

From safaris to beaches, urban chic hotels – oh and the odd royal engagement – Kenya looks set to shine this year

# Kenya



**W**HEN IT comes to being a mover and shaker on the world stage, Kenya has played a key role recently. Not only does it lay claim to strong ancestral ties with Barack Obama - the first black president of the US - it is now likely to claim the accolade for being one of the world's most romantic destinations after Prince William popped the question to Kate Middleton at the safari lodge in the Lewa conservancy - guaranteed to spark off a rush for loved-up couples to get engaged or married on safari.

And you can rest assured Kenya won't be resting on its laurels; the east Africa country will be pulling out all the stops to show the world what it has to offer.

The Kenya Tourist Board has appointed a new chairman. Michael Joseph, previously chief executive of Safaricom, has taken over from Jake Grieves-Cook as visitor figures for 2010 look set to beat 2007, with the UK remaining the largest overseas market.

From new safari lodges to beach resorts and ultra-modern, urban chic hotels, let's get the lowdown on Kenya in 2011.

## Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp

Serena Hotels is opening a new luxury tented camp in Kenya in April.

The New Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp will be located along the shores of the flamingo and pelican-fringed Lake Elmenteita within the Soysambu Conservancy, which is 112 miles from Nairobi and 20 miles from Lake Nakuru National Park.

The new camp will comprise 25 luxury tents, a dining and lounge area, spa and swimming pool enjoying views of the lake.

## Kicheche Mara Camp

Kicheche Mara Camp has relocated to Mara Camp Acacia Valley, Mara North Conservancy.

This move phases out the seasonal Little Kicheche Camp as the site will expand from four to eight tents to become the permanent location of Kicheche Mara Camp.

The camp's eight tents have been relocated from the original Lemek site, which is now closed, and have been set in locations with views down the Valley and over the Olare Orok stream.

The nearest airstrip to this site is Mara Shikar. The Camp is on schedule to launch in June.

## Sasaab

The Sasaab Safari Lodge is offering guests the opportunity to really explore further reaches of the Samburu national reserve with one or two nights' walking and fly camping packages.

Guests staying at the lodge, which is located on the high banks of the Ewaso Ngiro river, will start their safari with a four or five-hour walk along the banks of the river, accompanied by Sasaab's own camels carrying a picnic breakfast, reaching the fly camp late in the morning.

Another walk will take place in the evening, followed by dinner before settling down for a night under mosquito tents, giving a clear view of the sky.

The Samburu reserve is home to Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, Somali ostrich, gerenuk and Beisa Oryx.

Fly camping should be booked in advance and prices start at £340 per person sharing a luxury villa including all meals, game drives, walks, camel walks and cultural village visit.

## Ol Donyo Wuas Lodge

A lodge in the private 275,000-acre Mbirikani Group Ranch on the slopes of Kenya's Chyulu Hills has been renamed.

The Ol Donyo Wuas Lodge is now known as Ol Donyo. This five-star lodge has 10 guest suites, in six stand-alone villas, offering views over the wildlife-rich plains and Mount Kilimanjaro.

Ol Donyo Lodge is situated in a big five region with the reserve containing one of Kenya's last wild population of black rhinos, as well as large-tusked elephants. The safari lodge offers a number of activities including 4WD, open-vehicle, early-morning and late afternoon/evening game drives, bush walks with armed guides, half-day horseback safaris, mountain biking; close-up wildlife experiences in the hide; star-beds; authentic Maasai cultural visits and tracking with Bloodhound dogs.

Nightly rates include all activities, all meals, all local drinks and house wines and laundry.

## Nairobi National Park

A tented camp has opened at Nairobi National Park – the first and only accommodation in the park.