

One of Kenya's best kept secrets is its numerous golf courses. Few places in the world offer such perfect ingredients for a fantastic golf holiday, as Kenya does. The opportunity to play your favorite game, to see wildlife (sometimes on the course!) and to relax on the beautiful white sandy beaches all during the same holiday is unique.

While the larger golf courses of Kenya are over a century old, some newer ones are coming up in the luxury resorts. The "golfing in Kenya" experience is made memorable by the picturesque backdrop of the Mount Kenya, or the emerald waters of the sea.

One of the appealing features of golfing in Kenya is the variety. From the beach clubs set among palm and casuarinas with stunning views of the sapphire Indian Ocean, to those dominated by the perennial snow-cap of Mount Kenya there is a medley of courses each vying for priority as the most attractive for location and interest. One is even built on the slopes of an extinct volcano!

Kenya has over 37 golf courses of which 10 are 18-hole, 9 of which are used for championship events. 6 are within a 20-mile radius of Nairobi - Kenya's bustling capital. The oldest course is Royal Nairobi Golf Club (7021 yards - par 72 - 18 holes) founded in 1906, the latest is the Windsor Golf and Country Club (6751 yards - par 72 - 18 holes). There are several new courses under construction and a number are being upgraded from 9 hole to 18 holes.

The weather in Kenya is ideal for golf all year round. On some occasion you might need a sweater or a jersey, but will usually play in a polo shirt.

In the highland areas the temperatures are in the low 20's and at the coast in the high 20's or low 30's. There are 12 hours of daylight and, depending on the season, 4 to 9 hours of sunshine. During the two rainy seasons, the rain usually falls before 1000 hrs and after 1700hrs and at times never while you are playing. More and more clubs are installing sophisticated fairway watering systems to keep the courses green during the dry seasons.

Many courses are at an altitude of more than 1500 metres (5000 feet) truly giving you an additional 10% yardage to your stroke.

Most clubs have a pro-shop where you can buy whatever you need. Though there are no golf carts available, Kenya has the luxury of caddies. Usually the caddies are very good players themselves and will not only carry your bag and look for your balls in the rough, but will advise on local rules, assist in your swing and generally be your companion and mentor. Kenya's golf clubs are generally very quiet and especially so during weekdays. One or two clubs do not permit visitors on weekends, but most do, except for competition days.

For the visiting golfer, Kenya has a broad appeal. There is everything for the fanatic golfer, whilst the avid golfer can fashion his safari to view some wildlife as well. A golfer who prefers to laze in the beach can still fit in a game or two and the business traveler, with an afternoon off, can easily play his favorite game right on his doorstep. Many city hotels have made arrangements with local courses for temporary membership for their business visitors.

Kenya has it all and golf is no exception.

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