

Activities offered when staying at these Saruni Basecamp properties:  
**Saruni Samburu / Saruni Rhino**

## SAMBURU – KALAMA & SERA CONSERVANCIES

Each region of Kenya offers different surprises and delights. We've grouped the camps and lodges in the Saruni Basecamp by region (or geolocation); within each geolocation, some activities are available at all properties, while others are exclusive to specific properties (as indicated).

Samburu (Kalama/Sera geolocation) features two properties: **Saruni Samburu** and **Samburu Rhino**. Given the quite different nature of the habitats and offerings at each property, their activities are listed and described separately.

Each day during your safari, your guide and the lodge/camp team will recommend activities based on your specific interests, and factors such as the season, weather, recent sightings, and any special occasions.



ACTIVITY / EXPERIENCE		Saruni Samburu		Saruni Rhino	
		Included	Payable extra	Included	Payable extra
Game Drives (in open-sided vehicles) & Wildlife	Guided Shared Day Game Drives	✓	×	✓	×
	Guided Shared Night Game Drives	✓	×	✓	×
	Picnics, Bush Meals & Sundowners	✓	×	✓	×
	Wildlife Sightings at Waterhole	✓	×	✓	×
	Birdwatching	✓	×	✓	×
	Reteti Elephant Sanctuary Excursion	×	✓	×	✓
	Rewilding Rhino Calf Visit – Loijipu	×	×	✓	×
	Rare Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse Spectacular	×	×	✓	×
Walking / Hiking	Black Rhino Tracking on Foot	×	×	✓	×
	Guided Walking Safaris / Bush Walks	✓	×	✓	×
	Sacred Mountain Trek - Mount Ololokwe Excursion	×	✓	×	×
	Mountain Hiking	✓	×	✓	×
Educational / Family / Cultural & Community Awareness	Tribal Storytelling Through Song & Dance / Fireside Chats	✓	×	✓	×
	Warriors Academy - Family Activity	✓	×	×	×
	Cultural Village & Local Community Visit	×	✓	×	×
	Local Samburu Caves & Rock Art Visit	✓	×	×	×
	The Singing Wells Visit & Walk	×	×	✓	×
Eco / Sustainability	Seedballs Kenya Regreening Project	×	✓	×	✓
Wellness	Complimentary Massage Treatments	✓	×	×	×
	Additional Massages & Treatments	×	✓	×	×
	Swimming	✓	×	✓	×
Specialist	Photographic Hide by Waterhole	✓	×	×	×
	Stargazing	✓	×	×	×
	Scorpion & Night Torch Safari	✓	×	×	×
	Helicopter Excursions	×	✓	×	×
	Traditional Ceremonies & Blessings	×	✓	×	×

## KALAMA & SERA CONSERVANCY ACTIVITIES

SAMBURU, NORTHERN KENYA

### Game Drives & Wildlife

#### Guided, Shared Day Game Drives (in open-sided vehicles)

Guided by Samburu warriors in traditional attire, shared game drives are the best way to explore the Kalama Conservancy and Samburu National Reserve. Discover the unique, rugged landscapes of northern Kenya, and look out for the endemic ‘Samburu Special Five’, including the majestic Grévy’s zebra. Within the Samburu National Reserve, the focus is very much on the Ewaso Nyiro river – lined with iconic doum palms, this waterway is a lifeline for large herds of elephant and many other creatures. Game drives include a tea and coffee stop in a scenic spot. From Saruni Rhino, you can explore the combined 800,000 acres of pristine Kenyan wilderness protected by the Sera Conservancy and Sera Rhino Sanctuary.



#### Guided, Shared Night Game Drives (in open-sided vehicles)

At night, the wilderness is transformed into a magical world of sound, inhabited by nocturnal creatures that are seldom seen by day. Night drives are permitted in the Kalama and Sera Conservancies (but not in the Samburu National Reserve) and offer the opportunity to see a different side to northern Kenya. You may well spot animals and birds that are new to you – perhaps even some you’ve never heard of. Night is often when some of the most dramatic wildlife action – including hunts – takes place.



#### Picnics, Bush Meals & Sundowners

Our delicious, Italian-inspired cuisine tastes even better when enjoyed in a scenic bush location. We offer several ways to incorporate bush meals and sundowners into our game drives, including taking a picnic hamper to enjoy on the banks of the Ewaso Nyiro river, or your choice of drinks for the traditional safari sundowner (taken, as its name suggests, at the end of the day as the sun sinks in the sky and the shadows lengthen). Our signature bush meal is dinner in a dry riverbed or other secret location, illuminated by a campfire and lanterns, and accompanied by traditional Samburu singing and dancing. Saruni Rhino meanwhile benefits from having a dry riverbed snaking right past the camp. This has given us the perfect setting for some of the best safari traditions, including sundowners (traditional end-of-day safari drinks), bush breakfasts and dinners. In fact, we consider this riverbed to be our playground.





