

Gorillas & Plains

Country(ies): Uganda & Kenya

Tour type: Overland

Transport: Overland expedition vehicle, minibus & 4x4 safari jeeps

Group size: Min: 4 | Max: 20

Days: 15 Days

Start location: Nairobi, Kenya

End location: Nairobi, Kenya

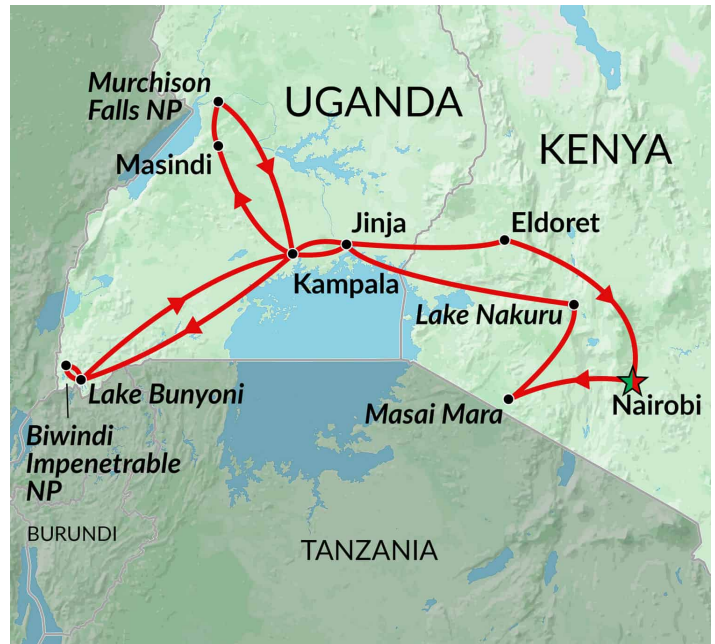
Departs On: Friday & Saturday

Meals: Breakfasts - 13, Lunches - 8, Dinners - 11

Highlights:

Masai Mara Reserve safaris, Masai tribe, Lake Nakuru, the equator, Murchison Falls, chimpanzees, Lake Bunyonyi, mountain gorillas

Places Visited: Nairobi, Masai Mara, Lake Nakuru, Jinja, Kampala, Murchison Falls NP, Masindi, Lake Bunyonyi & Eldoret



Itinerary

Day 1: Nairobi to the Masai Mara

Your African adventure begins in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. We depart from our hotel pick up point at the Sentrim Boulevard at 07.00am so please be there at least 30 minutes early. We'll then make our way to the famous Masai Mara Game Reserve, one of the wildest and most spectacular safari destinations on the planet.

Stretching for over 1,510 square kilometres (580 square miles) and rising between 1,500 - 2,170 meters (4,920-7,120 feet) above sea level, the Masai Mara is home to all the Big Five wildlife (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhinoceros) as well as the great wildebeest migration for several months of the year.

We'll travel to the Masai Mara in a minibus, before switching over to a game vehicle. For this reason, we request that you only pack a small overnight bag to travel with. You will need your towel, clothes, toiletries and camping essentials. You can leave the rest of your luggage with the expedition truck at the hotel.

Route: Nairobi to Masai Mara

Included Highlight: Masai Mara Excursion

Facilities: Both camping and accommodation options stay in permanent tents with shared ablutions

OVERNIGHT: Permanent Tents: Masai Mara Camp

MEALS: Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: Gorilla Permit || Extra day in Nairobi - pre-tour || Arrival airport transfer in Nairobi

Day 2: Exploring the Masai Mara

The vast plains and grasslands of the Masai Mara offer some of the best game viewing opportunities in Africa. If you're lucky enough, you could see the Big Five in the reserve as well as animals such as cheetah, gazelle, zebra and more.

Hippo and Nile crocodile spend hours wallowing in the muddy waters of the Mara River, which from the months of July - September play host to the infamous Mara River crossings, which sees thousands of wildebeest attempt to cross its crocodile-infested waters.

Today we will spend the entire day game driving through the Mara in search of all the animals.

Included Highlight: Masai Mara safaris

Facilities: Both camping and accommodation options stay in permanent tents with shared ablutions

OVERNIGHT: Permanent Tents: Masai Mara Camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Travel to Lake Nakuru

We start our day looking out for more wildlife as we leave the Masai Mara and head towards Lake Nakuru National Park, which we'll reach by the afternoon.

