

Pearl of Africa to the Island of Spices

A 32 day exploration of East Africa, from the parks of Uganda, through the wildlife rich plains of Tanzania to the Indian Ocean, game viewing, night drives, walking and boat cruises.

Day 1: On arrival in Nairobi today, met and transfer to the Silver Springs for overnight on b&b basis.

Day 2: Morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Entebbe, departing at 07hr55 and arriving 09hr10. (flights may vary according to day of travel, and also if you choose Dar Es Salaam or Kilimanjaro as arrival airport)

Day 3: This morning depart for Murchison Falls National Park with picnic lunch, afternoon game drive for dinner and overnight.

Murchison Falls National Park

Uganda's largest national park protects a chunk of untamed African savannah bisected by the mighty river Nile. It is named for the dramatic Murchison Falls, where the world's longest river explodes violently through a narrow cleft in the Rift Valley escarpment to plunge into a frothing pool 43m below. Wildlife populations have largely recovered from the poaching of the 1980s; in the lush borassus grassland to the north of the Nile, elephant, buffalo, giraffe and a variety of antelope are regularly encountered on game drives, while lion are seen with increasing frequency. In the southeast, Rabongo Forest is home to chimps and other rainforest creatures.

The Nile itself hosts one of Africa's densest hippo and crocodile populations, and a dazzling variety of waterbirds including the world's most accessible wild population of the rare shoebill stork.



Days 4 and 5: These days are spent exploring the Murchison Falls National Park, including launch trips to the base of the falls and game viewing, launch trip to the Lake Albert delta, and the short climb to the top of the falls. Dinners and overnights in within camp.

Day 6: This morning depart with picnic lunch for Kibale National Park, mid afternoon arrival in the park, dinner and overnight within camp.

Kibale

The most accessible of Uganda's major rainforests, Kibale is home to a remarkable 13 primate species, including the very localised red colobus and L'Hoest's monkey. Kibale's major attraction, however, is the opportunity to track habituated chimps - these delightful apes, more closely related to humans than to any other living creature, are tremendous fun to watch as they squabble and play in fruiting trees. A network of shady forest trails provides much to delight botanists and butterfly lovers, while birders are in for a treat with 335 species recorded including the endemic Pirogrine's ground thrush. The elusive forest elephant, smaller and hairier than its savannah counterpart, moves seasonally into the developed part of the park, while other terrestrial mammals include buffalo, giant forest hog and a half dozen antelope species.



Day 7: Today is spent exploring Kibale National Park, chimp trekking and other guided forest walks, and even the possibility of a night walk. Dinner and overnight at the park guesthouse.

Day 8: This morning depart for Queen Elizabeth National Park for the campsite overlooking the Kazinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth National Park for dinner and overnight.

Queen Elizabeth National Park

From open savannah to rainforest, from dense papyrus swamps and brooding crater lakes to the vastness of Lake Edward, it is little wonder that QENP boasts one of the highest biodiversity ratings of any game reserve in the world. Almost 100 mammal species and a remarkable 606 bird species makes this superb safari territory, with elephant, a profusion of hippos, the elusive giant forest hog and handsome Uganda kob all regularly sighted around the tourist village on the Mweya Peninsula - which also boasts a marvelous waterfront setting in the shadow of the Ruwenzori Mountains.



Day 9: Today is spent game viewing in Queen Elizabeth National Park, including experiencing a launch trip on the Kazinga Channel. Dinner and overnight within camp.

Day 10: This morning is spent game viewing before we depart for Mbarara after lunch for dinner and overnight in a local guesthouse.

Day 11: After breakfast this morning head towards the Tanzanian border near Mtukula, clearing customs and immigration and continue towards Bukoba on the shores of Lake Victoria. The drive passes through the Kagera River marshlands. Dinner and overnight in the Bukoba Hotel.

Day 12: This morning explore Bukoba, before heading south around the bottom of Lake Victoria for Mwanza. Dinner and over night at the Tilapia Hotel

Day 13: This morning Sesse Island National Park, and explore this large port city. Dinner and overnight at the Tilapia.

Day 14: After breakfast this morning leave the shores of Lake Victoria and head towards the Serengeti with picnic lunch to spend the day game viewing en route to the campsite either in the Seronera valley or further east at the Moru Kopjes for dinner and overnight. This is a private campsite using our standard dome tents, with camp beds, mattresses and all bedding as well as private shower and toilet tents. *(the location of the camp is dependent on the time of year, with November being around the Seronera valley, and January probably further east at the Moru Kopjes, or Naabi Hill/Ndutu area.)*



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 15 and 16: Full day exploring the Serengeti, either with picnic lunch or early morning and late afternoon game drives and lunch in camp. Dinner and overnight within camp.

Day 17: This morning depart for Ngorongoro with picnic lunch, game viewing en route and visiting Ol Duvai Gorge. Late afternoon ascend the crater walls to the Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge for dinner and overnight.

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!

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 18: Early this morning head into the crater for game viewing with picnic lunch, before heading to the Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem for dinner and overnight at Ol Tukai Manyara.

Day 19: Today is spent on treks on the lake shore and game drives in Manyara National Park. Dinner and overnight at Ol Tukai. We will also take the opportunity to visit the remote Masai school here, as well as visit some of the local Bomas with our Masa guides.

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 Lolkisale 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 630 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 selection of wildlife.

Day 20: This morning head into Tarangire National Park for game viewing with a picnic lunch, dinner and overnight at Boundary Hill Lodge. Evening night drive.

