



KENYA

Cycle Challenge

Adventure awaits you...



Brighter futures across the globe

Karibu! Welcome!

A note from our co-founder

Once again I will be embarking on an incredible cycling adventure through Kenya! Join me on the journey of a lifetime that you will never forget.

I'm delighted that this trip continues to raise vital funds for COCO's work - it even includes a trip to Maasai Academy, one of the partner schools that COCO fundraisers like you support. Once you reach the finish at the top of Enchorro Naibor, all of the hard pedalling will have been worth it and you will have some great stories to tell.

This brochure is designed to give you all the information you will need for your challenge, but if you have any additional queries don't hesitate to get in touch with the COCO team. See you in the saddle!



The Challenge in a Nutshell

We hope that you are excited for this once in a lifetime challenge!

This will not be a standard charity cycle challenge. In addition to cycling you will also be given the opportunity to meet members of the Maasai community including a visit to COCO's partner school, Maasai Academy, so you can see exactly where your fundraising goes!

Over 5 days you will cover a distance of around 240 km and will travel into some of the wildest and most remote areas of Kenya.

This will be a tough challenge, with combined inclines higher than Mount Kilimanjaro and hot temperatures. However, with persistence and the motivation of having a huge impact on the lives of children in East Africa we are confident that you will complete it in style!

Be prepared to be without phone reception, to have routes altered by erosion and have aching legs at times!

FAQ's

Am I experienced enough for this?

You don't have to be an expert cyclist for this event. However, we do suggest getting out on your bike regularly to prepare for the challenge and to get your fitness up for the journey! The terrain varies from rocky tracks to dusty off-road areas, and everything in-between. There will be some challenging ascents, but there is also vehicle support along the way. It's not a race, so cycle at your own pace and embrace the challenge!



Itinerary

	Overnight	Accommodation
Day 1	Nairobi	Wildebeest Camp - Safari Tents
Day 2	Maasai Mara	Camp on the edge of Maasai Mara
Day 3	Aitong	Aitong Hotel
Day 4	Ngoswani	Moses Camp
Day 5	Leshuta	Williams Camp
Day 6	Loita	Andres Camp Olkoroi
Day 7	Enchorro Naibor	Under the Stars
Day 8	Nairobi	Wildebeest Camp - Safari Tents *
Day 9	Return Flight Home*	

Important Notes

- **You will be cycling through very remote areas.** There will be times where you need to find a bush to go to the toilet, particularly during the day.
- There is **no mobile phone reception** along the majority of the route, be prepared for no communication.
- There is **no running water**, as a group you will be pumping your own **drinking water**.
- There is **no electricity**, pack a spare battery or power bank and be prepared to be without.
- The **weather is unpredictable**, there are contingencies in place for poor weather but please be patient if itineraries/routes change at short notice.
- It can be **extremely hot**, pack plenty of sun cream and wear something under your helmet like a bandana.

The Golden Rules

1. **Don't bring too much stuff.** You can leave a bag of clean clothes in Nairobi.
2. **Listen to the Maasai.** If they say it will rain soon, it *will* rain. If they say there's a leopard in the bush, do *not* go in that bush!
3. **Be patient and flexible.** You will be in the wild - 'nature might decide your route.'
4. **Don't gift cash to strangers.** It might be tempting to sometimes hand out money, but please do not do this.
5. **Go at your own pace.** There will be some fast people and some slow people, but this is not a race! Everyone will be supported from start to finish.

Preparation



Vaccinations & Anti-malarials - Please consult your GP for the best advice, as everyone's medical history and requirements will be different!



Travel Insurance - Whilst it is unlikely that anything will go wrong, it is important to have the right policy in place as it can be very expensive if problems do occur. Please share details of your travel insurance policy with COCO as soon as you have secured it. As well as the cycle challenge please remember to consider any other activities you may be taking part in e.g. safari or additional travel.



Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA) - From 1st January 2024 Kenya no longer requires travellers to apply for a visa, but instead all visitors must be in possession of an eTA. The application is completed online via the Government of Kenya's official website ([here](#)). Applications made through third party websites will be rejected, so ignore any sponsored ads for these!

For the eTA application you will need...

