

VARD AFRICA

D E S T I N A T I O N I N T E L L I G E N C E

NAIROBI, KENYA

— *Where it all began* —

NAIROBI, KENYA — IT ALL STARTS IN NAIROBI

"A city that surprises, captivates, and rewards those who arrive with open eyes and an adventurous soul."

An Intimate Introduction

There are cities that greet you, and there are cities that claim you. Nairobi does the latter. From the moment your aircraft descends over the vast, golden savannah that borders its edges, this city announces itself as unlike any other on earth. It is a metropolis where wildlife roams the city's periphery, where colonial history mingles effortlessly with Afro-futurist ambition, and where the energy of 5.5 million souls' pulses through every corner from the gleaming towers of Westlands to the vibrant street life of the CBD.

For the ultra-high net worth traveller, Nairobi offers something increasingly rare in today's world: genuine, unfiltered authenticity. This is not a city that has been packaged for tourism. It breathes, it hustles, it creates and it invites you to be part of something real. Whether arriving for a single night en route to the Mara or settling in for a curated week of cultural, culinary, and conservation experiences, Nairobi delivers a richness of encounter that few cities on earth can match.

A City Shaped by History

Nairobi's story begins in 1899 when it was established as a railway depot on the British-built Uganda Railway as a colonial infrastructure project of extraordinary ambition that cut through the East African wilderness and inadvertently gave birth to one of Africa's most dynamic capitals. The name 'Nairobi' derives from the Maasai phrase Enkare Nyirobi, meaning 'A place of cool waters,' a reference to the cold streams that once flowed through what is now the city centre.

From these humble colonial origins, Nairobi grew rapidly. By the early 20th century, it had become the administrative capital of British East Africa, drawing settlers, diplomats, adventurers, and traders from across the globe. The city's leafy Karen and Langata suburbs named after the Danish author Karen Blixen, whose farm sat in the shadow of the Ngong Hills became legendary social and intellectual hubs, immortalized in Blixen's memoir 'Out of Africa.' This golden era of colonial Nairobi, with its grand clubs, garden parties, and wide dusty roads flanked by jacaranda trees, has left an indelible imprint on the city's aesthetic character.

Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963, and Nairobi emerged as the proud capital of a newly sovereign nation. The decades that followed were marked by rapid urbanization, the rise of a dynamic East African business community, and Nairobi's steady ascent as the diplomatic and commercial heartbeat of the continent. Today, the city is home to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat the only city outside New York and Geneva to host two major UN headquarters cementing its position on the global stage.

Nairobi Today: Africa's Silicon Savannah

Modern Nairobi is a city of extraordinary contrasts and extraordinary possibilities. It is simultaneously one of Africa's most cosmopolitan cities and one of its most deeply rooted in tradition. The skyline of Westlands and Upper Hill reflects a city in confident ascent glass towers, luxury retail, and five-star hospitality rising from a landscape that was, not so long ago, open bushland.

Dubbed 'Silicon Savannah,' Nairobi has emerged as one of Africa's leading technology and innovation hubs, home to a booming start-up ecosystem, a world-class arts and fashion scene, and a culinary culture that draws chefs, food writers, and gastronomes from across the world. It is also, uniquely, a city where you can watch lions yawn against a skyline backdrop the Nairobi National Park, lying just kilometres from the city centre, is the world's only national park embedded within a capital city.

For the discerning luxury traveller, Nairobi rewards patience and curiosity. It is a city best experienced not from behind a car window, but through meaningful encounters: a private sunrise game drive into the park, a quiet morning at a colonial-era coffee estate, an evening at one of East Africa's finest restaurants, or a bespoke guided tour through the city's living cultural landscape. This is the Nairobi that Vard Africa knows intimately, and it is the Nairobi we invite you to experience.

The Nairobi Ecosystem

Nairobi sits at an altitude of approximately 1,795 metres (5,889 feet) above sea level, giving it a famously pleasant climate cool nights, warm days, and an ever-present freshness in the air that defies its equatorial location. Surrounded by the rolling Ngong Hills to the southwest, the Rift Valley escarpment to the west, and the vast Athi Plains to the east, the city exists within a landscape of breathtaking natural grandeur.

The Nairobi National Park forms the southern boundary of the city, a protected wilderness of open grassland, riverine forest, and seasonal swamp that is home to lion, leopard, rhino, buffalo, and hundreds of bird species. To the north lies Karura Forest, an urban forest reserve of over 1,000 acres that offers extraordinary cycling, hiking, and birdwatching experiences. To the west, the Aberdare and Mt. Kenya ranges rise dramatically above the tea and coffee highlands a backdrop that lends Nairobi a grandeur and scale unmatched among African capitals.

This interplay between urban sophistication and wild nature is the defining characteristic of the Nairobi experience and it is what makes the city such a compelling destination for the world's most discerning travellers.

WHAT TO DO IN NAIROBI

Nairobi is a city of layers. Peel back the first and you discover colonial heritage and wide, bougainvillea-draped avenues. Go deeper and you find a city of extraordinary creative energy artists, chefs, conservationists, storytellers, and innovators all working side by side. For the Vard Africa guest, every experience in Nairobi has been selected not simply for its prestige, but for the depth of encounter it offers. These are not tourist boxes to tick they are invitations into the authentic soul of one of Africa's most fascinating cities.

EXPLORE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF NAIROBI CITY

Culture, Conservation & Culinary Encounters

A curated half or full-day private immersion into the many worlds that coexist within Nairobi's borders from its colonial heritage districts and vibrant arts quarters, to its world-leading conservation centers and buzzing culinary scene. With a dedicated Vard Africa guide, this is Nairobi as very few visitors ever experience it.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Conservation & Meaningful Encounters: Private visits to the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Elephant Orphanage and the Giraffe Centre, where conservation comes alive through up-close, deeply personal wildlife interactions.
- Culinary Discoveries & Garden Lunches: Guided tastings at artisan food producers and market visits, culminating in a garden lunch at one of Nairobi's celebrated Karen or Langata restaurants set amid tropical gardens.
- Art, Craft & Creative Spaces: Private tours through Nairobi's flourishing gallery scene from the Banana Hill Art Gallery to Go Down Arts Centre with the opportunity to meet artists and acquire original works.
- Evening Flavours & City Energy: Sunset cocktails at a rooftop bar with panoramic city views, followed by dinner at one of Nairobi's award- winning restaurants, from contemporary Kenyan cuisine to world-class international tables.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

This experience is entirely bespoke. No shared buses, no rushed schedules, no tourist itineraries. Vard Africa crafts each city day around the specific interests and rhythms of our guests ensuring every hour spent in Nairobi is purposeful, pleasurable, and personally meaningful.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

Suitable for all ages and mobility levels. Vard Africa provides fully air-conditioned private vehicles and arranges all access in advance, ensuring seamless transitions between experiences. Best scheduled between 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM to maximise daylight and avoid peak traffic.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

Nairobi is the gateway through which most guests enter the East African safari ecosystem. Rather than treating it as a transit point, Vard Africa transforms this city into a destination in its own right one that sets the tone, deepens the context, and elevates the entire journey that follows.

♦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange private access to spaces not open to the general public including studio visits with Nairobi's leading contemporary artists, private conservation briefings, and exclusive dining reservations at tables that are notoriously difficult to secure. Ask your Vard travel designer for details.*

DID YOU KNOW? Nairobi is the only capital city in the world to have a national park within its boundaries, where lions, rhinos, leopards, and giraffes roam freely just minutes from the CBD.

THE NAI NAMI STORYTELLING WALKING TOUR

"Walk with those whose city this is. Hear stories that no guidebook has ever told."

'Nai Nami' — a phrase drawn from Sheng, Nairobi's vibrant street language, meaning 'My Nairobi' is one of the most celebrated and internationally lauded urban experiences on the continent. Founded and guided by young Nairobians who grew up in the city's most characterful neighborhood’s, this walking tour is not a recitation of dates and facts. It is a living, breathing conversation between past and present, told by the people who have lived it.

