

Tanzania

Set between the tropical Indian Ocean and the two arms of the Rift Valley, Tanzania is one of Africa's most scenically beautiful countries. It also has some of the most extensive protected areas including the fabled Serengeti. The landscape rises from sea level to 19,000 feet (5,894 m) at the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Covering 365,000-square-miles (945,000-km²), Tanzania is about the same size as Texas and Oklahoma combined. The population numbers some 36 million, with Dodoma as the administrative capital. The famous port city of Dar es Salaam has been a key trading center for centuries. KiSwahili is the most widely spoken language, but English is also commonly used. Currency is the Tanzanian Shilling.

Tanzania Country Highlights

- Tanzania is considered by many experts as one of the two top wildlife countries on the continent (along with Botswana).
- Have front row seats to the spectacle known as the Great Migration of the Wildebeest across the majestic Serengeti plains.
- Experience world-class luxury mobile camping in Tarangire the Grumeti Reserves and the Serengeti.
- Descend into the Ngorongoro Crater, the largest caldera in the world, for a day of game viewing and opportunity to see the “Big Five”
- Climb Mt. Kilimanjaro – the highest peak in Africa.
- Spend time with the Hadzabe Bushmen, the Datoga and the Maasai.
- Fly to the Selous and experience guided walking safaris and game viewing by boat.
- Trek chimpanzees at Mahale or Gombe, and visit remote Katavi to see big game with very few tourists.
- Finish your safari adventure with a stay on Zanzibar or one of the charming outer islands offering barefoot luxury.

When's the Best Time to Go for Game Viewing

Best Safari Experience

Ndarakwai Ranch, Oliver's Camp (Tarangire); Manyara Ranch; Kisima Ngeda (Lake Eyasi); Sayari (Serengeti), Serengeti Explorer and Ubuntu Seasonal Camps (Serengeti); Faru Faru, Sabora Plains and Singita Explore (Grumeti Reserves); Greystoke (Mahale); Jongomero (Ruaha), Beho Beho, and Selous Safari Camp (Selous)

TANZANIA

Between Africa's highest mountain (Kilimanjaro) and Africa's largest lake (Victoria) lies one of the best game viewing areas on the continent. This region also includes the world's largest unflooded intact volcanic caldera (Ngorongoro) and the most famous wildlife park (the Serengeti). There is great chimpanzee trekking at Mahale in the west, and to the southeast lies one of the world's largest game reserves — the Selous.

Volcanic highlands dominate the north, giving way southward to a plateau, then semidesert in the center of the country and highlands in the south. The coastal lowlands are hot and humid with lush vegetation. One branch of the Great Rift Valley passes through Lake Natron and Lake Manyara in northern Tanzania to Lake Malawi (Lake Nyasa), while the other branch passes through Lakes Rukwa and Tanganyika in the west.

The “long rains” usually occur in April and May, however, this does not mean it rains all the time, as the thundershowers will come and go. Lighter rains often occur in late October and November. Altitude has a great effect on temperature. At Arusha (4,600 ft./1,390 m), the Southern Highlands (6,700 ft./2,030 m) and the top of Ngorongoro Crater (7,500 ft./2,285 m), nights and early mornings are especially cool. Tanzania's highest temperatures occur December to March and are lowest in July.

Some scientists debate that East Africa was the cradle of mankind. Some of the earliest known humanoid footprints, estimated to be 3.5 million years old, were discovered at Laetoli by Dr. Mary Leakey in 1979. Dr. Leakey also found the estimated 1.7-million-year-old skull *Zinjanthropus boisei* at Oldupai (formerly Olduvai) Gorge in 1957.

From as far back as the tenth century, Arabs, Persians, Egyptians, Indians and Chinese were involved in heavy trading on the coast. The slave trade began in the mid-1600s and was abolished in 1873.

British explorers Richard Burton and John Speke crossed Tanzania in 1857 to Lake Tanganyika. The German East Africa Company gained control of the mainland (then called German East Africa) in 1885, and the German government held it from 1891 until World War I, when it was mandated to Britain by the League of Nations. Tanganyika gained its independence from Britain in 1961, and Zanzibar gained its independence in December 1963. Zanzibar, once the center of the East African slave trade, was ruled by sultans until they were overthrown in January 1964. Three months later, Zanzibar formed a union with Tanganyika — the United Republic of Tanzania.

Leopards are known for their climbing skills and spend much of their days lounging on tree branches

There are 120 tribes in Tanzania. Bantu languages and dialects are spoken by 95% of the population, with KiSwahili the official and national language. Over 75% of the people are peasant farmers. Export of coffee, cotton, sisal, tea, cloves and cashews bring 70% of the country's foreign exchange. Tourism is now one of the country's top foreign exchange earners.

The Great Migration is located in the northern Serengeti near the Mara River from August through October

WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE AREAS

Reserves cover over 100,000-square-miles (259,000-km²); only a few countries on earth can boast having a greater amount of land devoted to parks and reserves. The 15 national parks, 17 game reserves and 1 conservation area comprise over 15% of the country's land area. In total, over 25% of the country has been set aside for wildlife conservation. Tanzania's great variety of wildlife can be at least partially attributed to its great diversity of landscapes, with altitudes ranging from sea level to 19,340 feet (5,895 m).

Tanzania is one of the best wildlife countries in Africa for mobile and seasonal tented camp safaris. Vehicles with roof hatches or pop-tops are used on driving safaris. Safari camps and lodges that have guides and vehicles based at them may in many cases use open-sided vehicles — similar to those used in many reserves in Southern Africa.

If accompanied by a national park guide, walking is allowed in Arusha, Mt. Kilimanjaro, Gombe Stream, Mahale Mountains, Katavi National Park, Ruaha National Park, Rubondo Island National Park, Selous Game Reserve and Loliondo Game Reserve (bordering the eastern side of the Serengeti National Park). Areas for walking have recently been designated in Tarangire National Park and in the northern part of Serengeti National Park. Walking is also allowed in the Ngorongoro Conservation area (but not within the Ngorongoro Crater itself) if accompanied by a conservation ranger.

The best weather for viewing game in northern Tanzania is June through March. Late December to February and July and August are the busiest periods. April and May is traditionally the rainy season and travel in 4wd vehicles is highly recommended, however, as the seasons are not as pronounced as they were a few decades ago, travelers during that period may in fact encounter little rain. Advantages of traveling in April and May include lower rates, fewer tourists, and great game viewing in some parks, such as the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater. This is a great time to drive through the Great Serengeti Migration, with possibly no other vehicles in sight!

Light rains usually fall late October to early December, but little negative effect on game viewing in some reserves. November is in fact one of my favorite times for northern Tanzania; a little rain is nice because it helps drop the dust out of the air, and the bush turns from brown to green. In southern Tanzania the best months for game viewing are June to November due to the longer 6 month dry season compared to the north.

The country contains 35 species of antelope and over 1.5 million wildebeest — over 80% of the population of this species in Africa. The calving season for wildebeest is from mid-January to mid-March.

THE NORTH

This region, from Mt. Kilimanjaro in the east to Serengeti National Park in the west, is the area most visited by tourists and boasts many of the country's most famous parks.

Some visitors reach Arusha, gateway to the area, by flying directly into Kilimanjaro International Airport. Others fly into Nairobi (Kenya) and then take a 1-hour flight to Kilimanjaro or a 5-hour drive via Namanga to Arusha, or they fly into Dar es Salaam and then take an hour's flight to Kilimanjaro or Arusha airports. Kilimanjaro International Airport is located 34 miles (54 km) east of Arusha and 22 miles (35 km) west of Moshi, and has a bank, bar, shops and a restaurant.

The traditional **“Northern Circuit”** includes Arusha National Park, Tarangire National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Oldupai Gorge and the Serengeti National Park. Other areas of interest in the north include Ndarakwai Ranch, Sinya, and Lake Eyasi (opportunities for great cultural experiences), Manyara Ranch Conservancy, Grumeti Reserves, Mt. Meru and Mt. Kilimanjaro.

From Arusha the Northern Circuit runs 45 miles (73 km) west on a good tarmac road, across the gently rolling Maasai plains with scattered acacia trees, to Makuyuni. You can then either continue on the main road toward Dodoma for another 20 miles (32 km) to Tarangire National Park or turn right (northwest) to Mto wa Mbu (Mosquito Creek) on a paved road.

Northern Tanzania and Southern Kenya

Traditional Maasai boma

Children attend a local “open air” classroom

En route you pass many Maasai bomas (villages) and Maasai in their colorful traditional dress walking on the roadside, riding bicycles, herding their cattle and driving overloaded donkey carts.

Maasai Morani completing the circumcision ritual are sometimes seen clad in black with white paint on their faces. They leave the village as children for a period of training and instruction by elders and return as men.

Mto wa Mbu is a village with a market filled with wood carvings and other local crafts for sale. Be sure to bargain. If you take a few minutes to walk into the village behind the stands, you will get a more realistic (and less touristy) view of village life.

Continuing west, you soon pass the entrance to Lake Manyara National Park. The road then climbs up the Rift Valley escarpment past huge baobab trees and numerous baboons looking for handouts (please do not feed any wild animals). Fabulous views of the valley and Lake Manyara Park below can be seen. Next you pass through beautiful cultivated uplands, the village of Karatu and other small villages, past the turnoff to Lake Eyasi, and on up the slopes of the Crater Highlands to the Ngorongoro Crater. The road then follows the southern rim of the crater and finally descends the western side to Oldupai Gorge and Serengeti National Park and the Grumeti Reserves, and Lake Victoria.

The Northern Circuit is thought by some travelers to be “crowded.” If your driver/guide sticks to the main roads and tracks, as many do, then the park will certainly seem full of tourists. You can avoid most of the crowds by booking a safari with a company that uses top guides, 4wd drive vehicles and no limitations to the distance (kilometers) they may drive. Many guides who are restricted by the number of kilometers they may drive, are penalized financially for driving over their limit, and are rewarded financially for driving under the limit. For instance, I once met a group in the central Serengeti that were very upset because their guides refused to drive them to see the “migration” because the distance was too great and they would have exceeded their kilometer limit! Driver/guides who really know the park will then be happy to take you to lower utilized areas off the beaten track for a real safari.

Arusha

This town is the center of tourism for northern Tanzania and is situated in the foothills of rugged Mt. Meru. Named after a sub-tribe of the Maasai, the Wa-Arusha, it is located on the Great North Road midway between Cairo and Cape Town. Makonde carvings and other souvenirs are available in the numerous craft shops at the center of town. Walking around the Arusha Market, located down the road from the clock tower, is an interesting way to spend a few hours. Consider visiting a school or clinic to better experience the local culture.

Arusha Coffee Lodge

Plantation Suite at Arusha Coffee Lodge

Serena Mountain Village

ACCOMMODATION — DELUXE: • **Arusha Coffee Lodge**, located near the Arusha Airport on a coffee plantation, is comprised of 18 standard suites and 12 Plantation suites, each with private decks. There is a swimming pool and 24-hour room service. • **Lake Duluti Lodge** is based in an old coffee estate and has 18 suites and a swimming pool. • **Onsea House**, located outside Arusha, features 5 rooms with private terraces and views of the gardens. There is a restaurant, swimming pool, lawn bar and garden.

FIRST CLASS: • **Shangazi House**, located near Arusha National Park, is set in beautiful gardens with 6 cottages with private verandahs and a swimming pool. • **Arumeru River Lodge** offers 21 rooms with ceiling fans, mosquito netting and private terraces. There is a lush garden, swimming pool and an organic vegetable garden. • **Serena Mountain Village, Arusha** has thatched rondavels, swimming pool and conference center. The lodge is set in lovely gardens and is located 6 miles (10 km) east of Arusha overlooking Lake Duluti. • **Hatari Lodge** has 9 bungalows (doubles) with open fireplace, designed in a classic retro style. The lounge and deck have views of Mt. Kilimanjaro. • **Arusha Safari Lodge**, situated in a valley between Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru, offers comfortable guest cottages, fitness center, sauna, steam room, jacuzzi, and swimming pool. Polo matches are often played on the grounds. • **Moivaro Lodge**, situated outside of Arusha on a coffee plantation, has 40 double (or triple) cottages and a swimming pool. • **Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge** is a farmhouse situated on the slopes of Mt. Meru with 10 rooms. • **Mount Meru Game Lodge** is located in 33 acres of gardens bordered by the Usa River and the animal sanctuary. The lodge consists of 15 rooms and 2 suites.

TOURIST CLASS: • **Olasiti Lodge** features 24 rooms, a swimming pool and a bar with views of Mt. Meru. • **Snow Crest Hotel**, 10 minutes from Arusha, has 83 rooms, swimming pool, sundeck, restaurant and lounge. • **Kibo Palace Hotel**, in Arusha's Town Center, has 65 rooms, fitness center, massage room, and swimming pool.

Arusha National Park

This highly underrated park is predominantly inhabited by forest animals, while in the other northern parks, savannah animals are more prevalent. Arusha National Park is the best place in northern Tanzania to spot black-and-white colobus monkeys and bushbuck and to photograph larger species with Mt. Kilimanjaro or Mt. Meru in the background. Early mornings are best for this because Mt. Kilimanjaro is less likely to be covered with clouds. Travelers should consider spending at least half a day here as this park is so different from the other parks and reserves on the “Northern Circuit.”

This 53-square-mile (137-km²) park is actually the merger of three regions: Meru Crater National Park, Momela Lakes and Ngurdoto Crater National Park. The wide range of habitats, from highland rain forest to acacia woodlands and crater lakes, hosts a variety of wildlife. Armed park guides are required to accompany you for walks in the western part of the park or for climbing Mt. Meru; guides are available at Park Headquarters at Momela Gate.

Arusha and Arusha National Park

On the open grassland near the entrance to the park, Burchell's zebra are often seen. High in the forest canopy of the Ngurdoto Forest is a good place to find blue monkeys and black-and-white colobus monkeys. Olive baboons are common and red duiker are sometimes seen.

A submerged hippo in the Momella Lakes

Walking is not allowed in the 2 mile (3 km) wide **Ngurdoto Crater**, which is, in essence, a reserve within a reserve. However, there can be good views (especially in the early morning) of the crater, Momela Lakes and Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Driving north from Ngurdoto, you pass Ngongongare Spring, the Senato Pools (sometimes dry) and Lokie Swamp and are likely to see common waterbuck and maybe Bohor reedbuck and the rare red duiker. Buffalo are often seen around Lake Longil.

As you continue past Kambi Ya Fisi (hyena's camp), the landscape becomes more open, and elephant and giraffe can be seen. Hippo and a variety of waterfowl can be seen at the shallow, alkaline **Momela Lakes**, where **canoe safaris** are offered.

Driving west from Momela, you may encounter black-and-white colobus monkey and red duiker enroute to the **Arched Fig Tree** — large enough to drive

a vehicle through.

