

## Green Hills of Africa

*A twelve to twenty day exploration of Tanzania from the northern game parks to the southern reserve of Selous. Walking safaris, boating, canoeing, night drives and traditional game viewing.*

Day 1: On arrival at Kilimanjaro or Nairobi met and transferred to the Bay Leaf Hotel in Arusha for overnight on bed and breakfast basis.

Day 2: After breakfast depart for the Ngorongoro Highlands with picnic lunch to spend the afternoon trekking on the highlands. Dinner and overnight at the Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge.



### **Ngorongoro Conservation Area**

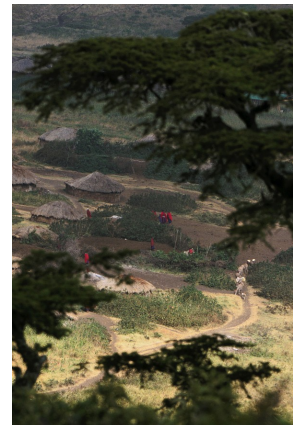
Ngorongoro Conservation Area is the name given to the 8,300 square kilometre piece of land that surrounds the famous Crater and the Highlands of the same name. The Crater was once the headquarters of Serengeti National Park of which it was an integral part, but in 1956, after intense pressure and lobbying from the local Masai community who were dispossessed of the lands when the National Park was set up, Ngorongoro was designated a Conservation Area.

The 210 square km Crater is now one of the principal attractions on the Northern Tanzanian Safari Circuit and the reputation of the Crater Highlands is slowly developing as a premier trekking destination. The Crater is all that it is made out to be, the hyperbole about Garden's Of Eden, Eighth Wonder Of The World etc all justified by its perennial animal population. This cross-section of wildlife is about as convenient as you will find, dispersed amongst an amazing array of eco-systems within the Natural Amphitheatre created by 600 metre high cliffs around it. It is home to one of the few remaining populations of black rhino in Tanzania and just about every other East African mammal, with the exception of giraffe (walls are too steep) and impala, all unafraid and used to the constant retinue of vehicles.

The crater has the highest density of lions in Africa, with over 30 lions per 100 sq kms, compared to the Serengeti, which has about 14 lions per 100 sq kms; and Kruger National Park in South Africa with about 10 lions per 100 sq kms. In Ngorongoro it is not uncommon to find the lions lying in the shade of the parked tourist vehicle!

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area is unique in that the area is shared between the pastoralist Masai tribe and the wildlife the area was established to preserve.

Day 3: This morning is spent game viewing in the crater with a picnic lunch. Mid afternoon depart for the Serengeti, game viewing en route to our camp in the Seronera valley for dinner and overnight.



### **Serengeti National Park**

Arguably the most famous National Park in the world, the Serengeti Ecosystem (the name comes from "siringit" the Masai word for "endless plains") consists of some 35,000 square kilometres. It extends into the Masai Mara in neighbouring Kenya and provides a vast eco-system for the wildebeest migration that takes place each year. The famed plains are found to the south of the park east of the Seronera Valley, rolling hills in the less visited Lobo area to the north and wooded riverine valleys to the remote east around Kirawira and Grumeti.

The park itself is about 14,763 sq kms in area and encompasses the main part of the Serengeti ecosystem. The ecosystem is defined by the annual migration of over 1,500,000 million wildebeest, zebras and associated predators, which occurs throughout the year and extends into the game reserves, game controlled areas and conservation area surrounding the park

boundaries. As in all ecosystems, the vegetation and type of animals you will find are closely correlated, although it is impossible to say exactly where different species will occur, it is possible to build up a picture of the most likely species to be found in each area.

**Seronera Valley**

Located virtually in the geometric centre of the park, the Seronera Valley provides the best all year game viewing within the National park. The area consists of a varied habitat of acacia riverina and plains of red-oat grasslands. To the east and south are the lightly wooded Nyaraswiga and Mukoma Hills. The Seronera Valley provides probably the widest variety of game viewing in all of the Serengeti park, being on the crossroads for the migration and having a number of permanent water courses. It is justly famous for both leopards and lions, both of which are usually seen in the area without difficulty. Just to the north of the valley along the road to Lobo is the only place where you are likely to see hippopotamus in the Serengeti

Day 4 and 5: These days are spent exploring the Serengeti, either on game drives early in the morning and late in the afternoon with hot lunch in camp, or on full day game drives with picnic lunches. Dinners and overnights within camp.



Day 6: After breakfast we depart for Tarangire for dinner and overnight at Boundary Hill Lodge where we will also be able to experience a late afternoon walking safari and a night drive.

