



OL LENTILLE

KENYA



CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

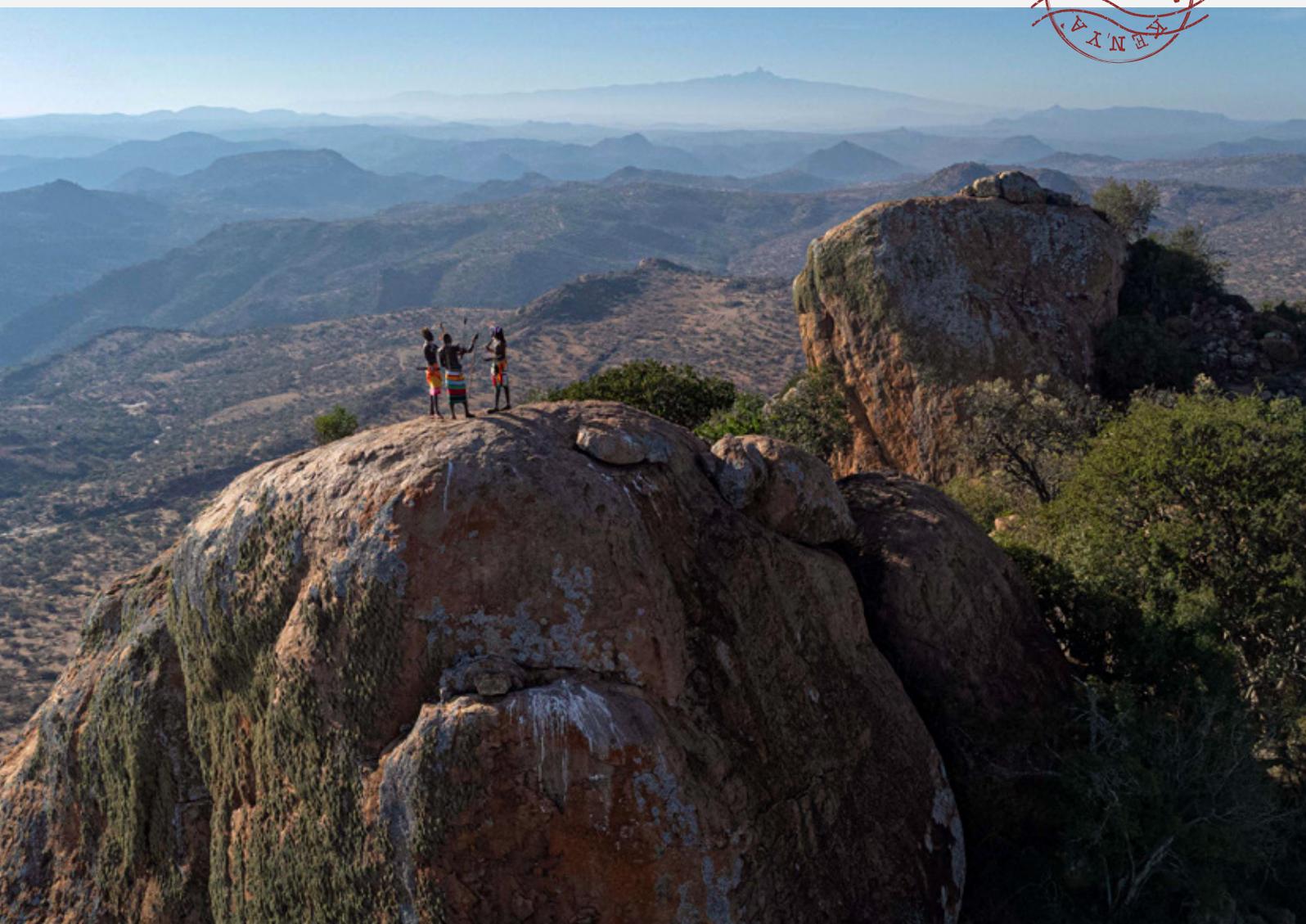
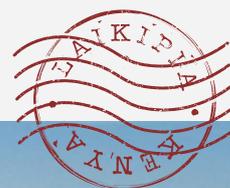
**A UNIQUE CULTURAL IMMERSION
INTO MAASAI AND SAMBURU LIFE**

WE ARE A SAFARI LODGE WITH A DIFFERENCE

The 40,000 acres of the Ol Lentille Conservancy, uniquely, are jointly owned by two Maasai and two Samburu communities. The Ol Lentille safari lodge, which operates exclusively on the Conservancy, is owned by a local Maasai community too. This makes us the only luxury community-owned lodge in Kenya. As such, you are treated as a guest of the local community, and given extensive, deep and authentic access to their culture and key events in their life.

