

FootprintAfrica

Nairobi & Rift Valley

Includes the Masai Mara National Reserve

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Transport in Nairobi and the Rift Valley

Kenya has an efficient transport network linking its towns and cities. There are regular flights between Nairobi and the larger towns and coast, and further afield to Tanzania and Zanzibar. There are overnight train services between Nairobi and Mombasa and Nairobi and Kisumu that are a fairly enjoyable, if slow experience, and in recent years there have been great improvements in the standards of the bus and *matatu* (minibus) services. It is quite feasible for a visitor to move around by public transport, which is

cheap and efficient, but be aware of petty theft not only on the vehicles but in the bus stands and stations.

Air

Regular daily flights connect the major towns and cities and some of the safari destinations, all of which can be reached within a couple of hours' flying time from each other. The introduction of 'no-frills' airlines has introduced competition and flights are very affordable. Many of these airlines run services in circuits and flights may involve intermediate stops as the plane drops passengers at different airstrips on each circuit and may often return on the same route. For example, a flight to the Masai Mara may actually 'drop down' at several safari lodges. All tickets can be booked online or can be bought

directly from the airline desks at the airports.

Air Kenya, T020-391 6000, www.airkenya.com, flies between Nairobi's Wilson Airport and Amboseli, Lamu, Lewa Downs, Malindi, Masai Mara, Meru, Mombasa, Nanyuki and Samburu. It also code shares with **Regional Air** in Tanzania and offer flights from Nairobi to Kilimanjaro, where they connect with flights to the lodges in the Serengeti and other Northern Circuit parks.

Kenya Airways, T020-327 4747, www.kenya-airways.com, flies between Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Kisumu, Malindi, Lamu and Mombasa, plus regional destinations.

Fly 540, T0722-540 540, www.fly540.com, flies between Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and

Eldoret, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kitale, Lamu, Lodwar, Malindi and Mombasa. Regionally they fly between Nairobi and Entebbe in Uganda, Juba in South Sudan, and Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar in Tanzania. From Nairobi's Wilson Airport they have flights to Amboseli, Masai Mara, Nanyuki and Samburu.

Mombasa Air Safaris, T0734-400 400, www.mombasaairsafari.com, operate a circuit between Mombasa and Amboseli, Tsavo and the Masai Mara.

Safarilink, T020-600 777, www.flysafarilink.com, flies between Nairobi's Wilson Airport and Amboseli, Kiwayu, Lamu, Lewa Downs, Masai Mara, Nanyuki, Samburu and Tsavo. It code shares with Air Excel in Tanzania so has flights from Nairobi to Kilimanjaro.

Road

Bus and matatu There is an efficient network of privately run buses and *matatus* across the country. The *matatu*, the most popular form of public transport in Kenya, has become a national icon and a large part of Kenyan modern culture. A *matatu* is a minibus, usually a Nissan or Toyota, with a three-tonne capacity, hence the name *matatu* – *tatu* means ‘three’ in Kiswahili. On good, sealed roads, buses and *matatus* cover 50-80 km per hour, but on unsealed or poorly maintained roads they may average only 20 km per hour. Fairly new regulations of public transport in Kenya mean that standing is no longer permitted: everyone gets their own seat, every vehicle is fitted with seat belts and it is law for passengers to buckle up – police issue on-the-spot fines to passengers who