

When to go

Even though some parks and lodges advertise themselves as good year-round destinations the fact that they offer high and low season rates indicates that it is not prime time all the time. Our chart on the next page should, however, not be interpreted as the holy grail but merely as an approximation of best, good and not so good times to visit.

The rule of thumb is to go on safari during the dry winter season when foliage is sparse and animals can be spotted more easily. Wildlife gathers in large numbers around the remaining water holes. This means generally from May until October. (Being in the southern hemisphere seasons are of course opposite to those of North America and Europe). During the wet summer months, when water and grazing are plentiful, wildlife scatter over vast areas and are sometimes difficult to spot in the tall grass and thick vegetation.

However, a visit during the summer rainy season has its own advantages. Animals are in peak condition and it is breeding season for many species. Migratory birds are in evidence and plant life more vibrant and interesting. However, some lodges and parks such as Kafue, Katavi and Selous are actually

closed during part of rainy season and in others certain portions may be inaccessible.

There are two rainy seasons in East Africa. The first, the short season, is from late November through December. The second, known as the long rains, is from March to May. In Southern Africa, the rainy season is generally from November to March.

The Great Migration in Serengeti and Maasai Mara sets its own parameters. The best period to see the migration from the Serengeti side is usually between June and August as the wildebeest assemble in large herds to cross the Grumeti River on their way north. Visitors to the Maasai Mara can expect to see the large herds arrive between August and September and remain until October or November before they move south again. As with the weather, however, these are approximations and not firm schedules.

Safarists who wish to enjoy other attractions in the host countries outside the game parks might have to compromise. In South Africa, for example, Cape Town with its spectacular scenery and great beaches is at its best during the summer months when game viewing is at its low point up north in Kruger National Park and adjoining private parks. Ultimately the choice will depend on availability, and—if there are children involved—on school holidays.



BEST TIME TO GO

AREA	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
BOTSWANA												
Chobe	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	◐	○	○
Linyanti/Selinda	○	○	○	○	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	○	○
Moremi Reserve	○	○	○	○	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	○	○
Okavango Delta	○	○	○	○	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	○	○
Central Kalahari	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	●
KENYA												
Amboseli	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	◐
Maasai Mara	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	◐
Meru/Samburu	●	●	●	◐	○	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	◐
Tsavo	●	●	●	◐	○	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	◐
MALAWI												
All parks	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	○	○
NAMIBIA												
Etosha	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	○
East Caprivi	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	○
Namib/Naukluft	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
RWANDA												
Volcanoes	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	●
SOUTH AFRICA												
Addo Park	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●
Kruger NP region	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	○
Hluwe/Phinda	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	○
TANZANIA												
Katavi	◐	○	○	○	◐	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐
Lake Manyara	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐
Mahale/Gombe	◐	◐	◐	○	○	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐
Ngorongoro	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	●	●	◐
Serengeti (SE)	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	●
Serengeti (NW)	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	●	●	◐
Ruaha/Selous	◐	◐	○	○	○	◐	●	●	●	◐	○	◐
Tarangire	◐	◐	◐	◐	○	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐
UGANDA												
All parks	●	●	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	○	○	●
ZAMBIA												
Kafue	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	○	○
Lower Zambezi	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	○	○
South Luangwa	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	○	○
ZIMBABWE												
Hwange	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	○
Matusadona	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐

Prime time ● Good time ◐ Questionable ○ Closed ○



WEATHER IN MAJOR CENTERS IN AFRICA'S SAFARI COUNTRIES

°FAHRENHEIT AND NUMBER OF RAIN DAYS PER MONTH

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
BOTSWANA MAUN	Max	89	88	88	88	82	77	77	84	90	95	93	90
	Min	66	66	64	59	50	43	43	48	57	66	66	66
	Rain	8	7	5	2	1	-	-	-	1	3	5	7
KENYA NAIROBI	Max	77	78	77	75	72	70	70	70	75	75	73	73
	Min	53	55	57	57	55	54	52	52	52	55	55	55
	Rain	5	6	11	16	17	9	6	7	6	8	15	11
MADAGASCAR ANTANANARIVO	Max	78	78	78	75	73	70	68	70	73	81	81	81
	Min	61	61	61	57	54	50	48	48	52	54	57	61
	Rain	21	20	17	11	9	9	10	9	7	9	13	20
MALAWI LILONGWE	Max	81	81	81	81	77	73	73	77	81	86	84	82
	Min	63	63	61	57	52	46	45	46	54	59	63	64
	Rain	19	18	13	5	1	-	-	1	1	1	7	15
NAMIBIA WINDHOEK	Max	84	82	81	77	72	68	68	73	77	84	84	86
	Min	63	61	59	55	48	45	43	46	54	59	59	63
	Rain	8	8	8	4	1	-	-	-	-	2	3	6
SOUTH AFRICA CAPE TOWN	Max	78	78	77	72	66	64	63	64	64	70	73	75
	Min	61	61	57	54	48	46	45	46	48	52	55	57
	Rain	3	2	3	6	9	9	10	9	7	5	3	3
SOUTH AFRICA JO'BURG	Max	78	77	75	72	66	63	63	68	73	77	77	79
	Min	57	57	55	50	43	39	39	43	48	54	55	57
	Rain	8	7	5	2	1	-	-	-	1	3	5	7
TANZANIA ARUSHA	Max	82	82	81	77	73	72	72	73	77	81	81	81
	Min	55	57	59	61	59	55	54	54	55	57	57	57
	Rain	12	9	11	7	2	-	-	-	-	1	4	9
UGANDA KABALE	Max	75	75	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	75	73	73
	Min	48	52	52	52	52	48	46	48	52	50	52	50
	Rain	11	13	16	20	16	5	3	8	15	18	19	15