



Stuttaford Van Lines Country Guide for

Kenya



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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: East Africa.

Time: GMT + 3.

Kenya Wildlife Service

PO Box 40241, Nairobi, Kenya Tel: (20) 600 800 Website: www.kws.org

Kenya High Commission in the UK

45 Portland Place, London W1B 1AS, UK Tel: (020) 7636 2371/5. Website: www.kenyahighcommission.net Opening hours: Mon-Fri: applications 0930-1400, collections 1400-1530.

Kenya Tourist Board in the UK

c/o Hills Balfour, Notcutt House, 36 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9EU, UK Tel: (020) 7202 6373 (dial 1). Website: www.magickkenya.com

Kenya Embassy in the USA

2249 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel: (202) 387 6101. Website: www.kenyaembassy.com

2 OVERVIEW

'The greatest wildlife show on earth'

Straddling the Equator on the east coast of Africa, Kenya is one of the most scenically diverse and beautiful countries on the continent, and home to the nomadic Masai and Samburu, the Kikuyu farmers and coastal Swahili tribal peoples. Kenya has two major cities, the high-altitude, colonial-built capital Nairobi, and the ancient Swahili trading port of Mombasa. But what really draws the tourists is the great outdoors. This is a place for sunbathing, hiking, climbing, diving or riding. Above all, it is a place for safaris. The scenery is fabulous from the indigo sea and white sand beaches to the grey-green rolling bushveld of Tsavo and Amboseli. The rippling golden grasslands of the Masai Mara contrast with the seismic scar of the Great Rift Valley and the desolate volcanic wastelands around northern Lake Turkana. And everywhere, the game-viewing is unsurpassed with elephants, lions, giraffe, rhino and a host of other animals joined by hundreds of species of glitter-winged birds. However, Kenya is by no means perfect. Corruption riddles the land, the crime rate is high and malaria and AIDS are rife. But despite this, the people are friendly, and the tourist trade is supremely well organised and professional. For those in search of a little adventure, this can be an ideal holiday destination.

Melissa Shales



3 GENERAL INFORMATION

Area: 582,646 sq km (224,961 sq miles).

Population: 32.8 million (UN, 2005).

Population Density: 56.29 per sq km.

Capital: Nairobi. Population: 2.14 million (1999).

GEOGRAPHY: Kenya shares borders with Ethiopia in the north, Sudan in the northwest, Uganda in the west, Tanzania in the south and Somalia in the northeast. To the east lies the Indian Ocean. The country is divided into four regions: the arid deserts of the north; the savannah lands of the south; the fertile lowlands along the coast and around the shores of Lake Victoria; and highlands in the west, where the capital Nairobi is situated. Northwest of Nairobi runs the Rift Valley, containing the town of Nakuru and Aberdare National Park, overlooked by Mount Kenya (5200m/17,000ft), which also has a national park. In the far northwest is Lake Turkana (formerly Lake Rudolph). Kenya is a multicultural society; in the north live Somalis and the nomadic Hamitic peoples (Rendille, Samburu and Turkana), in the south and eastern lowlands are Kamba and Masai and the Luo live around Lake Victoria. The largest group is the Kikuyu who live in the central highlands and have traditionally been dominant in commerce and politics, although this is now changing. There are many other smaller groups and, although Kenya emphasises nationalism, tribal and cultural identity is a factor. A small European settler population remains in the highlands, involved in farming and commerce.

Government: Republic. Gained independence from the UK in 1963. Head of State and Government: President Emilio Mwai Kibaki since December 2002. Recent history: With former President Daniel arap Moi constitutionally barred from contesting the December 2002 election, Mwai Kibaki the most prominent opposition politician made his second attempt at the presidency and was elected President. His National Rainbow Coalition (Narc) won a parliamentary majority. He promised that his main objective would be to fight against corruption. However, both former and current ministers have become embroiled in a recent corruption scandal, involving a multi-million dollar scam. Furthermore, voters rejected a draft constitution in a referendum in late 2005. While the President presented it as a modernising measure, his opponents said that it would have left too much power in the hands of the President.

Language: Swahili is the national language and English is the official language. There are over 42 ethnic languages spoken, including Kikuyu and Luo.

Religion: Mostly traditional but there is a sizeable Christian population (both Catholic and Protestant) and a small Muslim community.

Electricity: 220/240 volts AC, 50Hz. Plugs are UK-type square three-pin. Bayonet-type light sockets exist in Kenya.

SOCIAL CONVENTIONS: Western European habits prevail throughout Kenya as a result of British influences in the country. Kenyans are generally very friendly. Dress is informal, and casual lightweight clothes are accepted for all but the smartest social occasions.

Passport/Visa



	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian	Yes	Yes	Yes
Canadian	Yes	Yes	Yes
USA	Yes	Yes	Yes
OtherEU	Yes	Yes	Yes
Japanese	Yes	Yes	Yes

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for three months from date of entry required by all.

VISAS: Required by all except nationals of the following: (a) nationals of Commonwealth countries for stays of up to three months except those nationals listed in the chart above, and nationals of Bangladesh, Cameroon, Dominica, Guyana, India, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and St Kitts & Nevis who do require a visa; (b) nationals of Ethiopia, San Marino, Turkey, Uruguay and Zimbabwe; (c) nationals of Malaysia if staying less than 30 days; (d) all holders of a re-entry pass to Kenya; (e) transit passengers continuing their journey by the same or first connecting aircraft provided holding valid onward or return documentation and not leaving the airport.

Types of visa and cost: Entry: £30 (single-entry); £60 (multiple-entry). Transit: £10. Note: If the application is referred to Immigration in Nairobi, an additional £7 will be payable. Nationals of Rwanda will receive visas gratis.

Validity: Single-entry: up to three months from date of issue; Multiple-entry: up to 12 months from date of issue. Renewals (up to six months) or extensions can be made at Immigration in Nyayo House, Uhuru Highway, Nairobi or at Kisumu and Mombasa. The period of stay in Kenya can be given at the port of entry (maximum three months).

Note: Multiple-entry visas may only be issued to nationals of the United Kingdom.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy or High Commission); see Passport/Visa Information.

Application requirements: (a) Valid passport with at least one blank page. (b) Completed application form. (c) One recent passport-size photo. (d) Fee, payable by postal order or bank cheque if applying by post, or cash if applying in person. (e) Holiday itinerary or business letter. (f) For postal applications, include a self-addressed stamped, registered envelope for return of passport and daytime telephone number.

Working days required: Three (applying in person) or one week from date of receipt (postal applications). If the visa has to be referred to Nairobi it will take at least eight weeks.

Note: The following nationals will automatically be referred to the Principal Immigration Officer in Nairobi before a visa can be granted: nationals of Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Iraq, Jordan, Korea (Dem Rep), Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tadjkistan.

Temporary residence: Apply to Principal Immigration Officer, PO Box 30191, Nairobi.



Passport/Visa Information: Kenya High Commission in the UK 45 Portland Place, London W1B 1AS, UK Tel: (020) 7636 2371/5. Website: www.kenyahighcommission.net Opening hours: Mon-Fri: applications 0930-1400, collections 1400-1530. Kenya Embassy in the USA 2249 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel: (202) 387 6101. Website: www.kenyaembassy.com

4 MONEY

Currency: Kenyan Shilling (KES) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of KES1000, 500, 200, 100 and 50. Coins are in denominations of KES20, 10 and 5.

Currency exchange: Currency can be exchanged at the major banks, bureaux de change or authorised hotels. The bank at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport have 24-hour exchange services. The easiest currencies to exchange are US Dollars, Pounds Sterling and Euros. There are over 140 ATMs.

Credit & debit cards: American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are all widely accepted. Major hotels now also accept payment by credit card, as do major safari companies, travel agencies and restaurants. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Traveller's cheques: These can be changed at banks, and are widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling.

Currency restrictions: There is no restriction on the import and export of local or foreign currency. However, authorisation from the Central Bank is required for amounts of 500,000 KES and above.

Exchange rate indicators

Date At time of publishing £1.00 = KES129.59 \$1.00 = KES74.65

Banking hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1500; 0900-1100 on the first and last Saturday of each month. National and international banks have branches in Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu, Thika, Eldoret, Kericho, Nyeri and in most other major towns. Banks in Mombasa and the coastal areas open and close half an hour earlier. Many of the banks and bureaux de change at the international airports open 24 hours every day.

5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Kenya by passengers over 16 years of age without **incurring customs duty:** 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; 1l of spirits or 2l of wine; perfume and toilet water not exceeding in all 0.5l of which not more than a quarter may be perfume.

Note: Firearms and ammunition require a police permit. Pets require a good health certificate, a rabies certificate and an import permit.



Prohibited items: The import of fruit, plants, seeds, children's toys and imitation firearms. The export of gold, diamonds and wildlife skins or game trophies not obtained from the authorised Kenyan government department is also prohibited.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2006-June 2007 period. Jan 1 2006 New Year's Day. Apr 14 Good Friday. Apr 17 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. Jun 1 Madaraka Day. Oct 10 Moi Day. Oct 20 Kenyatta Day. Oct 22-24 Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan). Dec 12 Independence Day. Dec 25-26 Christmas. Jan 1 2007 New Year's Day. Apr 6 Good Friday. Apr 9 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. Jun 1 Madaraka Day.

