Kenya

The Black Leopards of Laikipia and Beyond

August 19 to September 3, 2028



Giza
© PJ Hicks

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Join this epic and exclusive Kenyan safari specially designed for the wildlife photographer and/or wildlife lover searching for something truly unique and out of the ordinary from the standard African safari. From the sweeping soda flats of the Rift Valley to the vast private conservancy of Laikipia and the lion-rich savannas of Tsavo, this sixteen-day Kenya journey moves through three of East Africa's most iconic landscapes. We begin at the remote and stunning Lentorre Lodge, tucked at the edge of the Rift Valley near the Tanzanian border, renowned amongst wildlife photographers and animal lovers for its professionally designed nighttime animal viewing hides. Then we fly north to Laikipia's Sosian Ranch, one of the only places on earth where extremely rare melanistic leopards have been documented in the wild. These extraordinary black leopards, an animal phenomenon so rare they were barely believed by science to exist until local camera traps confirmed their presence in this very region, roam the rocky hillsides and dense thickets of the conservancy alongside more familiar predators. Five nights here gives us an exceptional chance to find and photograph them. The adventure closes in style aboard Kenya's modern SGR railway, rolling through classic Tsavo country to Lumo Conservancy and the clifftop perch of Soroi Lions Bluff Lodge. With private safaris, expert guiding, super unique wildlife photography opportunities and intimate camps well off the beaten path and far from the crowds, this is Kenya few travelers will ever experience.

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Rare Wildlife, Legendary Sightings:** Search for Giza, Laikipia's famous resident black leopard, and track African wild dogs on one of Kenya's most wildlife-rich private ranches.
- **Three Ecosystems, Zero Crowds:** Maasai-owned Rift Valley wilderness, rugged Laikipia ranchland, and the sweeping plains of Tsavo — all well off the standard tourist circuit.
- **Exclusive-Use Safari at Lentorre:** Complete freedom from park rules, schedules, and other vehicles in one of Kenya's most remote and privately operated wilderness camps.
- **A Journey by Rail:** Trade the final flight for Kenya's modern SGR express train, rolling through classic Tsavo country with Kilimanjaro on the horizon.

LEADER: Scott Davis assisted by local guides.

DAYS: 16, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 10.

COST: $18,900 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for the one-way flight between Loisaba and Wilson and the one-way flight between Rangers and Sosian), singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 6.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Aug 19	**Travel to Nairobi, Kenya.**		
Aug 20	**Arrive in Nairobi.**	Karen Blixen Garden, Nairobi	—
Aug 21	**Nairobi.** After breakfast, transfer by 4x4 Safari Land Cruiser down into the southern Rift Valley, crossing the soda flats of Lake Magadi en route to Lentorre Lodge.	Lentorre Lodge, Olkirimatian Conservancy	B, L, D
Aug 22–24	**Three Full Days in Lentorre.** Game drives, guided walks, the photographic hide, kayaking, and sundowners with the Rift Valley escarpment as a backdrop.	Lentorre Lodge, Olkirimatian Conservancy	B, L, D
Aug 25	**Fly to Laikipia.** Scenic charter flight north over the Rift Valley to Laikipia, arriving at camp in time for afternoon activities on the ranch.	Laikipia Wilderness Palm Camp, Laikipia	B, L, D
Aug 26–29	**Four full days in Laikipia.** Track African wild dogs, search for the resident black leopard Giza, and explore a vast landscape of rocky escarpments, riverine woodland, and open grassland.	Laikipia Wilderness Palm Camp, Laikipia	B, L, D
Aug 30	**Fly to Nairobi and take a train to Soroi Lions Bluff Lodge.** Morning flight back to Nairobi, then board the SGR express train to Voi, rolling through classic Tsavo country. Transfer to Soroi Lions Bluff Lodge at sunset.	Soroi Lions Bluff Lodge, Tsavo	B, L, D
Aug 31–Sep 1	**Two full days in Lumo Conservancy.** Two days of game drives and bush walks in the Lumo	Soroi Lions Bluff Lodge, Tsavo	B, L, D

	Community Wildlife Sanctuary, with Kilimanjaro views and night drives in this little-visited corner of Tsavo.		
Sep 2	**Transfer to Nairobi.** After breakfast, board the morning SGR train back to Nairobi for onward flights home.		B
Sep 3	**Arrive home.**		

LEADERS

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris carefully selects leaders who are experts in their field to ensure that your experience is the best it can be. One leader with assistant guides will provide a range of expertise for your trip.



