



Holiday Photography Tips for Your East African Adventure

Capture the Wild: Holiday Photography Tips for Your East African Adventure

There's nothing like the thrill of a safari – the dusty tracks, golden sunsets and unforgettable wildlife at every turn. So why wouldn't you want to make those memories last?

If you're looking to take a photography holiday or would just like to immortalise those precious moments on your East Africa trip, you might be looking for some top tips on how to take the best photos possible.

We'll cover timings, lighting, framing, camera settings and, most importantly, what the best things to capture are – whether you're using a DSLR or an iPhone.

Timing is Everything: The Best Times of the Day to Snap



When it comes to the best times of day to take photographs, there are a couple of prime times to focus on, as well as one to maybe put the camera down for and just soak in the moment.

ARP Africa Travel Limited

Registered in England & Wales No 2590308
98 Bessborough Road | Harrow | HA1 3DH | United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)208 423 0220 | Email: africa@arpafrica.com
Website: arpafrica.com

Representing



Top Time #1: Golden Hour

Golden Hour, or the time just after sunrise or just before sunset, is widely known as one of the best times to take photos of any kind. When it comes to holiday photography, Golden Hour offers soft, golden light which is perfect for animal portraits and landscapes.

Shadows are long, contrast is low, and the bold colours of East Africa really shine during this time. Whether you're using a DSLR or a smartphone, Golden Hour should be primetime for your holiday photography.

Top Time #2: Blue Hour

The cousin of Golden Hour is Blue Hour, the time just before sunrise or just after sunset. This offers a different yet equally mesmerising tone for photography, with picturesque skies and dramatic shadows making wildlife look even more imposing.

Open savannahs or bodies of water also look great at this time, but your window is a small one so don't miss the chance to take some fantastic photos at this time.

The Challenge of Midday

Whilst you'd be forgiven for thinking so, taking photos when the sun is at its highest is not the best time to do so. Between the hours of 11am and 3pm, light is harsh, and colours can easily wash out.

Of course, you're free to take photos whenever you like, but this time might be best spent without a camera in your hands. Alternatively, head to the shade to soften the light and keep snapping throughout the day.

Camera or Smartphone? Use What You Have



Whether you're an avid photographer or just want to capture some memories whilst on safari in East Africa, you can take fantastic photos with whichever device you already have.

Smartphone Users

- Rule of thirds: Turn on the grid (go to Settings > Camera > Grid) for better framing
- Exposure control: Tap and slide up/down on the screen to adjust brightness
- Don't zoom: Try moving closer (if possible) or crop later for better quality images
- Portrait mode: Use this feature for sharp subjects and soft backgrounds when taking up-close pictures
- Hold the phone on its side to get wider shots



DSLR Users (Pro Tips)

- Aperture priority mode: Use this for shallow depth of field on animals (f/2.8 to f5.6)
- Shutter speed: Crank it up to 1/1000s or faster for birds or running animals
- Continuous focus tracking: Use this to keep the focus on moving animals

Whichever one you're using; stable hands are going to be crucial for taking the best photos. Try using a monopod attachment to add stability and ensure you don't blur the best moments. Beanbags can also be handy when taking photographs from the safari vehicles.

Framing the Wild: Easy Composition Tips

If you're not an experienced photographer, here's some easy composition tips to help you take some pro-grade holiday photos.

The Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds is one of the fundamental concepts behind photography. The basic idea is to set your subject in the left or right third of an image, leaving the other two thirds more open. This helps to add balance and makes pictures more compelling, more so than having the subject right in the centre. Especially with the dramatic landscapes as a backdrop to any photo while on safari.



Lead-In Lines

Create the feeling of movement by using roads, rivers or animal trails to guide the viewer's eye into the frame and across the picture. This can help to make your photos feel more dynamic.

Don't Zoom

Unless you have a professional-grade long distance lens, zooming in can really reduce the quality of pictures. Not only this but zooming in on a subject (like an elephant) takes away from the stunning East African landscapes they are surrounded by. Show more context by staying zoomed out to add drama and scale.

Layer Your Shots

Layers can make your photos feel more dynamic and less one-dimensional. Add layers by incorporating foreground, middle and background to create depth – for example, the foreground could be some grass or a tree, the middle could be an elephant, and the background could be a mountain or the sky.



Be Patient

This one isn't exactly a composition tip, but it's one of the most important parts of taking quality holiday photography – especially when you're visiting East Africa and the stunning wildlife it offers.

Be patient. Let the moment develop. Waiting just a few extra seconds could give you the perfect moment as an animal turns its head towards you or interacts with another animal. Getting that perfect picture will be more than worth the wait.

What to Shoot: Must-Capture Wildlife and Landscapes

There are so many beautiful things to photograph on an East African holiday, here are some of our top recommendations.



Wildlife

The wildlife of East Africa is one of the most compelling subjects for any photographer. It's hard to ignore the Big Five (lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants and buffalo), but don't forget giraffes, zebras, flamingos, hyenas and everything else the East African landscape has to offer.

Birds are also a fantastic subject for photos, albeit a bit harder to capture, with places like the Serengeti or Lake Nakuru playing host to countless species.

Landscapes

From the towering Mount Kilimanjaro to the endless plains of the Serengeti, East Africa is also home to some of the most dramatic and jaw-dropping landscapes found anywhere.

These landscapes are beautiful when captured on their own, but they also make perfect backgrounds for photos of wildlife. Valleys, craters, lakes, national parks and game reserves are the perfect subject for dramatic, awe-inspiring photos.

Cultural Moments

East African culture is vibrant, colourful and unforgettable. Local markets or villages can make for fantastic photos, **but make sure to always ask your guide for permission before photographing any people.**

Bonus Tips for a Smooth Photography Holiday

Moving away from technical photography tips, there are a few things you should know in order to make the most of your photography holiday.

Pack Smart

A dead battery is a surefire way to make sure you don't take any good photos. As such, ensure you [pack smart](#) with extra batteries and memory cards, or portable chargers if you're using a smartphone, as charging can be limited in remote areas.

A dry bag or padded camera case is also a good idea, as the safari trails can get a little rough and dusty at times.

Back Up Regularly

Relying on a single memory card or point of storage can be a recipe for serious disappointment. To avoid this, use an external hard drive back at your accommodation or back up to the Cloud if Wi-Fi access is available. We'd recommend doing this every day.

Respect the Wildlife

Don't try to get too close or disturb animals in order to get a better picture – the perfect moment will come if you are patient enough. You can always zoom or crop later, your own safety and that of the animals should come first.

Stay Present

While taking holiday photography is a great way to immortalise the moment and test your skills, make sure to take some time to enjoy the moment without a camera in your hands. Some memories are best captured in your mind.



Conclusion

A photography holiday in East Africa offers a truly rare blend of wildlife, landscapes and moments like nowhere else. Whether you're a total novice or a seasoned photographer, taking quality photos is easily achievable if you follow these simple tips.

Live in the moment of your adventure and return home with permanent reminders of the incredible experiences you had.

If you're interested in finding out more about a once-in-a-lifetime trip to East Africa, [get in touch](#) with us today to find out more.