

EASTERN AFRICA HIGHLIGHTS

ETHIOPIA

Addis Ababa This capital of Ethiopia lies at 7,000 feet above sea level and is home to the National and Ethnographic Museums that house Ethiopia's finest cultural treasures including "Lalibela," a replica of the 3.2 million year old skeleton *Australopithecus afarensis* found by Dr. Donald Johanson in Ethiopia's Afar Triangle.

Axum This northern highlands city is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in Africa, and was the capital of the ancient Aksumite kingdom, which lasted from the 1st to the 8th centuries AD at the crossroads of the three continents: Africa, Arabia and the Greco-Roman World. Its impressive ruins – monolithic obelisks, royal tombs, and churches – earned Axum UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.

Lake Tana The largest lake in Ethiopia and a center of worship for 500 years, Lake Tana also is the source for the Blue Nile and home to 37 islands scattered on its 1,860 square mile surface. About twenty of the islands shelter beautifully decorated churches and monasteries, and treasures containing medieval manuscripts, religious relics, royal treasures and other artifacts dating from the 14th to the 19th centuries.

Lalibela A living place of worship and pilgrimage in the isolated mountains of Lasta. The town of Lalibela surrounds eleven famous 12th and 13th-century Christian churches carved out of solid bedrock.

Omo National Park Ethiopia's most remote park, alongside the Omo River. In addition to great wildlife, it is home to hominid fossils up to 4 million years old. The local tribes of the Omo River Valley are happy to share their traditional way of life with visitors, including the intricate body painting and adornment for which they are known.

KENYA

Amboseli National Park Semi-desert scenery, acacia savannah, lush oases and springs and spectacular views of Mount Kilimanjaro. Melting snows from the mountain bring water underground into the park, drawing plentiful wildlife, particularly large herds of elephants,

as well as hippos, buffaloes and plains game. Opportunities for authentic cultural encounters with the Maasai.

Chyulu Hills Hemingway described the Chyulu as the "green hills of Africa." It is also a Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust that protects this legendary place within the Amboseli-Tsavu ecosystem. It spans over one million acres, and is an important wildlife corridor. Its hills are covered in cloud forest. Its plains stretch out to meet Kilimanjaro, and its volcanoes dot the landscape, making it one of the most scenic places in all of Africa.

Funzi Island This unspoiled island in the Indian Ocean offers luxurious seclusion and beautiful natural scenery despite being only 15 minutes flying time from Mombasa. Funzi Island is known for its pristine beaches, while most of the island is fringed with mangrove forests. Numerous inlets and small creeks into the mangroves provide for glassy, calm waters and opportunities for creek fishing and bird watching.

Lakkipia Plateau and Mount Kenya Free-roaming game, spectacular scenery, and a traditional pastoral way of life coexist in one of Kenya's conservation success stories. Lakkipia's open savanna ecosystem supports a wide diversity of species, from the endangered Grey's zebras and elephants to the patas monkeys, Somali ostriches, and Beisa oryxes. It is also central to many surrounding private ranches where you can enjoy safaris unaffected by national park restrictions.

Lake Naivasha Located at an altitude of 6,200 feet, Lake Naivasha is a freshwater lake within the Great Rift Valley. Surrounded by green papaya and yellow fever trees, this relatively small, beautiful park is very productive, and home to hippos, buffaloes, giraffes, colobus monkeys, and leopards. It is also a world-class birding destination, with a dazzling flamingo population as one of its many features.

Lake Nakuru National Park Created as a national park to protect its huge flocks of flamingoes and many other bird species, Lake Nakuru is also very good for game viewing and daylight sightings of leopards. Unusual species include white rhinos, black and white colobus monkeys, Defassa waterbucks, and clawless otters.

Lamu Island One of the earliest Arab coastal settlements, Lamu has preserved its whitewashed architecture and a tempo reminiscent of the 18th century. The ambience

is maintained by the absence of motor vehicles. Donkeys and dhows are still the most common mode of transport. In this UNESCO World Heritage Site, skilled craftsmen create ornate doors and Arab chests, with the blue Indian Ocean as a backdrop.

Masai Mara Lives in rangelands outside the National Parks and National Reserves. These rangelands belong to a variety of landowners, many of whom are pastoralists like the Maasai and Samburu peoples. The conservancies offer visitors incredible game viewing and authentic cultural interactions in a model that protects the delicate eco-system and benefits the Maasai people who live there.

