

6 Night Chyulu Safari

Day 1 Arrival, Introductory Game Drive and Horse Ride

Fly into Ol Donyo Lodge airstrip, and be met by a Ride Kenya guide. Enjoy a short game drive, en route to the first campsite which is nestled in thick Acacia woodland.

The Chyulu Hills offer some of the most stunning scenery in Africa; rolling volcanic hills, Acacia forests, and grassy plains all under the shadow of Mount Kilimanjaro. This first drive serves as an introduction to the area and its inhabitants; there are 38 recorded species of large mammal here and over 300 species of bird.

Arrive in camp, and be shown to your tent. Orientation around camp, have a cool drink, and before lunch meet the rest of the staff who will accompany you throughout the safari.



After a post-lunch rest, drive to Ride Kenya's main stables (30 minutes' drive) to meet the horses.

The Chyulu safari starts close to Ride Kenya's stables, so that riders can be matched with a horse and then assessed as a group in the fenced arena, before heading out into the bush. Anyone who is not comfortable with their horse has a chance to switch at the stables.

This first ride sets off from the stables, and is designed to introduce the rider to their horse and the local ecosystem. The ride will pass through thick Acacia forest, and out onto the savannah. Expect to ride at a variety of speeds and to see game such as giraffe, impala, elephant, warthog and gazelle.

Arrive into camp at dusk. Enjoy a drink by the fire, a hot shower and a three-course dinner. As the sun goes down, listen to the jackal and hyena calling to commence their nocturnal hunts.

Day 2 Bush Breakfast Ride and Afternoon Walk

Depart at dawn on horseback for a morning exploration of the woodland and savannah around camp. The woodland is thick with umbrella-shaped *Acacia tortilis*, where giraffe browse and antelope abound. Enjoy the dawn chorus as the horses set off into the first light of the day.

The footing is ideal for horse riding; coarse volcanic soil that is firm yet forgiving under hoof. This morning's ride is a chance to enjoy the horses' schooling and fitness; long trots and canters can be supplemented with some cross-country style jumping over fallen trees and other fences, for those who wish.

As the land here is owned by nomadic Maasai people, there are often villages to ride past. The traditional Maasai culture is fascinating to see first-hand.

Emerge from the woodland, and traverse the wide open Mbirikani plains, dotted with wildlife. The plains stretch for 70 miles before Mt. Kilimanjaro rises up from them on the distant horizon.

Enjoy a full English breakfast under the shade of an *Acacia* tree before riding back to camp.

Late lunch in camp is followed by a few hours' rest in the heat of the day.

An evening walk is offered, to stretch out riding muscles, and to learn more about the local flora and fauna. There is even a chance to track and locate some of the area's resident bull elephants; several of which are known to be the largest 'tuskers' left in Africa today.

Day 3 Game-drive to Amboseli National Park and Afternoon Horse Ride

Depart by road before dawn to enjoy a half-day game drive in Amboseli National Park. Amboseli is home to around 1,500 elephant which live in and around the swamps beneath Mt Kilimanjaro. As well as the famous elephant, there are plenty of hippo, buffalo, plains game, predators and birds to enjoy viewing. This is a world-famous ecosystem and the photographic opportunities are endless.

Return to camp for a late lunch.

Enjoy a horse ride in the afternoon, ending up in a scenic spot for sunset and drinks.

Day 4 Morning ride to Crater Camp and Afternoon Hike.

Leave camp early on horseback and proceed through the Acacia woodland up towards Chyulu East National Park. Taking a packed breakfast in the saddle-bags allows the ride to be flexible and to enjoy wandering with the game on its daily movements. Coming across wildlife on horseback is thrilling; from small sightings like flocks of guinea-fowl, pairs of dik-dik or packs of jackal, to the huge bulk of a herd of eland, oryx or elephant.

The ride soon leaves the thick Acacia woodland and begins to pass through seemingly endless stands of whistling thorn Acacia on the ascent up into the Chyulu Hills. This is a good ecosystem for seeing cheetah, gerenuk, zebra, wildebeest and Coke's hartebeest.

