



RUN AFRICA

The EA Guide to the
Lewa Safari Marathon

End of June 2026



Welcome to your Lewa Safari Marathon adventure

Congratulations!

You've been inspired to take on one of the most extraordinary marathon challenges in the world.

The Lewa Safari Marathon isn't just about running 42.2km; it's about immersing yourself in the wild heart of Africa, where your fellow runners include some of the world's fastest athletes – and the occasional giraffe or zebra.

This ebook is designed to help you prepare, plan, and make the most of your race experience.

From race-day logistics to where to stay, what to expect on the course, and how to turn your marathon into the adventure of a lifetime, you'll find everything you need right here.

Whether you're aiming for a personal best or simply looking to soak in the magic of running through a wildlife conservancy, this is more than a marathon – it's a journey like no other. So lace up, start dreaming, and let's get you to the start line!





Race details

Where & when

The Lewa Safari Marathon takes place on the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in northern Kenya. The next event will be held at the end of June, date TBA.

How to register

Visit www.lewasafarimarathon.com and follow the prompts. Entries are limited, so early sign-up is recommended. This is the only thing you need to organise yourself – Encompass Africa will do the rest!

Race options

Full Marathon (42.2km) – starts early morning (exact time TBC); cut-off time: approx 6.5 hours.

Half Marathon (21.1km) – starts early morning (exact time TBC); cut-off time: approx 4 hours.

Executive 10km Race – cut-off time: approx 2 hours.

Children's 5km Race – open to participants aged 10–17; cut-off time: approx 1.5 hours.

No qualifying times are required for any distances, but participants in the Full and Half Marathons must be 18 or older.

Entry costs

Full or Half Marathon: GBP £150. Junior Fun Run: GBP £50. Adult entrants must fundraise, with a suggested minimum target of GBP £1,750 to support conservation and community projects across Kenya.

Race bibs

Race packs and bibs are collected in person in the days leading up to the event. Encompass Africa will assist with all logistics and can collect your bib for you if needed.





Getting there

There are no direct flights from Australia to Africa, but excellent connections are available via major hubs such as Dubai (Emirates), Doha (Qatar Airways), and Johannesburg (Qantas & SAA codeshares).

For the Lewa Safari Marathon, most runners fly into Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (NBO). From there, it's either a 5-6 hour road transfer or a short domestic flight to Lewa Downs, where the race takes place. Encompass Africa can organise a scenic light aircraft transfer straight to the Lewa airstrip, where you'll be met on arrival.

Flight times from Australia to Nairobi range from 18 to 26 hours depending on your route. A layover in the Middle East or South Africa can help break up the journey and ease jet lag. As the race attracts international participants and accommodation at Lewa is limited, early bookings are essential.

Australian passport holders require a visa to enter Kenya, which can be obtained online via the official eVisa portal. Always check the latest entry and health requirements before you travel.



What to pack

In addition to your regular travel gear, we recommend you pack the following:

Your race kit

Wear what you always do on race day, but remember that temperatures can vary from cool mornings to hot afternoons. Pack gear for all conditions, including a light rain jacket and warm layers for pre-dawn starts. Your race shoes (broken in, but not worn out!) are a must – but bring a backup pair of shoes and running kit in your carry-on, just in case your luggage is delayed.

Other essentials

A hat, sunscreen and sunglasses are vital in equatorial and high-altitude conditions, while insect repellent is essential, especially in mosquito-prone areas. Bring a printed race confirmation and medical certificate if required. A running watch is useful for tracking your pace and progress on race day.

Hydration gear

Check whether hydration vests or belts are allowed on course.
Bring electrolyte supplements or energy gels you've trained with – availability can be limited locally.

Recovery gear

Pack your favourite post-race recovery tools, such as a foam roller or massage ball, compression socks, and electrolyte sachets.





Health & vaccines

Travelling to Lewa requires some basic health precautions to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. It's always best to consult a travel doctor or visit a travel clinic at least 4–6 weeks before departure for personalised advice on vaccinations and health precautions, but here are some top tips:

Yellow Fever

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required if you're arriving from or transiting through a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission. While Kenya is not considered a yellow fever risk area, proof of vaccination may still be requested if you've passed through an affected country.

