

On the trail of a **million hooves**

Imagine yourself driving through a million-strong army of beasts. As you admire their tanned coats gleaming resplendently in the sun, you cannot help but chant along to the interminable grunt “gnu, gnu, gnu...” from which the beasts get their name.

July is her birthday month and I was determined that she experience the one of the biggest spectacles on earth.

We will be staying at the newly opened Leopard Hill Camp (LHC) run by Basecamp Explorer.

Your first encounter at the camp is a welcome drink and briefing at the central spacious lounge tent adjacent to the dining area. Built on leveled terraces, it hosts a bar and library with interesting safari books and is a cosy spot with fire pits from whence you can enjoy sightings of parched wildlife that come to seek relief in shade and drink from either of the three watering holes camp is built around.

It is hard to miss the focal point of the giant ‘mugumo’ tree. This twin tree, dubbed Double Fig Tree, was struck by lightning in the 1950s, the locals say. The tree was splintered in two giving it its unusual shape. If privacy is your preference, then LHC falls right on your



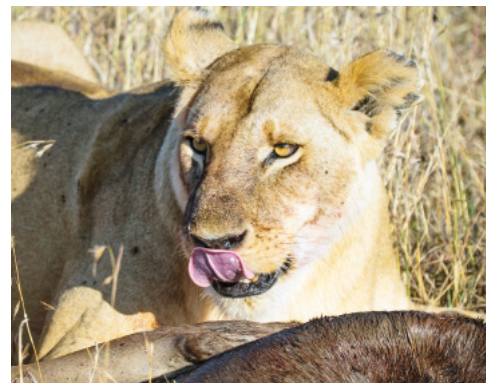
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alley because the six-tent accommodation allows guests an intimate stay, far from the crowds.

Of the six tents, one is a honeymoon suite and the other is fashioned to accommodate groups travelling together. The remainder, like Tent Five where we put up, is luxurious double. You cannot miss the distinct architectural inspiration that borrows from the Manyatta. The interior décor is classic safari with the characteristic brass, leather and wood touches. What I liked the most was the adjustable motorised



[Photos: Courtesy]



roof of the tents controlled by remote.

Anyone who has been on safari is accustomed to the routine built around game viewing. This means at the crack-of-dawn morning drives, lazy mid-mornings or afternoons at the camp, evening game drives capped with the mandatory sundowner, dinner and repeat. Naboisho, despite its short time in operation, has become renowned for its bountiful biodiversity and breathtaking beauty.

As you might know, animals are at liberty to move outside Masai Mara Reserve into huge areas known as ‘dispersal areas’. There can be as much wildlife roaming outside the park as inside.

Naboisho is a community-owned conservancy modelled around this synergy. It was named after the maa expression of ‘coming together’.

The density of lions within Naboisho is one of the highest in the world, with a population of more than 70 identified ones who use Naboisho as their home territory.

During our game drive, we saw four large prides at close proximity. We actually shared a sundowner on the first evening with the friendly resident cheetah called Naibor and her two boys.

What we exhaustively relished, however, was the massage treatment send off before we left the renovated Ol Seki strip back to the hustle and bustle of the capital.