- Your passport** (must be valid for at least 6 months after your arrival, and must have at least one blank page).
- A clear passport-style digital photograph to upload, or a webcam** to take a photo during the application.
- Your contact information** (valid email address, phone number, etc. Your eTA will be sent to the email you input).
- Flight details** for your arrival and departure dates.
- Proof of accommodation** (your COCO booking email should suffice - use **just Wildebeest Eco Camp** as your location, instead of listing every single campsite on the route).
- Online payment method** (credit/debit card, Apple Pay/GPay, etc.).



The Bikes



Bikes are provided in country. If you would like to take yours with you it is important that you ask the airline what additional charges will be made, and that you let us know so we can have transport for it in Kenya and to help with planning which bikes we will need.

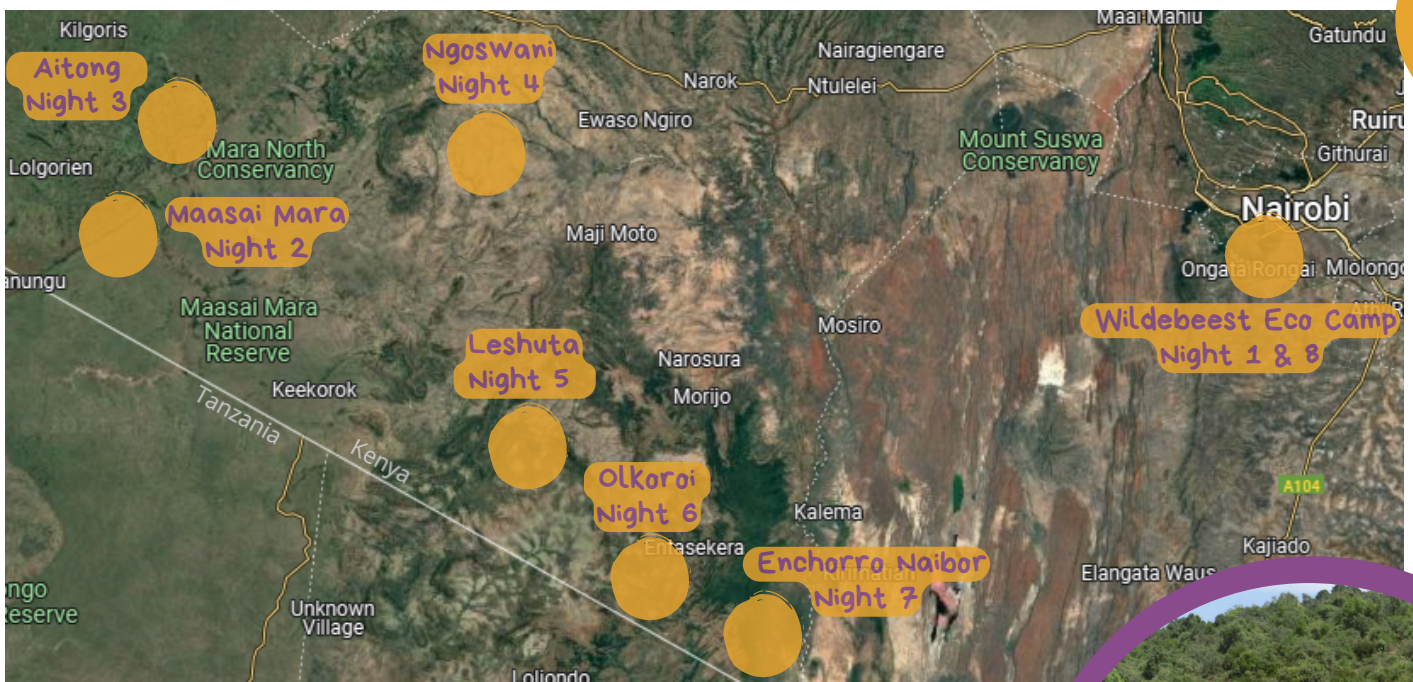
Generally bikes are allowed on all airlines, although size and weight restrictions usually apply and an extra cost may be incurred. The bike will need to be packed into a protective case or bag with the handlebars turned lengthwise, pedals removed or fixed inwards and tyres deflated. You may also have to reserve bicycle transport in advance. Please check with your airline for exact requirements.

