

Safaris – are they worth doing?

Most definitely yes! A safari is a must!

We departed Heathrow, in March, for our overnight flight to Nairobi to begin our 5 day fly-in safari.

From Nairobi, we went across town to Wilson Airport for our flight into the Masai Mara. The flights take 45 minutes from Nairobi (2 hours from Mombassa) and are operated by small 20 seat planes. There is no separate cabin for the pilot so you see all the aircraft controls and one lucky passenger gets to sit up front next to the pilot.

Landing on a dirt airstrip, we were met by the park guide allocated to us for the duration of our stay. We were then taken by Land Rover, an ideal vehicle for the terrain, to Governors Camp ( used by the BBC film crews for “Big Cat Dairies”). The camp is situated within the perimeters of the Masai Mara national game reserve. After a 10 minute drive we arrived at camp and were shown to our tent!! If, like me, you are not into camping, don’t panic!! The tents house a large double bed, gas lighting, a zipped off ensuite bathroom with proper shower and toilet!



We headed back out on the land rover for a quick game drive and within 10 minutes, we were sitting feet away from two majestic male lions. Wow! As darkness fell, we returned to camp to freshen up for dinner. Each night, dinner was a three course event with superb service and exceptionally well cooked food. In addition, we had the added delightful sightings of any wildlife that chose to stroll past the restaurant tent. On our first night we saw two young and large bull elephants. When we were ready to retire for the night a ranger escorted us back to our tent, ensuring we did not disturb the wildlife that chose to wander through camp, after all it is their home you are in. As I nearly always feel the cold, you

can only imagine my delight when I got into bed to find it pre-warmed by a hot water bottle!

Each morning we were woken at 6am with tea and biscuits. The first game drive starts at 6.30am and lasts three hours. We returned to camp for breakfast which, like lunch, is served outside amongst the birds and mongoose. Then it was back out into the Mara at 10.30am for your second drive lasting 2 hours. Due to the heat, after lunch is relaxation time on the riverbank of the Mara River. Animals are resting too at this time, so the final game drive of the day is 15.30pm for three hours.



This trip of a lifetime was fantastic!! For me, it wasn’t just about seeing all the larger animals you associate with Africa, there is also a vast array of owls, eagles, and beautifully coloured smaller birds such as kingfishers, plus the thrill of being lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time to witness a hunt from start to finish by the three cheetah brothers (made famous by Big Cat Dairies) to bring down a wildebeest.

Words cannot convey the sights and sounds that really moved and will stay with me forever. I have a fantastic collection of photos that captured some fantastic memories.

*Beccy*

#### *USEFUL FACTS*

*Luggage allowance on the safari flights is 15kg so pack wisely and if travelling onward the left luggage facility can be arranged.*

*A jumper is required for the early morning game drive due to the altitude of the Masai Mara; the land rovers are equipped with blankets.*

*It is worth investing in a quality pair of binoculars and a fast camera with wide range of zoom, sports mode and stability programme to help get capture sharp active photos.*

*You tip your game drive guide at the end of your stay in US dollars.*