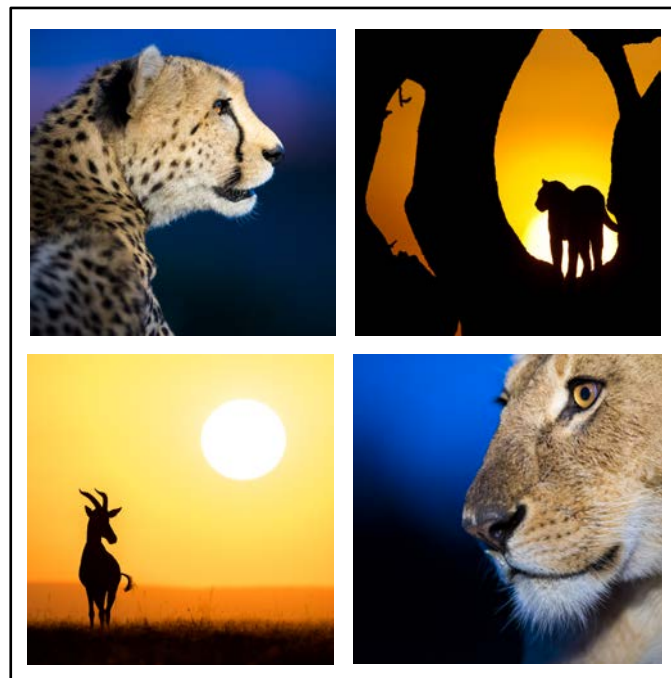


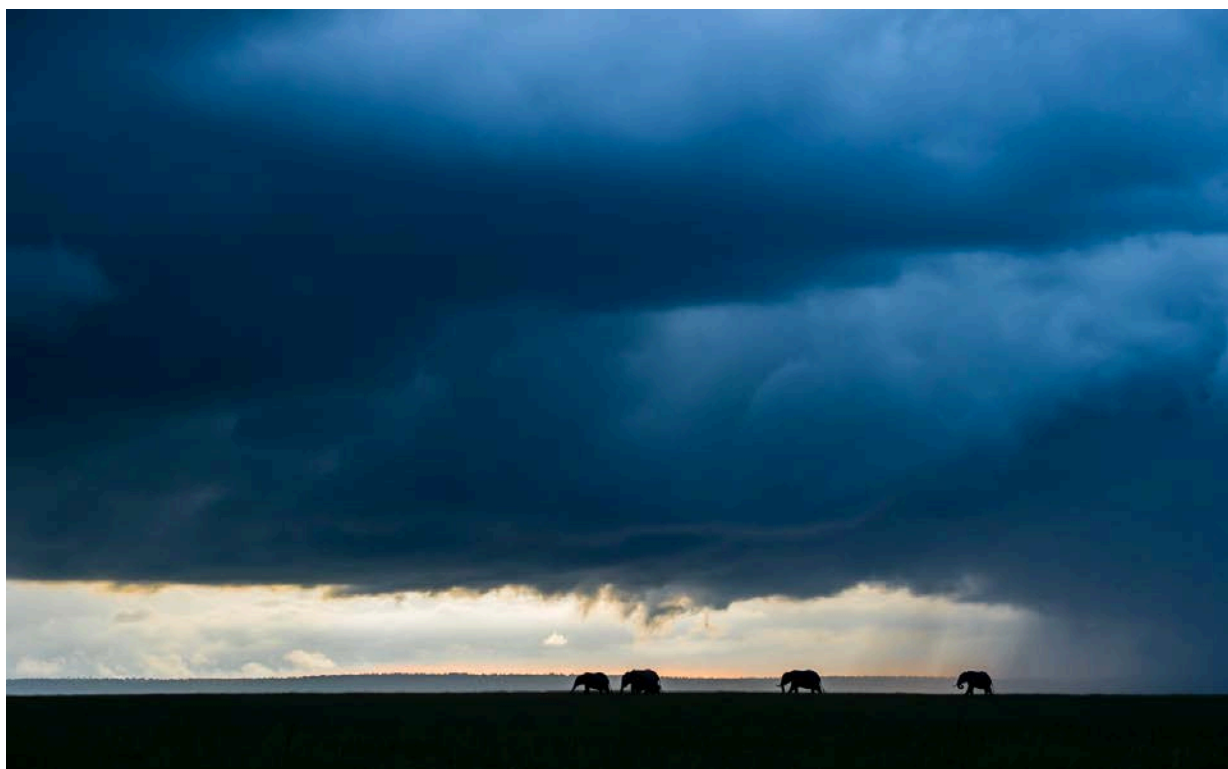


# Suomen Kuvausmatkat Oy Kenian Valokuvaussafarit

## Maasai Mara Oltepesi Tented Safari Camp

Specially modified vehicles for photography





Elephants under thunder skies photographed during the long rains

## Welcome

Welcome to Oltepesi Tented Safari Camp and Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya, one of the absolute most incredible places for wildlife experience and photography in the world!

### The wildlife of Maasai Mara

Here you will find lions, leopards and cheetahs and all the other iconic animals of Africa like elephants, buffalos, giraffes, hippos, crocodiles, hyenas, jackals, warthogs, hares, mongooses, baboons, vervet monkeys, zebras, wildebeest, eland and other antelopes such as the Thomson's gazelles, impalas, grants and topis – among many other species. There is also a fair chance to photograph the rhino if you decide to go for that, and if you are lucky, you might see the serval cat. You will also experience a rich birdlife including eagles, hawks, falcons, owls, vultures, kingfishers, cranes, hornbills, the Secretary bird, the ostrich, etc. - just to mention some of them.

### Stay in a genuine Maasai village

On top of this, you will experience the Maasai people's traditional and famous culture – you will stay in a genuine Maasai village. Here we offer accommodation in new and spacious safari tents. The tents are like "hotel rooms on the savannah" with ensuite bathroom including shower, washbasin and flush toilet. In the camp, there is also a bonfire place where you can relax with a cold drink in the evening before dinner, and there is a separate restaurant tent where our chef will serve you safe and delicious food. To stay in a village like this instead of in an ordinary tourist lodge will give you a unique chance to get to know the proud Maasai people and their culture from inside. Their hospitality is excellent. Upon arriving, the children come running and welcome you; Jambo! You can also experience BBQ in the true Maasai way, and if you like, you can spend a night in a traditional Maasai house. And last but not least, in the village, you can feel like home and do photographing and filming as much as you like without asking permission first.