We'll head out later in the day for a game drive through Lake Nakuru National Park, which is home large flocks of flamingos, pelicans and a host of other bird life. In fact, the Lake Nakuru was originally a bird sanctuary before it

received national park status in 1968.

Other wildlife that you can see here include leopard, lion, black and white rhino as well as different species of buck.

Route: Masai Mara to Lake Nakuru

Included Highlight: Lake Nakuru NP game drive

Facilities: Both camping and accommodation options stay in rooms with shared ablutions

OVERNIGHT: Waterbuck hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Lake Nakuru to Jinja

We say goodbye to Kenya today as we make our way across the border towards Uganda. We'll make a stop along the way to celebrate crossing the Equator before we head towards Jinja - Uganda's second largest city.

Jinja is also famed as being the point where the Nile River flows out of Lake Victoria and begins its 6,700-kilometre journey towards Egypt and the Mediterranean.

Route: Lake Nakuru to Jinja

Included Highlight: Crossing the Equator

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with en-suite bathrooms

OVERNIGHT: Kalagala Falls Tented and Overland Camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Jinja to Masindi and the Murchison Falls National Park

After spending the night in Jinja, we make our way towards Kampala for a short stopover before we make our way to Murchison Falls National Park which sits on the shore of Lake Albert, in northwest Uganda.

The Murchison Falls, also known as Kabaraga Falls, is a waterfall located on the course of the Nile River. The park is one of the best in Uganda and is home to four of the Big Five species: lion, leopard, buffalo and elephant.

Your guide will help you settle into your accommodation before briefing you on the itinerary for the following day.

Route: Jinja to Masindi Local options: Ziwa Rhino walk

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with en-suite bathrooms

OVERNIGHT: Kabalega Resort Hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: Options available while on tour (KEOVGP)

Day 6: Chimp Trek and boat cruise in Budongo Central Forest Reserve

Today we make our way to East Africa's biggest mahogany forest, Budongo Central Forest Reserve, which is home to the largest population of chimpanzees in Uganda. It's estimated that between 600-700 chimpanzees call Budongo Forest home.

We'll meet up with our chimpanzee guide this morning, who will take us on a trek through the forest in search of these beautiful mammals. Afterwards, we head out on a game drive to spot the other wildlife in the forest reserve. A boat cruise in the park is also included today.

Note: Chimp trekking is limited to 12 guests per trek. Should there be more than 12 guests on a tour, the trekking will be split into morning and afternoon treks with the other activities adjusted accordingly. Please allow for flexibility.

Included Highlight: Chimp trekking (half day) / Nile River Cruise in Murchison Falls National Park

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with en-suite bathrooms

OVERNIGHT: Kabalega Resort Hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Lake Kikorongo

We leave Masindi this morning and transfer through Uganda to the edge of the Queen Elizabeth National Park. We'll spend the night at our accommodation overlooking Lake Kikorongo.

Route: Masindi to Lake Kikorongo

Facilities - Camping: Camping with shared facilities

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with en-suite facilities

OVERNIGHT: Simba Safari Camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Crossing the Equator towards Lake Bunyonyi

We make our way back across the Equator once more today as we travel south towards Lake Bunyonyi - a small lake with an abundance of bird life.

Surrounded by mountain ranges, Lake Bunyonyi boasts a large otter population and is the ideal place to relax before our journey to see the mountain gorillas. We'll have a briefing this evening on what to expect tomorrow.

Route: Lake Kikorongo to Lake Bunyoni

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with en-suite bathrooms

OVERNIGHT: Lake Bunyonyi Overland Resort

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 9: Gorilla Trekking and Lake Bunyonyi

Today, we head out in search of the endangered mountain gorillas. It's estimated that there are only around 650 left in the wild today.

One of the best ways to protect these beautiful animals is by visiting them, as money spent on permits are used to fund their protection.

One of the most important factors in the future conservation of the mountain gorillas lies with in community development - if the attitudes of the local communities' changes towards protecting the wildlife around them instead of poaching - the battle in protecting mountain gorillas can be won.

Permits granting permission to visit the gorillas are limited, so flexibility is required in both the tour itinerary and where we visit them.

The home of the mountain gorillas is completely at odds with man-made borders and so their range encompasses Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

We prefer to make use of the national parks of Uganda, but depending on the availability of the permits, we may travel to Rwanda or the DRC, in which case you will be advised in advance.

