

Getting Started

East Africa has a wide selection of hotels and restaurants in tourist areas and major towns, plus some of Africa's most elite safari lodges and luxury tented camps. If you're on a midrange or top-end budget, travel here is Africa made easy, with just enough adventure to keep things satisfying.

If you're travelling on a shoestring, things get more rugged. Expect to stay in basic guesthouses, and to put in time bumping over rough roads on crowded buses. The rewards: getting into the pulse of East Africa, and seeing how most locals live.

Whatever your style, there's plenty to keep you busy – mountain trekking, wildlife safaris, up-close encounters with our primate relatives, moss-covered ruins, palm-fringed beaches and much more. Costs range from high, for people staying in upscale safari lodges (especially in Tanzania, which is generally the most expensive destination in the region), to modest, for those living local style.

If you don't have time pressures it's quite easy to set your itinerary as you go, but, especially for safaris and treks, you'll get better quality and prices by doing some advance planning. When charting your route, remember that East Africa is large; it's much better to concentrate on one or two areas, than to try and cover too much distance in one visit. Major destinations are connected by reasonably good air connections and reliable (albeit often gruelling) bus routes, but you'll need plenty of time to cover the often long distances.

WHEN TO GO

The main tourist seasons are the hotter, drier months of mid-December through January, and the cool, dry months from June to August, although the region can be visited at any time of year. For more information on climate in the region see p621, and check individual country chapters for more detailed Climate and When to Go sections.

During the long rains (roughly March through May), things are much quieter: there are few tourists, accommodation prices come down, and some places close completely. While main routes in most areas remain

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

You can buy almost anything you'll need in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Kampala, except specialist trekking and sporting equipment, and certain toiletries such as contact lens solution. However, especially outside of Nairobi, choice is limited and prices high. Some things to bring from home:

- binoculars for wildlife watching
- torch (flashlight)
- mosquito repellent and net (p644)
- zoom lens for wildlife shots (p627)
- light, rubber-soled shoes for beach walking
- sleeping bag and waterproof gear for trekking
- sturdy water bottle
- travel insurance (p625)
- wind- and waterproof jacket, especially for highland areas.

See p622 for climate charts

CUTTING COSTS

Whatever your budget, the following are some tips if you're trying to cut costs while travelling in East Africa.

- Travel in the low season.
- Always ask about children's discounts.
- Travel in a group (four is ideal) for organised treks and safaris.
- Keep your schedule flexible to take advantage of last minute deals.
- Carry a tent, and camp whenever possible.
- Focus on easily accessed parks and reserves to minimise transportation costs.
- Use public transport.
- Eat local food.
- Stock up on food and drink in major towns to avoid expensive hotel fare and pricey shops in tourist areas and national parks.
- Offer to pay in cash – sometimes this may result in a discount if you ask.

passable, secondary roads are often closed, especially in parts of Uganda and Tanzania. You can expect to get drenched for at least a few hours each day, and it will be too muddy in many areas for hiking, but everything will be beautifully green.

Particularly in Kenya and Tanzania, watch out for peak-season hotel prices around the Christmas-New Year holidays, and during the July–August high season.

COSTS & MONEY

Travel in East Africa is considerably more expensive than in Asia or India and you'll need to work to stick to a shoestring budget. That said, it's quite possible to get by on limited funds, and in so doing you'll be able to immerse yourself more fully into local life. At the other end of the spectrum, East Africa has some of the most expensive lodges and hotels to be found anywhere, with all the corresponding comforts. Tanzania is the most expensive country in the region for travel, followed by Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda. Burundi's delicate political situation gives it a special status, and accommodation is generally expensive, thanks in part to the large UN presence in the country.

At the budget level throughout the region, plan on spending from about US\$20 to US\$25 per day – that's staying at budget guesthouses, eating mostly local food, travelling primarily with local transport and excluding safaris and other organised activities. For midrange hotels, Western-style meals and more travel comfort, a realistic budget would start at around US\$60 per day, excluding 'extras' such as park entrance fees, visa fees, the price of vehicle rentals or safaris, plus any airfares. Top-end luxury lodge travel costs anywhere from US\$150 to US\$400 or more per person per day, with prices at the upper end of this spectrum usually for all-inclusive safari packages.

