

July 26, Day 11 - Sunday: Drive to Namanga border with a lunch stop at the Flame Tree Restaurant in Arusha, about 3-4 hours drive, including Kenya immigration; you need \$25 cash here for your visa. Be prepared for the Maasai ladies selling their beads work, especially on the Kenya side. They can be aggressive. Prices can be very good if you bargain, which is expected. Go for it! After clearing immigration, we will be met and taken to Ol Tukai Lodge. It's about 2 hours drive to Amboseli Ol Tukai Lodge.



Ol Tukai Lodge

July 26-28, Day 11, 12 & 13 – Sunday, Monday & Tuesday: 3 nights at Ol Tukai Lodge, Amboseli, Kenya; game drives in Amboseli NP.

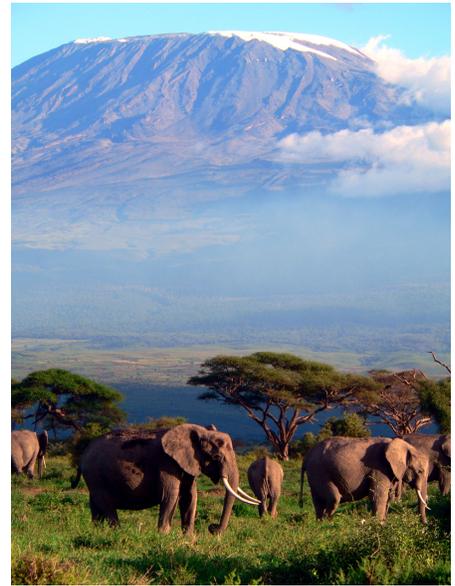


Ol Tukai Lodge is one of the best spots in Amboseli to watch elephant with the backdrop of Africa's highest mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro. Writers have described Ol Tukai and the surrounding Amboseli National Park 'as a home for the Gods'. A place of rugged beauty, abundant water, lush grass and forest, set like an oasis in surrounding savannah scrub. To crown it all, the Gods look upon one of the world's most awe-inspiring sites – as dawn breaks and the sun sets from the 19,000 foot snow capped dome of Africa's highest mountain.

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Optional champagne breakfasts, bush dining or sundowners at the summit of Observation Hill, where the 360-degree view is superb, compliment morning and evening game drives. The afternoon allows for a siesta, a massage or a refreshing swim before the afternoon game drive where one can view the profusion of game and bird life supported by Amboseli National Park. Large elephant populations are known to frequent the area.

This is the most beautiful lodge in or around Amboseli. There are direct views of either wildlife in the swamps or Mt. Kilimanjaro. You're right in the middle of everything and don't have to travel far to see the game. The architecture is unobtrusive with lots of wood, local stone and slate. Make time to sit, watch, listen and relax. Ol Tukai Lodge has plenty to offer. There are 80 luxury chalet-style twin rooms at Ol Tukai Lodge, all with an uninterrupted view of the wetlands or Kilimanjaro, Elephant or Mountain View.



Stylish and comfortable, the rooms are built from gum trees, local river stone and slate. All rooms have private bathrooms and individual terraces.



The buildings are spaciouly laid out and the property has well maintained flat lawns, gardens and wide open spaces. It is an ideal spot for star gazers in the African tropical nights. The property overlooks Africa's highest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro and the Amboseli plain to the south. The eastern boundary is home to several families of elephants, known to be amongst the best spots in the world to watch elephant. At Ol Tukai, they roam right in front of your room!



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Evening entertainment includes Maasai dancing, often with surprise visitors.



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Amboseli National Park

"The best place in the world to watch elephants"



The park covers an area of 152 square miles at an altitude of about 3,800 feet. The superb views of Mount Kilimanjaro as a backdrop to a large herd of elephants walking in a single file, their shadows stretched out by the evening setting sun, leaves a lasting memory for everyone visiting this park.

