

Flying Kenya: Land, park your airplane and enjoy the place

(Update October 2005)

Prepared by Yves Degiacomi

WARNING

Information was valid at time of last visit
NOT FOR NAVIGATION/LANDING/TAXIING/PARKING/TAKE OFF USE !!!!
Check first AIP, NOTAMs, etc. as well as actual conditions
Some are Private, and you may need owner's permission before use

About this Leaflet:

The aim of this leaflet is to encourage aviation enthusiasts to fly more over beautiful Kenya and enjoy this flying paradise. At the end of the compendium, foreign pilots will find information about renting planes and locating an instructor. Definitely, for pilots new to Kenya, it is wiser to fly first with an instructor and safely build up licence equivalence. Having a GPS on board is a good idea. Disappearance of fuel has been reported at a few airports/airfields: if you intend to lose sight of your aircraft for a while, measure and write down the levels in the tanks after landing and compare the figures before next take off. The below information is purely aviation-friendly and none of the statements was meant to harm anyone's sensitivities and/or financial interest(s). Should you feel differently, please accept our apologies, email us and we shall remove the offending part(s). Feel free to feed this initial database with additional information. As for the well-known "Guide Michelin", information is totally neutral, independent and non-business oriented. The author did not receive any money to mention a facility in this leaflet and paid the normal resident rates for food and lodging. If you can recommend other places, please email me and I shall plan to land there. Places of interest are classified in three categories: **Inside National Parks, walking distance to parking area, Get transportation.**

Inside National Parks:

Most airstrips are well attended/maintained by KWS staff. Remember that wildlife has the right-of-way and that if they decide to remain grazing on the runway you will have to divert to an alternate. The author was always warmly welcomed, and fees payments were gently settled according to the tariff. Remember that you are not supposed to walk away from your plane. KWS staff often help with transport at no additional cost. Making a reasonably low pass above staff housing will inform them that you intend to land and may need a pick-up. For lodging, KWS has bandas and former warden's houses to rent. So, bring your own food and beverages (bedding, cutlery and cooking utensils are usually available). You can, of course, also check-in at private lodges and tented camps. It is a good idea anyway to fly with some food and water, your Swiss army pocket knife, mosquito repellent, a good blanket or a sleeping bag, in case of While taking off, reduce noise as soon as practical and respect the MIN 1'500 Ft AGL prescribed over National Parks. All accommodations and prices of KWS facilities are available from www.kws.org. Masai Mara Game Reserve is not managed by KWS, but landing fees are similar.

Finch Hatton's: Tsavo West: Private tented camp: Caution: heavy turbulence on approach around mid-day. Spending the night with the sound of the hippos in the pond is an unforgettable experience. To my family's taste, one of the best cuisines in Kenya. Also, calling in advance, you can arrange to have an excellent stopover lunch, in style, on your way to/from the Coast. Peter Frank, the owner, is also a pilot with a C182 RG. Tel. 045 622 468 fax 045 622473 finchhattons@iconnect.co.ke and www.finchhattons.com

Intrepids: Masai Mara: Private tented camp: Long runway with wild animals all around. Tents are well furnished, and the wake-up service comes with tee/coffee and biscuits. After that you go on your first game drive and come back for a substantial breakfast. You can ask your eggs to be done a thousand different ways with several ingredients. Dinner is served according to a choice menu (good initiative). Lunch is however the buffet type. E-mail: info@heritagehotels.com.

Ithumba: Tsavo East: Caution: High hill on the East (3450 FT). A new lodging facility is currently (July 2005) under construction close to the SE of the airstrip. Within one-hour flight (110 - 130 Kt) from Nairobi, it is already a nice spot for picnics and a siesta in the shade. Some pilots are involved in the project, so I guess the fly and enjoy-life at this place will be a place to mention in next leaflet edition for our week-ends. The hill to the East is magic and is said to be a nice spot for sundowners.