Note: (a) Holidays falling on a Sunday are observed the following Monday. (b) Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Eid al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Many restaurants are closed during the day and there may be restrictions on smoking and drinking. Some disruption may continue into Eid al-Fitr itself. Eid al-Fitr may last anything from two to 10 days, depending on the region. For more information, see the World of Islam appendix.

7 HEALTH

	Special Precautions	Certificate Required
Yellow Fever	Yes	1
Cholera	Yes	2
Typhoid and Polio	3	N/A
Malaria	4	N/A

1: A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travellers over one year of age arriving from infected areas; those countries formerly classified as endemic zones are considered to be still infected by the Kenyan authorities. Travellers arriving from non-endemic zones should note that vaccination is strongly recommended for travel outside the urban areas, even if an outbreak of the disease has not been reported and they would normally not require a vaccination certificate to enter the country.

2: Following WHO guidelines issued in 1973, a cholera vaccination certificate is no longer a condition of entry to Kenya. However, cholera is a serious risk in this country and precautions are essential. There was an outbreak of cholera in the Eastleigh area of Nairobi in June 2005. Up-to-date advice should be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccination, as medical opinion is divided over its effectiveness; see the Health appendix for further information.

3: Immunisation against typhoid and poliomyelitis is recommended.



4: Malaria risk exists throughout the year in the whole country. There is usually less risk in Nairobi and in the highlands (above 2500m/8200ft) of the Central, Eastern Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western Provinces. The predominant falciparum strain has been reported as highly resistant to chloroquine and resistant to sulfadoxine/pyrimethamine. Mefloquine, doxycycline or malarone are the recommended prophylaxis.

Food & drink: Mains water is normally chlorinated and relatively safe. Bottled water is available and is advised for the first few weeks of the stay. Drinking water outside main cities and towns is likely to be contaminated and sterilisation is considered essential. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat. Food prepared by unlicensed vendors should be avoided at all times.

Other risks: Dysenteries and diarrhoeal diseases are common. Hepatitis B is hyperendemic; hepatitis A and E are widespread. Meningococcal meningitis is a risk, particularly in the savannah in the dry season; long-staying visitors and backpackers should consider vaccination. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is present. Avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water; bathing in rivers and lakes is forbidden in national parks and is best avoided elsewhere due to dangers from wildlife and water borne diseases; swimming pools which are well chlorinated and maintained are safe. Dengue fever is present, as are leishmaniasis, trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) and filariasis. Avoid sandfly, mosquito and tsetse fly bites, and wear shoes to protect against hookworm. Relapsing fever and typhus are present. In June 2004, there were 141 suspected cases, including six deaths, of leptospirosis in a high school in the Bungoma district. A nearby primary school also reported two deaths. Travellers should be aware of these developments when within the Bungoma district. Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. See the Health appendix for further information.

Note: There is a risk of contracting AIDS if the necessary precautions are not taken. It is advisable to take a kit of sterilised syringe needles for any possible injections needed, as well as drip needles for emergencies.

Health care: Health insurance is essential. East African Flying Doctor Services have introduced a special Tourist Membership which guarantees that any member injured or ill while on safari can call on a flying doctor for free air transport. There are good medical facilities in Mombasa and Nairobi. The Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF) safety communication centre (24-hour) help tourists in difficulty (tel: (20) 604 767 in emergencies or 604729 or 601343 or 604730; e-mail: safetour@wananchi.com).

Travel - International

AIR: The national airline is Kenya Airways (KQ) (website: www.kenya-airways.com).

Approximate flight times: From Nairobi to London is nine hours 30 minutes; to New York is 18 hours; to Los Angeles is 20 hours; to Singapore is 21 hours; and to Sydney is 25 hours.

Main airports: Nairobi (NBO) (Jomo Kenyatta International) is 16km (10 miles) southeast of the city. To/from the airport: A Kenyan Bus Services bus and a Kenyan Airways bus leave every 20 minutes (travel time 40 minutes). Scheduled bus service to and from the town centre is available at unit 1 and 2 bus stops. Taxis are readily available, but the fare should be established before getting into the vehicle (travel time - 15 minutes). The state-controlled Kenacto taxis work on a fixed rate as do the British-style black cabs, and Dial a Cab, which are legally required to charge



per kilometre. Facilities: Duty free shop, hotel reservation, bank/bureau de change, post office, restaurant/bar, car hire, internet cafe and wireless hotspots. Mombasa (MBA) (Moi International) is 13km (8 miles) west of the city. To/from the airport: There is a regular bus service by Kenya Airways to their city centre office in Mombasa (travel time 20 minutes). Taxis are also available. Fares should be negotiated in advance. State-controlled Kenactoxi taxis and British-style black cabs work on a fixed rate. Facilities: Duty-free shop, bank, restaurant/bar, tourist information and car hire.

Note: Immigration procedures in Kenyan airports are likely to be extremely slow, so it is advisable to arrive early.

Departure tax: None.

SEA/LAKE: Main ports: Mombasa. Short-distance ships sail between Mombasa, Mauritius, the Seychelles and Zanzibar. The ports in the Lake Victoria passenger service include Homa Bay, Mfangano and Port Victoria/Kisumu. The ferries in Lake Victoria connect Kisumu in Kenya to Mwanza, Musoma and Bukoba in Tanzania. Fares are paid for in the currency of the port of embarkation. It is also possible to get ferries from Mombasa to Pemba and Zanzibar in Tanzania, and also to Chiamboni in Somalia. Enquire locally for details.

RAIL: Kenya is serviced by a single railway system running from Mombasa through Nairobi to Uganda, with branches to Nanyuki, Kitale and Kisumu. Another branch connects Kenya to Tanzania through Taveta. Train services operate between Voi and Moshi (Tanzania) and between Nairobi and Kampala (Uganda). The sea port of Mombasa is linked to surrounding areas of Kenya and Uganda by rail. Travellers should check beforehand as these rail services may be subject to disruption. For more information contact Kenya Railways, PO Box 30121, Nairobi (tel: (20) 221 211).

ROAD: The main crossing points from Tanzania are at Lunga Lunga and Namanga, with smaller posts at Isebania and Taveta. Some direct coach services operate. From Uganda there are crossing points at Buisa and Malaba. Note that at Malaba, the Kenyan and Ugandan customs posts are about 1km (0.6 miles) apart and no transport between them is available. For all road frontier crossings, it is advisable to contact the Kenya AA, PO Box 40087, Embakasi, Nairobi (tel: (20) 825 060-6) prior to departure from the country of origin for up-to-date information concerning insurance requirements and conditions.

Travel - Internal

AIR: Kenya Airways (website: www.kenya-airways.com) operates an extensive network of flights, which includes scheduled services to Eldoret, Kisumu (on the shore of Lake Victoria), Lamu Island, Lockichogio, Malindi and Mombasa. Air Kenya (website: www.airkenya.com) offers scheduled flights from Nairobi to Amboseli, Kilimanjaro, Kiwayu, Lamu, Malindi, Masai Mara, Mombasa, Nanyuki and Samburu. Air Kenya also operates into all of Kenya's game parks. Regional Air also operates from Nairobi. There are also private airlines operating light aircraft to small airstrips. Planes can be chartered and are useful for transport into game parks.

Departure tax: None.

SEA: Local ferries run between Mombasa, Malindi and Lamu. For details, contact local authorities and tour operators. It is also possible to hire a traditional Kenyan sailing boat (dhow) in Lamu, Malindi and Mombasa. This is a very basic form of sea travel which requires travellers to take their own food and drinking water. Trips can be arranged directly with the captain or through



local travel agencies. There are several popular anchorage points for yachts at Mtwapa, Kiliti, Mnaroni and Lamu.

RAIL: Kenya Railways Corporation runs passenger trains between Mombasa and Nairobi; trains generally leave in the evening and arrive the following morning after a journey of around 13 to 14 hours. There are also branches connecting Taveta and Kisumu to the passenger network. There is a daily train in each direction on the NairobiKisumu route, and also an overnight service (travel time approximately 14 hours). There is also a service through to Kampala. Trains are sometimes delayed, but most of the rolling stock is modern and comfortable, and most trains have restaurant cars. There are three classes: first class is excellent, with two-berth compartments, wardrobe, etc; second class is more basic but comfortable; third is basic. In first and second class, doors can be locked from the inside but when leaving the compartment valuables should not be left unattended. The dining-car service on the NairobiMombasa route is very highly regarded. Sleeping compartments should be booked in advance. Sexes are separated in first and second class. Children under three years of age travel free. Children between three and 15 years of age pay half fare. Tickets can be booked at Nairobi railway station or through local travel agencies. For further information contact Kenya Railways (see address in Travel International section).