For the Vard Africa guest, we offer a private, bespoke version of the Nai Nami experience a curated journey through the city's historic streets, murals, matatu culture, and community spaces, led by a dedicated guide who will weave personal narrative with social history, urban art with architectural evolution, and humour with honesty.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A private 2–3-hour walking journey through Nairobi's most storied urban neighborhoods, including the CBD, River Road, Kirinyaga Road, and the city's vibrant street art corridor.
- Immersive storytelling sessions at significant historical landmarks, murals, and cultural sites.
- Authentic street food tastings and stops at beloved local institutions, from tea rooms to street vendors experienced safely and with full cultural context.
- Engaging conversations about Nairobi's social evolution, architecture, music, fashion, and the lives of ordinary Nairobians.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

Unlike conventional city tours, Nai Nami has been celebrated by National Geographic, CNN Travel, and The Guardian as one of the world's most authentic urban experiences. For the ultra-luxury traveller who has 'seen it all,' this tour offers something genuinely rare: unmediated human connection and a perspective on a great city that no amount of money can ordinarily buy.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The tour involves moderate walking on urban pavements. Comfortable footwear is recommended. Best undertaken in the late morning, starting around 9:00 or 10:00 AM. Vard Africa provides private vehicles for transfers and can arrange a driver to follow the route for guests who prefer shorter walking segments. Not recommended during heavy rain.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

The most memorable luxury travel experiences are those that create genuine human connection. The Nai Nami tour delivers this in abundance and provides guests with a personal, grounded understanding of Nairobi that enriches every subsequent experience in Kenya.

♦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange for the Nai Nami team to create a completely bespoke private tour tailored to specific interests’ architecture, street art, culinary history, political heritage, or musical culture. A private lunch at a beloved local restaurant can be incorporated as a natural midpoint.*

DID YOU KNOW? Nairobi's matatu minibuses are internationally recognised as rolling works of art hand-painted with portraits of global celebrities, local heroes, and pop culture icons, and blasting music from custom-built sound systems. They are as much a cultural institution as a means of transport in Nairobi famously known as the Nganya’s.

A VISIT TO THE DSWT ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE

"To stand beside a rescued elephant calf is to understand, viscerally, why conservation matters."

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) Elephant Orphanage at Nairobi National Park is one of the most emotionally powerful conservation experiences in the world. Founded in 1977 in memory of David Sheldrick, the legendary warden of Tsavo East National Park, the Trust has hand- raised over 270 orphaned elephants and returned the majority to the wild a conservation achievement of extraordinary global significance.

For Vard Africa guests, we arrange private visits during the normal visiting hours an intimate, deeply moving encounter with the orphaned elephants and their dedicated keepers, accompanied by a senior DSWT conservationist who shares the story of each animal and the Trust's groundbreaking reintegration programme.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- An unhurried encounter with the orphaned elephant calves and their keepers during the exclusive early morning visiting slot.
- Personal introduction to the DSWT's conservation philosophy, emergency rescue operations, and long-term reintegration programme.
- Opportunity to sponsor or foster an elephant a deeply meaningful and lasting connection to Kenya's conservation future.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

The DSWT is not simply a sanctuary it is the world's most successful elephant rescue and reintegration programme. The knowledge that every calf you encounter has been saved from certain death, and will one day return to the wild, makes this experience profoundly moving in a way that is entirely unlike any zoo or conventional wildlife encounter.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The standard public visiting session runs daily from 11:00 AM to 12:00 noon. However, Vard Africa can arrange exclusive private visits outside these hours for our guests who are already foster parents and who donate to the DSWT programme. The experience is fully accessible and appropriate for all ages, including young children and elderly guests. Located within the Nairobi National Park, approximately 10 km from the city centre.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

For guests travelling to Kenya's wilderness areas, this experience provides an extraordinary conservation context that transforms subsequent wildlife sightings into something far more meaningful. To see a wild elephant in the Mara after meeting a rescued calf in Nairobi is to witness an entire story arc and to understand one's own role within it.

♦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa guests may choose to foster an orphaned elephant through the DSWT's fostering programme, receiving regular updates, photographs, and letters about their elephant's progress. We can also arrange for a portion of your Vard journey fee to be donated directly to the Trust ask your travel designer for details.*

DID YOU KNOW? The DSWT pioneered the use of coconut oil and specially formulated milk formula to nourish orphaned elephant calves a breakthrough that, for the first time in history, made it possible to hand-raise newborn elephants to adulthood. Their formula is now used by elephant orphanages worldwide.

PRIVATE GAME DRIVES IN — NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

"Where the Nairobi skyline meets the African wilderness — one of earth's most extraordinary juxtapositions."

Nairobi National Park is one of the most remarkable wild spaces on the planet a fully protected national park of 117 square kilometres lying just seven kilometres from the heart of one of Africa's largest cities. Here, against the improbable backdrop of Nairobi's gleaming towers, lions hunt, black rhinos graze and herds of buffalo move in their ancient, unhurried way. The park is also one of Kenya's most important rhino sanctuaries, protecting a significant population of the critically endangered black rhinoceros.

Vard Africa offers exclusive private game drive experiences in the park conducted in customised, open-sided 4x4 vehicles with expert Vard naturalist guides who bring the park's extraordinary biodiversity to life with the depth and intimacy that only a private experience can provide.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Private sunrise or sundowner game drives in open 4x4 vehicles with dedicated Vard naturalist guides.
- Encounters with lion, leopard, black rhino, buffalo, giraffe, zebra, hippo, and an extraordinary diversity of birdlife.
- The iconic 'city-meets-wild' photographic opportunity — wildlife framed against the Nairobi skyline.
- Private bush breakfast or sundowner picnic arranged by Vard Africa within the park.
- Expert commentary on the park's ecology, conservation history, and the remarkable co-existence of wildlife and urban development.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

No other city in the world offers this experience. The Nairobi National Park is unique and its uniqueness never diminishes. Whether you are a first- time safari guest or a seasoned wildlife enthusiast who has travelled the world's greatest parks, the sight of a lion silhouetted against the Nairobi CBD at sunrise remains one of the most arresting images in all of travel.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The park is open year-round. Sunrise drives (departing approximately from 6:00 AM) offer the best game sighting opportunities and the park's most magical light. Sundowner drives (departing approximately 4:00 PM) are equally spectacular. Suitable for all guests, including families with children and elderly guests. The park is approximately 7 km from the city centre a 15-minute drive in off-peak traffic.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

For guests whose Kenya itinerary includes the Masai Mara, Amboseli, or Laikipia, a morning in Nairobi National Park serves as a thrilling and remarkably productive safari preview. For guests on short stopovers, it is the most extraordinary urban wildlife experience in the world.

♦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange private bush breakfasts set on the open plains within the park a table laid with fine linen, freshly brewed Kenyan coffee, and a full hot breakfast, with nothing but open sky and wildlife around you. This is one of our most requested and celebrated Nairobi experiences.*

DID YOU KNOW? Nairobi National Park has one of the highest density of large mammals of any national park in Kenya. Despite its relatively small size, over 100 mammal species and more than 400 bird species have been recorded within its boundaries.

KARUNGURU COFFEE ESTATE TOUR

"Follow your morning cup from cherry to cup — in the very highlands where the world's finest Arabica grows."

Kenya is renowned the world over for producing some of the finest Arabica coffee on earth and the lush highlands within reach of Nairobi are where much of this extraordinary coffee story unfolds. The Karunguru Coffee Estate, set in the Kiambu highlands just a short drive from the city, offers an immersive and sensory journey through Kenya's celebrated coffee culture from the cultivation of the coffee cherry to the science of the roast.

Vard Africa offers a private, fully guided estate experience that takes guests deep into the cultivation, processing, and appreciation of Kenya's most celebrated export, culminating in a guided cupping session with a certified Q Grader the coffee world's equivalent of a Master of Wine.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A guided walk through the estate's rolling coffee plantation, with expert commentary on the cultivation of Kenya's signature SL28 and SL34 Arabica varieties.
- A full tour of the processing mill from the depulping of freshly harvested cherries to the wet fermentation, drying, and milling process.
- A guided professional cupping session with expert notes on flavour profiles, origin characteristics, and the art of coffee appreciation.
- Freshly roasted take-home coffee and full estate provenance documentation for each guest.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

Kenya's coffee is a product of rare and extraordinary complexity grown at altitude in mineral-rich red volcanic soil, processed with meticulous care, and traded at international auction at some of the highest prices per kilogram in the world. To understand Kenyan coffee is to understand a great deal about Kenya itself its land, its people, and its relationship with excellence.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The estate is approximately 35-45 minutes from central Nairobi. Best visited during the harvest season (October to December and June to August) when coffee cherries are being processed. Year-round visits remain highly worthwhile. Suitable for all guests. Walking is on gentle, well-maintained estate paths.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

Kenya produces some of the most sought-after single-origin coffees in the world, yet few visitors ever connect the cup on their breakfast table with the extraordinary landscape and human endeavour behind it. This experience closes that gap creating a lasting personal connection to one of Africa's most celebrated agricultural traditions.