Kamboyo: Tsavo West. You can rent the former KWS warden's house for groups up to 10 people (about five rooms sleeping one to three persons each). Bring your own food and drinks, the caretaker will take care of the rest. Rumour has it that cold drinks are available from the staff cafeteria. Also sending a car with supplies and fuel from Nairobi/Mombasa/ Malindi (Kamboyo is closed to Mtito Andei gate) could be a good solution considering your weight and balance sheet. It has an elevated veranda for game viewing around a small pond, while enjoying a post-flight drink (caution: the wooden stairs at the back of the veranda are steep, especially if your style is to put many "s" to drinks).

Kilaguni: Tsavo West: Private Lodge. The aircraft parking apron is next to the lodge and you can stop for lunch or spend the night. Probably the quickest way to have a lunch break on your way to/from the Coast, although there are other alternatives in Tsavo West for lunch breaks, avoiding the usual buffet (see above/hereunder). www.serenahotels.com/Kenya/Kilaguni

Kinna: Meru: A nice way to discover this National Park if you don't like long hours in a car on "tiring" roads. While there, it is sometimes possible to make a deal with private 4X4 drivers to go on a game drive. Animals here are not used to tourists and cars and are still wisely timid ("craintifs" in French). A nice change from Amboseli and the Mara., but a clear reminder of the poachers' era of the 70's- 80's. You could get a lift to KWS Bweitaga Bandas with cooperative KWS staff. Giraffes and elephants passed near the bandas when we were there..

Lake Jipe: Tsavo West: Caution: While booking, it may be advisable to ask the banda staff to remove the elephants' and other big stools from the runway. Enjoy the shores of the Lake from the veranda of the KWS banda (a few hundred meters from the parking apron) with a magnificent view on the Pare Mountains (in Tanzania). Three rooms, each with two beds (the upper side of the wall is mosquito net), simple, but the caretaker will be happy to help guests to feel at home. You can rent a boat, and bird watching is nearly as impressive as in Lake Baringo.

Naishi: Nakuru: Caution: An easy approach in an incredible scenery so your attention may be wandering, but beware of animals (grass on the runway is probably sweeter). KWS banda a few hundred meters from the parking apron. Maximum 8 pax in the main house and annex. A real getaway in the middle of one of my favourite parks.

Satao: Tsavo East: Private Tented Camp: Caution: high power line north of airfield. Free pick up from/to Satao Airstrip if you are staying there. With a water point, you are pretty sure to see the "pink" elephants during your stay (because they like to cover themselves with laterite dust). Reservation sales@southerncrosssafaris.com Contact: 0733 62 20 22 or 043 30415.

Voi KWS: Tsavo East: A possible stopover between Nairobi and the Coast if your passengers don't like long hauls. The view from the dining terrace is extraordinary; food is good but the usual buffet. Sleeping there and hiring a car for a game drive is an option we enjoyed at the end of December 2004. Transport and lunch can be arranged with Voi Safari Lodge. Call Manager Sarah Tomno 043 30019 & 30027 voilodge@kenya-safari.co.ke

Coming next Update: **Sala** KWS airfield, Tsavo East, along the Galana River.

Walking Distance from parking:

Congrieve: Mbweha Camp Caution: Could be gliders in the sky and game on the runway. Walking distance to Camp. Private Aircraft are most welcome: Good lunch: two menus (congratulations: no buffet !). Landing fees: KSH 200 and a conservancy fee: KSH 100 per person. They have comfortable Bandas and you can even pitch your tent. Call Kate (Murimi) 0721 840150. mbwehacamp@wanachi.com

Delamere's Camp: Jersey Hall: Caution: Runway North of Lake Elementaita with high trees on both sides at the northern end: Landing northwards (turning final above the lake is a pilot's dream approach), allow enough reserve for power/rate of climb to clear the big trees in case of going around when warthogs cross the runway. Do not mistake it with another nearby (NW) airstrip (very very short). Home for research projects. Parking the

aircraft and walking ON the Lake is also an experience. You can also hire the place as a self-catering facility for more than 20 people. info@jerseyhall.com & www.jerseyhall.com.