ROAD: Traffic drives on the left. All major roads are paved and many of the others have been improved, particularly in the southwest, although vast areas of the north still suffer from very poor communications. Care should be taken when leaving trunk roads as the surfaces of the lesser roads vary greatly in quality, particularly during the rainy season. There are petrol stations on most highways. The Kilifi Bridge linking Mombasa to Malindi serves as an alternative to the Kilifi ferry, and eases traffic flows to the northern circuit. Bus: Buses run regularly between most cities and towns. City buses operate in Nairobi and Mombasa at reasonable prices. Peak hours should be avoided as buses get very crowded. Buses also run across the borders to Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. Fares are paid to the conductor. There is a network of regular buses and shared minibuses (Matatu); the fares do not vary greatly, but buses tend to be the safer method of transport. All bus companies are privately run. Local advice should be taken for bus companies with a better safety record and reputation. In some towns the different bus services and the matatu share the same terminus. Taxi: Kenya is very well served by long-distance taxis, carrying up to seven passengers. The best services are between the capital and Mombasa and Nakuru. Taxis are not metered and a price must be agreed before departure. Taxis and minibuses are a convenient method of travel on the coast. Car hire: Self-drive and chauffeur-driven cars may be hired from a number of travel agents in Malindi, Mombasa and Nairobi. This can be expensive, and rates particularly the mileage charges can vary a good deal. Most companies insist that only 4-wheel-drive vehicles should be rented. Tours and safaris: Many tour companies in Nairobi offer package arrangements for visits to the game parks and other attractions. Before booking it is very important to know exactly what the all-in price provides. For further information contact Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO), PO Box 48461, 00100 Nairobi (tel: (20) 713 348 or 713 386; website: www.katokenya.org). Documentation: Visitors bringing in vehicles with registration other than Ugandan or Tanzanian must obtain an 'International Circulation Permit' from the Licensing Officer in Nairobi. This will be issued free of charge on production of a permit of customs duty receipt and a certificate of insurance. A full British driving licence is valid, otherwise an International Driving Permit is required. For further details, apply to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles in Nairobi.

URBAN: Bus: Nairobi and Mombasa have efficient bus systems. Single tickets are sold (by conductors), but monthly bus passes are also available from the Kenya Bus Offices in the city centre. There are also unregulated Matatu, 12- to 25-seat light pick-ups and minibuses. These are often severely overloaded and badly driven and therefore should be used with caution. The



three-wheel Bajaj Auto Rickshaw or Tuk tuk of South East Asia is becoming increasingly popular. In Kisumu, cycle rickshaws and bicycle taxis are popular. They are locally known as Boarder-boarders. Taxi: Dial a Cab, Jatco and Kenatco run fleets of taxis and these are usually very reliable. The older yellow-band taxis do not have meters, so fares should be agreed in advance. A 10 per cent tip is expected. Taxis cannot be hailed in the street. Hotels and restaurants can order taxis.

TRAVEL TIMES: The following chart gives approximate travel times (in hours and minutes) from Nairobi to other major cities/towns in Kenya.

Air	Road	Rail	Kisumu	1.057.00	14.00	Mombasa	1.006.00	14.00	Nakuru	0.303.00	05.00	Eldoret	1.157.00	09.00
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8 ACCOMMODATION

EDITOR'S CHOICE: GAME LODGES/SAFARI TENTS: Many safari operators offer camping safaris. Vehicles, tents, guides and equipment are provided. The type of accommodation available on a safari depends on the type of safari booked. Upmarket safaris offer overnight stays in luxurious game lodges and luxury tented camps. These are often situated in beautiful or dramatic surroundings, with animals sometimes roaming around the grounds freely. Camping safaris are also available but only travellers willing to live without luxuries such as running water or flushing toilets should consider this. The Kenya Wildlife Service recently completed the rehabilitation of selected self-catering bandas (cabins) in various national parks. These are privately owned country bush homes usually in spectacular locations, major cities or on main tour circuits. Most travel agents in Nairobi can arrange stays. For further information, contact the Kenya National Tourist Office, the Kenya Wildlife Service (see Top Things To Do) or KATO (see Travel Internal section).

HOTELS: Many of Nairobi's hotels are of top international standards, and some of them are still in the colonial style. Cheaper hotels are also available. Small boutique hotels are becoming increasingly popular in Nairobi, on the coast and in wilderness areas. Hotel bills must be paid in foreign currency or Kenyan Shillings. Almost all towns in the country offer basic budget hotels and lodgings, and in many tourist areas private campsites offer budget rates for backpackers. Grading: Accommodation in Kenya is divided into groups: town hotels, vacation hotels, lodges and country hotels. Within each group, grading is according to amenities and variety of facilities. For further information, contact the Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers & Caterers, PO Box 46406, Nairobi (tel: (20) 726 640/2).

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: There are no restrictions on camping in Kenya. However, visitors should be aware that camping in remote regions can be dangerous, owing to wild animals and to shifta (armed bandits); the latter are a hazard particularly in the far north. If camping in the vicinity of a village, culturally sensitive behaviour must be practised. Visitors intending to camp in remote areas should contact the Kenya Association of Tour Operators (see Travel Internal section) or Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) (see Top Things To Do). Most game reserves and national parks have camp grounds and basic facilities. Clear tent space and long drop latrines are often available.

YOUTH HOSTELS: There are youth hostels in all major towns. For further information, contact the Kenya Youth Hostels Association, Ralph Bunche Road, PO Box 48661, Nairobi (tel: (20) 723 012; e-mail: kyha@africaonline.co.ke).

SELF CATERING: Apartments ranging from luxury villas to basic beach cottages can be rented. Assistance with domestic chores can also be arranged.



HOME STAY: Home stays with Kenyan families can be arranged for visitors wishing to discover the way of life in a typical home.

Introduction

Kenya, regarded by many as the 'jewel of East Africa', has some of the continent's finest beaches, most magnificent wildlife and scenery and an incredibly sophisticated tourism infrastructure. It is a startlingly beautiful land, from the coral reefs and white sand beaches of the coast to the summit of Mount Kenya, crowned with clouds and bejewelled by strange giant alpine plants. Between these two extremes is the rolling savannah that is home to game parks such as Amboseli, the Masai Mara, Samburu and Tsavo; the lush, agricultural highlands with their sleek green coat of coffee and tea plantations; and the most spectacular stretch of the Great Rift Valley, the giant scar across the face of Africa. One-tenth of all land in Kenya is designated as national parks and reserves. Over 50 parks and reserves cover all habitats from desert to mountain forest, and there are even six marine parks in the Indian Ocean. Tourist facilities are extremely good. There are many organised safaris, but visitors with the time and money may choose to hire their own vehicle and camping equipment. Kenya also has a fascinatingly diverse population with around 40 different tribes, all with their own (often related) languages and cultures. The major tribes include the Kikuyu from the central highlands, the Luyia in the northwest, and the Luo around Lake Victoria. Of them all, however, the most famous are the tall, proud, beautiful red-clad Masai, who still lead a traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle of cattle-herding along the southern border. Kenya does have its downside as a tourist destination. Rampant corruption means that many of the roads are in poor condition and driving can be a chore. Urban crime is high and continuing inter-tribal skirmishes and banditry are a threat in some areas of the North. More prosaically, the tourist trade has taught people there to think of foreigners as open wallets. Prices for everything from park fees to hotel rooms are set way above the local level. There is enormous pressure to buy anything and everything, often at ridiculously inflated prices, and even taking a photograph in the local market is likely to incur a cost.

The Coast

MOMBASSA: The second-largest city in Kenya, 500km (300 miles) from Nairobi, Mombasa town actually sits on an island. Until the ascendancy of the Western powers in the Indian Ocean, Mombasa was second only to Zanzibar as a centre for trade with Arabia, India and the Far East slaves and ivory were exchanged for spices and small goods, and later for gold dollars. Mombasa is still an important port, prospering from its position at the head of the only railway into the Kenyan interior, but visitors are likely to find the rakish grey forms of foreign warships to be more typical of modern Mombasa than the flotillas of Arab dhows that still collect in the Old Harbour. Mombasa is the headquarters for Kenya's coastal tourist trade, but has none of the fine beaches to be found to the north and south. There are, however, several places of interest: the Old Town retains a strongly Arab flavour, with narrow, crowded streets and street vendors selling all manner of local and imported craftwork; Fort Jesus, built by the Portuguese in 1593 and taken by the Omani Arabs in 1698 after a 33-month siege, is now a museum and worth visiting (open 0830-1830 every day of the year, including son-et-lumière shows); the Old Harbour is an interesting place for early morning and late afternoon strolls, and is often filled with sailing dhows from the Yemen and Persian Gulf. For those who want to go shopping with atmosphere, Biashara Street is probably the best place to go to buy kikoi and khanga cloths; the main city market is the Makupa Market, off Mwembe Tayari and there is a floating market at Tudor Creek, to the north of the city. There are plenty of dhow trips here, and around the harbour if you fancy a spell on the water. The tourist office is on Moi Avenue near the Giant Tusks (Mon-Fri 0800-1700, Sat



0800-1200; tel: (11) 315 922 or 223 465). Staff are very helpful. Alternatively, there is also excellent information about the city online (website: www.mombasaonline.com).

