

AFRICANMECCA DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

INTEGRITY IN AFRICAN TOURS & ADVENTURES

AfricanMecca Newsletter - September 2005 - Update from Americas, European and Africa Offices

News

Great Rift Valley Ballooning - KTB Statement

News Overview

"The Great Rift Valley is one of the most awe-inspiring sights on earth, but the best way to see the rift is from above. It will literally give you a birds eye view of the valley as you join flocks of flamingo soaring high across lakes, volcanoes and forest. Kenya's wide open spaces and 'big sky' country make this fantastic ballooning country, but until now balloon safaris have been limited to the plains of Maasai Mara and Serengeti.

The geographic wonders of the Great Rift valley offer a spectacular new alternative. Born of a major shift beneath the Earth's surface over 35 million years ago, the massive Rift valley is one of natural wonders of the world, easily visible from outer space. The valley stretches 6000 kms from Jordan to Mozambique, with its width varying from between 30 to 100 kms. The valley is at its most spectacular in Kenya, its floor studded with dormant volcanoes and fresh water and soda lakes, attracting a wide range of big game and bird life. When exploring the rift, it is difficult to gain a clear perspective of the scale and sheer size of the valley, which is where a balloon comes in handy. Rising from the floor, you can appreciate the entire Rift, both in its vast entirety and the many natural elements and ecosystems that bring the valley to life.

Leaving the lake, the balloon makes a low level traversal of the riparian forests around Elementeita, giving passengers a treetop view of giraffes nibbling leaves, gazelles grazing grass and elands and impala following well established game trails through the undergrowth. Following this airborne game drive, the balloon makes a breathtaking ascent skyward, up to 3,500 meters. From this altitude, the true magnitude of the Rift is revealed in its long winding lava flows, deep volcanic craters and jagged peaks. Cloud allowing, there may well also be views of both Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro, Africa's two highest peaks in a single, awe inspiring view. Descending again, the hour-long safari ends with a landing on the plains between Elementeita and Nakuru. The exact position and pace of the landing is determined by the wind, and a sometimes bouncy return to earth is often made under the curious gaze of herds of plains game. By the time you have landed, a full champagne breakfast is waiting, laid out in the shade of yellow acacia trees.

For anyone on safari in the Naivasha or Nakuru area, this is an excellent excursion, with an easy pick up available from your lodge. The only difficult part of this adventure is dragging yourself out of bed in the dark to make your dawn departure but the pay off is definitely worth it."

Contact us for more details on Great Rift Ballooning.



Safari Destination Guide

Great Rift Valley - Lake Nakuru National Park

Nakuru means "Dust or Dusty Place" in Maasai language. Lake Nakuru National Park, close to Nakuru town, was established in 1961. It started off small, only encompassing the famous lake and the surrounding mountainous vicinity. Now it has been extended to include a large part of the savannahs.

Lake Nakuru, a small (it varies from 5 to 30 square kilometers) shallow alkaline lake on the edge of the town of Nakuru lies about 160 kilometers north of Nairobi. It can therefore be visited in a day tour from the capital or more likely as part of a circuit taking in the Masai Mara or Lake Baringo and east to Samburu. The lake is world famous as the location of the greatest bird spectacle on earth - myriads of fuschia pink flamingoes whose numbers are legion, often more than a million maybe two. They feed on the abundant algae, which thrives in the warm waters. Scientists reckon that the flamingo population at Nakuru consumes about 250,000 kilos of algae per hectare of surface area per year. There are two types of flamingo species: the Lesser flamingo can be distinguished by its deep red carmine bill and pink plumage unlike the greater, which has a bill with a black tip. The Lesser flamingos are ones that are commonly pictured in documentaries mainly because they are large in number. Flamingo populations in Lake Nakuru are on a steady increase again. The numbers had been reduced due to the El-Nino weather pattern that flooded the lake, and changed the alkaline concentration. The flamingos feed on algae, created from their droppings mixing in the warm alkaline waters, and plankton. But flamingo are not the only avian attraction, also unforgettable are two fish eating birds, pelicans and cormorants. Despite the tepid and alkaline waters, a diminutive fish, tilapia grahami has flourished after being introduced in the early 1960's. The lake is rich in other birdlife. There are over 400 resident species on the lake and in the surrounding park. Thousands of both little grebes and white winged black terns are frequently seen as are stilts, avocets, ducks, and in the European winter the migrant waders.



[Click here](#) for a complete guide to Lake Nakuru National Park including videos.