Cheetah hunting in the sunset

## When to go?

Thanks to its abundant resident wildlife and temperate climate, the Maasai Mara is widely regarded as a year-round safari destination. Its vast, open plains mean there is virtually always something to see, no matter what time of year you go. As the birthplace of safari, Kenya always promises incredible scenery and outstanding gaming.

### The Great Wildebeest Migration

However, many visitors come for The Great Wildebeest Migration. The best time to visit the Maasai Mara for this famous spectacle is between July and the end of October, although due to varying rainfall patterns, the exact timing varies from year to year. Some years, the rain might be early, and the wildebeest disappear more quickly; at other times, late rain means you will find the last of the migrating wildebeest still in the Maasai Mara with the "residents" (those wildebeest who stay put year-round and do not migrate at all) in November/December.

### Rainy seasons

Kenya has two sets of rainy seasons. The "short rains" are usually expected in November. Clouds build up during the morning, which can be very hot, sunny and humid, only to break in spectacular but generally short-lived downpours in the late afternoon. These showers have several benefits: they wash the air of dust; cool everyone and everything down; and, best of all, trigger the growth of fresh grazing and the filling up of rivers that attract herds to drink. Migrant birds return, and baby antelopes drop in their thousands.



Male lion in the high, green grass

The "long rains" is in March, April and May, usually with a peak in May. As the name suggests, these are far more serious, and many lodges and camps are closed in May because the rivers flood their banks and crossing with the vehicles get difficult, the dust roads turn to sticky mud, the safari vehicles get stuck, etc. Though it is more demanding, for photography, this season can be very good with lush, high green grass, heavy clouds, drizzling rain, nice light all day, and wet cats...

Therefore I have been visiting Maasai Mara many times during the long rains, and therefore also our camp is open all year round. But once again, predicting the weather nowadays is difficult, and you may find that one year it is washed out while the next, it is quite dry.

### **Time of year and number of days**

So when you like to go is up to you and your schedule, and if you do not have many options, go when you can because regardless when you go, it will be a memory for life!

The dates are subject to booking and availability and the number of days is flexible: You can choose a short safari of 6-7 days, a standard safari of 8-12 days, or a longer safari for two-three weeks or more.





Topis in the sunset photographed on foot

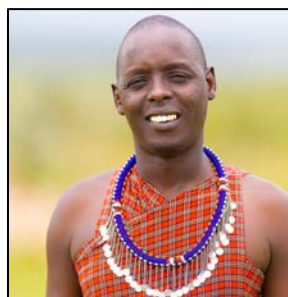
## Our guides

One of the most important things when it comes to a successful safari is to have good guides. Head guide is my partner in Maasai Mara, John Siololo (Big John). John is a professional guide I have known and been in Maasai Mara with for many years, and a close friend of mine. He is a recognized Maasai citizen, a very respected guide and a highly skilled naturalist. Three other highly skilled guides working for Oltepesi are James Lenjir, Jackson Ole Ronko, and Johnmark Kiss-may. All the guides' mother tongue is Maasai (Maa), and they also speak Swahili and English fluently.

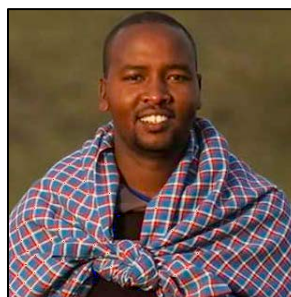
Our guides understand what it means to deal with professional and demanding wildlife photographers, and always work hard to give you the best opportunities to get your best shots whether it is from inside the car, or from the ground or on foot – from the early mornings to the late evenings. They have exceptional skills in finding the animals, reading what will happen and positioning the vehicle optimally for photography.



Big John



James



Jackson



Johnmark



Images from Oltepesi Village

## Oltepesi Tented Safari Camp

### The village

Oltepesi Tented Safari Camp is located in Mara North Conservancy on the border to Maasai Mara National Reserve.

It takes five minutes to drive to the national reserve border, but there are no gates we need to go through to enter the reserve, and there are no fences, so the animals roam free.

Oltepesi, which means acacia tree in Masai, is a small Maasai village with traditional Maasai houses made of wood, mud and cow dung, a barn for the calves and the lambs, and a fenced enclosure for the cattle and the sheep to protect the livestock from predators, especially the hyenas and the lions during the night. They also hold dogs to raise the alarm in the night when predators come along.

In this village, John lives with his big family, including the elderly, adults and children all different ages. The people live like the Maasais always have done. In addition to the traditional Maasai houses, John also has a modern house.





This is how the safari tents look like. The tents are furnished and have ensuite bathroom including shower with hot and cold water, washbasin and flush toilet. Clean bedsheets and towels are provided for the guests. Laundry service is available. Outside there is a bonfire where you can relax with something cold to drink before dinner.

### The safari camp

For the guests, we offer new and private safari tents made of solid canvas with a floor. The safari tents are like "hotel rooms on the savannah". In the tents, there are two or three double beds (width is about 140-150cm) with mosquito net. The tents are furnished with a small table and chairs and have ensuite bathroom including shower with hot and cold water, washbasin and flush toilet. Bedding and towels are included (shampoo and other toiletries you bring). There is solar power light in the tents, and the charging of cellphones is possible. Laundry service is available.

In the camp, there is a bonfire surrounded by chairs where you can relax with something cold to drink before dinner. Both bottled water, soft drinks, and beer will be offered in the camp in the evenings. (Alcohol is extra.)

You can charge cameras, laptop, mobile etc. in both the restaurant tent in the camp and the car. Your safari vehicle always parks in the camp, so there are no longer walking distances.



Topi in the sunrise photographed on foot

## The meals

Our chef prepares all meals. Our chef is very experienced and can offer dishes for both vegetarians and vegans, and also prepare dishes to guests with gluten intolerance or any other special dietary needs (just let us know any special dietary restrictions at the time of booking). We usually bring both breakfast and lunch on the game drives, including coffee, tea, bottled water and soft drinks, so that you can enjoy full day safaris with picnic breakfast and picnic lunch for example on the open savannah, in the shadow under a tree, or by Mara and Talek rivers overlooking the hippos and crocs.

If you want to, you can have lunch served in the camp. Having lunch in the camp allows time for a rest/nap during the warmest hours of the day. The dinner will always be served in the dining tent in the evening, and on the day of arrival and departure, lunch is always served in the camp. (Alcohol is extra.)



Picnic breakfast on the savannah



Lunch in the camp on arrival day





Cheetah with a fresh kill photographed on five meters distance from the ground

## The game drives

### Full-day safaris in the best light

All game drives will be in the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Usually, and if you like, it will be full-day safaris, so we maximize the time spent out shooting. This also gives possibilities to be out before sunrise until after sunset, photographing in the very best light. It will also be possible to photograph using a flash, a torch or the car light as a source of light.