For more money issues, including how to access and carry it, see p625.

READING UP

Books

Peter Matthiessen's *The Tree Where Man Was Born* offers a timeless portrayal of life on the East African plains.

The classic *Out of Africa* by Karen Blixen is one European's nostalgic perspective on life in colonial-era Kenya. For a more recent and realistic take, look for David Bennun's *Tick Bite Fever*.

Green Hills of Africa by Ernest Hemingway and *Death in the Long Grass* by Peter Hathaway Capstick chronicle the days of African big game hunting. Another title by Hemingway – *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* – deals with some of the larger questions of life in an East African setting.

Among the many beautiful coffee table books that will whet your appetite for travels in the region are *Africa Adorned* by Angela Fisher and *Africa's Great Rift Valley* by Nigel Pavitt.

The Ukimwi Road: From Kenya to Zimbabwe by inimitable Dervla Murphy is a sobering though highly readable chronicle of the author's bicycle journey through the ever-present reality of AIDS in East and southern Africa.

Websites

Afrol.com (www.afrol.com) African news and current affairs.

ArtMatters (www.artmatters.info) Focuses on Kenyan arts, but also has excellent regional cultural links.

East Africa Living Encyclopedia (www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/neh.html) Part of the University of Pennsylvania's African Studies Center, with country information and lots of links.

Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org) Regional news and humanitarian issues.

Kamusi Project (www.yale.edu/swahili/) A 'living' online Swahili dictionary, plus East Africa links.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Travel tips, the Thorn Tree bulletin board and helpful links to other sites.

Pambazuka (www.pambazuka.org) Articles on regional and continent-wide social and humanitarian issues.

MUST-SEE MOVIES

East Africa's stunning panoramas and turbulent human history have featured in many films. There are quite a few to look for before setting off.

Hotel Rwanda (2004) is the real-life story of a Rwandan Hutu who sheltered hundreds of refugees in his four-star hotel during the outbreak of the Rwandan genocide; see p571 for more about this film.

FAVOURITE FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The best festivals and events are often the unannounced ones, such as a small-town wedding, a rite of passage celebration, or local market day. Larger-scale happenings include the following.

- The Serengeti–Masai Mara wildebeest migration – one of Earth's greatest natural spectacles (see p193).
- Zanzibar International Film Festival – taking place in Zanzibar around July, and part of the Festival of the Dhow Countries, this is East Africa's major cultural gathering (see p253).
- Sauti za Busara Swahili Music Festival – a celebration of all things Swahili, held around February in Zanzibar, and featuring artists from throughout East Africa (see p253).
- Maulid – marking the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed, best seen on Lamu in Kenya (see p353).
- Eid al-Fitr – the end of Ramadan fasting, and especially colourful on Zanzibar and elsewhere along the coast (see p624).
- Kenya Music Festival – Kenya's longest-running music festival, held in Nairobi over 10 days in August (see p286).

CONDUCT IN EAST AFRICA

East Africa comfortably mixes a generally conservative outlook on life with a great deal of tolerance and openness towards foreigners, and meeting locals is one of the highlights of regional travel. The following are a few tips to smooth the way.

- While most East Africans will probably be too polite to tell you so directly, they'll be privately shaking their head about travellers doing things like not wearing enough clothing or sporting tatty clothes. Especially along the Muslim coast, cover up the shoulders and legs, and avoid plunging necklines, skin-tight fits and the like.
- Pleasantries count! Even if you're just asking for directions, take time to greet the other person. Handshake etiquette is also worth learning, and best picked up by observation. In many areas, East Africans often continue holding hands for several minutes after meeting, or even throughout an entire conversation.
- Don't eat or pass things with the left hand.
- Respect authority; losing your patience or undermining an official's authority will get you nowhere, while deference and a good-natured demeanour will see you through most situations.
- Avoid criticising the government of your host country, and avoid offending locals with public nudity, open anger and displays of affection (between people of the same or opposite sex).
- When visiting a rural area, seek out the chief or local elders to announce your presence, and ask permission before setting up a tent or wandering through a village – it will rarely be refused.
- Receive gifts with both hands, or with the right hand while touching the left hand to your right elbow. When giving a gift, don't be surprised if the appreciation isn't expressed verbally.