### Waterhole for Wildlife Sightings

In areas as dry as the Kalama and Sera Conservancies, water is worth its weight in gold, and animals and birds know that the rocky waterhole in the dry riverbed in front of Saruni Rhino and the waterhole below Saruni Samburu are two of the few reliable year-round sources of water for miles around. This means that there is a regular parade of animals (and especially elephant) coming down to the waterhole to drink and bathe, and you can watch them come and go in complete comfort from your room or the shared lounge. Our 'bush TV' may only have one channel, but we can promise you that it never gets boring!

### Birdwatching

Over 400 types of bird have been recorded in our traversing area, which means that however arid the landscape may seem, you're rarely out of sight of a colourful, interesting species. From the Somali ostrich (one of the Samburu Special Five) to sandgrouse that fly great distances to collect water for their chicks using their absorbent chest feathers, the birds of northern Kenya are every bit as fascinating as the animals. Our guides have extremely sharp eyes and are experts in bird recognition, even when all they have to work with is a snippet of song. We can promise that even if you don't arrive at Samburu as a birder, you'll certainly leave as one!



### Reteti Elephant Sanctuary Excursion

Located in the Namunyak Conservancy, a visit to the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary gives you an immersive conservation experience, and gives you a unique window into the world of Kenya's elephants. One of the first community-run sanctuaries in the country, Reteti is located in the Namunyak Wildlife Conservancy adjacent to Kalama. The main focus of the sanctuary is on rescuing, rehabilitating and ultimately rewilding orphaned and abandoned elephant calves. The cost\* of visiting the Sanctuary is donated in full to Reteti, to purchase essential supplies such as milk formula, feeding bottles and veterinary medicines. (excluding the transportation costs). This uplifting and eye-opening excursion includes a lunch-stop close to the Sanctuary at the appropriately named Bull Elephant Rock Painting.

### Re-wilding Rhino Calf Visit – Loijipu

Loijipu, the second black rhino calf born in the Sera Rhino Sanctuary, was unfortunately abandoned by his nervous mother when he was just a few days old. He was then hand-reared by volunteers at the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary. In a ground-breaking project, he then returned to Sera to see if he could be successfully 'rewilded' – that is, prepared for a successful return to a fully wild existence. As part of this process, the amount of time he spends with humans is being steadily reduced, but you can still visit him to learn more about how black rhinos spend their days, and for unique photographic and filming opportunities.





**Rare Lichtenstein’s Sandgrouse Spectacular**

Lichtenstein’s Sandgrouse is a remarkable bird that has special chest feathers that can be used to soak up and carry water over great distances – all the way back to their thirsty chicks in the nest. Sera Conservancy is one of the best places in Kenya to witness a remarkable daily occurrence, as literally thousands of these birds arrive en masse at waterholes, land, take on water, and depart again before darkness. The sound of so many beating wings all at once, plus the continuous movement of thousands of birds, is simply breath-taking, and an experience that we would recommend to all our guests. While Kenya is known for the Great Wildebeest Migration, this less famous but no less enthralling wildlife event deserves to be just as well-known – but we actually don’t mind that it’s still one of northern Kenya’s best-kept secrets.



**Walking / Hiking**

**Black Rhino Tracking on Foot**

This unique activity in one of the world’s first community conservancies, Sera, is an opportunity to approach the highly endangered black rhino – on foot. Accompanied by a Samburu guide and experienced Sera Conservancy ranger, you will initially look for signs of the rhinos during a game drive, before parking some distance away (to avoid disturbing these shy creatures) and approaching on foot, making use of your guide’s exceptional bushcraft and tracking skills for a thrilling yet entirely safe experience. This very special activity is included in your daily conservation fees, which are in turn paid directly to the community to enable their efforts to preserve this species. (One rhino tracking session per day is included; additional rhino tracking experiences are payable extra and subject to availability).



**Guided Walking Safaris / Bush Walks**

A guided bush walking safari or bush walk in the company of one of our Samburu guides makes the perfect counterpoint to your game drives. Explore the Kalama and Sera Conservancies at a much slower pace, pausing to notice the tiny details that contribute to the mosaic of this remarkable ecosystem. Your guide will reveal many of the secrets of Samburu, such as the meaning of tracks and signs on the ground, and the traditional medicinal uses of the plants you see. They will also share ancient local wisdom, and myths and proverbs about wild birds and animals. Walks are planned for the cooler times of the day, either early morning or later afternoon, after which you can enjoy either breakfast or dinner in camp. No special equipment is required, but we recommend sturdy footwear and a hat for protection from the sun.