♦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** Vard Africa can arrange for a private batch roast of single-origin estate beans, personally selected by your group during the cupping session, to be vacuum-sealed and sent to your home address after your departure a delicious, long-lasting souvenir of your Kenyan journey.

DID YOU KNOW? Kenyan coffee is graded on a scale of AA, AB, PB, C, E, TT, and T with AA beans representing the largest, densest, and most prized grade. A single kilogram of top-grade Kenyan AA can fetch over USD 50 at international auction, making it one of the most valuable coffees in the world.

NAIROBI ARTS & STUDIO EXPERIENCES

"Nairobi's creative heart beats loudest in its studios, its galleries, and its streets."

Nairobi has quietly emerged as one of Africa's most exciting and internationally significant contemporary art cities. A generation of Kenyan artists painters, sculptors, photographers, fashion icons, textile artists, and mixed-media innovators are producing work of extraordinary power and global relevance, and the city's gallery and studio infrastructure has grown rapidly to support and showcase their talent.

For the Vard Africa guest, our arts and studio experiences go far beyond a gallery visit. We arrange private studio appointments with leading Kenyan artists, exclusive after-hours gallery tours with curators, and bespoke art consultation services for collectors seeking to acquire significant works from the emerging East African art market.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Private studio visits with leading Nairobi-based contemporary artists — painters, sculptors, photographers, and mixed-media creators.
- Exclusive gallery tours at RaMoMA (Rahimtulla Museum of Modern Art), Circle Art Gallery, One Off Gallery, and Go Down Arts Centre, guided by curators and gallerists.
- Visits to Nairobi's vibrant craft and design studios in Kazuri Beads, Maasai Market, and Westgate Cultural Quarter.
- Private art acquisition consultation with expert advisors for guests interested in building an East African art collection portfolio.
- Access to private fashion, art events, openings, and cultural soirees during the Nairobi Art and Fashion Week and other cultural festivals in the city.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

The East African contemporary art market is at an extraordinary inflection point globally recognised, critically acclaimed, and still accessible compared to the established art markets of Lagos, Cape Town, and Johannesburg. Nairobi's art scene is genuinely world-class, and the opportunity to engage with it at a private, curatorial level is one that even the most experienced luxury travellers find revelatory.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

Art and studio experiences are best arranged in advance, as artist studio visits require individual scheduling. Vard Africa handles all logistics, introductions, and pre-visit briefings. Gallery visits can be incorporated into broader Nairobi city days. Evening gallery openings, Art and Fashion events are particularly atmospheric and socially vibrant in the city.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

For collectors, design professionals, and culturally curious travellers, Nairobi's art scene offers a genuinely world-class experience in an intimate, accessible, and deeply personal setting. The relationships formed during private studio visits often endure long after the journey ends.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa maintains a close relationship with some of Nairobi's most celebrated artists, fashion icon's and can arrange for bespoke commissioned works as extraordinary travel souvenirs a portrait, a landscape, or an abstract piece that captures the essence of your Kenyan journey.*

DID YOU KNOW? Nairobi's Kuona Trust, founded in 1995, was one of the first artist residency programmes on the African continent and has hosted hundreds of artists from over 40 countries. It remains one of East Africa's most important creative incubators.

THE FOREST ADVENTURE CENTRE

Kereita Forest, Aberdare Ranges | Nairobi Excursion

Introduction

Perched on the southern edge of the majestic Aberdare Ranges and cradled within the ancient canopy of Kereita Forest, The Forest Adventure Centre stands as one of East Africa's most extraordinary outdoor destinations a place where raw natural beauty converges seamlessly with world-class adventure. Situated on the very doorstep of Nairobi, it is home to East Africa's longest zipline tour, spanning a breathtaking 2.2 kilometres of heart-thumping rides across the forest canopy, complemented by an expansive menu of curated activities designed to stir the spirit and awaken the senses. The Forest is precisely that kind of experience: elevated, unhurried, and entirely unforgettable.

WHAT TO EXPECT

From the moment your vehicle turns off the Nairobi–Nakuru highway and the road begins its gentle ascent into the highlands, the pace of life shifts. The city dissolves, the air cools, and the dense, cathedral-like Kereita Forest envelops you on all sides. Situated in the heart of the Aberdare Ranges, the centre provides an extraordinary range of adrenaline-filled and captivating activities that cater to every spirit of adventure, all within effortless reach of Nairobi.

The signature experience the **Flying Fox Zip Tour** is nothing short of theatrical. Spanning 2.2 kilometres across six thrilling lines over the course of approximately two hours, guests soar above the forest canopy at heart-racing speeds, the world falling silent beneath them save for the rush of air and the endless green stretching toward the distant peaks of the Aberdares. The zipline operates to European Union EN safety standards and is inspected and certified by a UK inspector annual, ensuring that the thrill is matched at every step by an uncompromising commitment to guest safety.

Beyond the ziplines, the afternoon unfolds at your own pace across a suite of activities. Guests may saddle up for a **horse-riding** excursion through serene forest trails, test precision and focus on the **archery** range, or take to the trails for **mountain biking** through verdant highland paths. Those seeking something more contemplative may find meaning in **tree planting** a quiet, purposeful act of giving back to the very landscape that surrounds them while **foot golf, laser tag, paint balling**, and a **quad bike experience** round out the offering for those who simply cannot choose. When adventure has had its way with you, **The Forest Restaurant** awaits a spectacular canopy-view dining experience where healthy, beautifully prepared meals are served with cool highland breezes and panoramic views across the forest to the Aberdare peaks, and on a clear day, all the way to the distant silhouette of Mount Kenya.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

In a world where luxury travel increasingly seeks authenticity over artifice, The Forest Adventure Centre delivers something increasingly rare: an experience that feels genuinely untamed, yet is executed with the care and professionalism that Vard Africa's guests rightly expect. The centre has partnered with international operator Flying Fox to ensure that safety standards meet the highest global benchmarks, meaning guests can surrender to the thrill of it all with complete peace of mind. The setting itself ancient indigenous forest, highland air, birdsong, and an ever-present sense of elevation above the ordinary provides a sensory contrast that makes it a natural and deeply satisfying counterpoint to game drives, city stays, or long-haul travel days.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The Forest Adventure Centre is located approximately 45 to 60 kilometres from Nairobi, roughly one to one and a half hours from the Nairobi CBD via the Nairobi–Nakuru Highway (A104), making it an ideal full-day excursion from any Nairobi base. The venue is well signposted from the highway, and our team sends all logistical details including directions and timings directly to our guests via email upon booking confirmation.

Vard Africa strongly recommends **advance booking** for all activities, as the centre is a popular destination for both leisure travellers and corporate groups, and activities are likely to sell out, particularly on weekends. Guests are advised to arrive punctually, as activity timings are adhered to strictly. We recommend **comfortable outdoor clothing and closed shoes** suitable for uneven terrain, along with a light jacket the forest microclimate is notably cooler than Nairobi and can shift unexpectedly. The experience is **suitable for a broad range of guests** including couples, families with children of all ages, small private groups, and solo travellers seeking something genuinely different. The zipline has a dedicated junior line option, making it accessible and thrilling for younger guests alongside their families and guardians.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

At Vard Africa, we curate experiences that go beyond the expected and The Forest Adventure Centre represents exactly the kind of destination that earns its place in a Vard Experience itinerary. It is not simply an activity stop; it is an encounter with Kenya's highland landscape in its most visceral, living, breathing form. Whether placed as a dynamic first-day Nairobi experience, a celebratory family adventure, or a privately arranged full-day excursion tailored around our guests' preferences, The Forest consistently delivers the rare combination of authentic wildness and impeccable execution that defines the Vard Africa standard. It is Kenya beyond the safari and it is magnificent.

VARD INSIDER NOTE: *For the most exclusive experience, Vard Africa can arrange a privately guided full-day excursion with priority booking across your preferred activities, a reserved table at The Forest Restaurant for a curated lunch, and a dedicated on-site host throughout the day. We recommend pairing this with an early morning departure from Nairobi to make the most of the cooler highland temperatures, arriving before the midday heat and departing at leisure as the late afternoon light filters through the canopy. For families, we can pre-arrange a personalised activity schedule that balances the thrill-seekers and the more contemplative members of your group ensuring no one is left waiting and everyone leaves with a story worth telling.*

DID YOU KNOW?

The Flying Fox Zip Tour at The Forest Adventure Centre is not only the longest zipline in East Africa at 2.2 kilometres, but it is also one of the very few zipline experiences on the continent certified to **European Union EN safety standards** and independently inspected annually by a UK-based safety authority the same benchmarks applied to adventure operators across Switzerland, Austria, and the Alps. When you glide above the Kereita canopy, you are doing so to a standard of safety and engineering that stands among the finest in the world.

