



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Kenya 2012

Sosian Ranch

Sosian is a privately owned game ranch on the Laikipia Plateau in central Kenya, an area bordered by the Great Rift Valley to the west, the Aberdares Range to the south and Mount Kenya to the southeast. Part owned and managed by Tristan Voorspuy, owner of Offbeat Safaris and one of the pioneers of riding safaris in Kenya, it offers a highly personalised safari experience with a choice of game viewing by horse, by vehicle and on foot as well as other activities that include camel safaris, fly camping, fishing and swimming. Itineraries are tailor-made and a stay at Sosian is a superb choice for anyone looking for a flexible and relaxed safari holiday, with a variety of activities. Add a few days on the Kenyan coast and you have the ingredients for one of the best holidays imaginable! Access to Sosian is by road (4 ½ hour transfer from Nairobi), by private charter from Nairobi or by scheduled flight from Nairobi to Nanuki (about a 35 minute flight) followed by a 1 ½ to 2 hour vehicle transfer to the lodge.

Dates Sosian is open year round and stays are organised to suit, for anything from 2 to 14 nights. During certain times of year itineraries can include a night or two fly camping or several consecutive nights on a mobile walking safari for those who wish. Please contact us to discuss your plans and to check availability.



The Horses There are about twenty horses permanently stabled at Sosian, all kept under the expert eye of Charlotte Outram, who runs the stables at the lodge together with a team of able staff. The horses are between about 14hh and 16hh with a couple of smaller ponies that are ideal for children. They are of varying breeds and include thoroughbreds, TB crosses, ex-polo ponies and Somali crosses. They are responsive, reliable and enjoyable to ride as well as being sensible to handle, used to game and at home in the bush. English tack is used with a few Australian Stock saddles (more similar to a western in style) available and most of the horses ridden in snaffle bridles. Grooms look after the horses at the lodge and prepare them for rides.

Riding The amount of riding you do whilst staying at Sosian is entirely up to you. Riding is optional but if you wish, you can ride out every day to explore the area around the lodge and look for game. Rides are usually early morning or afternoon for a maximum of about 3 hours. Longer rides, stopping for refreshments, picnics and a siesta en-route, are sometimes an option. Riding groups are small, generally a maximum of about 6 guests, accompanied by a guide with a groom or back up rider for support. The weight limit for riders is about 15 stone (95kgs) although there is some flexibility as long as prior notice is given. If you are close to this weight please contact us to check that suitable horses are available. Charlotte, who is English, has lived in Kenya for 7 or 8 years and has been managing the riding at Sosian for over 4 years. She comes from a racing background and is an experienced horsewoman having spent much time hunting and eventing in the UK. She guides some rides herself, with other rides lead by Annabelle (co-manager of the lodge), or by local guides trained by them. Tristan can also sometimes be booked to guide by special arrangement and for an extra fee.

Pace As the riding from Sosian is tailored to suit, the pace varies, although it is always subject to the terrain and also depends on the weather and riders' ability. The area around the lodge is uncultivated bush; it is thick in places and in others, acacia and thorn scrub is scattered across open plain. Sometimes you have to ride slowly, weaving in and out of the thorn trees, following game trails through the bush and perhaps dismounting to lead your horse over rocky ground. At other times, there are good opportunities to trot and canter along sandy tracks and on plains where the bush thins out. Overall the riding pace is varied and there are usually plenty of chances for trots and canters and also to jump small fallen logs and trees pushed over by passing elephant.



Riding Experience Riders of all standards can be catered for at Sosian with riding hours and the pace tailored to suit - but as the lodge is in an area where there is big (and potentially dangerous) game including elephant and lion, those wishing to ride out should have some previous riding experience. As a minimum, to do more than just a short trial ride, you should be well balanced and secure in the saddle and able to control a well-schooled horse in open country at a walk, trot and steady canter. There is a small arena for novice riders and a few show jumps and simple cross-country jumps for the experienced. Riding fitness is important and will greatly enhance your enjoyment, comfort and safety, so if you do not ride regularly at home, we recommend concentrated practice in the months before you go to get used to spending several hours in the saddle. Families with children are very welcome at Sosian and it is the ideal place for a family safari holiday. Children who wish to try riding can have a short lesson with Charlotte in the enclosed arena and then a short hack of about 20 minutes either on or off leading rein. Children who are confident, strong riders, can ride off-leading rein. If there are novice and more experienced riders at the lodge, two rides can be organised and the group split according to riding ability.