## KALAMA & SERA CONSERVANCY ACTIVITIES

SAMBURU, NORTHERN KENYA



### Sacred Mountain Trek – Mount Ololokwe Excursion

The Samburu people have a deep and abiding connection to the landscape of northern Kenya, and Mount Ololokwe in particular. Clearly visible from Saruni Samburu, this mountain stands tall both literally and in terms of its significance to the Samburu, who consider it sacred. Thanks to our close relationship with local communities, we have obtained permission for hikes to the summit of Mount Ololokwe – an experience that is both respectful and spectacular. The hike (which begins at the foot of the mountain, after a 30-minute dawn drive from the lodge) is guided by local warriors, with the pace adjusted to ensure your comfort. Viewpoint stops for breakfast and lunch are included.

### Mountain Hiking

The landscapes of northern Samburu are a hiker's dream – dramatic, rugged climbs leading to astonishing viewpoints from where you can enjoy panoramic vistas as far as the snow-capped Mount Kenya. Guided by local Samburu warriors, you can choose from a selection of routes graded by difficulty and the time needed to complete them. Our full-day hikes are planned so that you enjoy a picnic lunch in the shade during the hottest part of the day, and let you reach parts of Kalama that very few outsiders have ever seen.

### Educational / Family / Cultural & Community Awareness

#### Tribal Storytelling Through Song & Dance

The Samburu people have a rich heritage, including song and dance, that they are justifiably proud of, and have kept alive for centuries. On special occasions, the warriors will stage an entirely authentic performance that uses exuberant sound, athletic movement and even humour to tell creation myths, parables about animals, and cautionary tales about how people interact. As a guest of Saruni Samburu, you're welcome to take pictures or video – or better still, put your camera or phone down and join in. All you need is a sense of rhythm and your dancing (or jumping) shoes!

#### Warriors Academy – Family Activity

The ultimate family safari activity, our Warriors Academy programme is ideal for kids of all ages, and their parents. It can be designed to fit into a morning or an afternoon, or an entire day. This is a chance to not just learn about the traditional Samburu way of life, but to actually live it. Under the watchful eyes of a Samburu moran (warrior), trainee warriors will learn essential skills like how to light a fire, and how to find food and water in the wild. Our Warriors Academy programme adds extra nuance and meaning to your entire safari experience, and can be particularly eye-opening for kids.

## Cultural Village & Local Community Visit

The Samburu are not merely a cultural curiosity – to us, they are neighbours and friends, and our partners in conservation. They are the ancient custodians of this remarkable land, and we have learned a great deal from them about everything from saving water to building structures that stay cool by day and warm by night. Our mutually respectful cultural visits are opportunities for you to both ask and answer questions – the Samburu will be just as interested in your world and lifestyle, as you are in theirs. Our community visits are a timely reminder that while people may be outwardly different, we share many of the same concerns and aspirations: how to provide for our children, how to find meaning in life, and how to protect the planet we all depend upon. The cost of this activity goes directly to the village.

## Local Samburu Caves & Rock Art Visit

The Samburu have inhabited this region for countless generations, and they have left their subtle mark on the landscape. However, given their sustainable way of life, you have to look hard to find permanent traces of their presence. These include well-preserved examples of ‘white rock art’ in caves close to Saruni Samburu – these can be visited by vehicle (followed by a short walk), and reveal the priorities, hopes and fears of the people who created them, many decades ago. The rock art includes depictions of animals, warriors and hunting scenes.

## The Singing Wells Visit & Walk

During the dry season, Samburu herders bring their livestock to special wells – places that only they know – to seek life-giving water. When they arrive, the stage is set for a remarkable tradition. The herders dig into the dry ground to find water and as they do, each sings unique songs that are recognised only by their own herd. The singing encourages the cattle, goats and camels to come forward and drink, and has given rise to the popular name for these locations: the Singing Wells. Our respect for the sacred traditions of the Samburu, photography and video are not permitted at the Singing Wells, but you’re unlikely ever to forget an experience like this.

## Eco / Sustainability

### Seedballs Kenya Regreening Project

Seedballs are an award-winning conservation initiative that we have embraced. By combining fun with reforestation, seedballs are a great way to get kids interested in conservation. For just a small fee, you can purchase a seedball consisting of an indigenous seedling encased in a charcoal crust. Your guides will point out the ideal location to throw your seedballs so you can give your seedling the best possible chance of survival, and of contributing to the reforestation of northern Kenya. We’ll keep an eye on the young trees that result, and update you on their progress. In such a dry area as Samburu, every tree counts!