KIAMBETHU TEA FARM WALKING TOUR

"Tea, history, and the most magnificent garden lunch in the shadow of the Ngong Hills."

Nestled in the lush, mist-softened hills of Limuru just 45 minutes from Nairobi the Kiambethu Tea Farm is one of the oldest and most beautiful tea estates in Kenya, established in 1910 by AW McCall, one of the country's earliest tea pioneers. Today, lovingly managed by his descendants, the farm offers what has become one of Nairobi's most celebrated and quietly coveted private experiences: an intimate tour of the estate, a walk through the tea rows, and a magnificent garden lunch beneath the African sky.

The Kiambethu experience is as much about Kenya's colonial and agricultural heritage as it is about tea and the family's generational stories bring the history of the Kenyan highlands to life with warmth, wit, and remarkable candour.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A private guided walk through the estate's immaculate tea rows, with expert commentary on the cultivation, plucking, and processing of Kenya's renowned black tea.
- A tour of the original colonial farmhouse one of the finest examples of early settler architecture in Kenya.
- An exclusive garden lunch of exceptional quality, served on the estate's sweeping garden terrace with panoramic views over the tea-covered hills toward the Ngong horizon.
- A colobus monkey sighting the estate is home to a resident troupe of black-and-white colobus monkeys who move through the garden's ancient indigenous trees with extraordinary grace.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

The Kiambethu experience is entirely private and individually hosted there are no large groups, no tour buses, and no standardized experiences. Every visit feels like a personal invitation into a private world that has remained largely unchanged for over a century. The garden lunch alone has earned a devoted international following, and guests frequently describe the experience as one of the most beautiful meals of their lives.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

Visits are by private appointment only and must be arranged in advance Vard Africa handles all bookings and logistics. The estate is approximately 40-45 minutes from central Nairobi. Suitable for all ages, including elderly guests and young children. Best visited in the morning, with lunch served between 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

For guests seeking beauty, history, and extraordinary food in a single experience, Kiambethu is simply without parallel in the Nairobi region. It is a world apart a green, perfectly preserved pocket of Kenyan highland life that moves at its own gentle, gracious pace.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa recommends combining the Kiambethu visit with a morning at the Karura Forest or Karen Blixen Museum, creating a perfect full day in the green, historic southwest of Nairobi before returning to the city for an evening at one of Karen's celebrated restaurants.*

DID YOU KNOW? Kenya is the world's largest exporter of black tea by value and the third-largest producer globally. Kenyan tea grown in the highlands at altitudes between 1,500 and 2,700 metres is prized for its bright, brisk flavour and distinctive deep amber colour.

FAIRVIEW COFFEE ESTATE TOUR

"From the first blossom to the final roast — a sensory journey through Kenya's living coffee legacy."

Set in the gentle green hills of Ruiru, within easy reach of Nairobi, the Fairview Coffee Estate is one of Kenya's finest working coffee farms a place where the full arc of the coffee journey, from cultivated tree to refined cup, can be witnessed, understood, and savored. With its rolling fields of arabica coffee trees, estate processing mill, and dedicated cupping room, Fairview offers a more intimate and professionally structured coffee experience than almost anywhere else in Kenya.

The estate produces award-winning single-origin coffees that appear on the menus of some of the world's most acclaimed specialty coffee roasters and a private visit here provides an understanding of Kenyan coffee culture that permanently transforms how you taste every cup that follows.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A guided walk through the estate's arabica coffee groves with a specialist guide who explains the cultivation calendar, soil science, and varietal characteristics that define Kenya's signature cup.
- A comprehensive tour of the wet processing mill, where the freshly harvested coffee cherries undergo the careful fermentation and washing process that gives Kenyan coffee its distinctive brightness.
- A formal cupping session guided by a certified Q Grader, exploring the full flavour spectrum of estate-grown single-origin coffees.
- Private access to the roastery, where guests can select, roast, and take home their own personalised batch of freshly roasted estate coffee.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

Fairview Coffee is one of the most professionally structured estate experiences in Kenya combining genuine agricultural depth knowledge with a welcoming, world-class hospitality sensibility. Unlike many farm tours, the Fairview experience is designed to educate and inspire at a level that satisfies the most knowledgeable coffee enthusiast while remaining entirely accessible to those encountering Kenyan coffee culture for the first time.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The estate is approximately 45 minutes from central Nairobi. Suitable for all guests. Best combined with a morning nature walk in Karura Forest or a visit to the Kiambu countryside. Full morning visits (9:00 AM to 12:30 PM) are recommended for the most comprehensive experience.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

Kenya's coffee is a global icon and yet most visitors to Kenya never experience the landscape and the human story behind it. The Fairview estate tour corrects this beautifully, creating a connection between the cup on the breakfast table and the remarkable land, it’s people, and the process behind everything.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange for a private Fairview Coffee experience paired with a garden breakfast at the estate before the tour begins a deeply pleasant, unhurried start to a day in the Nairobi highlands.*

DID YOU KNOW? Kenya introduced its famous 'double fermentation' wet processing method in the 1930s, a technique that remains one of the key reasons Kenyan coffees produce such extraordinary brightness, acidity, and complexity in the cup. This process takes approximately 72 hours and requires meticulous temperature and water management.

HIKING & CYCLING AT KARURA FOREST

"An urban forest of surprising scale and extraordinary beauty — Nairobi's green cathedral."

Karura Forest is one of Nairobi's greatest and most beloved treasures a protected indigenous forest of over 1,000 acres that sits improbably in the heart of the city's northern residential suburbs. With its ancient fig trees, flowering forest understory, cascading waterfalls, bamboo groves, and a network of well-maintained walking and cycling trails, Karura offers a restorative immersion in living nature just minutes away from the city's busiest neighborhood’s.

For the Vard Africa guest, Karura is more than a morning walk it is a private, expert-guided journey through one of Nairobi's most ecologically significant and historically layered landscapes, including trails past caves used by Mau Mau freedom fighters during the Kenya's independence struggle.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Private guided forest walk or cycle with a dedicated Vard naturalist, exploring the forest's major trails, waterfalls, and ecological highlights.
- Expert birdwatching opportunities Karura is home to over 200 bird species, including Ross's turaco, African fish eagle, and the brilliant Hartlaub's turaco.
- Visits to the forest's natural waterfalls and tranquil picnic clearings, ideal for private al fresco breakfasts or mid-morning refreshments.
- Historical narrative around the Mau Mau caves and the forest's role in Kenya's independence struggle.
- Mountain bike rental and private cycling guide for guests who prefer to explore on two wheels.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

Karura Forest is extraordinary in its improbability a vast, ancient, functioning forest ecosystem in the middle of one of Africa's most dynamic cities. Its trails are well-maintained, its nature is genuine and undisturbed, and the quality of birdwatching within its boundaries rivals dedicated birding destinations across Kenya.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

Best visited between 7:00 AM and 10:00 AM for optimal birdwatching and cooler temperatures. The forest has multiple well-marked trail options of varying distances and difficulty. Suitable for all fitness levels, including gentle strolls for elderly guests. Located in the Gigiri/Muthaiga area, approximately 20 minutes from central Nairobi.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

After the stimulation of the city, Karura offers something irreplaceable genuine, unhurried stillness. A morning in the forest recalibrates the senses and provides the perfect mental and physical preparation for the wider Kenyan wilderness that awaits.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange a private champagne picnic breakfast at one of Karura's secluded waterfall clearings a magical, utterly secluded outdoor dining experience that combines the forest's natural beauty with a level of comfort and elegance entirely unique to the Vard experience.*

DID YOU KNOW? Karura Forest was saved from illegal encroachment in the late 1990s in part through the activism of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai, who physically confronted bulldozers attempting to raze the forest for development. The forest's preservation is a testament to her extraordinary environmental legacy.

A SCENIC HELICOPTER SAFARI OVER NAIROBI

"From above, Nairobi reveals itself completely — city, savannah, and sky."

For a perspective on Nairobi and its surrounding landscape that is available to very few, a private helicopter safari offers a breathtaking and uniquely privileged view of the city and its natural surrounds. Departing from Wilson Airport Nairobi's charming, characterful general aviation hub a private helicopter flight over the city reveals the extraordinary diversity of the Nairobi ecosystem: urban towers and colonial estates, the vast open grasslands of Nairobi National Park, the sweep of the Athi Plains, the dark green ridgelines of the Ngong Hills, and the distant white peaks of Mt. Kilimanjaro on a clear day.