RESORTS: Most of the beach resorts which are actually listed as Mombasa are some way out of town, along a 120km- (70 mile-) stretch of coast. To the north of the city, resorts such as Bamburi Beach, Casuarina Beach, Kenya Beach and Nyali Beach are amongst the older developments with easy access to the city centre and activities, restaurants and clubs. The Kenya Marineland and Snake Park, Bamburi Quarry Nature Trail, which also has a butterfly farm, the Mamba Crocodile Village in Freretown, and the Ngomongo Villages cultural park, showing off the lifestyle of 11 different Kenyan tribes, are entertaining for children and adults alike. Serious souvenir shoppers should head for Bombolulu Workshops and Cultural Village, where 260 disabled men and women produce high-quality leatherwork, jewellery and other crafts. There is some good diving on the somewhat damaged coral reef of the Mombasa Marine National Park, off the Nyali headland. The best beaches, such as Likoni and Tiwi (popular with backpackers), stretch out for some distance along the South Coast, reached only by ferry from the city centre. The best and most famous of them all is the 10km long, dazzlingly white Diani Beach, some 40km (24 miles) south of the city, lined by a string of large resort hotels. A short way inland, the 192 sq km Shimba Hills National Reserve is the most accessible place to see big game for those staying on the coast, although the wooded vegetation does not always make it easy. It does, however, boast a lot of leopard and Kenya's only population of sable antelope. In the far south, little Shimoni is an increasingly popular centre for diving and deep sea fishing, with three small marine parks, Kisite Marine National Park, Mpunguti National Reserve and Wasini Marine National Park within easy boat-trip distance. The coral reefs around here are spectacular and there are dhow trips to go dolphin-watching.

MALINDI: Malindi, 125km (80 miles) north of Mombasa, was once the centre of a powerful kingdom. Today it is a small, somewhat tatty resort town, but the Malindi and Watamu Marine National Parks are nearby. Here the coral reef is close enough to the white sand beach to walk out at low tide and you can snorkel, dive or watch the technicolour fish through a glass-bottomed boat. There are also several operators running deep-sea fishing charters. A small white cross on the bay marks the arrival in 1499 of Vasco da Gama, the first European ever to visit the Kenyan coast. Close to Watamu, the Gedi National Park protects the well-preserved ruins of a Swahili city, founded in the 13th century and destroyed by Somali raiders in the 17th century. The Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, south of Watamu, and the little village of Mamburi, north of Malindi, are also worth a visit.

LAMU ISLAND: Lamu Island, 200km (125 miles) north of Malindi, is an exceptionally beautiful place with fine, white sandy beaches, sailing dhows and a fascinating town. No motorised vehicles are allowed on the island and the streets are so narrow that donkeys and hand-carts are the only vehicles that can negotiate them. The area is strongly Muslim and the only places on the island to buy alcohol are in a couple of the larger tourist hotels. Lamu Town was founded in the ninth century and is one of a handful of Swahili towns whose many mosques and fine old Arab houses with impressive carved wooden doors have survived intact. There are a couple of excellent museums; the Lamu Museum and the Swahili House Museum. The Fortress is also open to the public. Other attractions in the city include the Hindu Temple in Mwangogo Road, off Treasury Square, and the bazaars. The best beaches are about 2km (1.2 miles) south of the town at Shela, or on the nearby islands.

Excursions: Fishing trips may be taken by dhow, and day trips to the 14th- and 15th-century ruins on the nearby islands of Manda and Pate can be arranged with local boat owners. On the Prophet's Birthday there is a week-long festival with dancing, singing and other celebrations.



Many Muslims come to Lamu from all along the coast to enjoy this celebration. The best time to visit the island is outside the main tourist season (April to November).

The Southeast

Southeastern Kenya is low, dry, flat savannah country, much of it taken up by the vast Tsavo National Park, a collection of privately owned game ranches in the Taita Hills and the smaller Amboseli National Park, on the Tanzanian border.

TSAVO NATIONAL PARK: The largest park in Kenya, Tsavo covers a mammoth 21,000 sq km (8000 sq miles). It is actually managed as two separate parks - Tsavo East, most of which is closed to the public, and Tsavo West. Between the two, the Taita Hills are the setting for most of the local game lodges, all of which stand on private concessions run as part of the same ecosystem as the park itself. Despite a drastic fall in the elephant population, caused by massive poaching in the 1970s and 80s, numbers are again on the increase and it is possible to see large herds. Much of the land is open savannah and bush woodland inhabited by buffaloes, a few rhinos, lions, antelopes, gazelles, giraffes and zebras. Crocodiles and hippos can be seen at Mzima Springs in the northwest of the park. Nearby, the Shetani Lava Flow is a 50 sq km lava bed formed by an eruption in the Chyulu Hills. As well as being rich in wildlife, Tsavo has a wealth of birds, with over 440 species recorded.

AMBOSELI NATIONAL PARK: A small park by Kenyan standards, covering 329 sq km, Amboseli lies on the Tanzanian border 220km (140 miles) from Nairobi. The fine view it affords of snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain (5895m/19,340ft), draws many visitors, but the park itself has seen better days. The once-lush savannah is now largely a dust-bowl and most animals have retreated into areas of scrub forest and marshland.

Central Highlands

NAIROBI: The 'Green City in the Sun' is an attractive city with wide tree-lined streets and spacious parkland suburbs. Its pleasant nature together with judicious investment in facilities such as the Kenyatta Conference Centre have made Nairobi an important centre for international business and conference activities. However, despite the capital's appearance, urban crime is on the increase and visitors are advised to take precautions such as avoiding certain areas, or walking anywhere at night (travellers are advised against walking alone through Uhuru Park at any time). There is a full range of shopping opportunities, from purpose-built American-style malls to African markets, and a variety of restaurants and nightclubs. There are open-air swimming pools at the Boulevard, Jacaranda and Serena hotels non-residents may pay to swim. Other places of interest in or near Nairobi include the Bomas of Kenya, a short distance outside the city centre, where displays of traditional dancing are put on for visitors; the Kenya National Museum with its particularly good ethnographic and archaeological exhibits (this is where many of the earliest human remains, discovered by the Leakeys at Olduvai, Koobi Fora and other well-known prehistoric sites, are displayed); and the Snake Park, opposite the museum, which houses snakes indigenous to East Africa and a few from other parts of the world. Adjacent to Snake Park is a collection of traditional mud and thatch huts and granaries containing tools characteristic of different tribes. In the suburb of Karen, the Karen Blixen Museum occupies the farmhouse made famous by the author's book, *Out of Africa*.

Excursions: Although it is just 8km (5 miles) from Nairobi city centre, Nairobi National Park still seems a savage and lonely place during the week (carloads of city-dwellers invade at the weekend). It was Kenya's first national park and today still looks much as it did in the early photographs wild, undulating pasture dotted with every kind of East African plain-dwelling



animal except elephants. At the gates to the park is the Animal Orphanage where young, sick and wounded animals are cared for. Also near here, the Langata Giraffe Centre offers the enchanting opportunity of hand-feeding the resident Rothschild giraffes. North of Nairobi, the road climbs steadily through the suburb of Thika and rich agricultural lands, offering excellent views of the Great Rift Valley. The eastern wall of the Rift is made up by the Aberdare Mountains, while further east still looms the vast bulk of Mount Kenya. Between the two are several attractive small towns such as Nyeri; Nyahururu, home of the Thomson's Falls; Muranga'a, whose cathedral tells the story of the Mau Mau rebellions in a series of colourful murals; Nanyuki and Naro Moru, both acting as starting points for those wishing to climb the mountain.

ABERDARE NATIONAL PARK: The park is set amidst a densely wooded mountain range rising to over 4000m (13,000ft), adjacent to Mount Kenya. It is possible to see elephants, rhinos, dik-dik, leopards, lions and monkeys as well as rare forest antelopes such as the bongo. However, the thick vegetation and misty alpine climate hides most wildlife from the inexperienced observer, the exceptions being giant forest pigs, baboons and buffaloes, which often sleep or feed beside the many dirt tracks. Most visitors prefer to watch for animals from the comfort of the park's two lodges, 'Treetops' and 'Ark', both built on platforms overlooking clearings which are floodlit at night. On the higher slopes, giant alpine plants sprout from an almost perpetual fog. There are many waterfalls, the greatest being Guru Falls, which drops over 300m (1000ft). The western face of the mountain range is the sheer Mau Escarpment, which falls dramatically to the floor of the Great Rift Valley.

MOUNT KENYA NATIONAL PARK: Conical Mount Kenya, an extinct volcano, is the second-highest mountain in Africa, at 4986m (16,358ft) above sea level. The national park covers 600 sq km (230 sq miles) of forest and bare rock straddling the equator, all above 1800m (6000ft). The mountain may be climbed without special equipment, but it is advisable to take time so as to avoid altitude sickness. The ascent is very beautiful with the vegetation ranging from farmland to thick forest, bamboo forest, open moorland, giant alpine vegetation, sheer rock and finally, at the summit, year-round snow fields. The lower slopes are one of the last haunts of the black leopard and the black and white colobus monkey. Climbers should be accompanied by a guide. Porters are also available and there are huts to stay in along the way. Plenty of warm clothes are required as well as one's own food supplies. A Rockclimber's Guide to Mount Kenya and Mount Kilimanjaro can be bought from the Mountain Club of Kenya, PO Box 45741, Nairobi (tel: (20) 602 330; e-mail: MCKenya@iname.com; website: www.mck.or.ke).