Cyclists have previously managed to take a bike on as normal luggage without incurring extra costs, by taking it apart and wrapping it up in bubble wrap instead of putting the bike in a box!



The Route

The area you are going to is so remote that it has never been properly mapped! You really will be exploring parts of Kenya that tourists will never see. The route offers the very best of the local culture, scenery, wildlife, and cycling! The map below shows where you will be staying each night. Some are official campsites/hotels, on other nights you really will be sleeping in the bush, so the location is only a rough indication of the area.





Day 1: Arriving in Nairobi

All you have to worry about is **getting yourself to Nairobi**, ready for departure to Maasailand the following day.

Depending on your flight time you may have some **time to relax before the challenge**, which is why we are staying at **Wildebeest Eco Camp** - a peaceful and tranquil place outside of the chaos of the big city. Details of the camp can be found [here](#).

Make sure you **give COCO your flight details** so we can have someone **waiting at the airport** to take you to the camp. If you arrive in the morning, or choose to fly in the night before, you will have the whole day to relax, check your kit, etc. The staff at Wildebeest can **recommend various activities** and can help arrange these for you.

Day 2: Into the Wild!

After a good night's sleep and breakfast, you will **leave Wildebeest and drive across the plains through the Mara North Conservancy**. There are animals to be seen on the way to the Mara River, before **climbing the Oloololo Escarpment** to the **edge of the Maasai Mara National Reserve** to reach the first night's camp.

Your first day will be deceptively relaxing, as you **acclimatise** to Kenya and take in the wonderful culture. Look out for herds of **zebra, giraffe** and **impala**, as well as **elephants** and maybe even evidence of **leopards** that live in the region!





Day 3: On your bikes! approx. 50 km

Today you set off for the **first day of cycling**, riding to **Aitong**.

The first day is a **nice easy start** to get you used to your bikes, as it is **mainly downhill**. The transition between Louland and Maasailand is distinct, with **everything changing through the day** - the landscape, the vegetation, the climate, the population, and the presence of plantations.

At night you will stay in a **local hotel in Aitong**; it is very basic, but it's in a friendly town full of Maasai people.

Day 4: The BIG one! approx. 70 km

Leaving Aitong, you will cycle to **Ngoswani** which stands about half way between between Narok and the Maasai Mara Reserve. This will be the **longest ride of the trip**, with a distance of around 70km in one day.

You will spend the night in **Moses Camp**, which is basic but does have an outdoor toilet! There is no running water so you will have to filter your own using the nearby river. The backdrop of the **Siana Plains** is stunning and if time permits there may be chance to go for a late afternoon bush-walk at the nearby village of Labentera, or to cool off with a dip in the river. The area is **rich in wildlife**, with giraffe, wildebeest, zebra, antelope, elephant and buffalo grazing past. At night, leopard and hyena can often be heard close to camp and it is not unknown for lions to wander nearby.





Day 5: Onwards and upwards! approx. 45 km

On Day 5 you will set off for **Leshuta** and Williams Camp. Don't let the shorter distance deceive you, this will be a tough day involving a **number of long climbs** from 4,500 ft. to over 7,000 ft. However, the **tracks** will be in much better shape than the day before. The terrain is hard going and if it rains it will be even trickier – it might be necessary to **walk at times**. This should take around 7 hours, but remember, **it's not a race**, so don't get disheartened if it takes longer.

Williams Camp has no real washing facilities, but there is a toilet with a seat, and a stream for water! Keep in mind, the reason it is so basic is because of the logistics in getting there - very few people go, which is what makes this **all the more adventurous!**

Day 6: An easier day approx. 50 km

Today is **not quite as tough**, and whilst there are still some hills, there are **plenty of great descents**, with the last 10km nearly all downhill into **Olkoroi Camp in Loita**.

Olkoroi Camp, close to **thick forest** and **clear mountain streams**, is an eco-camp set up by the local community on the edge of Naimena-Engiyio (Forest of the Lost Child), a mystical place in local folklore. Olkoroi is the Maasai name for the black and white **Colobus monkeys** that can be seen around the camp - they also make their presence heard with their croaking roars. You will camp on top of a river gorge, with the chance to **soak your aches and pains in the warm thermal springs** and enjoy **stunning views as you watch the sun go down**.