During your free time in Bunyonyi there are several optional activities available, including hiking, mountain biking, visiting a Pygmy village or heading into Rwanda.

Route: Lake Bunyonyi National Park to the gorilla trek starting point (using safari or smaller vehicles)

Local Options: Rwanda day trip, Pygmy trip, Gorilla trek (requires advance booking and payment for your Gorilla permit)

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with en-suite bathrooms

OVERNIGHT: Lake Bunyonyi Overland Resort

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: Options available while on tour (KEOVGP)

Day 10: Gorilla trekking and Lake Bunyonyi

We allocate two days to gorilla trekking; however, we only spend one day on the trek. The other days are dedicated to providing a large enough window to obtain permits and to allow the entire group to see these beautiful animals.

If you did your gorilla trek yesterday then other options are available today including a visit to Nyombi Village, a Pygmy village which is reached by motor boat from Bunyonyi Resort. Here you have the opportunity to learn about the culture of the Pygmies, giving you great insight into their daily lives.

Local Options: Rwanda day trip, Pygmy trip, Gorilla trek (if not completed yesterday)

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with en-suite bathrooms

OVERNIGHT: Lake Bunyonyi Overland Resort

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: Gorilla Permit || Options available while on tour (KEOVGP)

Day 11: Lake Mburo

We depart the beautiful Lake Bunyonyi for another of Uganda's beautiful water bodies – Lake Mburo. Lake Mburo is

situated in the Ankole sub - region of Uganda, near the town of Mbarara , and spans an area of approximately 260 square kilometers and is surrounded by rolling hills, open grasslands, and patches of woodland. With over 350 recorded bird species, Lake Mburo National Park is a paradise for birdwatchers. The park's diverse ecosystems, which include acacia woodlands, savannahs, and wetlands, provide optimal habitats for numerous bird species, including the rare and odd looking shoebill stork

Route: Lake Bunyonyi to Lake Mburo

Facilities: Both camping and accommodated options stay in rooms with en-suite bathrooms

OVERNIGHT: Leopard Rest

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 12: To Jinja

This morning we leave the Ankole region and set off on our return journey to Jinja . Jinja offers many exciting optional activities which are focussed around the waters of the Nile and these include rafting, kayaking and a variety of cruises on Africa's largest river. While those who may be less inclined to water sports can enjoy horse riding or a quadbike adventure on dry land.

Route: Mburo to Jinja

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with shared ablutions

OVERNIGHT: Kalagala Falls Tented and Overland Camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 13: Free time for activities in Jinja

Jinja offers plenty of activities to take advantage of, most centred around the Nile River. They include kayaking, river rafting and cruises on Africa's largest river.

For those looking to do something else other than water sports, horse-riding and quad biking are available as well.

Route: Kampala to Jinja Local Options: Quad biking, kayaking, rafting

Facilities - Camping: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with shared ablutions

OVERNIGHT: Kalagala Falls Tented and Overland Camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: Options available while on tour (KEOVGP)

Day 14: Back to Kenya

We leave Jinja today and cross from Uganda into Kenya at the Busia/Malaba border post before making our way to Eldoret - Kenya's fifth largest city. The Great Rift Valley is the most prominent geographical feature of this region, with the city rising at 2100 metres above sea level.

Route: Jinja to Eldoret

Facilities - Camping

: Campsite with shared ablutions

Facilities - Accommodated: Rooms with shared ablutions

OVERNIGHT: Naiberi River Camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: Single room supplement (THSHSH) || Extra day in La Paz - pre-tour || Extra day in La Paz - post-tour

Day 15: Finish in Nairobi

After our time searching for the Big Five and mountain gorillas, the tour comes to an end back in the big city of in Nairobi this afternoon. Groups often arrange a final dinner out tonight to swap stories and exchange contact details.

We strongly recommend that you book at least one more night post-tour rather than flying out late this evening in case of any delays. We can help you in organising extra accommodation if required.

