



Saruni Wild – Frequently Asked Questions (updated February 2022)

1. What does the word 'Saruni' mean?

In the Maasai (and Samburu) language, 'Saruni' means 'sanctuary'.

2. What is the difference between a private conservancy and the Masai Mara National Reserve?

Private conservancies are owned and managed by private Maasai landowners and supported by investors in the tourist industry. The Masai Mara National Reserve, on the contrary, is owned and managed by a local government authority called the Narok County Government. In the case of private conservancies, the income coming from tourism goes directly to the landowners, in the case of the National Reserve it goes to the local government. The main difference, though, is that private conservancies allow only a limited number of properties/lodges and vehicles to use them, while this limitation does not exist in the National Reserve. Furthermore, private conservancies allow walking and night driving, even if strictly regulated while the National Reserve does not.

3. Why should I choose Saruni Wild over many of the other camps and lodges in the Mara?

Saruni Wild is the smallest tented camp in the Masai Mara – ideal for privacy and an incredible under canvas experience: only 8 guests! There are only three tents – a 2-room family tent and two double luxury tents. The family tent has two bathrooms and two bedrooms facing the Mara plains; both luxury double tents have king-size beds, are large and comfortable with a very private setting. Saruni Wild boasts a WOW location, right in the heart of the Mara wildlife: it is on the border between Lemek Conservancy and Mara North Conservancy (less than 10 mins' drive from Mara North airstrip), always surrounded by wildlife. You can view the plains game and wildlife directly from your tent – everything is literally on your doorstep! Oil lamps, dinner under the stars and drinks around the camp fire, this is a small camp with a big heart! Saruni Wild is personal, intimate and wildly romantic, it offers a great stand-alone safari or a great combination with Saruni Mara (approximately a 30 mins' game drive away).

4. How do Saruni Wild and Saruni Mara, both in the Mara, differ?

Saruni Wild is a tented camp and sleeps 8 persons in total while Saruni Mara is a permanent lodge and sleeps 18 persons in total. Saruni Wild is in the heart of the Mara plains, while Saruni Mara is on the top of a spectacular mountain, overlooking the plains.

5. When is it the best time to visit?

Saruni Wild is open all year round and a safari is recommended during any month of the year. The resident population of wild animals and birds remains spectacular from Jan-Dec, with one of the highest concentrations of wildlife in the African continent. Some national parks in East Africa are very seasonal, but the Masai Mara eco-system offers us a non-stop stunning experience. However, there are 5-6 months of the year when the number of animals is really exceptional: from July to Oct-Nov (depends on the year) when the famous 'Great Migration' reaches the Masai Mara ecosystem from the Serengeti - it's the greatest natural show on earth. (see also below).

There are two rainy seasons: the 'long rains' of mid-April-May and the 'short rains' of November. A safari, during these wet weeks, is still an incredibly interesting experience: the Masai Mara is exceptionally green and beautiful, wildlife is abundant and the sky has unusual colours. Sometimes it rains for several hours in the late afternoon and on into the night and the weather is nice during the morning. Sometimes it can rain most of the day. You are rewarded with the feeling that you have the Masai Mara entirely for yourselves,

like a private Garden of Eden. In addition, during the wet seasons, there is more 'plains' game, which attract more predators.

6. What is the 'Great Migration'?

Between July to October-November (depends on the year), the world famous 'Great Migration' reaches the Masai Mara ecosystem from the Serengeti when over 2 million animals – zebra and gnu are the most prominent – head north and cross the Mara river in huge herds to search for water and fresh grass. The biggest misconception, however, is that the migration is only about the river crossing. Driving through the plains during this period, you will bear witness to thousands upon thousands of wildebeest and zebra; a truly astonishing sight. This far-reaching vision also makes up the 'Great Migration'. It's the greatest natural show on earth and if you visit Saruni Wild during this period, you'll go back home with once-in-a-lifetime memories.