Day 7: What It's All About! approx. 25 km

The final leg is everyone's favourite, and you will make the most special memories today. You'll **visit Maasai Academy**, a COCO partner school, where you will be greeted by the students and teachers and find out **what school is like for a child in Kenya**, seeing **firsthand how fundraisers like you make a real impact**.

From here, you will travel up to **Enchorro Naibor** to the **viewpoint**. This is a relatively **short cycle, but very tough!** But trust us, it's absolutely worth it. Enchorro Naibor sits atop an escarpment looking towards Mount Shompole, Ol Doiyo Sambu and Ol Doiyo Lengai, over **salt flats**, and **soda lakes** Magadi and Natron. The contrast between the **green, cool hillsides** and the hot, dry, floor of the **Great Rift Valley** nearly 1,500 metres below is astonishing. Gazing out from here does feel like sitting on the edge of the world.

You will camp in the open, **sleeping under the myriads of stars** that fill the African sky, overlooking this **stunning scenery**. As you gather round the campfire, you will celebrate the miles covered and memories made, and **soak up this truly special experience**.

Day 8: Return to Wildebeest Eco Camp

After a restful night under the stars, you return to Nairobi (by vehicle - not by bike!). This will be the group's **last evening together**. Some may choose to fly home this evening, others will stay and enjoy all that Africa has to offer, for just a little bit longer.

Day 9: Flights Home / Embark on Extension Trip



Costs

The fundraising target is £2,000, the trek costs are £1,500 (excluding flights).

Your **registration deposit of £500** and follow-up invoice of **£1,000** (total = £1,500) covers everything associated with the **challenge logistics**, including airport transfers in Nairobi, accommodation, vehicles, camp kit, food, staffing, and of course bikes! All you need to add is **your own flight booking** to get to and from Nairobi!

The **fundraising target is £2,000**, and this funding is **vital to COCO and our partners**. It will help us continue our work, removing obstacles preventing children in rural areas from accessing education, and helping them have a **brighter future**. You'll be able to **see firsthand the impact your money makes** when you visit Maasai Academy!

Whilst **tipping** is not compulsory, it is normally **expected for tourists** to tip camp staff, cooks, guides etc. We would recommend each person puts approximately £40 into a pot for tips, which will be shared by the team looking after you. **Local currency is best** as £/\$ are not very helpful in Maasailand - Kenyan Shillings can be obtained in the airport upon arrival.

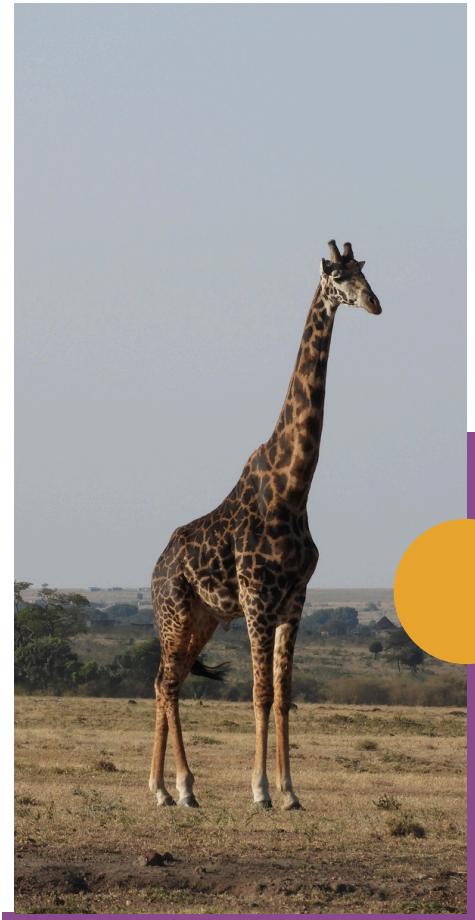


Safari Extension

After you have completed the cycle ride, there is the option of **extending your trip with a safari**.

