

# KENYA Land of Mystery and Marvels

Monday, 19 July 2021 2021

GIRAFFES!!!!!! The giraffe (*Giraffa*) is an African artiodactyl mammal, the tallest living terrestrial animal (around 18 feet!) and the largest ruminant! It is traditionally considered to be one species, *Giraffa camelopardalis*, with nine subspecies! HOWEVER, the existence of up to eight extant giraffe species has been described, based upon research into morphological measurements of *Giraffa*. Seven other species are extinct, prehistoric species known from fossils. The giraffe's chief distinguishing characteristics are its extremely long neck and legs, its horn-like ossicones, and its distinctive coat patterns. Its closest relative is the Okapi. WHEW! We will see 2 types of giraffes, Maasai (Northern Giraffe) and Reticulated (Southern Giraffe) in the wild and at the Giraffe Centre in

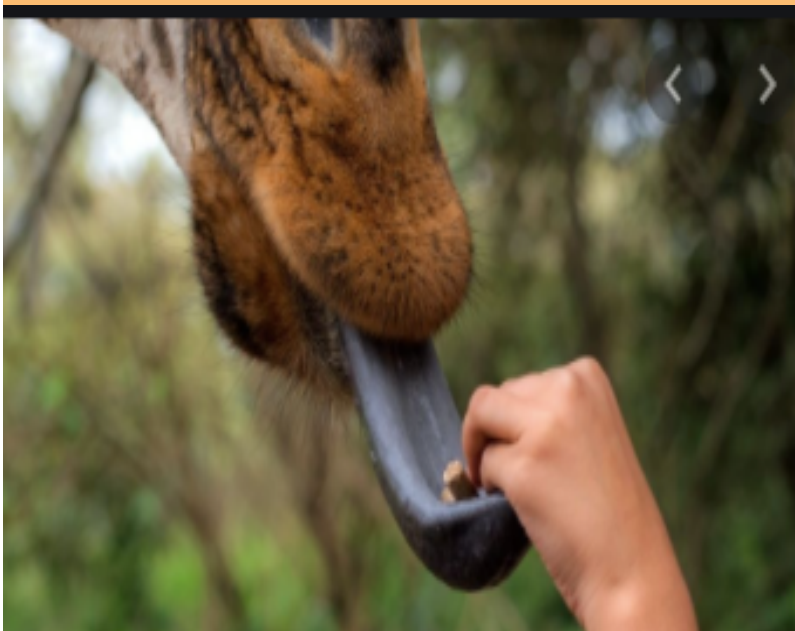


Nairobi. At the Giraffe Centre, we will be able to hand feed them with the "Giraffe kibble" (like dry dog food) provided there (at no cost). You'll see how gentle they can be and will also note their 18 to 20 inch long tongues!!! Something I experienced first hand!!! We were at the Centre and had been feeding these guys. I was wearing a denim work shirt with front pockets. I put some of the "kibble" in one of the pockets and turned my back on the giraffe I'd been feeding. All of a sudden this long, black tongue came over my shoulder and went into the pocket!!! The moral of this story is, don't turn your back on a hungry giraffe!!! :->) BTW, their tongues come in black, blue, and purple!



Sadly, there are less than 100,000 giraffes

remaining in the wild. The Reticulated has a coat pattern with uniform-colored spots and sharp edges. The Maasai giraffe has patterns that resemble oak leaves. Aside from being the tallest animals on earth, they can run as fast as 35 mph over short distances or just cruise around at 10 mph. While their necks are loooooong, they are too short to reach the ground, hence you'll see them with their front legs REALLY wide apart as they bend to drink from the rivers, streams, or any other water source. BTW, they only need to drink every few days.





Ok, enough about Giraffes! How about the MONEY? **The Kenyan Shilling** is the money of the Kenya! Duh!!! As of 18 July 2021, \$1.00 US = 108.17 KES and \$100.00 US equals KSh 10,817.16. Of course, that can change like the weather! If you belong to AAA, you can order Kenyan Shillings through them. SOME local banks here in the states will also order them, but not all banks offer this service. You can also change your USDs in Nairobi and at most of the hotels, but you may find the exchange rate to be a bit much! You should wary of anyone who offers to change your money for you outside a financial establishment. It's illegal and YOU, as well as your "source", can end up in a bit of trouble! Many, many places will accept USDs. US dollars must have been **PRINTED AFTER 2006** or it will **NOT** be accepted in Kenya. Another fun fact: Kenyans LOVE to bargain! They'll ask what you'd like to pay for an article and you should answer with something like 10% lower than the price marked on the item. From there it's back and forth before you arrive at a number you can both live with! It's all in good fun and sometimes it seems they're unhappy when you just offer the marked price! In fact, they MAY try to get you to bargain! Don't be insulting or insulted, just enjoy the experience! Among the things you'll find are all sorts of carvings. From small statues, to bowls, to canes, to baskets, to life size animals! Yep! LIFE SIZE! Just remember you can't carry those on the plane! LOL!!! Kenyans are amazing artisans and you will find many things to take home. If we visit a Maasai village, the women produce beautiful beadwork surprisingly similar to Native American beadwork. There are also textiles and metal work pieces ... oh, yes, and loose beads of various sizes if you happen to be into making your own jewelry.





As much as it pains me to say this, we do have to get serious about who's going and who isn't. There is no COMMITMENT until a deposit is requested. BUT I do need to have an idea of how many of you are interested.

From the questions I've gotten, it seems you'd all LIKE to go, but many are on the fence. It

may help for you to know, the more the merrier AND depending on how many more, we MAY be able to lower the price. I will need your input by 01 September 2021. Your cooperation is appreciated! ... and, yes, you can decide this isn't for you, but you want to stay on the mailing list for the photos. That's ok, just let me know!



Will this be you???:>)

That's it for this week! As usual, I urge you to send any questions to me via email or phone. We'll leave the US Sunday, 30 October and arrive in Nairobi Monday, 31 October 2022, on Tuesday, 01 November, we leave on SAFARI!!!

Stay happy, stay healthy, and STAY SAFE!!! Kwa heri!

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