

DAY 1

En route

Your adventure begins today as you enplane for Africa.

DAYS 2 & 3

Nairobi, Kenya's bustling, cosmopolitan capital

Upon arrival in the Kenyan capital, we'll be met by our Micato Safari Director and driven to Hemingways, a hotel that great lover of Africa would have savoured for its classic African ambience and old-school luxuries. The next day, we'll wend our way over to the Giraffe Centre for some interspecies camaraderie, and visit the former home of Karen Blixen, author—writing as Isak Dinesen—of *Out of Africa*, one of the most evocative books ever written about any earthly place. And we'll head over to Lavington, the home of Felix and Jane Pinto, Micato's founding couple, for a hearty, familial, and story-flavoured lunch, then tour the excellent National Museum before returning to our hotel.

DAYS 4 & 5

Amboseli, in the shadow of Kilimanjaro

We fly south this morning over the Athi Plains to the natural wonderland of Amboseli National Park. Mount Kilimanjaro, the still-glaciated monarch of Africa, presides over Amboseli, thrusting three dizzying miles above the park's grasslands. As Peter Matthiessen wrote in *The Tree Where Man Was Born*, "A snow peak in the tropics draws the heart to a fine shimmering painful point of joy."

Tortilis Camp is our base for visits to Maasai villages and game drives in this almost incomparably rich animal kingdom. Our spacious, luxuriously furnished, thatch-covered tents nestle under the huge and reposeful Tortilis acacia trees from which the camp takes its name. Unwinding on our veranda, we might, like Isak Dinesen, watch a parade of elephants "pacing along as if they had an appointment at the end of the world."

DAYS 6 & 7

Classic gameviewing at Lewa Safari Camp

Set high up on the Laikipia Plateau, graced with unendingly various views of lordly Mount Kenya,* Lewa Safari Camp is the jewel of the famed Lewa Conservancy, which has helped create the template for the successful conservancy model of wildlife and habitat preservation. Lewa's wide range of terrains supports a full cast of predators and prey; it's home to the world's largest concentration of Grevy's zebra, and its 130 happily roaming black and white rhinos are a testament to the Conservancy's resolute and ingenious conservation efforts. Lewa Safari Camp's 13 thatched roof tents are classically airy and simply, easefully luxurious. Each has a modern en-suite bathroom and a large private veranda overlooking one of the continent's vastest and most vibrant African landscapes

DAYS 8 & 9

The great wildlife haven of the The Maasai Mara

This morning we'll fly over the planetary rumple of the Great Rift Valley—it makes "the Grand Canyon look like a line scratched with a toothpick," John Gunther wrote in *Inside Africa*—to the Maasai Mara, the northern sector of the bigger-than-Belgium Serengeti–Maasai Mara ecosystem, unquestionably the earth's greatest haven for large mammals, more than 70 species of which go about their business in the oceanic Serengeti–Maasai Mara grasslands.

Based from equally splendid Bateleur Camp or Governor's Il Moran Camp, we'll game drive

throughout the Mara, spend rewarding time with the local Maasai people, and make side trips to the Mara River and its tributaries for a gander at leviathan crocodiles and hippos. And we'll have sundowners in the gentle evening warmth of the "true world" Ms. Dinesen wrote her mother about, breathing its clean and guileless air, watching Africa's showy stars come out to dazzle, feeling like we might have dallied in these parts, 10,000 years ago.

On our second day in the Mara, we'll sweep in a hot-air balloon above the siringet, or the "endless place," as the Maasai call this great land (normally an additional cost, ballooning on the Micato Grand Safari is part of the luxe experience). And at flight's end, we'll savour a champagne breakfast; we'll already be a little giddied by the plain's beauty and our good fortune to be so welcome and at ease in its presence.

DAYS 10 & 11

The Serengeti, iconically vast and golden

We fly to the Serengeti via Nairobi and Arusha, Tanzania. Three million or more large mammals—elephants, cheetahs, gazelles by the gazillions, wildebeest, zebras, giraffes "floating across the plain" (thanks again, Ms. Dinesen), lions, rhinos, and going on 60 more species—inhabit the great grassland, its riverine forests, and bustling, set-piece kopjes, rock islands that pop up from the plain.

We'll spend our two Serengeti nights in either the Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti or Grumeti Serengeti Tented Camp. The magnificently conceived Four Seasons is set on a fine collection of kopjes, looking out at what seems to be a golden eternity, with sunrise skies "banded with rose and lemon and the colour of flamingo wings," as Elspeth Huxley wrote. Grumeti is a chic, 10-tent camp set along the banks of river, bustling with stunningly sizable crocs and hippos, always heftier than we remember. These are the kinds of African places that Micato loves to introduce our guests to, places that seduce us into slowing down.

DAYS 12 & 13

The Lost World of the Ngorongoro Crater

Today, some of us may wish to visit the Olduvai Gorge, which—with a touch of poetic license—we honour as the jumping-off point for humankind's incredibly rapid colonization of the earth.

After paying our genealogic respects at the consequential gorge, we make the lovely drive across the Crater Highlands and up to the Ngorongoro Crater Lodge, perched on the rain-forested rim of the Ngorongoro Crater, one of our solar system's greatest geographic ornaments.

Peter Matthiessen captured one of the crater's enigmas: "How did the hippopotamus find its way up into the Crater Highlands, to blunder into the waters of Ngorongoro? Today one sees them there with wonder, encircled by steep walls." Indeed, meandering around the softly lush caldera floor, we may feel like Professor George Edward Challenger and Lord John Roxton in Arthur Conan Doyle's thriller *The Lost World*. True, we won't see any *Aardonyxes* or *Zupaysauri*, but—as we often say—once you've really looked at a rhino, or contemplated the gigantic unlikeliness of an elephant, your old sadness at never having seen a dinosaur will be lightened.

DAY 14

Back to Nairobi and onward

After breakfast and a last look at the Edenic lands below, we'll drive to Lake Manyara and fly to Nairobi, where we'll have a day room at the Norfolk or the near-the-airport Boma Nairobi, and get a bite to eat before being driven to the airport for our late flights back to the Northern Hemisphere.

DAY 15

Connect in Europe with homeward flights