The Great Rift Valley

About 20 million years ago, a vast seismic scar was torn across the face of Africa, stretching for nearly 6000km (3600 miles), from the Red Sea to the Drakensberg in South Africa. Known today as the Great Rift Valley, it is at its most dramatic and visible in central Kenya where escarpment walls 2000m high plunge to the flat-bottomed valley floor, decorated by a small string of volcanoes and brackish soda lakes. Driving down into the valley from Nairobi, the first landmark on the valley floor is the almost perfect cone of Mount Longonot, a dormant volcano (2885m/9466ft), that has recently been gazetted as a national park. The walk up is hard, but worth it both for the wildlife and the final spectacular views of the crater and along the Rift. Known for the abundance and variety of its birdlife and spectacular views, freshwater Lake Naivasha, is one hour's drive from the capital, and the centre of a booming horticultural industry. The south shore is lined by hotels and guest houses, popular as a weekend retreat from Nairobi, with the option of boat trips to little Crescent Island. Also on the south shore is Elsamere, home of Joy and George Adamson and the real setting of Born Free, their effort to return the lioness, Elsa, to the wild. It is now a small museum, guest house and conservation centre. Nearby, Crater Lake is another small volcanic crater and Hell's Gate National Park, both of which allow you to



walk amongst the wildlife. Happy Valley, centre of the 'White Mischief' scandal is a short distance north of Naivasha, in the foothills of the Aberdares. Much of the socialising in the 1920s took place in the mansions surrounding Lake Naivasha, notably the Djinn Palace (still there, but closed to the public). Lake Elementeita is the first of the brackish soda lakes in the string. There is a small game reserve on its shores and excellent birdwatching. Also nearby is a small but fascinating prehistoric site, Kariandusi. Kenya's third-largest city, Nakuru is situated a little further north still, about 230km (140 miles) west of Nairobi. A vibrant town, with a huge central market, it is a good place to hunt down souvenirs (keep an eye on wallets and bags). Lake Nakuru National Park was once said to be home to half the world's total population of pink flamingos and, even today, visitors in winter will encounter these ungainly birds in vast numbers, along with around 450 other species of bird. Although tiny, this gem of a park has huge concentrations of game (everything except elephant). Above all, it is one of Kenya's rhino sanctuaries, and it is possible to see up to 15 of these magnificent animals in one game drive. Also near Nakuru are Hyrax Hill, another important prehistoric settlement, and the Menengai Crater, an extinct volcano with a vast caldera. You can drive right up to the rim. Lake Bogoria National Park, about 70km (42 miles) north of Nakuru, surrounds a long thin soda lake, dramatically set at the foot of the 600m-high Laikipia Escarpment. It also has good game-viewing and giant flocks of flamingos, and area of belching geysers and hot springs lie in one corner of the park, which have dyed the surrounding rocks a kaleidoscope of colours. Of the most northerly of the string of lakes (approximately 118km (65 miles) north of Nakuru), Lake Baringo is a large, beautiful freshwater lake with excellent birdlife. There is a permanent tented camp on the island at the lake's centre where boats may be hired to cruise through the reeds at the northern end, a habitat rich in water fowl, egrets, giant herons and fish eagles. With village tours on offer and a huge variety of local tribes, this is one of the best places in Kenya to explore the rich human culture of the country.

Western Kenya

With the exception of the magnificent Masai Mara, Western Kenya is rarely visited by tourists and there are fewer hotels and lodges of international standard. On the plus side, the area is stunningly beautiful, culturally diverse and offers a real chance to explore the country away from the crowds.

MASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE: Situated 390km (240 miles) from Nairobi in the southwest corner of the country, this reserve, owned by the local Masai Council but operated as a national park by Kenya Wildlife Services, is a slice of Africa as seen by Hollywood (much of the film *Out of Africa* was shot here) a vast rolling plain beneath the Oololo escarpment that forms part of the vast Serengeti plains in neighbouring Tanzania. Each year, this is the spectacular setting for the great migration, the constant clockwise motion of an estimated two million wildebeests and zebra who arrive in the Mara from late June onwards, heading south again in September. Continually harried by predators, thick columns of exhausted animals eventually converge at one spot on the Mara River and wait nervously to cross. A panic anywhere within the herd is transmitted flank-to-flank until it reaches those by the river, who fall 6m (20ft) into water already bloodied and bobbing with bloated carcasses. The inelegant beasts must swim past crocodiles, hippos and flapping vultures to join the sparse but growing herd on the other side. The stench is unimaginable and while it is undoubtedly fascinating, also requires a strong stomach to watch the immense distress. During the migration season (July/August), the reserve's resident lions lounge prominently in the sun, fat and seemingly placid, and apparently indifferent to tourists. Other animals to be seen, at any time of the year, include elephants, cheetahs, baboons, gazelles, giraffes, jackals, hyenas, water buffaloes, ostriches and several types of antelope. There are numerous lodges and tented camps both within the park and on its immediate borders. Mara Serena Lodge, Mara Sopa Lodge and Keekorok Lodge are the best known of the hotel-style properties. Governor's Camp is the largest of the camps. For true luxury,



try Bateleur's Camp or Cottars 1920s Safari Camp. Most of the small lodges and camps have their own airstrips. A highlight for any visitor is the hot air balloon trips which operate from Governor's Camp, Sarova Camp and Fig Tree Camp. Masai tribespeople live on the reserve's fringes. They are very keen to sell traditional bead necklaces and decorated gourds to tourists, or to pose for tourist cameras in return for a fee.

LAKE VICTORIA: West of the Mara, on the Ugandan border, Lake Victoria is the largest lake in Africa, a vast inland sea that is also the source of the fabled Nile River. Kisumu, Kenya's fourth city, made its reputation as the inland end of the Lunatic Line railway and a trading centre with Tanzania and Uganda. These days, the lake steamer and trade have gone and the city struggles to survive on the few tourists who head over to the lake. Three islands, a little further south, near Homa Bay Rusinga Island, Mfangano Island and Takawiri Island have luxury lodges which provide excellent fishing and birdwatching. In the far south, tiny Ruma National Park (painfully reached by an appalling road) protects several rare species such as the roan antelope and Rothschild giraffe. Inland, Kisii is the centre of production for most of Kenya's trademark pink and white soapstone, while the area around Kericho and the Nandi Hills is tea country, with vast estates flowing across rolling hills. The Kakamega Forest Reserve is Kenya's last surviving patch of primeval rainforest, a wonderful cool green cave of soaring trees and tangled vines, with hundreds of species of birds, around 60 of which are found nowhere else in the country.

THE NORTHWEST: The northwest of the country is largely agricultural, its steep hills patchworked by terraces and villages. The two main towns of Eldoret and Kitale act as jumping off points for many stunning scenic tours. The most important attraction in the region is Mount Elgon National Park, the Kenyan half of a giant forested volcano (4321m/14,178ft), famous for its mountain flora and fauna, its wonderful birdlife and for the elephants who scratch salt from the walls of Kitum Cave. To the north, the Cherangani Hills offer excellent mountain hiking and the tiny Saiwa Swamp National Park. To the east, bordering the Rift Valley, are the Tugen Hills and the dramatic escarpments of the Kerio Valley.

Northern Kenya

Due north of the Central Highlands is a belt of savannah which provides a home to several game-rich, if less visited, national parks, including Samburu, Meru and Kora, plus a whole host of small game reserves, few of which have any tourist facilities. The far north of Kenya is largely desert, difficult to travel, remote and wild. Unfortunately, much of the area is also troubled by inter-tribal violence and banditry and tourists should take local advice before travelling in the region. It is possible to fly up to Lake Turkana, the largest of the Kenyan soda lakes, on the Sudan border.

MERU AND KORA NATIONAL PARKS: Located 400km (250 miles) from Nairobi, Meru National Park remains one of the more unspoilt parks, an oasis within the parched land all round, with 13 rivers lined with Doum palms and mountain-fed streams watering richly tangled woodlands on the slopes of the Nyambene Mountain Range. To the east, the park is adjoined by Kora National Reserve, a largely dry area bisected by the great Tana River. Both areas have plenty of game but were badly affected by poaching in the 1970s and 80s. Security has been strengthened these days and there are three lodges and several campsites in Meru, all operating happily. However, security is still a concern in less well-trodden areas.

SAMBURU GAME PARK: An area of semi-desert halfway between Nairobi and Lake Turkana (see below) that provides a rare chance to see the oryx, gerenuk, reticulated giraffe and Grevy's zebra. Ostriches and elephants are easily spotted in this open habitat. There are two lodges, Samburu Lodge and River Lodge, both of which hang out bait to attract leopards for the guests



to study whilst sitting at the bar. The park takes its name from the Samburu people, distantly related to the Masai.

