AFRIQUE UNIE · TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Kenya and Tanzania in 14 days: a day-by-day itinerary

The Maasai Mara and the Serengeti are one and the same ecosystem, split in two by a border, so linking them in a single trip is the most natural way to see the great plains of East Africa. This fourteen-day itinerary starts in Nairobi, enters Tanzania at the Isebania border post, runs south through the Serengeti to Ngorongoro Crater and ends on the beaches of Zanzibar. The border crossing, with its formalities on both sides, is explained in detail. Before you leave, read your government's official travel advice for both Kenya and Tanzania.

Day by day

Day 1 · Nairobi, a first evening in East Africa (night : Nairobi)
Most international flights land in Nairobi, at Jomo Kenyatta airport. If you arrive in the morning, use the afternoon for a first encounter with wildlife without leaving the city: Nairobi National Park, where giraffes, zebras and rhinos live with the downtown towers as a backdrop, can be visited in half a day. The quieter suburbs of Karen and Lang'ata are home to a giraffe conservation centre and an orphanage for baby elephants that opens to the public at set times. The authorities advise avoiding certain districts of the capital and not walking after dark, so get around by taxi booked through your accommodation. Have an early night: departures for the bush are at dawn.

Days 2-4 · Three nights in the Maasai Mara (night : Maasai Mara)
Allow five to six hours by road to the reserve, through Narok and down the escarpment of the Rift Valley; the last stretch is on rough tracks. A light-aircraft flight from Nairobi's Wilson airport cuts the journey to under an hour. Three nights give you four or five game drives, early in the morning and late in the afternoon, when the big cats are active. Lions, cheetahs, elephants and hippos are present all year. From roughly July to October, wildebeest and zebras arriving from the Serengeti cross the Mara River, a spectacle that also draws a lot of vehicles. The community conservancies bordering the reserve limit visitor numbers and allow walking safaris with Maasai guides.

Day 5 · Into Tanzania through Isebania and Sirari (night : Shore of Lake Victoria, Tanzanian side)
This is the pivotal day of the trip. The Maasai Mara adjoins the Serengeti, but the Sand River post between the two parks is closed to tourists, so you have to go round to the west. Leave at dawn for Isebania, the last Kenyan town, then report to the border post, where exit checks for Kenya and entry checks for Tanzania follow one another. Sirari begins on the other side. Kenyan safari vehicles do not usually continue: your driver hands you over to a Tanzanian crew waiting with another 4x4. The tarred road then heads south through Tarime towards Lake Victoria. Allow seven to nine hours in all, formalities included, and sleep near the lake, close to the western entrance of the Serengeti.

Days 6-8 · The Serengeti, from the Western Corridor to Seronera (night : Serengeti National Park)
Enter the park at Ndabaka Gate, in the west, and follow the corridor of the Grumeti River, known for its crocodiles and riverine forest. By the end of the day you reach the Seronera area, in the centre, where lions and leopards are particularly numerous. Spend the next two days on the plains dotted with kopjes, the granite outcrops where the big cats keep watch. The position of the migrating herds changes with the months: in the north from July to October, on the southern plains from December to March, with calving in January and February. Ask your guide to adapt the game drives, and choose where you stay according to the season.

Day 9 · From the southern plains to the crater rim (night : Rim of Ngorongoro Crater)
Leave Seronera after a last morning game drive and take the track heading south-east. At Naabi Hill Gate you leave the national park and enter the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, where the Maasai still graze their herds among the wildlife. Olduvai Gorge, a short detour off the track, is worth a stop: some of the oldest hominid fossils were discovered here and are presented in a small museum. The track, dusty and bumpy, then climbs towards the highlands. Allow three to four hours of driving, not counting stops. You sleep on the rim of the crater, at an altitude of more than 2,200 metres: nights are cold up here, so pack a fleece.

Day 10 · Ngorongoro Crater, then Arusha (night : Arusha)
Drive down into the caldera as soon as the tracks open, when the mist is lifting from the crater floor. This natural amphitheatre, around twenty kilometres across, is permanently home to lions, hyenas, buffaloes, elephants with long tusks and a few black rhinos, which are often seen from a distance. The rules limit the time spent on the crater floor to about half a day, which is enough to make a full circuit, with a picnic near the hippo pool. Drive back up in the late morning, then continue to Arusha in three to four hours, through Karatu and the village of Mto wa Mbu. The road is tarred from the exit of the conservation area onwards.

