

MAASAILAND 2020

**A SPECIAL TRIP TO CELEBRATE COLLABORATION BETWEEN ROTARY AND MERC,
THE INSTITUTE FOR MAASAI EDUCATION, RESEARCH & CONSERVATION**

TRIP ITINERARY

JULY 10-21, 2020

11 NIGHTS IN KENYA

Day 1 : Friday, July 10 NAIROBI

- Depart from home on Thursday, July 9, and arrive at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport by the evening of Friday, July 10. You will be met at the airport by a MERC staff member and taken either to the Stanley Hotel, which is downtown Nairobi, or the Eka Hotel on the edge of Nairobi National Park.

Day 2 : Saturday, July 11 NAIROBI

- Trip leaders Meitamei Ole Dapash and Mary Poole will meet you for breakfast at the hotel.
- After breakfast, some of us may choose to relax by the hotel pool and allow time to rest up after the long flight. Those ready to go will gather in the lobby at 9:30 for a trip to the Karen Blixen House, the colonial home of the author Isak Dennison and setting for the film, *Out of Africa*. This trip will focus on history and provide a context for MERC's scope of work on behalf of Indigenous Maasai people including land rights, water, and the continuing influence of colonization on Kenya's tourism industry.
- We will lunch at Karen Coffee House on the grounds of the museum.
- After lunch, we will travel a short distance to the Giraffe Manor and experience one of East Africa's best environmental education centers and models of conservation.
- **Dinner will be on your own** and there are many excellent restaurants in the vicinity of the Hotel. A group dinner will be arranged for all interested with members of the Rongai Rotary Club, MERC's partner on the most recent Rotary International Water Project

Day 3 : Sunday, July 12 NAROK

- At 8:00, after an early breakfast, we will head out going north and then west to begin the 2000 meter descent into the floor of the Great Rift Valley towards the town of Narok—the county headquarters of western Maasailand. The drive will take 2½ hours and will include a stop at the escarpment for a view. In Narok we will stay at either the Seasons Hotel or the new Mara Frontier Hotel.
- We begin our time in Narok with a church service at local evangelical Church to experience western religion as practiced by sections of the Maasai people. Church services in Maasailand are full of music and we will be given an opportunity to sing ourselves, and if we are moved to practice a song ahead of time, our efforts will be wildly appreciated!

- While some attend church, others will meet Chairman Kisuna and the water committee and visit the project site of the third Rotary International Water Project in Maasailand, at Eorr Emayian, to hear the story of the project, meet the community, and climb the water tower (for the brave!)
- At noon we will eat a lunch prepared by the hotel while the community gathers for a celebration of the water project.
- The celebration will begin around 1:00, and will include singing, dancing, reports from the cluster committees, and recognition of Rotary and all that it has done to bring water to Maasailand. We will be joined at the celebration by our Rotary partners from Naivasha.
- In the late afternoon we will drive the short distance back to Narok and convene for happy hour at the hotel bar before dinner and talk with Meitamei about the big picture of water in Maasailand and across East Africa, the factors involved in water shortages and solutions that are changing the landscape.
- Dinner will be African food served at the hotel outside.

Day 4 : Monday, July 13

MAASAI MARA

- After an early breakfast we will travel a short distance to Erusiai, the community that helped to build the first big Rotary/MERC water project in Maasailand, which was completed in 2008. The project continues to thrive and after expansion, now serves 30,000 people. We will meet with the water committee and tour the school and hygiene station designed by local women. Erusiai is Meitamei's home area and we will also meet members of his family, and visit the school that he began building 30 years ago which is thriving today.
- We will leave Erusiai mid-morning and return to the hotel in Narok to check out.
- After a light lunch at the hotel we will head south to the Maasai Mara and the Mara Sarova lodge, our home for the next four nights. For those who have taken this trip before you will be happily surprised to find a tarmacked road in place of the old dirt one! The trip from Narok to Sarova now takes only 2½ hours. If you have not taken this trip yet, you will likely encounter your first wildlife at this time so you will want to keep your eyes peeled...
- We will arrive at the Sarova before dark and will be greeted by our friends there. Mara Sarova has taken the lead in supporting an important community initiative, the Mara Guides Association (www.maraguides.org), and we will meet members while in the Mara and learn about their vision
- We will have dinner at the lodge which is a real treat as the Sarova has the freshest, most delicious food in the area.