Showcasing magnificent footage of the cycle of life on the Serengeti plains, *Africa – The Serengeti* (1994) features the annual wildebeest migration.

Kilimanjaro: To the Roof of Africa (2002) is a gripping preview of what is to come if you're contemplating climbing the mountain (p175), and a good armchair adventure if you're not.

The film version of Karen Blixen's classic book (see p17), *Out of Africa* (1985) is notable primarily for its evocative locational footage of Kenya. Another classic, *Born Free* (1966), is a family-friendly film, set in Kenya and focused around hand-rearing a lion cub, that still forms many Westerners' first ideas about East Africa.

Nowhere in Africa (2002) is the absorbing tale of a Jewish family who flee Nazi Germany to settle in colonial-era Kenya and *Keepers of Memory* (2004) is a moving look at the Rwandan genocide through the eyes of survivors; see p567 for more on this subject.

Maasai: The Rain Warriors (2005) is a somewhat contrived but intriguing look at a group of Maasai as they walk across Kenya to track down a legendary lion and thus break a drought.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Tourism is big business in East Africa, especially in Tanzania and Kenya. The following are a few guidelines for minimising strain on the local environment. For tips on etiquette, see above, and for more on deforestation and other environmental problems where tourist behaviour can have an impact, see p80.

- Support local enterprise.
- Buy souvenirs directly from those who make them.
- Choose safari and trekking operators that treat local communities as equal partners, and that are committed to protecting local ecosystems.

'Always ask permission before photographing people'

- For cultural attractions, try to pay fees directly to the locals involved, rather than to tour company guides or other middlemen.
- Always ask permission before photographing people.
- Avoid indiscriminate gift giving; donations to recognised projects are more sustainable and have a better chance of reaching those who need them most.
- Don't buy items made from ivory, skin, shells, etc.
- Save natural resources, especially water and wood, and don't take hot showers if the water is heated by firewood. To wash yourself or your clothing, fill a container with water and carry it elsewhere to avoid polluting the source.
- Respect local culture and customs.
- Don't litter! On treks, in parks or when camping, carry out all your litter, and leave trails, parks and campsites cleaner than you found them.
- A major danger in parks, especially in Kenya, is land degradation resulting from too many vehicles crisscrossing the countryside. Keep to the tracks when on safari (or encourage your driver to do so).

Itineraries

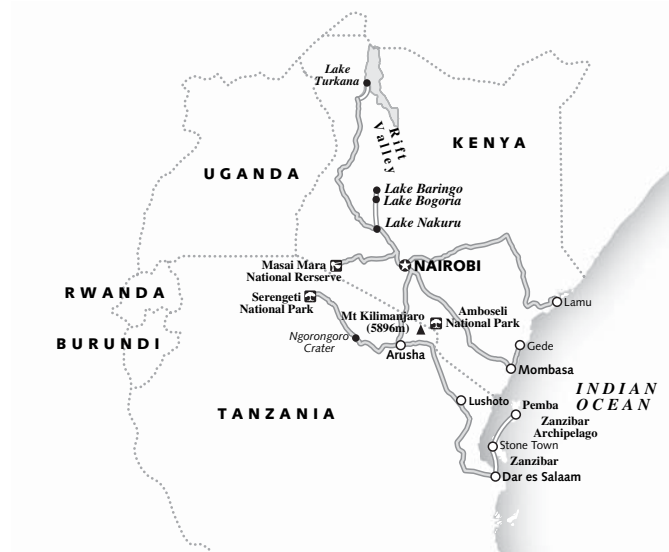
CLASSIC ROUTES

BEACH & BUSH

Two to Three Weeks

This classic beach and bush combination mixes wildlife watching *par excellence* with postcard-perfect beaches and the allure of Swahili culture, plus the chance for detours in between. You can squeeze in the essential destinations in as little as a week (albeit very pressed), but two to three weeks will allow you to explore at a more leisurely pace and to include some detours. Fly into **Nairobi** (p278), from where you can head off for a safari in either the **Masai Mara National Reserve** (p393) or **Amboseli National Park** (p300). Alternatively, make your way overland from Nairobi to **Arusha** (p178) for a safari in **Serengeti National Park** (p193) and **Ngorongoro Crater** (p199).

