



COTTAR'S
SAFARIS
EST. 1919

Safari Frequently Asked Questions



How do I choose which company to go on safari with?

With so many safari companies to choose from, it is important to choose one with genuine expertise, comprehensive insurance, a strong reputation for delivering excellent safari experiences (look at awards and industry recognition), and one which upholds credible sustainability values.

Cottar's Safaris is a multi-award-winning, fifth-generation family-run business with over 100 years of safari experience, an acclaimed guiding team, and a wide range of exceptional safari experiences. We are not a corporate company, but a family with a deep-rooted commitment to sustainability, conservation, and community impact.

Not only do we offer stays at our multi-award-winning properties (Cottar's 1920s Camp and Cottar's Bush Villa) in the Maasai Mara, but we can also craft tailor-made safaris. We only recommend properties that we have personally vetted, all of which uphold the highest standards of sustainability, conservation, and community engagement. We also collaborate with trusted tour operators, ground handlers, and safari accommodations across Africa so that we can create exceptional safaris for every guest.

Where is Cottar's Safaris located?

Cottar's Safaris - comprising **Cottar's 1920s Camp** and **Cottar's Bush Villa** - is **located** in the Maasai Mara within the exclusive Olderkesi Conservancy, a 7,608-acre private wilderness in Kenya that borders the famous Maasai Mara National Reserve, the Serengeti, and Loliondo reserves.

The Olderkesi Conservancy is the only private-use conservancy in the Maasai Mara, offering guests unrivalled access to one of Africa's most wildlife-rich regions and ensuring a truly exclusive safari experience, with no congestion at wildlife sightings.

How does Cottar's Safaris compare with other properties in the Maasai Mara?

There are an abundance of camps, lodges and villas in the Maasai Mara to choose from, but none like Cottar's Safaris. Cottar's Safaris have the following comparative advantages:

1. **Award-Winning Excellence:** Recognised by Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards and the Safari Awards, accolades include, *Best Guides in Africa*, *Most Romantic Safari Property*, *Most Ecologically Responsible Property in Africa*, and *Best Villa in Africa*
2. **Sustainability Leadership:** Cottar's Safaris is the only Global Ecosphere Retreat® in the Maasai Mara, reflecting our deep commitment to sustainability and conservation.
3. **Diverse Range of Activities:** Cottar's Safaris has over 20 different **activities** available, compared to the limited offerings at many other camps and lodges.
4. **Exclusive Private Conservancy:** We are located in the only exclusive private conservancy in the Maasai Mara, ensuring a more private and crowd-free safari experience.

Can I book Cottar's Safaris directly?

Booking Cottar's Safaris directly has never been easier. We have an online booking system, a direct reservations office and a travel concierge service staffed by safari experts which can book not only stays at our two properties in the Maasai Mara (Cottar's 1920's Camp and Cottar's Bush Villa) but also entire safari trips across Africa. We can be contacted via multiple channels below and also have a **live availability calendar**. Alternatively, you can book through a reputable safari company in your region.

How do I contact Cottar's Safaris?

You can contact Cottar's Safaris through the following contact details:

Email: reservations@cottarsafaris.com

Book to speak to our travel concierge

Website: cottars.com

Whatsapp: +254 73 377 3377

Office address: Cottar's Safaris,
Ground Floor Suite 2A - Spring Court,
Watermark Business Park, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya

How many days should I plan to stay at Cottar's Safaris?

We recommend staying at Cottar's Safaris (either at Cottar's 1920s Camp or Cottar's Bush Villa) for a minimum of three nights to fully immerse yourself in the safari experience. Many of our guests choose to stay longer and combine their time with other properties in East and Southern Africa.

How do I get to Cottar's Safaris?

To get to Cottar's 1920s Camp and Cottar's Bush Villa, you will typically fly internationally into Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) in Nairobi. From there, and then transfer to Wilson Airport, Kenya's domestic airport (allow for adequate transfer time), where you will take a smaller aircraft for your journey to the Maasai Mara, either via a scheduled flight or private charter flight.

Flying directly to [Cottar's Safaris private airstrip](#) is the most convenient and direct option. However, some flights may instead land at Keekorok Airstrip, which is approximately a two-hour scenic safari drive from Cottar's Safaris. Our preferred domestic airline for domestic flights is Governor's Aviation, as they guarantee to land at Cottar's Safaris with a minimum of 2 passengers.

Do I need a visa?

Yes, Kenya requires an e-visa otherwise known as an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for many nationalities prior to arrival.