## Wellness

### Complimentary Massage Treatments

*Ease away the stresses and strains of everyday life – or your journey to Kenya – with a complimentary 30-minute classic back & neck massage. As part of your stay at Saruni Samburu, one massage session is included per room per stay (you can of course book additional therapies as an optional, payable extra). Treatments take place in our dedicated Samburu Wellbeing Space. Our skilled therapists draw on ancient Samburu wisdom and herbal knowledge to soothe, revitalise and rejuvenate tired muscles and minds.*

### Additional Massages & Treatments

*Simply being on safari and spending time in northern Kenya is wonderful for the body, mind and soul, and you can enhance these feelings of wellness by booking additional treatments in the Samburu Wellbeing Space at Saruni Samburu. The Samburu Wellbeing Space is a serene, contemplative environment where our team of highly trained therapists offer a variety of treatments designed to complement your safari experience, and which draw on traditional herbal knowledge to add an authentic sense of place to your massage. No matter how stressful your year prior to visiting us, or how long your journey to Kenya, we’ll ensure that you discover the secrets of true relaxation and reinvigoration.*

## Swimming

Saruni Samburu features two rock-hewn swimming pools. In addition to providing a wonderful contrast to the dry landscapes of northern Samburu, they offer exceptional views out over the Kalama Conservancy. The pools are particularly refreshing at the end of the safari day, with a cool drink waiting for you after your swim. A moonlit dip is one of life's great pleasures – the water retains enough of the sun's heat to be welcoming, while still providing relief from the warmth of the evening air. The pools at Saruni Samburu are a unique feature of our lodge – when was the last time you were able to swim on top of a mountain? – and are fed by precious rainwater collected by a series of channels cut into the rock. At Saruni Rhino, you can immerse yourself in the experience of a cooling, refreshing dip in the swimming pool. A true oasis, it's surrounded by the doum palms which mark so many of northern Kenya's rivers and waterholes, and offers the perfect antidote to the heat of the day. Large enough to let you feel free – and feel your troubles float away – this is a unique swimming spot that combines the weightlessness of water with the chance to gaze up at the sky and out across the dry yet intriguing landscapes of the Sera Conservancy. After your swim, relax on a pool lounger while you enjoy a cool drink and maybe even catch a few rays.

## Specialist

### Photographic Hide by Waterhole

The waterhole hide below Saruni Samburu lets you wait in comfort and safety for thirsty animals to come and drink, and you can then capture remarkable close-up images that would be impossible to obtain in any other way. If you've ever seen images of elephant's feet, the tips of their trunks and even their eyes, then the chances are that they were taken from a hide just like ours. Our waterhole hide is designed in such a way that the animals won't suspect you are there; instead, they will go about their daily routines as usual, completely unperturbed. The Saruni Samburu waterhole hide is also an exceptional place from which to watch (and photograph) birds.

## Stargazing

Few places in the world are as ideal as Saruni Samburu for observing the night sky. The lodge is far away from any source of light pollution, high above the surrounding valleys and plains, and blessed with at least 300 cloud-free nights per year. Using laser pointers, our team will show you spectacular

sights including the Milky Way, constellations, planets and even satellites as they pass overhead. Make a wish on a shooting star and learn how the Samburu use stars to navigate, and the myths and legends they associate with specific groupings of stars.

## Scorpion & Night Torch Safari

Did you know that scorpions 'glow' a pale bluish-white colour when you shine a UV light on them? This makes them easy to spot at sunset or sunrise, and a guided scorpion walk around the lodge an especially fascinating experience. The dry, rocky terrain around Saruni Samburu is ideal for these arachnids, and you may well encounter species including the large emperor scorpion and the tiny *Neobuthus kloppersi* which was new to science when discovered by one of our previous managers, right here at Saruni Samburu. Definitely not an experience for the barefooted!

## Helicopter Excursions

Soaring above Samburu in a helicopter lets you see the landscape in a whole new light, as well as giving you additional chances to spot wildlife. From the air, you'll enhance your understanding of how the different threads of this intricate terrain intertwine to create thriving ecosystems. These flights not only provide breath-taking scenery, but also offer a bump- and dust-free way to access further-afield destinations including Mount Kenya and the 'Jade Sea' – the fabled Lake Turkana. You can also book helicopter flights to transfer you between different lodges and camps on your itinerary, quite literally taking your Kenyan holiday to a whole new level.

## Traditional Ceremonies & Blessings

The dramatic landscapes of Samburu are sure to stir feelings of romance, and a traditional wedding here is a unique and unforgettable way to declare your love for each other. Plus, you'll already be in the perfect place to begin your honeymoon! Experience the beauty and mystery of Samburu in a whole new way as you declare your unending love for each other – a love as boundless as the views from Saruni Samburu. The ceremony that we help organise is an authentic Samburu blessing, with traditional singing and dancing in the presence of the elders of the community. We also include floral displays, a wedding cake, champagne, a private wedding dinner and more.