After getting a taste of the wildlife, head eastwards to the coast. In Kenya, not-to-miss destinations include **Lamu** (p341) and the ruins at **Gede** (p334). In Tanzania, the **Zanzibar Archipelago** (p128) is the highlight, and an ideal base for diving, snorkelling and relaxing, plus taking in the charm and historical attractions of Zanzibar's old **Stone Town** (p133). When your time is up, fly out of **Dar es Salaam** (p114), Nairobi or Zanzibar, whichever is most convenient. With extra time in either Kenya or Tanzania, it's possible to take in a few more highlights en route between bush and beach, including hiking in Tanzania's cool, green Usambara Mountains around **Lushoto** (p166), trekking on **Mt Kilimanjaro** (p175) or – with a bit more detouring – visiting some of Kenya's Rift Valley lakes. Highlights here include **Lake Nakuru** (p364), **Lake Bogoria** (p366), **Lake Baringo** (p368) and the starkly beautiful and otherworldly **Lake Turkana** (p427), though you'll need several extra days for this.



Wildlife and beaches have long been East Africa's top draws. This classic itinerary combines the best of both, and can be easily trimmed or extended, depending on the time at hand. Distance covered by this route is about 700km at a minimum, though it could be considerably lengthened to take advantage of all that's on offer.

EAST AFRICA OVERLAND

Three Months

For those with a bit of wanderlust, plenty of time, a tolerance for rugged travel and a desire to immerse themselves in local life, East Africa is an ideal destination for exploring on a classic overland route, either on a shoestring budget, or more upscale.

One possibility is to start off in Uganda, where – in addition to visiting as many national parks as you possibly can and going **gorilla tracking** (p100) – you can spend time in laid-back **Kampala** (p470), on the relaxing **Ssesse Islands** (p537) or white-water rafting the **source of the Nile** (p495) close to **Jinja** (p491). Once you've had your fill, make your way via **Bukoba** (p207) and **Mwanza** (p202) on Lake Victoria to view wildlife galore at **Serengeti National Park** (p193) and then on to **Arusha** (p178). From Arusha, head south towards **Dodoma** (p220) and then eastwards to **Dar es Salaam** (p114) and the beautiful **Zanzibar Archipelago** (p128). From here, turn north to explore **Mombasa** (p309), with its fascinating Old Town, and the **Kenyan coast** (p309) with Malindi and Gede.

Once you've had enough of the sand and the sea, make your way inland until your time runs out, enjoying highlights such as a trek on Africa's second-highest mountain, **Mt Kenya** (p376), and the beautiful **Kakamega Forest Reserve** (p406), or detouring north for a **Lake Turkana** (p424) safari, including stops at **Maralal** (p425), **South Horr** (p427), **Loyangalani** (p428) and perhaps even **Marsabit** (p422). Depending where in Kenya fortune finds you when you've finished your travels, you can continue either to Kampala or **Nairobi** (p278) for a flight home. This itinerary can also be started in Nairobi, or done in reverse from Kampala – both alternatives are good options for those wanting more time in Kenya.

Whether you're a Gap-year traveller or a mid-life adventurer, following this classic overland route is one of the best ways to get into East Africa's pulse. You can make things as rough or luxurious as you wish. The main requirement for covering this approximately 3500km loop is time.