### Photographing from the ground

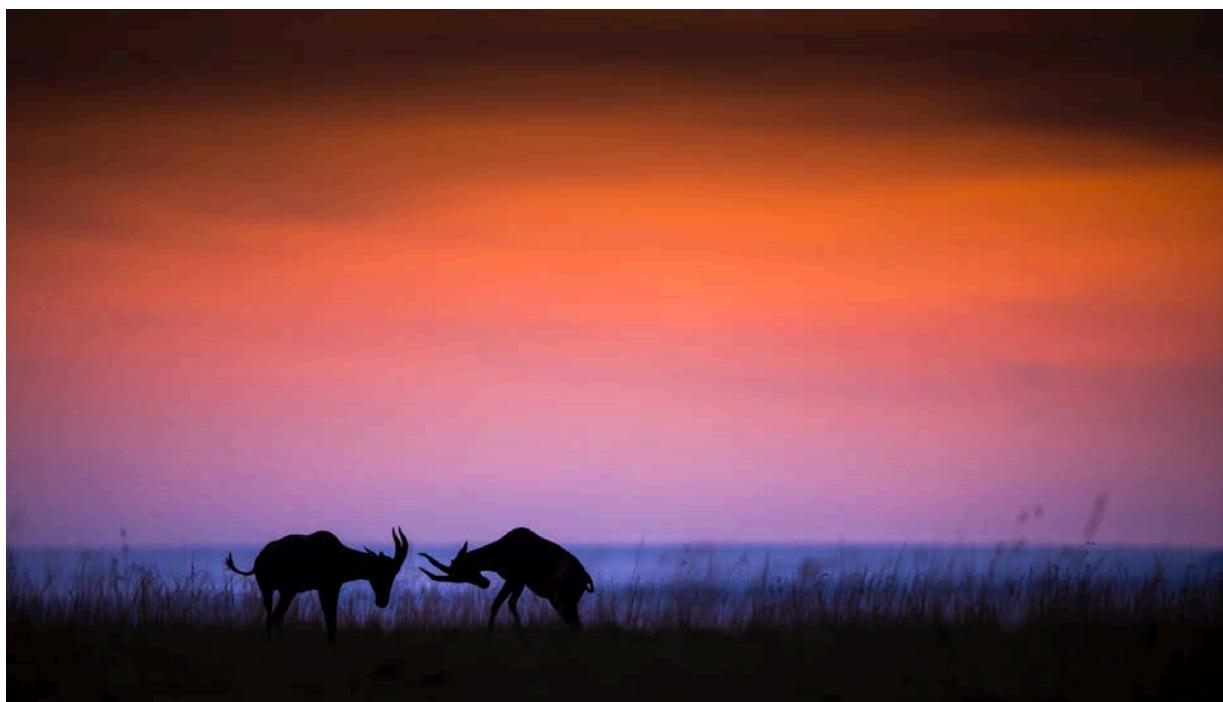
In many situations, it will also be possible to photograph from outside the car on foot / from the ground, and we will do this whenever we can when it is safe for both the guests and the wildlife.

### Off-road license (extra) - Sisältyy hintaan Kuvausmatkojen varauksissa.

On the game drives, it will be possible to drive off-road, but if you would like to have a special off-road permit that guarantees off-roading, it can be arranged. This can be very useful when, for instance, following hunting cheetahs. It is far from straight forward to negotiate and needs to be prepared well in advance, so let us know if this is of interest to you. Extra: The price for off-roading is 1,300 USD on a weekly basis for the car (regardless of the number of people that are in the car).

### The guiding

Our guides understand what it means to deal with professional and demanding wildlife photographers, and always work hard to give you the best opportunities. They have exceptional skills in finding the animals, reading what will happen and positioning the vehicle optimally for photography.



Fighting topis before sunrise photographed on foot

## Specially modified safari vehicles for wildlife photography

Our safari vehicles are 4WD Toyota Landcruiser, Three-row, Long edition. Based on many years of experience with wildlife photography in East Africa, the cars are modified to give the best working conditions for professionals and other demanding nature and wildlife photographers.

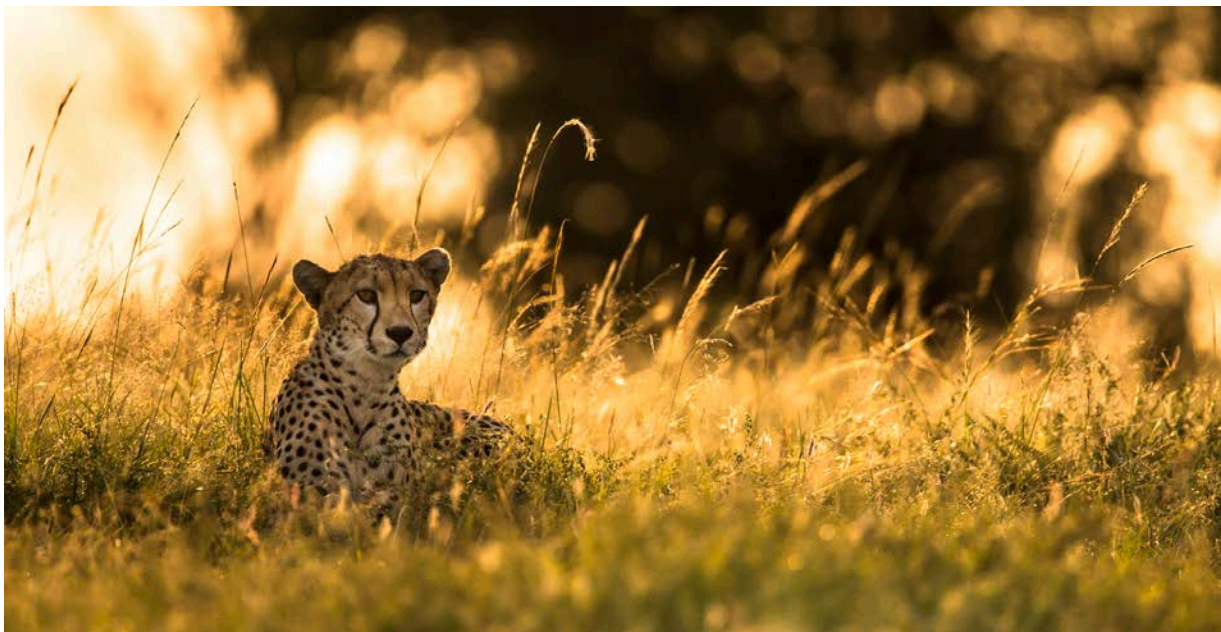
### **Number of seats** Kuvasmatkoilla 2 penkkiriviä ja max 4 asiakasta.