Vard Africa offers bespoke private helicopter safari itineraries and charters over and around Nairobi, including wildlife flights over the national park, panoramic city overflights at sunset, and extended excursions to the Rift Valley escarpment and Great Rift Valley lakes.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Private chartered helicopter with a dedicated and knowledgeable pilot.
- Customised flight itineraries from a 30-minute city and park overflight to extended half-day excursions to the Rift Valley, Lake Naivasha, or Amboseli.
- Aerial wildlife encounters over Nairobi National Park spotting herds of wildlife from above against the city backdrop.
- Sunset helicopter flights over the Ngong Hills, with panoramic views stretching to the Kilimanjaro.
- Private picnic or sundowner landings at scenic bush sites within reach of Nairobi.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

A private helicopter flight in Kenya is one of the most purely exhilarating experiences the country has to offer and from Nairobi, the range and variety of landscapes accessible within a 30–60-minute flight is simply extraordinary. Few experiences in all of African travel match the sensation of hovering above a lion pride in a national park framed by a capital city skyline.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

All helicopter excursions are by a private charter and subject to weather conditions. Best scheduled for early morning or late afternoon for optimal visibility and photographic light. Suitable for most guests, though those with motion sensitivity should be advised. Minimum booking of one hour. Wilson Airport is approximately 10 km from the city centre.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

The aerial perspective is transformative. Guests who have experienced the Kenyan landscape from a helicopter consistently describe it as one of the defining moments of their entire travel journey. From above, the scale, beauty, and extraordinary ecological richness of the region becomes fully, viscerally apparent.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange a private helicopter transfer from Nairobi to any of Kenya’s major safari destinations combining the practicality of an inter-camp transfer with the most extraordinary aerial game-viewing experiences imaginable. Ask your travel designer about a helicopter day-trip to the Masai Mara from Nairobi.*

DID YOU KNOW? Wilson Airport, Nairobi's secondary airport, is one of the busiest general aviation airports in Africa handling private charters, bush flights, air ambulances, and light aircraft operations for the entire East African region. It is the departure point for the majority of Kenya's private safari charter flights all over the country.

EXPLORE THE LOCAL MARKETS WITH A PRIVATE GUIDE

"The market is where the city's heart beats loudest. Come prepared to be surprised."

Nairobi's markets are a world apart vibrant, colourful, pungent, and alive with the energy of everyday commerce and cultural exchange. From the sprawling Maasai Market, where skilled artisans display hand-crafted jewellery, textiles, and carvings from across Kenya and Tanzania, to the flower markets of City Market, the curio stalls of Kazuri Beads, and the curated artisan offerings of the Village Market, Nairobi's marketplace culture is as rich and varied as the city itself.

Vard Africa offers a private, professionally guided market experience designed specifically for the discerning traveller one that provides cultural context, personal safety, and meaningful access to the very best of what Nairobi's artisans and producers have to offer, without the pressures and confusion that can characterize independent market visits.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A private guided tour of Nairobi's most compelling markets including the Maasai Market (held at various locations throughout the week), City Market, and the Village Market artisan section.
- Expert commentary on the origins, cultural significance, and traditional craftsmanship techniques behind the goods on display.
- Personal shopping assistance and negotiation support ensuring guests achieve authentic prices and acquire genuine, high-quality pieces.
- Introductions to individual craftspeople, weavers, and jewelers’ whose stories bring extraordinary depth to the objects they create.
- Optional private floral market visit for guests with a passion for botanical design and colour.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

A private market visit guided by a Vard Africa specialist is an entirely different experience from entering a market independently. With a guide who knows the vendors personally, speaks the languages, understands the craftsmanship, and knows exactly where to find the most exceptional pieces, the market becomes a curated, deeply pleasurable experience rather than an overwhelming one.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The Maasai Market is held at various locations across the city on different days of the week Vard Africa provides current schedules and handles all logistics. Best undertaken in the late morning (10:00 AM to 1:00 PM). Comfortable footwear is recommended. Suitable for all guests. A private vehicle and driver remain on standby throughout.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

The market experience is where culture, creativity, and commerce converge and where the most beautiful, authentic, and personally meaningful souvenirs of a Kenya journey can be found. A Vard-guided market visit transforms what might otherwise be a chaotic experience into a genuinely fun and joyful one.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa maintains ongoing relationships with several of Nairobi's finest individual artisans and can arrange private studio viewings and commissions outside of the market setting ideal for guests seeking truly unique, bespoke pieces that reflect the full scope of the Kenyan craftsmanship.*

DID YOU KNOW? The Kazuri Bead Factory in Karen was established in 1975 by Lady Susan Wood as a small cottage industry to provide work for single mothers in the local community. Today it employs over 350 women and produces handmade ceramic beads and jewellery that are exported to over 60 countries worldwide.

THE RETREAT EXPERIENCE AT THE GIRAFFE MANOR

"Breakfast with a Rothschild giraffe. There is simply nothing like it on earth."

The Giraffe Manor in Karen is, without question, one of the most iconic and photographed boutique hotels in Africa and one of the most celebrated addresses in all of luxury travel. Built in 1932 in the style of a Scottish hunting lodge, the Manor has achieved global fame for its remarkable resident herd of endangered Rothschild giraffes, who freely wander the property's expansive grounds and, to the delight of guests, regularly push their magnificent heads through open windows and doors in search of their favoured pellet treats.

For Vard Africa guests who are not in residence, we arrange exclusive private morning retreat experiences encompassing access to the Manor's gardens, the iconic giraffe feeding at breakfast time, and a beautifully curated morning in one of the most enchanting properties in Africa.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Exclusive private access to the Giraffe Manor grounds during the morning giraffe feeding experience.
- Up-close personal encounters with the Manor's resident Rothschild giraffes feeding them by hand from the Manor's famous elevated feeding station.
- Access to the Manor's beautifully designed garden and living spaces for photography and peaceful morning reflections.
- A curated breakfast spread in the Manor's garden, accompanied by the extraordinary sight of giraffes moving through the surrounding forest.
- Expert briefing on the history of the Rothschild giraffe conservation programme, one of Kenya's most important breeding initiatives for this critically endangered subspecies.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

The Giraffe Manor is a world icon and its fame is entirely deserved. The encounter with the giraffes is genuinely extraordinary: intimate, gentle, utterly unhurried, and endlessly photogenic. For guests travelling with families, the Giraffe Manor morning is frequently described as the single most memorable experience of an entire African journey.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

Day access is limited and must be arranged exclusively through Vard Africa. Morning experiences are best (8:00 AM to 11:00 AM). Full overnight residence is also bookable through Vard Africa the Manor's twelve rooms are among the most coveted in Africa and book up many months in advance. Suitable for all ages, including young children.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

The Giraffe Manor experience is one that guests talk about for the rest of their lives. It is fun joyful, beautiful, and entirely unlike anything else in the world of luxury travel and it embodies the spirit of Kenya as few other experiences can.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can secure reservations at the Giraffe Manor for overnight stays including exclusive use of the property for private groups. Given the Manor's extraordinary international demand, early booking through Vard Africa (typically 12+ months in advance) is essential. We also have access to occasional last-minute availability for our valued clients.*

DID YOU KNOW? The Rothschild giraffe is one of the most endangered giraffe subspecies in the world, with fewer than 800 individuals remaining in the wild. The Giraffe Centre's breeding programme has successfully reintroduced over 300 Rothschild giraffes into protected areas across Uganda, Kenya, and beyond.

MEET & FEED THE GIRAFFES AT THE GIRAFFE CENTRE NAIROBI

"To look into the eye of a giraffe is to feel, briefly, the grace of the natural world looking back."

The African Fund for Endangered Wildlife's Giraffe Centre in Karen is one of Nairobi's most beloved and internationally celebrated attractions and for a very good reason. Established in 1979 by Jock and Betty Leslie-Melville, the Centre was founded specifically to protect the critically endangered Rothschild giraffe, and over four decades of work has made it one of the continent's most successful wildlife conservation and breeding programmes.

