



nomad

LIFE ENHANCED

Katavi

YOUR GUIDE TO THE SEASONS

MONTH	RAIN FALL	HI TEMP	WILDLIFE & PARK INFO
JAN	204mm	28°C (82.4°F)	Camp closed. Long green grasses and leafy bushes dominate the landscape. Vegetation provides denser concealment for wildlife, which disperses throughout the park, enjoying the widespread and numerous water sources, including a full and flowing Katuma river. Elephant herds congregate in the long grass floodplains, plains game is plentiful, predators are better concealed, hippos and big crocs are numerous as always. Walking is not really feasible as the bush thickens.
FEB	188mm	28°C (82.4°F)	Camp closed. Grasses and other vegetation have grown up since the start of the rains so become problematic for game viewing; continued rains mean some tracks are now impassible. The park, however, remains open to tourism for those who want to stay in National Park bandas, a local village 1 star lodge, or have camping gear. Birding is excellent as always.
MAR	182mm	28°C (82.4°F)	Camp closed. Similar conditions to February. Camps are all closed, but the park remains open to the intrepid, waterproof tourist.
APR	134mm	28°C (82.4°F)	Camp closed. See February/March. Rains may reduce drastically in a dryer than normal year. Grass is at its longest, concealing even elephants on the plains. Again, the only accommodations are as listed for February.
MAY	21mm	28°C (82.4°F)	Camps reopen near the end of May. Dry conditions set in quickly, with classic dusty roads and dry air, cloudless skies, yet floodplains remain lush and green. Tanzania National Parks begins its fire management plan, burning large designated areas of savannah to knock down grasses that have grown 3 metres tall. Some areas are blackened and some early visitors find this view disturbing, but the underlying moisture allows fresh growth and encourages wildlife onto the burned areas, increasing game viewing quality. Though daytime temps are warm/hot, nighttime and early mornings require a fleece or the blankets we provide in game drive cars. Cloudless skies mean crisp, cool mornings.

MONTH	RAIN FALL	HI TEMP	WILDLIFE & PARK INFO
JUN	0mm	29°C (84.2°F)	Conditions similar to May, but continuing to dry. The river still flows but water levels fall so that by the end of June, the river may be crossable by 4x4 vehicle. Herds of elephant, buffalo, topi, zebra, giraffe, impala are common. Roan antelope can be spotted occasionally. Lions are a common sight, preying mainly on buffalo during the next few months when floodplains still support sufficient grasses to sustain herds of up to 2,000 buffalo. Hippos and crocs still have water, but some are seen to be moving into more permanent, known springs and mud holes in preparation for the coming drought. As in May, warm clothing advised for evening and early morning.
JUL	0mm	29°C (84.2°F)	The second month without a drop of rain is exciting. The river is drying rapidly, hippos are forced to crowd together into smaller and smaller waterholes or sections of river. Driving across the river makes game drives much more varietal and guides can cross at many points when they see action on the opposite banks. Lions still target buffalo and plains game mainly. Leopards, as always, are elusive, but the miombo woodland sections of Katavi and the large impala population support plenty of these cats as well. Game viewing is excellent now, with less vegetation and mostly short grasses. Elephants frequent Chada, as they do almost every month, but especially as the park dries and the tamarinds drop fruit on the tent roofs, which the elephants sweep with their trunks. As in May/June, warm jumper needed for eve/a.m.
AUG	0mm	29°C (84.2°F)	The dry season is in full swing now. The river may dry completely, or at least stop flowing, leaving only scattered pools along its length which are dominated by hippos packed in by the hundreds. Having so many dominant males in such close proximity causes battles, which often result in death or grave injury, and the lions, hyenas and crocodiles are there to take advantage. This month or September see the lions changing tactics from buffalo hunting to hippo scavenging. Elephants start to dig wells in the dry areas of the riverbed, since hippo dung has contaminated most remaining pools. Water for crocodiles becomes scarcer. Huge herds of buffalo form black lines across the plains. Warm fleece for early a.m. may be needed.
SEP	2mm	31°C (87.8°F)	So dry now, even monkeys and elephants try to reach into Chada's outdoor showers for a drink. Crocodiles dig caves in the banks of the river to escape the sun. Hippos try to survive by coating themselves with mud if available. Elephants and plains game visit two fresh water springs more regularly. Predators also frequent the springs to drink and hunt. Some species, including eland, are adapted to life without much water so are still able to roam across the drier parts of the park. It is likely to see lions eating hippos now. While five camps are operating now, Katavi remains very quiet compared to northern parks. Game viewing is excellent. Migratory birds begin passing through, moving south.
OCT	24mm	31°C (87.8°F)	Almost identical to September, possibly even drier, this is a very hot month, with a completely dry riverbed, and amazing wildlife sightings. Buffalo herds that began to disperse in September are now mostly broken up into smaller groups and many have migrated to the southeastern remote areas of Katavi where the ankle deep Chorangwa river still trickles, since buffalo must drink almost daily. There is a chance of a rain shower occasionally, but dry conditions persist as every droplet is immediately absorbed. Elephants can be seen napping in the afternoon, lying flat on their sides at Chada, conserving energy. Their commute between food and water is becoming very long now.

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NOV	128mm	29°C (84.2°F)	<p>Camp closes mid November.</p> <p>By normal standards, Katavi is still wonderful for game viewing, though compared to the condensed concentration of game of the dry season, it pales slightly. Rains begin to fall and plains turn from yellow and brown to green. Grass is still short and game is easily spotted. Though elephants' and lions' habits become less predictable with the increase in water sources, an experienced guide is rarely snookered by this. Buffalo may begin to be seen in larger numbers again on the Chada and Katisunga plains as grasses grow taller toward the end of the month. Migratory birds may still be present this month. On rainy days, a fleece/jumper is a good idea.</p>
DEC	222mm	28°C (82.4°F)	<p>Camp closed.</p> <p>Rains are likely almost daily, especially in afternoons, but sunny mornings and evenings are still common. Grasses grow longer while leaves return to the trees and shrubs to fill in the woodlands. This month is a safari veteran's paradise for landscapes and lush habitat. Not ideal for the newcomer who needs to see a lion under every bush. Katavi is extremely quiet now, often having between 2 and 10 visitors in the entire park, despite being 3rd largest in Tanzania, second only to Ruaha N.P. and the mighty Serengeti. It is possible to spend days without seeing another vehicle. It is a couple's modern day Eden. On rainy days, warmer clothing is recommended.</p>