You can apply online at etakenya.go.ke. However, it is worth noting that the application process can be rather cumbersome. If you are staying with Cottar's Safaris, we have created a helpful guide to assist you with your visa application. See [HERE](#).

When is the best time to visit the Maasai Mara?

Cottar's Safaris is a year-round destination, offering exceptional wildlife and safari experiences in every season.

The Maasai Mara enjoys a mild and pleasant climate throughout the year, thanks to its elevation of 1,500–1,900 meters (4,900–6,200 feet) above sea level. Average temperatures in the Maasai Mara are around 21°C, with the coolest nights dropping to 11°C in July, and the hottest day temperature reaching up to 28°C in February. Each season offers its own unique highlights:

Private Season (April to May, and November to mid-December). This is a wonderfully quiet time to visit, with fewer people and significantly lower rates. Wildlife sightings remain excellent, with opportunities to see newborn animals. Big cats are particularly easy to spot during the private season, as they stand out against the lush green grasslands.

High Season (mid-January to March, and the first half of June). Following the rains, the savannah begins to flourish in preparation for the Great Migration. It is a wonderful time for walking, night wildlife drives and birdwatching. February and March are the hottest months of the year, while June has some of the best temperate weather. Wildlife sightings remain excellent, with the Big 5 still present.

Peak Season (mid-June through to October). This is the most popular time to visit, coinciding with the Great Migration - a world-renowned natural phenomenon where over a million wildebeest, zebra, and other animals move through the landscape. It is the best time to witness dramatic river crossing and predator-prey interactions.

VIEW THE COTTAR'S SAFARIS WEATHER GUIDE FOR THE MAASAI MARA



Are vaccinations required for travel to Kenya?

Yellow fever and malaria precautions are often recommended for travel to Kenya. Yellow fever vaccination is mandatory if you are arriving from, or transiting through, a country where Yellow Fever is present. We advise that you consult your doctor at least one month prior to departure, as individual medical and vaccination recommendations may vary.

What animals will I see in the Maasai Mara?

You will see an abundance of wildlife in the Maasai Mara, often referred to as the 7th Wonder of the Natural World. The Maasai Mara is home to the iconic 'Big 5' (lion, rhino, elephant, buffalo and leopard) and is famous for the Great Migration, the annual, awe-inspiring movement of over 1.5 million wildebeest, zebras, and gazelles crossing from Tanzania's Serengeti into Kenya's Maasai Mara in search of fresh grazing. Common sightings include, lions, elephants, leopards, cheetahs, buffalo, giraffes, zebras, hippos, crocodiles, with the occasional sightings of rhinos and wild dogs. This epic journey includes dramatic river crossings and intense predator encounters along the way - making it one of the most spectacular wildlife events on Earth.



What's the daily schedule?

At Cottar's Safaris, there is no fixed daily schedule. Each day is tailored to suit our guests' individual needs and interests, drawing from over 20 **award-winning, impact-driven activities** to create a highly personalised and memorable experience. From wildlife drives, sundowners, spa treatments, e-biking, conservation talks on the plight of raptors, to our unique Maasai Warrior School, you can enjoy a wide range of enriching and exciting experiences throughout your stay with us.

Is going on safari safe?

At Cottar's Safaris we prioritise the wellbeing and safety of all our guests. We have expert guides, health and safety trained staff, access to a medical doctor on call, and an abundance of positive, joyful, safe experiences. While you will be in close proximity to wild animals we provide a comprehensive safety briefing on arrival, as well as in our in-room information booklet. We kindly ask all guests to follow our safety instructions to ensure a secure and enjoyable stay at Cottar's Safaris.



What's the difference between a lodge, Cottar's 1920s Camp and Cottar's Bush Villa?

We don't have a lodge, as lodges are typically geared towards mass tourism and this does not align with our ethos. At Cottar's Safaris, we offer a more intimate, luxury glamping experience that brings guests closer to nature while still enjoying modern comforts. Cottar's 1920s Camp features 11 tented suites - comprises five luxury double tents, four spacious family tents (each with two en-suite bedrooms connected by a shared living area and a large outdoor deck), and two romantic honeymoon tents. For those seeking even greater exclusivity, the exclusive-use Cottar's Bush Villa - voted Best Private Villa in Africa and the World Travel Awards - offers private, luxury accommodation for up to 10 guests in five en-suite bedrooms. The villa comes with its own staff, guiding team, private safari vehicle, chef and also boasts a 25-meter private swimming pool.