Vard Africa offers private, guided visits to the Centre outside of peak visiting hours ensuring an unhurried, deeply personal encounter with these extraordinary animals, combined with a comprehensive briefing on the Centre's conservation mission and the wider challenges facing Africa's giraffe populations.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Private guided visit with a dedicated Vard specialist and Giraffe Centre conservationist.
- Hand-feeding of the Centre's resident Rothschild giraffes from the elevated feeding platform one of the most joyful wildlife encounters in Kenya.
- Expert conservation briefing on the Rothschild giraffe's status, the Centre's reintroduction programme, and how guests can contribute to its work.
- Access to the Centre's resident warthog family, who wander freely through the grounds with supreme nonchalance.
- The legendary 'giraffe kiss' one of the most photographed wildlife moments in Africa.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

The Giraffe Centre provides a conservation experience of genuine depth combined with the pure, uncomplicated joy of feeding one of Africa's most beautiful and improbable animals from your own hand. It is a combination found nowhere else and it consistently ranks among the most memorable experiences guests have in Kenya, regardless of what spectacular wilderness they encounter subsequently.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The Centre is open daily and located in Karen, approximately 20 minutes from central Nairobi. Vard Africa arranges private visits during early morning hours for the most peaceful and uncrowded experiences. Suitable for all ages and mobility levels. The elevated feeding platform is fully accessible. Best combined with a visit to the Giraffe Manor or Karen Blixen Museum.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

Conservation is at the heart of the Kenya Vard experience and the Giraffe Centre brings this to life in the most immediate, personal, and joyful way imaginable. Every pellet fed to a giraffe supports a programme that has helped save a subspecies from extinction.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange for the Giraffe Centre to be opened exclusively for a private sunrise visit before the gates open to the general public a magical experience with the early morning light filtering through the acacia trees and the giraffes moving peacefully through the dew-covered landscape.*

DID YOU KNOW? Giraffes have the highest blood pressure of any land animal necessary to pump blood up their extraordinary long necks to the brain. Their hearts, which can weigh up to 11 kilograms and measure 60 centimeters in length, beat approximately 150 times per minute to achieve this.

BROWNS CHEESE FARM — AN ARTISAN CHEESE EXPERIENCE

"A pastoral afternoon where Kenya's countryside slows down and the art of cheese-making reveals itself."

Just beyond the southern edges of Nairobi, tucked into a peaceful rural landscape where smallholder farms and rolling green hills replace the city's energy with gentle, pastoral calm, Browns Cheese Farm stands as one of Kenya's most delightful and unexpected artisan food experiences. Established by the Brown family and now a beloved institution among Nairobi's food community, the farm produces an impressive range of hand-crafted cheeses from velvety brie and creamy camembert to sharp aged cheddars and fresh chevre using milk sourced from the farm's own herd of carefully managed dairy cattle.

For the Vard Africa guest, a visit to Browns is a sensory and educational afternoon that provides an intimate window into Kenya's flourishing artisan food culture far from what most visitors ever encounter, and all the more special for it.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A guided tour of the farm's cheese-making facilities, where guests observe the full process from milk pasteurization to curd cutting, pressing, salting, and ageing.
- Expert commentary on the science and craft of artisan cheese-making, including the role of specific bacterial cultures, temperature, and time in developing different cheese styles and flavour profiles.
- A guided tasting of the farm's full cheese range paired with house-made accompaniments, fresh bread, and estate produce.
- The opportunity to purchase farm-direct cheeses, including seasonal and limited-production varieties not available elsewhere.
- A relaxed, privately hosted picnic or farm lunch in the farm's garden setting.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

Browns Cheese Farm is a genuine, working artisan dairy not a tourist attraction packaged as one. The experience feels authentic, personal, and genuinely educational, and the quality of the cheeses produced here is extraordinary. For food-loving travellers, it offers a dimension of Nairobi and Kenya's culinary culture that is entirely unexpected and deeply satisfying.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The farm is approximately 45-60 minutes from central Nairobi and should be booked in advance through Vard Africa. Best visited in the afternoon, ideally combined with a morning at the Kiambethu Tea Farm or Karunguru Coffee Estate for a full 'highland food trail' day. Suitable for all guests, including families with children.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

Kenya's artisan food culture is flourishing, and experiences like Browns Cheese Farm represent the very best of it authentic, high-quality, and deeply rooted in the land. For guests with a passion for food provenance and artisan craft, this is an experience of quiet, lasting pleasure.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** Vard Africa can curate a full 'Nairobi Highlands Food Trail' day combining a morning at the Kiambethu Tea Farm, a coffee tasting at the Karunguru or Fairview Estate, and an afternoon at Browns Cheese Farm, concluding with a farm picnic as the sun sets over the Ngong Hills. This is one of our most requested Nairobi day experiences.

DID YOU KNOW? Kenya's dairy industry is one of the largest in sub-Saharan Africa, with the country producing approximately 5.2 billion litres of milk annually. The sector supports the livelihoods of an estimated one million smallholder farmers and their families across the country's highlands.

A VISIT TO THE KAREN BLIXEN MUSEUM

"I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills." — Isak Dinesen, Out of Africa"

Few literary addresses in the world carry the weight of association that attaches to the Karen Blixen Museum in the green, leafy suburb that bears her name. The former home of Danish author Karen Blixen known by her pen name Isak Dinesen and celebrated globally for her memoir 'Out of Africa' the farmhouse sits at the foot of the Ngong Hills in a state of exquisite preservation, its rooms, gardens, and surrounding landscape virtually unchanged since the day Blixen departed Kenya in 1931 following the failure of her coffee farm and the death of her great love, Denys Finch Hatton.

For Vard Africa guests, the Karen Blixen Museum is not simply a historical site but a portal into one of the most extraordinary human stories in African literary and social history and a landscape of haunting beauty that invites genuine reflection and connection.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A private, expert-guided tour of the original farmhouse now the museum with detailed narrative about Karen Blixen's extraordinary life, her relationships, her writing, and her legacy in Kenya.
- A walk through the property's beautiful garden, where the original plantings have been lovingly restored and where the views toward the Ngong Hills recreate the landscape described in 'Out of Africa.'
- A visit to the museum's exhibition spaces, housing original furniture, personal artefacts, photographs, and documents from Blixen's Kenya years.
- Context on the broader history of the Karen suburb, the colonial settler community, and the social landscape of early 20th-century Kenya.
- Optional private screening of scenes from the 1985 Academy Award-winning film adaptation, which was shot on location in Nairobi and the surrounding countryside.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

The Karen Blixen Museum is one of the finest literary and cultural museums in Africa but it is also, simply, a place of great beauty and emotional resonance. The combination of colonial architecture, exquisite garden setting, dramatic views, and one of the most compelling life stories in modern literature creates an experience of remarkable depth.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The museum is open Tuesday to Sunday. Private guided visits with Vard Africa are arranged outside of peak visiting hours for an unhurried experience. Located in Karen, approximately 25 minutes from central Nairobi. Suitable for all guests, including those who have not read 'Out of Africa' though the book is warmly recommended as preparation.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

To visit Kenya without encountering the Karen Blixen story is to miss one of the most powerful human narratives woven into the fabric of this country. The museum experience enriches every subsequent journey into the Kenyan landscape the Ngong Hills, the Mara, the Highland farms — with a layer of literary and historical resonance that deepens everything that follows.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange a private sundowner at the foot of the Ngong Hills following the museum visit — a perfect conclusion to a Karen afternoon, with Blixen's beloved hills turning golden in the fading light exactly as she described them.*

DID YOU KNOW? Karen Blixen left Kenya in 1931 having lost both her farm and Denys Finch Hatton, who died in a plane crash near Voi. She returned to Denmark and wrote 'Out of Africa' from memory, completing it in just two years. The book was published in 1937 and has never been out of print.

OUR CULINARY MAP — WHERE TO EAT IN NAIROBI

"Nairobi's table is set for the world. Pull up a chair."

Nairobi has, in the space of a decade, established itself as one of Africa's most exciting and internationally significant culinary cities. A new generation of Kenyan chefs and restaurateurs, many trained in the world's finest kitchens and returning home with both global technique and fierce local pride, are transforming the city's food culture with a sense of ambition and creativity that is drawing international attention. Farm-to-table philosophy, indigenous ingredient rediscovery, and a celebration of the extraordinary diversity of Kenya's produce and culinary heritage are defining this new era of Nairobi dining.

For the Vard Africa guest, we have curated a selection of the city's finest and most distinctive dining experiences from intimate farm-to-table restaurants in leafy Karen to bold, cosmopolitan grills in Westlands, and authentic Kenyan culinary encounters in neighborhood settings that most visitors never discover. Each restaurant on our map has been personally vetted and reflects our commitment to quality, authenticity, and experience.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- World-class cuisine at every level of formality — from refined tasting menus to beautiful garden lunches and vibrant grill restaurants.
- A celebration of Kenyan and East African ingredients — game meats, freshwater fish, indigenous vegetables, tropical fruits, and the extraordinary flavours of Kenya's highlands.
- International culinary traditions executed with Kenyan soul — Japanese-Peruvian fusion, Brazilian churrasco, Greek Mediterranean, and contemporary European, all given a distinctly Nairobi flavour.
- Restaurant experiences that are equally memorable for their design, setting, and atmosphere as for the food they serve.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

Vard Africa handles all restaurant reservations in advance. Nairobi's finest restaurants book quickly, particularly on weekends, and advance reservation through Vard Africa ensures the best tables and the full attention of the restaurant team. Private dining rooms, bespoke tasting menus, and chef's table experiences can also be arranged privately for our guests.