7. Do I need a visa?

Online visa applications ahead of travel are now mandatory for all travellers (adults and children) from applicable countries. Visas on arrival are no longer available. Children under the age of 16 years and accompanying their parents are exempted from payment of visa fees and are not expected to make visa application. Only their valid travel documents will be required at the point of entry. Apply for your visa online by visiting www.evisa.go.ke. The website is mobile phone-enabled which means you can complete the application from an internet-enabled mobile phone. The system also accepts photos taken and uploaded from a mobile phone. Please note, the website is currently only offered in English although other language versions are being planned. Your E-Visa will be valid for 90 days from the date of approval and not from the date of arrival in Kenya. You should therefore ensure your visa will still be valid at the time of travel. The online payment of visa fee is in US dollars. Visa fee is non-refundable since the application will be processed for approval or non-approval.

Travelling in & out of Kenya on the same trip?

Should you need to enter Kenya twice during the same trip, i.e., arrive in Kenya, depart to another destination within East Africa, return to Kenya for homeward travel, you can apply for a 'double entry' visa on the E-Visa website.

Our Reservations team would be delighted to answer any further visa-related questions you may have - email reservationsteam@saruni.com.

8. What should I wear?

Somebody once said that "*Africa is a cold continent blessed by a hot sun....*" Please remember that Saruni Wild sits at an altitude of 1,800m (around 5,900ft) and that the temperature can be similar to that of an alpine or mountain location in summer. Outside of the rainy seasons, weather in the Masai Mara is warm-hot and dry during the day and cool-cold and dry throughout the night. You will want to bring a couple of pullovers/sweaters, both long and short trousers, good, and solid walking shoes (the same you'd wear on a mountain trek). Wear colours that allow you to blend into the environment as much as possible, so choose different shades of green, brown, yellow or red that characterise the African soil and vegetation. Bring a water-proof jacket, a hat and sunglasses.

9. What equipment should I bring?

The most important things to remember are your sun protection cream, your binoculars and your camera or video equipment. In addition, bring your own flash light or torch: but if you don't have one, we can provide you with one. Equally, Birds' or Mammals' Field Guides are incredibly useful during your safaris if you are interested in these areas, as there will be plenty of occasions to consult them.

Saruni Wild is a tented camp elegantly and comfortably furnished with all the necessary luxuries of a wild yet classic safari. However, it is 'wild' in every way – providing an authentic experience to guests staying there. Electricity is available in the tents and communal 'mess' area and at certain times of the day. Guest should consult the camp management for such times.

10. Do you have telephone network and Wi-Fi in the camp?

Safaricom network covers part of the area in which Saruni Wild is located and guests are generally able to make and receive phone calls without issue. Weather conditions and location will determine the strength of the signal for this matter. The coverage will also depend on your mobile provider back at home. However, Wi-Fi is not available in camp and those guests needing to access Wi-Fi should do so from Saruni Mara, a 30 mins' game drive away.

11. Can children come on safari?

Yes, and we don't have age limits. For parents, to go on safari with your children can be a most exhilarating experience. Children immediately connect with nature and animals, show great curiosity and ability to learn. They normally find the unusual circumstances exciting and absorbing. Obviously, children might need special arrangements and we are ready to cater for them. We always say, it's not how the children behave on safari, it's how the parents interact with them and ensure the safari experience is an encompassing one for all involved.

At Saruni, we are proud to offer the unique 'Warriors Academy'; an interactive experience designed for families with children. With a strong educational flavour, it is a fun, learning adventure that allows you all to explore the wilderness, wildlife and authentic lifestyles of two of Africa's last remaining, fascinating tribes - the Maasai and the Samburu. Guided by the 'Moran', or warriors, you get to know, enjoy and understand these exceptional people and see the Kenyan wilderness from an extraordinary perspective - through the eyes of people who have called this wilderness their home for centuries. We tailor and personalise our Warriors Academy according to your timeframe and preference. Combined with the regular safari activities, Warriors Academy can be arranged for anywhere between half a day and 3 days, at no additional cost. Contact reservationsteam@saruni.com for information and to book this amazing adventure.

Food can be tailored to suit children's requirements and earlier meal times can be arranged where necessary. Please contact us to make a plan ahead of time. Some options include but are not limited to the usual 'treats': pizza, plain pasta or pasta with tomato sauce, chicken and chips etc. Babysitting can be arranged for those who require it.

12. Can my food requirements be accommodated?

Saruni Wild's cuisine is Italian-inspired focusing on fresh local ingredients, blended with specially-imported products. We can cater for most special dietary requirements and allergies, and our first-class chefs can accommodate bespoke menus when informed prior to arrival.

