

Masai warriors at the Masai Mara National Reserve.



SAFARI EXPERT



Douglas Nagi

From Kenya

Company
Cottars Safari Service
(cottars.com)

First-Time Safari

"The Mara is as close to *Out of Africa* as you can get, and perfect for novice safari-goers. Nowhere else can you see all of the Big Five in a matter of hours and watch the annual migration of more than a million wildebeests."

COMMUNITY & CONSERVATION

Kenya

HIGHLIGHTS The **Masai Mara National Reserve**, home to the Great Migration; the private game reserves of the **Laikipia** region; the vibrant capital, **Nairobi**.

Traditionally the most romantic of safari destinations, Kenya lost much of its luster over the past three decades because of congestion in its parks and rampant political corruption. But there's a fresh energy in the countryside, evident in a new breed of lodges—and lodge owners—that emphasize community and preservation. Proceeds from the eight-cottage **Olarro** (olarrokenya.com), on the Mara's eastern perimeter, go to build local schools, clinics, and wells. The seven-tent **Mara Plains Camp** (greatplainsconservation.com) operates game-viewing trips in a conservancy run in partnership with the Masai. **Segera Retreat** (wilderness-safaris.com), meanwhile, is set to open eight solar-powered villas on a reclaimed Laikipia cattle ranch in July. Family-owned properties are also playing up the personalities of their owners. In Laikipia, **Lemarti's Camp** (lemartiscamp.com) is owned by Nairobi fashion designer Anna Trzebinski and her Samburu husband. Near Amboseli National Park, **Oi Donyo Lodge** (greatplainsconservation.com) is the revamped lodge of legendary conservationist Richard Bonham.

WHEN TO GO

Jan	Feb	Mar
Apr	May	Jun
Jul	Aug	Sep
Oct	Nov	Dec

TOP OPERATORS

- ▶ **Big Five Tours & Expeditions** bigfive.com; 7 days from \$6,000.
- ▶ **Cottars Safari Service** cottars.com; 7 days from \$5,950.
- ▶ **Extraordinary Journeys** ejafrica.com; 7 days from \$3,500.
- ▶ **Journeys by Design** journeysbydesign.com; 8 days from \$7,395.
- ▶ **Micato Safaris** micato.com; 7 days from \$11,200.
- ▶ **Safari & Conservation Company** thesafarianidconservationcompany.com; 9 days from \$4,997.

SAFETY NOTE The U.S. State Department currently has a travel warning issued for Kenya. Check with your tour operator and hotels on what security precautions they take.