

Day 1 En route to a memorable Kenya safari

We board our flight and enjoy the anticipation of Kenya.

Day 2 Nairobi, Kenya's bustling, cosmopolitan capital

Upon arrival in the Kenyan capital, we'll be met by our Micato Safari Director and driven to Kempinski Villa Rosa, a lush contemporary hotel with rooms that blend elegant European and Pan-African furnishings with modern touches.

Days 3 to 5 Tsavo National Park, in the shadow of Kilimanjaro

We fly south this morning over the Athi Plains to the natural masterpiece of Tsavo National Park. This great park occupies much of the hinterland between the Kenyan coast and Nairobi, a vast expanse of 8,000 square miles that extends to the border with Tanzania. Tsavo—we always think of it as one of the most evocative African names—is one of the largest game sanctuaries in the world, especially famous for its large population of elephants and its classic savannah and acacia woodlands.

Finch Hattons Camp is our base for game drives in this almost incomparably rich animal kingdom. Unabashedly luxurious and intimate, it caters to the safari traveller who's looking to avoid crowds and has, like Denys Finch Hatton himself, a taste for the finest and comfiest accommodations and toppest-notch cuisine. Finch Hatton Camp was named and inspired by Denys Finch Hatton, the aristocratic adventurer who was immortalized by his lover Karen Blixen in *Out of Africa*, and led many British royals and international luminaries on safari in Kenya (he's credited by many as one of the first to emphasize hunting safaris in favour of photography and just letting the African wonder sink in bloodlessly). Finch-Hatton was known to bring Mozart and crystal with him on his safaris, and his eponymous camp is happy to follow his lead in mixing luxe with earthy enjoyment. Even the setting of the camp is dramatic: the cloud forests of the Chyulu Hills, and beyond, gargantuan Mount Kilimanjaro provide a majestic backdrop, and in the foreground, ever-viewable from our suite's decks, animals congregate at the camp's water hole, and hippos cavort in a couple of their own pools.

Days 6 to 8 Classic game viewing in the Laikipia Reserve

The Laikipia Reserve came into existence in 1991 when the ranches of the Colonial era turned from farming to wildlife conservation. Since its ranch days, the plateau has reverted back to wilderness, a wildlife refuge supporting huge numbers of animals (it's the only place to see the endangered Jackson's Hartebeest). Other game includes lions, cheetahs, leopards, rare wild dogs, impalas, gazelles, reticulated giraffes, Grevy's zebras (the most comely of the zebra clan), Somali ostriches, Beisa oryxes (endemic to the north of Kenya) and balletic gerenuks.

Well off the beaten path, Loisaba Tented Camp, set in privacy in its own conservancy adjacent to the Laikipia Reserve, is a Micato favourite. Its spacious, airy tents have floor-to-ceiling windows, polished floors, and minimalist but sophisticated Africana furnishings. Horse and camel rides, bush walks,

Samburu village visits and more await as we explore the Reserve and the Loisaba Conservancy quite literally in our backyard.

Days 9 to 11 Natural extravagance in the Maasai Mara

We fly west from Nairobi to the Maasai Mara, the northern, more verdant section of what we think of as the undisputed capital of the Animal Kingdom, the Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem. Game drives in the Mara are especially fruitful, as our camp, Mahali Mzuri, is auspiciously set next to one of the Mara's prime migration pathways. (Though the famous migration—a million and a half wildebeest, a couple hundred thousand zebras, and a slew of watchful predators—reaches seasonal crescendos, the migration is more or less constant as the animals circle the Serengeti-Maasai Mara, which is larger than New Jersey, with Rhode Island thrown in the bargain. It's not unusual for us to see miles-long herds flowing on the savannah most times of year.)

Sir Richard Branson isn't known for lack of imaginative panache, and his Mahali Mzuri's dozen delightfully innovative, yet very African tents, interconnected by walkways, are set on a gentle rise above a quintessentially African scene: rolling hills dotted with acacias, animal-magnet waterways and, in the background, the limitless Maasai Mara. It's almost needless to add that those tents resemble the tents of our youth like a Gulfstream G650 resembles a Piper Cub, as we like to say.

Day 12 Day rooms in Nairobi for late night flights

We'll have day rooms for use prior to our late night flights homeward. And during the day, we can visit the Micato-AmericaShare Harambee Centre, do some shopping, or just kick back and savour the first, fresh memories of a classic African safari.

Day 13 Connect on with homeward flights