Our Landcruisers are spacious cars. They have three rows of seats behind the guide/driver and take six guests, two side by side, so everyone is guaranteed a "window" seat. The maximum number of guests in one car is seven. For a group of professional photographers with a lot of gear who also like to have a maximum of space, up to three-four photographers is recommendable. It is also possible to remove seats. The first seat row or a combination of separate seats can be removed according to your needs giving full flexibility on how to arrange the space inside the vehicle.

### **The construction of the car**

The car is open-sided without glass windows. Instead, it has canvas windows with very low frames. The canvas is always rolled up (only taken down when there is heavy rain). Having no windows but big open sides without vertical window frames are very convenient for photography, including panning, action photography, etc.

The cars have pop-up roofs which can be opened and closed by the guests. Usually, it is open all the time. There is one big opening so you can quickly move and change position forward and backwards in the car while you are photographing. Photographing from the roof, for instance, birds, a leopard in a tree or a cheetah hunting, is very convenient, and also the pop-up roof will give you protection from the sun. You can even photograph from the roof using a tripod, monopod or beanbag. Beanbags are provided in the car, but you can also bring your own and get them filled up in the camp.



Cheetah in backlight photographed from the car

### Low angle photography

The cars have no back doors; they are replaced with canvas. The canvas is flexible and can be adjusted up and down or taken off. This means you can photograph with floor angle. When the first seat row is removed, there is a lot of space on the floor (and still five seats available in the back). The floor is covered with a soft rubber mat where you can lay down. This gives maximum possibilities for low angle photography through the low windows, the open sides and through the door openings. The floor is extended to a width of 180cm. How many seats you would like to remove is optional, and it can also be changed during the safari so that you according to your own experience can arrange it the way that gives maximum working conditions for yourself and your group's photography. In the car, you can also easily use tripod, monopod and bean bag. Bean bags are provided in the vehicle but do bring your own as well if you like, and we will fill them up for you.

### Charging facilities in the car

The vehicles are provided with 230-volt outlets (UK std). Charging cameras, phones, laptops, etc., can be done while driving, ensuring you always have the possibility of fully charged batteries. There are 4-6 power outlets in the car. Do remember to bring your own power plug travel adapter(s). Standard Norwegian outlet adapters are provided in the vehicle. You can also charge camera batteries, phones, laptops, etc., in the camp.

### Exclusive car for only you / your group

The vehicle will be for your exclusive use / your group. This is important since other lodges offer "shared game drives". That means when staying at a regular tourist lodge, you will be placed in a car filled up with up to six other tourists, often with different nationalities, interests and patience, giving small room for doing serious photography and following your interests and wishes. On our safaris, the vehicle will be exclusive for you and your group.

### Freedom of choice

To have a private car, of course including the driver/guide, means you can go where you like, stop and have the vehicle positioned as you want, waiting for as long as you like, and last but not least; be in the right place in the early mornings catching the sunrise, or wait for the right moment and the very best light in the evenings. This – according to my experience – tend to be when no other vehicles are around because it is too early or too late for them.





Wildebeest in the sunrise photographed on foot close to Oltepesi Tented Safari Camp

## Walking safari (Lisäretki)

At Oltepesi Tented Safari Camp, we also offer walking safari. The best time for this is in the morning when the temperature is still cool, and the animals are most active (it is also possible in the evening). We start at 6 AM walking in the Mara North Conservancy where the camp is located, and the walk is about 2,5 - 3 hours. (It is not allowed to do walking safaris inside Maasai Mara National Reserve, but the conservancy borders to the reserve and there are no fences, so the animals are roaming free.) The guide will avoid the group getting close to lions, elephants, buffalos and hippos hence security reasons, but you might see giraffes, zebras, topis, Thomson's, impalas and wildebeests (depending on the season), mungos, baboons, hyenas, jackals, and more. All the members in the group can participate on the walking safari. Still, if some of the group members would like to do a game drive in the vehicle instead, they can do that, and the remainder of the group will join in the car when the walking safari ends.

Our guide for the walking safari is James Tira, who is a very experienced Maasai naturalist and wildlife expert. James lives in the neighbouring village close to Oltepesi. He speaks fluent English, and he will also show and teach you about birds, insects, tracks, scents, droppings, flowers, bushes, trees, and more.

Lisähinta 25 eur. Voit varata ennakoon tai ilmoittaa kiinnostuksesta vasta paikan päällä.



BBQ the Maasai way in Oltepesi Village

## Cultural Maasai BBQ (Lisävaraus)

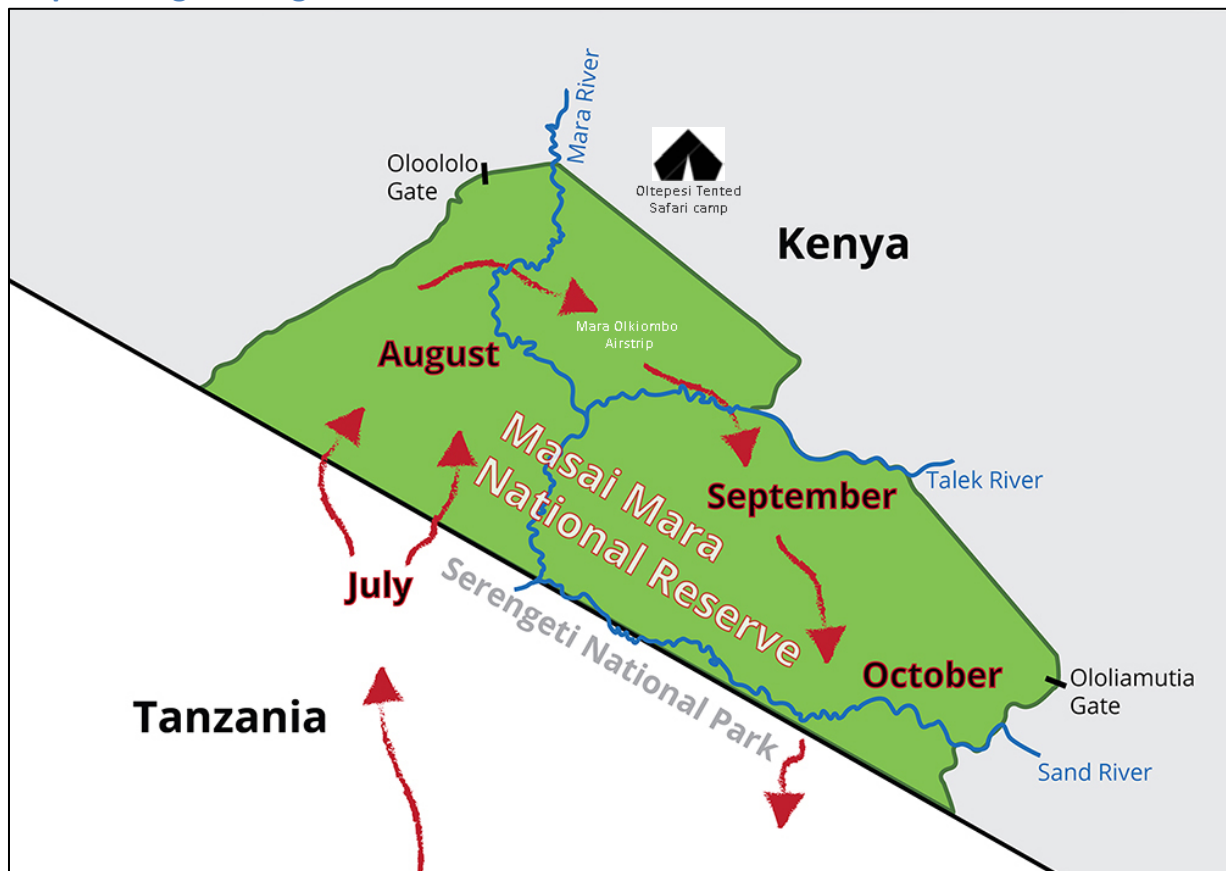
An optional cultural Maasai BBQ, including a traditional goat slaughtering, can be arranged. You will follow the whole process, from picking the goat in the boma, see how the Maasais are slaughtering it by suffocating it (just like the lions, leopards and cheetahs do), cutting it into pieces making sure everything on the animal is utilized, and grilling the meat on the open fire in the village.