From Kitoto, a 4wd vehicle is needed to reach **Meru Crater**. The sheer cliff rises about 4,920 feet (1,500 m) and is one of the highest in the world.

At the base of Mt. Meru, you may encounter elephant and buffalo. Kirk's dikdik, banded mongoose and klipspringer can also be seen in the park. The best time to visit for game viewing is June through March.

Over 400 species of birds have been recorded, with Hartlaub's turaco, redfronted parrot and brown-breasted barbet among the species not easily found elsewhere in northern Tanzania.

Mt. Meru (14,977 ft./4,566 m) is an impressive mountain that is classified as a dormant volcano; its last eruption was just over 100 years ago.

Mt. Meru is best climbed in 4 days. As a bonus you have a chance to see some wildlife such as giraffe and buffalo. The 3 nights are spent in the national park mountain huts. These huts have bunk beds in rooms that sleep 4 to 8 people and a communal dining area. Food and equipment is carried by porters and meals are prepared by your cook.

Arusha National Park is an excellent place to see black-and-white colobus monkeys

On Day 1 (5-6 hours walking), you start from Momela Gate 4,920 feet (1,500 m) in late morning. You steadily climb past open grasslands and motane forest to Fig Tree Arch. The route continues through less dense forest to **Miriakamba Hut** (8,245 ft./2,514 m), situated in a grassy glade

On Day 2 (3-6 hours walking), hike from Miriakamba Hut to the saddle below Little Meru is steep all the way. Elephant Ridge, the half-way point, has excellent views of the summit ridge and across most of the crater floor. Continue uphill through giant heather and other moorland vegetation to **Saddle Hut** (11,710 ft./3,570 m). After lunch, some trekkers summit **Little Meru Crater** (12,530 ft./3,820 m) and return to camp before sunset

On Day 3 (10-12 hours walking), you begin your summit attempt at around 2 a.m. – climbing the steep path to Rhino Point (12,650 ft./3,800 m), and then continue along a ridge of ash and rock to reach Cobra Point (14,270 ft./4,350 m) around sunrise. The views of the cliffs of the Crater rim and the Ash Cone rising from the Crater floor, of Mt. Kilimanjaro to the east, and the surrounding Rift Valley are spectacular if the weather is clear. Hike another hour or more to the summit of Socialist Peak (14,975 ft./4,566 m). The route back to Rhino Point is on a dramatic, narrow ridge with sheer drops. After a rest, continue to Saddle Hut for brunch before and onward to **Miriakamba Hut** (2,514 m). For anyone suffering from vertigo, it is not recommended that they climb past Rhino Point.

On Day 4 (2–3 hours walking, you hike to Momela Gate through grassland and mixed forest with good chances of seeing some wildlife.

The best months to climb are June to October and late December to February. Bring all your own gear and make your reservations in advance.

The turnoff to the park entrance is 13 miles (21 km) east of Arusha and 36 miles (58 km) west of Moshi. Continue another 7 miles (11 km) to Ngurdoto Gate. Walking is allowed in the western part of this park where there are a number of hikes and picnic sites to enjoy when accompanied by a park ranger.

ACCOMMODATION NEAR THE RESERVE — See Accommodations: Arusha

Ndarakwai Ranch

Ndarakwai is an 11,019 acre (4,460-hectare) private wildlife reserve located on the northwest slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Flood plains, hills, acacia woodland and views of Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru make this one of the most beautiful, pristine, wild areas of northern Tanzania.

Ndarakwai Ranch

There is permanent water on the ranch — a key element in making it a haven for wildlife — especially in the dry season. Wildlife includes a recorded 63 species of mammals and more than 340 species of birds.

Activities include day and night game drives (off-road driving allowed) in open vehicles, half-day or full-day escorted walks with armed guides and cultural visits with neighboring Maasai communities. An optional activity offered is the elephant interaction to meet the ranch's two habituated elephants. This exclusive activity is limited to two guests in the morning and afternoon, and must be booked in advance. This is one of the best places for a quality visit to Maasai villages that are far off the tourist track. Voluntourism programs are also available and highly recommended.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A/B: • **Ndarakwai Ranch** is family-owned and has 15 large tents on platforms under thatch. The ranch is located about an hour and a half drive from Kilimanjaro International Airport or Arusha, and is a great place to begin your safari. The ranch's **tree house** is a favorite among guests where, during the dry seasons, you are likely to gaze down at a herd of sixty or more elephants at the waterhole. In the evening, the tree house is the ideal location for sundowners.

Sinya

The Sinya region is Maasailand bordering the southwestern corner of Amboseli National Park in Kenya. Mt. Meru lies to the southwest and Mt. Kilimanjaro to the southeast. This area is know for its hills and acacia woodland.

Unlike at Amboseli National Reserve in Kenya, one seldom if ever encounters other tourists on the Tanzania side of the border.

There is no permanent water in the area except for a few boreholes used by the Maasai for their livestock. In addition to seeing resident game, wildlife can be seen traversing the area, moving to and from permanent water in Amboseli National Reserve to permanent water on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Game viewing in Sinya is good; however, its major attraction may be that it offers very good opportunities for a non-touristy, cultural experience with the Maasai.

Sinya is about an hour and a half drive from Namanga and about a two-hour drive from Arusha.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A/B: • **Kambi ya Tembo** has 20 tents with private verandahs. Activities include game drives, sundowners and Maasai visits.

Tarangire National Park

Large numbers of baobab trees dotting the landscape of this 1,003-square-mile (2,600-km²) park make it one of the most scenic reserves in Africa — and one of my favorites. Tarangire is the best park on the northern circuit to see lions in trees and large numbers of elephant.

Fewer tourists visit this park than Manyara, Ngorongoro and Serengeti, however, this park should not be missed. Wildlife viewing is excellent, especially from July to November, when many animals concentrate near the only permanent water source in the area — the Tarangire River and its tributaries.

At the beginning of the short rainy season (November), some herds of migratory species including wildebeest and zebra, soon followed by elephant, buffalo, Grant's gazelle, Thomson's gazelle and oryx, begin migrating out of the park. The creation of the Manyara Ranch Conservancy has helped open up the migration route from Tarangire to Lake Manyara National Park. However, as some migration routes have been cut off from the expansion of man's presence, many of these animals are remaining in the park and few are migrating out of the park or far beyond the park's borders. December to February is also a good time to visit.

Tarangire

An ancient baobab tree

Walking safaris are offered by some Tarangire camps

Giraffe, waterbuck, lesser kudu and other resident species remain in the park. The migratory animals that do manage to leave the park usually return at the end of the long rains in June.

On a recent two-day visit during November we saw more than 600 elephant, several prides of lion, leopard in a tree with an impala kill, eland, oryx, along with a variety of other antelope. The game viewing was excellent!

Tarangire wildlife populations include approximately 30,000 zebra, 25,000 wildebeest, 5,000 elephant, 5,000 buffalo, 5,000 eland, 2,500 Maasai giraffe and 1,000 oryx. Other prominent species include Grant's and Thomson's gazelle, hartebeest, impala, lesser and greater kudu, reedbuck and gerenuk. Lion

and leopard are frequently seen. Cheetah and spotted hyena are also present, as are the banded, slender, dwarf and marsh mongoose. African wild dog may also be seen.

Approximately 550 bird species have been recorded. Specialties include the northern pied babbler, Eastern chanting goshawk, black-faced sandgrouse, slender-tailed nightjar, coqui francolin, magpie shrike and D'Arnaud's barbet. Lappet-faced vulture, yellow-necked spurfowl, Fischer's lovebird, white-bellied go-away bird, rosy-patched bushshrike and ashy starling are among the characteristic species. Bird watching is best December through May.

The **Lemiyon region**, the northernmost region of the park, is characterized by large numbers of majestic baobab trees. This unique landscape is also dotted by umbrella acacia trees, as well as some open grasslands and wooded areas. Elephant, wildebeest and zebra are often seen. Visitors with little time for game viewing may want to concentrate on the Matete and the Lemiyon areas, including the Tarangire River.

The **Matete region** covers the northeastern part of the park and is characterized by open grasslands with scattered umbrella acacia and baobab trees and the Tarangire River. Lion, fringe-eared oryx and klipspringer are seen quite often. Bat-eared fox are also present.

On the 50-mile (80-km) **Burungi Circuit**, you pass through acacia parklands and woodlands. You are likely to see a number of species, including elephant, eland and bushbuck.

The eastern side of the **Kitibong area** is a good place to find large herds of buffalo. The eastern side is mainly acacia parklands, and the western side is thicker woodlands.

The **Gursi section** is similar to the Kitibong area with the addition of rainy season wetlands, which are home to large populations of water birds.

The **Larmakau region**, located in the central eastern part of the park, has extensive swamps, and is not visited by many travelers. **Nguselororobi**, in the south of the park, is predominantly swamp with some woodlands and plains. The **Mkungunero section** has a few freshwater pools and a variety of bird life.

During the heavy rainy season (March to May), some roads become impassable. There is an open market every Sunday not far from the entrance of the park.

Guests at Oliver's Camp have views of the flood plains from their beds

ACCOMMODATION IN THE RESERVE — CLASS A: • **Oliver's Camp**, located inside the southern region of the reserve and sitting on an elevated ridge overlooking a flood plain, has 10 tents each with private verandahs. Day game drives, night game drives and walking safaris are offered. • **Swala Camp** is a permanent tented camp, located on the western side of the park, with 12 recently refurbished tents and a swimming pool. Morning and afternoon game drives and walking safaris are offered.

CLASS A/B: • **Tarangire Balloon Camp** has 6 luxury safari tents with butler service. The camp is located near Boundary Hill and features balloon safaris.

CLASS B: • **Tarangire Sopa Lodge** has 75 rooms each with 2 queen size beds, sitting area and private terrace, and a swimming pool.

CLASS B/C: **Tarangire Tented Lodge** is set on a high ridge overlooking the Tarangire River, and has 35 tents (doubles) and 6 bungalows (triples) and a large swimming pool.

ACCOMMODATION ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE PARK — CLASS A: • **Tarangire Treetops Lodge** is set in a private game reserve adjacent to the park, about a 45-minute drive from the park entrance. Each of the 20 luxurious tents is built around one of the baobab treetops and has a private deck. Activities offered outside the park include walking, hilltop sunset cocktails and night game drives.

CLASS A/B: • **Chem Chem Safari Lodge**, located northwest of Tarangire in the Tarangire/Lake Manyara Corridor on a private game concession, has 8 luxury tents with private wooden decks. There is a dining room, lounge, library, sundeck, swimming pool and spa. Game drives in open vehicles are offered.

CLASS B: • **Kirurumu Tarangire Tented Lodge**, located on a private concession near the main entrance, has 10 tents, 2 honeymoon suites and 2 family suites. Activities include guided bush walks, mountain biking and game drives in Tarangire National Park. • **Lake Burunge Tented Camp**, built on the western shores of Lake Burunge just northwest of the park, features 20 tents and 10 lodge rooms with a central dining and bar area connected by walkway. Activities include guided walks, canoeing and cultural interactions with Maasai and Datoga tribes. • **Maramboi Tented Camp**, located 10 miles (17km) from Tarangire in the migratory corridor to Lake Manyara, has 20 tents and 10 lodge rooms with private verandahs and a swimming pool. Activities include game drives, guided walks, bird watching and Maasai village visits. • **Tarangire River Camp**, located in a private concession near the main entrance, has 20 tents with views of Mt. Meru. Activities include game drives, guided walks and cultural visits to the local Maasai and Datoga tribes.

A guest tent at Swala Camp

Tarangire Treetops Lodge is elevated in baobab trees

The Tarangire/Lake Manyara Corridor

The Kwakuchinja Corridor, or migration route between Tarangire National Park and Lake Manyara National Park, had become severely restricted until the Tanzania Land Conservation Trust got involved and the Manyara Ranch was created. The migration of wildlife between these two parks, which are only 25-miles (40-km) apart, has become much improved.

A stay at Manyara Ranch Conservancy includes open-vehicle game viewing

Resident wildlife includes groups of large bull elephants, giraffe, oryx eland, lesser kudu, wildebeest, zebra, gazelle, along with lion, cheetah, leopard, bat-eared fox, and wild dog.

Day and night game drives (offroad driving allowed), escorted walks, viewing from hides, visits to local villages, fly camping and horseback riding are available on this 35,000-acre (14,175-hectare) property. Day trips to Lake Manyara and Tarangire national parks are also offered.

comfortable tents

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A: • **Manyara Ranch Conservancy** is a tourism initiative developed in partnership with local Maasai and African Wildlife Foundation. To help sustain the conservancy a luxury camp has been built and features 6 deluxe tents with private viewing decks.

Lake Manyara National Park

This 125-square-mile (325-km²) park has the Great Rift Valley Escarpment for a dramatic backdrop and was once one of the most popular hunting areas of Tanzania. Two-thirds of the park is covered by alkaline Lake Manyara, which is situated at an altitude of 3,150 feet (960 m).

Lake Manyara

The turnoff to Lake Manyara is past Mto wa Mbu on the road from Makuyuni to Ngorongoro Crater, about 75 miles (120 km) west of Arusha.

Despite its comparatively small size, the park has five distinct vegetation zones and a remarkable diversity of wildlife. From the crest of the Rift Valley to the shores of the lake, the varied topography and soils support characteristic plants and animals. The first zone reached from the park entrance is groundwater forest that is fed by water seeping from the Great Rift Wall, with wild fig, sausage, tamarind and mahogany trees. Elephant prefer these dense forests, as well as marshy glades. The other zones include the marshlands along the edge of the lake, scrub on the Rift Valley Wall, open areas with scattered acacia, and open grasslands.

Manyara, like Tarangire National Park (Tanzania) and Ishasha in Queen Elizabeth National Park (Uganda), is well known for its tree-climbing lions, which may occasionally be found lazing on branches of acacia trees. Some people believe that lions climb trees in Manyara and Tarangire to avoid tsetse flies and the dense undergrowth while they remain in the cool shade. They also believe that lions of the Ruwenzori National Park in Uganda climb trees to gain a hunting advantage. Finding lion in the trees in Lake Manyara is rare, so don't set your heart on it — look at it as an unexpected bonus.

Manyara features large concentrations of elephant and buffalo. Other wildlife includes common waterbuck, Maasai giraffe, zebra, impala, baboons and blue monkeys.

Tree climbing lion in Lake Manyara National Park

Some 450 species of birds — including an astonishing total of over 40 varieties of birds of prey — have been recorded, which makes Manyara one of Tanzania's best bird watching localities and one of the world's most impressive raptor havens. Among the exciting birds regularly seen are saddle-billed stork, crowned eagle, southern ground hornbill, silvery-cheeked hornbill, grey-hooded kingfisher, long-tailed fiscal, spotted morning thrush and black-winged red bishop.