The Terrain The lodge overlooks miles of unspoilt bush. The 24,000 acres of bush the ranch covers, once a derelict tract of over grazed farmland, has been regenerated by 10 years of careful management to provide a sanctuary in which game and cattle co-exist. The landscape varies from dry lowlands dotted with patches of thick scrub and acacia thorn to winding river valleys, sheer cliff faces and rocky gorges. There is a beautiful river running through the ranch, lined with Yellow Fever Acacia trees, which provides a lifeline to game in this normally dry environment. Cattle are still farmed at Sosian and the ranch has between 500 and 1000 head of pure and cross-bred Boran cattle, a hardy breed that originated in the deserts of Northern Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Accommodation Sosian lodge is the original managers homestead, now thoughtfully renovated and converted to a stylish bush home. It is comfortable, yet overwhelmingly, the atmosphere is relaxed and informal, hitting just the right note between the welcome informality of a home and the facilities, comfort and service of a stylish guest lodge. The main house includes a large comfortable sitting room with open fireplace, sofas and armchairs and a dining room with fireplace and long dining table that is beautifully set for dinner at night. The front of the house is surrounded by a wide, covered veranda that is a fabulous place for breakfast and lunch, or for relaxing when you are not out riding or down by the swimming pool. Bedrooms are in separate 'cottages' overlooking the tropical lawns and gardens, a short walk from the main house. There are 7 bedrooms in all, 4 twins and 3 with double beds. The honeymoon cottage is set by itself and the other cottages house 2 bedrooms, each with its own en-suite bathroom (with shower, bath and loo,) that adjoin (but do not inter-connect). All cottages have their own veranda, set with chairs, and are individually furnished and decorated. At certain times of year fly camping is an option and if you choose this, you will sleep out under the stars, either in the open air or under a light custom-made gauze tent, on a mattress with fresh linen and bedroll. Fly camps do not attempt to re-create the luxury of a night in the lodge, rather to contrast with it and provide a simple natural home with just the basic comforts you need - a hot bucket shower, chairs for sitting whilst eating a delicious dinner around the camp fire and canvas washbasins for your early morning wash or shave. Loos when fly camping are open air - a bush with a view! Thoughtful extras, such as soap, towels and ice for drinks, are all provided. On longer mobile walking safaris, camps are similar style although they have long drop loos as well as hot bucket showers. Accommodation at the lodge and on mobiles is based on two sharing. One single room is allowed per group / per booking but if a second single room is requested in one group, a single supplement is payable.



Meals Meals at Sosian are delicious, freshly made and plentiful. Almost all the ingredients used are grown on the ranch, which has its own organic vegetable garden, or purchased locally from small community farmers. Days usually start with a cup of tea or coffee and light snack brought to your room before an early morning ride, walk or game drive. On your return to the lodge, there is a substantial breakfast and your choice of fruit, perhaps porridge, toast and a full cooked breakfast for those who wish. Alternatively you may opt for a leisurely start with morning tea or coffee to wake you and a relaxing breakfast on the veranda or, if you go out on an early morning ride or drive, you might stop half way for a picnic brunch cooked and served at tables set up out in the bush. Lunch is often served on the lodge veranda or in the pool-house or you may have a picnic when you are out riding or walking. It might be a barbeque (the ranch beef is excellent) or a combination of salads, quiches and cold meats as well as freshly baked bread. Tea helps revive you from a traditional African after-lunch siesta and after riding or a late afternoon game activity, evening drinks are accompanied by snacks and followed by a three course dinner served by candlelight. Meals at the lodge are usually eaten as a group at a long table in the dining room, outside on the veranda or in the pool house, but if you wish there is generally the option of a private dinner for two or for your own group.

cont. over



Meals cont . Special mealtimes can be organised for children or they can eat with parents if you prefer. There is a varied bar with a selection of spirits, good wine, beer and soft drinks (with plenty of ice) all included.



