

## JUST BACK FROM...EAST AFRICA

*Jewelers and collectors Lizzie and Kathryn Fortunato took us on safari.*

Excerpted from an article by Carrie Goldberg



*Images: Kathryn and Lizzie Fortunato*

**Just Got Back From...** East Africa: Kenya & Tanzania

**Trip Duration:** 2 weeks

**Flight Plan:** We flew from NYC to London to Nairobi and on tiny bush planes (like flying school busses) while in Africa. Carry-on essentials include: a Kindle, an over-sized scarf to stay warm on the plane, rosebud balm for lips and nose (40,000' gets dry!), and a hard copy of "Out of Africa" to read by flashlight at night. Travel gear is laid back, like an easy pair of Theory pants I got at Hampden Clothing this spring and seem to wear on every trip, a J. Crew chambray shirt (which I wore virtually everyday on Safari), our new SS17 **scarves** which perfectly dress up any outfit, Dieppa Restrepo Chelsea boots, a Lizzie Fortunato **Safari Clutch** for my passport and wallet and our **favorite canvas carry-all** for the airplane.

**Tour Group:** We toured with **Micato Safaris**, a phenomenal tour company focusing on East African Safaris. We loved the family-run and boutique-nature of the company (both elements we champion in our own business) and could not have fallen more in love with our tour guides, the

people—and the animals!—we met. We traveled with our mom — promptly re-named "Mama Safari" — for her 60th birthday, along with our brother Alex (who was the trip's chief photographer), and our fiancés Peter and Nick.

### **Where We Stayed:**

The **Fairmont Norfolk Hotel** in Nairobi for a day of exploring Kenya's capital city. While there, we visited **Karen Blixen's house**, where she maintained a coffee farm and gathered inspiration for her novels, most famously *Out of Africa*. Then, we took a tiny bush plane to a tiny dirt air strip (attended by exactly zero people) in Kalama. From here, we drove



*Image: Kathryn and Lizzie Fortunato*

to Samburu Game Reserve, where we stayed at **Larsens Camp**, a rustic and beautiful camp with 20 tented rooms. We loved sitting on our porch between game drives and watching baboons play a few feet away while elephants and antelopes drank in the nearby river. Our last stop in Kenya was the famed Maasai Mara where we stayed at the **Fairmont Mara Safari Club**. The rooms here were beautifully appointed: hardwood floors, full baths, and canvas tent walls. From our rooms we could hear hippos and lions at night and watch alligators bathe in the river below. A highlight of our stay here was a 5a.m. hot air balloon ride over the Maasai Mara plains, following herds of gazelle, zebra, giraffes and elephants.

**Best Daytime Activity:** Game Drives! The rover left early: 6:30a.m. to catch wild animals en route to their morning meal.

**Trip Highlight:** A hot air balloon ride over the Maasai Mara followed by breakfast in the middle of the savannah, surrounded by no one except the rising sun and gazelles. Also, visiting a local village where we stocked up on kanga fabrics and beautiful beaded necklaces—materials that will certainly inspire our FW17 collection.

**Favorite Shopping Trip:** A local Samburu village where we found beads and insane necklaces and a small shop in Nairobi where Lizzie picked up a mud cloth table runner (she's a textile fiend!)

**Why a Safari?** Because experiencing the wild up-close-and-personal is the most extraordinary thing ever. Because the light here is like nowhere else in the world. Because the people were the most warm, hospitable, and welcoming that we've ever encountered.