

# Wild! Kenya

10 Day Safari with  
Wildlife Photographer NJ Wight



# Wild! Kenya

March 02-March 12, 2018

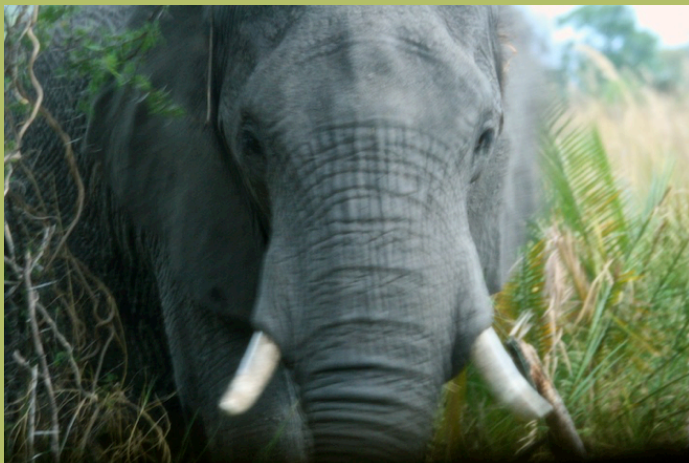
June 28-July 08, 2018

I am currently working through the last pieces of the itinerary for a fabulous adventure to Kenya in 2018. A finalized itinerary, booking requirements and deposit dates will be forthcoming for those interested, but for now, this should help you make a decision that it is time to start planning this trip of a lifetime! (<http://www.njwight.com/kenya-safari/>)

## **Why Kenya?**

I have visited Africa 8 times and spent over 150 nights across 6 countries—all of them remarkable! But I have returned to Kenya five times. To me, it is the Africa of my imagination. Everything I thought an African safari could be, I have found in Kenya. Wild and wide open spaces, gorgeous light, big skies, friendly people and more wildlife than I have seen anywhere else. It is my *happy place* and I cannot wait to show it to you!

This will be a wildlife adventure and you will be spending your time in the bush, albeit in very capable hands and very comfortable accommodations. However, the properties are not fenced and you will truly feel the magic of the African bush all around you! Animals routinely walk through camp—while you are fast asleep or enjoying your morning coffee. It is not unusual to walk out of your room in the afternoon to find an antelope leisurely grazing close-by. Anything can happen but rest assured, you will always be safe.



*A young male elephant appeared at the window of my tent while I was getting dressed one morning. He may have got a glimpse of my naked backside, but he was a polite gentleman and put his head down to eat. He might have been more startled than I...*

There are various different price points for African safaris and the trip I am hosting would be considered in the mid range. Here are a few important factors to consider:

1. This is a fly-in safari (as opposed to overland.) By this I mean that we will *not* be spending long periods of time in trucks driving across the country. We will be flying in light aircrafts, combined with shorter transfers by vehicle. It is always fun to spend some time on the roads in Africa, but you do not want to be spending your short visit with long days traveling between camps.
2. We will be staying at intimate, award-winning properties—especially in terms of location, comfort, service and conservation mandates.
3. The number of people in a vehicle will be limited to four, as opposed to the usual six+ at other camps. These smaller Land Cruisers are more easily positioned for wildlife viewing. The large side openings provide great visibility and camera supports for photography.
4. We will be spending our time with *highly* trained guides who have spent years living and working in the bush.
5. This adventure will be limited to a very small group size: minimum six, maximum eight.
6. From the moment you land in Nairobi until you return for your flights home, you will have on-the-ground contacts making sure everything runs smoothly. All transfers will be organized and are included.
7. On-site photography assistance for those trying to take better photos and pre-trip camera equipment guidance.
8. Pre-trip preparation, including what to pack and how to prepare for your adventure. (Visa, medical information, maps etc.) Wildlife and birding resources for those who want to learn as much as they can before traveling. Expert coaching on what everyone needs to know about going to the bathroom while on safari!
9. The experience of traveling with a knowledgeable and enthusiastic photographer who will happily answer your questions as well as guide you in the proper cocktail choices for sundowners.



## Adventure Overview

We will be traveling with the Gold Eco-Rated Kicheche Camps in game-rich conservancies in both the Masai Mara and Laikipia region. I have stayed at all of **their camps multiple times and assure you we will be in EXCELLENT hands.**

Our first night in Nairobi, followed by three nights at three different camps. For travellers arriving from North America, you will likely depart on the March 1st and there are a number of different routes through Europe. For those in Europe, you can travel in one day arriving the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The flight home is also overnight through Europe so arrival back in NA would be March 13<sup>th</sup>.

**INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS ARE NOT INCLUDED.**

March and June in Kenya is considered mid-season. High season for travel is between late July and October as the migration passes through. The heavy rains are generally in April-May, and a lighter rain season is in November. But honestly, weather patterns are so very unpredictable. I just returned from Kenya in March and the weather was great. However, we did have some very heavy rains on a few afternoons, but they are generally over in an hour and they certainly didn't interrupt the animals. It also brought out the new green grass, which was beautiful to see. On my visit last June the grasses were high and the migration was early. I will advise on how to pack for all possibilities.

We will be spending our time in open 4x4 Land Cruisers which are fabulous for viewing game! You can also stand up to view out the top of the truck. If there is a downpour, a canvas roof easily rolls across and plastic windows roll down. The temperatures before sunrise and after sunset can be a little cool, and even more so while driving in an open vehicle! I wear several layers when I head out and take on and take off as needed. Back at camp, midday can get quite hot.

*“The only man I envy is the man who has not yet been to Africa – for he has so much to look forward to.”*

*Richard Mullin*





**Day 2,3,4**

## **Nairobi to Ol Pejeta Conservancy**

As most international flights arrive in the evening, our trip begins with an overnight in a Nairobi hotel (TBD). You will be met at the *Jomo Kenyatta International Airport* and transferred to the hotel. We will meet for an early breakfast and the group will then be transferred to Wilson airport for our flight to Nanyuki and transfer to the *Ol Pejeta* conservancy Laikipia.

Once a working cattle ranch, the conservancy was a trailblazer in conservation and today it is the largest black rhino sanctuary in east Africa. *Ol Pejeta* is a vast 90000-acre wildlife area between the Aberdares and the majestic Mount Kenya and in addition to rhinos, it has some of the largest predator densities in Kenya and yet, it is still a working cattle ranch. The conservancy is community-focused and supports the communities living around its borders. In 2014 *Ol Pejeta* achieved IUCN Green List status, one of only two conservancies in Africa to achieve this distinction.

We will spend three nights at camp enjoying game drives twice a day and dining al-fresco under the Africa sky. The six tents overlook a watering hole which attracts wildlife throughout the day. In the evening, sink into an arm chair in front of the fire in the well-furnished lounge and relax with a pre-dinner cocktail.



Day 5, 6, 7

## Olare Montorogi Conservancy



On day 5 we will take an early morning game drive and head back to the *Nanyuki* airstrip for our light aircraft flight to the *Olare Montorogi Conservancy*. Upon arrival, we will be met at the airstrip and take a game drive to *Kicheche Bush Camp*, home for the next three nights of adventure.

The *Olare Montogori Conservancy* covers an area of 33,000 acres directly adjoining the *Maasai Mara National Reserve* to the south and is an area of outstanding beauty and importance for wildlife.



Founded in 2006 through a landmark conservation initiative that brought together 277 Maasai landowners, it has become the blueprint for Mara wildlife conservancies. The area encompasses the lower river valleys of the Olare Orok and Ntiakitiak rivers, together with the associated riverine woodland. The OMC also features the impressive Ntiakitiak Gorge and a beautiful escarpment of some 12 kms in length. Below the

escarpment are extensive areas of acacia woodland, which are important habitats for a number of wildlife species.

The conservancy offers some of the *highest wildlife population densities in east Africa* and all the big cats are present and accounted for! Tourism in the conservancy is limited to only five mobile



camps with a total of less than 100 beds. This very low ratio of game viewing vehicles to land area is aimed at ensuring the best possible experience of wildlife viewing while minimizing the environmental impact of tourism. Only visitors staying at one of these small camps are allowed to drive in the conservancy. In the *Maasai Mara National Park* an exciting sighting can result in more than a dozen trucks sitting close-by. This is not the case in the private conservancies where strict policies are in place to restrict the number of vehicles at a viewing ensuring you have a peaceful and safe experience watching wildlife.



We will be staying at the intimate, Eco-Award winning Bush Camp which includes only six spacious, luxury tents with en-suite bathrooms, flushing toilets and hot safari bucket showers. Solar power is available 24 hours a day and meals are eaten either alfresco or in the well furnished dining tent. We will enjoy two game drives each day and have lots of opportunity to explore the surrounding area. We might even have an encounter with Fig, the popular resident leopard.