The level of the lake fluctuates with rainfall. When the lake is high, the fish population increases and pelicans and storks flourish. At lower levels, the salinity of the water increases, and vast flocks of lesser and greater flamingo feed on brine shrimp and algae in the shallows.

The northern part of the park can be crowded, but as the southern part has very few visitors, consider packing a breakfast and/or a picnic lunch and spend most of a day exploring the south.

Much of the wildlife is resident year-round, making this a good park to visit any time. The best time to visit is December to March, followed by June to October. A 4wd vehicle is recommended for travel in April and May.

Other activities offered in and near the park include night game drives (with bush dinner), walking on the edge of the escarpment and mountain biking.

Roads in the northern part of the park are good year-round and 4wd is not needed, although in the rainy season some side tracks may be temporarily closed. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are sometimes necessary and highly recommended for travel in the more remote southern part of Lake Manyara. There is an open market every Thursday at Mto wa Mbu village.

The Escarpment Luxury Lodge overlooks Lake Manyara

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A: • **Lake Manyara Tree Lodge**, located in the remote southwestern area of the park in a mahogany forest, has 10 luxury treehouse suites and a swimming pool. A 2-night stay is recommended as it takes at least 2 hours to drive from the park gate to the lodge.

CLASS A/B: • **Escarpment Luxury Lodge**, perched on the rim overlooking Lake Manyara, has 16 chalets with private decks from which to enjoy the view. A cycling tour to nearby village of Mto wa Mbu can be arranged. • **Lake Manyara Serena Safari Lodge**, set on the Rift Valley Escarpment overlooking the park and the Rift Valley 1,000 feet (300 m) below, has 67 rooms and a swimming pool. The hotel offers walks along the Rift Valley Escarpment and to Mto wa Mbu village.

CLASS B: • **Kirurumu Manyara Lodge**, set on the escarpment overlooking the Rift Valley, has 27 tents covered by thatched roofs. Short nature walks around the area as well as hikes down the escarpment to Mto wa Mbu village are offered.

CLASS C: • **Manyara Wildlife Safari Camp** overlooks Lake Manyara and the national park. It features 10 tented chalets with private balconies. • **E Unoto Retreat Lodge** is a totally Maasai inspired and owned lodge with 25 bungalows overlooking a natural spring outside the park. Mountain biking, nature walks and exclusive visits to their nearby village are offered. • **Lake Manyara Hotel**, set on the escarpment overlooking the park, has 100 rooms and a swimming pool.

Lake Eyasi

Lake Eyasi lies on the southern border of the Ngorongoro Conservation area and is Tanzania's largest soda lake. The remote region is seldom visited by travelers and is home for the Hadzabe Bushmen and the Datoga (also called the Barabaig or Mang'ati) tribe. Here you can have a much truer picture of tribal life than in the more touristy areas.

Hadzabe Bushmen are traditional hunter-gatherers who speak a "click" language similar to the Bushmen of southern Africa. The men hunt in the early mornings and afternoons with bows and arrows. Poison arrows are used for large game and non-poison arrows for birds and small game. The women gather wild fruits, roots and tubers. The **Mang'ati** (also called the **Datoga**) is a tribe similar to the Maasai that herd cattle and goats. Their diet primarily consists of meat, milk, and blood.

Remote Lake Eyasi is off the traditional safari route

Hunting with the Bushmen is one of the most exciting cultural experiences you can have in Africa. Recently my wife and I and our 2 children spent 2 days at Lake Eyasi and enjoyed every minute of it. We left the lodge before sunrise and with the assistance of a local guide found a bushman encampment that had apparently been deserted just a few days earlier.

After about 45 minutes of searching, we located their new camp, and shortly thereafter set off with 5 hunters armed with traditional bows and arrows (they gave our boys bows and arrows as well). Their first mission was to find a dikdik that they had shot the night before that had escaped. My son Nicolas became the "hero" of the day by finding the lost metal arrowhead on the pathway, as arrowheads require a relatively high price in the form of trade with the local blacksmith. We never found the dikdik, but they did shoot a bushbaby, and quickly made a fire the traditional way, cooked and ate it. We returned to their camp, where we were invited to dance with them and to take target practice. Shooting those bows is harder than you might think!

Later that day we visited the local blacksmith, and spent a few hours with the Datoga (Mang'ati) tribe. The women invited our children to dance (jump) with them, and we spent some time in huts, seeing how they lived. What made the experience with the bushmen and the Datoga even more special is that we had them to ourselves — just our family and our guide.

Only travelers with a keen interest in culture should venture here. If you visit the area, please do your part in helping them maintain their culture by not giving the Bushmen or the Mang'ati any clothing or other western articles. Your guide will know what is appropriate. Lake Eyasi is a perfect family destination as children are welcome to get involved in all the activities.

Lake Eyasi is about a 3-hour drive from the Karatu — Ngorongoro Crater road.

Hadzabe bushmen giving hunting tips to Miles and Nicholas Nolting

Kisima Ngeda Camp

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A/B: • **Kisima Ngeda Camp** is located on the eastern shore of Lake Eyasi and has 6 permanent tents built under a thatched structure. The camp is managed by Chris Schmelling, who grew up in the area and knows the tribe quite well.

CLASS B: • **Tindiga Tented Lodge** is located a mile from Lake Eyasi and has 10 canvas and thatched tents.

The Karatu Area — Bordering the Ngorongoro Conservation Area

This is a highland area of rich farmland near the town of Karatu, located between the Rift Valley Escarpment overlooking Lake Manyara National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Many visitors stay in comfortable accommodations here and take day trips into the Ngorongoro Crater and to Lake Manyara. There is an open market in Karatu on the seventh of each month.

The **Iraqw Cultural Center** allows visitors the opportunity to learn more about the local Iraqw tribe, who have inhabited the immediate Ngorongoro highlands for over 200 years. Guests may tour a traditional Iraqw home and observe a biogas plant used for producing cooking and lighting gas from animal dung for a home — eliminating the need for firewood or charcoal and thereby helping to minimize the effects of deforestation. Our kids particularly enjoyed trying their hand at throwing the traditional spears.

The Manor at Ngorongoro

Gibb's Farm

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A: • **The Manor at Ngorongoro** is set on an extensive country estate with 18 luxurious cottages and a 3-bedroom family house, each with a fireplace and butler service. Activities include horseback riding, guided walks of the estate, swimming pool and spa. • **Gibb's Farm** has 18 Farm Cottages (Class A) and 2 Standard Cottages (Class B) set in the gardens. Walks to nearby waterfalls, hikes to the Ngorongoro Crater rim, mountain biking and village visits can be arranged. • **Exploreans Ngorongoro Lodge**, located near the conservation gate, has 20 private log cabins each with a fireplace, living room and private terrace. There is a restaurant, bar, swimming pool and spa.

CLASS A/B: • **Kitela Lodge** is an exclusive lodge with 20 chalets with a heated pool and spa. • **Plantation Lodge**, set in lovely gardens on a coffee farm near Karatu, has 14 rooms and a swimming pool.

CLASS B: • **Ngorongoro Farmhouse** is located 2.5 miles (4 km) from the Ngorongoro park gate and has 50 rooms with colonial charm and private verandahs. Walks are available in the

Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area

Ngorongoro Crater is the largest unflooded, intact caldera (collapsed cone of a volcano) in the world. Known as the eighth Wonder of the World, its vastness and beauty are truly overwhelming, and it is believed by some to have been the proverbial Garden of Eden. Many scientists suggest that before its eruption, this volcano was larger than Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Ngorongoro contains possibly the largest permanent concentration of wildlife in Africa, with an estimated average of 30,000 large mammals. In addition, this is one of the best reserves in Africa in which to see black rhino.

Large concentrations of wildlife make Ngorongoro Crater their permanent home. Game viewing is good year-round. Because there is a permanent source of fresh water, there's no reason for much of the wildlife to migrate as it must do in the Serengeti.

Ngorongoro Crater itself is but a small portion of the 3,200-square-mile (8,288-km²) Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a World Heritage Site that is characterized by a highland plateau with volcanic mountains as well as several craters, extensive savannah and forests. Altitudes range from 4,430 to 11,800 feet (1,350 to 3,600 m).

Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area

The Ngorongoro Crater, a World Heritage Site

Ngorongoro Crater is about 12 miles (19 km) wide and its rim rises 1,200 to 1,600 feet (365 to 490 m) off of its expansive 102-square-mile (265-km²) floor. From the crater rim, elephant appear as small dark specks on the grasslands.

The steep descent into the crater along winding roads takes 25 to 35 minutes from the crater rim. The crater floor is predominantly grasslands (making game easy to spot) with two swamps fed by streams, and the Leraï Forest. The walls of the crater are lightly forested. You may descend on a road beginning on the western rim or on the eastern rim. Once on the floor, most guests are driven clockwise or counter-clockwise around the crater floor.

Lake Magadi, also called Crater Lake and Lake Makat, is a shallow soda lake near the western rim entry point of the crater that attracts thousands of flamingos and other water birds.

The dirt road continues past Mandusi Swamp. Game viewing is especially good in this area during the dry season (July to October) because some wildlife migrate to the fresh water. Hippo, elephant and reedbuck, among many other species, can usually be found here.

You then come to Round Table Hill, which provides a good view and excellent vantage point to get your bearings. The circular route continues over the Munge River, the source of which is in the Olmoti Crater north of Ngorongoro Crater, to Ngoitokitok Springs. From there, you journey past Gorogor Swamp, fed by the Lonyokie River, to the Hippo Pool, which is probably the best place to see hippo.

Game viewing on the crater floor

The Leraï Forest, primarily composed of fever trees (a type of acacia), is a good place to spot elephant and waterbuck and, if you are very lucky, leopard. There are 2 picnic areas here with long-drop toilets and running water. The "exit only" road climbs the wall of the crater behind the forest. The road from the eastern rim can be used as both a down and up road into the crater.

Lake Magadi attracts thousands of flamingos

On a recent visit we spent a morning and afternoon on the crater floor spending time looking for the elusive rhino! Even though we ran into more vehicle traffic than on the rest of our trip we still have to appreciate that 5 or more vehicles at a sighting is not huge when you consider how many travelers around the world have their heart set on seeing one of the Natural Wonders of the World! We in fact never had more than 2 other vehicles at our sightings as our naturalist guide knew that we wished to avoid other vehicles when possible. If you are concerned about the "crowds" in the Crater, I suggest you book a private vehicle and guide.

The highlight of a visit to the Ngorongoro Crater — black rhino!

Some tour companies tell prospective clients that the Ngorongoro Crater is not worth a visit. I disagree, and feel that they are just trying to avoid the expensive entry fees in order to make their tours less expensive. That's like saying that if you go to Delhi it's not worth going to see the Taj Mahal!

Close to 400 bird species have been recorded in and around the Ngorongoro Crater. Birds commonly encountered on the crater floor are kori bustard, northern anteater chat, rufous-naped lark, rosy-breasted longclaw, superb starling and rufous-tailed weaver, as well as a host of waterfowl and waders. Different bird life thrives on the forested crater rim and misty highlands, with augur buzzard, golden-winged sunbird, malachite sunbird, tacazze sunbird, Schalow's turaco, white-eyed slaty flycatcher and streaky seedeater all being common.

At the picnic sites, vervet monkeys are very aggressive in getting at your food. Black and yellow-billed kites (predatory birds) habitually make swooping dives at lunch plates out in the open, and it is advisable to eat inside your vehicle! Camping has not been allowed on the crater floor since 1992.

Since this is classified as a conservation area and not a national park, wildlife, human beings and livestock exist together. Ground cultivation is not allowed. The Maasai are allowed to bring in their cattle for the salts and permanent water available on the crater floor, but they must leave the crater at night.

Ngorongoro Crater is about 112 miles (180 km) west of Arusha. An airstrip is located farther along the crater rim, but it is not used for scheduled charter flights as fog often keeps it closed in the mornings. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are required for game drives into the crater, and guests must be accompanied by a licensed guide or ranger.

Olmoti Crater, located about an hour's drive from where the eastern ascent/decent road intersects with the Ngorongoro Crater rim, is the perfect excursion for travelers who would like to explore more of the Crater Highlands and to possibly encounter Maasai going about their daily lives. From the Maasai village of Nainokanoka at the base of the crater, you hike with a ranger from Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority for about an hour to the top of the 10,165 foot (3,099 m) crater rim.

Another interesting excursion — for the adventurous and hardy only — is to take the beautifully scenic drive past Olmoti Crater through Maasailand to the 10,700 foot- (3,260 m) high **Empakaai Crater**, situated 20 miles (32 km) northwest of Ngorongoro Crater on a road that is difficult (and sometimes impossible) to negotiate, even with a 4wd vehicle. The crater is 5 miles (8 km) in diameter and is absolutely beautiful.

The 1,000 foot (300 m) decent to the floor of Empakaai Crater takes less than an hour to hike and is amazing. Maasai are often encountered on the drive as well as on the hike in and out of the crater. Flamingos and a variety of other bird life are often found lining the shores of Lake Empakaai. Allow a very long day for this excursion, or camp on the rim of the crater if you can stand the cold!

Ol Doinyo Lengai (10,600 ft./3,231 m) — an active volcano and holy mountain of the Maasai, **Lake Natron** and possibly even Mt. Kilimanjaro may be seen from the crater's rim.

Oldupai Gorge

About 30 miles (50 km) west of Ngorongoro Crater and a few miles off the road to the Serengeti is **Oldupai Gorge**, site of many archaeological discoveries, including the estimated 1.7-million-year-old *Zinjanthropus boisei* fossil. The fossil is housed in the National Museum in Dar es Salaam. A small museum overlooks the gorge itself, and a guide there will tell you the story of the Leakeys' research and findings. Due to efforts in conserving the area, trips into the gorge where the *Zinjanthropus boisei* fossil was found are only allowed by special permit.

On one of our family's safaris, the drive to Oldupai Gorge brought us into contact with "the old" with a visit to Richard Leakey's Museum & Archaeological Site, and "the present" with further interaction with the Maasai people living near the Gorge. My older son especially enjoyed listening to the museum guide talk about man's predecessors, and having his picture taken next to the marker where the famous fossil was discovered.

We then drove to the **Shifting Sands**, located 4 miles (6 km) northwest of Oldupai Gorge. These crescent-shaped sand dunes, called "barchans," are

about 100 yards (100 m) long and about 30 feet (9 m) high, and were formed by volcanic ash spewed from the active volcano Ol Doinyo Lengai. The strong prevailing winds move the dunes an average of 55 feet (17 m) per year. En route to the Shifting Sands you can see signs that have been posted over the years showing the dune's "progress." This is one of the few places in the world where these dunes exist. While climbing a dune we were joined by 3 Maasai boys who spent some time playing with our children.