These human and cultural connections are what truly sets Ol Lentille apart from other safari lodges. The genuine hospitality when you visit someone's home, the participation in life events, such as warrior initiations, weddings or blessings are simply not accessible to visitors anywhere else in Kenya.

**Come and meet the people and get immersed
in their way of life and traditions.**



VISIT TO A MANYATTA (MAASAI OR SAMBURU HOMESTEAD)

See local life up close and personal.

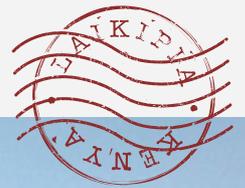
Learn about the construction of the manyatta, its organization, where the various wives and children reside, how roles are divided and life events are celebrated. Sit inside a house with one of the mamas and chat over a cup of smokey Maasai tea.

This is a very real and always heartwarming experience.



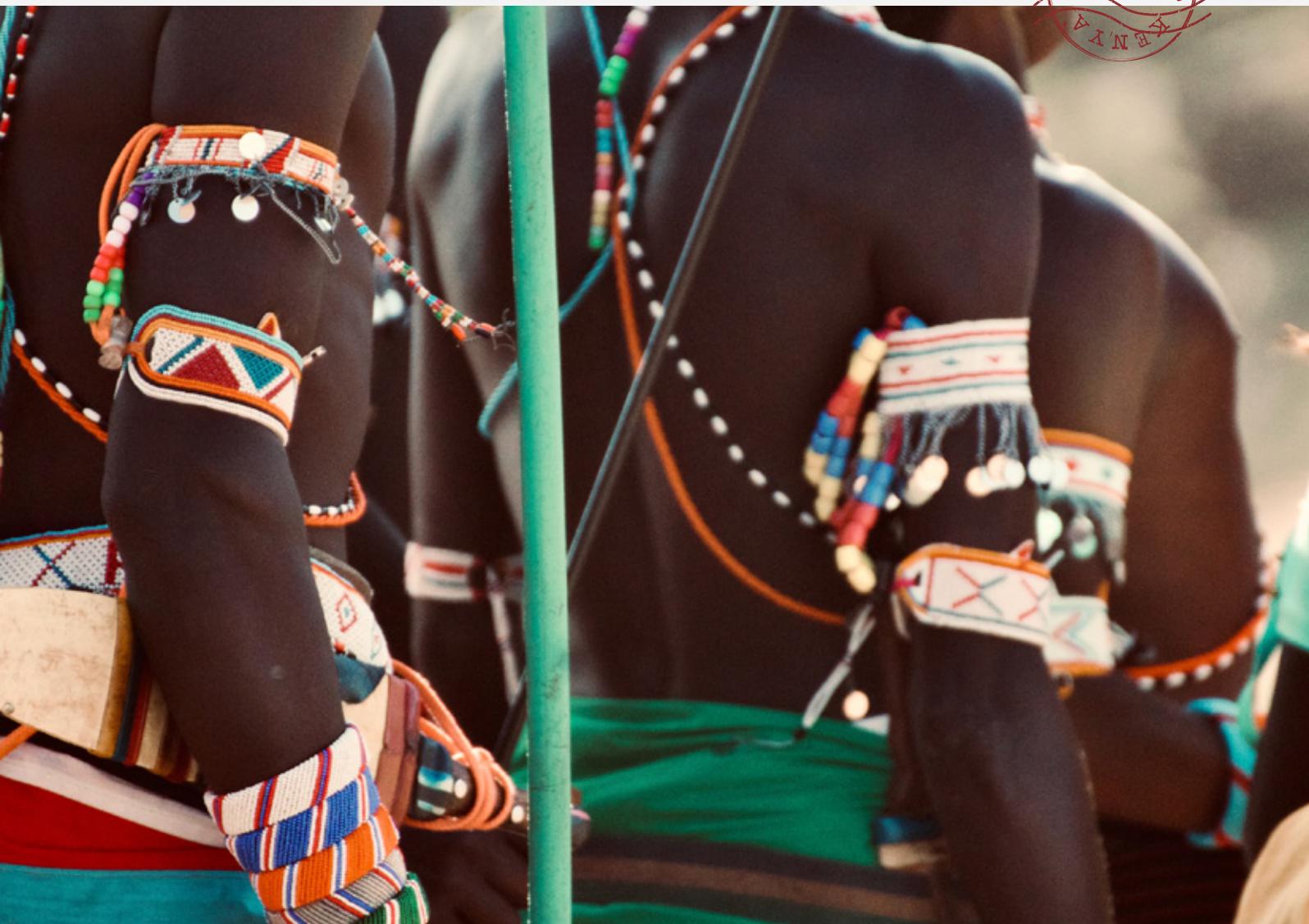
AN EVENING AT THE MANYATTA

Arrive as the sun is setting and the herders bring their animals back for the night. Sit around the fire with the elders for a wide-ranging chat and a glass of “maratina” (local brew, made of fermented aloe vera and honey), and maybe a game of “bao”. Then indulge in a delicious dinner of roast goat and various curries prepared by our chef. The table is set by an acacia tree, with lanterns hanging from its branches and blending into the starry skies. This is a completely raw and magical experience.



WARRIOR INITIATIONS (MAASAI “EMORATA”)

The most important event in the life of a man, this begins with the circumcision ceremony, and is followed by a series of fascinating rituals which mark the initiation of the young man as a warrior, together with other boys of the same age-set. During the next 12 years or so, the warriors will live apart from their families, learning the arts of war and tasked with protecting the community. Witnessing that initiation is always deeply emotional.



WEDDINGS AND BLESSINGS

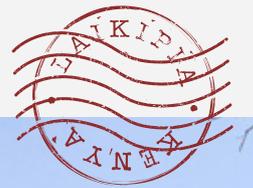
Maasai and Samburu weddings are elaborate and colourful affairs, which begin with a complex courtship and match-making process. The festivities start during the day and go on through the night, with Ol Lentille guests often invited to participate and dance till dawn. The next morning sees the more formal parts unfolding, with the handing down of women's secrets to the bride and her quite emotional ritual departure from her manyatta. Guests also sometimes witness mass-blessings, with hundreds of attendants in traditional attire officiating.