**Tarangire National Park and Conservation Area**

This park represents perhaps the closest approximation to people’s expectations of Africa. Savannah lands, acacia stands, clusters of baobab trees, large herds of elephant and large tracts of rarely visited game lands make this perhaps the epitome of the safari experience. The park is approximately 2,600 sq kms within an ecosystem of over 20,000 sq kms on the Masai steppes, and during the height of the dry season is second only to Ngorongoro in density of wildlife. Tarangire is also arguably the best park in Africa for elephants with a population of over 3,000; and during the season, these are concentrated around the permanent waters of the Tarangire River during the heat of the day.

As in all ecosystems the vegetation and the types of animals you find are closely correlated. The principle features of the ecosystem are grasslands and floodplains, Acacia tortillas and baobab parkland, riverina woodland, acacia commiphora woodland and combretum woodland. Three swamps form very important all year water sources for the large elephant populations, Silale and Gursi within the park, and Goswa within the conservation area.

Tarangire is also one of the only places in Tanzania where you are able to combine the traditional game viewing from vehicles with other activities such as night drives, walking safaris and fly camping. For avid birders, to be able to walk in the Conservation Area with one of the trained Masai guides is incredibly rewarding as it is at this pace it is far easier to spot and observe the many bird species. Night drives also enable visitors to spot the nocturnal animals such as African wildcat, Serval cats, genets, civets and bat eared foxes. The larger predators are also active at night and it is not uncommon to spot leopards hunting in the woodland margins or lions on the plains.

For birders, species to note include Hildebrandts Starling, the endemic Ashy starling, Yellow collared lovebird and Orange bellied parrot. Also seen around the camp are Brown parrots, Von der Deckens Hornbill, Northern pied babbler, Northern white crowned shrike, white bellied go away bird, plus a variety of rollers, woodpeckers and other species. On the night drives we also have the chance to see some of the many owls in the area, as well as two banded coursers and Montane nightjars.

**Community Conservation**

During the late eighties and early nineties, Tarangire National Park was in danger of becoming an island surrounded by marginal agricultural activities. This would have been a disaster for the Tarangire National Park and the world would have lost one of the top three wildlife migrations. The local Masai communities, seeing their natural heritage endangered entered joint partnerships with private investors and established areas set aside for habitat and wildlife preservation. It is in these areas that we offer our walking safaris, night drives and fly camping, with economic benefits flowing back to the local Masai communities.

Days 7 & 8: Full days game viewing in Tarangire, walking safaris and night drives, we will also take the opportunity to visit one of the local Masai bomas found in the area, dinners and overnights at Boundary Hill Lodge.

Day 9: This morning we head through Tarangire National park to the western gate before heading south to Lake Babati, dinner and overnight with camp on the lake shore. Lake Babati was the setting for Hemingway's "The Green Hills of Africa" and is located between Tarangire National Park and the Rift Valley. The Lake is located in a valley surrounded by hills and mountains. Lake Babati is also a designated Hippo Reserve, one of the few in Tanzania, but sightings are not always easy. Sometimes there are hippos in the swamps right within town, and at other times they are on the lake shore in inaccessible locations.



Days 10 and 11: These days spent exploring the Lake Babati area, either trekking on the forested slopes of the surround mountains with local guides, visiting the UNESCO Rock Art site at Kolo, fishing or just exploring the lake shore in a traditional dug out canoe. Dinner and overnight with camp.



Day 12: After breakfast today depart for Arusha for connecting flights to Zanzibar, international departures or transfers to Nairobi.

### Southern Tanzania Extensions

Day 11: This morning depart Babati for Dodoma in central Tanzania for overnight at the Simba guesthouse. En route you can visit one of the 180 different cave painting sites located around the Kolo and Kondoa area.

Day 12: This morning depart for Mikumi National Park for dinner and overnight at the Mikumi Wildlife Lodge or similar. Afternoon game viewing in the park.

#### Mikumi National Park

Swirls of opaque mist hide the advancing dawn. The first shafts of sun colour the fluffy grass heads rippling across the plain in a russet halo. A herd of zebras, confident in their camouflage at this predatory hour, pose like ballerinas, heads aligned and stripes merging in flowing motion. Mikumi National Park abuts the northern border of Africa's biggest game reserve - the Selous - and is transected by the surfaced road between Dar es Salaam and Iringa. It is thus the most accessible part of a 75,000 square kilometre (47,000 square mile) tract of wilderness that stretches east almost as far as the Indian Ocean. The open horizons and abundant wildlife of the Mkata Floodplain, the popular centrepiece of Mikumi, draw frequent comparisons to the more famous Serengeti Plains.