Day 5 : Tuesday, July 14

MAASAI MARA

- Your morning begins with an early wildlife viewing drive into the Maasai Mara Game Reserve to experience what Maasai culture has created in this world, an ecosystem that supports

habitat for many species of wildlife to live free. Your experience will be led by one of the MGA guides that were taught through Prescott College's widely recognized guide certification program. Maasai guides know the wildlife in depth, their family histories, and their individual personalities in many cases as Maasai culture relates to elephants, lions and other wildlife as communities with whom they must negotiate shared use of common land. Learning about the wildlife with a Maasai guide is pure joy, an opportunity to see in action what it means for a people to co-exist as part of the natural world.

Optional : For those interested in taking a hot-air balloon ride over the Mara, this would be a perfect time. The ride includes a champagne breakfast inside the park and is a remarkable experience. The cost is \$495 per person.

- We will return to the Sarova by 10 for a late breakfast, after which you are free to swim, rest and explore the grounds until lunch.
- We will convene for a second wildlife viewing drive from 3 to 6.
- We will gather in the lounge at 6 for a happy hour discussion with Meitamei about the Maasai Mara, land and conservation issues, and how our current MERC programs are addressing the long-term health and sustainability of the region. Meitamei has been a leader in the fight to save the Mau Forest watershed, the headwaters of the Mara River system, for three decades, and that work is bearing fruit in this moment.
- We will have dinner together at Sarova and enjoy the nightly entertainment provided by local Maasai warriors.

Day 6 : Wednesday, July 15	MAASAI MARA
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- Your day begins with an early breakfast and then a drive through the Maasai Mara Game Reserve to the Dopoi MERC/Prescott College Center. We will visit the Center on this day and the next to see some of the scope of Prescott College's work in Maasailand over the past 14 years and to celebrate the fourth Rotary water project in Maasailand, which is located at the Dopoi Center and serves 5000 people in the surrounding community, their livestock, and local wildlife.
- Upon arrival we will meet a group from Arizona State University's OLLI program (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute), which will be concluding a two-week stay at the Center during which they have provided education to local community members and in other ways supported ASU's Maasai Automotive Education Center Project (MAEC). We will tour the MAEC site as a part of a tour of the Center.
- We will have lunch with the group from OLLI and other community members that frequent the Center, especially the local Water Project Cluster committees and MERC Water Project heads, Charles Takai and George Kiriyama.
- In the early afternoon, we will be joined by leadership of the Mara Guides Association for a large meeting of members about the future of MGA, and will learn about many recent

victories, the role MGA is playing in vetting guide certification in the Reserve, and the influence MGA is having in government policy regarding tourism and conservation, in an effort to reassert Maasai stewardship of the land and wildlife.

- The time with MGA will merge into a community celebration of the completion of the fourth Rotary International Water Project in Maasailand, Endoinyo Oloip. We will provide a feast at the Dopoi Center of goat and other Maasai foods including ceremonial herb bone soup, and sing and dance together into the night.

Day 7 : Thursday, July 16

MAASAI MARA

- After an early breakfast at the Sarova, we will head out again to the Dopoi Center.
- After introductions, we will take advantage of the cool morning temperatures to walk through the land along the distribution system of the water project to local villages and see the impact of the water project on communities in this area, the power of water to transform life.
- On returning to the Center, we will have morning coffee and tea and adjourn in the main classroom to meet with the other group staying at the Center, a Prescott College Masters class. This class, which will be studying Community Based Action Research, was organized by a Prescott College PhD student undertaking dissertation research into Maasai traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) about water in the context of the challenges to the health and sustainability of the Mau Forest river system. The students will give a report to our group on their work.
- Over lunch, we will discuss the broader strokes of work happening at the Dopoi center. MERC and Prescott College have enjoyed a model partnership for many years which has produced a field studies program for Prescott College and now other university partners, most significantly Arizona State University, and the Maasai Field Guide Training Program that is changing the face of tourism in the Mara. We will share our big plans to continue to grow the Center, to develop a more formal research program and an educational tourism program.
- After lunch, we will have an opportunity to shop at the Center Cooperative Store that displays beadwork, clothing and art from Maasai women's beading cooperatives throughout the larger region, hosted by the shop manager, Joseph Ole Keiwua.
- In the late afternoon, we will take a wildlife viewing drive through the park on the way back to the Sarova.

Day 8 : Friday, July 17

AMBOSELI

- For your last day in the Mara, we will take a day-long wildlife viewing drive to the Serengetti, on the other side of the Kenya/Tanzanian border, to follow the wildebeest migration, one of

the seven wonders of the world. Box lunches will be provided, and again we will be led by our own MGA guides.

- After a long day with wildlife we will return for a rest, and then meet for happy hour to discuss the next day's travels to Amboseli.
- Dinner will be at the Sarova.