Route: Eldoret to Nairobi

Note: The itinerary for this tour is flexible and may be changed without notice to give the group the best possible opportunities for viewing the Mountain Gorillas. The Permit price to visit the Gorillas can also change without notice.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra day in Nairobi - post-tour || Departure airport transfer in Nairobi

Included

- 14 night's accommodation as per the itinerary
- Transport in a 25-seat expedition vehicle
- Safari vehicles in the Masai Mara, Lake Nakuru and where required
- All 'included highlights' as mentioned in the itinerary
- 2 truck crew (driver/guide plus assistant/cook)
- Local guides for sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded

- International Flights (available on request)
- Visa fees if required
- Optional activities (see itinerary and tour notes)
- Gorilla permits (see options)
- 2024 Kenyan Park Fees increase (£130-£170)
- Travel Insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guides & drivers
- Entrance fees and activities not mentioned above
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Gorilla Permit

Min numbers: 1

This permit covers the cost of the one day gorilla trek featured on this tour as well as transport to and from the forest, admin and currency fees. You will be invoiced for the cost of this permit with your deposit, and upon confirmation of your booking and receipt of payment, the Gorilla permit is bought and paid for. Gorilla permit numbers per day are limited, and once purchased the permit is non refundable, and unfortunately it can not be transferred to another person or a different date if you cancel or change your travel date.

Price: Starting from - \$775

Single room supplement accommodated

Min numbers: 1

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour if you have booked the Accommodated option. Room shares are not available on this tour, so if you are single traveller then you will need to add this option to your booking.

Price: Starting from - \$180

Extra day in Nairobi - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing. Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Price: Starting from - \$80

Extra day in Nairobi - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing. Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Price: Starting from - \$80

Options available while on tour

Min numbers: 1

These options are available while you are on the tour from local activity providers who your booking will be with. Prices are given as a guide and are subject to change. Kenya Masai Mara Tips for Guide - per day | \$12 to \$20 Uganda Jinja Nile Cruise | \$45 to \$65 Nile River Rafting (half day) | \$170 to \$270 On Trek Tips for Guide - per day |

\$20 to \$35 Bwindi Area Pygmy village visit (boat hire) (2020) | From \$80

Price: Starting from - \$0

Arrival airport transfer in Nairobi

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an arrival airport transfer in Nairobi to your Overland tour with us. You will need to also book at least one night of pre-tour hotel accommodation with us in order to book this transfer. Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

Price: Starting from - \$50

Departure airport transfer in Nairobi

Min numbers: 1

This option adds a departure airport transfer in Nairobi to your Overland tour with us. You will need to also book at least one night of post-tour hotel accommodation with us in order to book this transfer. Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

Price: Starting from - \$50

1. Accommodation

We provide two options for the accommodation on this Overland tour, both available on the trip. Each option stays in the same place each night, just using a different level of accommodation. On some nights both options will use the same rooms or tents - please see the itinerary for details.

Camping: As the name suggests, the majority of your time will be spent camping. We include easily erected tents and camping mattresses; all you need to bring is a sleeping bag & towel (and pillow if you need one). Some nights spent in towns and cities may be spent in hotel or lodge rooms instead of camping - please see the itinerary for details. Prices are based on 2 sharing so if you are travelling as a single passenger you should expect to share a tent with another traveller of the same sex. During hotel stays, all couples will be given a private double room. Friends booking together will also share a room. Triple rooms are not generally available.

Accommodated: This level is designed to bridge the gap between a basic camping tour and an expensive lodge holiday. So, we use good quality hotels, lodges and camps rated at the local 2 to 4-star level, with the majority of rooms en-suite. In some places more basic properties with separate bathrooms, or permanent safari tents may be used. We aim always to use accommodation that is in keeping with the local area so there is a good variety. Local star ratings may vary slightly from international standards. Accommodation is based on twin or double rooms, chalets, bungalows or safari tents. All couples will be given a private double room. Friends booking together will also share a room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

Note - Accommodation providers are subject to change without notice. The properties listed are our preferred options, but sometimes due to availability or other issues with the property, we may substitute another property of similar standards.

2. Destination Guides

Masai Mara National Reserve

The Masai Mara National Reserve covers some 1 530 square km and is bounded by the Serengeti Park to the south, the Siria escarpment to the west and Masai pastoral ranches to the north, east and west. The terrain of the reserve is primarily open savannah grassland with seasonal riverlets. Wildebeest, zebra and Thomson's gazelle migrate into and occupy the Mara reserve from the Serengeti plains to the south and Loita plains in the pastoral ranches to the north-east, from July to October or later. The Great Migration is one of the most impressive natural events worldwide, involving some 1.5 million wildebeests, 360 000 Thomson's gazelles and 191 000 zebras. These numerous migrants are followed along their annual, circular route by a block of hungry predators, most notably lions and hyena.