13. Is Kenya safe?

Absolutely. The African bush is safe, quiet and far away from any danger. Throughout the night, your security is assured by our Maasai watchmen (the 'Askari'), who patrol the camp and grounds after dark and escort you to and from your tent after dinner. During the day, our professional guides will instruct you on how to approach the wildlife in the safest way, either on your game drive or your walking safari. Historically, the number of accidents involving humans and wild animals has always been very low: Homo sapiens are the most feared predator of all.... In the past, like in many other countries, Kenya has been the target of terrorist actions and some governments have issued travel warnings, but they have now been lifted. Kenya is a fast-growing and very successful economy and is one of the commercial hubs of the continent.

14. I love animals and wildlife, but I am keen to learn about the local people too. How can you accommodate it?

Our guides and trackers, who are themselves Maasai and from our local communities, are more than happy to share with you stories, traditions, habits, concerns of the people who own the land upon which Saruni Wild and Saruni Mara are situated. The ongoing protection of this impressive ecosystem is embraced by the Maasai because of their own culture and values, not because they have 'adopted' it from any experts.

15. How do the Maasai and Samburu tribes differ?

Both tribes belong to the Nilotic family (as opposed to the Bantu family) and are originally pastoralists and semi-nomadic. They speak two languages that are very close to each other and have similar traditions, but

they also live in very different regions (the Samburu in the arid North, the Maasai mostly in the fertile South of Kenya) and this has modified their lifestyles. In a way, the Samburu are the old-fashioned version of the Maasai, even more traditional and more community-oriented.

16. What makes Saruni Wild eco-friendly?

All our toilets are eco-toilets that provide both short and long flush cycles. We dispose of our rubbish in a responsible way, taking glass and metal back to Nairobi for recycling. We also collect and recycle rainwater. We strive to reduced single use plastic by providing each guest with their own Saruni aluminum water bottle, which they can refill at various water dispensers around the lodge and in their tent. We no longer provide plastic straws, but biodegradable option upon request. The burning of firewood is limited only to our main fireplace and to fire the Kuni boosters. We support many community projects and work closely with the local community of landowners and especially with the Maasai women.

17. How do I get to Saruni Wild?

Once you arrive in Nairobi (several airlines have daily flights to Kenya's capital, check with your travel agent), there are three ways: by car, by scheduled flight and by chartered flight. The journey between Nairobi and Saruni Wild is approximately 260km, takes about five and a half hours and is a combination of highway, dirt road and bush! Please contact our Reservations Team on reservationsteam@saruni.com for driving directions. The internal flight lasts less than one hour and we will be waiting for you at the airstrip, ready to begin your adventure. Air Kenya, Safarilink and other airlines fly to the Masai Mara, landing at our nearest airstrip, 'Mara North'. It takes 15 mins from Mara North Airstrip to the camp, but we combine your arrival with a game drive, given that the areas between the lodge and airstrip are jam-packed with plentiful game – so you get to start your safari as soon as you disembark from the plane! You can also charter your own plane. Your booking agent can arrange this for you.

18. Do you have a private airstrip?

If you plan to arrive in the Mara using a private plane, you will land at Mara North airstrip, and this is our nearest landing site being a 15 min' game drive from the camp. Its GPS coordinates are S 1°08'39", 35°07'48" E, its elevation 5,200ft.

19. What health precautions should I take?

Malaria Prevention: Saruni Mara is located at 6,000 ft. and therefore can be considered malaria-free. Mosquito nets are still provided in each room as a precaution. You should still eliminate any risk by keeping your arms, legs and feet covered as much as possible after dusk (long, light-coloured sleeves and trousers are best) and cover exposed skin with a strong repellent. Mosquito repellent spray is provided in your room. Mosquitos can be encountered during your safari, or during your transit in Nairobi, but they are very rare at the lodge, especially at night. However, it is always better to consult your doctor and be given personalised advice.

Yellow fever vaccination is not compulsory in order to enter Kenya and yellow fever in itself is not a major threat, but we advise the guest to ask his/her doctor about the need for a yellow fever vaccination. If guests are travelling on to a destination or returning home following a visit to Kenya, they may be asked to present a valid Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate on arrival, having declared they have just visited or travelled from Kenya.

