

THE LINKE ATLAS

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FREE FIELD GUIDE

The Ololokwe Visitor Field Guide

Getting there, the hike, respect on the mountain, the sky above it, and where to stay.

Begin at Ololokwe. Explore Kenya. Experience the Story.

Edition: October 2026 · Written by Neltoijo · Nairobi, Kenya

WELCOME

Karibu to the mountain

Ololokwe is a flat-topped mountain in Samburu County, about 2,000 metres above sea level, and the sacred mountain of the Samburu people. This guide is the practical companion to our journal. Keep it on your phone, and read it with your guide, host or driver.

The mountain is a source of water for herds and a place of rain prayers, ceremonies and memory. You are a guest on Samburu land. Everything here is written to help you arrive well, walk safely and leave it as you found it.

Where	Samburu County, off the A2 Nairobi–Moyale road, about 340 to 350 km north of Nairobi (sources vary)
Also called	Ol Donyo Sabache. Ololokwe is said to mean “wide head” in Samburu.
Usual start	Sabache Camp, at the foot of the mountain, by a short dirt road off the A2
Time	2 to 5 hours to the top, according to different sources. Plan a full day, or sleep on the plateau.
Best months	Dry seasons: January to February and June to October
Local help	Walk with a Samburu guide. Agree the fee before you start.

How to use this guide. The first pages cover the route and the hike. Then come respect and etiquette, the seasons and the sky, and where to stay. A packing checklist and a notes page are at the back.

A note on facts. We checked fees, times and distances against several published sources in October 2026, and they sometimes disagree. Treat every figure as a guide and confirm with your host or guide before you travel.

GETTING THERE

The road north

Two roads lead north from Nairobi into Samburu. For Ololokwe, Archers Post and Wamba take the A2. For Maralal take the A4.

The A2 route: Ololokwe, Archers Post and Wamba

Leave Nairobi towards Thika and Mount Kenya, go through Nanyuki, drop down to Isiolo and continue north past Archers Post, about 308 km from Nairobi. Ololokwe rises beside the A2 some way north of Archers Post, and a dirt road of about 4 km leaves the main road for Sabache Camp. Ask the camp for exact directions and the turn-off.

For Wamba, turn west at Archers Post. The road towards Maralal passes villages such as Lengusaka. Wamba sits on the edge of the Mathews Range, roughly 40 km from the A2.

The A4 route: Maralal

For Maralal go via Gilgil, Nyahururu and Rumuruti, then north on the A4. Maralal is about 335 km from Nairobi, roughly six hours of driving. The Rumuruti to Maralal section was being paved as of 2019, so check its current condition.

Getting around

- Scheduled light-aircraft flights run from Wilson Airport to Nanyuki and to the Samburu airstrip. You then drive.
- Public transport is limited beyond the main towns. Ask your host or guide to help arrange the last leg.
- Nanyuki, around 200 km from Nairobi, is the natural place to break the journey.
- Fill your tank in Nanyuki, Isiolo or Nyahururu. Carry water, a spare tyre and a charged phone.
- Start early to arrive in daylight. Camels, goats and cattle use the roads.
- In the long rains (March to May) unpaved sections can be very difficult without high clearance.

THE HIKE

Climbing Ololokwe

The climb runs from hot thorn bushland, through dense forest, to a cool, damp plateau with cedars and wild orchids. Many of the paths were first worn into the rock by elephants.

Distance and climb	About 10 km round trip and about 800 m of climbing, according to one trail record
Effort	Hard. Steep, narrow paths. Good fitness and good shoes help a lot.
Time	Sources range from 2 to 5 hours to the summit. Count on the longer end if you stop for plants, views and stories.
Fees reported	Conservancy fee about KSh 1,000 to 1,500. Guide about KSh 1,000. Camping about KSh 500. One source quotes about KSh 1,000 for Kenyans and USD 30 for foreign visitors. Confirm on booking.
Summit	A cairn near the top. First-time visitors are invited to add a stone and make a wish. Ask your guide how.

On the day

- **Walk with a guide.** It is the norm, the safest way to go and how the community benefits.
- **Time your start** to avoid the worst of the heat in the open bushland. Ask your guide.
- **Go slowly and drink often.** The path is steep and the first section is hot.
- **Watch for wildlife.** Elephants use these paths. Follow your guide’s lead.
- **Take your rubbish with you.** Carry a small bag for it.
- **Tell someone** your plan and expected return time. Mobile signal can be patchy.

Packing checklist

- ☐ Sturdy hiking shoes with good grip
- ☐ Walking stick
- ☐ Plenty of drinking water
- ☐ Snacks or a packed lunch
- ☐ Sun hat and sunscreen
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Warm layer (the plateau is cooler and windy)
- ☐ Light rain shell (mist and damp)
- ☐ Head torch
- ☐ Small first-aid kit
- ☐ Phone and power bank
- ☐ Cash in small notes for fees
- ☐ Bag for your rubbish
- ☐ Camera (ask before photographing people)

RESPECT

Being a good guest

Samburu hospitality is generous. A few habits of respect make you welcome and protect the places and people you have come to meet.

