

## Southern Tanzania Explorer

*A thirteen day exploration of southern Tanzania. Walking safaris, boating, fly camping and traditional game viewing.*

Day 1: On arrival at Dar Es Salaam airport met by our guide and depart for Mikumi National Park for dinner and overnight at Vuma Hills Tented Lodge. Game viewing late afternoon. (today is flexible depending on arrival details)

### 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 2: Early morning game viewing in Mikumi before departing with picnic lunch, for Ruaha National Park, game viewing in the afternoon en route to the campsite for dinner and overnight.

Days 3 and 4: These days are spent exploring Ruaha, dinners and overnights are within camp.

### Ruaha National Park

Ruaha National Park lies to the west of Tanzania's Southern Highlands town of Iringa. Recently expanded to include the huge Rungwa Game Reserve the park is over 40,000 sq kilometers in size, probably the largest in the world. The park's southeastern boundary follows closely the Great Ruaha river, with the terrain within most of the park being well wooded, undulating plateau country.

Although particularly noted for large numbers of elephants, the park is rich in all forms of wildlife except some of the plains animals such as wildebeest and topi. It is also possible to see Sable and Roan antelope as well as greater and lesser Kudu. The best time for game viewing is during the dry season from June through to November.

Day 6: 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 that 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 hik-



ers. 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: on-going scientific exploration will surely add to its diverse catalogue of endemics.

Days 7, 8 and 9: These days are 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. Dinners and overnights within our mobile camp.

Day 10: After breakfast break camp and head towards the Selous Game Reserve with picnic lunch. Dinner and overnight at Lake Manze Tented Camp.

#### 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 11: Full days spent exploring the Selous, on walking safaris, boat safaris as well as game drives. Dinners and overnights within camp.

Day 12: After breakfast this morning depart for Dar Es Salaam with picnic lunch, game viewing en route, for mid afternoon arrival at Sea Cliff Hotel for overnight on b&b basis.

Day 13: Transfer to airport for international flight.

#### Included:

This is a private safari including all transfers, game drives, walking safaris, boat cruise in Selous, 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.

