



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**THE MINISTRY OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC),  
THE ASALS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**State Department for the ASALs and  
Regional Development**

Directorate of Research and Partnership



**DESERT SAFARIS CIRCUIT**

## **Introduction**

Kenya is among the top tourist destinations in Africa and is a must-see tropical paradise in Africa from diverse wildlife to breathtaking landscapes; the country bears the most alluring safari destinations. Arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya is endowed with unique tourist destinations in Kenya that falls in the various regions in Northern Kenya.

Mapping and marketing tourist attraction plays a key role towards popularizing the sites. The department has provided up-to-date tourism information about all the attractive features in ASALs.

In ASALs region, one can come across some of best and famous features that includes National Parks and Reserves, Museums, sand dunes, valleys, deserts, mountains, conservancies, eco-tourism spots, breathtaking sceneries, diverse cuisines, wildlife, birds and much more.

The department has identified and mapped the 8 Desert Safari Circuit in various destinations in the country. Some of the spots are famous however they require renewed marketing for the destination to increase awareness of their existence to realize their full potential.

### **The Desert Safaris Circuit**

The hottest and most arid region in Kenya in the Northern part of Kenya is a **safari hub** with multiple destinations that one can enjoy visiting. The area is very accessible since the road network in this region is good. The following are some of the key mapped features for desert safari circuits recommended for visiting;

1. **CHALBI DESERT**: Located in Marsabit County and covers an area of 100,000 KM<sup>2</sup>.



*Photo courtesy of Laba Africa Expectations*

The largest desert in Kenya with the following activities; camel racing, cultural festivals such as the Marsabit/Lake Turkana Cultural Festival, and guided safaris. It is characterized by rocky terrain, sand dunes, and occasional oasis.

2. **NYIRI DESERT**: This is also known as Nyika Desert.

The desert is Located in South Eastern part of Kenya and covers an area of 20,000 hectares. Rock hills, sand dunes and occasional shrubs characterize the landscape. It is situated between the Great Rift Valley and Lake Turkana. The climate in the Nyiri desert is hot and dry with temperature often exceeding 40°C. The desert is home to variety of wildlife including elephants, zebras, giraffes and numerous species of antelope.



Photo courtesy of <https://steemit.com>

### 3. **KAISUT DESERT:** Located in Turkana County and also known as Suguta Valley.

The desert is Located in North- Western part of Kenya and covers an area of 23,000 hectares. Rocky terrains, sand dunes and occasional shrubs characterize the landscape.



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It is known for its unique landscape, which includes sand dunes, rocky outcrops and dry riverbeds. It is also home of variety wildlife; camels, gazelles and desert foxes.

#### 4. TURKANA DESERT: Covers an area of 70,000 KM<sup>2</sup>.

The desert is Located in North- Western part of Kenya and covers an area of 77,000 hectares. Rocky hills, sand dunes and occasional oases characterize the landscape. It is considered as one of the harshest environments on earth due to its extreme temperatures, limited water sources and scarce vegetation.



*Courtesy of Betty Images, Google*

Despite its difficult condition, the desert is rich in natural resources including oil, natural gas and geothermal energy.

#### 5. MARALAL DESERT: The Desert is located in Samburu County, Kenya.

It covers an area of 10,000 hectares. Rocky hills, sand dunes and occasional shrubs characterize the landscape. It experiences hot and dry climatic condition.

Despite its aridity, it is also home of variety wildlife including; elephants, giraffes, zebras, antelopes and predators such as lions and leopards. The Desert is also known for its diverse cultures with several tribes living in the area.



© Maralal International Camel Derby

## 6. NGURUNIT DESERT: Located in Isiolo County.

It is home to the Ngurunit community, and is known for its unique rock formations.



[www.wildlifekenyasafari.com](http://www.wildlifekenyasafari.com)

**7. SAMBURU DESERT: Located in Samburu County.**

It is part of the larger Ewaso Nyiro ecosystem and is home to the Samburu community. It hosts unique sceneries for tourism activities.

**8. MAGADI DESERT: Located in Kajiado County.**

It is known for its soda ash mining activities and is home to several wild-life species. *Lake Magadi* is a scenic pink caustic lake, populated with flamingos but dominated by the large industrial soda ash.



[www.tsavonationalparkkenya.com](http://www.tsavonationalparkkenya.com)

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