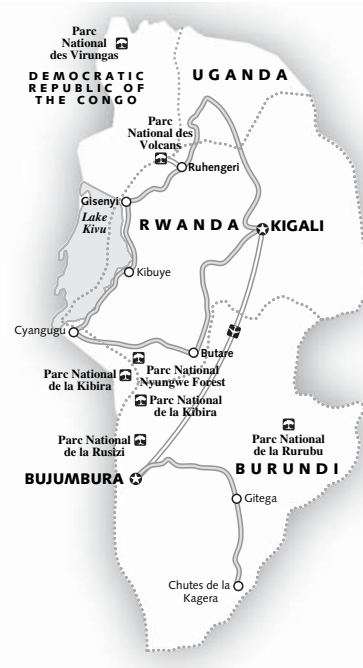


ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

RWANDA & BURUNDI SAMPLER

Two to Three Weeks

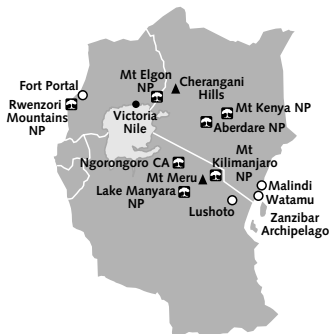
Rwanda and Burundi, although war-scarred, are topographically magnificent and culturally fascinating, and make rewarding destinations for intrepid and savvy travellers. If you're lucky enough to make it to these countries, a good first stop is **Kigali** (p572), with its lush, mountainous setting, resurgent nightlife and peppy atmosphere. Next, head southwest via **Butare** (p589) to **Parc National Nyungwe Forest** (p591), with its abundance of chimpanzees and other primates, and then via **Cyangugu** (p592) to the scenic inland beaches on Lake Kivu around **Kibuye** (p593) and **Gisenyi** (p586). From here, it's just a short hop on to **Ruhengeri** (p581) and the mountain gorillas of **Parc National des Volcans** (p583), and then back to Kigali. Alternatively (and security situation permitting) adventure over to **Parc National des Virungas** in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo; p561) for some gorilla tracking on the wild side. In Burundi, apart from **Bujumbura** (p607) – which makes an agreeable enough introduction to the country – the impressive **Chutes de la Kagera** (p612), near Rutana, are well worth a visit, as is **Gitega** (p612), Burundi's second-largest town. More rewarding destinations – only possible once the security situation stabilises – include **Parc National de la Rurubu** (p607), with its beautiful views, **Parc National de la Rusizi** (p607) near Bujumbura and **Parc National de la Kibira** (p607), with patches of rainforest. With time remaining, head from Burundi into Tanzania, or from Rwanda into Uganda, both of which have plenty to keep you busy.



Long off the trodden trail, the lush, mountainous panoramas and vibrant cultures of these two East African gems will captivate anyone who ventures their way. Although it covers barely 400km, allow as much time as possible for this journey into the heart of Africa.

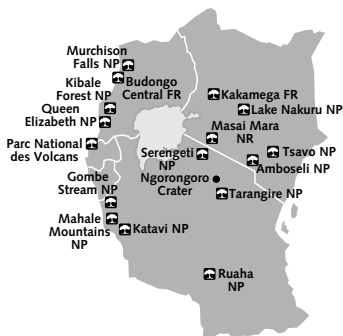
FOR FITNESS FANATICS

Want to stay fit while travelling? For the ultimate challenge, trek to the top of Africa in **Mt Kilimanjaro National Park** (p175), make the rigorous climb up to **Mt Kenya's** (p376) snowy peak, or watch the mists roll back from the summit of Mt Stanley in Uganda's **Rwenzori Mountains National Park** (p516) – or try combining all three. Tanzania's **Mt Meru** (p190) and the rugged expanses of the **Ngorongoro Conservation Area** (p197) offer off-beat but highly satisfying alternatives. Less dramatic but equally enjoyable is the easy, rolling terrain around **Lushoto** (p166), where the cool climate, winding paths and picturesque villages will keep you walking for days. In Kenya's **Cherangani Hills** (p410), you can travel overnight from alpine meadows to searing desert, while **Aberdare National Park** (p373) in the Kenyan Central Highlands treats you to panorama after panorama of unspoiled mountain wilderness. If you still have energy, head for Uganda's **Mt Elgon National Park** (p503), with trekking that is just as rewarding as in the Rwenzoris but at only a fraction of the price; or to the picturesque **crater lakes** (p512) near Fort Portal, with village-to-village walking. Finish up with white-water rafting at the **source of the Nile** (p495) near Jinja; diving around the **Zanzibar Archipelago** (p128), **Malindi** (p336) or **Watamu** (p331); or cycling or microflight flying near Tanzania's **Lake Manyara National Park** (p191).