You can take part in all of it and do the filming and photographing, and our guides will join and explain how everything is done and why. In the end, you will enjoy a great BBQ meal together with the locals. The event starts around 5 PM and ends around 9 PM. That night (or another night) you can also spend the night in a traditional Maasai house if you want.

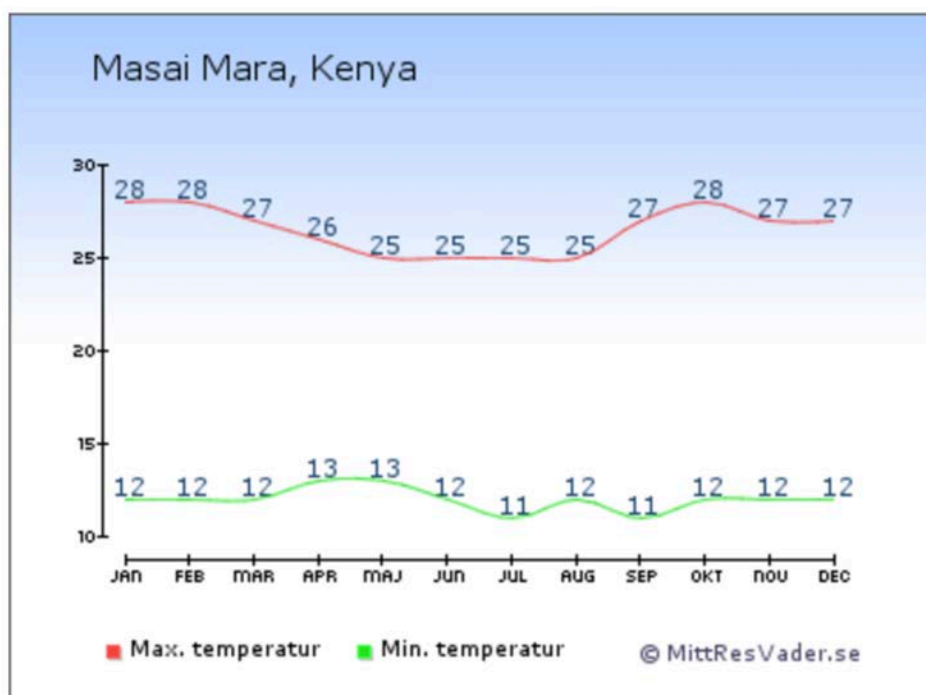
Lisähinta á 50 eur/ hlö (minimi 4 osallistujaa tai 200 eur).



## Map of the great migration in Maasai Mara



## Max and min temperature, Celsius degrees







## Images of the modified safari vehicles

The images show the vehicle with two seat rows in the back. The first front seat row (where the camera is) is removed. The back doors are also removed. This can be arranged as you like in all cars. The open window frames are especially low. In case of rain, there are canvas windows, and the pop-up roof can be closed. The floor width is extended to 180cm, and it is comfortable to photograph while lying on the floor.







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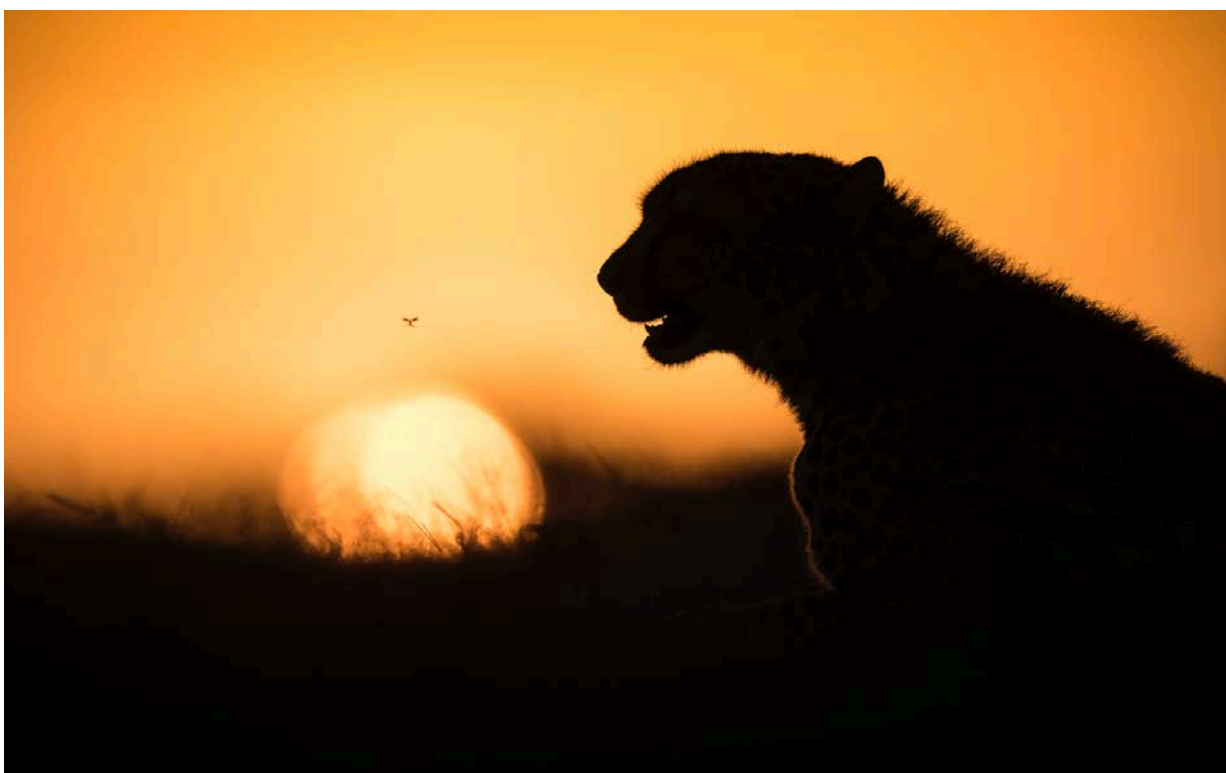