The Shifting Sands is a fun place to stretch your legs en route to the Serengeti

The vast flat plains around Oldupai Gorge and west toward Ndutu and the Naabi Hills are underlain with volcanic ash, which promotes the growth of highly nutritious annual grasses. These plains are the principle breeding grounds of the one and a half million wildebeest, which drop their calves in January or February and feed on the lush but short-lived grasses. When the rains come to an end, the wildebeest move north and the plains bake under the relentless sun.

To the north of Oldupai are the **Gol Mountains**, a range of jagged hills and deep valleys. A great number of vultures nest in the **OIKerian Gorge**, and the elusive striped hyena may sometimes be seen. At the western end of the Gols, the huge monolith of **Nasera Rock** is a striking landmark and — if you have the energy to climb to the top — allows for breathtaking views across the endless wilderness. These areas, along with the Shifting Sands, are great areas to visit for those who want more adventure in their safaris and wish to get off-the-beaten path.

The western part of the conservation area is covered by the Serengeti Plains. Game viewing in this region bordering the Serengeti National Park is best between December and March, when the Serengeti migration is usually in the area.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A+: • **Ngorongoro Crater Lodge**, set on the southwestern rim of the crater, has 3 separate camps: North and South Camp, each with 12 suites, and Tree Camp with 6 suites. Each stilted suite is elegantly furnished with claw-foot bathtubs and has butler service.

CLASS A/B: • **Ngorongoro Serena Safari Lodge**, situated on the western rim of the crater, has 75 rooms and suites, recently refurbished with private balconies. The dining room, bar and central fireplace overlook the crater.

CLASS B: • **Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge**, located on the eastern rim of the crater, has 96 rooms and a swimming pool all overlooking the crater floor. There is an exclusive down-and-up access road into the crater nearby.

CLASS B/C: • **Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge**, a 75-room hotel, has a wonderful view of the crater.

SEASONAL CAMP: • **Lemala Ngorongoro**, located just below the crater rim 2 miles (3 km) from the Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, has 9 heated tents and a tented dining room.

Serengeti National Park

The Serengeti is Tanzania's most famous park, and it has the largest concentration of migratory game animals in the world. It is also famous for its huge lion population and is one of the best places on the continent to see them.

Serengeti is derived from the Maasai language and appropriately means "endless plain." The park's 5,700-square-miles (14,763-km²) makes it larger than the state of Connecticut. Altitude varies from 3,120 to 6,070 feet (950 to 1,850 m).

The park, a World Heritage Site, comprises most of the Serengeti ecosystem, which is the primary migration route of the wildebeest. The Serengeti ecosystem also includes Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve, bordering on the north; the Loliondo Controlled Area, bordering on the northeast; the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, bordering on the southeast; the Maswa Game Reserve, bordering on the southwest; and the Grumeti Reserves and the Ikorongo Controlled Areas, bordering on the northwest. The "western corridor" of the park comes within 5 miles (8 km) of Lake Victoria.

Serengeti

Nearly 500 species of birds and 35 species of large plains animals can be found in the Serengeti. The park may contain as many as 1.5 million wildebeest, 500,000 zebra, 300,000 Grant's gazelle, 250,000 Thomson's gazelle, 120,000 impala, 70,000 topi, 20,000 buffalo, 9,000 eland, 8,000 giraffe, 1,000 lion and 800 elephant.

Most of the Serengeti is a vast, open plain broken by rocky outcrops (kopjes). There is also acacia savannah, savannah woodland, riverine forests, some swamps and small lakes.

The north is hillier, with thick scrub and forests lining the Mara River, where leopards are sometimes spotted sleeping in the trees. Acacia savannah dominates the central region, with short- and long-grass open plains in the southeast and woodland plains and hills in the western corridor.

The Serengeti is home to over 800 elephant

It is impossible to predict the exact time of the famous Serengeti migration of approximately 1.3 million wildebeest, 200,000 zebra and 250,000 Thomson's gazelle, which covers a circuit of about 500 miles (800 km).

The key element in understanding "The Greatest Wildlife Show on Earth" is that it follows the general "rainfall gradient" across the ecosystem, with lower rainfall in the southeast (short-grass plains) and higher rainfall in the northwest. The migration moves from Kenya back to the short-grass plains of the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Conservation Area once the short rains have begun (usually in late October into November), and after the short-grass plains have dried out (usually in April or May), the migration moves northwest to higher rainfall areas and areas of permanent water — and fresh grass.

From December to April wildebeest, zebra, eland and Thomson's gazelle usually concentrate on the treeless short-grass plains in the extreme southeastern Serengeti and western Ngorongoro Conservation Area near Lake Ndutu in search of short grass, which they prefer over the longer dry-stemmed variety. In April and May, the height of the rainy season, a 4wd vehicle is highly recommended.

Leopard frequently seen on the Serengeti plains

cheetah frequently seen on the Serengeti plains

Other species common to the area during this period are Grant's gazelle, eland, hartebeest, topi and a host of predators including lion, cheetah, spotted hyena, honey badger and black-backed jackal. Kori bustard, secretarybird, yellow-throated sandgrouse and rufous-naped lark are resident birds of the open plains, which attract large numbers of migratory Montagu's and pallid harriers (from Europe) between September and March.

During the long rainy season (April and May) nomadic lions and hyena move to the eastern part of the Serengeti. The migration, mainly of wildebeest and zebra, begins in May or June. Once the dry season begins, wildebeest and zebra must migrate from the area. There is no permanent water, and both of these species must drink on a regular basis.

The rut for wildebeest is concentrated over a three-week period and generally occurs at the end of April, May or early June. After a gestation period of eight and one-half months, approximately 90% of the pregnant cows will give birth on the short-grass plains within a six-week period between the mid/end of January and February. Zebra calving season is spread out over most of the year, with a slightly higher birth rate December through March. The best time to see wildebeest and zebra crossing the Grumeti River is in June/early July and November, and the best time to see them crossing the Mara River is from July to November.

Wildebeest move about 6 to 10 abreast in columns several miles long toward the western corridor. Zebra do not move in columns but in family units.

As a general rule, by June the migration has progressed west of Seronera. The migration then splits into three separate migrations: one west through the corridor toward permanent water and Lake Victoria and then northeast; the second due north, reaching the Maasai Mara of Kenya around mid-July; and the third northward between the other two to a region west of Lobo Lodge, where the group disperses.

During July through October, the highest concentration of the migration in the Serengeti is in the extreme north. The first and second groups meet and usually begin returning to the Serengeti National Park in late October; the migration then reaches the central or southern Serengeti by December.

Ballooning over the Serengeti

A unique way to experience the Serengeti is by **hot air balloon**. Your pilot may fly you, at times, over 1,000 feet off the ground for panoramic views, and at other times at a very low altitudes (a few yards/meters off the ground) for great game viewing and photographic opportunities. The flight lasts about an hour, depending on wind conditions. After landing, guests enjoy a champagne breakfast. There are balloon launch sites in the central Serengeti and in the western corridor, and a seasonal one in the Southeastern Serengeti. There are no launch sites in the northern Serengeti. Balloon safaris are not accessible from all camps and lodges.

There has been much international concern about a proposed highway through the Serengeti. The initial proposed routing was to pass across the northern part of the Serengeti, however, there are other proposed routes to the south of the park. As of this writing, the issue is still unresolved. This is just another possible reason that you should travel to Tanzania sooner than later!

Southern Serengeti — Short Grass Plains

Short-grass plains dominate the part of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area bordering the Serengeti. As you move northwest into the park, the plains change to medium-grass plains and then into long-grass plains around **Simba Kopjes** north of Naabi Hill Gate. Topi, elephant, Thomson's and Grant's gazelle, bat-eared fox and warhog are often seen here.

There are two saline lakes in the south of the park, **Lake Masek** and **Lake Lagaja**, known mainly for their populations of lesser and greater flamingos.

Seronera

The **Seronera Valley** is located in the center of the park and is characterized by large umbrella thorn trees — the archetypal image of the African savannah. Game is plentiful, and the area is famous for lion and leopard. Other wildlife includes hyena, jackal, topi, Maasai giraffe and Thomson's gazelle. This is the best area of the park to find cheetah, especially in the dry season. In the wet season, many cheetah are found in the short-grass plains. They are, however, found throughout the park.

Banagi Hill, 11 miles (17 km) north of Seronera on the road to Lobo, is a good area for Maasai giraffe, buffalo and impala. Four miles (6 km) from Banagi on the Orangi River is a hippo pool.

Lobo

From Banagi northward to Lobo and the Bologonja Gate are rolling uplands with open plains, bush, woodlands and magnificent kopjes. This is the best area of the park to see elephant. Forests of large mahogany and fig trees are found along the rivers where kingfishers, fish eagles and turacos can be seen. Other wildlife found in the Lobo area includes grey bush duikers and mountain reedbuck. Large numbers of Maasai giraffe are permanent residents.

Extreme Northern Serengeti & the Lemai Wedge

This part of the park has great game viewing year-round, however, from around mid-July to October, when the migration is generally in the area, the game viewing here is spectacular! Thousands of wildebeest and zebra gather along the Mara River to cross either north toward Kenya or south toward the central Serengeti.

The **Lemai Wedge**, a wedge-shaped piece of land consisting of a mixture of acacia forest, small valleys and large open plains bordered to the north by the Maasai Mara Reserve (Kenyan border) and to the south by the Mara River, is a very special place in the Serengeti. Escorted game walks allowed, making it all the more attractive.

From late July to October, when one arm of the migration is usually in the Maasai Mara in Kenya, consider focusing your time in the northern Serengeti. You will have a very good chance of seeing the migration, with only a fraction of the tourists that you would probably encounter game viewing in the Maasai Mara. Having those expansive Serengeti Plains almost to yourself is a priceless experience for travelers who are looking for more out of a safari than just seeing animals.

The Great Migration crossing the Mara River in the northern Serengeti

The hilly escarpment along the river is a key rhino breeding ground, and the rock kopjes are home to huge prides of lion. This is also a one of the best areas in Tanzania to see cheetah!

Western Corridor

The western corridor road begins 3 miles (5 km) north of Seronera and passes over the Grumeti River and beyond to a central range of hills. Eighteen miles (29 km) before Ndadaka Gate is an extensive area of black cotton soil, which makes rainy season travel difficult. This area is best visited June to March for its fabulous resident game. For the migration, it is best visited June, July and late October to early December. Do keep in mind that as there is permanent water in this area, game viewing is good year-round. Colobus monkeys may be found in the riverine areas. Other wildlife includes eland, topi, impala, dikdik, hippo and crocodile.

The area is known for its huge crocodiles, which reach 20 feet in length. There is a swinging bridge across the Grumeti River that provides a great viewpoint down the river.

The granite kopjes or rocky outcrops that dot the plains are home to rock hyrax, Kirk's dikdik and klipspringer. Banded, dwarf and slender mongoose are occasionally seen nearby. Verreaux's eagle are sometimes sighted near the Moru Kopjes.

Three species of jackal live in the Serengeti: black-backed, side-striped and golden. Side-striped jackal are rare, golden jackal are usually found in the short grass plains and black-backed jackal are quite common. The 6 species of vultures found in the park are white-backed, white-headed, hooded, lappet-faced, Ruppell's and Egyptian.

At the time of this writing, there are daily scheduled charter flights between the northern Serengeti and the Maasai Mara in Kenya. There is a dry-weather road (often impassable in the rainy season) from Mwanza and Musoma (Lake Victoria) to the west through Ndadaka Gate. The main road from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area via Naabi Hill Gate is open year-round.

Travel in the park is allowed only from 6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Visitors may get out of the vehicle in open areas if no animals are present. Do stay close to the vehicle, and keep a careful lookout. Night game drives are not allowed.

The Serengeti is so large, I recommend spending at least 2 or 3 days in each of 2 regions. Many travelers spend 5 to 7 days in this great park. On our last visit, our family spent 10 days and did not want to leave!

Park Headquarters are located at Seronera, while the park staff housing is located at Ft. Ikoma, outside of the park.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A+: • **Sayari Camp**, an extraordinary permanent tented camp located in the northern Serengeti close to the bridge to the Lemai Wedge, is divided into 2 wings of 6 and 9 luxury tents with private verandahs. Each wing enjoys its own bar, dining room and lounge with a shared swimming pool. There is good resident game year-round, peaking during the Migration crossings that occur usually from July through early November. Activities include open vehicle game drives and walking safaris. • **Serengeti Bushtops**, located 15 miles from the Mara River, has 12 tents with private decks, hot tub, personal telescopes and 24-hour butler service.

CLASS A: • **Kusini Camp**, located in the southern Serengeti, has been rebuilt and refurbished with 12 tents scattered around a rock formation. The camp is ideally located for the calving season of the wildebeest, which takes place in this area around February of each year. Game viewing is at its best from December through March. The camp supports the Cheetah Watch Program. • **Serengeti Migration Camp**, located 14 miles (22 km) west of the Lobo airstrip, has 20 luxurious tents all with expansive decks. The main lodge overlooks the swimming pool and a water hole. • **Lamai Serengeti**, located in the northern Serengeti, features 12 tents split between two separate camps. Each luxury tent has a step-down shower and tub area and an outdoor shower on the deck, and an expansive private deck. • **Four Seasons Bilila Lodge**, located in the central/northern Serengeti, features 74 rooms, suites and villas, restaurant, lobby lounge, bar, boma, wine cellar, infinity swimming pool and Anantara spa. The Corner Suites and Private Villas have private plunge pools and large teak decks. • **Soroi Serengeti Lodge**, located in the western corridor, features 25 thatched chalets with hardwood floors, Turkish baths, outdoor showers, and private decks with spectacular views. The main lounge and dining room are built around large rock kopjes and acacia trees. Between game drives enjoy swimming in the infinity pool or have a spa treatment on your private patio. • **Kirawira Luxury Tented Camp**, located in the western corridor approximately 55 miles (90 km) west of Seronera and 6 miles (10 km) east of the Kirawira Ranger Post, has a classic Victorian atmosphere, with 25 luxury tents and a swimming pool. • **Grumeti Serengeti Tented Camp**, located in the western corridor 53 miles (85 km) west of Seronera Lodge and 31 miles (50 km) east of Lake Victoria, has 10 spacious tents.

CLASS A/B: • **Mbuzi Mawe Camp**, located on a kopje between Seronera and Lobo, consists of 16 tents. • **Serengeti Serena Safari Lodge**, set on a hill overlooking the Serengeti Plains about 18 miles (29 km) northwest of Seronera Lodge, has 66 rooms and a swimming pool. Walking safaris and hikes with sundowners can be arranged. • **Mbalageti Safari Lodge** is a permanent tented camp located in western Serengeti overlooking the Mbalageti River Valley, consisting of 24 tented chalets, each with a private verandah.

