

Kenya:

ISLANDS & PLAINS – SEACOLOGY SAFARI

TRAVELLING OVER UK HALF TERM – DEPART UK 21ST OCTOBER AND RETURN 29TH OCTOBER 2011

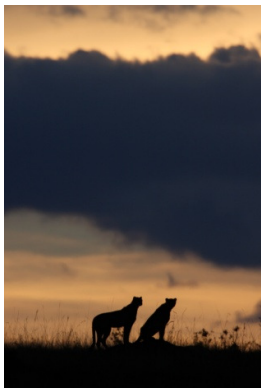
- A family holiday staying at the exceptional Kicheche Mara Camp and Funzi Keys.
- Working with *Seacology* this trip gives behind the scenes insight into the work being done on Funzi to conserve the endangered sea-turtle population.
- Explore the Masai Mara on extended game drives escorted by the best guides in the Mara.



Summary

Aimed specifically at families this trip is the perfect combination of beach adventure and safari. Your holiday starts at Funzi Keys, a remote hideaway in the Indian Ocean voted one of the top six private island resorts in the world by *Conde Nast Traveller*. This is the perfect base from where to learn more about the work that *Seacology* is funding to protect the five sea turtle species that are found foraging or nesting on and around Funzi. Having gained insight into turtle conservation on Funzi you will be flown to Kenya's other remarkable ecosystem, the Masai Mara. Staying at Kicheche Mara Camp, the departure information is simple: arrive at the camp, discard your mobile phone and any other distractions and prepare for five days of unparalleled game viewing combined with the best hospitality in the Mara.

Overview



This safari is designed for families, with a love of wildlife and special places. Designed to satisfy curious minds the beach element of this trip will not only allow time for relaxation but will also give a privileged insight into community based marine turtle conservation, courtesy of our links with Seacology. Seacology's East African field representative will provide a personal introduction to the multi faceted marine turtle conservation activities undertaken by Seacology's local community partners, KESCOM and the Funzi Island Turtle Club. While sea turtle conservation will be the group's main focus when on Funzi there will of course be time to enjoy the special ambience of Funzi Keys. Simply relax and enjoy the peace and seclusion or if you would rather explore the island, it is possible to organise a boat trip direct with the hotel, up the Ramisi River or Funzi Creek looking for kingfishers, crocodiles and dolphins.

SPOTLIGHT: Seacology

Seacology (<http://www.seacology.org>) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with the sole purpose of preserving the highly endangered biodiversity of islands throughout the world. Its community-driven, cost-effective work on over 100 islands around the world has protected close to 2 million acres of coral reef, mangrove, rainforest, and other island ecosystems.



On this trip. Seacology's East Africa Field Representative, Dishon Lionel Murage, will be our local guide to Seacology's island conservation work in the region. Dishon has a master's degree in Zoology from the University of Nairobi, Kenya. His professional experiences have included extensive work with local communities to promote conservation and sustainable livelihoods. He is currently marine and coastal resources program coordinator for the East African Wildlife Society.

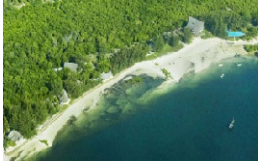


The second part of the trip is spent exploring the Masai Mara staying at Kicheche Mara Camp. Renowned for the quality of its guides and the warmth of its hospitality, Kicheche is the perfect base for exploring the abundant flora and fauna that make the Masai Mara such a magnet for lovers of wildlife and wilderness. Kicheche share our commitment to responsible travel and approach safaris in a very sensitive manner ensuring that the wildlife is always put first.

There will be early starts to catch the Mara's incomparable first light and full day game drives with sumptuous picnic lunches under the shade of Acacia trees. There will be flaming sunsets cooled by icy sundowners and, of course, intimate camp fires with only the noise of the bush and a million stars as distraction. Game viewing takes place in custom-built vehicles, however there will be the opportunity to enjoy a game walk, where the emphasis will switch from mammals to birds, insects and fauna. The Maasai are an integral part of any trip to this area and we take great care to ensure your visits to a local market and a manyatta are handled with sensitivity and that they give you an authentic insight into modern Maasai culture.

