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Big Cats of the Maasai Mara Day by Day Itinerary Safaris in Style

DATE	ACCOMMODATIONS	ACTIVITIES
Day 1	Travel day	International flight
Day 2	House of Waine Nairobi	Pickup at Jomo Kenyatta Airport by Deeper Africa guide after clearing customs. He will have a sign with your name on it. Your guide will transport you to House of Waine for an evening dinner and overnight. Dinner and overnight at House of Waine.
Day 3	Mbweha Camp Lake Nakuru National Park	Breakfast at House of Waine. Begin the drive out after breakfast for Lake Nakuru National Park. Arrive at Mbweha Camp about lunch time, with check-in and time for lunch. Afternoon wildlife viewing in Lake Nakuru National Park. While wildlife viewing you'll have a cool box in your Land Cruiser stocked with water and your favorite sodas. Your next seven days will provide you with in-depth opportunities to learn animal identification, wildlife tracking, and wildlife spotting in the East African landscape in the company of your Deeper Africa naturalist. You'll begin your Natural Learning program focusing first on animal identification and learning to distinguish animal species. As well, your guide will begin to introduce you to conservation issues including human wildlife conflicts, poaching controls and conflicts, and community involvement in wildlife conservation. Nakuru is a small, beautiful park with ecosystems that include an acacia forest, woodlands, and a famous soda lake that draws flocks of greater and lesser flamingos and over 400 species of birds, including many white pelicans. Up to four million flamingoes roam the Rift Valley lakes in great flocks throughout the year, searching for the best feeding and bathing conditions. Each day a substantial number of these flamingoes settle on Lake Nakuru producing a fascinating fusion of sights and sounds. Nakuru is full of wildlife and you have the opportunity for sightings of giraffe, rhino, buffalo, zebra, and many antelope species including waterbuck, eland, reedbuck, dik dik, impala, as well as Thompson and Grant gazelles, as well as numerous warthogs. Dinner and overnight at Mbweha Camp.
Day 4	Mbweha Camp Lake Nakuru National Park	Breakfast at Mbweha Camp. Set your wildlife viewing schedule with your guide. In the 1990's a number of species were introduced into this park by Kenyan Wildlife Service ("KWS"). Both black rhino and white rhino were relocated into the park and their populations continue to grow steadily. The Rothschild's giraffe herd now numbers between 60 and 70 members. With only a small population of lions and leopards to check population growth, the antelope populations are large and well habituated. There are no elephants in Nakuru. Historically, Nakuru was a remote wildlife park, but development and urban sprawl have brought many people to this remote area. Human and wildlife conflicts were a constant problem. As a solution Kenya Wildlife Service built an electric fence around this small park. Funds for the fence were provided by

the World Wide Fund for Nature for the purpose of maintaining a large population of rhino in one well-protected zone, secure from poachers. Security costs per year for this rhino sanctuary top \$7,500(US) per rhino. The fence solved the conflict problems and it allows you the opportunity for viewing wildlife in this small geographic area.

Dinner and overnight at Mbweha Camp.

Day 5 Mara Intrepids
 Maasai Mara Game Reserve

Breakfast at Mbweha Camp. Morning drive westward into the Maasai Narok District. As you drive west, you will see the landscape change to drier savannah grasslands and begin to note many herds of cattle tended by local Maasai herdsmen. Today is a longer drive with a picnic lunch along the way. You will begin wildlife viewing as soon as you enter the Mara, traveling the distance to Mara Intrepids. You'll arrive at Mara Intrepids in the late afternoon for sundowners (drinks at sundown) and a luscious dinner.