CLASS B: • **Lobo Wildlife Lodge**, located in the north of the park 43 miles north of Seronera, has 75 rooms uniquely designed around huge boulders. • **Serengeti Sopa Lodge**, located 25 miles (40 km) southwest of Seronera Lodge and 60 miles (96 km) from Naabi Hill Gate, has 69 rooms each with 2 queen size beds, private balconies and a swimming pool.

CLASS C: • **Seronera Wildlife Lodge**, situated in the center of the park 90 miles (145 km) from Ngorongoro Crater, has 57 double rooms.

ACCOMMODATION ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE PARK — CLASS A/B: • **Kleins Camp**, situated in a 25,000-acre (10,000-hectare) private reserve bordered on the west by Serengeti National

Park, has 10 thatched cottages made from local rocks. Day and night game drives, guided bush walks and visits to local Maasai are offered. • **Lake Masek Tented Camp** overlooks the shores of Lake Masek. The camp has 20 tents, a comfortable lounge, restaurant and expansive deck with views over the lake. It is located in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area bordering Serengeti National Park.

CLASS B/C: • **Lukuba Island Resort**, situated in Lake Victoria approximately 9 miles (15 km) from Musoma town, has 5 stone and thatch bungalows. • **Speke Bay Lodge**, located on the southeastern shore of Lake Victoria, 9 miles (15 km) from the Serengeti National Park, has 8 thatched bungalows on the lakeshore. Fishing, boat excursions and mountain biking are offered.

CLASS C: • **Ndutu Safari Lodge** is a rustic lodge with 34 rooms located on the edge of the park in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

SEASONAL MOBILE CAMPS — LUXURY: • **Serengeti Explorer Camp** has 10 luxury tents and periodically moves location within the Serengeti according to migration game movements and weather conditions. The focus of the camp is a large dining tent with a shaded lounge area and a campfire every evening, around which guests can share the day's adventures with like-minded souls. • **Dunia Camp**, located in the Nyarebora area, north of the Moru Kopjes, has 8 large tent, and is seasonally opened for peak game viewing (closed April to May). • **Serian Serengeti North**, located close to the Mara River in the northern Serengeti, features 6 tents and is open from July to mid-November. • **Serengeti Under Canvas** has 8 Bedouin-style tents. • **Olakira Camp** features 8 large tents with an intimate dining tent, lounge tent and fireplace.

FIRST CLASS: • **Ubuntu Camp** is a seasonal camp located in the northern Serengeti near the Mara River. With just 6 tents, the camp is an intimate base for game viewing. • **Nduara Loliondo** is situated in a private conservation area in Loliondo immediately bordering the northeastern Serengeti. Day and night game drives, walking, and Maasai visits are offered. • **Simiyu Mobile Camp** moves 3 times a year as it follows the migration across the Serengeti and features 8 tents with private verandahs.

MID-RANGE: • **Kati Kati Tented Camp** is a mobile camp located in the central Serengeti. There are 15 mobile tents, dining tent and drinks served around a camp fire.

Serengeti Migration Camp

Sayari Camp

Mbuzi Mawe Camp

Kusini Camp

Sayari Camp's pool area overlooks the Serengeti plains

Serengeti Serena Safari Lodge

Dunia Camp

Lake Masek Tented Camp

Serengeti Explorer Camp — luxury mobile camping at its best!

Grumeti Reserves

Grumeti Reserves is located adjacent to the western corridor of the Serengeti, bordering the national park, and encompasses over 350,000-acres (40,000-hectares) of unrivaled wilderness. The area forms part of the famous migratory route, which is traveled by hundreds of thousands of animals every year.

The real advantage of this private reserve is that guests can enjoy the splendor of the Serengeti Plains and it's spectacular wildlife with only a few other vehicles ever in sight.

Sasakwa Lodge, Sabora Tented Camp and Faru Faru are three of the best properties in Africa — with Sasakwa providing true elegance in the wilderness. Our family had a fabulous time here on a recent visit. We saw the migration in all its glory with endless wildebeest columns moving through the area. As the reserve is so large, we hardly encountered another vehicle on our game drives. While staying at Sasakwa, my wife Alison went horseback riding while our boys Miles, Nicholas and I tried our hand at archery, played some tennis and went for a swim to get some much appreciated exercise.

Game drives and walks are enjoyed with resident professional guides. Other activities include archery, lawn croquet, mountain biking, equestrian pursuits, and hot air ballooning.

The Grumeti Reserves offers luxurious accommodations in a remote setting

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A+: • **Sasakwa Lodge** offers 9 individually air-conditioned cottages (ranging in size from 1 to 4 bedrooms) that have been positioned in the garden for complete privacy, each with its own heated infinity pool, a comfortable lounge area, elegantly appointed bathrooms and generous sized bedroom with a four-poster bed. More experienced riders can enjoy rides onto the Serengeti plains. • **Sabora Tented Camp** accommodates 18 guests in 9 luxurious tents reminiscent of Hemingway, Blixen and Roosevelt. The spacious air-conditioned tents are decorated in rich fabrics, antiques and Persian rugs. • **Faru Faru Lodge** accommodates 22 guests in luxurious comfort. Offering fantastic views across the Grumeti River, the lodge is built with barefoot elegance with huge windows where guests can watch the constant stream of game to the camp's waterhole next to the heated swimming pool. • **Serengeti House** is an exclusive private villa with 2 suites in the main house and 2 garden suites, a swimming pool and tennis court.

SEASONAL MOBILE CAMPS — LUXURY: • **Singita Explore** is a private luxury mobile camp exclusive for up to 12 guests. The theme is modern, robust and stylish.

Faru Faru Lodge

Private mobile camping at Singita Explore

Lake Natron Region

Located between the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the Kenya border, **Lake Natron** is a shallow, alkaline lake approximately 38 miles long and 15 miles wide (60 by 25 km). This remote lake is one of East Africa's largest breeding areas for both lesser and greater flamingos.

This is a remote wilderness with limited wildlife, a few scattered Maasai settlements and rugged sand tracks. You may encounter Maasai tribesmen as they tend their herds of cattle, visit the waterfalls and see the inland cliffs that are home to thousands of Ruppell's vultures.

South of Lake Natron is **Oi Doinyo Lengai**, the only active carbonatite volcano in the world and holy mountain of the Maasai. This steep mountain takes about 10 hours to climb and return to its base. The climb starts at midnight, due to the extremely high midday temperatures and to allow the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the volcano at night.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS B: • **Ngare Sero Lake Natron Camp** offers 8 self-contained tents. Activities include bird and nature walks and climbs on Oi Doinyo Lengai.

CLASS C: • **Moivaro Lake Natron Tented Camp** can arrange climbs on the mountain.

Rubondo Island National Park

Located in the southwestern part of Lake Victoria, the main attractions of this 93-square-mile (240-km²) island are sitatunga (indigenous) and small groups of chimpanzees. Walking is allowed and the wildlife that may be seen includes black-and-white colobus monkey, giraffe, bushbuck and otters. There are no large predators. Nearly 400 species of birds have been recorded, including storks, herons, ibises, kingfishers, bee-eaters, flycatchers and an abundance of fish eagles.

In addition to the main island, there are about a dozen small islands that make up the park. Habitats include papyrus swamps, savannah, open woodlands and dense evergreen forests. Visitors, accompanied by a guide who is usually armed, may walk along forested trails in search of wildlife or wait

patiently at a number of hides. The best time to visit is November to February. A few boats are available for hire.
Flying by air charter is the only easy way to get to the park. An airstrip is located at Park Headquarters.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A/B: • **Rubondo Island Camp** has 10 tents under thatch and a swimming pool. Activities include fishing, walks in search of chimpanzees and other wildlife, and birdwatching.

Mt. Kilimanjaro National Park

Known to many through Ernest Hemingway's book *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (Arrow), Mt. Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in the world that is not part of a mountain range, and it is definitely one of the world's most impressive mountains. Kilimanjaro means "shining mountain"; it rises from an average altitude of about 3,300 feet (1,000 m) on the dry plains to 19,340 feet (5,895 m), truly a worldclass mountain. On clear days, the mountain can be seen from over 200 miles (320 km) away.

The Mawenzi Peak rises in the distance

The mountain consists of three major volcanic centers: Kibo (19,340 ft./5,895 m), Shira (13,650 ft./4,162 m) to the west and Mawenzi (16,893 ft./5,150 m) to the east. The base of the mountain is 37 miles (60 km) long and 25 miles (40 km) wide. The park is a World Heritage Site and covers 292-square-miles (756-km²) of the mountain above 8,856 feet (2,700 m). The park also has six corridors that climbers may use to trek through the Forest Reserve.

The early stages of a Kili climb

Hikers pass through zones of forest, alpine and semidesert to its snow-capped peak, situated only three degrees south of the equator. It was once thought to be an extinct volcano, but due to recent rumblings, it is now classified as dormant.

Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro was definitely a highlight of my travels. For the struggle to reach its highest peak I was handsomely rewarded with a feeling of accomplishment, fabulous views of the African plains, and many exciting memories of the climb. In fact, with over 30,000 climbers a year, Kilimanjaro is second only to the Everest and Annapurnas areas in Nepal in popularity as a trekking destination outside of Europe.

Kilimanjaro may, in fact, be the easiest mountain in the world for a climber to ascend to such heights. But it is still a struggle for even fit adventurers. On the other hand, it can be climbed by people from all walks of life that are in good condition and have a strong will. Mind you, reaching the top is by no means necessary; the flora, fauna and magnificent views seen enroute are fabulous.

A Christian missionary, Johann Rebmann, reported his discovery of this snow-capped mountain, but the Europeans didn't believe him. Hans Meyer was the first European to climb Kilimanjaro, doing so in 1889.

The most unique animal in this park is the Abbot's duiker, which is found in only a few mountain forests in northern Tanzania. Other wildlife includes elephant, buffalo, eland, leopard, hyrax, and black-and-white colobus monkeys. However, very little large game is seen.

Bird life is sparse but interesting, with bronze sunbird, red-tufted malachite sunbird, alpine chat and streaky seedeater not uncommon. You might see augur buzzard and white-necked raven soaring above you, and you may even be lucky enough to see the rare bearded vulture.

A guide welcomes climbers to the Rongai One Camp

Porters carry all equipment and food

Clouds roll in at Kibo Camp as climbers prepare for the summit

The best time to climb is mid-December to mid-March and June to October during the drier seasons when the skies are fairly clear. The temperatures in July and August can be quite cool. April and May should be avoided because of heavy rains and overcast skies.

From April to May, during the long rainy season, the summit is often covered in clouds, with snow falling at higher altitudes and rain at lower altitudes. The short rains (November) bring afternoon thunderstorms, but evenings and mornings are often clear.

Many routes to the summit require no mountaineering skills.

Mountaineers wishing to ascend by technical routes may wish to get a copy of *Guide to Mt. Kenya and Kilimanjaro* (Mountain Club of Kenya), edited by Iain Allan.

The Park Headquarters is located in Marangu, about a 7-hour drive from Nairobi, or 2 hours from Arusha. Children under 10 years of age are not allowed over 9,843 feet (3,000 m).

Travelers wishing to see Mt. Kilimanjaro, but who do not wish to climb it, may do so (provided the weather is clear) from Arusha National Park or Amboseli National Park (Kenya). Day trips and treks to the first camp only are also available as an option.

Zones

Mt. Kilimanjaro can be divided into five zones by altitude: 1) cultivated lower slopes, 2) forest, 3) heath and moorland/lower alpine, 4) highland desert/alpine and 5) summit. Each zone spans approximately 3,300 feet (1,000 m) in altitude. As the altitude increases, rainfall and temperature decrease; this has a direct effect on the vegetation each zone supports.

The rich volcanic soils of the **lower slopes** of the mountain around Moshi and Marangu up to the park gate (6,000 ft./1,830 m) are intensely cultivated, mostly with coffee and bananas.

The **forest** zone (5,900–9,185 ft./1,800–2,800 m) receives the highest rainfall of the zones, with about 80 inches (2,000 mm) on the southern slopes and about half that amount on the northern and western slopes. The upper half of this zone is often covered with clouds, and humidity is high, with day temperatures ranging from 60 to 70°F (15 to 21°C). Don't be surprised if it rains while walking through this zone; in fact, expect it.

The challenge of the Kili trek is forgotten once reaching the summit

In the lower forest, there are palms, sycamore figs, bearded lichen and mosses hanging from tree limbs, tree ferns growing to 20 feet (6 m) in height, and giant lobelia which grow to over 30 feet (9 m). In the upper forest zone, giant groundsels appear. Unlike many East African volcanic mountains, no bamboo belt surrounds Kilimanjaro.

Black-and-white colobus and blue monkey, olive baboon and bushbuck may be seen. Elephant, eland, giraffe, buffalo and suni may be seen on the northern and western slopes. Also present but seldom seen are bushpig, civet, genet, bush duiker, Abbot's duiker and red duiker.

Zone three, a lower alpine zone ranging from 9,185 to 13,120 feet (2,800 to 4,000 m), is predominantly **heath** followed by moorlands. Rainfall decreases with altitude from about 50 inches to 20 inches (1,250 to 500 mm) per year. Giant heather (10 to 30 feet/3 to 9 m high), grasslands with scattered bushes and beautiful flowers, including "everlasting" flowers, protea and colorful red-hot poker, characterize the lower part of this zone.

You then enter the **moorlands** with tussock grasses and groups of giant senecios and lobelias — weird, prehistoric-looking Afro-alpine vegetation that would provide a great setting for a science fiction movie. With a lot of luck, you may spot eland, elephant, buffalo or klipspringer.

The **highland desert/alpine zone** is from around 13,120 to 16,400 feet (4,000 to 5,000 m) and receives only about 10 inches (250 mm) of rain per year. Vegetation is very thin and includes tussock grasses, "everlasting" flowers, moss balls and lichens. The thin air makes flying too difficult for most birds, and the very few larger mammals that may be seen do not make this region their home. What this zone lacks in wildlife is compensated for by the fabulous views. Temperatures can range from below freezing to very hot, so be prepared.

The **summit** experiences arctic conditions and receives less than 4 inches (100 mm) of rain per year, usually in the form of snow. It is almost completely devoid of vegetation.

Kibo's northern summit is covered by the Great Northern Glacier. On Kibo there is an outer caldera about 1.5 miles (2.5 km) in diameter. Uhuru peak is the highest point on the outer caldera and also the highest point on the mountain. Kilimanjaro's glaciers have been shrinking with global warming, and it has lost most of its ice peak in the last decade.

Within the outer caldera is an inner cone that contains the Inner or Reusch Crater, which is about .5 mile (1 km) in diameter. Vents (fumaroles) spewing

steam and sulfurous gasses are located at the Terrace and the base of the crater. Within the Inner Crater is an ash cone with an ash pit about 1,100 feet (335 m) across and about 400 feet (120 m) deep.

