



ILORA
RETREATS

A Guide to Your Stay

HANDBOOK

THE CONCEPT

Ilora is a place shaped by the rhythm of the Mara — unhurried, immersive, and deeply connected to its surroundings. Conceived as a retreat rather than simply a safari camp, it invites guests to experience the landscape at their own pace, whether through wildlife encounters, quiet moments in camp, meaningful conversations, or time spent in nature.

Every aspect of the experience has been thoughtfully considered to balance comfort, authenticity, and a sense of place, creating space to slow down, reconnect, and engage with the Mara in a more personal way.



WHERE WE ARE

Access

45-minute flight from Nairobi, followed by a short transfer from Olkiombo Airstrip. Approximately 6-7 hours by road from Nairobi.

Setting

Tucked within a secluded forested pocket of the Masai Mara National Reserve, between the Olare Orok and Talek rivers. Surrounded by riverine woodland, offering privacy, shade, and a strong sense of place.

The Mara Around Ilora

Set within one of the Mara's most ecologically rich landscapes, where forest, river, and open plains meet. Wildlife moves freely through the surrounding ecosystem, shaped by seasonal rhythms and natural migration routes.





WHAT WE ARE

Ilora is an intimate tented retreat within a preserved forest of the Masai Mara. Of its thirty acres of wilderness, less than five percent carries any structure — leaving space, privacy, and uninterrupted views.

Fourteen tented suites rest on raised wooden decks, set among discreet shared spaces — a reception lounge, dining pavilion, sky deck, and swimming pool — each open to the landscape rather than closed off by walls.

The retreat runs entirely on solar power, with an on-site purification (RO) plant supplying clean water throughout. Structures stay light on the land — canvas, wood, and natural materials — alongside a curio boutique, photo lounge, gallery and library, spa, and gym.

Camp layout — illustrative, not to scale

ACCOMMODATION

Fourteen private suites on thirty acres, each set deep in the bush so no suite looks onto another. Canvas and timber breathe with the heat and cool with the night — a stay connected to place, not separated from it.

Inside: a large bed oriented to the wilderness, a writing desk, a spacious bathtub and rustic ensuite shower. Binoculars, an in-room safe, an electricity-free fridge, and a phone to your butler. The minibar holds water, tea, coffee, local spirits and soft drinks; safari ponchos wait for cool mornings.

Every suite is fully solar-powered, with RO-purified water from every tap. On select clear evenings the Sky Deck becomes a Star Bed — a single king bed under the open southern sky, on request.



TENT AMENITIES

Private Veranda	Yes	Twin Bed Option	On Demand
Sun Beds	Yes	Extra Bed	On Demand
Personal Locker	Yes	Bathtub	Yes
WC	Yes	Telephone	Yes
Internet access	Yes	Hairdryer	Yes
In-room safe	Yes	Bathrobe	Yes
Safari Poncho	Yes	Binoculars	Yes
Personal care amenities	Yes	Beverages	Yes
Indoor shower	Yes	Refrigerator	Electricity-free
Ceiling Fan	Yes	Charger / plug type	220V · universal + USB
Wheel Chair	On Demand	Child Cot	On Demand
Air Conditioning	None — sealed tents	Mosquito Net	Not needed — sealed tents



DINING CONCEPTS

Full Board, Plated

Every stay is full board — unhurried, plated meals that draw on Kenyan ingredients and cooking traditions.

Chef's Foraged Lunch

There is a farm inside the camp. Each morning the chef walks the organic garden and builds lunch from what's at its peak — roughly half of what you eat is picked that morning. Bread, yoghurt and ice cream are made here, and nothing is added to the juice.

Bush Breakfast

A table set in the reserve during or after the morning drive — coffee, fresh fruit, warm bread, eggs over a field burner.