Fig Tree: Caution: RWY 09 for slow short landings by real bush pilots, down/updrafts on short final above the river, avoid landing on RWY27, and beware of small fence on the south side of the runway. You can stop for a drink, have lunch or spend the night at the lodge. Camping next to your plane is also possible. Get Mr Tinkoi as askari (watchman). You are outside the park, so no entry fees unless you decide to go on a game drive that can be organised by the lodge (dozens of wildlife species to be admired/spotted in less than three hours: this is the Mara !). Tel 020 222 14 39, 221 83 21, www.madahotels.com & www.southtravels.com/kenya/marafightree. Also the home of Adventure Balloon Safari (an experience you will remember and dream of all your life).

Green Park: Great Rift Valley Lodge & Golf Resort: Caution: Check for potential runway obstruction(s) before landing. Airfield elevation is high and whichever side you take off, you start with an uphill slope. Nice walk from airfield to lodge (beware of flying golf balls) or call assistant manager Anthony Mbehelo for a lift. 0733 773145. Buffet is good and the view of Lake Naivasha is spectacular. You can also take off early from Nairobi area and have your breakfast there as a good start for the day. Golfers can spend more time on the greens. www.heritage-eastafrika.com

Kangetchwa: Keshue Lodge, SE of MzimaSprings. 16 Nm of Kilaguni, R 165°. This lodge is just outside the national park with a view towards the sunset (hence the Kilimanjaro). You can walk to the lodge, but you will most likely get a lift if you first fly over the big tukul. It is eco-friendly and with a conservancy fund for local social activities. Furniture is home made as Marcus Russell is turning natural wood into pieces of art. 4marcus@swiftkenya.com 0733 939 020 & 0733 630 011. Probably a place where you can enjoy a non-buffet stopover for lunch on your way to/from the coast (but I forgot to ask if that is possible).

Mfangano: Lake Victoria: Caution: Undulating runway, lots of people on the field (make a low pass first), high tree before THR 16, avoid landing THR 34, taxi at low speed especially near the southern end to the parking apron. Stressful landings and take - offs but beautiful approach. Park at the Southern end and the watchman will, for a soft drink, take care of your airplane. You can walk to the village for a soft drink and/or buy fresh fish. Recent pilot reports indicate that you may be charged landing fees. Two tourists' lodges are nearby, but I did not had the time to visit.

Orly (Oloolotikosh): Caution: read first AIP supplement S24/04 of August 2004 . There may be cross wind(s). Transponder Mode C (SQUAWK 2077) compulsory. Contact staff on ground: Enoch 0734 664 4222 or Issa 0723 44 09 72. Bring your own drinks and food and enjoy the view so close to busy Nairobi. Take away any rubbish/refuse. Lunch, dinner & accommodation at Whistling Thorns, about 10 Km away (0722 721933 & 0733 703637).

Rusinga Island: Lake Victoria: Caution: be sure the fence at northern end is removed, land aligned on the centreline and also avoid southern end. Otherwise, a smooth green/grass airfield. You can park your airplane right next to the entrance. Beautiful Lodge on the Lake. A sun-downer on the jetty, admiring fishermen at work, is great. Call for reservations: some nice deals in low season.

Email: rusinga@lvsteamship.com

Ziwani: A well-organised tented camp facing a river, outside the park. It is just next to an entrance gate to Tsavo West National Park. You can park your plane right at the front door. Go for a "Nature Walk", it's GREAT. Booking through Eastern & Southern Safaris Ltd. 020 24 28 28 & 21 23 71 & 0722 832 795.