WILD WANDERINGS

East Africa boasts one of the world's best collections of national parks and reserves. For a few weeks wandering on the wild side, start with the magnificent **Serengeti–Masai Mara** (p193 and p393) ecosystem, famed for the annual wildebeest migration. Nearby are Tanzania's wildlife-packed **Ngorongoro Crater** (p199) and **Tarangire National Park** (p192), with its baobabs and elephants. **Ruaha National Park** (p229) provides the chance for a serene wilderness experience, while **Katavi National Park** (p218) is one of Africa's last great frontier areas. For communing with the chimps, make your way to **Mahale Mountains** (p217) or world-renowned **Gombe Stream** (p216) National Parks. In Kenya, don't miss the lush **Kakamega Forest** (p406), with its plethora of birds; **Amboseli National Park** (p300) with elephants, giraffes and more wandering around against the backdrop of Mt Kilimanjaro; **Lake Nakuru National Park** (p364), with birds, rhinos and hippos; and the vast **Tsavo National Park** (p303), with its sweeping plains and the 'Big Five'. Rwanda's highlight is **Parc National des Volcans** (p583) with its gorillas, while often-overlooked Uganda's offerings include **Kibale Forest National Park** (p511) with its chimps; the Nile's thundering falls at **Murchison Falls National Park** (p541); **Queen Elizabeth National Park** (p520), with antelopes, buffaloes and hippos; and **Budongo Central Forest Reserve** (p545) with its chimps and dense forest.



Snapshot

East Africa defies all attempts at neat classification. On the one hand, the region seems to be striding towards a better future. Peace is solidifying in Rwanda and slowly taking root in Burundi – helped along by a US\$290 million per year United Nations (UN) presence. Tanzania is enjoying an economic upswing, thanks in part to shrewd fiscal policies, and in part to a positively booming tourism industry. Kenya – long a regional powerhouse – has announced its intent to bid to host the 2016 Olympics, and has been a major contributor in international attempts to stabilise neighbouring Somalia. Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni has spearheaded one of the continent’s highest profile AIDS campaigns, and the country’s once-soaring HIV/AIDS infection rate has dropped significantly in recent years. After years of stalling and delays, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda have joined hands in a customs union – paving the way for a full revival of the long-defunct East African Community. East Africa’s music and woodcarvings are being exported around the world, its films regularly gain critical acclaim, and the vibrancy of the region’s tribal traditions – together with its unparalleled network of national parks – unfailingly impress visitors from all corners of the globe.

Yet, there’s another, more sombre side of the picture. Kenya, which held one of its most peaceful political transitions on record in 2002, is now overshadowed by a massive government corruption scandal. Kenya has also fallen 20 places on the UN Human Development Index (HDI) over the past three years, and all five of the countries covered in this book are ranked in the bottom third globally on the HDI. Northern Uganda continues to host what the UN Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief recently referred to as the ‘biggest neglected humanitarian emergency in the world’, with thousands of children being kidnapped and brutalised by the Lord’s Resistance Army. In Rwanda, although more than a decade has passed since the outbreak of the genocide, deep scars remain, while across the border in neighbouring Burundi, many wounds are still open. Malaria – a scourge throughout sub-Saharan Africa – continues to claim the lives of East Africans daily, while HIV/AIDS ravages the younger generation, and has left over two million children orphans.

So, what is the bottom line? For most East Africans there is no clear answer, with life, politics and culture revolving around a fusion of all these realities. Things *are* looking up for the most part, while at the same time, daily life *is* often a struggle. The rough and tumble of urban streets – with overflowing *matatus* (minibuses) careening past fruit vendors, sidewalk hawkers and modern highrises – contrasts sharply – or does it? – with the serenity of a night on the East African plains under a velvet-black sky, or the primeval majesty of one of the Rift Valley lakes at dawn. If there’s any thread uniting all the apparent contradictions and tying together the region’s diverse peoples and cultures, it’s the conviction that the path forward must be according to East Africa’s ways, with East Africans setting the beat and with East Africans calling the final shots.

‘... the region’s tribal traditions – together with its unparalleled network of national parks – unfailingly impress visitors from all corners of the globe’

The Authors



MARY FITZPATRICK

Coordinating Author, Tanzania

Originally from Washington, DC, Mary set off after graduate studies for several years in Europe. Her fascination with languages and cultures soon led her further south to sub-Saharan Africa, where she has spent much of the past decade living and working, including extended periods in Tanzania. She has authored and coauthored numerous guidebooks on East Africa and elsewhere on the continent, speaks Swahili and is convinced she holds an unofficial record for kilometres travelled in buses along East Africa's roads. Mary works as a full-time travel writer from her home base in Cairo, from where she continues to journey frequently to the land of Kilimanjaro.