**“If ever I have seen magic, it has been in Africa.”** John Hemmingway

**Days 8,9,10**

## **Mara North Conservancy**

We will leave the OMC on a game drive in the early morning and transfer by road driving through local communities and farms to the bordering *Mara North Conservancy*, arriving at camp before lunch.



Forming the north-western zone of the Maasai Mara ecosystem, the *Mara North Conservancy* boasts 74,000 acres of pristine wilderness and wildlife viewing. It is one of the largest community and private sector owned conservations areas in the world and works towards ensuring community livelihoods, controlled grazing and low impact tourism. The Maasai Mara ecosystem holds one of the densest lion populations in Africa and a thriving population can be

found in the Mara North. In addition to the lions, there are over 95 species of mammals and 570 recorded species of birds.

Our next three nights will be at the eight tent *Kicheche Mara Camp*, situated in a beautiful acacia valley overlooking the Olare Orok stream. Each of the tents are comfortably furnished with an ensuite bathroom, flushing toilet and hot safari shower, and low wattage lighting is supplied 24 hours.







All tents overlook the Olare Orok stream and the western escarpment of the valley. It is not uncommon to have zebras and gazelle roaming out in your “front yard” and you will learn special security techniques to keep the baboons from “exploring” your tent. The spacious lounge area is comfortably furnished and a great place to relax and share stories with the group.

*(For updates from my 2016 trip, check out Mara Musings: <http://www.njwight.com/masai-mara-musings/>)*



***“You know you are truly alive when you are living among lions.”***  
***Karen Blitzen; Out of Africa***

## Return to Nairobi

After our morning game drive we will head to the airstrip for our flight back to Wilson Airport in Nairobi. We will be met at the airport by a local car service and will visit one or two interesting Nairobi sites before stopping for dinner and then on to the International Airport for flights home.



## A Typical Day on Safari

*(Check out the video here for some highlights. <http://www.njwight.com/kenya-safari/>)*

So, what is a typical day out on safari? Well, no two days are ever the same when you are out in the bush. Anything can happen. Your guides all work together and share information over the radios and follow up on previous sightings from the day before. Often you will set off in search of something specific but be ready to change plans depending on what presents itself. The wildlife sets the schedule.



At around 5:30 am you will be woken up in your tent with a steaming cup of Kenyan coffee or tea and a plate of biscuits. Your Askari will escort you up to the main area to climb on the trucks for a 6 am departure with your guides. We will be setting off just before the sun comes up in search of predators that may still be hunting. We will pack a picnic breakfast and around 9 or 9:30 we will stop somewhere to stretch our legs and eat a delicious meal out in the bush.

Depending on what is happening, we will return to camp around 11am to relax and meet for lunch

around 1 pm. You can spend your time around camp reading, napping or just soaking in the scenery from your tent or the main lounge area. At around 3:30 we meet again for a coffee or tea before heading out on the trucks again. Afternoon drives continue until dark with a stop for a sundowner along the way (the ultimate happy hour!) We will be back at camp around 7 in time to clean up and enjoy cocktails around the fire and dinner under the stars.

*(Times are an approximation as game drives are always dictated by wildlife sightings.)*



### **Included in your rate:**

- Trip preparation information, packing lists, wildlife and birding resources
- Photography assistance before and during the safari
- International airport transfers in Nairobi
- Three flights within Kenya, including transfer to and from airstrips
- 10 nights of luxury tented accommodation: double occupancy per person
- All meals and drinks including beer, wine and cocktails (except premium spirits)
- Laundry at lodges (except in Nairobi)
- All park and conservancy entrance fees
- All camp activities and game drives
- All taxes and service fees
- Photographic souvenir

### **What is not included:**

- International Airfare
- Trip insurance (It is mandatory to have travel insurance)
- Gratuities for camp staff, guides etc. (at your discretion)

### **Contact me for 2018 prices.**

**(There is limited single accommodation with a supplement on a first come, first serve basis.)**

20% non-refundable deposit to confirm booking. (Your deposit secures your reservation.)

80% balance due at minimum 90 days before travel.

\* All payments are in US dollars and will be made directly to Kicheche Camps. All other information, document circulation and arrangements will be made directly with me.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at: [njw@sympatico.ca](mailto:njw@sympatico.ca)