Masai Mara Game Reserve Part of the Serengeti ecosystem where herds of migrating wildebeests, zebras, and Thomson's gazelles roam these expansive short grass plains. Predators are also visible, including lions, leopards, and cheetahs.

Mathews Range Rising up from the plains like a green tropical island, this untouched wilderness runs nearly 100 miles north-south, and approaches 8,000 feet above sea level. Nyungwe Forest is a mosaic of microhabitats from tall, dense forests to open, flower-filled marshes. The diverse, protected terrain is home to one of Africa's greatest concentrations of chimpanzees, as well as other primates like black and white colobus (Hose's) monkeys, and grey-cheeked mangabeys, plus about 300 bird species and hundreds of butterflies and orchids.

Meru National Park Made famous in the 1960's by conservationists Joy and George Adamson, and lioness "Elsa" whom they reintroduced to the wild in the park and about whom the film "Born Free," was based, the park boasts enormous diversity of habitat and wildlife. In addition to lions and elephants, Meru also has many rare species including caracals, aardwolves, and a rhino sanctuary housing over 60 black and white rhinos.

Nairobi One of East Africa's main gateways, Nairobi gives you access not only to Kenya, but also Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda. Most itineraries require an overnight in Nairobi, and one of the best places to stay is in the suburb of Karen where you can also visit the Karen Blixen Museum, Giraffe Manor, or the Daphne Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage during feeding time.

RWANDA

Kigali Much more than an airport connection en route to gorilla tracking further west, Kigali's vibrant markets, artisan crafts and solemn Genocide Memorial offer visitors a memorable cultural experience.

Nyungwe Forest Encompassing nearly 400 square miles, and rising to Mount Bigugu's peak at 9,678 feet above sea level, Nyungwe Forest is a mosaic of microhabitats from tall, dense forests to open, flower-filled marshes. The diverse, protected terrain is home to one of Africa's greatest concentrations of chimpanzees, as well as other primates like black and white colobus (Hose's) monkeys, and grey-cheeked mangabeys, plus about 300 bird species and hundreds of butterflies and orchids.

Volcanoes National Park Home to mountain gorillas, golden monkeys, blackfronted duikers, bushbucks and buffaloes. The peaks of the Virunga Mountains, heavily forested extinct volcanoes, support several vegetation zones, from lush bamboo stands to mountain forest to Afro-alpine. Trek 4-7 hours to sit with gorillas in their natural habitat. 15-year-old age minimum.

TANZANIA

Arusha A small safari town in close proximity to Kilimanjaro International Airport, Arusha is home to some charming coffee plantations and intimate hotels to help you recharge before setting off on safari the following day.

Dar Es Salaam While not the official capital of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam serves as the cultural and economic capital of the country. It also serves as a great stop-over point for trips farther inland. If you find yourself some extra time in the city, a trip to the national museum or an Indian Ocean beach is a great way to spend the time.

Katavi National Park Two thousand square miles of wild wilderness, where Eastern and Southern African species meet. This primeval national park offers fertile wetlands, vast herds of buffaloes, flocks of water birds, plains game, hippos, elephants, lions, and hyenas.

Lake Manyara National Park In the green season (November – June), flamingoes flock by the thousands to Lake Manyara to feed on the tiny morsels they filter out of the muddy lake bottom. The area surrounding the lake is rich in wildlife, too. Populations of leopards, lions, elephants, blue monkeys, dik-diks, gazelles, hippos, giraffes, impalas, and more call Lake Manyara home all year long.

Mahale Mountains National Park In this mountain range live wild chimpanzees, behind a white tented safari camp set on the white sand beaches of Lake Tanganyika. Within an hour or two of tracking from camp, you can be sitting with these great apes. 15-year-old age minimum to track chimpanzees.

Mount Kilimanjaro Mount Kilimanjaro is a dormant volcano, and Africa's highest mountain, rising 17,000 feet high in Tanzania. You can trek to the top of Kilimanjaro on one of two main routes, the Shira route and the Machame route. The Kilimanjaro Airport is serviced by international carriers, and it serves as a gateway to Tanzania's northern wildlife highlights.