Days 21 and 22: These days are spent exploring the Tarangire ecosystem, on game drives, walking safaris, night drives, aking traditional bow and arrows and visits to the remote Masai communities found on the Masai Steppes, as well as the chance to visit a local Masai school. Dinners and overnights 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. Most animals leave the area near the Tarangire River at the beginning of the short rains in mid to late November. The first to move are the numerous wildebeest and zebras which slowly make their way in two groups, one towards the breeding grounds of the Simanjiro and Endupai plains to the east and a smaller group north into the Manyara and Natron ecosystem. In December through to February the wildebeest and zebras can be found within the Conservation Area and especially on the Lemiyon Plains.

Some of the elephants groups tend to stay in their home ranges, feeding off the moisture filled bark of the baobab trees during dry periods and ranging over enormous areas in search of water. Other elephant groups leave the park area completely and disperse over the Simanjiro and Lolkisale wildlife zones. The resident species which include waterbuck, giraffe, impalas, lesser kudus and dik dik, do not migrate but are to be found throughout the park and conservation area at all times of the year.

Tarangire has over 450 species of birds including endemic such as Ashy Starling and Orange bellied parrots. It is one of the best places in East Africa for birding, including many European migrants.

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 23: This morning we head through Tarangire National park to the western gate before heading south to Lake Babati, dinner and overnight at the Royal Beach Guesthouse 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.

Lake Babati

During the 1930s the future King of England hunted lions on the mountain slopes above Lake Babati, Ernest Hemingway wrote of his expeditions around Babati and on the Masai Steppes in his novel "The Green Hills of Africa", and Bror Blixen, of "Out of Africa" fame, had his hunting lodge near the lake shore. The modern explorer can also experience the uniqueness found in the Babati area, trekking on the mountain slopes, the melting pot of tribes that make the area their home, and viewing the largest population of hippos in northern Tanzania as well as Tanzania's only designated Hippopotamus Reserve.



Dug out canoeing; walking safaris; cultural exchanges; and climbing Mt Hanang, Tanzania's fourth highest mountain; relaxing in our private camp on the lake shore; fishing and birding; or tasting the sweetness of the local honey; Babati has so much to offer those who want to get away from the herds and experience Tanzania

Day 24: Today is spent exploring the Lake Babati area, either trekking on the forested slopes of the

Day 25: Morning departure with picnic lunch for Mkomazi National Park, afternoon spent game viewing in the park en route to the campsite at Ibaya for dinner and overnight.

Mkomazi National Park

The Mkomazi National Park is Tanzania's newest park and is located in a wild and beautiful stretch of land behind the Pare and Usambara Mountains and forming the Tanzanian extension of the Tsavo National Park of Kenya. The Transborder National Park is the largest of its type in the world, over 26,000 sq kilometers. The acacia and boabab habitat is home to over 400 bird species as well as dozens of large mammals usually found in the Somali - Masai habitats including gerenuk and kudu. The landscape is dominated by a ring of mountains. The reserve is also home to migratory mammals from Tsavo at the beginning of the short rains in December but mainly during the long rains in April and May. Thousands of elephant, buffalo, oryx and zebras are common during this period, as well excellent chances of spotting lions and leopards.



African Wild dog and black rhinoceros have been reintroduced into the reserve and are to be found in a semi- captive environment near Kisima. Mkomazi is one of the few areas in northern Tanzania where we are able to talk with armed rangers, and makes for exciting game viewing!

Day 26: Full day spent exploring Mkomazi on walk-ing safari with a ranger and game views, dinner and overnight at Ibaya.

Day 27: After breakfast this morning we break camp and head south east along the main road to the port city of Tanga. Dinner and overnight is in private camp on the beach at Tambarani just south of Tanga. *(note that this is not a resort type beach, but is located near Swahilli villages on white sand and mangroves, and we can take local Ngalawa outriggers to offshore sand islands for picnics and skin diving)*

Day 28: Today is spent exploring the Swahili coast. Dinner and overnight at Tambarani.

Swahili coast

Tanga is the second largest port in Tanzania but its decaying grandeur is only a remnant of its heyday during the German colonial administration at the start of the 20th Century. From Tanga we will be visiting the Amboni caves as well as the atmospheric fourteenth century Swahili trading town of Tongoni. Tanga seems to have missed the developed experienced elsewhere in East Africa during the last half of the 20th century, and the buildings lining the streets all date back nearly a century. The central market is one of the few left which is typical of what was in every town in East Africa. there will be opportunities for heading out on the local Ngalawa sailing boats, deep "v's" with dhow set sails, visiting offshore sand islands for picnic and swimming. Tanga is also the location of the first land engagement of WW1 in East Africa when British and colonial troops attempted an amphibious landing in November 1914.



Day 29: Today take dhow across the Pemba channel to the north of Zanzibar and the Kilima Kidogo Guesthouse in Nungwi for overnight on b&b basis.

Days 30 and 31: These days spent relaxing on Zanzibar, overnights at Kilima Kidogo Guesthouse.

Day 32: Transfer to airport for onward connections.

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, bottled drinking water, all park fees and conservation fees, unlimited kilometers on game drives, all walking safaris and night drives as stated. Flights Nairobi to Entebbe and Tanga to Zanzibar.

End Of Services

Quote: For a private departure, \$8,255 USD per adult for a private departure for two persons, and \$7,125 USD for four persons.