Game Sosian is one of a group of ranches on the Laikipia plateau and covers about 24,000 acres of diverse ecosystem. Over 70 species of mammal, over 30 species of reptile and over 300 species of birds have been found in the ranch's different habitats, which range from open plain to thick bush, river valley and cliff. The plains are home to game such as oryx, Grants gazelle, wildebeest, ostrich and cheetah. There are rare Grevy's Zebra and Jackson's Hartebeest, hippo in the river and to the south, the thicker bush and acacia woodland hide many elephant (Laikipia has the second highest elephant population in Kenya with around 6000 resident elephant of which several hundred can be seen at Sosian at one time), buffalo, reticulated giraffe, wild dog, lion and leopard. Sosian is very active in predator research, especially lion and wild dog, which were almost wiped out of Laikipia in the 1900s. Packs returned to the area in 2000 and there are now well over 150 wild dog living in the Laikipia and Samburu regions. A resident pack roam between 3 local ranches and are expected to breed on or near Sosian soon. There are also many smaller game species on the ranch, including warthog, rock hyrax, monkeys, baboons, duiker, impala, jackal and nocturnal species such as bush-babies, genet, porcupine, a strong population of hyena (both striped and spotted) and aardvark.



Other activities Sosian suits both riders and non-riders and makes a great base for a mixed group, for couples and also families with children. As well as riding, game drives (both day and at night with a spot light) and walks with an experienced guide and local trackers are always available. Steve Carey and his wife Annabelle manage the lodge and Steve, who is Zimbabwean, has been leading walking safaris in Africa for about 20 years. Walking is his favourite way of seeing the bush and can be exciting and adventurous or serenely peaceful, depending on what happens at any particular time. Camels are a common sight in northern Kenya and Sosian has its own string, all well trained in carrying people with comfortable saddles and a team of camel handlers from various local tribes to lead them. Camels provide a wonderful vantage point from which to enjoy the bush and rides can last anything from 30 minutes to a full day with overnight camping at the end. If you prefer, you can also walk alongside the camels learning about local culture and bush-craft from the camel handlers. Whether your preferred mode of travel is a horse, your feet, a vehicle or camel, overnight fly-camping trips are not to be missed and are an exciting way to really get to know the bush. They also make a wonderful contrast with the luxury of the lodge! After an exhilarating afternoon ride, walk or game drive, you arrive at a simple fly-camp set up ahead in a picturesque spot, where a hot bucket shower, followed by drinks and dinner, freshly cooked over the fire, will set the scene for an atmospheric night out, enjoying the simplicity of nature, listening to the night sounds of the bush, then waking to see the sunrise and Mount Kenya on the horizon. Longer walking safaris, moving from camp to camp, can also be organised on request, with camp moved ahead by an experienced team of Samburu and Turkana staff, using vehicles or camels for transport. Back at the lodge, another popular way to spend late afternoons is to take a rod and local expert down to the river, the pools below the waterfall or one of the dams, to try casting for Tilapia, Catfish or Barbel. The lodge has spinning rods for adults and children and fly-fishing is also fun to try. Bird shooting trips can also be organised - Kenya has big populations of Guinea fowl (both helmeted and vulturine) and Sand grouse which are excellent game birds and day or overnight trips to Kalacha, an oasis in northern Kenya's Chalbi Desert, which has one of the highest populations of Sand grouse in Africa, are possible on request. There is a hard tennis court at the ranch (racquets and balls supplied) and 'tubing' down the river or, for the brave, jumping 30 foot off the Ewaso Narok Waterfall into the deep pool below, are great ways to cool (or show) off afterwards.