Day 9 : Saturday, July 18	AMBOSELI
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- The day will begin with breakfast, after which you will pack and prepare for departure.
- We will leave around 10:00 for an hour and a half flight to Amboseli. Amboseli is famed as the home of Africa's most studied elephant population. We also visit Amboseli to experience contrasts in different sections of the Maasai community. Amboseli is home to Ilkisongo Maasai, which has been less impacted by modernity than Maasai in the Narok area and continued nomadism and the ceremonial life of the community is also more evident.
- Upon arrival and check in at Oltukai Lodge, we will enjoy lunch, and then some free time and observe elephants, buffaloes, zebras, wildebeests, and other plains game as they graze in lush green swamps adjacent to the lodge. If we are lucky, Mt. Kilimanjaro should be out smiling in welcome!
- Mid-afternoon we will meet with members of a local beading cooperative with whom MERC has worked for decades. Representatives will come to the lodge with beads and other art to sell.
- About 4:00, we will take a relaxed wildlife viewing drive to the Observation Hill hosted by a researcher of the Elephant Trust. From the hill we will enjoy a bird's eye view of Amboseli National Park and Mt. Kilimanjaro. Our guide will teach us about elephant culture and behavior, as we observe families grazing in the swamps.
- We will have dinner together at the lodge.

Day 10 : Sunday, July 19	AMBOSELI
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- We will enjoy breakfast at Oltukai with views of wildlife.
- At 9:00 we will embark on a walk of about an hour to the source of *Enkongu Narok* (Clear Waters) spring located on the boundary of the Park and Maasai communal land. For walking, birding, and cultural enthusiasts, this walk is a precious opportunity to learn about the traditional ecological and cultural knowledge of the community from Maasai warriors. We will observe elephants, wildebeests, zebras, buffaloes, impalas and other resident species along the way. Our vehicles will be on hand to drive those who prefer to ride or to walk a shorter distance.

- The walk will end at the Enkongu Narok Village which is home to Daniel Leturesh, one of the founders of MERC over 30 years ago. We will be welcomed by the community here with dancing and will be invited to join!
- After our visit at the village we will return to Oltukai for lunch.
- In the early afternoon, MERC board members will meet with Leturesh at Oltukai to discuss the past, present and future of MERC, and everyone is welcome! Others can take time to swim and relax instead.
- At around 4:00 we will enjoy a final wildlife viewing drive into Amboseli National Park, followed by dinner.

Day 11 : Tuesday, July 21	Flight home to U.S.
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- After breakfast, we will have time for more swimming and relaxing before our flights back to Nairobi and onward.
- We will have lunch and say our goodbyes before catching late afternoon flights back to Wilson airport in Nairobi and transferring to Jomo Kenyatta International airport for evening flights back home.

MAASAILAND 2020:

Additional Information

Food

Food is included in the trip cost except for dinner in Nairobi. Vegetarian meal will be available throughout.

Accommodation

All accommodation in Nairobi, Maasai Mara and Amboseli will be in five star lodges/camps. In Narok, we shall be staying at a three star but comfortable hotel.

Security

Though Maasailand may be one of the safest place you will ever find yourself, we still take all safety issues very seriously. Once in Maasailand our biggest concern is always wildlife and we maintain a well respected approach to safety through networks of community leaders and park management.

TOTAL COST: \$5995

INCLUDED

All transportation within Kenya including local flights, accommodation and meals in the Mara, Narok and Amboseli; breakfast and lunch in Nairobi. Water on game drives (only), services of Maasai naturalists, park entrance fees, and excursions in Nairobi: Karen Blixen House and Giraffe Center.

NOT INCLUDED

International flights, Kenyan visa, gratuities, bottled drinks and alcoholic beverages, laundry services, and optional excursions. Trip medical insurance is recommended and available through

www.amref.org/flying-doctors

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL: Each participant is responsible for making your own international travel arrangements and booking your flight. We request that all participants arrive in Nairobi the evening of Friday, July 10, and depart after 8 p.m. on July 21.

PAYMENT DEADLINES

Please send your check of \$1500 by December 15, 2019. Checks should be made out to MERC and mailed to:

MERC
563 Dameron Drive
Prescott, Arizona, 86301
Attn: MERC in Maasailand 2020

The remainder of the cost of the trip is due by April 1, 2020.

MORE INFORMATION

You will receive a pre-departure package once you submit your deposit which will include information about visas, travel insurance, and recommendations for immunizations. Additional information will include suggested readings, opportunities to learn the some Maa language, some basic Maasai history and culture and more on the places we will be staying, as well as detailed suggestions about what to pack and how else to prepare for your trip.

QUESTIONS?

Please feel free to contact us at any time.

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