The Maasai Mara is the northern section of the Serengeti ecosystem. This vast savannah grassland extends south for over five thousand square miles into Tanzania, forming one of the world's largest wildlife refuges. This land is as it was in the beginning: no fences, no settlements, just a perennial migration of wildlife. In a journey that reaches back through time, these herds of animals (currently estimated at 1.25 million) follow the seasonal rains traveling from the Serengeti into the Mara instinctually moving with the seasonal rainfalls, sometimes migrating as much as 300 miles a year. Wildlife is allowed to roam freely across the Kenyan and Tanzanian borders, uniting the two parks into a single ecological unit that supports the largest concentration of large mammals on the planet.

You'll have daily wildlife viewing from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm with the flexibility to schedule each day as you choose with your guide. A wide array of habitats is represented in the Mara, each with a unique complement of flora and fauna. The variety of ecosystems makes the Mara superb place to hone your tracking and spotting skills - allowing you continued opportunities to increase your wildlife knowledge. Acacia woodlands attract giraffes, while hippos occupy the deeper river pools. The eastern and western Mara, as well as the Mara River, are all accessible to you by Land Cruiser.

Dinner and overnight at Mara Intrepids.

Day 6 Mara Intrepids
 Maasai Mara Game Reserve

Breakfast at Mara Intrepids. Wildlife viewing from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm as you schedule with your guide.

The annual migration is what makes the Mara famous. The herds gather in the hundreds of thousands on the plains of the Mara during July, August, September, October, and into November. The herds are drawn into the northern Serengeti region by areas of greater rainfall because the grasses grow taller and stay greener longer. The migration includes vast herds of wildebeest, but also zebra and Thomson's gazelle. Those herds remain in the Mara for up to four months - chomping and trampling the grass, grunting, and stampeding across the Mara River in search of fresh grass for grazing. The onset of the "short rains" sometime in November or early December sends the herds south into the Serengeti for fresh grass. Wildebeest are well-suited to harvest the short grasses that cover the semiarid plains of the Serengeti. The soils of this region have an underlying hardpan covered by a fertile layer of volcanic soil. Grass growing in this soil is highly nutritious taking up nutrients trapped by the hard pan.

It is the superabundance of prey that accounts for the Mara's big predator populations. At last count there were 22 lion prides in the Mara. Females

within a lion pride are related to each other. Daughters, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and nieces live together for up to 15 years - the typical lifespan of a lioness. Males are forced to leave the pride at between two to three years of age. When not attached to a pride, lions are nomadic, occasionally banding together with other male cousins or brothers. The majority of prides in the Mara have two or three adult males, but the males in power can form larger alliances. Nomadic males are a constant territorial threat to the pride males.

Ask your guide about the better pride viewing opportunities for your safari season. He will consider taking you near Musiara Marsh, near the Governors Camp area of the Mara, which is prime territory for the Marsh lion pride. Other pride territories are near Rhino Ridge, near Paradise Plain, and near Kichwa Tembo. Each of these pride territories vary in size. The controlling factors tend to be habitat and the availability of food. Some Mara prides can do quite well with small amounts of territory, while other prides require substantially larger amounts of ground. While pride members defend their territories they can never keep an exclusive lock on all of their territory. Overlaps at the edges of the territories find young nomadic males creating confrontations whenever possible. During migration season, the lions prosper with sufficient food to feed all of the pride members. But once the herds migrate south into Tanzania, the resident wildlife becomes the prime target. Territory and hunting skills become the means of survival.

Dinner and overnight at Mara Intrepids.

Day 7
Mara Intrepids
Maasai Mara Game Reserve

Breakfast at Mara Intrepids. Set your wildlife viewing schedule with your guide.

Mara Intrepids is located in a large wedge of rolling savannah between the Talek and Ntiakitak Rivers. The rivers make it difficult to access from the west, hence, more private wilderness and wildlife for you. The resident lion pride in the area is known as the Ol Kiombo pride, and they are very active. You will have a good chance of sightings. Dusk and dawn are particularly good times for lion hunting. Darkness favors the nocturnal eyes of the predators and the advantages to grouping with other animals in a herd diminishes. Leopards favor the thickets near Leopard Gorge and Fig Tree Ridge.