Ngorongoro Crater An ancient volcanic crater and self-contained ecosystem that sustains the greatest concentration of wildlife on earth: black rhinos, elephants, buffaloes, wildebeest, lions, hyenas, and zebras. Nearby is Olduvai Gorge, where Dr. Louis Leakey discovered a famous repositary of prehistoric man.

UGANDA

Bwindi Forest The Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is a national park in Western Uganda where over 500 mountain gorillas live. Tracking gorillas is very active and requires gorilla-viewing etiquette. The area is mountainous and heavily vegetated. Exclusive tented camps offered and all excursions are on foot. 15-year-old age minimum.

Entebbe As the commercial capital of Uganda, Entebbe is a traveler's first introduction to Uganda upon arriving at the airport. In hotels around the city, travelers dream of the next day's adventures, hiking to see gorillas, tracking chimpanzees through the forest or spotting one of Uganda's many other exotic and entertaining creatures.

Kibale Forest This is lowland tropical forest with marshes, crater lakes, and grasslands, and is home to chimpanzees, duikers, bushbucks, and many species of birds. 15-year-old age minimum to track chimpanzees.

Serengeti National Park The Serengeti is famous for the annual Great Migration of millions of wildebeests and zebras, with predators in their wake. If you'd like to see one of nature's greatest phenomena, timing is everything. Every year is slightly different, since the migration is dictated by weather. But, in general, the migration is in the Southern Serengeti in December through March, in the Western Serengeti in June and July, and heads up to the Northern Serengeti and Masai Mara in June to November.

Tarangire National Park Reminiscent of old Africa, red elephants and baobab trees dot the landscape. In the dry season, clouds of migrating animals come down from the north to drink from the river – zebras, impalas, buffaloes, giraffes, Beisa oryxes, lesser kudus, gerenuks, Thomson's gazelles and elusive cheetahs.

Zanzibar Explore Stone Town, the market, cathedrals, antique shops and the Sultan's Palace Museum. Visit the famous Mwanagwani caves. Relax on tranquil Indian Ocean beaches. End the afternoon with a spice tour.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mnemba Island Lodge Famous British explorers like John Speke once journeyed through this beautiful national park in search of the Nile. Vast plains are scattered with rich palm forests and lush grasslands. The river and delta is home to Nile crocodiles and rare shoebill storks, lions, Ugandan kob, Rothschild's giraffes, harthebeests, oribis, buffaloes, and primates.

Queen Elizabeth National Park One of Uganda's most popular parks Queen Elizabeth National Park has enormous biodiversity with savannahs, bushlands, wetlands, and forests. Home to 96 species of mammals, including hippos, elephants, lions, leopards, chimpanzees, hyenas, and famously, tree-climbing lions in the far south of the park. Over 600 bird species can also be found in the park, which offers a classic big game viewing that can be paired with Uganda's primate trekking for a comprehensive single-country safari experience.



Cheetah, Okonjima

MASAI MARA CONSERVANCIES



Great Plains Conservation, Mara Plains Camp

SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK



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Following the Great Migration

Driven by weather cycles, the timing of the Great Migration is different every year. Also, within the migration, there are many mini-migrations, smaller herds of wildebeest and zebra that migrate shorter distances. Some are permanent residents, staying in one location all year. To really get the most out of a Great Migration safari, you need a little luck and a lot of experience and planning.

December – March: When rains have soaked the Serengeti and Ngorongoro, the great herds graze on rain ripened grass. This starts calving season when 80-90% of the wildebeest give birth over a period of a few weeks, attracting predators like lions, cheetahs and hyenas.

April – June: The depleted plains are unable to sustain the endless herds and the migration sweeps through Serengeti's western corridor. As they transition to a period of breeding season, the males butt heads, buck and leap, in an attempt to express dominance.

July – October: In July, one thing lies between the herd and the sweet grasses of the Masai Mara...the swollen, crocodile-infested Mara River. The exciting climax of the journey may see wildebeest swept away or snapped up, as the rest of the herd passes into the Masai Mara.

November: Better grazing beckons once again, as the migration moves southward to the place they will give birth, completing the circle of life.