All members of the 'Big 5' are found in the Masai Mara, although the population of black rhinoceros is severely threatened, with a population of only 37 recorded in 2000. Hippopotami are found in large groups in the Masai Mara and Talek rivers. Cheetah is also found, although their numbers are threatened. Additionally, over 450 species of birdlife have been identified in the park, including vultures, marabou storks, secretary birds, hornbills, crowned cranes, ostriches, long-crested eagles and African pygmy-falcons.

The park was named after the people who have made their homes in the area for centuries, the Masai. The Masai Mara tribe is arguably the most famous of all African tribes and have been in the region of the Masai Mara Reserve for centuries, using the plains to feed their livestock, hunt and make their homes. While visiting the reserve you'll have the opportunity to meet the Masai, visit their villages and learn about their customs.

Lake Nakuru National Park

Lake Nakuru National Park is named after the alkaline lake that it encircles. Nakuru means 'dry or dusty place' in the Masai language. Although it was initially established as a bird sanctuary, it is now home to a surprisingly large number of animal species, including the Big Four – lion, leopard, rhino and buffalo but sadly there are no elephants in the park. Lake Nakuru is famous for the vast flocks of flamingos that line its shores, attracted by the abundance of

algae. It is also a sanctuary for black and white rhino and has recently been extended to protect these endangered animals.

Lake Bunyoni

Lake Bunyoni ("Place of many little birds") lies on the border of Rwanda. It is 25 km long and 7 km wide, covering an area of 61 square km. The depth of the lake is rumoured to vary between 44 m and 900 m, which if true would make the lake the second deepest in Africa. It is one of the few lakes in the region that is free of bilharzia and safe for swimming (please check locally for up to date information). Its 29 islands are concentrated in the central part. These islands have few settlements, mostly tourist facilities, schools and missions.

Jinja

Jinja was formerly a fishing village that benefited from being on long-distance trade routes. The city was founded in 1901 by the British, as an administrative centre for the Provincial Government Headquarters for Busoga region. This was around the time that Lake Victoria's importance in transport rose due to the Uganda Railway linking Kisumu, a Kenyan town on the lake, with Mombasa on the Indian Ocean, 1 400 km away. Cotton-packing, nearby sugar estates and railway access all enabled Jinja to grow in size. In 1906 a street pattern was laid out and Indian traders moved in from around 1910.

Jinja once had a large East Indian community until they were expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1971 and 1972. Much of Jinja's architecture is Indian-influenced, although the detailed shop-fronts and buildings were poorly maintained after the Indians left. Local industrial concerns also collapsed. Many of the East Indians who are now returning to Uganda are choosing to set up businesses again.

Eldoret

Eldoret, strangely, is a Kenyan town founded by Afrikaners in 1910. The town was originally known as 64 or "Sisibo" by the locals, because it was established at the 64th mile post on the wagon route from Londiani. In 1908, the Eldoret area had been settled by Afrikaans-speaking South Africans who "trekked" there from Nakuru after a journey from South Africa by sea and by rail from Mombasa. Other European and Asian settlers and traders began arriving shortly afterwards. When the governor decided to establish an administrative centre the town was officially named Eldoret in 1912. Becoming an administrative centre caused an enormous increase in trade within the prospective city. A bank and several shops were built.

Eldoret is the hometown of numerous legendary Kenyan runners, the most renowned of whom is Kipchoge Keino. The high altitude is an ideal training ground for many middle and long distance athletes. The runners from Eldoret have contributed significantly to the economy of Eldoret town from their winnings in races all over the world.

Nairobi

Nairobi is the capital and largest city in Kenya. The name "Nairobi" comes from the Masai phrase Enkare Nyirobi, which translates to "the place of cool waters". However, it is popularly known as the "Green City in the Sun" and is surrounded by several expanding villa suburbs.

Founded in 1899 as a simple rail depot on the railway linking Mombasa to Uganda, the town quickly grew to become the capital of British East Africa in 1907 and eventually the capital of a free Kenyan republic in 1963. During Kenya's colonial period, the city became a centre for the colony's coffee, tea and sisal industry. Nairobi is the most populated city in East Africa, with a current estimated population of about 3 million.

Nairobi is now one of the most prominent cities in Africa politically and financially. Home to many companies and organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme and the UN Office in Africa, Nairobi is a hub for business and culture. The Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE) is one of the largest in Africa, ranked fourth in terms of trading volume and capable of making 10 million trades a day. The Globalization and World Cities Study Group and Network (GaWC) defines Nairobi as a prominent social centre.

