

## Itinerary for Northern Tanzania Safari

*A seven day exploration through the Serengeti/Ngorongoro ecosystem and Tarangire National Park*

**Day 1:** This morning depart Arusha with picnic lunch for Ngorongoro and the opportunity to trek on the crater rim area with an NCAA guide this afternoon, dinner and overnight at the Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge on the crater rim.

### Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Ngorongoro Conservation Area is the name given to the 8,300 square kilometer 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!



**Day 2:** This morning head into the crater with a picnic lunch for game viewing, mid afternoon departing for the Serengeti to spend the rest of the day game viewing en route to our camp. Dinner and overnight within our full service camp in the Serengeti, and depending on the time of year we would locate the camp in the best spot for game viewing.

### 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.

**Days 3 and 4:** Full day exploring the Serengeti, either with picnic lunch or early morning and late afternoon game drives and lunch in at the lodge. Dinner and overnight at the Seronera valley.

**Day 5:** This morning depart with picnic lunch, game viewing en route for Manyara, dinner and overnight at the Boundary Hill Lodge in the Tarangire ecosystem. Evening night drive.

### Lake Manyara National Park

From whichever way you approach Lake Manyara National park, the first view is spectacular. From the west as you pause at the top of the escarpment and gaze out over the thin green strip of vegetation nestled tight against the Rift Valley and the lake shining in the sunshine. Or if you approach from the east, the Rift Valley and Ngorongoro Highlands form an impressive backdrop to the lake. The large variety of wildlife to be found in the park, mammals, reptiles and birds and the different vegetation, all within a small area make Lake

Manyara a diverse and particularly interesting place to visit. The Park derives its name from the Masai word 'manyara', which is the name for the plant *Euphorbia tirucalli*. The Masai use this plant to grow livestock stockades, eventually producing a stock proof hedge which is more durable than that of any built of thorn.

The Great Rift Valley is part of the fault which runs from Mozambique in the south, north 8,000 kilometres to Turkey. In the Manyara area there is no eastern wall to the Rift Valley as there is in Kenya. Here it is flattish country which falls gently into a depression and towards the Masai steppes of the Lolikisale and Simanjiro region.

The types of vegetation which occurs in the region is related to the geology of the area. The northern part of the park consists of volcanic rock which being porous allows many streams of clear water to flow out of the base of the rift wall, Further to the south, around Msasa River, the volcanic rock gives way to crystalline rock which is harder and less porous which allows fewer streams to emerge.

Despite being only 620 sq kms in area, of which 230 sq kms is the lake, it contains a large variety of habitats; the rift wall, the ground water forests, acacia woodland, areas of open grasslands, the lake shore, swamp and the lake itself. Due to the wide range of habitats the lake can support a diverse range of wildlife.

**Day 6:** Early this morning enjoy a walk with the local Masai guides, before spending the rest of the day game viewing with a picnic lunch, dinner and overnight at Boundary Hill Lodge.

#### **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.

#### **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.



**Day 7:** Today there is a chance for another walk in the Boundary Hill, returning to the lodge for lunch, after lunch depart for Arusha. (this day can be flexible to fit in with other plans, flights or transfers)

#### **End Of Services**

**INCLUDED:** This is a private safari , with all game viewing in 4WD land rover or Land cruiser with English speaking guide, all full board accommodation throughout, all park fees and conservation fees, unlimited kilometers on game drives, all walking safaris and night drives as stated.

**NOT INCLUDED:** soft and alcoholic drinks, all items of a personal nature, visas and international flights.

**Quote:** \$2,295 USD per person for a private safari for a group of two.