

mara explorer

masai mara national reserve

The flagship camp in the Heritage Hotels' Explorer portfolio, Mara Explorer offers sophisticated luxury and impressive wildlife.





PREVIOUS SPREAD Dinner is served in a romantic setting overlooking the Talek River.

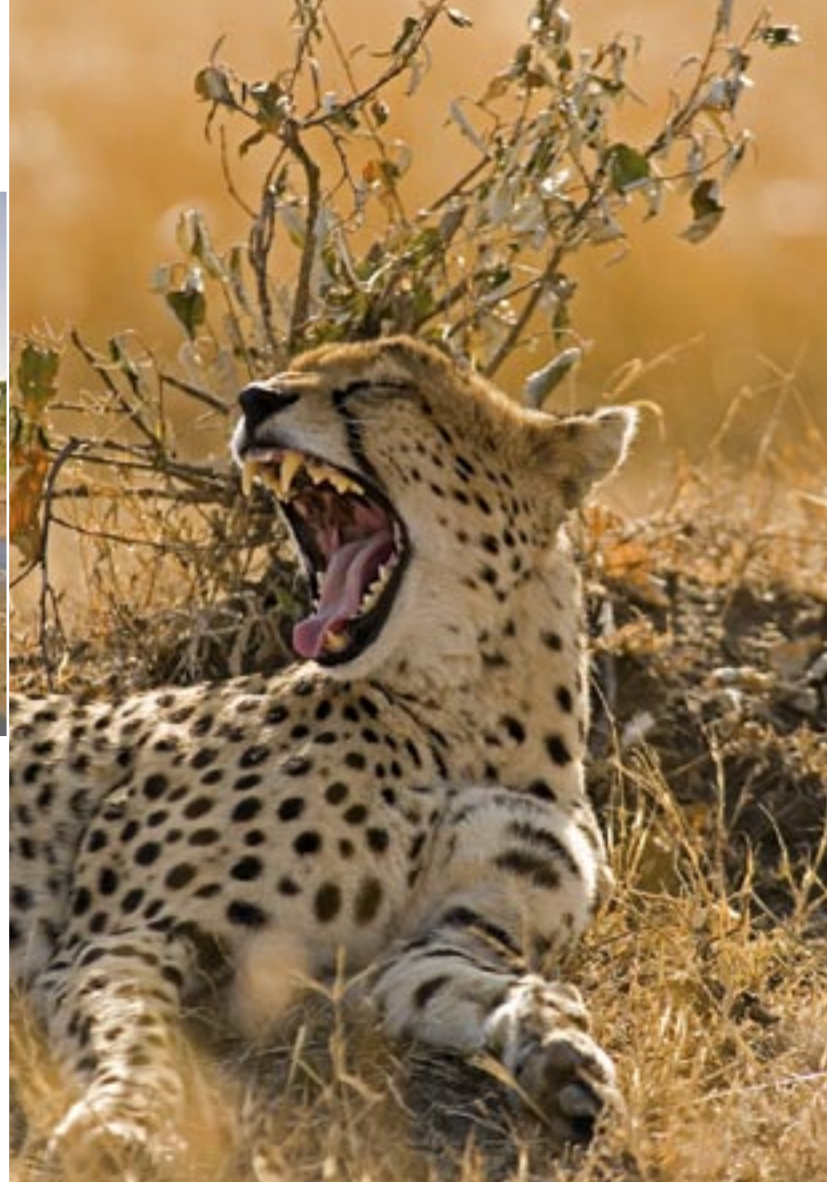
THIS SPREAD Monkeys and birds abound in the dense riverine forest.

A lone cheetah on the plains.

Game drives reveal treasures such as this pride of lions.

The wild outdoors is right on your doorstep.

A bathtub on the veranda ensures uninterrupted game-viewing.



The word 'explorer' evokes manly adventures and remote, untouched places. So staying at Mara Explorer camp in its concealed location made me feel like David Livingstone. After just one game drive with Paul Kirui, a professional safari guide, I was ready to call the area the predator capital of the world. We'd left at the crack of dawn after hearing noisy evidence of animal activity in the night. Just five minutes from the camp, we were greeted by the sight of a zebra killed by a pride of lions, and a vociferous group of 15 spotted hyaenas who were trying to drive them off. I watched entranced as a royal battle ensued, with the hyaenas emerging victorious and each running off with a share of the zebra remains.

Mara Explorer is located right in the centre of the Masai Mara National Reserve, with its 10 tents well-spaced and partially concealed by riverine forest on a bend in the Talek River. My tent had a huge double bed, hand-carved mahogany furniture and lots of memorabilia of the old safari explorer style, including old prints, tin trunks and wooden chests. Although the camp itself is sheltered by the trees, it is in a core animal zone and is a natural magnet for loads of wildlife. Herbivores from the great grassy plains are drawn to the area by its mixed vegetation, mineral licks and water. In their wake are the predators and scavengers.

Leaving the kill site, we headed south on to the great Burungat Plains. Paul's eagle-sharp eyes quickly spotted a mother cheetah with three large cubs hunting in the tall grass. I held my breath as the mother jumped onto our bonnet. As we watched her using our vehicle as a vantage point from which to spot prey, Paul explained this was the famous cheetah, Kike, which had been filmed by the BBC in *Big Cat Diary*.

We stopped for breakfast from a well-stocked picnic hamper provided by the camp's kitchen staff, and then explored the more remote regions further afield. With its central location, Mara Explorer allows you to access all the best wildlife areas of the reserve.

Back at the camp, we sat down to dinner, hosted by the ever-attentive Mariana, who takes special care of all her guests. Our Maasai waiter served us smoothly and efficiently, and the food was fresh and delicious.

For me, one of the camp's best features was the extravagant, claw-foot bathtub on my balcony (each tent has one). There, while sipping champagne and soaking in bubbles, I watched elephants feeding and drinking in the river below while being serenaded by honking hippo.

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details

When to go
June to September is the best time to view the wildebeest migration. Big cats can be seen during the rest of the year.

How to get there
Charter flights transfer passengers to Masai Explorer's private airstrip.

Who to contact
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