3. Transport

This tour is run in conjunction with our local partners in South Africa. You will travel in one of their specially designed overland trucks throughout this tour, giving you a great vantage point from which to enjoy the scenery and incredible wildlife. Our professional and knowledgeable local guides will help to make your experience unforgettable and fun. The maximum number of people on this tour is 20 (the trucks have 25 seats)

The vehicles we use are amongst some of the finest on the road. However, do not forget the nature of an adventure tour. This is not a bus trip. Nor do we provide up-market tours. These are still tours aimed at the adventurous traveller. Though the vehicles are comfortable with large windows and great visibility, there are no onboard toilets or air-conditioning.

Each expedition vehicle is fitted with the following:

- Freezers to keep food fresh in the African heat.
- Individual seats with seat belts and ample leg-room
- Overhead luggage racks.
- Lockers for your backpacks (~35 cm square, 80cm deep)
- A safe for your valuables.
- A well-stocked first aid kit is on hand for emergencies.
- Reading material (fiction & field guides), games and recreational gear to keep you well entertained.
- I-pod/MP3 points
- Charging facilities for cameras, batteries etc
- PA System
- Kitchen and stove
- Water tank
- Cooler boxes
- Table for food preparation
- Hand-dishwashing facilities

Partaking in an adventure tour in Africa involves covering hundreds if not thousands of kilometres in a truck, and our tours are as much about this journey as they are about the destinations we visit. Use your time in the truck to talk to your fellow travellers, play card games, have a drink, walk around, take note of the world passing by your window and make the most of this unique opportunity to step out of your comfort zone.

Some roads you travel on will be smooth and easy while others could take up to an hour to cover 1 kilometre (though this is very rare on this route unless there has been extreme recent weather). There is just no telling what could happen with road, rainfall, traffic and other conditions that may exist that will either increase or decrease the amount of time you spend on the road so take your watch off, put your iPad away, turn off your phone and just relax. An average driving day could take anything from 4-5 up to the whole day. We will stop for shopping, bathroom breaks, photo stops, activities and a whole lot more. However, if you are looking to only experience specific destinations and are not interested in the journey, perhaps overland adventures are not for you.

Some game safaris are carried out using 4x4 jeeps/safari vehicles - see your tour itinerary for details. These may be open-roofed or enclosed. You must not leave the vehicle or lean out through windows without express permission from the guide.

Transport to the Masai Mara from Nairobi is done in a minibus.

4. International Flights and Airport Transfers

International Flights: We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people living in different places and with varying travel plans, except on some Escorted Tours and package promotions, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure

airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

The vast majority of our tours are designed such that you can arrive and depart at any time on the first and last days of the set tour itinerary, with your arrival and departure airport transfers included in the tour price. However, on our **Overland tours**, you should not arrange your onward international flights or other travel for the day the tour is due to end (unless the final day does not involve any travelling and finishes after breakfast). Similarly, many of our Overland tours depart their first port of call on the first morning, and you will therefore need to plan for any flights to arrive at least one day beforehand.

Airport Transfers: Arrival and departure airport transfers are included on Small Group, Shoestring and Tailor-made tours but available as extra options on all our African Overland tours, as long as you have accommodation booked with us on that day. If you add extra accommodation before and/or after the tour that you do not book with us, then you will also need to arrange your own airport transfers.

Departure Taxes: Various countries may require that you pay an Airport Departure Tax when departing on an international flight. Please note that all departure taxes must be paid in hard cash currency and US Dollars are normally the best currency to use for this. Departure taxes can vary from US\$10 - US\$60 depending on the departure point.

Flight inclusive packages: We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. So, the expedition vehicles we use on our South & East Africa overland adventure tours have a maximum of 25 seats and on this tour will carry a maximum of 20 travellers.

In South & East Africa we provide fully trained, local English-speaking tour leaders, drivers and crew for all our tours. This tour will feature 2 crew – a driver, and tour leader. Between them they will help with the cooking, washing up, clearing away, cleaning of the truck etc. You may assist with this if you wish, and a limited amount of help is expected and appreciated (eg. Washing your own plates & cutlery) but you are not obliged to do any more than that unless you wish to. The tour leaders are not specialist licensed guides however, but during the tour we may also use a variety of local guides for activities and tours included in the itinerary.