Children at Sosian Sosian is a special place for families with children and after the excitement of riding, game drives, fly camping, fishing, jumping off the waterfall, tubing down the river, picnics, archery, collecting eggs from the chicken house, feeding the pet eland and above all having the space to run wild and be free, expect to have to drag your children away at the end of their stay. There are lots of opportunities for learning as well - check-lists of the game and birds, a chance to learn about animal tracks and other signs in the bush and to visit local tribes-people and learn about their customs and traditional ways of life. Special mealtimes can be organised for children if required and there are staff available to child mind or sit outside rooms at night so parents can enjoy a peaceful candle lit dinner.

Safety Rides out are lead by an experienced guide, usually accompanied by an English speaking groom / back up rider. The guide carries a hand held radio for communication with the lodge (there is a mobile 'phone signal at a few points on the ranch, but not at the lodge itself, which has normal landline 'phones). A basic first aid kit is taken in saddle-bags, with a more comprehensive kit kept at the lodge. When walking, Steve always carries a rifle, a radio and a full first aid kit and is accompanied by a Samburu or Turkana tracker who provides an extra pair of eyes and ears. Flying Doctor air ambulance cover is recommended for all guests (as well as standard travel insurance) in case of an emergency - this is available for a small extra charge and is normally automatically included in safaris we book.

Community and Conservation Sosian is a member of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF), working to protect Laikipia's wildlife through sustainable land use such as tourism. The ranch has encouraged the return of game to the area by removing all its fences to allow wildlife to move freely around, and by providing security teams who patrol and control poaching. The ranch employs about 80 staff and is situated at a junction of many different tribal areas that are rich in traditions and largely untouched by western development. Samburus, Pokots, Turkanas and many smaller tribes live here and by special arrangement, guests at Sosian may visit a local village. The villagers are proud to show their cultural traditions and visits emphasise the importance of keeping these alive. Dances of courtship, fertility and marriage, jewellery and fire making can be explained in detail and you may also have a chance to go inside some of the village houses see how these proud people live and how strongly their customs are ingrained in their society. This is a fascinating excursion from Sosian for both adults and children and an important part of a safari holiday to Kenya. The ranch has also started a programme supporting the local school, which is 3 kms away and is attended daily by 330 children. Primary school education is now free in Kenya but whilst school fees and salaries are paid, the numerous extras such as books, stationary, desks, sports equipment and even basic sanitation are not covered. Considered basics in the west these are luxuries beyond the reach of the families who live by subsistence farming in a harsh environment. They aim to provide enough money to feed their families from day to day but the community desperately needs its children to succeed so they can provide for parents and families in the future. School visits may be arranged and staff and pupils are always delighted to meet guests from Sosian. Anyone wishing to contribute to the school can also send donations to the ranch, which has set up a special account to ensure donations are well spent.



Weather and Seasons Daytime temperatures on the Laikipia Plateau are generally very pleasant for riding at around 20 to 25 degrees Centigrade year round. The wet seasons (as in the whole of East Africa) are late March to May when there may be intermittent downpours with sunshine in between, and November / early to mid December when there may be short, but sometimes heavy, bursts of rain. Sosian is at about 6000 feet and it can feel quite cool during the rains because of the altitude. It is usually hottest in late January and February but even then temperatures are generally pleasant and there is often a breeze on the plains so it never really gets too hot. June to August are the coolest months.

What to bring We will send you a list with suggestions of what to bring when your booking is confirmed.

Itineraries The following is an example of an itinerary for a 7 night stay at Sosian, including 2 nights in a fly camp (which are not possible during some seasons). This can easily be followed by a trip to the Kenyan coast to make a wonderful 2 week holiday. Please note that fly camps using horses are generally only offered during low season because of staffing requirements. At other times you can walk, drive or use camels when fly camping. Please also note that this is only an example of an itinerary. Stays are individually organised and will be tailored, as far as possible, to your individual wishes when you are there. Day by day arrangements also may be varied by your guides and hosts in their discretion, if the movement of game, weather or other local conditions require.