LAKE TURKANA: There are several parks and reserves in the far north of Kenya, gathered around Lake Turkana (formerly Lake Rudolph). This extraordinary lake has recently been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Running for several hundred miles through windswept and largely uninhabited deserts, the lake contains many unique species of fish and marine plants and has recently gained a reputation as a fishing resort. Several lodges have sprung up on the eastern shore to cater for this trade and, consequently, general tourism is expected to increase. Despite the harsh climate, many of Kenya's better known animals manage to survive here, as do the tiny people of the El Molo tribe, who fish the eastern waters. There are two large volcanic islands in the lake. The flooded crater of the southernmost island has a resident population of unnaturally large crocodiles. The lake is subject to violent storms that disturb algae to produce remarkable colour changes in the water. Those who wish to visit Turkana are advised to fly. The road takes two days, crosses immensely harsh landscape and there is danger of violence.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Wildlife safaris: The most common way to see Kenya's rich wildlife is by organised tours in small vans (which typically carry six to eight people). Private drives and walking safaris are also possible, although both require armed guides. Aeroplane or hot-air balloon trips are available at the Masai Mara National Reserve. Camel safaris can be organised in the Samburu and Turkana areas between Isiolo and Lake Turkana. Each park or game reserve offers different types of animals and vegetation. For further details, see the Resorts & Excursions section or contact the Kenya Wildlife Service (see Contact Addresses section). A list of safari tour operators can be obtained from the Kenya Association of Tour Operators, KATO (see Travel - Internal section).

Watersports: The coastal resorts on Kenya's Coral Coast, north and south of Mombasa, have fine sandy beaches and there are several coral reefs. The most popular resorts include Bamburi, Kikambala, Kilifi, Malindi, Nyali, Shanzu, and Wasini Island. A wide range of watersports is available, including scuba diving, snorkelling, sailing, water-skiing, swimming and surfing. The coast around Malindi is renowned for game fishing. Trout fishing in the lakes (notably at Lake Naivasha and Lake Victoria) is particularly good between November and March. Deep-sea fishing is good along the coast between July and April. Sailfish, marlin, wahoo, swordfish, kingfish, barracuda and tuna are all available. Whitewater rafting is popular on the Athi/Galana River.

Other: Kenya has a total of 39 golf courses ranging from minigolf to 18-hole courses. The most popular destination for trekking is Mount Kenya, although the trails tend to get fairly busy. Other trekking destinations include Mount Elgon (on the border with Uganda) and the Ngong Hills (near Nairobi). Tennis, squash, bowls, horse riding and polo are all popular. Kenya also has good athletics facilities and the Kenyans have a fine record in world competitions. Sports clubs accept visitors.

Entertainment

Food & Drink: Kenya's national dishes appear on most hotel menus. The country's beef, chicken, lamb and pork are outstandingly good, as is the wide variety of tropical fruits. Local trout, Nile perch and lobster, shrimps and Mombasa oysters are included on menus in season. Indian and Middle Eastern food is available in most areas. There is a wide range of restaurants in Nairobi and Mombasa, otherwise hotels in smaller towns offer restaurant service. National



specialities: Some game-park lodges serve game, including buffalo steaks marinated in local liqueurs and berries, often garnished with wild honey and cream. Nyma Choma literally means roasted meat, and is one of Kenya's best known specialities. Most Kenyans eat maize, beans and maize meal. At the small 'hotelis', chai (tea boiled with milk and sugar) and mandazi (doughnuts) are popular. National drinks: Locally brewed beer (Tusker and White Cap) and bottled sodas may be found throughout the country. Kenya Cane (spirit distilled from sugar cane). Kenya Gold (a coffee liqueur). Traditional beer made with honey (uki). Locally made spirit distilled from maize (changaa) may sometimes be found. Tipping: This is not required. Most hotels include a 10 per cent service charge in the bill. If the service charge has not been included, a KES20 tip is usual, although the amount is entirely at the visitor's discretion.

Nightlife: Most of the major hotels in Nairobi and the tourist resorts have dancing with live bands or discos each evening. There are also a few nightclubs. There is a large selection of cinemas in Nairobi which show mainly British, European and US films. Theatre is popular in Nairobi. There is a National Theatre and several small groups of dramatic companies; probably the best known are the Phoenix Players.

Shopping: Khanga, kitenge and kikoi cloths may be bought in markets. The Masai market is held in Nairobi city centre on Tuesdays. There is a particularly good cooperative shop in Machakos which sells kiondos, bags stained with natural dyes and with strong leather straps. Makonde woodcarvings are sold throughout the country, and young Kamba and Masai men sell carvings and necklaces on the beaches of the south coast. Shopping hours: Mon-Sat 0830-1230 and 1400-1730. Note: The sale of souvenirs made of wildlife skins (this includes reptiles) and shells is forbidden.

Business

Statistics: GDP: US\$13.8 billion (2004). Main exports: Tea, horticultural products, coffee, petroleum products, fish and cement. Main imports: Machinery and transportation equipment, petroleum products, motor vehicles, iron and steel, resins and plastics. Main trade partners: Africa (Uganda and Tanzania mainly), EU (UK mainly), and the Far East.

Economy: The Kenyan economy is largely agricultural 80 per cent of the population are dependent on the land, contributing around 30 per cent of national output. The main cash crops are tea and coffee, although pyrethrum, sisal, sugar and cotton are also important. Kenya is one of the few African countries with a significant dairy industry. Hydroelectric plants meet 80 per cent of the country's energy requirements. The remainder comes from imported oil, which is also used for one of the country's principal industries, the manufacture of petroleum-based products such as plastic and chemicals. Kenya, which has one of Africa's largest manufacturing sectors, also produces cement, paper, drinks, tobacco, textiles, rubber and metal products, ceramics, and electrical and transport equipment. The mining industry, however, is very small. In the service sector, tourism is the largest industry and the country's principal source of foreign exchange; this increased significantly in 2004 with a 51.9 per cent increase in earnings over 2003. Like many African countries, Kenya signed up to an IMF-imposed Structural Adjustment Programme in the mid-1990s but it lapsed following policy disagreements between the Fund and the Kenyan government. Further concerns, mainly concerning political reform and widespread corruption, disrupted Kenyan relations with its other major Western aid donors. The IMF and World Bank withdrew support entirely in January 2000. However, following introduction of anti-corruption measures and the privatisation of several major state-owned enterprises, the IMF is now expected to resume its support by the end of 2003. The IMF approved the new Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. The 2005/6 budget gave new emphasis to economic recovery strategies, with particular emphasis on increasing expenditure on health, education and



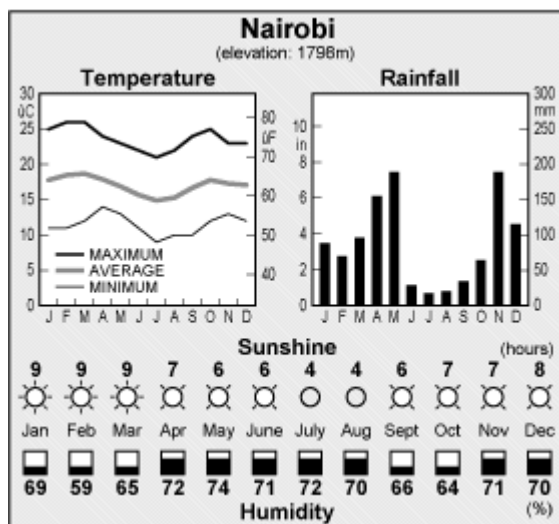
infrastructure. In addition, for the first time, foreign investors have been allowed to take controlling stakes in Kenyan companies. Overall economic performance has been disappointing due to the persistent Government failures and slow pace of reform. Since the election of the Narc Government, pace has begun to pick up. Economic growth reached 4.3 per cent in 2004. An estimated two million Kenyans are unemployed and the new Government, elected in 2003, plans to create 500,000 new jobs. Along with Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have explored plans to establish a customs union as the first step towards an east African regional trading bloc (a previous effort collapsed in 1977).

Business Etiquette: Lightweight suits are recommended for all occasions. Prior appointments are necessary. Although Swahili is the national language, English is the official language and is widely spoken. Office hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1300 and 1400-1700.

Conferences/Conventions: Main urban centres, such as Mombasa and Nairobi, and most international hotels have conference facilities.

Commercial Information: Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry PO Box 47024, Ufanisi House, Hailé Sélassie Avenue, Nairobi, Kenya Tel: (20) 220 867. Website: www.kncc.org Investment Promotion Centre PO Box 55704, 8th Floor, National Bank Building, Harambee Avenue, Kenya City Square 00200, Nairobi, Kenya Tel: (20) 221 401-4. Website: www.investmentkenya.com The Kenyatta International Conference Centre (Information on Conferences/Conventions) PO Box 30510, Nairobi, Kenya Tel: (20) 332 383.

10 CLIMATE



The coastal areas are tropical, but tempered by monsoon winds. The lowlands are hot but mainly dry, while the highlands are more temperate with four seasons. Nairobi has a very pleasant climate throughout the year due to its altitude. Near Lake Victoria, the temperatures are much higher and rainfall can be heavy.

Required clothing: Lightweight cottons and linens with rainwear are advised for the coast and lakeside. Warmer clothing is needed in June and July and for the cooler mornings on the coast.



