a few rivers for water. There are regular sightings of elephant and lion and you have a good chance of seeing Kenya's northern five; oryx, reticulated giraffe, gerenuk, Grevy's zebra and lesser kudu. Samburu National Reserve is located on the banks of the Ewaso Nyiro River which means "the plentiful water".



For so many Kenyans, coffee is considered an export product, not something for local consumption. Most Kenyans prefer tea and beer despite the fact that coffee is the biggest income generator, this is followed by tourism.



# ISLANDS & BEACHES

## THE SOUTH COAST

Stretching south from Mombasa to the Tanzanian border, this coastline offers spectacular beaches, good snorkelling and diving, particularly in the Kisite-Mpunguti Marine National Park. Situated close to the Tanzanian border, about 80 km south of Mombasa, the park covers about 39 km<sup>2</sup> (15 mi<sup>2</sup>) including four small islands and a number of coral reefs. Dolphins are common in the area and large coconut crabs, which have massive pincers, are easily seen on Mapunguti Island. A number of good lodges are dotted along the coast. The area is also known for its deep sea fishing.



## THE COAST TO THE NORTH

Running up past Malindi, the northern coast offers good beaches and excellent diving and snorkelling. The Watamu Marine National Park, declared in 1968, protects coral reefs and other sea-life, near the popular town of Malindi and many small villas and lodges in the area. Malindi has long been a trading port, visited by dhows from the Middle East and still has a strong Arabic influence in its food and culture.



## THE ISLANDS OFF THE KENYA COASTLINE

Lamu is the best known of the islands off the Kenyan coast but there are several others, less often visited, in the Lamu Archipelago.

Lamu town, founded in the 14th century, is one of the oldest continually inhabited settlements in the country. It has fine examples of Swahili and Arabic architecture and was once an important slave trading centre. The area around Lamu offers good diving and snorkelling.



Kenya's coastline is composed of beaches, coral cliffs and reefs, creeks and numerous offshore coral islands. Inland, a mainly level but narrow coastal plain lies on sedimentary rocks, with some igneous intrusions such as Dzombo and Mrima.







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