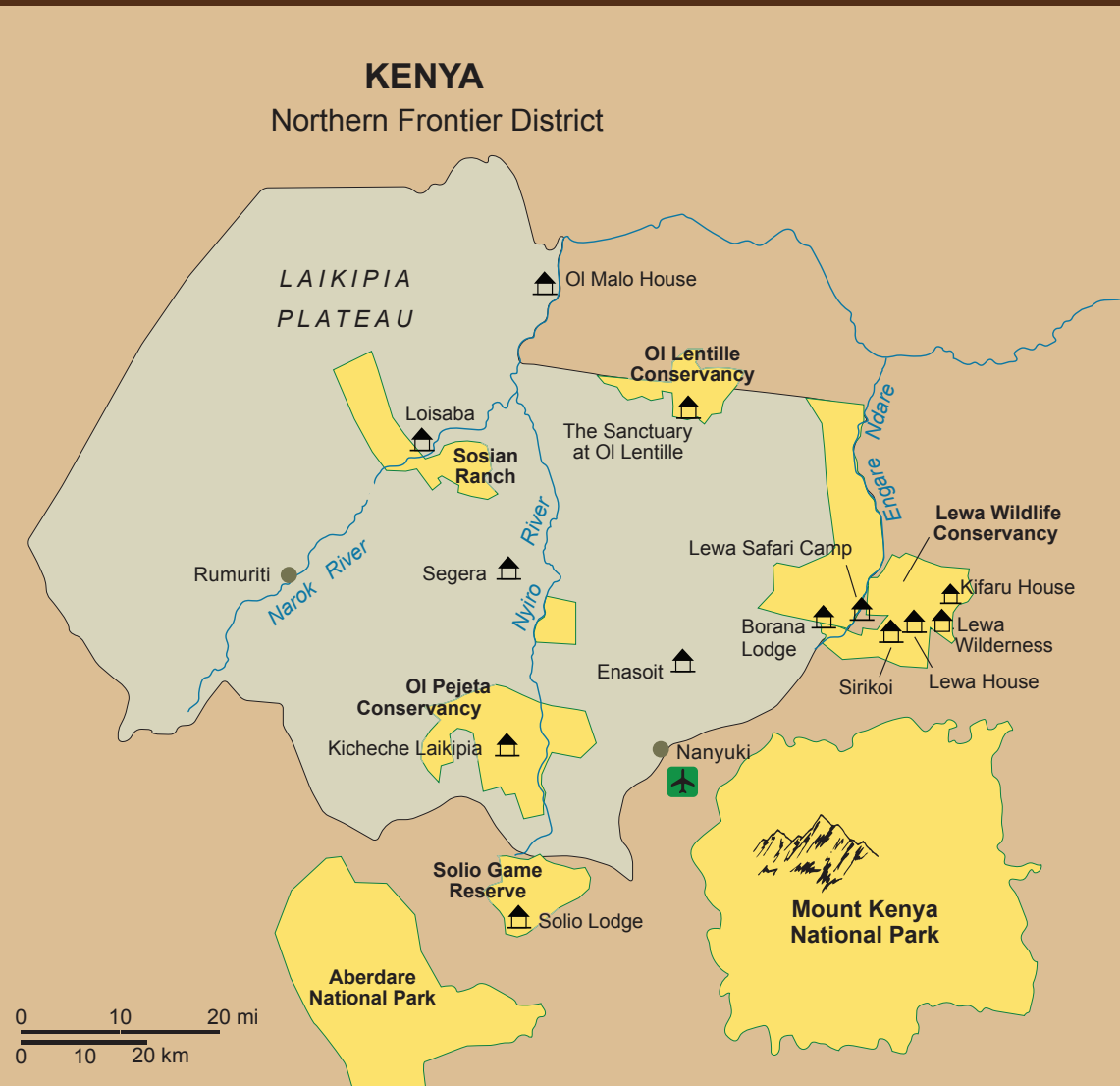
Wildebeests, Sayari Camp



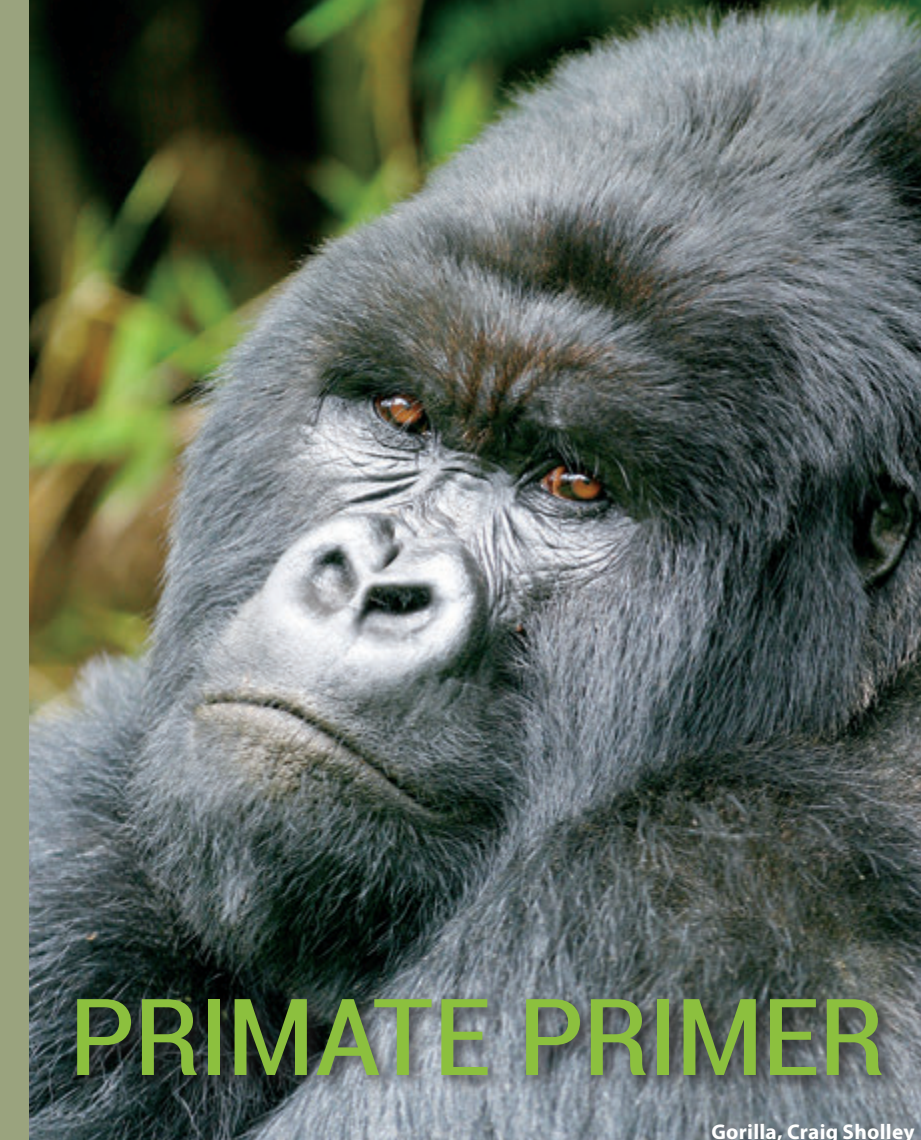
Lions, David Evans

The Great Migration is a natural movement pattern in which more than one million wildebeest and zebra are driven by the search for food in a large, seasonal loop. Every step of the way they must be vigilant, for their large numbers attract a large number of predators wherever they go.

KENYA'S LAIKIPIA PLATEAU



“Experiencing the migration was like witnessing a miracle in process. Could it get any better? Yes — the gorilla treks were the most exhausting thing we’ve ever done, but worth every exhilarating ache...”
— TAMAR SHERER AND CHRIS COOPER



Gorilla, Craig Sholley

PRIMATE PRIMER

Gorilla
The king of the primates. There are actually two subspecies of gorilla in Eastern Africa. The eastern lowland gorilla is the larger, which is limited to a very small population, mostly in Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The mountain gorilla is the rarest, yet most visited – accessible by permit in Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda and Bwindi Forest in Uganda.

Primates have the power to captivate human observers in a way few other animals can. Their closely-knit troops interact in ways – whether playing, grooming, quarrelling, or foraging – that are both familiar, and thrilling.