Lightweights are needed for much of the year in the highlands. Rainwear is advisable between March and June and October and December.

11 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Excavations in Kenya suggest that the region is the cradle of humanity, the home some 3.25 million years ago of *Homo habilis*, from whom *Homo sapiens* descended. What is certain is that, in more recent times, Kenya was the settling place of a huge number of tribes from all over Africa, with a long history of migration, settlement and conflict. During the following centuries, the region became prosperous on the profits of trade, and also as an entrepôt for commerce from the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese arrived in the early 16th century, and having wrested control of the area's trade from the Arabs, absorbed Kenya into their commercial empire. By 1720 they had been driven out by the Arabs, and for the next two centuries the region was largely ruled by Omani Dynasties from Arabia. During the 1820s, a local power struggle led to the British being invited into the region by the Mazrui Dynasty, and, by the middle of the century, both the British and the Germans were competing for control of the coast and its hinterland during the second great colonial period. By the 1890s the threat of the Masai tribesmen had, by a mixture of diplomacy and war, largely been neutralised, and the British were able to penetrate into the highlands. The Mombasa to Uganda railway line was constructed at this time, and Nairobi owes its present importance to the fact that it was a convenient staging point on the edge of the highlands. It soon became the headquarters of the British administration. By the early 20th century, the fertile lands to the north were attracting a large number of white settlers led by Lord Delamere who came into conflict with the local population. Many tribes, such as the Masai and the Kikuyu, were displaced. The movement for territorial, economic and political rights soon found an able leader in Jomo Kenyatta, who spent much of the 1930s and 1940s in Europe pressing the case for his cause. After World War II, this gathered pace. The fight for independence was a difficult and sometimes bloody affair, particularly the three-year guerrilla war mounted during the 1950s by the nationalist Land Freedom Army (better known as the Mau Mau) against the British colonial authorities. Kenya was nonetheless an early beneficiary of Harold Macmillan's 'winds of change' policy towards Africa. The main nationalist party, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), led by Kenyatta, took power on Independence Day in December 1963, despite British efforts to sponsor an alternative. Kenyan politics were subsequently dominated by the struggle between moderate and radical factions within the ruling KANU party. The moderates, led by Tom Mboya (assassinated in 1969) and Kenyatta's eventual successor, Daniel Arap Moi, consistently held the upper hand. Opposition parties were banned outright in 1982 after an attempted coup which showed signs of having been contrived by the government in order to justify the ban. During the early 1990s, under pressure from Western aid donors, the Moi government was finally forced to concede to a multi-party democracy. The main opposition movement was now the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD). This posed a major threat to Moi's hold on power until it suffered an irrevocable and, ultimately, fatal split. Kenyan politics is often based on tribal allegiance: FORD drew support from the two largest but often mutually antagonistic tribes, the Kikuyu and the Luo, while Moi belonged to the smaller Kalenjin tribe. With the main opposition party divided, KANU and Moi won the December 1992 legislative and presidential elections. It was the government's ferocious reaction to Safina, a relatively small and short-lived political party set up by the renowned anthropologist Richard Leakey, that prompted the suspension of some Western aid. Efforts to restore the flow foundered on the Moi regime's increasingly poor record in tackling official corruption. With a rapidly growing external debt, Kenya was now in serious financial difficulties. At the next national election in December 1997, amid widespread allegations of fraud, malpractice and pre-election violence orchestrated by pro-government elements, both Moi and KANU recorded slight improvements on



their performances of five years earlier. Moi's main opponent on this occasion was a former vice-president, Mwai Kibaki. With Moi constitutionally barred from contesting the December 2002 election, Mwai Kibaki the most prominent opposition politician made his second attempt at the presidency (this time against a new KANU candidate: Jomo Kenyatta's son, Uhuru, who is new to politics) and was elected President. The political scene has been dominated in recent months by the arguments for and against a draft constitution, which was put to a vote in a referendum on 21 November 2005. Although there were several instances of violence during rallies leading up to the referendum (resulting in eight deaths), referendum day itself passed off peacefully, as did a large NO ('Orange') rally in Nairobi on 26 November 2005 to celebrate the result. The NO ('Orange') group have announced that they are planning a series of further nationwide rallies, starting in Mombasa on 10 December 2005.

Government: Kenya's legislature is the single chamber 224-member National Assembly: 210 members are directly elected every five years in single-seat constituencies; 12 members are appointed; the Speaker and the Attorney-General serve in an ex-officio capacity. Executive power is held by the president who is also directly elected for five years.

Travel Advice

Kenya shares with neighbouring countries a high threat from terrorism. This threat remains. Previous attacks have been against civilian or visibly Western targets where foreigners have been present. These have included bomb attacks on a hotel and a Western Embassy, both of which resulted in significant loss of life, and an unsuccessful attempt to bring down a civilian airliner in Mombasa. Police raids on local media institutions on 2 March 2006 have caused widespread condemnation. Protest rallies followed and more may be planned. Travellers should avoid political rallies and demonstrations and exercise caution. There have been skirmishes and inter-clan fighting in the North Eastern Province, along the Somalia border. People have been killed. Travel in the northeast should only be undertaken with care and after consulting the police. There have also been a series of attacks linked to cattle rustling against local farmers in the Eastern and Central Provinces including the districts of Laikipia, Samburu, Baringo and West Pokot. There have been a number of violent attacks and murders of non-indigenous residents in recent years. Muggings and armed attacks are also prevalent, particularly in Nairobi and Mombasa. This advice is based on information provided by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in the UK. It is correct at time of publishing. As the situation can change rapidly, visitors are advised to contact the **following organisations for the latest travel advice:** British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Tel: (0845) 850 2829. Website: www.fco.gov.uk US Department of State Website: <http://travel.state.gov/travel>

Top Things To See

In Mombasa, enjoy the city's Arab flavour in the Old Town with its narrow, crowded streets and street vendors selling all manner of local and imported craftwork; continue to Fort Jesus, now a museum, with son et lumière shows; the Old Harbour is an interesting place for early morning and late afternoon strolls, and is often filled with sailing dhows from the Yemen **and Persian Gulf. Excellent information about the city can be found online (website: www.mombasaonline.com).** In Nairobi, the 'Green City in the Sun', see the ethnographic and archaeological exhibits of the Kenya National Museum (this is where many of the earliest human remains, discovered by the Leakeys at Olduvai, Koobi Fora and other well-known prehistoric sites, are displayed). In the suburb of Karen, go to the Karen Blixen Museum, which occupies the farmhouse made famous by the author's book, *Out of Africa*. In the Bomas of Kenya, a short distance outside Nairobi's city centre, see displays of traditional dancing. On Lamu Island, see dancing and other celebrations at a week-long festival on the Prophet's Birthday. In Lamu Town,



a Swahili town on Lamu Island, see many mosques and fine old Arab houses with impressive carved wooden doors. Go to the Lamu Museum and the Swahili House Museum. The Fortress is also open to the public. Other attractions in the city include the Hindu Temple in Mwagogo Road, off Treasury Square, and the bazaars. Day trips to the 14th- and 15th-century ruins on the nearby islands of Manda and Pate can be arranged with local boat owners. Close to Watamu, in the town of Gedi, see the well-preserved ruins of a Swahili city, founded in the 13th century and destroyed by Somali raiders in the 17th century. The Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, south of Watamu, and the little village of Mamburi, north of Malindi, are also worth a visit. In the Amboseli Park, which lies on the Tanzanian border 220km (140 miles) from Nairobi, see fine views of snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain (5895m/19,340ft). North of Nairobi, take the road through the suburb of Thika to discover excellent views of the Great Rift Valley. The eastern wall of the Rift is made up by the Aberdare Mountains, while further east still looms the vast bulk of Mount Kenya. Between the two are several attractive small towns such as Nyeri; Nyahururu, home of the Thomson's Falls; Muranga'a, whose cathedral tells the story of the Mau Mau rebellions in a series of colourful murals. In Aberdare National Park, be enchanted by the sight of many waterfalls, the greatest being Guru Falls, which drops over 300m (1000ft). The western face of the mountain range is the sheer Mau Escarpment, which falls dramatically to the floor of the Great Rift Valley.