The cycle challenge takes place along the edges of **Kenya's world-famous Maasai Mara National Park**, bordering its Tanzanian neighbour, the Serengeti. Both these areas combine to provide an ecosystem that supports a staggeringly large and **diverse array of legendary wildlife**. It's no wonder the Maasai Mara has been featured in many documentaries over the years (think "Big Cat Diary", "Mammals", "The Hunt", "Dynasties" to name just a few). Taking a few days off to visit the Mara, and perhaps combining it with a stay on the tranquil shores of Lake Naivasha, is the **perfect way to relax** after your exertions on the bike.

Our cycle challenge partner can tailor a safari for you, from one to several days. If you are interested in adding this on at the end of the trip then **just let us know** and we can put you in touch!



"The cycle challenge through the beautiful Rift Valley gives plenty of chance to spot zebras, wildebeest, monkeys and antelope, but then there's a great opportunity to round off the trip to Kenya with a bespoke safari through the Maasai Mara Game Reserve. A few days here, making the most of local knowledge, will ensure that you can truly relax and see so much more. The added excitement of getting close to elephants, hippos, buffalo, hyenas, and especially the big cats, will provide a lasting memory to a truly unique experience." **Chris Green - previous COCO cycle challenge participant**

General Advice

If you have any **dietary requirements** please let us know **well in advance** so meals can be planned accordingly - you will be staying in **remote areas** with limited options!

Whatever **clothes** you normally cycle in should be fine, but keep in mind that it will be **hot** and you should definitely **cover your head** underneath the helmet. The temperature is likely to be low to mid 30's. We try to organise events at the best time of the year for **minimal rain**, but climate change means that weather systems in the area have become **unpredictable** in recent years so bear this in mind when packing.

It is recommended that ladies have a '**kikoi**' or some kind of **wrap-around skirt/sarong** to **cover their knees** when visiting the local communities.

Puncture repair kits, food, bikes, mattresses and pillows **will be provided**. You will also have **vehicle support** at all times.

Pre-departure check list

- Passport
- eTA
- Travel tickets
- Vaccination certificates, if applicable
- Money
- Travel Insurance
- Copies of important documents - it's good to have scans with you, and also left with a trusted person at home



Equipment Checklist

- Helmet.** This is compulsory for all cyclists, for obvious reasons.
- Light-weight sleeping bag.** It does get cold at night, so make sure your sleeping bag is warm enough but not too bulky, for ease of travelling. You might also consider a sleeping bag liner.
- Sunglasses + Sunscreen.** A high factor is recommended e.g. SPF 50+
- Head torch.** This is essential - it gets VERY dark, VERY quickly!
- Water bottle + hydration pack.** We recommend one of each, making total capacity of 3 litres. You don't want to carry *too* much water as it will be heavy!
- Towel + wash bag.** Bear in mind that not all camps will have hot water or extensive washing facilities (if any).
- Camera/phone.** You will not have signal for the majority of the trip (yay!) but you will definitely want to take photos!
- Portable charger/battery pack (solar-powered).** To charge torches/cameras.
- Hydration salts and gels.** These help to keep your energy levels up during the cycle, but only bring them if you have tried them first!
- Insect repellent.** Not only are flies annoying, but bites can carry diseases or cause infection.
- Small First aid kit.** Especially wipes and creams for any minor cuts and scrapes.
- Favourite sweets/treats.** These will keep you pedalling! Bring more than you think you will need, and keep them in an airtight container to keep them edible.

Other Suggestions

- Hand sanitiser
- Wet wipes
- Toilet roll / tissue
- Entertainment (books, cards, nothing digital)
- Journal (and pen/pencils)
- Handy bits and bobs e.g. pocket knife, gaffer tape / duct tape (beware carrying a penknife in airplane luggage, though!)
- Knee brace / ankle brace / whatever-might-be-a-bit-dodgy brace - you'll know your body!
- It might be worth buying a Maasai Blanket when you get to Kenya, it will keep you extra warm when you're sitting by the fire!



GOOD LUCK



THANK YOU SO MUCH
for taking on this challenge for COCO.
Please don't hesitate to get in contact if you
have any further questions!
email: hello@coco.org.uk