## Images of Maasai Mara



Lioness in the night.

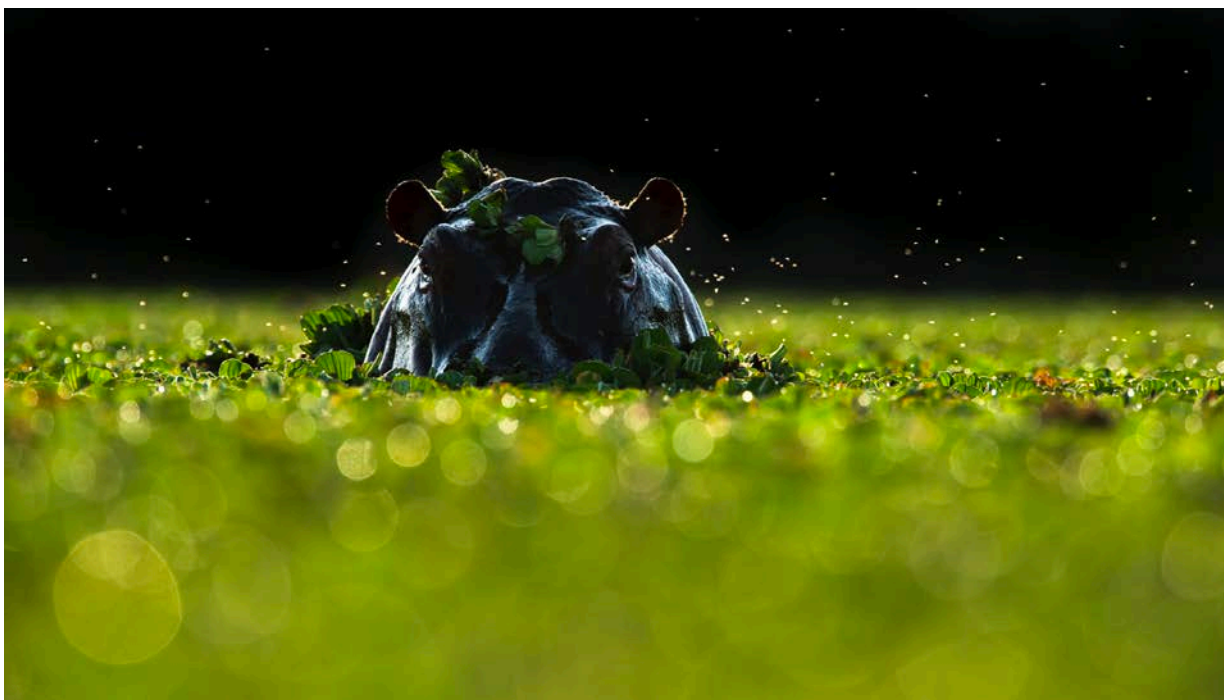


Cheetah in silhouette in the sunset.

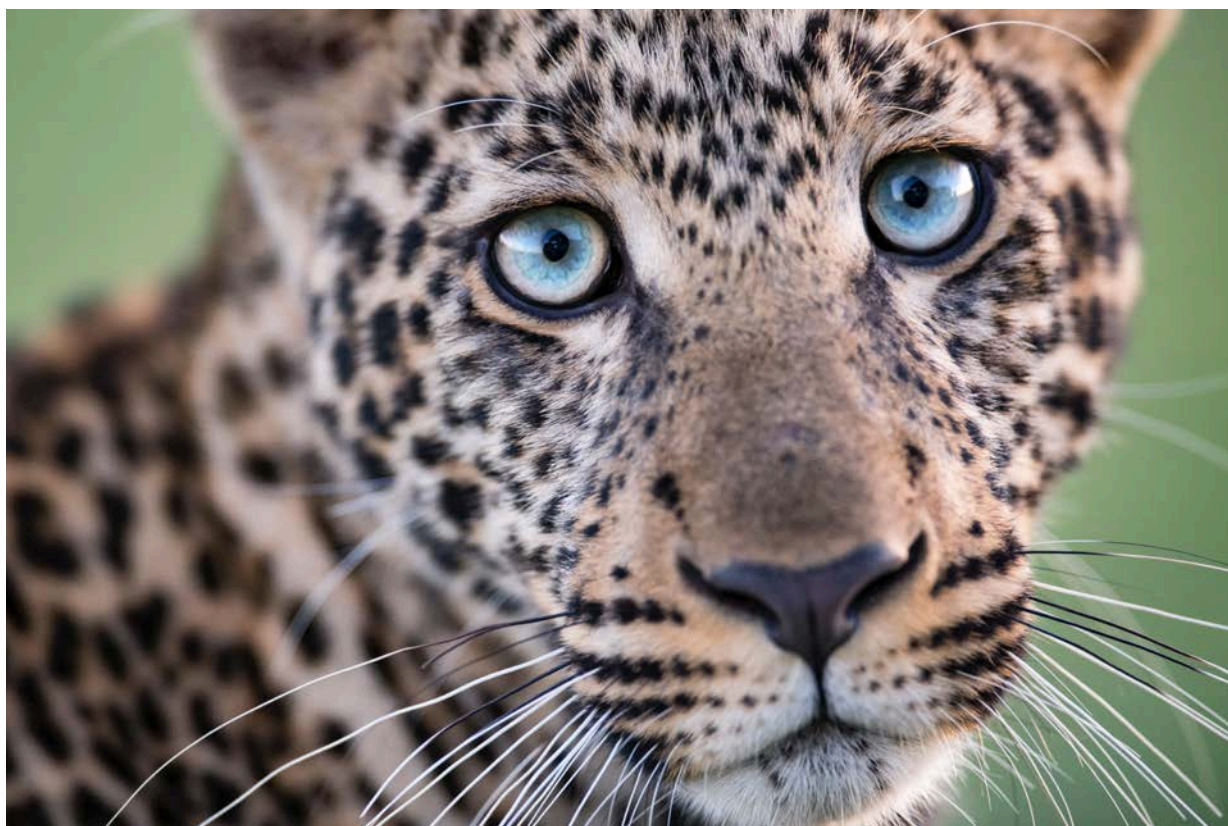




Mating lions.



