



South Kenya Special : Tusks & Twilight

Photographic tour with tour leaders Mark Sisson & Dave Cox

19th February - 1st March 2027

Trip Overview

Cost includes:

All transport, accommodation, meals, soft drinks, beer & house wine, park entrance & conservancy fees and game drives and a photographic helicopter flight.

Cost excludes:

International flights, Kenya visa, sundry items, non-local alcohol (ie spirits) in camp and all alcohol in Nairobi, and tips/gratuities for camp staff and drivers and personal travel insurance.

Accommodation:

Our first night will be at a hotel near to Nairobi Airport before a morning transfer to our comfortable Lodge base in Amboseli with a full set of facilities throughout. After 4 nights here we will transfer to a comfortable wilderness camp at Shompole in the Great Rift Valley. Our accommodation here is very comfortable with each tent consisting of a main bedroom with twin or double beds, en-suite bathroom and a spacious veranda.

Costs are based on a twin room sharing basis with limited single supplements potentially available on request.

Fitness Level:

In a physical sense this is not an especially hard trip but there will be early morning and late afternoon/evening drives (but offset by rest periods during the day) whilst in Amboseli, and at Shompole we will potentially be in overnight hides for over 12 hours so it can be tiring.

LEVEL 3 - 4



Trip Overview



We've been running safaris in East Africa for a long time now and this trip offers the opportunity to really enrich the portfolio of anyone who has been travelling here for many years as well: it's that exciting and different and it's two centres offer the chance to experience and capture a very diverse and different set of images of Kenya's wildlife in the southern part of the country. The very name of Amboseli National Park well and truly whets the appetite when it comes to elephant photography - tuskers, dry and dusty scenery and the impressive backdrop of Mount Kilimanjaro combine to make it a real "go to" location. All in all, it's a stunning canvas for the full array of African wildlife to be found here offering the opportunity to take evocative and powerful images with elephants our main focus but the other attractions and settings of Amboseli fully on our radar. We then head to the less well visited but equally dramatic settings of the African Rift Valley and base ourselves at Shompole Wilderness Camp near to Lake Magadi. The lake offers excellent opportunities with large flocks of lesser flamingos, and we will have an open-door helicopter ride to capture iconic aerial images one of our mornings here. The camp also boasts some of the very best underground waterhole hides on the continent and any search on social media will reveal the potential variety of species and creative photography opportunities they offer. We will have exclusive access throughout our stay and will look to spend all 4 nights split across the different hides.

Itinerary

Day 1: We will look to arrive in Nairobi in the early evening after our international flights and will then transfer to an airport hotel for the night.

Day 2: In the morning, we will head to Wilson airport for our private charter to Amboseli National Park to the south. On arrival we will head to our base for the next 4 nights which is the very comfortable Ol Tukai Lodge. After lunch we will head out for our first afternoon game drive in the park with a full row of seats for each guest to allow full flexibility photographically. After our first drive we will return to the comfort of the Lodge and dinner before settling into the pattern of the next few very full days here.

Days 3 - 5: We will be out for sunrise every morning with a mid-day break when the light gets too harsh before returning out later in the afternoon through until sunset. The Amboseli ecosystem has one of the highest densities of elephant anywhere in Africa with huge herds of over 100 individuals so these will be our focus during our time here, especially given the dramatic settings of the dry and dusty Amboseli pan and equally dramatic backdrop of Mount Kilimanjaro. The dusty conditions throughout our time here will create dynamic photo opportunities for the full array of wildlife including lions, zebra, and buffalo all of which can look stunning in these circumstances. With the possibility of some of the last remaining large tuskers to be found in Kenya a very real possibility here too, we can be sure of a full and exciting number of days of photography.