Malaria

The Lewa region is a malaria-risk area, so antimalarial medication is recommended. Protect yourself by using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves in the evenings, and sleeping under a mosquito net where available.

Routine vaccinations

Ensure you're up to date with routine vaccinations, including hepatitis A & B, typhoid, tetanus, measles and influenza.

Drinking water & food safety

Stick to bottled or filtered water, avoid ice in drinks unless confirmed safe, and choose freshly prepared, well-cooked food to minimise the risk of foodborne illness.



Where to stay

Choosing the right accommodation can make a big difference to your race experience.

Where possible, we recommend staying close to the start or finish line – ideally within walking distance. This will minimise stress on the morning of the event, and makes it easy to return and recover afterwards.

We carefully select runner-friendly hotels and lodges that offer early breakfasts on race day, quiet rooms for quality sleep, and nutritious meal options in the lead-up to the event. Many properties experienced in hosting marathon runners go the extra mile with welcome packs, late check-outs, or shuttle services to the race venue. We'll take care of all bookings and fine details, ensuring everything is sorted so you can focus on your run.

If you're travelling with friends, family, or a tour group, we'll arrange accommodation that keeps you together, so you can share the excitement and support each other before and after the race. Many of our recommended properties are also perfect for spectators and support crews, offering easy access to key viewing spots or event hubs. Just be sure to book early – accommodation fills quickly on race weekend!





When you arrive

Aim to arrive at least three to four days before race day. This will give your body time to adjust to the local climate, altitude and time zone – which is especially important if you’re travelling from Australia or New Zealand, where the time difference can be substantial. This arrival window is especially important if your race is at altitude or in a warmer climate than you’re used to – your body will thank you for the extra time to adapt. Early arrival also allows you to attend pre-race briefings, collect your bib, get in some light sightseeing or shakeout runs, and settle in without stress.

Take it easy in the days leading up to the race. Focus on hydration and sleep, walk the course and do a gentle jog the day before the race to loosen your legs and get familiar with the conditions. Resist the temptation to pack in too much sightseeing at this stage! Stick to familiar foods where possible, especially in the 48 hours before the race. If there’s a race briefing, attend if possible. You’ll get final details, route updates, and practical tips from organisers. Use your arrival time to collect your race bib and get a feel for the start line layout. Wherever you’re staying, ask about mealtimes and transport on race morning to avoid any surprises.



Training and preparation

Preparing for a marathon in Africa comes with unique challenges, from altitude and heat to maintaining your routine while travelling. Here's how to set yourself up for success:

Training for altitude

If you're coming from sea level, altitude can affect your performance more than you expect. Arriving a few days early helps, and incorporating hill training and strength work into your program will build the resilience you need for high-elevation courses.

Tapering before race day

Stick to your taper even while travelling – it's your chance to arrive fresh and ready. Many runners combine their marathon with a safari or holiday, maintaining fitness with shorter runs and active recovery while allowing for proper rest.

Heat & hydration

African races can be deceptively hot, even early in the day. Hydration is key – know your needs, use water stations strategically, and consider electrolytes in extreme conditions. Practise this in your training so your strategy is second nature on race day.

Stick to what you know

Race week isn't the time to experiment. Avoid new shoes, unfamiliar foods, or last-minute treatments like massages or ice baths if they aren't part of your usual routine. Trust your training, and stay consistent.





Why book with Encompass Africa?

Planning a marathon abroad can be overwhelming – but with Encompass Africa, you can focus on your training while we take care of everything else. From flights and pre-race accommodation to post-race safaris and seamless transfers, we handle every detail, making your marathon experience effortless.

We've handpicked the best stays and support, ensuring you have comfortable, well-located hotels, nutritious meals, and reliable transport – all designed to help you perform at your best. Whether it's a pre-race hotel near the start line or a luxury safari extension, we know what works because we've been there.

With Jonathon's passion for running and deep knowledge of Africa, we understand what runners need – whether it's race-day logistics, recovery recommendations, or insider tips. When you book with us, you're not just signing up for a trip; you're getting a team that's as invested in your race as you are.

Ready to run Africa?

Let's make it happen – get in touch today!

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