Itinerary

Day 1: 22 October - Nairobi to Funzi Keys



Arrive at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, where you will be transferred to Wilson Airport for your flight to Funzi. You will arrive at Funzi Keys in time for lunch and after lunch the rest of the day is left free to relax. Funzi Keys is nestled into the white sands of its own private peninsular, superbly located on a west-facing beach with glorious views of the African sunset. This remote and exclusive hideaway is the perfect place to escape from the outside world in style. Designed to blend unobtrusively with its idyllic beachfront setting and to reflect the influence of the local culture and coastal architecture, the accommodation consists of nine spacious sea front cottages set along the highwater line and eight sea view cottages, all constructed of stone and thatch with large netted windows open to the balmy sea breezes.



Each of the individually designed rooms has a hand carved king-sized four-poster bed and is furnished with local wooden artefacts and colourful fabrics. All cottages are provided with fans, safes and beach accessories in the oversized bathroom. In front of each cottage are private sitting areas where guests can enjoy a drink and watch the sun go down in total privacy.

Day 2: 23 October – Funzi Keys

Today has been set aside to visit the Funzi Turtle Club's headquarters accompanied by local field representative Dishon Murage.

SPOTLIGHT: Marine Turtle Conservation on Funzi Island



The beaches of Funzi Island, off the coast of Kenya, provide critical nesting habitat for several species of IUCN red-listed endangered sea turtles, including the endangered Leatherback, Loggerhead, Green, Hawksbill and the threatened Olive Ridley. Marine turtles are dependent on nesting beaches to lay their eggs and frequently return to the same beaches year after year. Without safe nesting habitat, the turtles are unable to reproduce and the young turtles cannot survive to maturity. Poaching, habitat degradation, soil erosion, destructive fishing practices, incidental capture and development are threats to these sea turtles. The Kenya Sea Turtle Conservation Committee (KESCOM) is a local non-profit organisation that is active on Funzi and nearby islands in turtle conservation. On Funzi, KESCOM collaborates with the Funzi Turtle Club to protect the local marine turtles and their habitat. Seacology is proud to support KESCOM and the Funzi Turtle Club with funding so that they can continue their important conservation activities. These activities include habitat rehabilitation, handicraft production to be used for ecotourism projects, and regular beach patrols. They are also working directly with the sea turtles in data collection, turtle tagging, and nest protection.



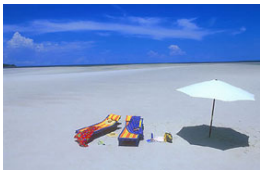
Working with the Kenya Sea Turtle Conservation Committee (KESCOM), Seacology is funding land purchase and construction of a Funzi Island Turtle Club office which will double as an educational display. Dishon will introduce you to the array of conservation activities that the local people are spearheading on Funzi in



order to protect local marine turtles and their habitat. The morning will be allowed by a lunch laid on by the local community before heading back to your hotel.

Day 3: 24 October – Funzi Keys

Today is left at leisure. If you wish you can do nothing more than unwind on the Mazeras stone deck of the 45m free-form pool with a drink while watching the local fishing dhows sail by. Alternatively participate in sailing, creekfishing, windsurfing or canoeing or perhaps take a boat trip up the Ramisi River or Funzi Creek for a glimpse of kingfishers, crocodiles and possibly dolphins. Funzi Keys is also an excellent base for deep-sea fishing and scuba diving in the Pemba Channel. All of the above need to be booked and paid for locally.



Day 4: 25 October – Depart Funzi for the Masai Mara

A very early start today in order to catch your flight to the Masai Mara. On arrival at Shikar airstrip Kicheche vehicles will be waiting to transfer you to camp. It is from here that the safari begins, as there is plenty of game to be found between the airstrip and Kicheche Mara Camp. After a briefing from the camp managers you will be shown to your tent before sitting down to a delicious lunch. The food at Kicheche is excellent and while the camp claims that nobody puts on weight you will certainly not go hungry for the next five days.