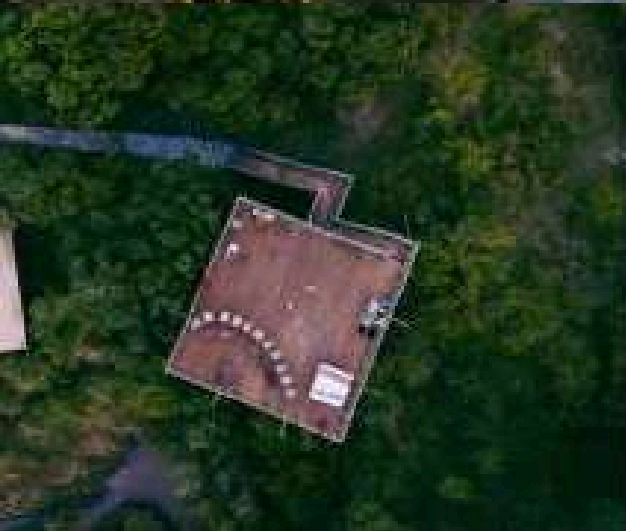
Bush Dinner

Tables carried into the open bush, set with lanterns and linen, with occasional Maasai song and dance. On selected evenings.

Koroga

A Kenyan communal cooking tradition — guests cook alongside the chef around a central open fire.





DINING VENUES

The Dining Tent

The main restaurant — half open to the bush, half sheltered. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, served slowly.

Sky Deck

An elevated platform open to the horizon — sunrise breakfasts, sundowners, or a private dinner under the stars.

Poolside

Light lunches and cold drinks at the water's edge, immersed in bushland — the unhurried part of the day.

Bahati Bar

Refined spirits, sundowners and quiet conversation, open through the day and long into the evening.

SAFARI EXPERIENCES

Game Drive

Dawn and late-afternoon drives in open-sided 4x4s (max six guests), 3–4 hours, guided by trackers who read the bush. Included in safari stays.

Balloon Safari

A pre-dawn lift-off and about 45 minutes over the plains, ending with a champagne bush breakfast in the field. Supplement.

Photography Safari

Vehicles set up with bean bags and low positioning, stops timed to light and behaviour. Max four guests; any camera welcome.

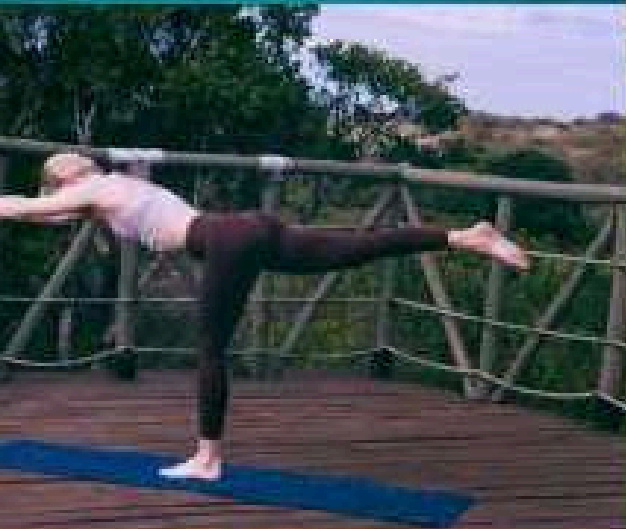
Bush Walk

The Mara on foot with a naturalist and armed guards — tracks, plants and birdsong a drive passes over. Gentle; all ages.

Bird Walk

First-light walks through 470+ species, our guides naming birds by call long before they come into view.





WELLNESS

Spa Sanctuary

Treatments from natural ingredients — in the spa tent with views, in the open-air bush spa, or in your suite, timed around your drives.

The Pool

Immersed in bushland and open skies; a gathering place for slow breakfasts, midday swims and dinners beside the water.

Sunrise Yoga

A guided morning practice on the Sky Deck, overlooking the wilderness as the Mara wakes.

Gym

A fitness space with outlooks onto forest and savannah.

EXPERIENCES

Celestial Observatory

Professional telescopes and a Vaonis Vespera 2 smart scope reveal planets, nebulae and galaxies, with live sky projection. Clear nights only.

Cinema Under Canvas

A thirty-foot open-air screen beside the fire, screening wildlife and nature films as the bush settles into night.

The Gallery and Library

Fifty-six photographs across eight panels, every one taken by our founder and most within an hour of camp. Beside them, books on the birds, mammals and people of this ecosystem — a fire, a deep chair, and nowhere you need to be.