Get Transport to the Place

Kigio/Malewa: The facility is dedicated to the Rothschild giraffe. Another place where you can stop for lunch. You can also spend a romantic night or hire the whole self-catering lodge and enjoy the lodge with your friends. Twenty-three of us enjoyed (Jan 05) the atmosphere and the friendly staff. Call Milli 050 30312 or 50063: they will most likely pick you up at the airstrip even for a drink on the riverside www.malewariverlodge.com, email: info@malewariverlodge.com

Kijipwa: N/S grass airfield on the coast, North of Mombasa (speak with Mombasa APP on 120.3 MHz to inform them about your intentions). Reasonable landing fee (KSH 500.-). The Mombasa Flying Club is (Dec 04) building a wonderful club house next to a huge Baobab tree. LDG info available from Werner Schillinger 0733 611 217

Lake Baringo, Kampi Ya Samaki: Caution for your propeller: gravel RWY. David Roberts Camp: We had free pick up from/to Airstrip as we stayed there for the night. Enjoy simple camping or renting a dream cottage. Food at the restaurant is good (menu, no buffet!) but allow some time for preparation (order and go walking to the jetty). Besides Roberts Camp there is also a conventional lodge and a tented camp on the island. Going on a boat ride is a must: hippos, crocodiles and a paradise for ornithologists. Contact: 051 851879 & 0721 307033 robertscamp@africaonline.co.ke.

Mweiga: Caution: Nice grass airstrip, but only land and take off on RWY 13. Next to main road. A bit far away, but a nice walk to Aberdare Country Club. You can probably also board a matatu after discussing the price. This is also the best airport for visiting Nyeri Town.

Shompole: Lodge: North of Lake Natron at the border with Tanzania: Caution: don't land on runway close to the lodge when wet: this is a "dry" lake airstrip. There is an (nearly!) all weather (but dusty) airstrip a bit further North. You can book for the night(s) thru www.shompole.com/eco.html Unfortunately the new management discourages "lunch only" visits. Hope this will change.

Solio Ranch: A place to visit: a must if you like special wildlife parks: dedicated to the rhinos. Petra can arrange a half-day safari/picnic with her own 4X4 (given the Black Rhinos' unpredictable mood it's good to use somebody else's car). She said she can also accommodate people in four round huts at her homestead, somewhere NW of Solio and pick you at another (!) nearby airfield (I plan to check that for you) Petra: 0733 734 619 & 0721 656 699, petra@africaonline.co.ke, www.farmurlaub-afrika.de

Tassia: Caution: long but sloped RWY, stay in the middle especially when wet: RWY25 preferred for LDG (uphill). Exclusive Lodge. You rent the whole place for yourselves and bring your food and beverages. Very nice staff. Walking around with them makes a difference from the Matatu tourism style. www.tassia.com.

Taita Hills: Caution: normally LDG 04, T/O 22. Good practice for landing on sloped runways. The hotel next to the runway is not operating for the time being, but you can have a cold drink at the bar. Landing fee is reasonable (Kshs. 200). You can also sleep at near-by Salt Lick, but negotiate the transfer fee before signing in. Google "Taita Hilton Kenya".

Ukunda: Caution: contact Mombasa APP on 120.3 MHz to tell them you are going there or taking off from there. "Entry" airport to the white beaches of Diani. Friendly AD staff. Kenya School of Flying (KSOF) is around with an instructor (Peter 0733 577 740 & 040 320 2655). Taxi: Ms Jane 0733 789 936 (KSH 500.- one way to/from town). For lodging, just "google" "Diani" on the internet and make your choice. ("Diani Marine" has been reported to be a nice place!)

Renting a Plane / Instructors at Wilson Airport:

There are more possibilities, but those are the ones I know. Consult their Web sites for last information about obtaining a Kenyan validation of your ICAO licence, or go for a full conversion. "Validations " are relatively straightforward, requiring only a check flight with a "Commercial Pilot who is rated and current on type". Make sure you bring your Medical, and your licence and log book. Calling Kenya from abroad: + 254 (remove the first "0" below).