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Top Things To Do

Skate on East Africa's first ice skating facility. The Solar Ice Rink, which opened in December 2005, at the Panari Hotel in Nairobi, can accommodate 200 skaters and measures 15,000 square feet. Take a dhow (traditional Arab sailing ship) trip from Mombasa. Go shopping with atmosphere in Mombasa. Biashara Street is probably the best place to go to buy kikoi and khanga cloths; the main city market is the Makupa Market, off Mwembe Tayari and there is a floating market at Tudor Creek, to the north of the city. Serious souvenir shoppers should head for Bombolulu Workshops and Cultural Village, where 260 disabled men and women produce high-quality leatherwork, jewellery and other crafts. In the Masai Mara, buy traditional bead necklaces and decorated gourds from the Masai tribespeople, who will also be very keen to pose for tourist cameras in return for a fee. Close to Mombasa, visit the Kenya Marineland and Snake Park, Bamburi Quarry Nature Trail, which also has a butterfly farm, the Mamba Crocodile Village in Freretown, and the Ngomongo Villages cultural park, showing off the lifestyle of 11 different Kenyan tribes. West of the Mara, on the Ugandan border, Lake Victoria is the largest lake in Africa. Take an unforgettable sunset boat trip through the channel between Mbasia and Mholo Island. Go scuba diving, snorkelling, sailing, water-skiing, swimming and surfing on Kenya's Coral Coast, north and south of Mombasa. The most popular resorts include Bamburi, which is undertaking a project to protect the turtle nesting sites, Kikambala, Kilifi, Malindi, Nyali, Shanzu, Lamu Island and Wasini Island. Along the South Coast, one of the the best and most famous beach is the 10km long, dazzlingly white Diani Beach, some 40km (24 miles) south of Mombasa. The coast around Malindi is renowned for game fishing. Trout fishing in the lakes (notably at Lake Naivasha and Lake Victoria) is particularly good between November and March. Deep-sea fishing is good along the coast between July and April. Sailfish, marlin, wahoo, swordfish, kingfish, barracuda and tuna are all available. Lake Turkana, recently designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, contains many unique species of fish and marine plants. Climb Mount



Kenya, an extinct volcano, and at 4986m (16,358ft) above sea level, the second-highest mountain in Africa. The lower slopes are one of the last haunts of the black leopard and the black and white colobus monkey. A Rockclimber's Guide to Mount Kenya and Mount Kilimanjaro can be bought **from the Mountain Club of Kenya, PO Box 45741, Nairobi 00100 (tel: (20) 602 330 (evenings); website: www.mck.or.ke)**. In the Great Rift Valley, escarpment walls 2000m high plunge to the flat-bottomed valley floor, decorated by a small string of volcanoes and brackish soda lakes. Walk up Mount Longonot, a dormant volcano (2885m/9466ft), that has recently been gazetted as a national park. At the top, enjoy the wildlife and the final spectacular views of the crater and along the Rift. There are also possibilities for abseiling. The most common way to see Kenya's rich wildlife is to go on a safari. For those staying on the coast, the Shimba Hills National Reserve is the most accessible place to see big game, leopard and Kenya's only population of sable antelope. There is also the Mwalu-Ganje Elephant Sanctuary. The largest park in Kenya, Tsavo covers a mammoth 21,000 sq km (8000 sq miles). The Taita Hills are the setting for most of the local game lodges. See large herds of elephants, buffaloes, a few rhinos, lions, antelopes, gazelles, giraffes and zebras. Crocodiles and hippos can be seen at Mzima Springs in the northwest of the park. Tsavo also has a wealth of birds, with over 440 species recorded. Just 8km (5 miles) from Nairobi city centre, Nairobi National Park was Kenya's first national park and today still looks much as it did in the early photographs wild, undulating pasture dotted with every kind of East African plain-dwelling animal except elephants. At the gates to the park is the Animal Orphanage. Also near here, the Langata Giraffe Centre offers the enchanting opportunity of hand-feeding the resident Rothschild giraffes. The Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage is also nearby. In Aberdare National Park, get close to elephants, rhinos, dik-dik, leopards, lions and monkeys as well as rare forest antelopes such as the bongo, giant forest pigs, baboons and buffaloes. In Lake Nakuru National Park, see pink flamingos, along with hundreds of other species of bird. Above all, it is one of Kenya's rhino sanctuaries. In the Masai Mara National Reserve, in the southwest corner of the country, be fascinated by the spectacular setting for the great migration, the constant clockwise motion of an estimated two million wildebeests and zebra who arrive in the Mara from late June onwards, heading south again in September. The Masai Mara has the largest population of lions. Other animals to be seen, at any time of the year, include elephants, cheetahs, baboons, gazelles, giraffes, jackals, hyenas, water buffaloes, ostriches and several types of antelope. Due north of the Central Highlands are several game-rich, if less visited, national parks, including Samburu, Meru and Kora. There are several parks and reserves in the far north of Kenya, gathered around Lake Turkana (formerly Lake Rudolph). Each park or game reserve offers different types of animals and vegetation. For further details, contact the Kenya Wildlife Service (see Tourist Information). A list of safari tour operators can be obtained from the Kenya Association of Tour Operators, KATO (see Travel - Internal section). Aeroplane or hot-air balloon trips are available at the Masai Mara National Reserve. Camel safaris can be organised in the Samburu and Turkana areas between Isiolo and Lake Turkana.

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OverviewII

Excavations in Kenya suggest that the region is the cradle of humanity, the home some 3.25 million years ago of Homo habilis, from whom Homo sapiens descended. What is certain is that, in more recent times, Kenya was the settling place of a huge number of tribes from all over Africa, with a long history of migration, settlement and conflict. During the following centuries,



the region became prosperous on the profits of trade, and also as an entrepôt for commerce from the Indian Ocean. Today, Kenya, regarded by many as the 'jewel of East Africa', has some of the continent's finest beaches, most magnificent wildlife and scenery and an incredibly sophisticated tourism infrastructure. It is a startlingly beautiful land, from the coral reefs and white sand beaches of the coast to the summit of Mount Kenya, crowned with clouds and bejewelled by strange giant alpine plants. Above all, Kenya is a place for safaris. Between these two extremes is the rolling savannah that is home to game parks such as Amboseli, the Masai Mara, Samburu and Tsavo; the lush, agricultural highlands with their sleek green coat of coffee and tea plantations; and the most spectacular stretch of the Great Rift Valley, the giant scar across the face of Africa. One-tenth of all land in Kenya is designated as national parks and reserves. Over 50 parks and reserves cover all habitats from desert to mountain forest, and there are even six marine parks in the Indian Ocean. Kenya also has a fascinatingly diverse population with around 40 different tribes, all with their own (often related) languages and cultures. The major tribes include the Kikuyu from the central highlands, the Luyia in the northwest, and the Luo around Lake Victoria. Of them all, however, the most famous are the tall, proud, beautiful red-clad Masai, who still lead a traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle of cattle-herding along the southern border. Kenya does have its downside as a tourist destination. Rampant corruption means that many of the roads are in poor condition and driving can be a chore. Urban crime is high and continuing inter-tribal skirmishes and banditry are a threat in some areas of the North. More prosaically, the tourist trade has taught people there to think of foreigners as open wallets. Prices for everything from park fees to hotel rooms are set way above the local level. There is enormous pressure to buy anything and everything, often at ridiculously inflated prices, and even taking a photograph in the local market is likely to incur a cost. But despite this, the people are friendly, and the tourist trade is supremely well organised and professional. For those in search of a little adventure, this can be an ideal holiday destination.

Communications

Telephone: IDD service is available to the main cities. Country code: 254 (followed by 20 for Nairobi, 41 for Mombasa and 51 for Nakuru). International calls can sometimes be made direct or operator-assisted by dialling 0196. Public telephones work with coins or with phone cards (which may be purchased from post offices or from international call services in major towns); coin-operated phone booths are painted red, card-operated booths are painted blue. Major hotels also offer an international phone service, but they usually charge up to 100 per cent more. In larger towns, private telecommunication centres offer international services. For local calls, it is useful to have plenty of small change available.

Mobile telephone: Roaming agreements exist with international mobile phone companies. The main network providers are Celtel (website: www.celtel.com), which has extensive coverage in the south west and around the coast and Mombasa, and Safaricom (website: www.safaricom.co.ke), with coverage in from Mombasa to Nairobi and in the south east.

Internet: There are Internet cafes in major cities and hotels.

Post: Post offices are identified by Telkom Kenya (Kenya Posts & Telecommunications Corporation). Post boxes are red. Stamps can usually be bought at post offices, stationers, souvenir shops and hotels. Airmail to Western Europe takes up to four days, and the service is generally reliable. Post office hours: Mon-Fri 0800-1700, Sat 0900-1200 (main post offices).

MEDIA: Kenya enjoys a more diverse media scene than many other African countries, although some media have been harrassed for upsetting the government. Most Kenyans rely on the broadcast media, particularly radio, for news. The print media is dominated by two publishing



houses, the Nation Media Group and Standard, which also have broadcasting interests. Press: The main dailies (all published in English) include Daily Nation, The East African Standard, Kenya Times and The People Daily. Taifo Leo is the only Swahili-language daily, published by the Nation Media Group. Nairobi is the main publishing centre. TV: State-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) has channels in English and Swahili. Kenya Television Network was the first TV station to break the state broadcasting monopoly; it is available in Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu. Nation TV is a Nairobi-based station operated by the Nation Media Group. Other private channels include: Nairobi-based station Citizen TV and Stella TV (STV). Radio: Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) is state-owned, with language-based networks in English, Swahili and 15 other indigenous languages. Metro FM is a national music-based station operated by KBC. Coro FM is a KBC-operated Kikuyu-language station in Nairobi. Capital FM and Kiss FM are music stations. Radio Citizen is a private station with wide coverage which also operates Kikuyu-language Inooro FM and Luo-language. Full-time FM relays of the BBC World Service are on the air in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu, and some BBC programmes are also rebroadcast by private Kameme FM. The Voice of America has an FM relay in Nairobi and Radio France Internationale is relayed on FM in Mombasa.