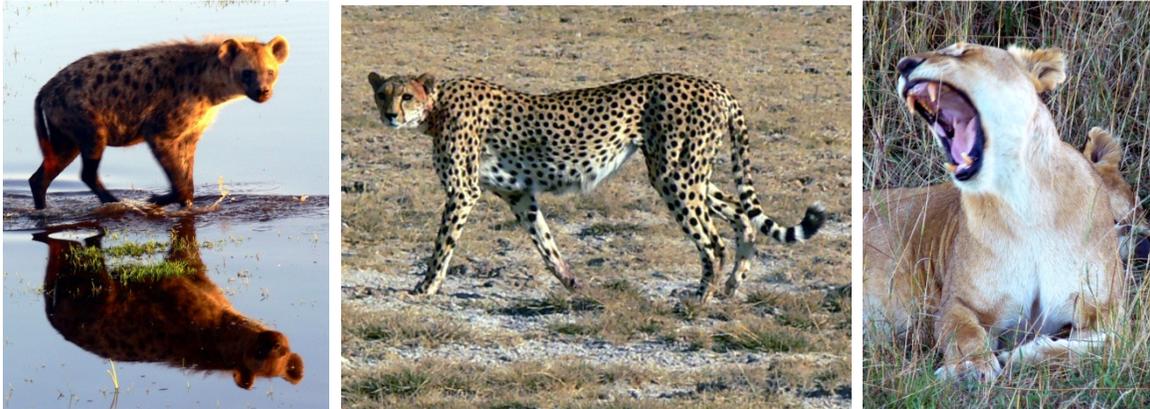
Lake Amboseli, a seasonal, shallow soda lake, covers one third the area of the present Park. When dry, the lake bed becomes a dusty, shimmering expanse. In the Maa language, amboseli means "salty dust". Mirages are visible over this vast, dry lake bed. The semi-arid acacias and grasses contrast widely with the green papyrus sedges of the swamps. During heavy rains, the lake bed fills up with shallow water and the plains are covered with green grass. Few flamingoes have been spotted on the lake shores during the wet season. Amboseli National Park is an ideal place to see elephants.



Many studies carried out on elephants have been done here. The most famous studies conducted by Cynthia Moss and Joyce Pool are continuing today.

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Over fifty species of mammals have been recorded at the Amboseli, including lions, cheetah, leopard, black rhino, Masai Giraffe, wildebeest and many more.



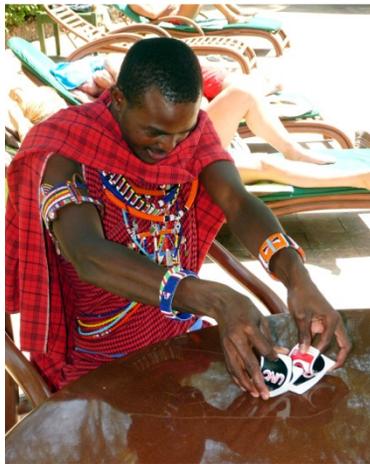
The area is classified as semi-arid savanna receiving only between 200-400 mm of rainfall each year. Rainfall is concentrated in two rainy seasons, March-April and November-December. Melting snows and rainfall on Kilimanjaro percolate through the porous soil into an extensive subterranean aquifer reemerging in the basin as series of permanent swamps.

Two large swamps, Longinye and Enkongo Narok, transect the basin and numerous smaller swamps surface in the central and western parts of the park. The swamps are the life-blood of Amboseli and are home to a myriad of species of animals. Thus, the Amboseli basin and Amboseli National Park constitute a dry season concentration area for migrating species of the surrounding Amboseli ecosystem, an area of approximately 3,000 sq km.



The glaciers on Kilimanjaro may be gone before 2015, based on how scientists assess the consequences of global warming. How this will affect the Amboseli ecosystem remains to be seen. Deforestation due to elephant and human activity is another major threat.

Sokoine, a friend from Seattle and Merueshi village



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