Lions survey their grassy kingdom - and the zebra, wildebeest, impala and buffalo herds that migrate across it - from the flattened tops of termite mounds, or sometimes, during the rains, from perches high in the trees. Giraffes forage in the isolated acacia stands that fringe the Mkata River, islets of shade favoured also by Mikumi's elephants. The equally impressive greater kudu and sable antelope haunt the miombo-covered foothills of the mountains that rise from the park's borders. More than 400 bird species have been recorded, with such colourful common residents as the lilac-breasted roller, yellow-throated longclaw and bateleur eagle.

Day 13: Early morning game viewing in Mikumi with picnic lunch, late afternoon head south towards the Selous game Reserve, dinner and overnight at Lake Manze Camp or similar.



### **Selous Game Reserve**

The Selous Game Reserve is one of the largest areas set aside for wildlife preservation anywhere in the world, covering approximately 50,000 sq kms. Located around the Rufiji river system, the Selous is a vast area of miombo woodland, swamps, lakes, gorges and plains. Being of such a vast size it is impossible to predict where the wildlife will be at any one time, but the wilderness experience is exceptional

Day 14 and 15: Full days spent exploring the Selous, on walking safaris, boat safaris as well as game drives. Dinners and over-nights within camp.

Day 16: After breakfast this morning depart for Dar Es Salaam with picnic lunch, game viewing en route, for late afternoon and early evening international flights.



#### **Included:**

All transfers, transfers, game drives, walking safaris, all accommodation as indicated, all park fees, conservation area fees, all meals as indicated, camping equipment, English-speaking guide and cooks.

#### **Not included:**

Visas, insurance, tips, items of personal nature, soft and alcohol drinks, departure taxes or airfares, unless stated.

### **Udzungwa National Park extension**

Day 13: After breakfast, we depart for the Udzungwa Mountains National Park with a picnic lunch. Our drive takes us across an impressive array of landscapes with basket-weavers and other local craftsmen to be found by the side of the road. Dinner and overnight is at our special campsite under the canopy of the Udzungwa Mountains rainforest.

#### **Udzungwa National Park**

Brooding and primeval, the forests of Udzungwa seem positively enchanted: a verdant refuge of sunshine-dappled glades enclosed by 30-metre (100 foot) high trees, their buttresses layered with fungi, lichens, mosses and ferns.

Udzungwa is the largest and most biodiverse of a chain of a dozen large forest-swathed mountains rise majestically from the flat coastal scrub of eastern Tanzania. Known collectively as the Eastern Arc Mountains, this archipelago of isolated massifs has also been dubbed the African Galapagos for its treasure-trove of endemic plants and animals, most familiarly the delicate African violet. Udzungwa alone among the ancient ranges of the Eastern Arc has been accorded national park status. It is also unique within Tanzania in that its closed-canopy forest spans altitudes of 250 metres (820 feet) to above 2,000 metres (6,560 ft) without interruption. Not a conventional game viewing destination, Udzungwa is a magnet for hikers. An excellent network of forest trails includes the popular half-day ramble to Sanje Waterfall, which plunges 170 metres (550 feet) through a misty spray into the forested valley below. The more challenging two-night Mwanihana Trail leads to the high plateau, with its panoramic views over surrounding sugar plantations, before ascending to Mwanihana peak, the second-highest point in the range. Ornithologists are attracted to Udzungwa for an avian wealth embracing more than 400 species, from the lovely and readily-located green-headed oriole to more than a dozen secretive Eastern Arc endemics.

Four bird species are peculiar to Udzungwa, including a forest partridge first discovered in 1991 and more closely related to an Asian genus than to any other African fowl.

Of six primate species recorded, the Iringa red colobus and Sanje Crested Mangabey both occur nowhere else in the world – the latter, remarkably, remained undetected by biologists prior to 1979. Undoubtedly, this great forest has yet to reveal all its treasures: ongoing scientific exploration will surely add to its diverse catalogue of endemics.

Day 16: Today is spent walking in the Udzungwa Mountains with its jagged mountain-scapes and waterfalls. Highlights might include sighting the rare endemic Iringa Red Colobus monkey, tracking one of the rare bird species that were only recently discovered and listing the incredible variety of orchids and plants found in the rainforest. Dinner and overnight within camp.

Day 17: After breakfast break camp and head towards the Selous Game Reserve with picnic lunch.

Days 18, 19 and 20 as per days 14, 15 and 16 on previous itinerary.