Dinner and overnight at Mara Intrepids.

Day 8
Mara Intrepids
Maasai Mara Game Reserve

Breakfast at Mara Intrepids. Mara Intrepids is located at the eastern edge of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve. It provides you with the opportunity to observe human wildlife conflicts and to study some of the greatest challenges facing the stability of the Serengeti migratory herds. In most other areas of Africa, major wildebeest herds have died out due to ever-expanding human populations which demand water resources as well as land for agriculture and domestic livestock. Humans' need for land at the edges of the Mara and their need for water resources threaten to reduce both the migration range and access to water resources. It is land available for grazing and access to water that determine the size of the Serengeti wildebeest population. The herd's population varies yearly depending on rainfall and availability of grassland. When there is not enough food or water, the weakest members of the population starve. In the absence of severe drought, most of the culling will occur late in the dry season, just before the "short rains" begin.

The Mara savannahs with their open country and grasslands support a healthy cheetah population. Cheetahs face increasing pressure from humans and land encroachment, with between 9,000 to 12,000 left in the world. You'll be

scouting for cheetah in one of the two remaining cheetah strongholds in the world: the Mara/Serengeti ecosystem. (The other significant cheetah population is in Namibia and Botswana.)

The Mara cheetah population is threatened by a lack of genetic variation, making them susceptible to disease and decreasing reproduction. Still there have been a number of cub births in the Mara cheetah population over the past five years. Cheetahs live in small groups or singly, not in prides. The famous BBC documentary “Big Cats Diary” has filmed quite a number of Mara cheetah mothers with their cubs in the past few seasons. Look carefully around the termite mounds as they are popular hiding places for the Mara cheetahs.

Dinner and overnight at Mara Intrepids.

Day 9	Nairobi	Breakfast at Mara Intrepids. Morning for wildlife viewing. Your guide will have your plane ticket for you. He will make sure you are checked in and that your luggage is loaded on your bush plane. Say goodbye to your Deeper Africa guide at the airstrip, as he needs to drive the Land Cruiser back to Nairobi.
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Bush Flight

Departs Mara bush strip @ approximately 11:00 am

Arrives Nairobi Wilson @ approximately 12:15 pm

Pickup by Deeper Africa guide and transfer to a relaxing dinner at one of Nairobi’s fine restaurants. Depart the restaurant with your Deeper Africa guide for evening transport to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport for your international flight.

Day 10	Travel day	International flight
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INCLUDED IN YOUR SAFARI

- Full board accommodations in all lodges and tented camps
- All meals
- Unlimited game drives in private 4x4 safari Land Cruisers
- All park and entrance fees
- Experienced and professional safari naturalist guides
- Natural Learning program
- Enrollment with Flying Doctors Evacuation Service
- All in-country transportation
- Laundry available at some lodges and camps
- Beverages in your 4x4 safari vehicle
- Bottled water available at all times
- Extensive pre-departure briefing and materials including health information, reading list and map

EXCLUDED FROM YOUR SAFARI

- Alcohol and some beverages in some camps and lodges
- Gratuities

We plan your wildlife adventures in areas where wildlife habitats are known to exist for the season and time you are traveling. Still, animals in the areas you are viewing are not in a zoo. They run freely, and we cannot always anticipate their movements.

Also, Deeper Africa uses best efforts to provide the lodging set out in this itinerary, but occasionally there are circumstances that occur in East Africa that require lodging substitutions. We reserve the right to make comparable lodging substitutions whenever necessary.

2012 CUSTOM DEPARTURE DATES

Schedule as you wish January through April and June through December.

2012 CUSTOM DEPARTURE PRICING

- 4 or more persons \$5,599 USD each
- 2 persons \$6,599 USD each
- Single supplement \$895 USD

Arrivals and departures out of Nairobi International Airport. Prices do not include international air travel. Holiday pricing may apply.