6. Tipping on Overland tours

In general tipping in restaurants is expected and is around 10% for good service, more if you have received exceptional service, and, feel free not to tip at all if you received poor service. Tipping taxi drivers etc is really at your own discretion and not always expected. If in doubt please ask your guides. It is expected to tip porters and car guards etc. Ask your guides how much is appropriate in local currency. The recommended amount for Serengeti and Masai Mara guides is around USD5-7 per client per day. Our guides do work hard but they are also paid at (and often above) industry levels for this work. Our Crew can be tipped if you feel that they have done a good job and/or gone above and beyond the call of duty. The best way to arrange tips is to elect one person in the group to collect the money. We recommend USD1-2 (or about R10-R20) per day per person, per guide as a fair tip. So if you have 2-crew on a tour, we would recommend that 2 envelopes are used and each crew member's name written on one. Place what you feel is fair into each envelope and the elected person can give these to the crew at the end of the tour. If you do not feel that the crew deserve a tip, please, do not tip them. You must remember that tipping is only for exceptional service and is not at all compulsory or expected.

7. Gorilla Permits and Local Options

On all our Overland tours we strive to strike a balance between including plenty of meals, tours and activities and being accessible and affordable.

The main tour price covers all your accommodation, transport, most meals and a range of tours and activities.

There are also some **Locally Available Options** on this tour. These have been chosen to give you more of a taste of what is available in the region and sometimes to offer an adrenaline rush during a relatively sedate tour. All these local options are offered and operated by professional local activity providers and Encounters Travel is not responsible for your booking or time while taking any of these options. Prices for these options may be given on our website, but please bear in mind that are given as a guide only and may vary seasonally and can change from time to time. Availability is subject to seasonal daylight hours and our time-keeping that day.

This tour also requires a separate advance payment (with your deposit) for a **Gorilla Permit** needed for your gorilla trek in Uganda. Prices for these permits can be discounted by the local authorities from time to time and we will pass on any current discounts available when you book. Gorilla permits are not transferrable to different names or dates. Please check the Options section for more information and prices.

8. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

South Africa: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Namibia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Botswana: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted or travelled through an infected area.

Zimbabwe: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if

arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Zambia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Malawi: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Tanzania: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Kenya: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Uganda: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Sudan: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area. A certificate may also be required for those departing Sudan.

Morocco: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this [US CDC information](#) about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate organised in advance and with you and to hand during the trip.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

If you are travelling on an Overland tour or your trip includes wildlife safaris then please bear in mind that you may be travelling on bumpy roads and/or rough ground for several hours at a time. This can be very uncomfortable or painful if you have a bad back, and make such conditions worse. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

9. Passports and Visas

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities. Encounters Travel will not be held responsible if travellers are denied entry because they are not in possession of the relevant visas. We therefore recommend you re-check requirements with the relevant embassy/consulate around 4 weeks before travel.

You should also be in possession of a valid onward or return flight ticket, or proof of other means of transport enabling you to leave the country that your tour passes through or finishes in. In addition you should carry proof of sufficient funds to cover you during your time in the country (eg. credit card).

Should your tour be re-entering a country, please ensure that you have a multiple entry visa that allows this. Some countries have a visa on arrival service which can be more convenient and cheaper. However, for peace of mind and to speed up the border crossing process, Encounters Travel advises that you to get your visas prior to your trip

if possible.

10. Meals on Overland tours

Due to the nature of the overland trip, the majority of your meals will be cooked by our crew and eaten beside the vehicle. Meals will not normally be eaten within the accommodation. The reason we run our trips in this way is that we feel it fits in better with this type of trip and it also helps to keep our prices competitive with other companies offering similar tours.

Breakfast: As breakfast is served very early in the morning (if there is driving or activities to be done) it is a simple but filling breakfast: Tea and coffee, breads and spreads, cereals, yoghurts, fruits and on occasion, when there is time for a later breakfast, the crew will serve a hot breakfast of scrambled eggs, porridge, bacon or beans.

Lunch: Lunch is generally served at a picnic spot next to the road en route to a destination. As the crew only have approximately 45 minutes to get everyone off the truck, prepare lunch and then get everyone back on the truck again, lunches consist of sandwiches and salads (rice salad, pasta salad, tuna salad and green salad) which are quick and easy to prepare but which are quite filling. They do have meal plans which they should stick to, to ensure that there is variety on a day to day basis.