WHY NAIROBI'S DINING SCENE IS A VARD ESSENTIAL

The culinary experience in Nairobi is inseparable from the broader cultural experience of the city. Nairobi's restaurants are where the city's cosmopolitan, creative, and entrepreneurial energy expresses itself most freely and an evening in one of the city's finest dining rooms offers a window into contemporary Kenyan society and culture that is both pleasurable and genuinely illuminating.

Talisman Restaurant, Karen

Set in a beautifully restored colonial-era house surrounded by lush tropical gardens in the Karen suburb, Talisman is one of Nairobi's most celebrated and enduring fine dining institutions. The menu is an eclectic, masterfully executed journey through global flavours interpreted with Kenyan sensibility fresh local ingredients elevated with international technique. The setting candlelit, garden-draped, and radiating an atmosphere of intimate warmth makes Talisman the ideal destination for a special evening in Nairobi. The cocktail list is exceptional and the wine cellar admirably stocked with both Old and New World selections. A Vard Africa favourite for private dining rooms and bespoke set menus.

Cultiva Restaurant, Riverside

One of Nairobi's most ambitious and critically acclaimed farm-to-table restaurants, Cultiva has established itself as a leader of the city's contemporary culinary movement. Set in a beautifully designed Riverside space, the restaurant is built on a philosophy of hyperlocal sourcing its menu changing seasonally and often daily, dictated entirely by what its network of small-scale Kenyan farmers and producers has harvested. Chef-driven, ingredient-obsessed, and conceptually rigorous, Cultiva offers the kind of dining experience that earns its place alongside the finest farm-to-table restaurants anywhere in the world. The tasting menu format is strongly recommended.

Carnivore Restaurant, Langata

An iconic Nairobi institution since 1980 and one of the most famous restaurants in Africa, Carnivore has earned its legendary status through sheer theatrical excess and extraordinary quality. The concept is simple and utterly compelling: whole animals are roasted on huge Maasai spears over an open charcoal pit, and carved tableside in continuous succession until guests can eat no more. Game meats including crocodile, ostrich, and hartebeest are served alongside traditional beef, lamb, and pork, accompanied by a procession of outstanding sauces and accompaniments. Carnivore is simultaneously a fine dining experience and an extraordinary Nairobi cultural institution. The Simba Saloon attached to the restaurant is equally legendary as a venue.

Ankole Grill, Karen & Westlands

Named for the majestic Ankole cattle of East Africa, this acclaimed contemporary grill restaurant has established itself as one of Nairobi's finest destinations for premium beef and game. With outposts in both Karen and Westlands, Ankole Grill combines a sophisticated, warmly designed dining space with a menu of exceptional provenance-led cuts dry-aged Ankole beef, prime game meats, and an outstanding selection of grills prepared over an open wood fire. The wine programme is among the most carefully curated in Nairobi, and the service team brings a genuine passion for the product they serve. An exceptional choice for guests seeking the very best of East African meat culture in a refined, contemporary setting.

Fogo Gaucho, Westlands & Mombasa Road

Kenya's premier Brazilian churrascaria brings the theatrical energy and extraordinary abundance of the Brazilian grill tradition to Nairobi with remarkable authenticity and flair. At Fogo Gaucho, the ritual of the 'rodízio' an endless parade of skewered meats carved tableside by dedicated passadores creates a dining experience of pure, celebratory pleasure. Premium cuts of beef, lamb, pork, chicken, and game are accompanied by an outstanding salad bar and traditional Brazilian sides. The atmosphere is convivial, vibrant, and entirely suited to group dining and celebration. Consistently ranked among the best dining experiences in Nairobi.

INTI — A Nikkei Experience

INTI brings the sophisticated culinary marriage of Japanese precision and Peruvian passion known internationally as Nikkei cuisine to Nairobi with remarkable elegance and confidence. The menu is a thoughtful exploration of ceviches, tiraditos, sushi, and hot Nikkei dishes, each combining the clean, mineral flavours of Japanese technique with the bold acidity, spice, and colour of Peruvian gastronomy. The restaurant's design is intimate and beautifully considered, and the cocktail programme built around pisco, yuzu, and Kenyan botanicals is exceptional. INTI represents Nairobi's cosmopolitan dining culture at its most sophisticated and globally connected.

Upepo Restaurant

Upepo meaning 'wind' in Swahili is a beautifully conceived contemporary restaurant that captures the essence of Nairobi's evolving dining culture with grace and creativity. Drawing on Kenya's extraordinary coastal and highland produce, the kitchen creates dishes that are simultaneously deeply rooted in East African culinary tradition and fluently executed with modern technique. The setting is relaxed yet sophisticated, and the service warm and informed. A genuine expression of the new Nairobi confident, creative, and grounded in the beauty of the local landscape.

Meko Restaurant

Meko is a sleek, high-energy contemporary restaurant that has rapidly established itself among Nairobi's most fashionable and culinarily interesting dining destinations. The menu is broad and boldly flavoured, drawing on Asian, Mediterranean, and Kenyan influences with confidence and genuine skill. The cocktail bar is exceptional, and the weekend brunch is widely regarded as one of the finest in the city. The design is modern and striking, making Meko an ideal setting for both business dining and celebratory evenings.

Slate Kitchen & Bar

Slate has earned a devoted following among Nairobi's most discerning food community through its commitment to genuine quality, beautiful design, and an atmosphere that feels contemporary and welcoming in equal measure. The menu travels confidently across wood-fired proteins, fresh local produce, and innovative small plates, with a particular strength in sharing-format dining that suits the social, convivial spirit of Nairobi's culinary culture. The bar programme is outstanding, and the outdoor terrace setting makes Slate one of Nairobi's finest venues for long, leisurely evening dining.

Mythos Taverna Nairobi

A genuine, warmly hospitable Greek taverna in the heart of Nairobi, Mythos has been a beloved institution in the city's dining landscape for years. The menu is faithful and excellent authentic mezze platters, fresh seafood, wood-grilled meats, and traditional Greek desserts executed with the kind of care and family pride that makes every meal feel like an invitation into someone's home. The atmosphere is relaxed, convivial, and genuinely joyful. Mythos represents the best of Nairobi's international culinary diversity a restaurant where the cooking tastes as if it has never left the Aegean.

Kalamata Restaurant & Bar

Kalamata brings the flavours of the Mediterranean to Nairobi with a lightness of touch and a quality of produce that consistently delights. The menu ranges across Greek, Lebanese, and broader Mediterranean traditions falafel, hummus, grilled halloumi, fresh seafood, slow-roasted lamb, and exceptional mezze spreads presented with genuine care and an eye for beautiful, colourful presentation. The bar programme includes a well-chosen selection of Eastern Mediterranean wines, and the setting is elegant yet unpretentious. A consistently excellent choice for guests seeking lighter, produce-driven cuisine in a refined and sociable environment.

♦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa maintains ongoing relationships with all of the above restaurants and can secure exclusive reservations, private dining rooms, bespoke tasting menus, and personal introductions to head chefs for our guests. We can also arrange private chef's table experiences and exclusive restaurant takeovers for special occasions and group events.*

DID YOU KNOW? Nairobi hosts one of East Africa's most vibrant and rapidly growing specialty coffee cultures, with a new generation of independent roasters and barista-led coffee bars producing some of the finest specialty coffee experiences on the continent — using beans grown in the very highlands that surround the city.

COOKING & CULTURE WITH MAMA CAROLE

"The most honest expression of any culture lives in the food its mothers cook."

For travellers who believe that the deepest understanding of any place comes through its food not in a restaurant, but in a home an afternoon with Mama Carole is one of the most profoundly memorable experiences that Vard Africa can offer in Nairobi. Mama Carole is a celebrated Kenyan home cook and cultural ambassador whose warm, generous, and deeply knowledgeable approach to Kenyan cuisine has made her a legend among Nairobi's culinary community and a beloved figure among the international travellers fortunate enough to share her table.