Routes

In regard to routes, Kilimanjaro is divided into two halves by a line running north/south between Barafu Camp and Kibo Hut. All climbers who ascend on the Machame, Shira, Lemosho, and Umbwe routes must descend on the Mweka route. All climbers who ascend on the Rongai and Marangu Routes must descend on the Marangu Route. The Marangu Route is the only two-way route; all other routes are one way only. Climbers from the Rongai and Marangu routes only meet climbers from the other routes on the Kibo Crater rim. This system is effective in reducing the impact of large numbers of climbers on all routes, except for the Marangu Route.

Kilimanjaro Routes

Climbers on the Machame, Shira, Lemosho, and Umbwe Routes may approach the summit via the Western Breach or may skirt around to Barafu and climb up to Stella Point.

Climbing Kilimanjaro to the summit, Uhuru Peak, via the routes described below requires no mountaineering skills. The Marangu and the Machame Routes are the most popular, carrying 85% of all climbers, while the Shira, Lemosho, Rongai and Umbwe routes are much less used. Climbers stay in basic mountain huts on the Marangu Route and camp on all other routes. Climbs booked with a professional climb operator are full service climbs, meaning that all the climbers have to do is hike. The chief guide, assisted by a team consisting of a cook, assistant guides and porters take care of everything else.

The park has rescue teams based at the Park Headquarters, on the eastern edge of the Shira Plateau, and rangers at various points spread over the mountain.

At the end of your climb you receive a diploma certifying your accomplishment at Park Headquarters. Many climbers then spend the night in a hotel in Marangu or Arusha and have the pleasure of sharing their experiences with unwary visitors planning to begin their Kilimanjaro adventure the following day.

The nights before and after the climb are often spent in a lodge or hotel in or near Arusha or Marangu.

For the quality of your experience to be the best possible on this busy mountain I recommend a 6 day-Rongai Route or an 8 day-Shira Route climb. These 2 routes allow you to visit some of the quieter areas of Kilimanjaro, are scenically interesting and the itineraries are structured to give the best chance to reach the summit.

Rongai Route

The Rongai route starts just south of the Kenya-Tanzania border. It is as easy as the main Marangu trail and more attractive as it travels from the northern side of the mountain right across it to the southern slopes. The route has extensive views and spends one night at Mawenzi Tarn, the mountain's most beautiful campsite.

DAY 1: RONGAI GATE (6,398 ft./1,950 m) to RONGAI ONE CAMP (8,530 ft./2,600 m) — 3–4 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN 2,133 ft. (650 m).

Drive for 2.5 hours from your hotel in Marangu to Rongai Gate and start the climb through the forest where there is a good chance of seeing colobus monkeys. As the forest starts to thin, you cross a small stream and reach Rongai One Camp.

DAY 2: RONGAI ONE CAMP to KIKELEWA CAMP (11,811 ft./3,600 m) — 6–7 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN 3,281 ft. (1,000 m).

A steady climb all morning brings you to Second Cave, where there is a break for lunch. After lunch, depart toward Mawenzi Peak. The Kikelewa Camp will be reached in late afternoon.

DAY 3: KIKELEWA CAMP to MAWENZI TARN (14,104 ft./4,300 m) — 3–5 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN 2,293 ft. (700 m).

A short, steep climb, leaving all vegetation behind, brings you closer to Mawenzi Peak and after topping a small rise you enter the striking Tarn valley. After lunch in camp, take an acclimation walk.

DAY 4: MAWENZI TARN to KIBO CAMP (15,420 ft./4,700 m) — 3–4 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN 1,316 ft. (400 m).

Cross the saddle between the Mawenzi and the main summit, Kibo. This area is very desert-like. Arrive at the Kibo Camp for a late lunch. The afternoon is spent preparing for the summit push.

DAY 5: KIBO CAMP to UHURU PEAK (19,344 ft./5,896 m) AND DOWN TO HOROMBO CAMP (12,139 ft./3,700 m) — 10–15 HOURS.

Wake up around midnight and start the climb by flashlight (headlamps are better), plodding slowly up the switchbacks to pass Hans Meyer Cave and Jamaica Rocks and reach Gilmans Point. Upon reaching the crater rim there is a real sense of achievement. After a short rest those strong enough can continue for another 1.5 hours to the very top, Uhuru Peak (19,344 ft./5,896 m). The descent to Kibo Camp is surprisingly fast, and after a small rest and some food, the descent continues down to Horombo Camp.

DAY 6: HOROMBO CAMP to MARANGU MAIN GATE — 5–6 HOURS.

A steady descent takes you down into the forest and on through rich forest to the main park gate at Marangu (6,070 ft./1,850 m).

Shira Route

This route is from the west and is planned to give the best acclimation, while views are not as extensive as on Rongai, they are constantly changing as you traverse the mountain which is quite interesting.

DAY 1: SHIRA BARRIER (10,800 ft./3,300m) to SHIRA ONE CAMP (11,650 ft./3,550 m) — 2–3 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN 985 ft (300 m).

Drive 2.5 hours from Arusha to Londerossi Gate, register and drive up to the edge of the Shira Plateau within the park to start the walk. The trail climbs up to the Shira Plateau and then heads along a small path into the middle of the Shira Plateau and reaches Shira One Camp.

DAY 2: SHIRA ONE CAMP to SHIRA HUT CAMP (12,598 ft./3,840 m) — 5 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN 1,115 ft (340 m).

Walk south across the plateau to its rim, there is a chance to get to the top of the Shira Cathedral (12,303 ft./3,750 m) before following the old crater rim around and up to the Shira Hut Camp.

DAY 3: SHIRA HUT CAMP to MOIR HUT CAMP (13,120 ft./4,000 m) — 4–7 HOURS WALKING (INCLUDING AFTERNOON WALK FROM CAMP). ALTITUDE GAIN 525 ft. (160m).

A short morning walk through the moorlands brings you to Moir Hut Camp (13,780 ft./4,200m). After having lunch at the camp, there is time to acclimatize with an ascent of the nearby Lent Hills (14,350 ft/4,375m).

DAY 4: MOIR HUT CAMP to LAVA TOWER CAMP (14,925 ft./4,550 m). — 4–5 HOURS.

Another morning walk which traverses the side of Kibo to reach Lava Tower Camp (14,925 ft./4,550 m). In the afternoon there is a chance to acclimatize by following a trail up toward Arrow Glacier, reaching a height of 15,420 ft. (4,700 m) before returning to camp.

DAY 5: LAVA TOWER CAMP to KARANGA CAMP (13,123 ft./4,000 m) — 5–7 HOURS.

From Lava Tower you drop down to the Barranco Valley and then climb up steeply on the Barranco Wall. An undulating trail that continues and eventually drops into the Karanga Valley, the last water source on the way to the summit. After crossing the stream, a steep climb up the other side of the U-shaped valley leads to Karanga Camp.

DAY 6: KARANGA CAMP to BARAFU CAMP (15,092 ft./4,600 m) — 4–5 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN 1,969 ft (600 m).

Today you will walk across the compacted scree and rocks onto the Barafu Ridge and on to the Barafu Camp for lunch. There is a short acclimation walk in the afternoon.

DAY 7: BARAFU CAMP to UHURU PEAK (19,344 ft./5,896 m) AND DOWN TO MILLENNIUM CAMP (13,123 ft./4,000m) — 10–15 HOURS.

Midnight you will wake up and head off to the summit over the rocky ridge behind camp and then switchback up the main slopes to reach Stella Point on the crater rim. It is another 45 minutes to the very top, Uhuru Peak. The descent back to Barafu Camp is rapid and after a rest and some food, continue your descent to Millennium Camp.

DAY 8: MILLENNIUM CAMP to MWEKA GATE (5,413 ft./1,650 m) — 4–6 HOURS.

The route heads straight off Kilimanjaro through the lush rainforest to reach Mweka Gate.

Marangu Route

The Marangu Route is the least expensive route to climb and is second in popularity only to the Machame Route. Marangu has hut accommodations with separate long-drop toilets, and is the second easiest (most gradual) route to the summit (Rongai is the easiest).

This route may be completed in 5 days, but it's best to take 6 days, spending an extra day at Horombo Hut to allow more time to acclimatize to the altitude. The huts are dormitory-style with common areas for cooking and eating. As bunk space is limited in the huts, I suggest you plan on starting your

treks early and arrive early.

DAY 1: MARANGU (6,004 ft./1,830 m) to MANDARA HUT (8,856 ft./2,700 m) — 4–5 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN: 2,854 ft. (870 m).

An hour or so is spent at Park Headquarters at Marangu Gate handling registration and arranging the loads for the porters. Try to leave in the morning to allow a leisurely pace and to avoid afternoon showers. The trail leads through the forest and is often muddy.

Mandara has a number of small wooden A-frame huts that sleep 8 persons each, 4 to a room, and a main cabin with a dormitory upstairs and dining room downstairs, for a total of 60 beds. Kerosene lamps, stoves and mattresses are provided.

DAY 2: MANDARA to HOROMBO HUT (12,205 ft./3,720 m) — 5–7 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN: 3,346 ft. (1,020 m).

On day 2, you pass through the upper part of the rain forest to tussock grassland and fascinating Afro-alpine vegetation of giant groundsels and giant lobelias to the moorlands. Once out of the forest, you begin to get great views of the town of Moshi and Mawenzi Peak (16,893 ft./5,149 m). If you can spare an extra day for acclimatizing, Horombo is the best hut for this. There are some nice day hikes that will help you further acclimatize. Kibo is too high to allow a good night's sleep. Horombo has 120 beds and is similar to but more crowded than Mandara.

DAY 3: HOROMBO HUT to KIBO HUT (15,430 ft./4,703 m) — 5–6 HOURS. ALTITUDE GAIN: 3,225 ft. (983 m).

On the morning of day 3, the vegetation begins to thin out to open grasslands. You pass "Last Water" (be sure to fill your water bottles because this is the last source of water). The landscape becomes more barren as you reach "The Saddle," a wide desert between Kibo and Mawenzi Peak. Kibo Hut does not come in to view until just before you reach it. Kibo Hut has 58 beds and is located on the east side of Kibo Peak.

With the wind-chill factor, it can be very cold, so dress warmly. This is the day many hikers feel the effects of the altitude and may begin to experience some altitude sickness. Most people find it impossible to sleep at this height because of the lack of oxygen and the bitter cold, not to mention the possibility of altitude sickness. Get as much rest as you can.

DAY 4: KIBO HUT to GILLMAN'S POINT (18,635 ft./5,680 m) and UHURU PEAK (19,340 ft./5,895 m) AND DOWN TO HOROMBO HUT — 10–12 HOURS.

Your guide will wake you shortly after midnight for your ascent, which should begin around 1:00 a.m. Be sure not to delay the start; it is vital that you reach the summit by sunrise. The sun quickly melts the frozen scree, making the ascent all the more difficult.

The steep ascent to Gillman's Point on the edge of the caldera is a grueling 4- to 5-hour slog up scree. Hans Meyer Cave is a good place to rest before climbing seemingly unending switchbacks past Johannes Notch to Gillman's Point.

From Gillman's Point, Uhuru Peak is a fairly gradual climb of 705 feet (215 m). It will take another hour to hour and a half. Uhuru Peak is well marked, and there is a book in which you may sign your name.

If you are still feeling strong, ask your guide to take you down into the caldera to the inner crater, which has some steam vents. You return to Gillman's Point by a different route.

Standing over 16,000 feet (4,900 m) above the surrounding plains, the view was breathtaking in every direction. Sunrise over Mawenzi is a beautiful sight. You truly feel that you're on the top of the world!

Shortly after sunrise, you begin the long walk down the mountain to Kibo Hut for a short rest, then continue onward to Horombo Hut. Provided you are not completely exhausted, the walk down is long but pretty easy going. From Gillman's Point to Horombo takes about 4 hours and from Uhuru Peak, about 5.

DAY 5: HOROMBO HUT to MARANGU

Another long day of hiking as you descend past Mandara Hut to Park Headquarters.

Machame Route

This is the most popular and one of the most beautiful routes up the mountain. It is also one of the steepest routes. The park gate is located a few miles above Machame village. Hike 4 to 6 hours through rain forest to Machame Huts (9,843 ft./3,000 m).

The following day you hike 5 to 7 hours to the defunct Shira Hut (12,467 ft./3,800 m) on the Shira Plateau (see Shira Plateau Route for description of the area). Continue hiking about 4 hours to Lava Tower Camp. From Lava Tower Camp there had been 2 choices to reach Uhuru Peak. The route via the Western Breach with an overnight at Arrow Glacier (15,744 ft./4,800 m) before reaching the Inner Crater has been closed due to concerns about the possibility of falling ice chunks from the glacier. The route now used continues along the Southern Summit Circuit path to Barranco and Barafu before climbing to Uhuru via Stella Point (18,811 ft./5,735 m).

Lemosho Route

Next to the Umbwe Route, this is the least-used route and requires a minimum of 7 days. As with the Shira Plateau Route above, drive to the Londorossi Gate. Then drive to Lemosho Glades and hike through the rain forest to Forest Camp (8,000 ft./2,440 m). On the second day, take a full day's hike into the Shira Caldera, a high grassy plateau, to Shira One Campsite (11,500 ft./3,500 m). On day three, trek for 3 to 4 hours across the Shira Plateau to Shira 2 Campsite (12,200 ft./3,700 m). Those who feel strong can take an acclimatizing trek to Shira Cathedral. On Day 4, hike 7 hours down the Barranco Valley over 15,000 feet (4,570 m). This is great for acclimatization. Next go to the camp at Barranco Wall (12,900 ft./3,940 m). On day 5, climb up Barranco Wall (14,000 ft./4,270 m). On Day 6 trek to Barafu Camp (16,000 ft./4,600 m). On Day 7, begin trekking up the scree slopes just after midnight to Stella Point on the rim and onward to Uhuru Peak. Return to Barafu Camp and continue your descent to Mweka Hut (10,170 ft./3,100 m). On Day 8, hike to Mweka Gate.

Umbwe Route

The Umbwe Route is very steep and strenuous. The route begins at Umbwe (about 4,600 ft./1,400 m), a village 10 miles (16 km) from Moshi. Walk two miles to Kifuni village and into the forest. Follow the path for another 3.5 miles (5km) and then branch left into a mist-covered forest until you reach the forest cave (Bivouac #1) at 9,515 feet (2,900 m), 6 to 7 hours from Umbwe. Overhanging ledges extending about 5 feet (1.5 m) from the cliff provide reasonable protection for about 6 people; however, it is recommended you use your own tents. Water is available, but not close by.

Continue through moorlands and along a narrow ridge with deep valleys on either side. The thick mist and vegetation covered with "Old Man's Beard" moss creates an eerie atmosphere. The second caves at 11,483 feet (3,500 m) are still another 2- to 3-hour hike from Bivouac #1. The vegetation thins out, and you branch right shortly before arriving at Barranco Hut (12,795 ft./3,900 m) about 2 hours later.