On the mountain

Ololokwe holds prayers, ceremonies, caves and streams that families still use. In droughts women walk up to pray for rain and elder women pour milk on the rock as an offering. Stay on the paths your guide chooses, keep your voice low near sacred spots, take nothing and leave nothing.

In the community

- **Greet first.** A simple “Habari?” or “Jambo”, a handshake and a little small talk come before any request.
- **Ask before you photograph** people, homes, animals, ceremonies or sacred places. A no is a no, and hesitation means no. Ask a parent before photographing children.
- **Go through the right people.** Visits to a manyatta are arranged with the community’s agreement. Do not drop in uninvited.
- **Use your right hand,** or both hands, to give and receive.
- **Dress modestly** away from the lodge: shoulders and knees covered.
- **Let your host guide you at meals.** Household customs differ.
- **Be patient with time.** Plans often move more slowly than a schedule says.

Buying beadwork

Beadwork carries meaning: colours and patterns say who a person is and what they are celebrating. Buy from makers or cooperatives, ask what a piece means and pay a fair price. Nyiro Beadwork Cooperative, a women-led cooperative, is on our Partners page.

Read more in our journal: *Why Some Places Are Never Walked Alone* and *Beadwork as Language* at linke.africa.

SEASONS AND SKY

When to go, and what you will see

Samburu has some of the darkest skies in Kenya. Go in the dry seasons and plan around the new moon.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Best	Best	Varies	Wet	Wet	Best	Best	Best	Best	Varies	Wet	Varies

Sources differ on December, March and October, and the rains can shift. Check the forecast with your host before you go.

New moon weeks

A bright moon washes out the Milky Way. For the darkest sky choose the few nights either side of a new moon. These dates are our own approximations, good to within about a day: about 10 Nov 2026, 9 Dec 2026, 8 Jan 2027, 6 Feb 2027, 8 Mar 2027, 4 Jun 2027, 4 Jul 2027, 2 Aug 2027, 1 Sep 2027 and 30 Sep 2027.

What to look for

Samburu sits on the equator, so both northern and southern skies are visible from one spot. Look for Scorpius and Sagittarius, the Southern Cross, the Milky Way and bright planets. Let your eyes adjust for 20 to 30 minutes, use a red torch and bring a warm layer. A free app such as Stellarium helps you name what you see.

The Samburu sky

In the Samburu creation story people began on Venus, the morning star, and came down to earth by a ladder let down by Nkai, God. Women wear star-shaped pendants that point back to this origin. The lines of elders at a wedding blessing echo the pattern of Orion. Stars that rise before dawn and stars that signal a change of season told herders when to move and when the rains might come.

Read more: *Samburu Star Names and Sky Stories* at linke.africa.

WHERE TO STAY

Stays and community partners

Stays on or near the route are run independently. Contact each place directly for current prices and availability.

Sabache Camp	At the foot of Ololokwe, the usual starting point for the climb. Published accounts describe rooms and camping, with meals and a Samburu guide. sabachecamp.com
Laikipia Mara Homestay	Makutano, Nanyuki, on the Nanyuki–Meru Road. Executive Airbnb-style stays with king-size beds, fast Wi-Fi, a work table, 24-hour security and parking. A good place to break the drive north.
Archers Samburu	A four-bedroom homestay villa in Archers, Samburu, 1 km from Samburu National Park.
Malabo Resort	A lakeside resort in Loiyangalani on the shores of Lake Turkana, for travellers going further north.

Community partners worth knowing

- **Wamba Small Scale Farmers Forum**, our founding community partner, working with farmers, women and youth on ancestral farming and land stewardship.
- **Namunyak Community Trust**, coordinating shared grazing, water access and local governance in the Namunyak area.
- **Nayiai Foundation**, in Kisima, Maralal, running youth and women empowerment programmes, including beadwork enterprise training.
- **Sarara Nature Heritage Foundation**, a community-driven conservation and sustainable development foundation.
- **Nyiro Beadwork Cooperative**, a women-led cooperative supplying fair-trade jewellery.

Full details are at linke.africa/partners. Partners, guides and builders operate independently of The Linke Atlas.

NOTES

Your notes

Stay in touch

Read the journal, the visitor guides and the Atlas Script at **linke.africa**. Questions or corrections: **karibu@linke.africa** or WhatsApp +254 751 293 380.

This guide is a starting point, not a safety briefing. Conditions on the mountain and the road change. Follow your guide's advice. Some links on linke.africa to stays, tours and tools may be affiliate links: if you book through one we may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you. Facts checked October 2026. © 2026 The Linke Atlas. You may share this PDF unchanged and in full. Please do not sell it or reuse its text or images without written permission.