- **CMC:** It is where I prepared my conversion for the Kenyan licence. Tel. 020 60 44 95 & 60 44 18/9, Fax 020 60 44 04. Email: adidas@cmcmotors.com
- **KSOF:** Kenya School of Flying: Tel. 020 50 03 74 & 50 21 27 & 60 78 92, 0733 777 582 & 0721 754 580, fax 020 50 36 51. They also have branches in Ukunda and Malindi. Email: flyingschool@swiftkenya.com, www.flyingschool-kenya.com.
- **Yellow Wings:** Most of the nice places described above were recommended by Christian Strebel the English/German/French speaking boss: Tel. 0733-885 210, 020- 606313 & 601093, Fax 020-605725, yellowwings@swiftkenya.com, www.yellowwings.com

The author:

Swiss, non-professional, purely hobby pilot

Email: y.degiacom@verbier.ch

The plane used:

1957 C182, no STOL devices, normal tyres, but long-range tanks

May 2004 to July 2005

Warning: The following GPS data, altitudes, runways (RWY) orientations and ownerships are purely indicative:
AGAIN: NOT FOR NAVIGATION / LANDING / TAXIING / PARKING / TAKE OFF !!!! Check first AIP, NOTAMs, other official publications and actual condition of runways.

Name of Airport/field	Run by	RWY	Altitude	Position
Congrieve	PVT	16/34	5800 ft	S0 29 02.2 E36 07 27.7
Delamare's Camp	PVT	16/34	5800 ft	S0 24 09.2 E36 14 09.8
Fig Tree (THR09)	PVT	09/27	5050 ft	S1 26 05.0 E35 11 35.7
Finch Hatton's	PVT	17/35	2500 ft	S2 56 33.4 E37 54 51.2
Green Park	PVT	01/19	6791 ft	S0 40 10.8 E36 18 37.0
Intrepid Mara	PVT	08/26	5000 ft	S1 24 31.6 E35 06 35.1
Ithumba	KWS	16/34	1700 ft	S2 13 00.2 E38 23 12.8
Kamboyo	KWS	02/20 & 12/30	2805 ft	S2 45 00.0 E38 07 12.0
Kangetchwa	PVT	16/34	3050 ft	S3 10 11.5 E38 08 16.3
Kigio (Malewa)	PVT	14/32	6734 ft	S0 34 04.0 E36 23 00.1
Kijipwa	PVT	18/36	40 ft	S3 50 35.3 E39 48 18.6
Kilaguni (HKKL)	KWS	12/30 & 01/19	2750 ft	S2 54 38.2 E38 03 54.6
Kinna Meru	KWS	01/19 & 15/33	2000 ft	N0 09 54.3 E38 11 42.5
Lake Baringo (Kampi Ya Samaki)	GOV	03/21	3000 ft	N0 36 11.4 E36 00 46.8
Lake Jipe	KWS	14/32	2400 ft	S3 37 01.0 E37 46 44.1
Mfangano	PVT	16/34	3750 ft	S0 27 43.6 E34 03 43.7
Mweiga	PVT	13/31	6298 ft	S0 20 39.6 E36 54 57.7
Naishi	KWS	18/36	5500 ft	S0 27 23.7 E36 05 06.0
Orly (Olooitikosh)	PVT	10/28	5600 ft	S1 34 52.3 E36 48 46.2
Rusinga	PVT	01/19	3800 ft	S0 24 45.6 E34 08 33.0
Satao	KWS	15/33	1400 ft	S3 23 37.5 E38 56 48.7
Shompole (Dry Lake)	PVT	17/35	2050 ft	S2 01 13.2 E36 02 20.8
Shompole ("All" weather)	PVT	17/35	2000 ft	S1 58 32.1 E36 02 54.2
Solio Ranch	PVT	13/31	6300 ft	S0 14 42.6 E36 53 05.6
Taita Hills	PVT	04/22	3150 ft	S3 30 44.6 E38 15 00.8
Tassia	PVT	09/27	3400 ft	N0 25 34.4 E37 20 02.5
Ukunda	GOV	18/36	98 ft	S4 17 46.6 E39 34 16.1
Voi Park	KWS	06/24 & 15/33	1700 ft	S3 21 45.8 E38 36 18.6
Ziwani	PVT	09/27	3025 ft	S3 13 09.7 E37 48 02.6
Grid: LAT/LONG Hddd° mm' ss.s"		GOV :Government		
Datum: WGS84		KWS :Kenya Wildlife Service		
		PVT :Private		