Scott Davis ~ Expedition Leader, Ecologist, Photographer
Scott, co-owner and co-CEO of Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris is an expert wildlife, nature, and travel photographer. Trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, he's explored all seven continents for research and photography. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, NY Times, and other prestigious publications have featured his inspiring work. Scott's passion for teaching and talent for capturing the essence of his subjects make him a highly sought-after tour leader.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Aug 19 ~ Travel to Nairobi, Kenya.

Aug 20 ~ Arrive in Nairobi.
Welcome to Kenya! Upon arrival in Nairobi, you will be greeted and transferred to the charming Karen Blixen Coffee Garden & Cottages, where the rest of the day is yours to relax and settle in after your journey.

Aug 21 ~ Transfer to Lentorre.
After breakfast, transfer by 4x4 Safari Land Cruiser to Lentorre Lodge, a scenic four-hour drive down into the southern Rift Valley.



Sunset at Lentorre Lodge
©Lentorre Lodge

Aug 22–24 ~ Lentorre Wilderness Camp.
Lentorre Lodge sits on a ridge of the Nguruman Escarpment within the Olkirimatian Conservancy, in Kenya's southern Rift Valley, bordering the Shompole conservation area and managed in partnership with the local Maasai community. With access to over 80,000 acres of wild, unfenced Maasailand, and because this is not a national park, you're unlikely to encounter another vehicle the entire time you're here. The region is home to a rich diversity of carnivores and large mammals, missing only rhino, alongside an impressive range of birdlife, while the vivid soda lakes of Magadi and Natron, shimmering pink with vast flocks of Greater and Lesser Flamingos, make this one of the most photogenic corners of Kenya. With just six villas, each with its own private plunge pool and sweeping views toward Shompole Mountain, your stay here will feel both intimate and deeply wild. An underground photographic hide beside a permanent waterhole offers an extraordinary eye-level vantage point for both day and night wildlife viewing. Our group will have exclusive access to the camp.



Lentorre Lodge Ridge View

Aug 25 ~ Fly to Laikipia.
From Nairobi's Wilson Airport, you'll board a light aircraft for the scenic 60-minute flight to Laikipia, touching down at one of the region's bush airstrips where your camp transfer will be waiting.



Lions Bluff Lodge

Aug 26–29 ~ Laikipia Wilderness Palm Camp.
Laikipia Wilderness Palm Camp is an intimate, family-run tented camp set on a hillside above the Ewaso Narok River in Kenya's vast Laikipia Plateau, where six en-suite rooms elevated on wooden stilts each offer a private veranda with sweeping river views. The open-plan central mess, running almost entirely on solar power and sourcing produce from its own kitchen garden, sets the tone for an experience defined by authenticity over luxury. The camp has built its reputation on two extraordinary wildlife encounters: a flourishing African wild dog population and Giza, the resident black leopard, who was born and raised less than 100 meters from camp, making this one of the only places on earth where you can search for this almost mythical animal with guides who know her territory intimately. Beyond Giza, the landscape delivers elephant, reticulated giraffe, Grevy's zebra, lion, hippo, and over 350 bird species, with activities ranging from night drives and walking safaris, wild dog tracking, swimming, every day shaped entirely by the rhythms of the bush.



Flamingo
©Jeffrey Wu

Aug 30 ~ Fly to Nairobi and take a train to Soroi Lions Bluff Lodge.

After a final morning game drive and breakfast, we fly back to Nairobi and transfer to the city's modern SGR train station, where we board the afternoon express to Voi. The journey rolls southeast through the heart of classic Tsavo country, a vast, red-earthed landscape of acacia woodland, rocky kopjes, and open savanna that defined the golden age of East African exploration. Arriving in Voi as the light begins to soften, we transfer into the Lumo Conservancy for the short drive up to Soroi Lions Bluff Lodge, where sundowners await on the terrace with Kilimanjaro glowing on the horizon.