From Barranco you can backtrack to the fork and turn right (north) and hike for 3 hours to where Lava Tower Camp (15,092 ft./4,600 m) used to stand. From there, the climb is up steep scree and blocks of rock to the floor of the crater and Uhuru Peak via the Great Western Breach. The climb from Lava Tower Camp to the caldera takes about 9 hours. An alternative from Barranco Hut is to traverse the mountain eastward and follow the Summit Circuit path to Barafu Camp. Descend via the Mweka Route, regardless of the summit routes used.

Equipment Checklist

The better equipped you are for climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, the higher your chances of making the summit. When it comes to clothing, the "layered effect" works best. Bring a duffel bag to pack your gear in for the climb. Wrap your clothes in heavy garbage bags to keep them dry. Keep the weight under the porter's maximum load of 33 pounds (15 kg). Here's a suggested checklist of items to consider bringing:

CLOTHING

Gortex (or other breathable-type) jacket (with hood) and pants, and a light raincoat
polypropylene long underwear — tops and bottoms, medium and heavy weight
wool sweater and/or heavy fleece (one or two)
Gortex gaiters (to keep the scree/rocks out of your boots at higher altitudes)
tennis shoes or ultralight hiking boots (for lower altitudes)
medium-weight insulated hiking boots for warmth and to help dig into the scree during the final ascent
heavy wool or down mittens with Gortex outer shell and glove liners
several pairs of wool socks and polypropylene liner socks
several pairs of underwear
track or warm-up suit (to relax and sleep in)
long trousers or knickers (wool or synthetic) 3 pairs
light, loose-fitting cotton trousers
shorts (with pockets) one pair only
wool long sleeve and cotton long sleeve shirts
T-shirts or short sleeve shirts
turtleneck shirt
down vest
balaclava (wool or synthetic)

wide-brimmed hat or cap for protection from the sun
bandana which serves as a dust mask (2 are highly recommend)
wool hat
sleeping pad (for all routes except the Marangu Route) — can be rented

MISCELLANEOUS

day pack large enough to carry extra clothing, rain gear, two plastic water bottles (1 liter/quart each), camera and lunch
Hydration system such as Camelbak or Platypus system (be sure you get the insulated version)
sleeping bag (rated at least 0° F [−18° C])
pocket flask for summit climb
flashlight and a head lamp
extra batteries for all electronic equipment
light towel
sunglasses and mountaineering glasses
camera and extra memory card
strong sunblock
protective lip balm, such as Chapstick brand
body lotion (otherwise skin may get dry and itchy) and hand soap
water purifiers (tablets and/or UV water purifier)
duffle bag
half-dozen heavy garbage bags in which to wrap clothes
toilet paper
moist towelettes
Multi-tool with pocket knife and scissors
granola bars, trail mix and sweets that travel well
powered drink mix
envelopes for tipping: Lead guide, assistant guides, cook and porters
earplugs for sleeping
small thermometer
Handheld GPS (not essential)
Mobile phone and spare batteries — there is reception on the mountain. Check with phone carrier prior to use about overseas charges. Can use local SIM card if your phone is set up that way

BASIC FIRST AID KIT

malaria pills
moleskin and second skin
plastic bandage strips, such as Band-Aid brand
elastic bandages
gauze pads (4" × 4")
diuretics (diamox) — by prescription from your doctor
broad-spectrum antibiotics (pills) — as above
laxative
Finger pulse oxymeter (not essential)
toothbrush & toothpaste
antihistamine tablets
antibiotic cream
antidiarrheal preparation — i.e. Imodium or Lomotil
iodine
aspirin or acetaminophen for headache/muscle pain (Ibuprofen)
throat and cough lozenges
decongestant (can be found in combination with antihistamine tablets)

Please note that it requires more time to boil water at higher altitudes to successfully kill the parasites that cause illness.

Climbing Tips

There are a number of ways to increase your chances of making it to the top. One of the most important things to remember is to take your time. *Pole pole* is Swahili for “slowly, slowly” which is definitely the way to go. There is no prize for being the first to the camp or hut, or first to the top.

Pace yourself so that you are never completely out of breath. Exaggerate your breathing, taking deeper and more frequent breaths than you feel you actually need. This will help you acclimatize and help keep you from exhausting yourself prematurely, and it will help lower the chances of developing pulmonary or cerebral edema.

Ski poles make good walking sticks; they can be rented from your tour operator or at Park Headquarters and are highly recommended. Bring a small backpack to carry the items to which you wish to have quick access along the trail, such as a water bottle, snacks and a camera. Most importantly, listen to what your body is telling you. Don't overdo it! A few people die each year on the mountain because they don't listen or pay attention to the signs and keep pushing themselves. Stop and enjoy the view from time to time and watch your footing while you climb.

On steep portions of the hike, use the “lock step” method to conserve energy. Take a step and lock the knee of your uphill leg. This puts your weight on the leg bone, using less muscle strength. Pause for a few seconds, letting your other leg rest without any weight on it, and breathe deeply. Then repeat. This technique will save vital energy that you may very well need in your quest for the top.

Some climbers take the prescription drug Diamox, a diuretic which usually reduces the symptoms of altitude sickness; but, there are side effects from taking the drug, including increased urination. You should discuss the use of Diamox with your doctor prior to leaving home.

Drink a lot more water than you feel you need. High-altitude hiking is very dehydrating, and a dehydrated body weakens quickly. Climbers should obtain 4 to 6 quarts (4 to 6 liters) of fluid daily from their food and drinks. Consume foods such as soups, oatmeal porridge, and fresh fruits to supplement water and other liquids. Climbers should drink until the color of their urine is clear. Most importantly, always convey the truth about how you are feeling to your guides so they can accurately assess your condition.

Most hikers find it difficult to sleep at high altitude. Once you reach the hut each afternoon, rest a bit, then hike to a spot a few hundred feet in altitude above the hut and relax for a while. Acclimatizing even for a short time at a higher altitude will help you get a more restful night's sleep. Remember, “Climb high, sleep low!”

Consume at least 4,000 calories per day on the climb. This can be a problem. Most climbers lose their appetite at high altitude. Bring along trail mix (mixed nuts and dried fruit), chocolate, and other goodies that you enjoy, to supplement the meals prepared for you.

Forget about drinking alcoholic beverages on the climb. Altitude greatly enhances the affects of alcohol. Plus, alcohol causes dehydration. A headache caused by altitude sickness can be bad enough without having a hangover on top of it.

As the entire descent is made in two days, your knees take a hard pounding; you may want to wrap your knees with elastic bandages or use elastic knee supports.

Most travelers who climb Kilimanjaro do so in conjunction with a safari. I am often asked if it is better to do the climb first or the safari first. There is no definitive answer, however, there are a few things to take into consideration: elevation and jet lag.

Some travelers tell me they want to “get the climb over with” and then go on safari. If you live at high altitude (i.e. over 5,000 feet/1500m), then you will already be acclimated to close to the base altitude of the mountain, and climbing first might not be a big problem for you. I do strongly recommend at least two nights in Africa before you start the climb, to allow some time to rehydrate from the long flight and to adjust to the time difference.

If you live at low altitudes, I suggest you take your safari first, as most of the reserves you will visit range from 3,000–7,500 feet (900–2,300 m) above sea level — allowing you time to become acclimated to close to the base altitude of the mountain. This also gives you more time to rehydrate and to recover from jet lag. In any case, I prefer going on safari first as I feel it helps maximize your chances of reaching the summit and the enjoyment of the climb as well.

Park Headquarters is located in Marangu, 29 miles (47 km) from Moshi, 63 miles (101 km) from Kilimanjaro Airport and 75 miles (120 km) from Arusha. Equipment is available for rent from your tour operator (best choice), Park Headquarters and Kibo and Marangu Hotels; but it may not be of top quality. If possible, I recommend that you bring as much of your own gear as possible, except for collapsible walking poles and pads, and a heavy duty jacket or sleeping bag if you do not have one. However, if you are over 6 ft. 2 in. in height (188 cm) then bring your own sleeping bag, as extra length bags are usually not available for rent.

ACCOMMODATION MARANGU — FIRST CLASS: • **Kilimanjaro Mountain Resort**, situated 1.75 miles (3 km) from the center of Marangu, has 42 rooms with mini-bar, flat screen TV, swimming pool and gardens to relax in before and after the climb.

TOURIST CLASS: • **Springlands Hotel**, located near Moshi Town, is an ideal base for Kili climbs and features comfortable rooms with simple furnishings. • **Marangu Hotel**, located 1.5 miles (2.4 km) from Marangu village, is a rustic lodge with 29 double rooms.

THE WEST

The Western Circuit includes Mahale National Park, Gombe Stream National Park and Katavi National Park, and is the most remote and least visited of the “Circuits” covered in this book. For those wishing to get off the beaten path — read on!

Mahale Mountains National Park

The main attraction of this remote park, which was only gazetted in 1985, is to be able to walk among large populations of chimpanzees. The chimps have been studied by Japanese researchers for more than 35 years, and now many chimps have been habituated to humans.

Located about 95 miles (150 km) south of Kigoma, this 609-square-mile (1,577-km²) park is situated on the eastern shores of Lake Tanganyika. The Mahale Mountains, featuring deep ravines, permanent streams and waterfalls, run through the center of the park, forming the eastern wall of the Great Rift Valley — with altitudes up to 8,075 feet (2,462 m) above sea level. The western side of the mountains, where the chimp trekking occurs, is primarily composed of semitropical rain forest with *brachystygia* (semi-deciduous) woodland on the ridges and montane forest at higher altitudes.

Trekking in the park occurs in the range of the M Group, which as of this writing consists of in excess of 60 individuals that have been habituated to human presence. Once found, trekkers can watch them naturally go about their normal daily activities from up to 10 yards (9 meters) away. When close to the chimps, trekkers are asked to wear masks, to avoid any transmission of diseases.

Over 1,000 chimpanzees live in Mahale Mountains National Park

In addition to over 1,000 chimpanzees, the park is also home to 8 other species of primates, including red colobus monkey and Angolan black-and-white colobus monkey. Other wildlife includes bushbuck, otters, banded mongoose, Sharpe's grysbok and blue duiker.

Seasons are fairly predictable. The main dry season usually runs from mid- May to mid-October, with mid-December to mid-February also being quite dry. Rainy seasons are usually mid-October to mid-December and mid-February to mid-May. Nights are often cool and rainfall ranges from 60 to 100 inches (1,500 to 2,500 mm) per year. The best time to visit is during the two dry seasons mentioned above.

There are scheduled charter flights operating a few times a week from Arusha to Mahale, which will also pick up passengers at Lake Manyara, the Grumeti Reserves and the Serengeti. Otherwise, a private charter is required.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A: • **Greystoke Mahale** is located on the eastern shores of the lake and features 6 open-fronted bandas. Hikes to see chimpanzees, sailing by dhow, dugout canoeing, snorkeling and fishing are offered. The camp is open early June to the end of March.

CLASS B: • **Kungwe Beach Lodge** is set on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and has 10 comfortable tents. Chimpanzee tracking, fishing, bird watching, forest walks, kayaking, boat rides on Lake Tanganyika and snorkeling are offered.

Greystoke Mahale is reached by boat

A thatched banda at Greystoke Mahale

Gombe Stream National Park

Gombe Stream is the setting for Jane Goodall's chimpanzee studies and her films and books, including *In the Shadow of Man* (Houghton Mifflin). The remote 20-square-mile (52-km²) park is situated along the eastern shores of Lake Tanganyika 10 miles (16 km) north of Kigoma in remote northwestern Tanzania.

This tiny park covers a thin strip of land 3 miles (5 km) wide and stretches for 10 miles (16 km) along Lake Tanganyika. A mountain range ascends steeply from the lake at an altitude of 2,235 feet (681 m) to form part of the eastern wall of the western branch of the Great Rift Valley, rising to 5,000 feet (4,524 m).

Thick gallery forests are found along Gombe Stream and many other permanent streams in the valley and lower slopes of the mountains. Higher up the slopes are woodlands with some grasslands near the upper ridges.

The experience of seeing chimpanzees in the wild is by far the major attraction of this park. Other primates include red colobus monkey, blue monkey and baboon. Other wildlife of note includes buffalo, Defassa waterbuck and leopard.

Chimpanzees can usually be found around the research station and are quite habituated to humans. Two-hour morning and afternoon hikes into the forest searching for chimps can be arranged. The Kakombe Waterfall is worth a visit. There is also a nice walk along the lake shore northward from the guest house.

You can reach the park by water taxi (about 3 hours) from Ujiji or Kigoma.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS B: • **Gombe Forest Lodge** is the only tented camp in the park and has 7 comfortable tents. Transfers from Kigoma to Gombe are by way of boat and take you past fishing villages and scenic hills.

Katavi National Park

Katavi offers incredible game viewing and remains virtually unvisited by travelers due to its remoteness. This undeveloped 1,545-square-mile (4,000-km²) park is located between the towns of Mpanda and Sumbawanga on the main road running through western Tanzania from north to south.

An aerial view of Katavi National Park

Lake Katavi and its extensive floodplains are in the north of this park, which is about 2,950 feet (900 m) above sea level. To the southeast is Lake Chada, which is connected with Lake Katavi by the Katuma River and its extensive swampland. Miombo woodlands dominate most of the dry areas, except for acacia woodlands near Lake Chada.

Game viewing in Katavi

Wildlife includes hippo, crocs, elephant, zebra, lion, leopard, eland, puku, roan antelope and sable antelope. Herds of several thousand buffalo are sometimes seen. Over 400 species of birds have been recorded.

The long rains are March to May. The best time to visit is July to October. Scheduled charter flights to the park are available at least twice a week from Arusha, and guests often can be picked up from other airstrips on the “Northern Circuit.”

ACCOMMODATIONS — CLASS A/B: • **Chada Katavi** is located in the heart of Katavi National Park with views over the wide Chada Plain. Accommodations include 6 spacious safari tents with safari showers (hot water) and eco-flush toilets. Activities include game drives, walks and optional fly-camping. • **Katavi Wildlife Camp** offers 8 spacious tents with solar heated showers and eco-flush toilets. The tents are set on wooden platforms with verandahs overlooking the Katisunga plain. Activities include game drives, walks, and fly-camping.

CLASS B: • **Katuma Bush Lodge** has 10 tents and offers game drives in open sided vehicles and walking safaris.

Kigoma

Kigoma is the country’s major port on huge Lake Tanganyika. From there you can catch a steamer to Burundi or Zambia. Kigoma is the closest town to Gombe Stream National Park and many travelers stay there while in transit to and from the park. Kigoma can be reached by air, by road or by a 2.5-day train ride (the train schedules are not dependable) from Dar es Salaam.