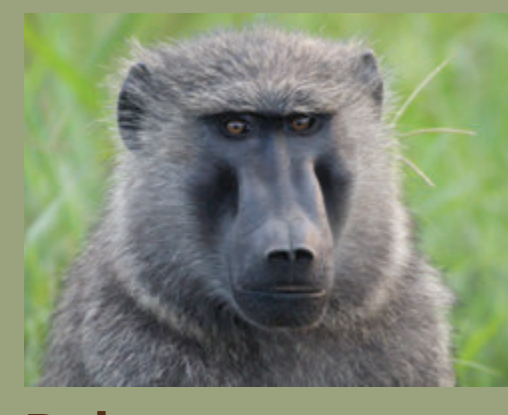
Chimpanzee

Our closest living relative, chimpanzees form complex social systems and to watch them is a transformative experience. The tender family grooming, the continual power grabs, the obvious curiosity and intelligence – a visit may break down your idea of what sets humans apart from animals. The most easily visited chimps are in Mahale and Gombe Stream National Parks in Tanzania as well as Kibale Forest and Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda.



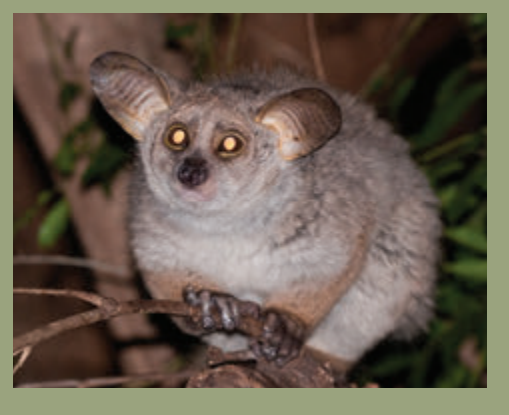
Monkey

There are a huge variety of monkeys in Africa. Vervet monkeys seem like they're everywhere, while red colobus monkeys are endangered and are usually found only after trekking specifically to see them. All the monkeys native to Africa are called "Old World" monkeys. South and Central American monkeys are called "New World" monkeys. The difference is that the African monkeys don't have prehensile tails, and they can't grab things with them.



Baboon

Although baboons are actually monkeys, they deserve their own spot among the primates. As grassland dwellers, they are very easily seen on safari and may even sneak into camps to cause some mischief. Unlike chimps and gorillas, baboons are wide-ranging and numerous, so baboon fans have ample opportunity to observe the mayhem that is a baboon troop.



Bushbaby

These cute little arboreal primates have large bug eyes, leap from tree to tree and make loud noises like a human baby. They are very nocturnal and their big eyes can often be picked up by the spotlights on night game drives.

UGANDA AND RWANDA



EASTERN AFRICA												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
TANZANIA												
Dar es Salaam	88/77	87/76	89/76	87/74	85/72	85/68	84/66	84/66	84/68	86/68	87/73	88/76
rainfall	2.6	2.6	5.12	11.4	7.4	1.3	1.2	0.98	1.22	1.6	2.9	3.6
Arusha	82/55	82/57	81/59	77/61	73/59	72/55	72/55	73/55	77/55	81/57	81/57	81/57
rainfall	2.7	3.1	5.3	13.4	5.4	0.75	0.51	0.51	0.51	1.02	4.5	4.6
Kigoma	81/67	82/68	82/68	82/66	83/68	82/66	83/63	85/65	86/67	85/69	81/68	80/67
rainfall	1.5	2.5	4.9	8.3	6.2	1.8	0.7	0.9	1.3	2.2	4.3	3.4
Zanzibar	90/75	90/75	86/77	86/77	82/73	82/72	81/72	82/72	82/72	86/72	88/73	88/75
rainfall	1.97	2.36	5.51	12.6	11.82	1.97	0.19	1.16	1.57	2.36	6.7	5.12
RWANDA												
Kigali	68/43	68/48	68/46	68/43	68/41	68/37	68/41	70/39	70/37	68/48	68/57	69/39
rainfall	3.5	3.5	4.1	6.5	4.9	1	0.3	0.8	2.4	3.9	3.9	3.5
UGANDA												
Entebbe	84/65	83/65	82/64	81/64	79/63	78/63	78/63	78/62	81/63	82/63	81/62	81/62
rainfall	1.8	2.4	5.1	6.9	5.8	2.9	1.8	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.8	3.9
KENYA												
Nairobi	87/75	87/76	88/77	86/76	83/74	82/73	81/71	81/71	82/72	84/74	85/75	86/75
rainfall	0.8	0.9	2.3	7.8	13	3.6	3.5	2.2	1.9	3.4	5	2.2
Nairobi	77/54	79/55	77/57	75/58	72/56	70/53	69/51	70/52	75/52	76/55	74/56	74/55
rainfall	1.9	4.2	3.7	8.3	5.2	2	0.8	0.9	2	5.8	3.5	
SEYCHELLES												
Victoria	86/71	87/71	87/73	87/72	85/72	83/72	79/72	80/71	81/72	83/71	85/71	85/71
rainfall	15.2	10.5	9.2	7.2	6.69	4.02	3.3	2.72	5.12	6.1	9.09	13.39