Sun Protection: do not underestimate the power of the equatorial sun. The sun can quickly burn and may even cause sunstroke. A hat and sunglasses will protect you from the bright light. A high-factor sunblock applied liberally to exposed skin is essential. Avoid dehydration by drinking plenty of bottled water whilst in the sun.

20. What if there is an emergency and I need to be evacuated for health reasons?

All guests travelling to Saruni must have comprehensive travel insurance, medical insurance and emergency evacuation coverage. On all bookings we organise temporary emergency medical evacuation cover valid for 1 month. Please contact us at reservationsteam@saruni.com or ask your travel agent about the Flying Doctors' cover on offer in Kenya.

21. What else can I do at Saruni Wild, in addition to going on a game drive watching wildlife?

At Saruni Wild, you can participate in a wide range of diverse activities appealing to all tastes and all ages. The activities have been developed in celebration of the great wilderness right on our doorstep and the unique people who call it their home.

MAASAI WELLBEING SPACE. At Saruni Mara, we operate the Maasai Wellbeing Space, where we use local plants and are inspired by ancient Maasai knowledge to offer a range of massages and beauty treatments. We offer one complimentary massage per room per stay; a half-hour classic Back & Neck massage.

GUIDED BUSH WALKS. Walking safaris are individually tailored to your interests and are set in a breathtaking landscape. Walking with the Maasai warriors through the plains around Saruni Wild, accompanied by a vehicle, is a fantastic experience.

BIRDWATCHING. If you are passionate about birds, the Mara is the perfect place to visit. Not only are the species abundant, but the birds can be easily spotted and photographed. Our guides are birdwatchers by instinct and training and share your love for birds. We always carry field guides in our vehicles.

STAR-GAZING. The night skies above Saruni Wild are among some of the brightest and most beautiful in the world. The air is unpolluted and offers unobscured, clear star-gazing opportunities – a unique and deeply fulfilling activity. Every evening provides you with an alternative ‘playground’.

WARRIORS ACADEMY. The Warriors Academy is a special interactive safari experience with a strong educational flavour, designed especially for families with children or small groups. It is a fun learning experience, that allows you to explore not only the wildlife, but also the authentic lifestyle of one of the most well-known and culturally fascinating tribes left in Africa; the Maasai. Under the tutelage of their ‘Moran’, or warriors, you get to know, enjoy and understand these unique people and see the Kenyan wilderness from a different perspective. Combined with regular safari activities, and tailored to your interests and timeframe, the Warriors Academy can last between 1-3 days, and needs to be booked in advance through Saruni or through your travel agent. There is no charge for this activity.

SUNDOWNERS. The sundowner is a well-deserved drink at the end of a long day on safari to ‘salute’ the African sun as it is setting. We drive you to secret corners and on top of the highest peak in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem and serve you your favourite drink along with a selection of scrumptious ‘bitings’; small snacks to whet your appetite ahead of the delicious dinner which awaits.

CULTURAL VISIT TO LOCAL VILLAGE MARKET. Held every Thursday, you have the opportunity to see how the Maasai have adapted to modern times, still with their traditions intact. The market is an authentic weekly gathering in Aitong of local people from across the Mara region and is also an important cattle market where the Maasai go to trade in livestock and monitor their value.

DRIVE TO KILILEONI, the highest peak in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, where at the top you can enjoy a panoramic view over the Mara plains and forests with the Tanzanian border visible on the horizon. During your ascent, you can encounter rare antelope species that live at high altitude and once you reach the peak, you may chance across elephant and buffalo grazing. It is one of the least explored and most spectacular corners of the Masai Mara. You will need to allow half a day at a minimum to best experience this unique drive.

VISIT TO THE OLCHORRO RHINO SANCTUARY. Located in the Olchorro Conservancy, about 30 mins. from Saruni Wild, this is a conservation project employing staff from the local community that has been protecting white rhinos for the past 20 years. Rhinos roam freely on the slopes of the mountain and the unique attraction of this project is approaching the rhinos on foot in complete safety, whilst guided by a local ranger.

SCENIC BALLOON FLIGHTS. See the Masai Mara from another viewpoint and soar above the plentiful Mara plains below. These are available upon request. Ask our Reservations team on reservationsteam@saruni.com or camp management for further information.