Hosted in her home, the experience is part cooking class, part cultural conversation, part family meal an entirely authentic encounter with the flavours, stories, and traditions that define Kenyan domestic life, guided by someone whose passion for her culture and her kitchen is entirely and joyfully infectious.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- An immersive private cooking experience in Mama Carole's home kitchen, learning to prepare authentic Kenyan dishes from scratch.
- Hands-on preparation of traditional staples ugali, sukuma wiki, nyama choma, pilau, kachumbari, and a selection of Kenyan coastal and upcountry dishes with expert guidance and generous narrative.
- A relaxed, storytelling-rich conversation about Kenyan food traditions, family culture, and the role of the kitchen in East African social life.
- A shared family-style meal of everything prepared during the session, set at Mama Carole's dining table with traditional Kenyan hospitality.
- A personalised recipe booklet, hand-written by Mama Carole, to take home as a lasting culinary souvenir.

WHY IT STANDS OUT

In a world of curated dining experiences and restaurant theatre, an afternoon with Mama Carole stands apart for its extraordinary authenticity and warmth. There is nothing performative here only genuine generosity, genuine knowledge, and the genuine pleasure of cooking and eating together. It is the kind of experience that stays with guests long after the flavours of the meal have faded.

PRACTICAL TIPS — ACCESSIBILITY & SUITABILITY

The experience is conducted entirely in a private home setting and requires advance booking through Vard Africa. Best scheduled in the late morning or early afternoon, with the meal served as a midday or early afternoon lunch. Suitable for all ages, including children, who respond particularly enthusiastically to the hands-on cooking elements. No dietary restrictions are an obstacle Mama Carole adapts the menu with skill and grace.

WHY IT'S A VARD ESSENTIAL

The luxury of genuine human connection is something that no five-star hotel or world-class restaurant can replicate. The afternoon with Mama Carole delivers this connection with extraordinary abundance and creates a personal relationship with Kenyan culture and cuisine that enriches every meal, and every memory, that follows.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** *Vard Africa can arrange for Mama Carole to host a private dinner for a small group transforming the cooking experience into a full cultural evening that includes Kenyan music, storytelling, and extended conversation about East African life and culture. This extended experience is particularly popular with small private groups and multi-generational family travellers.*

DID YOU KNOW? Ugali a firm, stiff porridge made from white maize flour is the staple food of Kenya and one of the most widely consumed foods on the African continent. In Kenya, it is traditionally eaten by hand, rolled into a small ball, and used to scoop up accompanying stews, vegetables, and meats. It is as central to Kenyan identity as pasta is to Italian.

GETTING TO & AROUND NAIROBI — AIRPORTS & TRAFFIC

Navigating Nairobi requires a combination of advance planning, local knowledge, and a philosophical acceptance of the city's legendary traffic one of its most defining and, in retrospect, endearing characteristics. Vard Africa manages all logistics for our guests, ensuring that the journey from aircraft to hotel, from hotel to experience, and back again is as seamless, comfortable, and pleasant as humanly possible.

Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA)

Nairobi's main international gateway, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) handles the vast majority of Kenya's international long-haul traffic and serves as East Africa's primary aviation hub. Located approximately 15 km southeast of the city centre, the airport is served by over 50 airlines connecting Nairobi to destinations across Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America.

JKIA's Terminal 1A handles international departures and arrivals. The airport offers a range of premium lounge facilities, including the Kenya Airways Pride Lounge and a selection of private lounges available through lounge access programmes. Vard Africa provides dedicated meet-and-greet services, private transfer vehicles, and fast-track immigration assistance for all of our arriving guests ensuring that the first moments of your Kenya journey are calm, organized, and personal.

Travel time between JKIA and central Nairobi or Karen varies considerably with traffic from 20 minutes at off-peak hours to 60-90 minutes during the morning or evening rush. Vard Africa schedules all ground transfers with this variability factored in, and our drivers maintain real-time traffic awareness to identify the optimal routing.

Wilson Airport

For the Vard Africa guest, Wilson Airport is arguably the most important aviation facility in Nairobi and certainly the most characterful. Located just 5 km from the city centre in the Lang'ata area, Wilson is Kenya's general aviation hub: the departure point for light aircraft charter flights, private helicopter excursions, bush plane transfers to safari camps, and air ambulance operations across East Africa.

The atmosphere at Wilson is a world apart from the corporate efficiency of JKIA light aircraft line the tarmac in cheerful abundance, bush pilots in khaki discuss routing at the operations desk, and the unmistakable tang of avgas drifts across the apron. For many guests, the first departure from Wilson Airport climbing into a small Cessna or Grand Caravan for a direct flight to the Masai Mara is one of the defining moments of their entire African journey.

Vard Africa provides private VIP transfer services to and from Wilson for all charters and helicopter flights, including dedicated lounge access and personal ground handling for all guest luggage and equipment.

Moi International Airport

Moi International Airport serves the coastal city of Mombasa, Kenya's second largest city and the gateway to the country's spectacular Indian Ocean coastline. While not a Nairobi airport per se, Moi International is a key connection point for guests whose Vard Africa itinerary combines a Nairobi city stay with time on the Kenyan coast whether at the iconic Diani Beach, the historic island of Lamu, or the marine reserves of Watamu and Malindi. Direct scheduled and charter services operate between Wilson Airport and Moi International, making a seamless coastal extension straightforward and highly recommended.

The Nairobi Traffic Experience

Let us address it directly and without apology: Nairobi's traffic is extraordinary. The city's road network, built for a fraction of its current population, now serves over 5.5 million residents whose collective enthusiasm for private vehicle ownership has created a congestion phenomenon of almost mythological proportions.

The morning rush hour (7:00 AM to 10:00 AM) and evening rush hour (4:30 PM to 8:00 PM) can transform a 10-minute journey into a 90-minute odyssey of stop-and-go navigation through neighborhoods of extraordinary character and surprising beauty. Key corridors Mombasa Road (connecting JKIA to the city), Ngong Road (connecting Karen to the CBD), and Thika Road (connecting the north of the city) can become almost completely stationary during peak hours.

Vard Africa's response to Nairobi traffic is simple and effective: we plan around it. Our schedulers factor traffic patterns into every transfer timing, our drivers know the city's secondary routing with forensic detail, and our vehicles are equipped with WiFi, premium refreshments, and the kind of interior comfort that transforms a traffic delay into a perfectly pleasant interlude. We also ensure that wherever possible, major transfers are scheduled outside of peak hours and that our guests never arrive at an experience feeling rushed or rattled.

The other response, of course, is to embrace it. Nairobi traffic, viewed from the comfortable interior of a Vard Africa vehicle, is one of the great people watching experiences in the country. The street vendors who materialize at traffic lights offering everything from phone chargers to fresh avocados; the matatus adorned with extraordinary artwork; the pedestrian life of a city of enormous vitality it is, in its own chaotic way, entirely compelling theatre.

✦ **VARD INSIDER NOTE:** Vard Africa's vehicles are all equipped with fast WiFi, premium bottled water, freshly prepared snacks, and curated music selections. For longer transfers, we provide complimentary reading materials and can arrange in-vehicle refreshments including tea, coffee, and should the occasion demand it a cold bottle of Coca-Cola or Kenyan beer.

WHY WE LOVE NAIROBI

"Every city has a personality. Nairobi's is one of the most extraordinary on earth."

At Vard Africa, we have travelled the world's finest destinations and worked within the most celebrated luxury travel frameworks and still, Nairobi surprises us. It surprises us because it refuses to be categorized. It is not simply a safari gateway (though it is the finest in the world). It is not simply a cultural capital (though its arts, food, and intellectual life would stand proudly in any global comparison). It is not simply a conservation destination (though nowhere on earth does wildlife and human settlement coexist in such extraordinary, improbable proximity).

Nairobi is all of these things simultaneously, and more. It is the energy of a city that knows it is rising and that rises with confidence, creativity, and an irrepressible, infectious joie de vivre. It is the warmth of its people: Nairobians are, without exception, some of the most hospitable, witty, and genuinely welcoming people you will encounter anywhere on your travels. It is the light that particular East African highland light, bright and clean and full of possibility, that makes everything it touches look like the beginning of an adventure.

We love Nairobi because it gives back more than you bring to it. Every guest who arrives here with curiosity, openness, and a willingness to be surprised leaves with stories they will tell for the rest of their lives. It is a city that, once encountered, is impossible to forget and one that draws those who truly know it back, again and again, with the ease and certainty of a place that has become, in some fundamental way, part of who they are.

This is the Nairobi we know. This is the Nairobi we share. And this is the Nairobi with which Vard Africa as East Africa's definitive ultra-luxury destination management company invites you to begin your extraordinary journey.

VARD AFRICA
REDEFINING THE FUTURE OF ULTRA-LUXURY TRAVEL

Where Every Journey Is Personal. Where Every Detail Is Perfection.