[Flight to Nairobi (eg Kenya Airways departing London Heathrow at about 20.00 and arriving Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi early the next day)]

Day 1 - You will be met on arrival at Nairobi International airport and [driven across town (30 - 40 minutes) to Wilson domestic airport for a scheduled Air Kenya flight to Nanyuki (about 35 mins). Met at Nanyuki airport and driven about 1 ½ to 2 hours to Sosian Ranch]. Shown to your rooms and lunch on arrival. Relax by the pool and then in the afternoon a first game viewing activity for those who wish - perhaps a first ride, a game drive or an evening walk for your first experience of the Laikipia plateau. Dinner and overnight at Sosian. (L,D)



Day 2 - A full day at Sosian, perhaps setting off for an early morning ride when game is at its most active. Return to the lodge for an early lunch and spend the middle of the day relaxing by the pool. Then in the late afternoon set off on another ride, walk or game drive. Perhaps stop for a sundowner on the plains before returning to the lodge for hot showers, drinks on the veranda and dinner. Night at Sosian (B,L,D)

Day 3 - After breakfast set off riding, hopefully encountering a variety of game including giraffe, elephant, antelope, zebra and buffalo. Stop to give the horses a chance to cool off under a shady tree before you set off again, riding back to Sosian in time for lunch and a siesta by the pool. In the afternoon you might try one of the other activities available - playing tennis, tubing down the river, trying your hand at fishing, archery or jumping off waterfalls. Return to Sosian for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

Day 4 - Perhaps set off on an early morning ride to explore another part of the plateau, then in the afternoon you might take the jeeps to the Mutara river, a spectacular valley with huge yellow fever acacia trees and some beautiful springs where camp is set up. You could expect to see elephant, reticulated giraffe, greater kudu and spectacular riverine birds in this area. Camps are simple, allowing you to lie under the stars at night listening to the nocturnal sounds of the bush. After a welcome hot bucket shower, watch the sun go down with a cold drink before sitting down to dinner freshly cooked over an open fire. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Breakfast in camp and then set off walking down the scenic Mutara river valley, an area of beautiful trees, birds and abundant wildlife. Being on foot enables you to see so much more detail - tracks on the ground, scratch marks on trees, droppings, a fresh kill, birds calling in alarm at the sound of a nearby snake, baboons shouting as they catch sight of a leopard. Africa is all around - in the smell of an acacia in blossom, the scent of long, dry grass underfoot on an early morning walk - a completely different experience and a wonderful way to see the bush. You will climb onto some huge rocks which overlook miles of western Laikipia and from where giraffe, elephant, impala and eland are often seen. Black eagles nest in this area and the birdlife is prolific. The rocks and this section of the river are home to leopard and they are often heard calling and are even sometimes seen. Arrive on foot at Sosian in time for lunch and a refreshing dip in the pool. In the late afternoon set off on a sundowner ride, returning to the lodge for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

[8]

Day 6 & 7 - Two full days at the ranch with your choice of rides out, game drives and walks, perhaps tracking game on foot or cantering across the open plains or just relaxing by the pool! Elephant, lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena, buffalo, wild dog, zebra, warthog, hippo and many different antelope species are all common sightings at Sosian as well as some unusual species such as Grevy's zebra, Striped hyena, Beisa Oryx and aardwolf. The birdlife is particularly good and there is a huge diversity of habitats from open plains, to riverine valley and cliff faces. Night drives with a spotlight will also be possible. Overnight Sosian. (B,L,D).

Day 8 - Breakfast and set off driving [back to Nanyuki for your scheduled flight to Nairobi Wilson Airport. Connect with onward flight / transfer to JKIA]



RATES 2012:

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are now quoted in US\$. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the US\$/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Rates are per person per night, assume twin accommodation and are seasonal.

