

Tsavo East & West

"Incredible Terrain and Contrasts"



Tsavo East National Park

Fulfilling Game Drives for True Explorers

Tsavo East offers miles of open plains, bushy grassland and semi-arid scrub. What is more, once you depart off the few 'beaten tracks' that exist, you can explore one of the last remaining wildernesses on earth in almost primeval solitude.

Aruba Dam

The peacock-blue waters of Aruba dam, located on the north bank of the seasonal Voi River and contrasting vibrantly with the terracotta earth that surrounds them, are visited by thousands of animals making this an especially rewarding game-viewing destination. Aruba Dam is an 85-hectare man-made dam built by the Parks authorities in 1952 to staunch the waters of the seasonal Voi River, which flows down from the Taita Hills in the southwest. It usually holds water throughout the year and is frequented by huge numbers of ibis, many grey heron and a kaleidoscope of other water birds. It is also part of the territory of a large pride of lion, which can often be seen in the dam's vicinity.

Kanderi Swamp

The Kanderi Swamp lies near Voi Gate and during the dry months provides one of only two drinking areas in Tsavo East, thus attracting large herds of buffalo, impala and antelopes as well as yellow baboons and lion.

Mudanda Rock

Kenya's answer to Ayer's Rock of Australia is called Mudanda Rock, a massive 1.5km whale-backed rock which rears out of the shrub between Manyani Gate and Voi and is famous for its photo-opportunities, offering marvellous light, panoramic vistas and an excellent chance of prime wildlife shots. It is also an excellent vantage point from which to look down on the natural dam below, which can at times attract hundreds of elephant. This area is also known as a favourite leopard haunt, though daytime sightings are rare.

The Galana River

The Tsavo and Athi Rivers join above Lugard's Falls to form the Galana River, which then flows down to the Indian Ocean. A major feature of the park, the

serpentine reaches of this river are fringed by riverine forests dominated by *Acacia elatior*, the Doum Palm *Hyphaene compressa* and the shrub *Suaeda monoica*.

Lugard's Falls

Named after Britain's first proconsul in East Africa, Captain (later Lord) Lugard, the falls are better described as rapids than falls progressing from foaming cataracts to narrow cascades that gouge deep into the gneiss bedrock creating fantastic shapes that have been surreally rounded by thousands of years of rushing water.

Mighty when in full spate, the falls gush through a small fissure, narrow enough for the foolhardy to leap across, before plunging to the pool below, where massive crocodiles bask motionless in the sun.

There is a parking area at the falls and visitors either climb around the bizarrely eroded rocks or walk down the river to view the rapids. 1 km east of the falls another short diversion takes you to Crocodile Point where hippos and buffalo wallow and zip-jawed crocodile grin.

The Yatta Plateau, an ancient valley frozen in time

The Yatta plateau is a ridge or tongue of lava about 300km long and a maximum of 10km wide, which forms a seemingly never-ending backdrop to Tsavo East. One of the longest lava flows in the world, the Yatta affords fabulous views across the rolling reaches of the Park, is an ornithological paradise and makes a peerless sundowner or picnic spot. It is made up of a form of lava known as phonolite, which is between 11 and 13.6 million years old.

Current thought suggests that the Yatta Plateau was formed when a stream of lava flowed across the land until it found its way into an ancient river valley. The lava then flowed down the valley; taking on the shape of its contours, until eventually it cooled and solidified. Thereafter the surrounding land was gradually lowered by erosion leaving the frozen river of lava standing up as a ridge.

Theatre of the wild

The sight of dust-red elephant wallowing, rolling and spraying each other with the midnight-blue waters of the Galana River is one of East Africa's most evocative images. The rolling savannah is also dotted with rocky hills, the favoured haunt of

lion, whilst the waterhole at Voi Safari Lodge is normally visited in the mornings by vast herds of buffalo, zebra and elephant. Giraffe are regulars along the Galana River routes as are troops of yellow baboon and numerous dik dik. Below Lugard's Falls are Hippo Point and Crocodile Point, both of which are popular venues for wallowing hippo and basking crocodile. Small herds of the critically endangered Hirola (Hunter's hartebeest) have also been translocated to the Park whilst the dry bush along the Galana River is a good place to look for one of Kenya's most beautiful antelopes, the lesser kudu.

'Man-eaters' and mane-less lions

Tsavo achieved notoriety in the 1900's when 'the Man-eaters of Tsavo', a pair of rogue man-eating lions, preyed gruesomely on the builders of the Uganda Railway. Today the Park is more famous for the numerous prides of mane-less lion that patrol the plains and police the herbivore herds. Lion can often be spotted near Kanderi Swamp and around Aruba Dam.

A brilliance of birds

Tsavo East's prolific bird life features 500 recorded species. Commonly seen birds are African skimmer, goshawk, red and yellow bishop, palm nut vulture and the white-headed buffalo weaver. Around Aruba Dam there is also a profusion of woodpecker, sunbird, starling and pigeon whilst along the Galana River both Maasai and Somali ostrich abound along with kori bustard, bateleur, carmine bee-eater and an East African speciality, the vulturine guinea fowl.

NGUTUNI GAME SANCTUARY

Ngutuni Game Sanctuary is the place to be for safari goers who do not wish to undertake extended driving in the vast Tsavo East National Park. We highly recommend a stay in this place.

It is a 10,000 acre private game sanctuary, surrounded on three sides by Tsavo East National Park with view of the Sagala Hills. It is best known today for its fantastic variety of wildlife including lion, cheetah, elephant, buffalo as well as a huge variety of plains game and bird life.

It is only in Ngutuni Sanctuary, in the whole of Tsavo East National Park, where one can do a night game drive conveniently and spot a lot of animals including many big cats at very close range.

Tsavo West National Park **Incredible Terrain and Contrasts**

The Wildlife Experience

Tsavo West offers some of the most magnificent terrain contrasts in the world and wildlife attractions include elephant, rhino, Hippos, lions, cheetah, leopards, Buffalos, diverse plant and bird species including the threatened corncrake and near threatened Basra Reed Warbler. There are also other animals to spot in the park, such as the bushbaby, hartebeest, lesser kudu and Masai giraffe.

The vastness of the park as mentioned in the overview, thick vegetation in focus areas makes comparative game viewing less popular than Amboseli and Tsavo East (which is made easier by Ngutuni Game Sanctuary). However, its offering cannot be ignored by those seeking a journey with a unique experience. Keen photographers, nature lovers, adventurers and itinerants all find the Tsavo West visit very fulfilling.

“Land of Lava, Springs, Man-Eaters & Magical Sunsets”

From the sight of fifty million gallons of crystal clear water gushing out of from the under parched lava rock that is the Mzima Springs to the Shetani lava flows, Tsavo West is a beautiful, rugged wilderness. The savannah ecosystem comprises of open grasslands, scrublands, and Acacia woodlands, belts of riverine vegetation and rocky ridges including the Poacher's Lookout where visitors can see the teeming herds in the plains below.

Walking Safaris & Scenery Viewing

Explore Chaimu Volcanic crater, Shetani Lava Flows and Mzima Springs over a variety that is unrivalled.

Safari Ideas to Tsavo East & West National Parks

Recommended Stay: 1 Night at Tsavo West and 1 or 2 Nights at Tsavo East

Starting and ending in Nairobi - Nairobi to Tsavo West, to Tsavo East, to Amboseli, Naivasha, Mara

Starting in Nairobi and ending in Mombasa for Beach stay
Mara, Naivasha, Tsavo West, Amboseli, Tsavo East, , Tsavo East, Mombasa