22. What about snakes, insects, bugs etc.?

It's very unlikely that you are going to be disturbed or scared by snakes, insects and bugs. Yes, the African savanna is home to all kinds of snakes and insects, but you rarely see them and if that happens, you most likely see from a safe distance. They are more scared of you. The camp manager on arrival can instruct you further. In a very dry, cool, sunny area like ours, bugs and insects are not likely to play a major role in your safari... and you'll certainly see more elephants and lions than you will snakes! For your own comfort, as lights attract insects (and to save electricity!), you should turn off the lights and torches in your tent when you are out or when not required.

23. How long should a safari be?

It really depends on how much time you have at your disposal. In general, if you are travelling from Europe or from the United States, you should plan to have at least a week in Africa. A period of ten days-two weeks would allow you to have an even better experience. There are two ways to enjoy a safari: one is to focus on one area and location and spend all your time there. The other is to tour several lodges, camps and locations, spending two or three nights at each of them. In the first instance, you get to discover much more of the area that you choose, you establish friendships and personal relationships with your hosts and with many of the guides and people who work at the lodge. You will get to know the area from all its different perspectives: early morning safaris, night safaris, bush breakfasts and bush dinners, dawn and sunset, the wildlife but also the people and their customs, photography and pure contemplation, the walking and the driving... The second type of safari allows you to taste the incredible variety of landscapes that Kenya and East Africa can offer. From the very hot deserts to the snows of its highest mountains. The choice is yours!

24. What cars do you have? Am I safe in the car? Can we have exclusive use?

At Saruni Wild and Saruni Mara, we share a fleet of six 4x4 Land Rovers with Saruni Mara, for all game drives and transfers. The vehicles are open-sided for the best game viewing and have a canvas roof for shade. The animals do not see you – they only see the outline of the car as an object, and not as prey so you can game drive safe in this knowledge. However, it is still advisable to keep your legs and arms inside the vehicle when you are near to the wildlife. Guests, when necessary, share our vehicles, unless exclusive use of a vehicle has been arranged at US\$350 per day.

25. What forms of payment does the lodge accept?

At Saruni Wild, we accept the following forms of payment: cash (currencies: US\$ newer than 2006, Euro, Sterling, KES), Travellers cheques, Visa and MasterCard credit cards and debit cards. Please note: there is no applicable surcharge when paying for stay incidentals. However, a surcharge applies if using a credit card to settle any outstanding accommodation/travel costs that are due to us prior to your arrival.

Any staff tips/gratuities should also kindly be paid in cash.

26. What are conservation fees – and why do I need to pay them?

This is the daily amount of US\$116 per person, payable as part of your holiday costs, due to the communities which own the private land upon which Saruni Wild is situated. In paying this, you are directly contributing to the ongoing protection of wildlife and land conservation, supporting the communities and preventing unnecessary development that would endanger fauna and flora. This 'fee' is different than that payable when you enter the Masai Mara National Reserve. For Masai Mara National Reserve fees, please email our Reservations team on reservationsteam@saruni.com.

27. How much does a safari cost?

Back in the 'golden days' of safari, a high-quality safari in Africa used to be a very expensive holiday, affordable only by the famous and wealthy. The glamour of those days is still part of any well-organised safari, but times change and so does accessibility. Naturally, the cost of a safari varies according to some variable factors such as internal transfers required, flights on scheduled or chartered planes, or, driving, number of people travelling together, extra activities required. In general, you should budget an all-inclusive cost between US\$700-1,000 per day per person (flights and transfers not included).

28. Are you allowed to hunt animals in Kenya?

No, absolutely not. Hunting has been abolished and forbidden in Kenya since 1977. The only shooting we do of wild animals and the beauty of Africa is with our cameras and with our eyes.

29. How do you support the local community?

Saruni believes fully and invests significantly in community development and conservation. Saruni Mara is a founding member of Mara North Conservancy, which provides jobs, income, training and guidance for the local Maasai people. Tourism directly supports conservation, the conservancy fees paid by guests are passed

on to the community and this represents its main source of income. By visiting Saruni Mara and Saruni Wild, you are directly giving back to the community who protect this beautiful land, improving their quality of life, whilst at the same time encouraging the purpose for conservation.