Day 6: We will have time for a short drive on our final morning here before our private charter into the heart of the Great Rift Valley, southwest of the city and our base for the next 4 nights at Shompole Wilderness Camp. We should arrive in time for lunch and to get ourselves ready for our first of 4 overnight hide sessions in the different hides they have for our exclusive use. The hides attract wildlife as dusk approaches for beautifully lit subjects and then once the dark falls the amazing array of lighting options they provide takes things to another level: fully flexible front, side and back lighting offer an array of styles and creativity to every visiting species.



Itinerary

Days 7 - 9: We will look to spend the next 3 days and nights in a similar pattern of returning to camp first thing to freshen up, have brunch and catch up on some sleep/rest before heading out towards the end of the afternoon to resume our night-time sessions. It is worth noting that there can be an option to cut the overnight session short on a planned and daily basis should you choose. The camp is also situated near to Lake Magadi which at this time of year is home to large numbers of Lesser Flamingos and on one morning after returning to camp we have scheduled a low-level door-off helicopter flight for everyone which will allow for some amazing top down vistas and images of them as they feed and fly across the impressive patterned lake and its surrounding shores. This will be an amazing few days in a true wilderness location and we will have sole exclusive use of the camp allowing for some great encounters, experiences, and images.

Day 10: After a final night and morning of activities we will head back to Nairobi where we will have the chance to refresh at an airport hotel (day rooms available on request) before our evening international flights home.

Day 11: Arrive home in the morning after our overnight flights.



Things to bring

Our accommodation consists of both a fixed lodge and luxury tents typical of African safari venues and are all very clean and comfortable with private ensuite facilities in each location. If you have any special dietary requirements do, please let us know in advance. Bottled water is always provided in the camp. The daytime temperature is typically around 25 degrees Celsius so in terms of clothing you'll obviously need light weight and potentially shower-proof clothing with a fleece or warm outer layer for the early morning drives and evenings around the campfire. Footwear needs to be just of the sensible outdoor variety. Sun cream, a hat, lip moisturiser and sunglasses are also recommended, as we will be exposed to the sun for long periods. Malaria tablets are generally recommended, but please liaise with your doctor as to which to take and bring. Insect repellent is useful as they can occasionally be a nuisance and other items like aspirin and the like are good for peace of mind. Laundry is provided free of charge daily at camp, but they will not cater for women's underwear.

Finally in terms of tips for our drivers and camp staff then the preferred denomination for this (and any expenditure generally) is US\$ and as a rough guideline \$15 - \$20 per day for the driver is advised: there will also be camp tip boxes for the camp staff which you can optionally contribute to with a \$10 - \$15 per day recommendation. Other than this there should be no need to pay anything in the camp as all food, water, soft drinks, and local alcohol is included in the price; the only extra charge would be for non-local alcohol like foreign wines and spirits.



Camera equipment

In terms of camera kit, it very much depends on your style of photography. Lenses of up to 400mm (assuming a full frame body) will suffice for 90% of your needs as the animals can get quite close: if you want to work on your bird photography while you are here a longer lens will be required though. You should bring some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for wide-angle opportunities and an intermediate zoom (70-200 or 100-400) so that you don't miss the chance for some images that put subjects in more of a setting. In the ides there are tripod heads and plates available as well as beanbags, but you must bring the necessary plate for your camera/lens for these. Bring plenty of compact flash cards with you as well you will definitely take a lot of images! Do bear in mind the weight constraints of the small flights though, but with laundry services available in each camp then clothing at least can be minimised!

During the mid-day rests and evenings, we will have a chance to critique and look at individuals work if you so wish so, please bring anything you'd like to share. If you have any questions or concerns during the trip please ask, we are here to help.

There is power in the camp (although the generators are turned off overnight), mobile phone reception and Wi-fi too in the communal areas (although of the speed you would expect of a remote satellite-based system), so a laptop for storing/reviewing images is fine as a method of storing images as you go. Plugs are British conformation.



Useful Contact Information

Our contact numbers for the build up to and for the duration of the trip are:

Mark: +44 (0) 7905 569685

Dave: +44 (0) 7721 733870



Please don't hesitate to contact us even if you think it is a minor question, we're here to help.



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