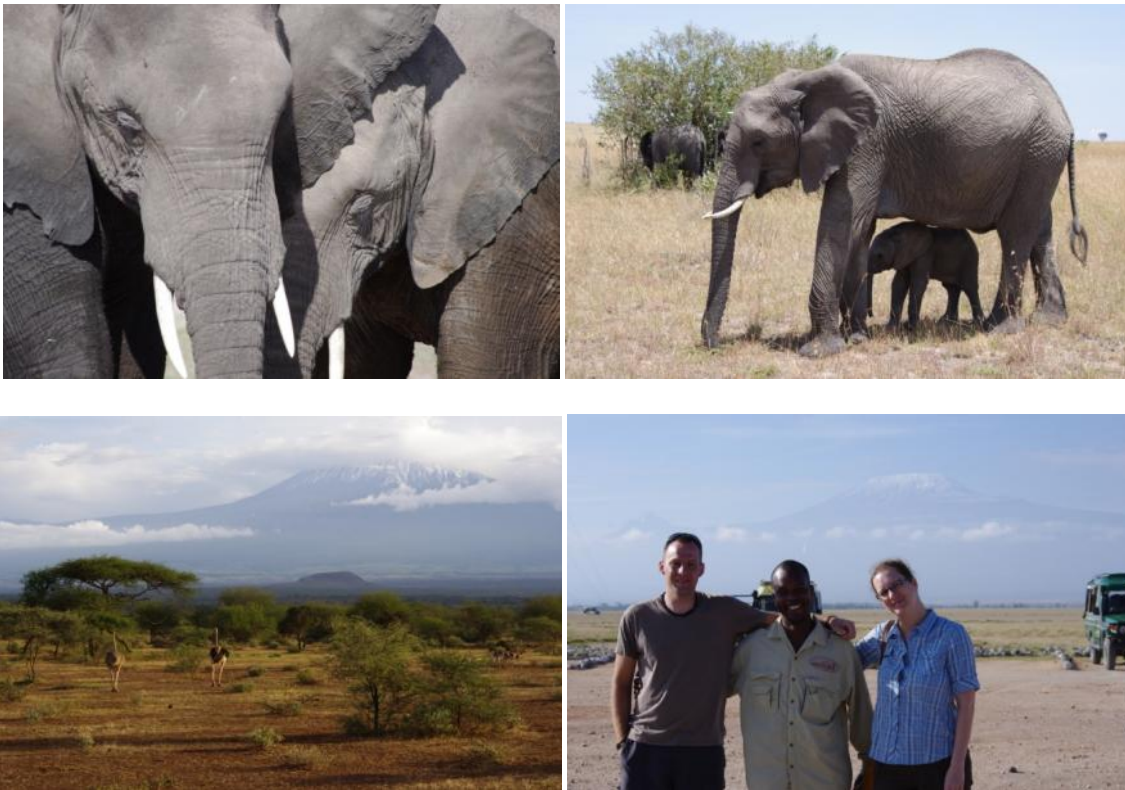


## Szilvia Hegyi – Safari in Kenya and gorilla trekking in Rwanda 2011

After spending a night at the lovely House of Waine in Nairobi, we started our Kenyan safari in Amboseli where we spent time at Tortilis Camp and Tawi Lodge. Both Tortilis and Tawi Lodge are located on private concessions just outside Amboseli National Park, and both have a waterhole on their property, so guests can also enjoy viewing animals while spending time in the main areas. Tawi Lodge is one of the newest lodges in Amboseli and a great option for a romantic getaway.

Amboseli is famous for its large population of elephants and during our game we had a wonderful time observing the elephant families moving in and out of the swamp, caring for their young ones or bathing in mud and dust. Amboseli is also one of the best parks to enjoy an amazing view of Mount Kilimanjaro and we were lucky to have a chance to see Mt. Kilimanjaro before we bid farewell to our fantastic guide, Stanley.

[Click on the link for more information about Amboseli National Park](#)



Our next stop in Kenya was the famous Maasai Mara. We spent time at Rekeru, Mara Ngenche and Mara Plains Camp. Every day while in the Mara during our game drives we saw lions, leopards and cheetahs alongside lots of giraffes, impalas, buffalos and many other species. The advantage of spending time in the Mara in the non-migration period was that we saw *very* few vehicles around which definitely enhanced our game viewing experience. During the non-migration period the Mara stays home for plenty of resident wildebeests, zebras, lions, cheetahs, leopards, giraffes and many other species including some amazing birds. Our guide Felix was great, we learned a lot about animal behavior, flora and fauna and the Kenyan culture from him.