SINGING WELLS, WOMEN'S RAIN PRAYER

During the dry season (Jan-March, Aug-Oct), the Maasai and Samburu dig deep wells in the dry riverbeds to find water for their livestock. The warriors make a human pyramid inside the well to bring buckets of water up to the surface, all the while singing haunting songs to their cows to pacify them and put them in the mood to drink.

Separately, in a remote part of the valley, the women will gather together to pray for rain, walking down the dry riverbeds chanting, stopping at every fig tree to douse it with milk and pray for rain. This is a powerful and moving experience, seldom witnessed by outsiders.



WARRIOR DANCES

During their time as warriors, young men live a carefree life of feasting, flirting, dancing and (occasionally) cattle rustling (the Maasai believe that God gave them every cow on earth, and so they are just “recovering” what is rightfully theirs!). Guests can attend warrior dances either at the lodge’s open field (the “boma”) or at a village. These are powerful and electric events which irresistibly draw everyone attending into their pulsating rhythm



MARKET AND SCHOOL VISITS

Market day is a chance to experience the rich culture of the various tribes of the area, Maasai, Samburu, Turkana, Pokot, Rendille intermingling and exchanging the latest news while they sell a goat or two to buy necessities.

A visit to one of the schools supported by Ol Lentille is always an emotional moment, where you will witness the bridging of tradition and modernity, and get a chance to interact with teachers and students.

These are a sample of the experiences and life events that guests may be able to attend at Ol Lentille. Our partner communities will usually happily arrange a blessing for guests making vows. Star readers might drop by a bush dinner to read the future in the stars. And sometimes, the most simple encounters will be the most meaningful, such as giving a lift to women walking to market.