Giraffe
©Lentorre Lodge

Aug 31–Sep 1 ~ Lumo Wildlife Sanctuary.

Lions Bluff Lodge sits perched on a rocky bluff above an ancient elephant migratory corridor within the Lumo Community Wildlife Sanctuary, on the edge of Tsavo West National Park. The setting is dramatic and deeply cinematic: sweeping views of Mount Kilimanjaro, the Taita Hills, and the vast plains of Tsavo and Amboseli stretch out in every direction, a fitting finale to this journey. Twelve luxury stone, wood, and thatch suites each open onto a private balcony, while open-plan communal spaces, a comfortable bar, and a uniquely shaped infinity pool invite long, unhurried afternoons between adventures.



Leopard
©Conway

What sets Lumo apart from the national parks is the freedom it affords. Off-road driving and night drives are permitted here, unlocking the full cast of Tsavo wildlife, from elephants, lions, leopards, cheetahs, and buffalo to the sanctuary's rare melanistic serval cat and nocturnal residents like aardvarks, civets, and hyenas. Twice-daily game drives in custom 4x4 vehicles are led by accredited English-speaking guides, with sundowner outings and bush breakfasts adding texture to the days. Guided walks with an armed ranger add an intimate dimension to the experience, revealing tracks, medicinal plants, and birdsong that pass unnoticed from a vehicle. With over 600 recorded species in the greater Tsavo area, dedicated birding outings are also available, rounding out one of the most complete wildlife experiences in Kenya.

Sep 2 ~ Arrive in Nairobi and fly home.

After a final breakfast at the lodge, with one last look at Kilimanjaro on the horizon, we make the short drive to Voi Train Station and board the morning SGR express back to Nairobi, arriving in the early afternoon. The journey retraces our route through the sweeping red plains of Tsavo, a fitting and unhurried farewell to the Kenyan wilderness. On arrival at Nairobi's SGR terminus, you will be transferred directly to the airport for your onward flight home, carrying with you memories of three extraordinary landscapes, rare wildlife encounters, and a Kenya that very few travelers ever get to see.

Sep 3 ~ Arrive home.

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	$18,900
Single Supplement	Contact us

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for two one-way flights), singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	$3,000
Final	March 12, 2028	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All bookings require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations
Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of $150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, landing fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- One-way flights from Loisaba to Wilson and from Rangers to Sosian.
- Accommodations (double occupancy) for the nights of August 20 through September 1.
- Meals from breakfast on August 21 through breakfast on September 2, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- Transfer between Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (NBO) and Karen Blixen Garden and Cottages regardless of arrival day.
- Transfer between Nairobi's SGR terminus and Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (NBO) on September 2.
- Premium Class rail journey from Nairobi to Voi aboard the Standard Gauge Railway.
- Premium Class rail journey from Voi to Nairobi aboard the Standard Gauge Railway.
- Laundry at the lodges.
- Non-premium drinks, local beer, soft drinks, select spirits and house wines.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.
- AMREF Flying Doctor emergency evacuation insurance, which provides rapid air evacuation to the

nearest appropriate hospital in the event of a medical emergency. This *does not* include hospital or treatment costs.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Additional hotel nights and transfers beyond Karen Blixen Garden and Cottages are not included.
- Meals on August 20.
- Gratuities.
- Optional Emergency evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, some alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

August falls during Kenya's cool dry season, making it one of the finest times to visit. Across all three regions, expect clear skies, low humidity, and minimal rainfall, ideal conditions for game viewing. At Lentorre Lodge in the southern Rift Valley, days are warm and sunny, typically in the mid-80s°F, with cool evenings as the altitude moderates the heat. Laikipia Plateau sits at roughly 6,000 feet. Come prepared for crisp mornings and evenings that can dip into the 50s°F, with pleasant daytime temperatures in the 70s°F. Soroi Lions Bluff in the Taita Hills enjoys similarly dry, clear weather with warm days perfect for game drives and spectacular views across Tsavo.