Hippo bull in the sunrise photographed from the ground.



Seven months old leopard cub photographed from the car on 2,5 meters distance (named "Blue Eyes" by the undersigned).

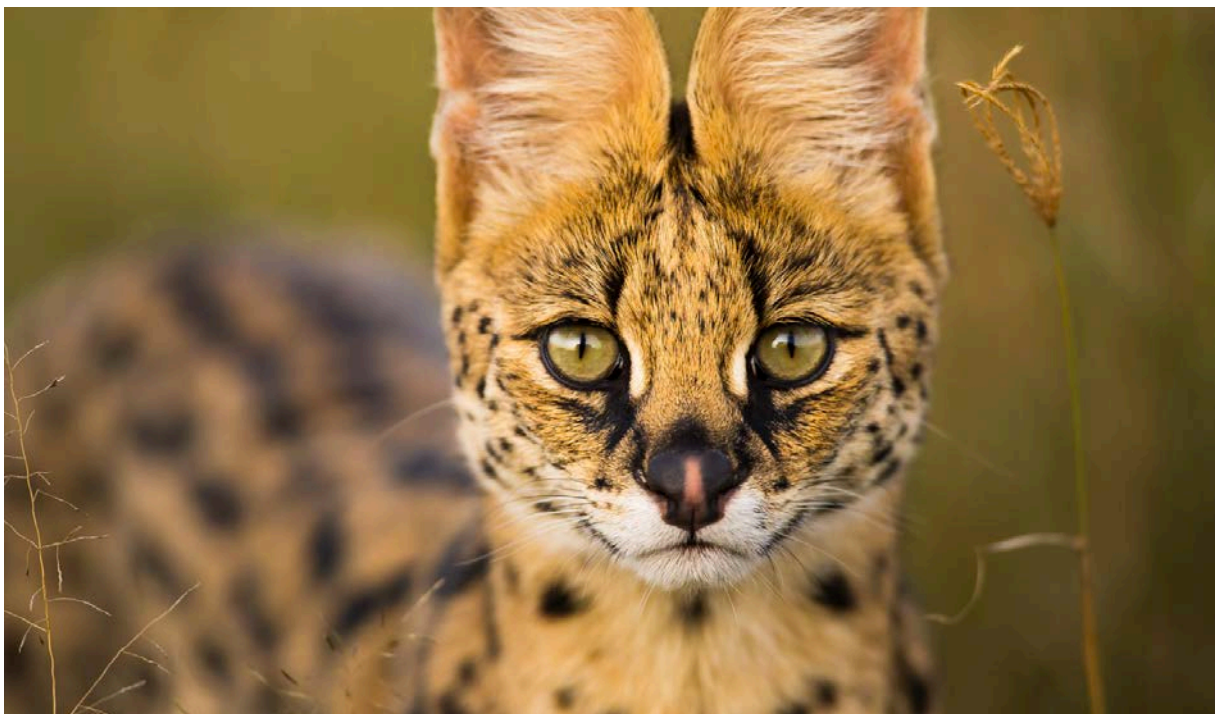


Cheetah mother (known as Amani) with cub.





Hyena with cub photographed in the late evening from the ground.



Serval cat close up.





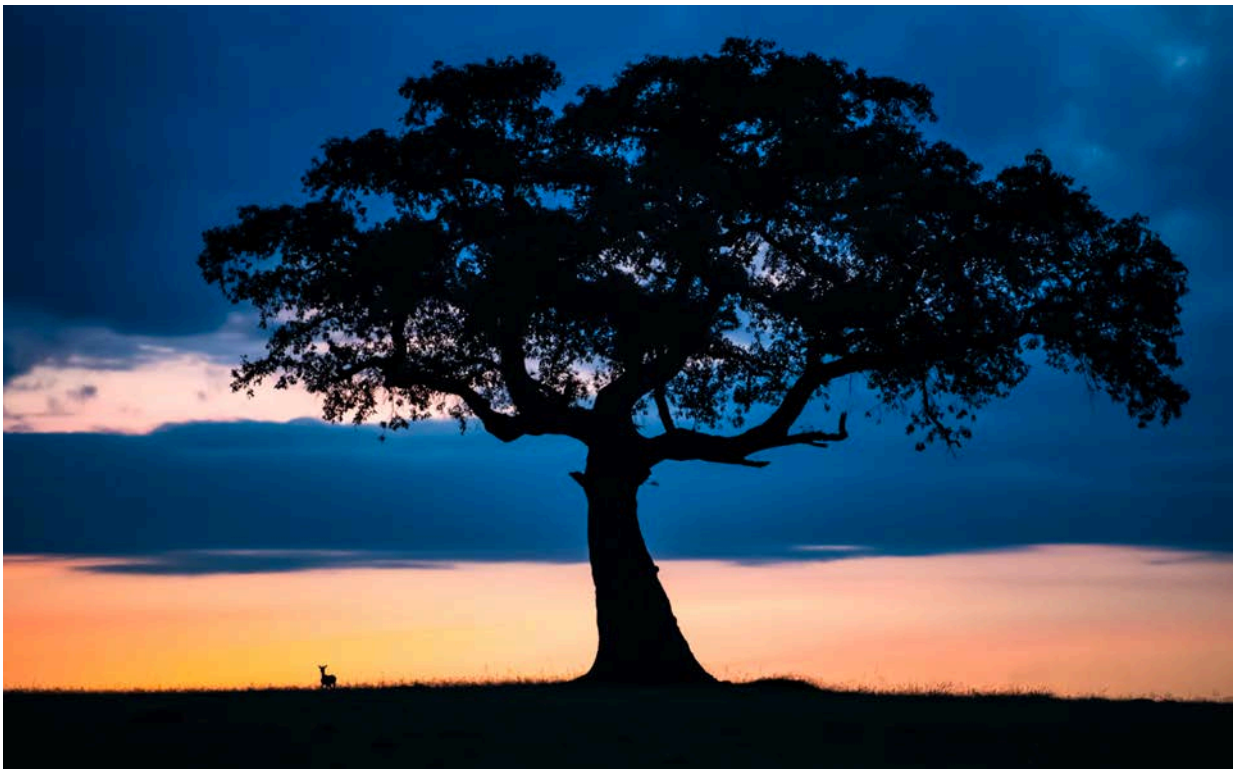
Elan in the sunrise photographed on foot.