Will I have Wi-Fi?

Wi-Fi is readily available and free to use throughout Cottar's 1920s Camp and Cottar's Bush Villa.

What kind of food is served?

All meals are prepared by our chef to a gourmet standard, blending local and international flavours. Much of our produce is sourced from our own organic kitchen garden, ensuring freshness and sustainability. Guests can enjoy a variety of memorable dining experiences, including bush breakfasts, private picnics, sundowners and candlelit dinners.

We happily cater to a wide range of dietary requirements with advance notice.

Does Cottar's Safaris have social media platforms that I can follow?

Cottar's Safaris has the below social media platform links:

-  Instagram: @cottars.safaris [instagram.com/cottars.safaris](https://www.instagram.com/cottars.safaris)
-  Facebook: @cottars [facebook.com/cottars](https://www.facebook.com/cottars)
-  TikTok: @cottarssafaris www.tiktok.com/@cottarssafaris
-  YouTube: @CottarsKenya [youtube.com/@CottarsKenya](https://www.youtube.com/@CottarsKenya)

Do I need to tip?

Tipping is customary and greatly appreciated. We provide guidelines at camp.

Is laundry available?

Yes, complimentary daily laundry service is provided.



What about electricity on safari?

Electricity in Kenya runs on 240 volts. The most common wall sockets are the British-style rectangular three-prong. Two-pin plugs can fit into these as well. For charging your devices, an international travel adaptor is recommended in case your equipment does not fit the available sockets.

How should I prepare and what should I pack?

Below is a very short list of suggestions for what to pack. Please note that many of the domestic flights in Kenya only allow 15 kgs of luggage (total), so efficient packing is necessary. For a more detailed list of what to pack please see [HERE](#).

- Neutral-colored clothing
- Hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
- Light jacket or fleece for cool mornings/evenings
- Binoculars, camera, extra batteries
- Personal medications and insect repellent

Does Cottar's Safaris support Conservation & Community

Yes, Cottar's Safaris is deeply committed to conservation, sustainability, and community empowerment. We actively support vital wildlife protection efforts and local socio-economic initiatives, working closely with our neighbouring communities. We are proud to be one of only twelve accredited Long Run Global Ecosphere Retreats in the World - a prestigious recognition of our holistic approach to sustainability and commitment to the 4Cs. We work with the community on a community-owned conservancy that has over 7,000 community members, making us one of the few truly equitable tourism operators in Kenya.

What are Cottar's Safaris Sustainability Credentials?

Cottar's Safaris are one of 12 nature based tourism businesses in the world to achieve [The Long Run's Global Ecosphere Retreat®](#) sustainability standard. The GER is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and aligned to global frameworks including the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Biodiversity Framework. Cottar's Safaris have met 91 criteria across the 4Cs (Conservation, Community, Culture, and Commerce). We have been externally audited and submit annual verifiable data for compliance, transparency and accountability purposes.

Cottar's Safaris are also Gold Eco-rated by [Ecotourism of Kenya](#) which is the highest level of certification in Kenya. The Gold Eco rating is awarded to facilities that demonstrate outstanding best practices i.e. they have achieved superior and replicable levels of excellence in responsible resource use, environmental conservation and socio-economic investment.

We manage our camp in an ecologically responsible way including solar energy, an organic garden, recycling, zero single plastics policy, the use of rainwater harvesting, and asking our guests to help us with reforestation and adopt best practices for the environment, socio, and cultural aspects of our business.

We are also the only community owned conservancy that has achieved the [Preferred by Nature Ecosystem Restoration Standard in Africa](#). The Ecosystem Restoration Standard is a global benchmark for assessing restoration performance.

Does Cottar's Safaris have any specials?

Yes, Cottar's Safaris offers a selection of fabulous specials throughout the year, including offers such as children stay free, 50% off honeymoons, and stay 4 nights, pay for 3. All specials are subject to terms and conditions, and availability may vary. Please see ([HERE](#)) for the latest offers and full details.

Are Safaris Expensive?

Safaris are generally considered a more expensive holiday choice, but it is important to understand what is included in the cost. At Cottar's Safaris, you are not just paying for a room - your stay with us supports the protection of thousands of acres of wilderness and wildlife. The rate also includes full board accommodation with drinks, most activities, private guiding, dedicated safari vehicles, and a personalised privately curated experience. Prices at Cottar's Safaris start from just over \$1,000 per person, per night.