My favorite camps in the Mara included Rekeru, Naibor and Salas Camps. The camps are beautifully located overlooking the Talek River (Rekeru and Naibor) and Sand River (Salas) where during the migration period clients may have a chance to witness a river crossing while spending time at the camps. The camps are quite small and not fenced allowing animals to roam around freely. Every night we fell asleep listening to hippos grazing outside and lions roaring, best sleeping pill ever! I would highly recommend these camps for guests who want to experience the Maasai Mara in a nice, exclusive bush setting. Many of the camps have special family tents with 2 connected rooms (each with their own bathroom), so nicely cater for families. These three camps reminded me of the Botswana bush camps, and offer a great option for repeat safariers who have spent time in the Southern Africa region, and would like to experience something similar in East Africa.

[Click on the link for more information about the Masai Mara National Reserve](#)

Other great camps in the Maasai Mara include Mara Intrepids, Mara Explorer and Mara Ngenche. I would highly recommend Mara Explorer and Mara Ngenche for couples and honeymooners, and Mara Intrepids for families as the camp is extremely child-friendly offering many fun activities for the young adventurers.

Guests can spend time within the Maasai Mara reserve (above mentioned camps) and/or outside the reserve in private concessions. At the camps located outside the reserve guests can enjoy activities like a night game drive which is not allowed within the reserve. Furthermore the private concessions located outside the reserve accommodate limited amount of guests due to concession rules, so there are fewer vehicles around while on a game drive which provides a more exclusive experience. In order to maximize the game viewing experience I would strongly recommend spending time both inside and outside the reserve to experience the wide variety of activities and different areas of the Mara region.

We enjoyed our last night at Mara Plains which is located just north of the Maasai Mara Reserve on the Olare Orok Conservancy. At Mara Plains Camp we enjoyed a night game drive, and had a chance to see lots of nocturnal animals like bush babies, white tail mongoose. We came across a pride of lions feeding on a wildebeest while surrounded by about 12 hyenas and 4-5 jackals who wanted to steal away their kill. The scene was super intense especially after the hyenas started to circle our vehicle!!



During our time in the Maasai Mara we also visited a Maasai village where we had the pleasure to see the Maasai boys and ladies dancing, and were invited into a Maasai house where we learned a lot about their way of life including their traditions regarding marriage, family functions, role of the men and women in the village and their responsibilities.

[Check out our '10 Day Kenya Exclusive Locations' safari](#)

While in Kenya we had the privilege to enjoy our game drives with two of our wonderful guides, Stanley in Amboseli and Felix in the Maasai Mara. Stanley and Felix are specialist guides who obtained the Silver (highest) level certificate from the Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association. They were very knowledgeable, shared a wealth of information about flora, fauna and the Kenyan culture with us.

[Check out our privately guided '14 Day Kenya Explorer' safari](#)

[Check out our privately guided '14 Day Kenya Family Adventurer'](#)

[Click on the link to read about our amazing guides](#)



Our next stop was Rwanda, one of the cleanest countries I have ever seen. After a night in Kigali we enjoyed a nice 2-hour drive to Musanze. Next morning after an early wake up and delicious breakfast we gathered at the Volcanoes National Park headquarters with other equally excited people who could not wait to see the mountain gorillas. Every day 8 groups each with 8 people have a chance to trek to the gorillas. The treks vary from 1 to 3 hours one way through some beautiful farmlands and bamboo forest. During the trek the guides and trackers advise the group about safety regulations (e.g. no flash photography, etc). Once at the gorillas, the group can spend an hour with the gorillas.

On our first trek we visited the Hirwa group where twin babies were born in February. First the babies were nowhere to be seen, and suddenly their mom came out of the bush carrying them. She sat down in front of us for a few seconds where we have managed to steal a glance of two little hair balls and tiny hands. What an amazing sight!

Our second trek led us to the Agasha group which was same as thrilling as seeing the first group. In both groups we saw about 12-15 individuals including babies, juveniles, females and the silverbacks. Seeing the gorillas was a truly amazing experience! We observed them grooming each other, feeding, young ones playing with trees and jumping around. The experience itself cannot be described, you have to go and experience it! Even the pictures do not truly reflect how wonderful it was standing in front of a 400 lbs silverback, hearing their 'conversations', smelling them and seeing the families in perfect harmony.

Our safari and gorilla trekking adventure was magical and we will savor our memories of Kenya and Rwanda for a very long time!!! Gorilla trekking can easily be combined with safari in Kenya or Tanzania.

[Check out our '11 Day Kenya and Rwanda Plains and Primates Safari'](#)