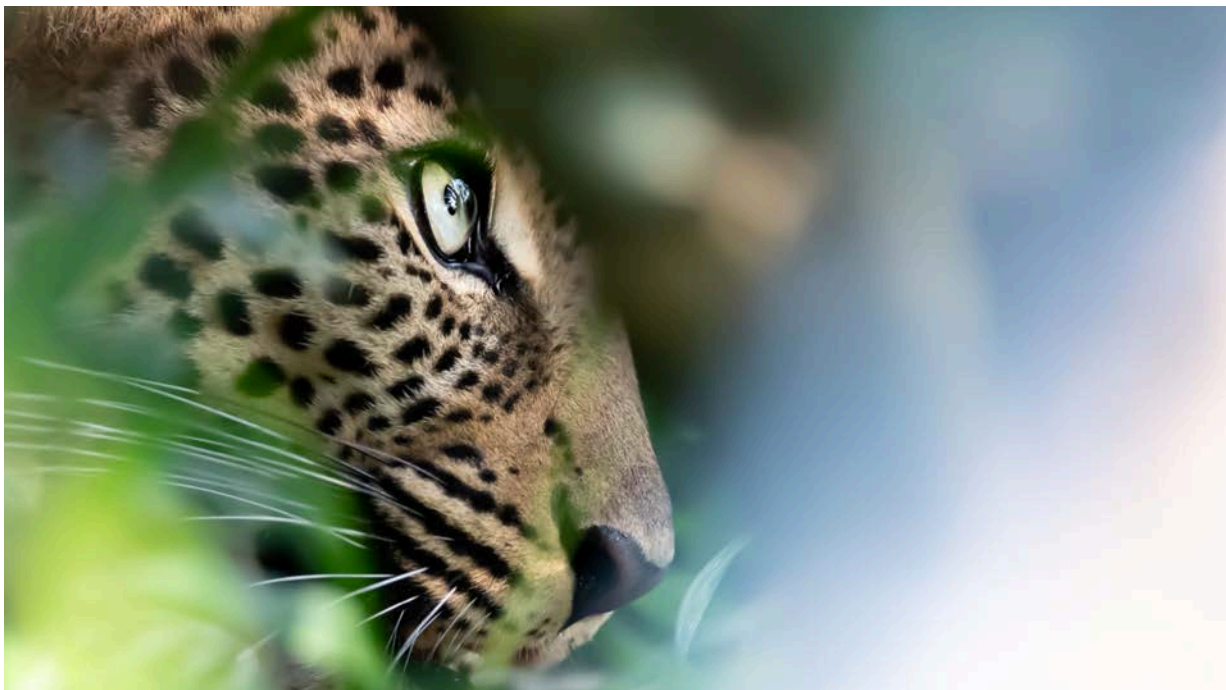
Topis in the sunset photographed on foot.



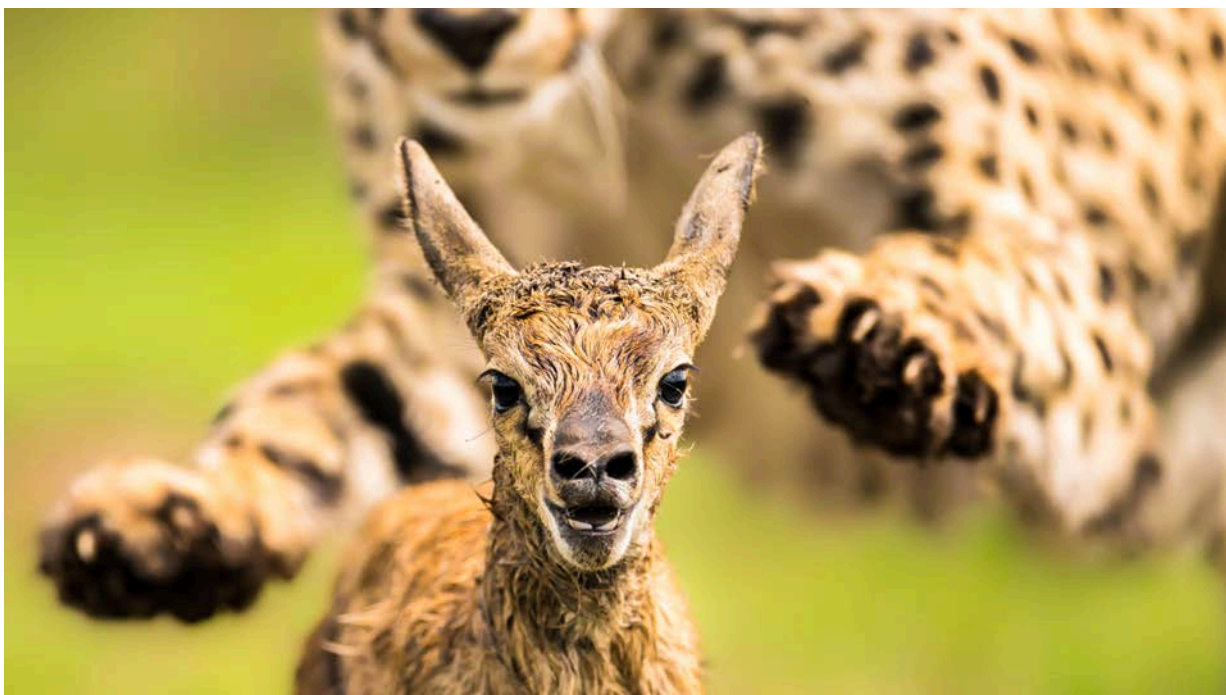
The great coalition of five Cheetah brothers of Maasai Mara.



Thomson's gazelle on Oltepesi hill close to the camp.



Leopard close-up.



Thomson's gazelle calf chased by a cheetah.





Rhino in black and white.



A big male lion, know as "Blackie", photographed in the late evening.





OLTEPESI  
TENTED SAFARI CAMP  
MAASAI MARA • KENYA

Camp location



MASAI MARA

Kilometres  
Miles