They INCLUDE compulsory Concession fees:

Peak Season (16th December to 2nd January 2013) - **adult \$680 US**

Child 12 to 17 yrs - \$510 US; child under 12 yrs - \$340 US

High Season (1st July to 31st October) - **adult \$600 US**

Child 12 to 17 yrs - \$460 US; child under 12 yrs - \$300 US

Mid Season (3rd January to 31st March) - **adult \$540 US;**

child 12 to 17 yrs - \$405 US; child under 12 yrs - \$270 US

Green Season (1st April to 30th April, 1st to 30th June & 1st to 15th December) - **adult \$480 US**

Child 12 to 17 yrs - \$360 US; child under 12 yrs - \$240 US

Single supplement - one single allowed per group at no extra charge; supplement \$135 to \$145 US per night for additional singles (varies a little with season)

NOTE: Check out time is usually 10am. If you wish to stay on and transfer out in the afternoon this is usually possible although you may need to vacate your room. Late departure (after 2pm) with lunch & game drive is charged at \$100 US per adult.

Rates INCLUDE: All riding, shared game drives (day and evening), walks, fly camping when available, fishing on the property, birding, camel safaris, cattle ranch activities, guiding by lodge staff, twin accommodation (extra single rooms only if paying supplement or otherwise only if available), Conservancy fees, meals, drinks (except champagne and premium spirits / cellar wines), transfers to / from Sosian airstrip and laundry service.

Rates EXCLUDE: International flights to Nairobi and taxes, local departure taxes, transfers between Nairobi and the lodge (these are by private charter plane, scheduled safarilink flight and / or by vehicle and are organised on request), personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), visa fees, personal items such as telephone calls etc, some activities (eg bird shooting safaris, cartridges, visits to local villages, light aircraft trips etc), exclusive use of vehicles (this may be possible subject to availability at a cost of \$300 per vehicle per day), guiding fees if a specialist guide is required (Tristan can sometimes guide for an extra charge) and any tips you may wish to leave staff.

Travel arrangements / Flights - The closest international airport to Sosian is Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta. Kenyan Airways and British Airways both have direct flights from London to Nairobi every day, either overnight flights departing London in the evening and arriving NBO early the next day or day flights arriving NBO in the evening. Several other airlines such as Air France and KLM also have flights via Europe although we highly recommend a direct flight where possible to minimize the risk of delays and missed connections. Airfares vary with the airline and season but expect to pay around £550 to £700 per person for an economy return. **If you would like a quote for flights, advice or to book please contact us (our ATOL number for flight booking is ATOL 6213).** We can also book onward transfers, any extra nights accommodation you may require in Nairobi and additional activities or accommodation on the coast or at another safari lodge. There are lots of wonderful options and we would be delighted to advise.

Transfers between Nairobi and Sosian are by private charter flight, by scheduled safari link flight to Nanyuki and onward vehicle transfer to the lodge or by private vehicle. Rates depend on the method of transfer, the number in your group and the dates. Please contact us ask for a quote. By way of example (NB charter rates vary from time to time and may increase with fuel costs etc.) a one way transfer between Nairobi Wilson and Nanyuki in a Cessna 206 charter plane seating up to 4 guests is approximately \$1160 US (approx. £750) for the plane. A smaller Cessna 182 may also be available at a lower cost. Scheduled safari link flights Nairobi to Nanyuki are approximately \$150 US per person, each way. Vehicle transfers Nanuki / Sosian are \$200 US per vehicle each way

General visa and health information (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking.)

Visas As of 1st March 2001, British Passport holders DO require a visa to visit Kenya as a tourist. The fee for a single entry visa, valid for 3 months from the date of issue, is currently £30. If bought on arrival in Kenya the fee is US\$50 (cash only).

Health The Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London recommends that you are up to date with inoculations against **Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria and Hepatitis A**. It also recommends you are up to date with **Yellow Fever** (a booster is needed after 10 years) and that you carry a valid yellow fever certificate with you - you may be required to show this when entering Kenya (generally only if entering from another tropical country) because of an episode of transmission of Yellow Fever in Kenya during the last five years. Rabies, Cholera and Typhoid may also be recommended in certain situations. You will also be advised to take **anti-Malaria** tablets - you should consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice about this

(DRAFT 12/11/11)