Great Rift Valley Lodge & Golf Resort

AfricanMecca Tier 2 Accommodation. [Click here](#) for details on Safari Tier™

The Great Rift Valley Lodge & Golf Resort enjoys one of the most spectacular views in all of Africa. It is perched on the side of the Eburu Escarpment, overlooking Lake Naivasha and the sweeping floors of the Great Rift Valley of Kenya. It is ideal accommodation for guests visiting Lake Nakuru National Park or Naivasha.

The Great Rift Valley Lodge & Golf Resort sits at about 7,000 feet, making it possible to enjoy magnificent views to the west and east: the vistas stretch from the shimmering waters of Lake Naivasha to the jagged volcanic crater of Mount Longonot and, beyond, the sloping shoulders of the Aberdare Mountains - Kenya's most important watershed.



[Click here](#) for complete information on Great Rift Valley Lodge &

Golf Resort

Indian Ocean Beach Destination Guide

Watamu - Kenya

The beach hotels at Watamu look over two beautiful inlets, Turtle Bay and Blue Lagoon, the former dotted with unnamed islets, one unmistakably the shape of a turtle. North from Kilifi, the coast road has run virtually straight, until the turn off to Watamu, save for a gentle curve as the road skirts the wonderful bird sanctuary of Mida Creek. The creek is a broad expanse of tidal mudflats surrounded by a belt of mangroves where three species of the eye catching bee-eater family enliven the dense green. From late March until early May, the creek attracts vast numbers of migrating waders; little stints, greenshanks, whimbrels, curlews, terek sandpipers and many more, dressed in their breeding plumage in readiness for their arrival a little later in Europe. Beside the migrants there are numerous resident birds of special interest like the crab plover, sooty gulls and the osprey



Near to Mida Creek is Kenya's greatest archaeological heritage, the ruined city of Gede (sometimes Gedi), a lost city whose population inexplicably vanished in the 17th century. The outer wall of this lost city encloses an area of about 18 hectares and a well-informed guess would put the population at around 2500. Many of the houses together with the Sultan's palace have been excavated and partly restored; perhaps it is wandering in a lifeless city, which, without fail, evokes mystery, suspense and melodrama as the visitor relives a past era. Even at high noon when the hot sun strikes down through the surrounding jungle the rustle of monkeys or the flutter of birds can make the heart leap. Few people linger in Gede's ruined walkways as the sun's shadows lengthen. The initiated choose Watamu and the Marine Park where five hotels welcome the fisherman, the scuba diver, the water skier or those who just want to relax, sunbathe and feast on an entrancing seascape.



[Click here for more information on Watamu](#)

Temple Point Venta Club - Watamu

AfricanMecca Three Star Experience. [Click here](#) for details on AfricanMecca

Rating

Temple Point Club is an all-inclusive resort just 25 km from Malindi airport and strategically lying on the Mida Creek Beach Watamu. The resort is located on Watamu beach that is reputed among some of the best beaches in the world. Indeed Club Temple Point is a real treasure waiting to be discovered. The club has a capacity of 100 sea and garden facing rooms, housed in individually thatched bungalow type villas.



[Click here for complete details on Temple Point Venta Club](#)

Recommended Watamu Beach & Cultural Program

Overnight Prices

3 Star Experience - Temple Point Venta Club: From US \$65 or GBP 39 per person sharing - All Inclusive Meal Terms

3.5 Star Experience - Turtle Bay Beach Club: From US \$94 or GBP 56 per person sharing - All Inclusive Meal Terms

2.5 Star Experience - Ocean Sports Hotel: From US \$50 or GBP 30 per person sharing - Full Board Meal Terms

5 Star Experience - Hemingways Resort: From US \$104 or GBP 60 per person sharing - Half Board Meal Terms

[Click here](#) for information on the above beach hotels.

Exclusive & Luxury Bush & Beach Safaris From Watamu [Click here](#) for details on Safari Tier™

Tier 1 Safari: Tsavo Trails - 4 days (3 nights): Satao Camp Suite & Finch Hattons - US \$865 or GBP 508 per person sharing

Tier 2 Safari: Tsavo East Explorer - 3 days (2 nights): Satao Camp Standard - US \$415 or GBP 264 per person sharing

AfricanMecca Reservation Inquiry

We ask that all destination travel requests such as yours be submitted through our reservation inquiry services page, where we can generate a request number and have a specialist who can quote you accordingly. We have several confirmations we are working with and want to make sure we can serve you in the best manner possible and at the same time create a quality follow through of your request.

Please visit and submit all your details at: <http://www.africanmeccasafaris.com/reservationrequest.asp>

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