After a few hours to enjoy the peace and solitude, you will embark on your first game drive in the surrounding Mara North Conservancy where your guides will do their best to introduce the Kicheche pride. Whether you see cats or not, there is good game viewing in this area and photographic opportunities are plentiful. With cool drinks in hand you wish the setting African sun farewell, happy in the knowledge that your Masai Mara adventure has only just begun.

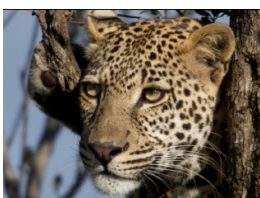


Day 5 – 7: 26 – 28 October – Kicheche Mara Camp

When on safari, clinical schedules are counterproductive, as they do not allow for the capricious nature of wildlife. So on this trip, the approach will be reactive as we allow the wildlife to dictate the schedule. For example, if we arrive at Kicheche and hear from the guides that a cheetah with cubs has been seen in the reserve, you know the focus for the following day's safari will be on cheetah. Likewise, if we hear that the Kicheche pride has been active on the Mara North Conservancy plains, your safari will stay closer to home as we look for signs of these enigmatic lions. Thanks to the skill and professionalism of Kicheche's guides, this flexible approach works well and, over the next three days, you can expect to enjoy the following, in no particular order:



Full Day Safari into the Masai Mara Nature Reserve or Mara North Conservancy



Kicheche is approximately one hour's drive from Musiara Gate into the reserve and, to do it justice, the safari will take a full day. At certain times of the year, however, the grass is long in the reserve. The wildebeest, zebra, gazelle and other plains game move north, meaning that their predators follow. If this is the case, you will still be taken on a full day's drive with a picnic lunch but will explore some of the further reaches of the Mara North Conservancy, including areas such as the Leopard Gorge and Acacia Valley.



Full morning game drive with bush breakfast on the Mara River

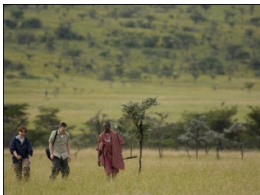
The adage of ‘the early bird catches the worm’ has never been more true than when on safari and you can expect early morning starts on this trip. Not only is the early morning light unbeatable for photography, but the animals are far more active when it is cooler first thing in the morning (especially lions). By getting out there early, you will increase your chances of seeing the wildlife at its most active.



The early starts will also be rewarded by a delicious bush breakfast overlooking one of the many hippo pools to be found on the Mara river or under a Balanites tree, looking out across the seemingly never ending Mara plains.

Game Walk

Getting out on foot allows for a more intimate encounter with Africa’s flora and fauna, where one can see, hear, touch and smell the real wild Africa. Kicheche’s Masai guides will talk you through the medicinal qualities of the local fauna, while looking for animal tracks and pointing out the smaller mammals, reptiles, birds and insects that are often overlooked when in a vehicle.

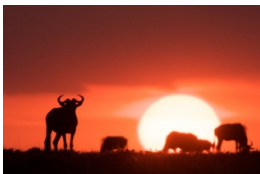


Visit to Masai market in Aitong

Aitong market is far removed from Nairobi’s tourist markets that sell predictable tacky souvenirs. This is a genuine trading post for the Masai, who will often walk for days to bring their cattle and goats, looking to do business and a spot of socialising with their fellow tribesmen. While the men swap stories and trade livestock, the ladies sell vegetables, fruit and clothing. With the help of your Masai guide, you may be able to buy a pair of Masai sandals, made from old car tires and known locally as ‘thousand milers’! This is an authentic look at a Masai way of life that hasn’t changed in hundreds of years. While the welcome you are likely to receive will be warm, photography will not always be appropriate.



Day 8: 29 October – Goodbye to Kicheche and the Mara...



