

KALACHA CAMP, Chalbi Desert

Situated in the Chalbi Desert, North Eastern Kenya, Kalacha Camp sits on the edge of a permanent oasis. The Camp has been funded by the European Union, Farm Africa and the Estate of the late John Sutton, who used this area as a base for his bird shooting safaris. Kalacha Camp has been set up as a community based project for the Gabbra people of this area, providing them with a further source of income, and is managed by Tropic Air.

The oasis provides water for vast numbers of livestock, including cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys and camels, many of which travel up to 70 miles (round trip) every couple of days from the Huri Hills, east of Kalacha, to drink and carry water back to their homes and stock.

Kalacha Camp was completed in mid 1999 after 5 months of building. It is a very simple camp, built using local materials, including dhom palm trunks for the poles, and leaves woven into mats which have been used for the roofs and walls. The camp consists of 4 bandas with twin beds, and each banda has its own bathroom, with flush toilet and cold shower. The bandas have a small veranda on the front, and overlook the oasis. The mess area is a circular building, and consists of the main living area and dining area. A kidney shaped swimming/plunge pool partly enters into the mess area – and is an extremely refreshing escape from the hot and dry desert weather.

Attractions:

Walking around the oasis and in the town. Photographic opportunities are fantastic, with the beautiful and unusual desert scenery and constantly changing lights and colours. The people are not used to be photographed, so please ask permission and respect their feelings. Watching the Gabbra people with their livestock at the water hole is yet another interesting experience, showing their simple but balanced way of life.

Sundowners in the desert on the edge of the lava flows.

The area is famous for Sandgrouse. At about 8:30am huge flights of Sandgrouse start to arrive at the springs from surrounding desert areas. The flights last about 2 hours and one has ample opportunity to shoot. The seasons for Sandgrouse are from 1st September to end of October and again from 1st January to end February.

Other than the attraction of the immediate surrounding area, there are several places to visit by air for the day or morning.

Koobi Fora on the North Eastern shores of Lake Turkana. This area has great archaeological importance, and is a site the Leakey Family uncovered in the 1970's, today it is widely regarded as the 'Cradle of Mankind'.

South Island for a totally unique adventure, where opportunities to fish for Nile Perch and tilapia are most rewarding.

Lunch or tea at Oasis Lodge, Loyengalani, South Lake, to enjoy the swimming pool and the surroundings., and maybe a boat ride to the El Molo village.

A Basic Guide to Kalacha Camp

How to Get There

Kalacha Goda is situated on the edge of an oasis in the Chalbi Desert between Maikona and North Horr, and 40 miles from the Ethiopian border.

There is a runway which taxis up to the oasis, within walking distance of the camp. Please call us to get details and co-ordinates.

About the Facilities

There are 4 fully furnished simple, but comfortable bandas, each with 2 single beds, and en-suite bathrooms. There is plenty of clean running water, which comes from the Artesian Well, for the flush toilets and showers.

The mess area is fully furnished with dining and lounge facilities. All bedding, nets, towels, cutlery, crockery, kitchen ware and cooking utensils are provided. Charcoal for cooking can be brought in the town. The camp is self catering, and one needs to be well stocked as very little can be brought in the way of food and drinks from the town. There is a paraffin fridge, which will help keep most foods fresh and drinks cool.

There are 4 Staff who will be willing to help cook, clean, wash up and do any laundry you may have and will be happy to show you to the town.

What to Take

Food: BBQ meats are great for evenings. As it is so hot during the day, cold lunches are ideal. Traditional breakfasts always go down well. There are no food supplies at the camp, so do remember to take sauces and jams.

Drinks: Please do take your own bottled water. One does get extremely dehydrated and thirsty at Kalacha, so take plenty of sodas, juices, beer, and also wine and spirits, depending on your preferences.

Clothing: One really needs to bear in mind the high temperatures and the intensity of the sun in the Chalbi Desert. Cotton shirts and shorts are ideal. Hats and sun block are a necessity during the day. Evenings get a little cooler. There are mosquitoes at Kalacha and insect repellent is a necessity.

You do not need to take: Loo roll, bath soap, washing powder.

RATES - per person per day (Valid up to Mid December 2004):

Locals and Guides (self catering only):	1200/- each per day.
Children between 5 and 12 years:	600/- each per day.
Non-Residents (self catering):	\$110 per person per day.
Non-Residents with food and drinks:	\$165 per person per day.
Use of Camp Vehicle:	100/- per KM *
Gabbara Dancers:	2000/- to be paid direct to women.

* The Land Cruiser is not totally reliable, so please do not go far in it. It is ideal for Sundowners in the desert. Apologies for the rate per KM, but the price of petrol at Kalacha is high.

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