Life on the Road

When on assignment in East Africa, life tends to revolve around transport. Travelling from Lindi to Mtwara one afternoon, all the buses had left for the day. After finding a pick-up truck and willing driver, we set off, rattling past the sunbaked palm- and baobab-studded landscapes so typical of this part of the continent. About 30km before Mtwara, the petrol tank ran dry. The driver, seeking to maximise his profit from our arrangement, hadn't wanted to splurge on an extra litre. A man pedalled past on his bicycle, and I was soon perched behind him, moving slowly closer to Mtwara. About 10km onwards – and happily for all concerned – I managed to find a lift, sent someone to bring petrol to the still-stranded driver and another day's travel in East Africa came to an end.



TOM PARKINSON

Kenya

Tom's association with East Africa began with a trip to Tanzania in his student days, and he has returned regularly as an author, handling two successive editions of *Kenya*. For his latest adventure he swapped the safari interior for the somewhat different delights of Nairobi and the coast, and also took time out to work on the Zanzibar International Film Festival, mixing literary debates and cultural appreciation with some hefty beach parties. Having worked extensively in North and Central Africa for Lonely Planet, Tom is no stranger to the myriad rhythms of African life, but finds Kenya keeps giving him reasons to come back.

Life on the Road

Thanks to the openness of its people and the diversity of its landscapes, Kenya has a habit of throwing up surprising experiences – at some point in my various trips here I've been stranded in the desert near Lake Turkana, gone tuxedo shopping at local markets, run away from elephants in bamboo forests, chatted with Swahili ex-professional footballers on quiet islands, dodged potholes and punctures on 10,000km of roads and danced the night away with Lamu's civil servants. Of all the things that made an impression, though, the one I'll never forget is seeing the moon rise bright orange over Mt Kenya as the glaciers cracked and groaned 50ft away: awesome, unearthly, and even with an altitude headache, a memory to treasure.



NICK RAY

Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda & Detour: Democratic Republic of the Congo

A Londoner of sorts, Nick comes from Watford, the sort of town that makes you want to travel. Nick has travelled through many countries in Africa over the years – including the southern stunner that is Mozambique, and Morocco with all its northern mystique – but it is Uganda and Rwanda that he finds to be small but perfectly formed. He relished the chance to return for another round of towering volcanoes, plentiful primates and blessed beers from Kampala to Kigali. He also managed some hit and runs on Burundi and DR Congo, fascinating countries emerging from their tortured pasts. Nick currently lives in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and has worked on more than 20 titles for Lonely Planet.

Life on the Road


Hitting the DR Congo for a couple of days was one hell of a trip. I barely scraped the surface, as you could easily fit 100 or more Rwandas into this vast heart of Africa, but I what I saw gave me cause for hope. The gorillas, the jungle, the volcanoes, the people and their music – the rest of the world doesn't realise what it has been missing. The beaches in Burundi are blissful and I had a fine afternoon watching locals try their luck on surfboards. Rwanda is hauntingly beautiful and easy to explore, but most people associate it with death and suffering. Memories of the genocide are everywhere, but none more poignant or better expressed than the Kigali Memorial Centre. And Uganda, what a place! The best of Africa packed into one little country. Track gorillas and chimps, chill out in Bunyoni, up the adrenaline in Jinja and join the Kampala nightshift for one of the best rumbles outside the jungle.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR

Dr Caroline Evans wrote the Health chapter. Caroline studied medicine at the University of London, and completed General Practice training in Cambridge. She is the medical adviser to Nomad Travel Clinic, a private travel health clinic in London, and is also a GP specialising in travel medicine. She has been an expedition doctor for Raleigh International and Coral Cay expeditions.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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The image shows the cover of the 'East Africa' guidebook. It features a photograph of a savanna landscape with a herd of animals in the foreground. The title 'East Africa' is at the top, and a red 'PDF' icon is at the bottom.

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