



SATAO ELERAI CAMP

Amboseli National Park, KENYA

Intimacy typically comes with privacy, and Satao Elerai Camp has this in spades – but do expect to share your quiet, romantic moments with the occasional roaring elephant. Up close. Prepare also for the constant gaze of mighty Mount Kilimanjaro.

Located just outside Amboseli National Park in a 5,000-acre private conservancy owned by the local Maasai community, Satao Elerai is a poster child for sustainable tourism. Built atop a volcanic rock outcrop, entirely from natural materials, the camp oozes a rugged minimalism. It's a serene contrast to the excitement of arrival – in a private plane smaller than a dining table, followed by a bumpy ride in an open-sided Jeep.

The camp's open-air dining area, well-stocked bar and infinity pool look out to a waterhole 20m away. Amboseli means "dry and salty" in the local Maa language, and the open-air bathtub is a magnet for animals of every kind. Giraffes, zebras, impalas, elands and buffalos are all

regulars but they vanish quickly when the main attraction, a herd of African elephants, stomp in to drink and bathe. Lucky guests may even see cheetahs or lions, while guided game drives into the main park offer the chance for more sightings.

An exclusive affair, accommodation comprises just 12 tents and five lodges. Choose the former and forget any bad camping memories – this is glamping and then some. Think of a gigantic field tent, three metres high and pitched on a wooden floor. The resulting room is filled with plush, rustic furnishings and a waist-high bed, plus an attached fully equipped luxury bathroom with piping-hot water to wash the dust away. The toilet even looks out over bushland, for bonus game views. Ultimately, only the best tent-like elements are preserved: the light flapping of canvas as you and your partner drift off to sleep and the joy of unzipping your front door onto a glorious mountain vista (and a pair of watchful zebras).

sataoelerai.com



THE DAY TRIP

IT'S NO DOUBT HARD TO LEAVE CAMP, BUT THE REAL MAGIC LIES IN THE BUSH. RISE EARLY AND OPT FOR THE BUSH BREAKFAST, SERVED AT SUNRISE, THEN VISIT THE LOCAL MAASAI VILLAGE, A PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTRAST OF JOYOUS SMILES, COLOURFUL CLOTHING AND STARK, PRIMITIVE LIVING. LATER, AS THE ANIMALS GATHER FOR A DUSK DIP, SETTLE IN AND SIP ON AN ICE-COLD TUSKER BEER, THE PRIDE OF KENYA.

