Great Rift Valley Tourist Attractions

by newsdesk

Elsamere Conservation Centre
Along the southern shore of Lake Naivasha is the former home of naturalist and painter Joy Adamson, author of "Born Free", and now the Elsamere Conservation Centre, incorporating a guesthouse and a small museum. Visitors are invited to join the guests daily for a sumptuous tea on the lawns of the beautifully peaceful lakeside setting, occasionally joined by the mischievous Colobus monkeys with a taste for cheesecake. The museum has displays portraying the true story of Joy and the lioness Elsa that she raised from birth, and her attempts to return her to the wild, as well as her paintings and personal artefacts. There is also a video shown about the story of Elsa the lioness.

Hell's Gate National Park
Named for the pair of massive red cliffs of the Ngororwa Gorge that encloses a geothermic area of hot springs and steam vents, Hell's Gate is one of the two parks in Kenya that allows visitors to explore on foot, making it an ideal place for hiking, cycling, camping and rock climbing. It is famous for its natural steaming geysers, and the towering cliffs provide an eagle and vulture breeding ground. The wide plains are home to numerous animals, such as zebra, buffalo, eland, gazelle and hartebeest and the experience of walking alongside a giraffe or past a herd of zebra is a memorable one. Lion, leopard and cheetah are also present but hardly ever seen.

Lake Naivasha
Recognised for its abundance of birdlife and beautiful scenery, and with the nearby attractions of Elsamere and Hell's Gate National Park, Lake Naivasha is a popular destination and something of a Mecca for bird fanatics. The lake is a shimmering waterscape of floating hyacinth surrounded by mountains, and the skies above are pierced by the distinctive cries of the fish eagle. Brightly coloured kingfishers dart into the waters from their papyrus perches and ugly Marabou storks strut along the shoreline like cantankerous sergeant majors. The trees are home to Colobus monkeys and at night the earth shudders with the movement of grazing hippos. The fertile soils and fresh water supply have made this one of the major agricultural regions in Kenya and farmlands surround the lake giving way to forests of acacia on the mountain slopes. The southern shore of the lake is lined with hotels, campsites and guesthouses, prettily situated either on the shore or higher up on the slopes of the mountain with fantastic views over the lake. Boat trips are a popular way to explore the lake and also the private Crescent Island Game Sanctuary.

Lake Nakuru National Park
Although tiny, this park has huge concentrations of game with everything except elephant, and is one of Kenya's important rhino sanctuaries. Apart from the rhino, there are several prides of lion and it is the best place to spot leopard. The surface of the shallow alkaline lake covers about a third of the park and the saline concentration supports a blue-green algae that attracts thousands of flamingos. This pulsating pink carpet covering the fringes of the lake is a breathtaking sight and at any disturbance the air above becomes a noisy confusion of long pink legs and reddish wings in flight. Large flocks of pelicans are also attracted to the rich food source in the lake and waterbuck and the rare Rothschild giraffe are common sights along the shores. The park has several high points with good lookouts and waterfalls, and monkeys and baboon frequent the rocky cliffs.

Great Rift Valley Tourist Attractions by newsdesk