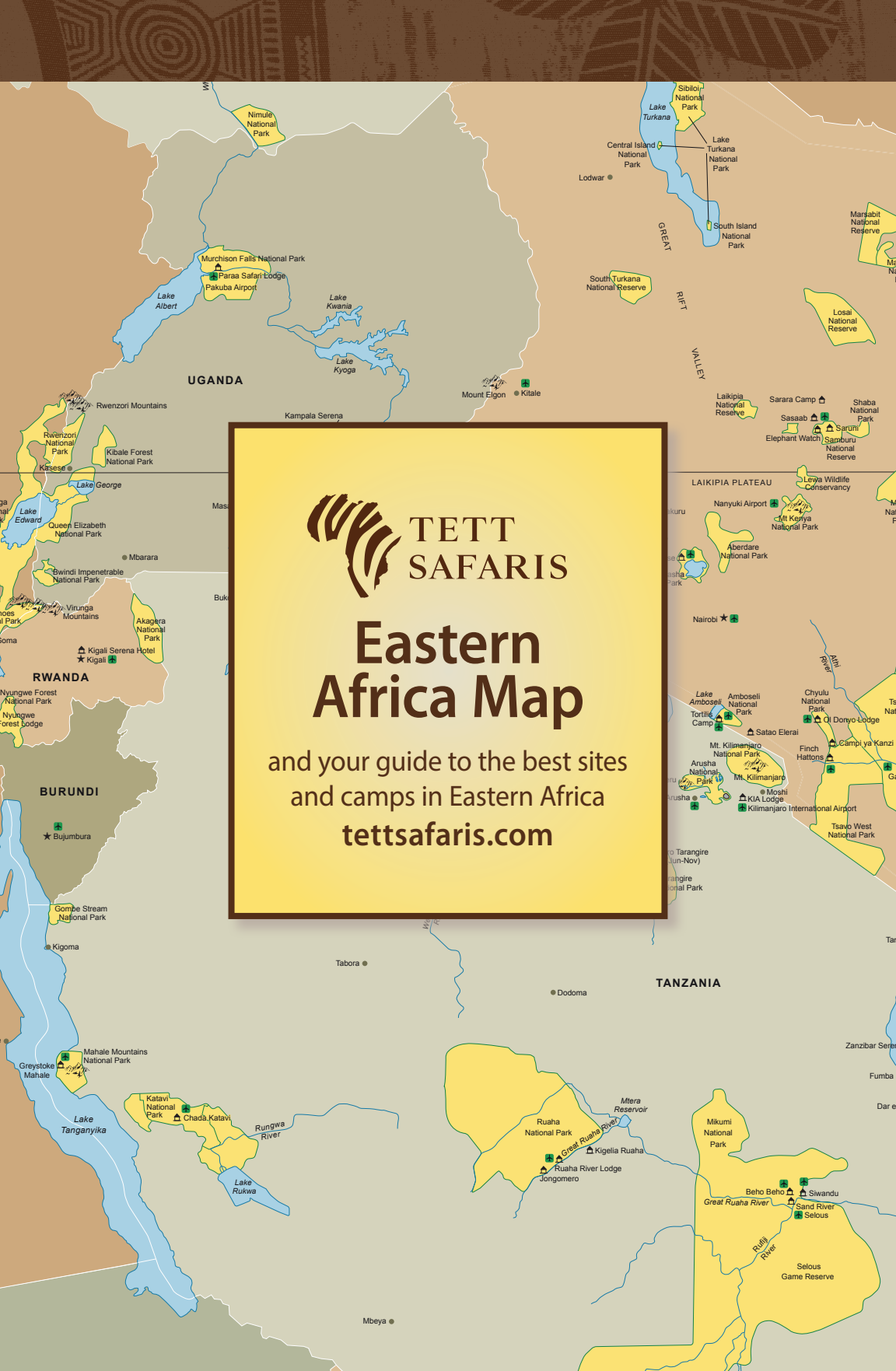
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