In order to fit in a final morning’s game drive, your flight back to Nairobi is booked for the afternoon. Lunch is provided at Kicheche and, if the camp is busy, you will have the use of a day tent to freshen up before flying back to Nairobi. At Wilson Airport, you will be met and transferred to the Rusty Nail for supper before being transferred back to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

Dates

2011

Friday 21st – Saturday 29th October, 2011.
School Half Term (in most areas!)

Main tour cost

From

£3,995 per adult based on twin share including flights.

£3,075 per child aged 12 – 16 years on twin share basis including flights.

£2,675 per child aged 10 – 11 years on twin share basis including flights

Please note this price is subject to change according to currency fluctuations and availability of flights and is based on twelve people travelling. If less than twelve people travel, there will be a supplement to pay.

Includes

International and domestic flights, local Seacology representative in Funzi, local Kicheche guides, all meals (excluding evening dinner on last day in Nairobi), all drinks (excluding drinks at the Rusty Nail in Nairobi on Day 8), laundry at Kicheche, all park fees, use of tent on the last day at Kicheche, transfers, game drives and walks.

Excludes

Travel insurance, visas, vaccinations, dinner and drinks in Nairobi on Day 8, gratuities and items of a personal nature.

Costs For Tailor made Trips

A similar trip is available as a non-group departure and is tailored to meet your individual needs. Please give us a call for more information.

Single Supplements

We do all we can to avoid charging you a single supplement, unless you want a guaranteed single room. We are happy to match you with a same sex, single traveller, subject to rooming availability. If we are unable to do so, there will be a single supplement charge on request.

International Flights

Steppes Discovery is protected by ATOL.

Important information

Coming From The USA

If you are travelling from USA, you may find it easier to go via the UK, from where we can help organise flights.

Weather And Best Time To Travel

We expect this time of year to be warm and sunny for the majority of the time. However, be prepared for temperatures to get cool and take a fleece for evenings and morning game drives. October is the build up to the short rains and if the rain has come a little early then you may find the wildebeest migration is still in the Mara.

Vaccinations And Visa's

A visa is required for entry into Kenya for British or American citizens. This can be obtained for US\$50 per person on arrival in Nairobi. However, to avoid long queues, we would suggest you obtain a visa before departing the UK – see <http://kenya.embassyhomepage.com/> for more details. A full passport is required and it is recommended that this is valid for six months from return date of travel.

Health And Fitness

We recommend the following inoculations: Typhoid, Tetanus and Hepatitis A. If you are a regular traveller abroad we would recommend that you are up to date on all childhood inoculations and vaccinations including Polio. Malaria is present in Kenya. It is important that you consult a medical practitioner for specialist advice. A reasonable level of health and fitness will allow you to fully appreciate the walking options available on this trip.

Essential items

You should take sunblock, strong sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat. When walking wear colours that blend with the scenery. Long trousers or track-suit (not jeans) give protection against thorns and do not leave you cold when wet. Good footwear and a light coat or sweatshirt for the cold mornings is advisable, as is a good pair of binoculars and a camera. Charging batteries is no problem for digital cameras and videos at Funzi Keys and Kicheche.

Our commitment



Since 1997 we have raised significant contributions in support of the world's leading wildlife and conservation agencies, researchers and experts, and have increased awareness of travel and conservation through newsletters, lectures and consistent media coverage. Furthermore, we have voluntarily spearheaded collective action campaigns such as Travel Operators for Tigers in South Asia.



SEACOLOGY is an international environmental non-profit organization that focuses on saving endangered species, habitats and cultures of islands throughout the world

Our travel partners, accommodation, service providers and ground agents are all carefully chosen to ensure their commitment to the environment, most being quality, family-owned businesses which reflect the unique character of the places, the abiding hospitality of the people and the remarkable spirit of the wilderness.

Now come along and see for yourself. With us it won't cost the earth!

Want to discuss this trip?



Please call Jarrod Kyte on 01285 643333 for more details or to make a booking

A love of wildlife and wild places has long been Jarrod's motivation for travelling. At his happiest when photographing big cats in Africa, Jarrod spent two years in Kenya managing a luxury tented camp in the Masai Mara, together with his wife and young son.