Dinner: This is when the crew get time to prepare a delicious meal and they focus on a substantial protein, vegetable and carbohydrate dinner. We serve traditional cuisine consisting of braais (BBQ), potjie (stew), bobotie (mince), spaghetti and fish and chicken dishes. All meals (on both accommodated and camping tours) that are included in the itinerary are prepared at the full service adventure truck. This is a unique adventure in itself where you get to dine under the stars with your new found friends and experience the real sights and sounds of Africa!

11. What to take

LUGGAGE ALLOWANCES: Most international airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 23kg per person of luggage to go in the hold of the plane. Domestic flights often have smaller allowances around 15kg. As airline rules vary we recommend that you take no more than 20kg of luggage if your tour just includes international flights, and no more than 15kg if there are any domestic flights included in your itinerary. Please ask us for details if you are unsure about luggage allowances on your tour. Any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility to cover. Most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage so we suggest that you take no more than 5kg unless you have confirmed that your airline(s) will allow more than this.

OVERLAND AND SAFARI TOURS: Please keep in mind that these are adventure tours in an adventure vehicle (truck or 4x4) and luggage should not include any solid Samsonite style suitcases. On our accommodated overland tours most of our trucks have lockers for the luggage (locker sizes: 37,5 cm high, 32 cm wide, 80 cm deep). Only a soft bag will fit in these lockers. A suitcase is far more difficult to store and make secure in our vehicle and this is part of the reason we ask for a backpack or tote bag to be used as your luggage. The other reason is that you need to walk from the truck to the accommodation and often over sand or uneven terrain. Your luggage on our Overland tours is limited to ONE backpack and ONE daypack weighing no more than 20kg. As a general rule, if you cannot lift your own luggage - you've got too much stuff! Most people make the mistake of bringing too many clothes. A quick reminder - **suitcases are not suitable on our overland tours** – especially huge Samsonite-style cases! **Small** wheeled cases are OK for safari tours.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST: Kit for all weather conditions including: • 2/3 shorts/skirts • 1 jacket/anorak • Tracksuit/pullover • 2 pairs of long pants/jeans • 2 pairs of walking shoes/boots/trainers • 1 pair of sandals • 3 or 4 T-shirts/short sleeve shirts or sundresses • 2/3 Long Sleeve Shirts • Smart casual change of clothes • Swimwear • Underwear & socks • Sun Hat – preferably that covers the back of your neck. • Raincoat • Kikoi/sarong

Your clothing should be easy to wash and dry and should preferably not need ironing. Avoid synthetics, which can be very uncomfortable in hot weather. Many people underestimate how cold Africa can be – remember that

jersey/jacket! There are also nights that are warm but you must still wear clothes that cover arms and legs from mosquitoes. Take a set of casual but smart clothes for the occasional evening out in a restaurant or club. If you wear glasses (or contacts) it is also advisable to bring a spare pair.

While on wildlife safaris it is important to wear dull coloured clothing - olive, mushroom, brown, khaki, stone are ideal.

You should avoid white (stands out too much), black or blue (attracts tsetse flies), and camouflage (illegal in many countries for civilians)

Additional Items: • Towel & facecloth • Baby wipes/ Wet Wipes • Personal toiletries • Sleeping bag • Torch & enough spare batteries • Camera & spare batteries and memory cards • Water bottle. (A 2-litre Coke bottle works well...) • Penknife • Insect and Mosquito repellent • Suntan lotion, sun block & after sun lotion • Sunglasses • Watch • Biodegradable laundry detergent • Passport (plus a copy of your passport & visas) • Extra passport photos • Vaccination certificate • Money • Travel plug • Neck pillow • Small sewing kit • Plastic bags • Clothes line and pegs • Small scrubbing brush • a small padlock for your luggage locker in the truck • Small basic First Aid kit (painkillers, band aids, after-sun lotion, eye drops, anti-diarrhoea tablets etc.)

DAY PACKS: Please check the itinerary for your specific tour if you will need a little daypack. For example on our Cape Town to Vic Falls overland tour you will need a smaller bag, big enough to bring basic equipment (toiletries and clothes) for 2 nights. The daypack is for your Okavango Delta Excursion, where you cannot bring your entire luggage.

12. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

13. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).

14. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

15. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water

bottles).

- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

16. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

17. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