This morning is a long and fast ride, with plenty of chance to canter, gallop and jump.



Over the course of the morning, the ride ascends about 2,000 feet above the plains with stunning views stretching for 90 miles on a clear day.

Arrive into Crater camp for a late lunch.

This camp is nestled into a forest next to a large volcanic crater. It is situated overlooking the quintessential East African plains that lead up to Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Late afternoon, climb the volcanic crater in pursuit of the very rare Verreaux's Eagle which nests in the nearly inaccessible rocky outcrops at the rim. Or, explore the lava tubes under the crater which lie within walking distance of the camp. These jagged caves stretch for miles as they lead away from the crater and have been used for generations of hunter-gatherers as shelter.

Enjoy sunset in this most spectacular campsite.

Day 5 Full-Day Ride to the Mist Forest

Depart after breakfast in camp.

Today's ride ascends another 2,000 feet higher into the Chyulu Hills. A noticeable change in climate and temperature occurs as you reach over 7,000 feet above sea level. The ride is dominated by incredible vistas of the vast wilderness of Tsavo East National park to the east, and Mount Kilimanjaro and Amboseli National Park to the west.

Today's riding traverses steep slopes and valleys and leading the horses may be necessary at times. Due to the altitude of the area, clouds often sit on the top of the Chyulu Hills. This consistent moisture has created to pockets of mist forest that dot the summits of the hills.



Enjoy a picnic lunch just outside one of the largest mist forests, and then enter the mist forest on foot, in pursuit of buffalo, leopard, Syke's monkey and bush pig that reside within.

Get back on the horses and enjoy the dramatic descent out of the hills, passing a few subsistence farmers' villages en route. Most of the farmers are Kamba people, who seek a living maize farming on the hillside. Rural school children are likely to spot the horses and follow them for a while, giggling and running along beside.

Arrive in the late afternoon to Olekuto Camp. Enjoy a well-earned drink and rest in stunning scenery.

Day 6 Full-Day Ride, with a Barbecue Lunch.

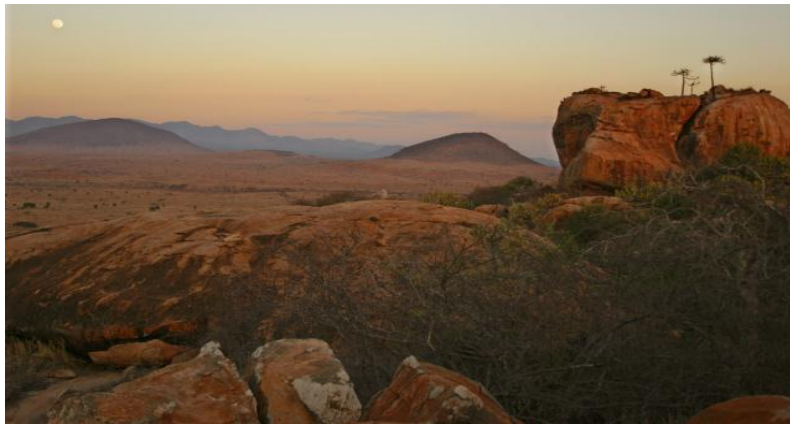
After breakfast in camp, depart on horseback to explore the woodland of Olekutu. This area is extremely beautiful and remote, with herds of giraffe, gazelle, zebra and wildebeest. Enjoy seeing ostrich and Kori bustard bathing in the red dust.

Leaving Olekuto, the ride passes by the Inchalai swamps. These are swamps where breeding herds of elephant come to drink at night and if riders are lucky they might catch the elephant returning to the thick lava flow in which they seek refuge during the day.

Maasai herdsman and women also bring their livestock for water in the swamps.

Enjoy a scenic spot for a barbecue lunch, atop some beautiful rocky outcrops.

Ride across the vast savannah after lunch and into camp.



Day 7: Departure

Enjoy breakfast in camp, followed by departure by road, to the Ol Donyo Lodge airstrip. Scheduled flight to Nairobi departs at 0815.