Fitness Level

This safari is designed to be accessible to a wide range of fitness levels, making it an excellent choice for guests who are in generally good health but not necessarily avid athletes. Game drives are the primary activity across all three camps, conducted from comfortable safari vehicles with minimal physical exertion required. That said, guests should be prepared for early morning starts, occasional walks on uneven terrain, and the stamina needed to make the most of full days in the field. At Laikipia, optional bush walks offer a more active way to explore the landscape, and a reasonable level of fitness will enhance that experience. The heat at Lentorre Lodge and the higher elevation at Laikipia can be more tiring than guests expect, so arriving well-rested and well-hydrated is always advisable. Guests with significant mobility limitations should contact us in advance so

we can work with the camps to ensure the best possible experience. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Transportation
Getting around on this safari is part of the adventure itself, with a varied mix of transportation that showcases Kenya from multiple vantage points. Game drives and transfers between camps are conducted in classic 4x4 Land Cruisers, offering elevated seating, open-sided viewing, and the capability to navigate rough bush tracks with ease. One of the highlights of the journey is a leg aboard the SGR (Standard Gauge Railway)**,** Kenya's modern high-speed rail line connecting Nairobi to Mombasa. This scenic and comfortable train ride offers a unique perspective on the landscape and a welcome change of pace from road and air travel. Two internal flights on light aircraft connect the more remote camps, whisking guests over sweeping savannahs, escarpments, and wilderness areas that would take hours to reach by road, offering stunning aerial views and maximizing time on the ground where it matters most.

Motion Sickness
Don't let a fear of motion sickness keep you away! Even those who have experienced motion sickness reported that the incredible wildlife and overall experience were well worth the temporary discomfort. If you are susceptible to motion sickness from winding roads, trains, and/or small planes or are concerned that you might be, please come prepared! The key to avoiding motion sickness is to act before you experience nausea. Do your own research and consult your doctor before taking any medications. A good night of sleep, eating well, limiting alcohol, and using your favorite seasickness remedy is sufficient for most travelers. Find more information on our Coping with Seasickness webpage (this information is applicable to any form of motion sickness) and contact us if you have any questions.

Flights
Detailed logistical information will be included in your Trip Planning Materials. We strongly recommend purchasing flight cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Nairobi, Kenya (NBO) anytime on August 20.
- Depart from Nairobi, Kenya (NBO) after 6:00pm on September 2.

Flights we book for you

- Two internal flights are included in the trip cost. **Important**: the flights within Kenya have a very strict luggage weight allowance of 15kg (33lbs) total. This means that you will need to pack light.

Terms and Conditions
Read our current Terms and Conditions.

Conservation
Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral**.

- **Offsetting our Journey Together**: From the moment you arrive to the day you depart; we take responsibility for offsetting the carbon footprint of your on-the-ground experience. For your travel to and from the destination, we encourage a shared commitment to reducing impact—whether through airline programs, our carbon calculator and donating to Sustainable Travel International, or an offsetting partner that aligns with your values.
- **Local Conservation**: Check out our Conservation pages to learn how we support conservation efforts through meaningful partnerships and responsible tourism practices.

Together, we can continue exploring and cherishing this planet while working toward its long-term protection. Thank you for being part of this important journey with us.

FAQS

How likely are we to see the black leopard, Giza?
Giza is a wild, free-roaming animal, so no sighting can ever be guaranteed. That said, five nights at Laikipia Wilderness Palm Camp gives our guides, who know her territory intimately, an excellent window to track her, along with the camp's resident African wild dog pack.

What should I know about packing for the internal flights?
The light aircraft connecting Laikipia and Nairobi enforce a strict 15kg (33lbs) total luggage limit, including hand luggage, and require soft-sided duffel bags rather than hard-shell suitcases. A full packing list will be provided in your Trip Planning Materials.

Will I have WiFi and phone signal during the trip?
All three camps offer WiFi in common areas, though connectivity can be intermittent given the remote locations. We recommend informing family or colleagues that you may be difficult to reach at times during the safari.