The Photo Lounge

Two editing stations, card readers, chargers and a long screen. Cull the morning's frames before dinner, or leave it to our photographer.

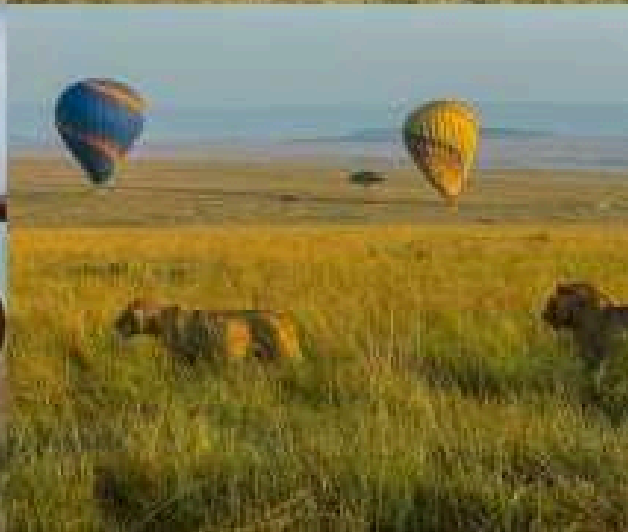
Cultural Encounters

Maasai village visits, a traditional naming ceremony, and legacy tree planting — into the life of this land's people.

Junior Rangers

Spear throwing, bead making, bush walks and storytelling for younger guests (5+). Childminding 6–10pm.





CONCIERGE

A discreet travel desk at reception assists with planning and reservations before and during a guest's stay.

Hot Air Ballooning

Sunrise flights over the Mara plains, with transfers arranged.

Nairobi Flights

Scheduled air connections between Nairobi and Olkiombo airstrip, with luggage handling coordinated.

Road Transfers

Road and airstrip transfers arranged on request.

Community Visits

Guided visits to nearby Maasai villages, offering respectful cultural exchange.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ilora occupies thirty acres inside the reserve; less than five percent carries any structure, and the rest is managed as habitat — not farmed, not landscaped. Canvas and timber sit on the land rather than in it, and can be removed without a trace.

The camp runs entirely on solar power, with RO-purified water from every tap and shower, and single-use plastics eliminated. Organic waste is composted back into the garden; everything else is carried out of the reserve. The Chef's Foraged Lunch is built from what the garden yields that morning.





FOOTPRINTS

Three Commitments

Every decision at Ilora is asked to serve the Mara rather than cost it — to the land, to the wild, and to the people.

Conservation Partners

A share of every stay supports three active field programmes, including the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project and the Mara Predators Programme.

Rangers' Forum

Candid, expert-led conversations with our guides and rangers on the wildlife, the ecosystem, and the pressures facing the Mara.

Community

Ilora stands beside the Maasai communities whose home this has always been — through employment, visits, and shared stewardship.

Legacy Tree Planting

Plant an indigenous tree on Ilora's land — a living record of your visit and a contribution to the ecosystem.

CLIMATE & HIGHLIGHTS

- The Masai Mara offers consistently strong wildlife viewing throughout the year
- Resident game remains abundant and consistent across all seasons
- Seasonal changes are felt more in landscape, light, and rainfall than in game density

June – October | Cooler & Drier

- Daytime 12°C to 25°C
- Cooler mornings and evenings
- Dry conditions and open plains
- Migration crossings may occur

November – March | Warmer & Short Rains

- Daytime 16°C to 27°C
- Short rains in November and December
- Calving season begins November–December
- Excellent birdlife

April – May | Long Rains

- Daytime 16°C to 27°C
- Lush landscapes; calving continues
- Preferential rates, low rush





A TYPICAL DAY AT ILORA

Early Morning

- Morning game drive in the Masai Mara
- Alternatively: sunrise yoga on the sky deck or a bush walk
- Bush breakfast in the reserve or breakfast at camp

Mid-Morning

- Nature-based activities for children
- Communal cooking experience
- Maasai cultural conversation
- Photography orientation in the Photo Lounge

Afternoon

- Lunch, then leisure — pool, spa, gym, gallery, or a village visit
- High tea at camp
- Afternoon game drive in the reserve