Days 11-12 · Flight to Zanzibar and the lanes of Stone Town (night : Zanzibar (Stone Town))
Daily flights link Arusha or Kilimanjaro International Airport with Zanzibar, taking an hour to an hour and a half when direct. Base yourself in the old stone town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is best explored on foot: carved wooden doors, the former palaces of the sultans, the Old Fort, Darajani market and the Anglican cathedral built on the site of the old slave market. The next day, visit a spice farm in the interior of the island, or take a boat to Changuu islet and its giant tortoises. Zanzibar is overwhelmingly Muslim: cover your shoulders and knees in town and keep beachwear for the beach.

Days 13-14 · The northern beaches, then departure (night : Nungwi or Kendwa)
About an hour and a half by road separates Stone Town from the northern tip of the island. Nungwi and Kendwa are the beaches where the tide goes out the least, so you can swim for most of the day, which is not the case on the east coast. In Nungwi you can still watch carpenters building dhows by hand; in Kendwa the beach is wider and quieter. Snorkelling trips, a sunset dhow cruise or simply resting after ten days on dirt tracks: the programme is up to you. On the last day, head back to Zanzibar airport, which has international flights, either direct or connecting through Dar es Salaam or Nairobi.

Getting around

In both Kenya and Tanzania, safaris are done in a 4x4 with a driver-guide: it is the safest option, and the authorities advise against driving at night outside towns. Book both halves with operators who coordinate the change of vehicle at the Isebania border. To save time, light aircraft link Nairobi with the Maasai Mara, and other flights, with a ground transfer through Isebania, reach the Serengeti airstrips. Another solution is to return to Nairobi and fly to Kilimanjaro airport, or drive through the Namanga border post. Arusha and Zanzibar are linked by air; flying avoids a very long day on the road to Dar es Salaam.

When to go

The two countries share the same seasons. The best periods run from June or July to October, during the long dry season, then from January to February, between the two rainy seasons. From July to October the migration is in the northern Serengeti and the Maasai Mara; in January and February it gathers in the southern Serengeti for calving, and the Maasai Mara is quieter. In April and May, heavy rain makes some tracks difficult. In Zanzibar the sea is pleasant all year round, but showers are frequent from March to May.

Practical information

Kenya

Entry	Depends on your passport: visiterafriqueunie.com/en/visa/kenya/
Yellow fever	Certificate required if arriving from a risk country
Malaria	in some areas
Currency	Kenyan shilling (KES)
Languages	Swahili, English
Plugs	type G · dialling code +254 · UTC+3
Emergencies	police 999 ou 112 ou 911 · ambulance 999 · fire 999

Tanzania

Entry	Depends on your passport: visiterafriqueunie.com/en/visa/tanzania/
Yellow fever	Certificate required if arriving from a risk country
Malaria	in some areas
Currency	Tanzanian shilling (TZS)
Languages	Swahili, English
Plugs	type D, G · dialling code +255 · UTC+3
Emergencies	police 112 ou 0787 668306 (Dar es Salaam) · ambulance 112 · fire 112

Departure checklist

Documents

☐ Passport valid for at least six months after your return, with blank pages
☐ Visa or e-visa (printed if required)
☐ International vaccination certificate (yellow fever if required)
☐ Travel insurance certificate and assistance number
☐ Paper and digital copies of your passport and bookings
☐ Tickets, bookings and addresses saved offline
☐ International driving permit if you are hiring a vehicle

Health

☐ Travel consultation done and vaccinations up to date
☐ Malaria tablets if your doctor recommends them
☐ First-aid kit: plasters, antiseptic, anti-diarrhoea tablets, rehydration salts
☐ Mosquito repellent suitable for the tropics
☐ Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
☐ Personal medication and prescriptions

Money and connectivity

☐ Bank told, Visa or Mastercard (and a backup card)
☐ Cash in euros or dollars, recent notes in good condition
☐ eSIM or local SIM card sorted
☐ Plug adapter for the country
☐ Power bank and cables
☐ Offline maps downloaded
☐ Afrique Unie app installed

In the bag

☐ Light clothes that cover up (sun, mosquitoes, places of worship)
☐ A fleece for evenings, dawn safaris and altitude
☐ Walking shoes and sandals
☐ Head torch
☐ Water bottle (ideally with a filter)
☐ Small daypack and waterproof pouches
☐ Luggage padlock

Before you close the door

☐ Your government's travel advice reread
☐ Trip registered with your consular service (if it offers this)
☐ Itinerary and contacts left with someone close
☐ Online check-in done and baggage allowance checked

Notebook made from visiterafriqueunie.com/en/itineraries/kenya-and-tanzania-in-14-days/ · information checked in November 2026 against official sources. Entry, health and safety rules change: check them again before you leave (your country's official advice, the embassy of the country you visit).