More than 90% of Saruni Mara and Saruni Wild's 40 employees are Maasai from the local communities. They are trained, employed and encouraged to rise through the ranks so that the local communities benefit directly from the lodge's presence in the area. Saruni formed a local women's group, where the ladies are encouraged to sell their artifacts and jewellery through Saruni's Maridadi shop. Saruni sponsors young Maasai to train as guides at the Koiyaki Guiding School, to ensure that the future generations of conservationists and safari guides will see the Maasai people in the forefront. The lodge also protects the northern corridors of the Masai Mara ecosystem around the Lemek-Ngoswani area – an important migratory route for the wildlife.

30. What other properties does Saruni have in Kenya?

We are proud to be able to offer the ultimate safari 'circuit' with guests staying at our other Mara lodge, Saruni Mara, and lodges across Kenya, as introduced below:

Saruni Mara is the only small, boutique lodge in the Mara, with five elegant cottages, one family cottage and one private house. The beautiful rooms are each decorated to a unique theme with a luxurious, classic safari feel. The lodge is nestled in a secluded valley in the heart of the most exciting wilderness in Africa: Mara North Conservancy – an exclusive, private wildlife concession bordering the world-renowned Masai Mara National Reserve. Encounter Africa's Big Five and the most remarkable natural spectacle on Earth, the Great Migration. Enjoy the Italian-inspired cuisine, exceptional service and being immersed in nature from your private veranda, the Maasai Wellbeing Space and the open lounge and dining area. Maasai warriors guide you throughout, sharing their ancient wisdom of the area and animals and their fascinating way of life - a truly life-enriching safari experience. For more information, please visit www.saruni.com/saruni-mara (opened 2003).

Saruni Samburu's six luxury villas are open and spacious, heralding spectacular views over Kenya's Northern Frontier District and Mount Kenya. The lodge is celebrated for its innovative, eco-chic design as well as its Italian-inspired cuisine. Guests can enjoy the vast panoramas from the dining and lounge area, the two infinity pools and spa. The warm hospitality makes for an intimate and exceptional experience. Saruni Samburu is the only lodge in Kalama Conservancy, bordering Samburu National Reserve, with over 200,000 acres of unspoiled wilderness teeming with wildlife to explore exclusively. Guided by Samburu warriors passionate about their land and culture, you learn first-hand about their fascinating customs and gain ancient, local knowledge about the land and animals – a truly authentic safari experience. For more information, please visit www.saruni.com/saruni-samburu (opened 2008).

Saruni Rhino. Located in Sera Community Conservancy, in the wild, undiscovered northern frontier of Kenya, Saruni Rhino is a little under 2 driving hours from our Saruni Samburu lodge in nearby Kalama Conservancy. Saruni Rhino offers the first on-foot rhino tracking experience in East Africa: an amazing walking safari that provides a uniquely thrilling adventure, but also allows our guests to actively contribute to the protection of this iconic species. Comprised of three elegant 'bandas' (open stone cottages – 2 x double bandas & 1 x Family banda) sleeping 8 guests and a main 'mess' cottage for dining and relaxing, Saruni Rhino is nestled amidst swaying doum palms dotted along a dry river bed (the Kauro 'lugga', in the heart of the conservancy) with sweeping views of a nearby waterhole and dramatic landscape so typical of the north. The waterhole is a popular watering stop-off for a diverse range of wildlife: elephant, impala, birdlife, hyena, oryx, Grevy's zebra and much more, making it great 'bush TV' from the comfort of your cottage's sandy veranda at any time. The dry river bed proves the quintessential torch-lit bush dinner location under the vast African skies. There is also a stunning infinity swimming pool, built in harmony with the natural beauty of the surrounding

landscape. Guests can enjoy a few laps in the rock pool, whilst delighting in the beach-club feel of the sandy river bed and swaying palms along-side. For more information, please visit www.saruni.com/saruni-rhino/ (opened February 2017).

You can see maps and locations for all our lodges, [here](#).

31. Can I ask you a question that is not listed here?

Please do. Email Saruni's Marketing Manager at marketing@saruni.com or the Saruni Wild Manager at maramanager@saruni.com. We look forward to hearing from you!