Evening & Night

- Sundowner on the deck or in the reserve
- Conservation or ranger talk by the fire; alternate evenings, open-air cinema
- Dinner in the chosen setting, guided stargazing
- Optional overnight sleep under open skies

YOUR STAY INCLUDES

Full Stay

- Accommodation in a tented suite
- All meals
- Filtered drinking water, tea, and coffee
- Use of gym and swimming pool
- Access to all camp-based activities
- Wi-Fi throughout the retreat
- Evening childminding (6:00–10:00 pm)

Safari Stay

- Everything in Full Stay, plus:
- Scheduled game drives in shared Land Cruisers
- Certified English-speaking guides
- Sundowner and bush breakfast (minimum three-night stay)
- Unlimited in-house drinks
- 5 pieces of laundry per person per day
- Return transfers to and from Olkiombo Airstrip





CARE, IF YOU NEED IT

In camp

A qualified nurse lives at Ilora full time — not on call from a neighbouring camp. The medical room holds snake antivenom, antibiotics, analgesics and the common medicines a traveller runs out of, along with intravenous fluids, oxygen and wound care. Our team is CPR trained. Most of what happens on safari is dealt with here and goes no further.

Forty-five minutes away

Talek Health Centre has served this part of the Mara since 1991. It has a resident doctor, an equipped operating theatre, blood transfusion services and a telemedicine link to specialists elsewhere in Kenya. Our nurse knows the staff there and travels with you.

Nairobi, by air

For anything serious an air ambulance is called to Olkiombo airstrip, ten minutes from camp, and flies to Wilson Airport. Counting the flight out and back, reaching Wilson is usually about two hours from the call. Nairobi West Hospital is roughly five minutes from the runway; M.P. Shah and Aga Khan are in Parklands. Aircraft fly in daylight — after dark the road remains.

Please tell us about allergies, conditions and regular medication before you arrive. We would rather know more than less.

THE FOUNDER & THE PEOPLE



Ilora was built by a wildlife photographer. After a corporate career, Alankar Chandra left in 2016 for years in the field across India, East Africa and beyond. He came to know the Mara not as a visitor but as a student — and Ilora is what that knowledge became. Every photograph in this handbook is his own.



Harrison Nampaso — General Manager

Born and raised in the Maasai Mara, with seventeen years in hospitality and leadership at the Mara's established camps. A certified bird guide and naturalist, he leads the resident team with warmth and a deep sense of place.



Daniel Ndambuki — Sales Director

Over ten years in premium hospitality sales, building partnerships and guest relationships across international markets. With his reservations team, he is a trusted point of connection from first enquiry to arrival.

FACT SHEET

CAMP

Maximum guests	35
Number of tents	14
Family accommodation	Available
Pilot / guide accommodation	Available
Room type	Tent · 700 sq ft
Distance between tents	70 ft
Check-in / Check-out	13:00 / 11:00

FACILITIES

Power	Solar, 24-hour
Internet	WiFi throughout
Wine store / cellar	Yes
Bush dinner	Yes
Bar	Yes
Interactive kitchen	Yes
Swimming pool	Yes
Wellness offering	Yes
Gym	Yes
Photo lounge	Yes
Gallery & library	Yes
Wheelchair access	Yes
Complimentary laundry	On safari stays





FAQS

What driver accommodation is available?

Four separate driver tents with twin occupancy, attached washrooms, and a dedicated mess.

What payment methods are accepted?

All major debit and credit cards, and M-Pesa. Cash payments are not accepted.

What wildlife can be seen?

Lions, leopards, cheetahs, elephants, giraffes, the wildebeest migration, and over 470 bird species.

Are there mosquito nets?

No — the tents are sealed, which is why none are needed. Ceiling fans are fitted throughout.

What time zone is the Masai Mara in?

East Africa Time (EAT), UTC +3.

Can Masai Mara be reached by flight?

Yes, flights from Nairobi take approximately 45 minutes. Reservations can be arranged through your travel agent or our travel desk.

More FAQs: ilora-retreats.com/mara/faq/



Your journey into the wild continues.

RESERVATIONS

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MASAI MARA · KENYA