Ujiji, a small town 6 miles (10 km) south of Kigoma, is where the line, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” was spoken by Stanley in 1872. Buses run there regularly from the Kigoma Rail Station.

ACCOMMODATION — FIRST CLASS: • **Kigoma Hilltop Hotel**, located just outside Kigoma on the edge of Lake Victoria, has 30 air-conditioned cottages.

Lake Tanganyika

Lake Tanganyika forms much of the western border of Tanzania and is indeed an “inland sea.” Located at the southern end of the Western Rift Valley, the lake is divided among four countries—Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zambia and Tanzania.

This is the world’s longest lake (446 mi./714 km) and the world’s second deepest lake (over 4,700 ft./1,433 m). Only Lake Baikal in Russia is deeper, at over 5,700 feet (1,738 m). The water flows into the Congo River system and ultimately into the Atlantic Ocean. During the slave trading period, Lake Tanganyika was a major transshipment route for slavers. More than 400 species of fish inhabit the lake’s clear waters.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A: • **Lupita Island Lodge** is an all-inclusive luxurious resort set on a 110-acre (44-hectare) island with 12 standard suites and 2 executive suites, each with private plunge pools and lake views. There is a swimming pool, spa and gym. Activities include lake cruises, snorkeling, biking, hiking, bird watching, fishing and sun-downer cruises. Access is by private charter flight.

THE SOUTH

The “Southern Circuit” of wildlife reserves includes Ruaha National Park, Mikumi National Park and the Selous Game Reserve. The Selous and Ruaha are less visited than the northern Tanzania parks and offer a great opportunity to explore wild and unspoiled bush. Mikumi is seldomly visited by international travelers. Daily scheduled charter flights link the Selous and Ruaha with Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar.

Ruaha National Park

Ruaha is now the largest national park in Tanzania. Known for its great populations of elephant, buffalo, greater and lesser kudu, hippo, crocs, it is also one of the country’s best national parks, and because of its location, it is one of the least visited.

Ruaha’s scenery is spectacular. The landscape is characterized by miombo woodland with rocky hills on a plateau over 3,300 feet (1,000 m) in altitude. Park elevation ranges from 2,460 feet (750 m) in the Ruaha Valley to the 6,230 foot (1,900 m) Ikingu Mountain in the west of the park.

Once referred to by the early explorers as the Garden of Eden, Ruaha was originally part of the Saba Game Reserve formed in 1910 before becoming part of the Rungwe Game Reserve that was established in 1946. The Ruaha National Park was gazetted as a park in 1964 when all hunting was prohibited. In 2008 it was extended from 5,000-square-miles (12,950-km²) in area to 8,500 square-miles (22,000-km²) by incorporating the former Usangu Wildlife Management Area.

Ruaha

One of the most important aspects of this is the overlapping of East African and southern African species of plants, trees, birds and mammals. The Great Ruaha River, with its impressive gorges, deep pools and rapids, runs for 100 miles (160 km), close to the park’s southern boundary, and it is home to many hippo and crocodiles. Black riverbed rocks are contrasted against golden grasses and baobab trees that line the riverbank, creating a unique and beautiful sight.

The dry season, June to October, is the best time to visit the park, when game is concentrated along the Ruaha River. Large numbers of greater and lesser kudu, elephant and impala can be seen, along with eland, sable antelope, roan antelope, buffalo, Defassa waterbuck, ostrich and giraffe. Lion, leopard, spotted and striped hyena, black-backed jackal, bat-eared fox and African wild dog are also present in significant numbers. Black rhino are present but seldom seen. Over 573 species of birds have been recorded.

In addition to morning and afternoon excursions, midday game viewing in this park can also be very productive because wildlife can be seen walking to and from the river.

Elephant frequent the Ruaha River

This is also one of the best parks in East Africa for escorted wildlife walks. The scenery and wildlife, especially along the Ruaha River, is exceptional in the dry season.

During the wet months of December to March, wildlife is scattered, but viewing is still good. Game viewing from February to June is difficult due to high grass.

The park is about a 2.5-hour charter flight from Dar es Salaam, or a 2-hour drive from Iringa. Park Headquarters is located at Msembe, 70-miles (112-km) from Iringa and 385 miles (615 km) from Dar es Salaam.

Jongomero Camp

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A: • **Jongomero Camp**, located on the banks of the Jongomero Sand River in the southwestern section of Ruaha, has 8 classic luxury tents with double vanity and solar-heated showers. The camp offers game drives in open vehicles, escorted walks with armed professional guides, bush breakfasts and bush dinners. As the camp is in a remote part of the park, other travelers are seldom if ever seen. • **Mwagusi Safari Camp**, located on the seasonal Mwagusi River, has 10 large tents with hot-cold running water showers and comfortable lounge areas under thatch. Game drives in open vehicles and walks are offered. Elephant may often be seen digging for water in the dry riverbed right in front of camp.

CLASS B: • **Ruaha River Lodge** is located on the banks of the Ruaha River and offers stunning views. The spacious 29 stone-and-thatch bandas are located in prime positions on the river bank, each with a private patio. There are two dining areas, one on the river’s edge and another on a hill overlooking the river. Game drives are offered.

Mikumi National Park

Mikumi is the closest park to Dar es Salaam (180 miles/288 km), and it takes about 4 hours to drive on tarmac from Dar es Salaam via Morogoro. The park covers 1,247-square-miles (3,230-km²) and borders the Selous Game Reserve to the south along the Tazara Railroad line, which runs down to Zambia and divides the park.

The park is dominated by the Mkata River flood plain, with swamps and grasslands dotted with baobab trees and miombo woodlands at an average altitude of 1,800 feet (550 m) above sea level. Elephant, buffalo, lion, hippo, zebra, wildebeest and Maasai giraffe are prevalent. Sable antelope, common waterbuck, Lichtenstein’s hartebeest, eland, Bohor reedbuck and impala may also be seen. Black-and-white colobus monkey are frequently seen in the

south of the park.

The long rains are from March to May and the short rains from November to December. Rainfall within the park ranges from 20 to 40 inches (510 to 1,070 mm) yearly.

It is difficult to say when the best time is to visit Mikumi. Unlike most parks, wildlife concentrates in this park during the wet season, when the vegetation is the thickest, making game viewing more difficult. Fewer animals are present in the dry season, but the ones present are easier to spot. Lion and elephant are two mammals that are more likely to be seen in the dry season. Considering this, the best time to visit is June through February.

This park is open all year, although some roads are closed during the rainy season. There is an airstrip at Park Headquarters.

ACCOMMODATION — CLASS A/B: • **Vuma Hill Tented Camp** has luxury tents under thatch and set on platforms and a swimming pool. Day trips to the Udzungwa Mountains are available. • **Stanley Kopjes Camp** (formerly *Foxes Safari Camp*) offers 8 custom-designed tents raised on wooden platforms and located around the rock kopje overlooking the Mkata flood plain and Mwangambogo waterhole. Day trips to the Udzungwa Mountains are available.

Selous Game Reserve

This little-known reserve happens to be the second largest game reserve in Africa, and it is a World Heritage Site. Over 21,000-square-miles (55,000-km²) in area, the Selous is more than half the size of the state of Ohio, twice the area of Denmark and 3.75 times larger than Serengeti National Park. Unexploited and largely unexplored, no human habitation is allowed in this virgin bush, except at limited tourist facilities.

Selous Game Reserve

The Selous is a stronghold for over 50,000 elephant, 150,000 buffalo (herds often exceed 1,000), and large populations of lion, leopard, Lichtenstein's hartebeest, greater kudu, hippo, crocodiles, and numerous other species, including giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, waterbuck, African wild dog, impala and a small number of black rhino. Colobus monkey can be found in the forests along the Rufiji River. Over one million large animals live within its borders. Over 350 species of birds and 2,000 plant species have been recorded.

Almost 75% of this low-lying reserve (360 to 4,100 ft./110 to 1,250 m) is composed of miombo woodlands, with a balance of grasslands, floodplains, marshes and dense forests.

Morning walks accompanied by an armed ranger and guide are popular and are conducted by some of the camps. Fly-camping for a few nights is also available from select camps.

This reserve can give you the feeling of exploring the bush for the first time, because you will encounter relatively few other visitors during your safari.

The Rufiji River, the largest river in East Africa, roughly bisects the park as it flows from the southwest to the northeast. The Rufiji and its tributaries, including Great Ruaha and Luwego, have high concentrations of hippo and crocs. Fish eagles are numerous.

The remote Selous is the 2nd largest game reserve in Africa

Exploring the Rufiji River and its channels and lakes by boat is another great way to view game and experience the reserve. You should consider adding the Selous onto a northern Tanzania itinerary, because game viewing by boat is not possible in the Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Lake Manyara or Tarangire. Fishing is also popular.

On a recent walk we encountered 3 female elephant as we tried crossing a dry river bed. We backtracked to another crossing point but as we went down the path we met these same elephants walking up it. Our guide had us quickly move back down the path we had come.

Camps feature boat rides on the Rufiji River

All photographic safari activities are restricted to the northern 20% of the reserve. The best time to visit the reserve is during the dry season, June to November. Game viewing from December to February is good, although it is quite hot during that period. During the rainy season, many of the roads are impassable and wildlife is scattered. The reserve is usually closed from mid- to end of March to the end of May.

Most visitors fly to the Selous by scheduled or private air charter from Dar es Salaam, while others take advantage of scheduled and charter flights from Arusha, Zanzibar or other parks. Access by road is difficult and only possible in the dry season. A novel way to experience the vastness of the Selous is to arrive from Dar via the Selous Safari Train (check operational schedule). The train journey takes about 5 hours and allows travelers to enjoy the scenery enroute.

Walking safaris are offered in the Selous

Beho Beho

ACCOMMODATION — The camps are located about 160 to 235 miles (260 to 380 km) from Dar es Salaam, requiring a 4.5 to 9 hour drive in a 4wd vehicle. All camps have private airstrips and flying is highly recommended.

CLASS A: • **Beho Beho** has been completely refurbished and the 10 luxury stone cottages have a light, breezy feel and offer panoramic views over the Rufiji River flood plain. Game drives, boating on Lake Tagalala and superb walking are offered. There is a swimming pool to enjoy between game drives. • **Bailey's Banda**, a new private villa, features 2 bedrooms, private pool and deck. Guests enjoy exclusive vehicle, guide and staff. • **Selous Safari Camp**, a luxury tented camp set on the shores of Lake Nzerakera, is comprised of 2 intimate camps (one with 7 tents, the other with 6) each with its own bar, dining room and swimming pool. The camp also has a "dungo," a large elevated platform overlooking Lake Nzerakera for relaxing and watching game and bird life during the midday. Game drives, escorted walks, boat safaris, fishing, fly camping and multiday walking safaris are offered. • **Sand Rivers Selous** is situated on the banks of the Rufiji River and has 8 open-fronted chalets (5 standard rooms, 2 suites and 1 Honeymoon cottage) looking out over the river. The 2 suites have plunge pools and a lounge area and the Honeymoon Cottage (known as The Rhino House) has its own plunge pool, lounge/dining area and private guide and vehicle. Game drives, walks, boat safaris, fishing, multi-day walking safaris with fly-camping are offered. • **Kiba Point**, downstream from Sand Rivers Selous, is a private camp featuring 4 large open-fronted rooms and a private plunge pool. This 8-bedded camp is booked on a totally exclusive basis only and includes game drives, walks, fly-camping, boating and fishing. • **Amara Selous** is located on the Great Ruaha River and features 12 deluxe air-conditioned tents with large wooden decks and private plunge pools. Activities include open-vehicle game drives, walking safaris and boating on the river (water levels permitting). • **Serena Mivumo River Lodge** is built on the Rufiji River and has 12 thatched air-conditioned rooms and one suite. Game viewing by open vehicles and by motorboat, and spa treatments are offered.

CLASS A/B: • **Rufiji River Camp**, a comfortable tented camp with 20 tents, offers game drives, fishing, and boat safaris. • **Selous Riverside Camp**, overlooking the Rufiji River, consists of 10 large tented chalets overlooking the Rufiji River. • **Serena Selous Luxury Camp**, located away from the river, has 12 well-appointed tents and offers game drives and game viewing by boat. • **Retreat Selous**, located in the extreme western part of the reserve, has a selection of hillside, riverside and private riverside tents. Open vehicle game drives and boat excursions are carried out on the Ruaha River (water levels permitting).

CLASS B: • **Selous Impala Camp** is located on the banks of the Rufiji River. There are 6 tents with views of the river with private verandahs and swimming pool. The camp offers game drives, walking safaris and boat rides on the Rufiji River.

Selous Safari Camp

Rufiji River Camp

THE COAST

Dar Es Salaam

Dar es Salaam, which means "haven of peace" in Arabic, is the functional capital, largest city and commercial center of Tanzania. Many safaris to the southern parks begin here. Among the more interesting sights are the harbor, **National Museum**, **Village Museum** and the **Kariakoo Market**. Ask at your hotel about traditional dancing troops that may be performing during your stay.

Once the German capital, hub of the slave trade and end point of the slave route from the interior, **Bagamoyo** is an old seaport 46 miles (75 km) north of Dar es Salaam. Fourteenth century ruins, stone pens and shackles that held the slaves can be seen.

The Oyster Bay’s pool area

Ras Kutani Beach Resort

ACCOMMODATION — FIRST CLASS: • **The Oyster Bay** is 4 miles (6 km) from town, located directly on the coast and has been recently renovated. The 8 suites have ocean views, air-conditioning and private balconies. • **The Hyatt Regency Dar es Salaam Kilimanjaro Hotel** is a 180 room air-conditioned hotel with a swimming pool, several restaurants and lounges and a fabulous view of the harbor. • **Dar es Salaam Serena Hotel** has 250 air-conditioned rooms with 2 restaurants, a bar, swimming pool and health club. • **Holiday Inn**, located in the city center, has 154 rooms, 2 restaurants and cocktail lounge • **Hotel Sea Cliff** features 114 rooms with ocean views, 2 restaurants, 2 lounges and a swimming pool.

TOURIST CLASS: • **The New Africa Hotel**, situated in the heart of Dar es Salaam's shopping and banking district, has 126 air-conditioned rooms and 7 suites, 2 restaurants, 2 bars, a casino and business center.

ACCOMMODATION NEAR DAR ES SALAAM — LUXURY: • **Amani Beach Club**, situated on the coast south of Dar es Salaam, has 12 luxury air-conditioned cottages, each with garden terrace and hammock overlooking the Indian Ocean, and swimming pool.

FIRST CLASS: • **Ras Kutani Beach Resort**, located on a beautiful, remote beach 17 miles (28 km) south of Dar es Salaam, has 9 spacious cottages and 4 suites. Wind surfing, sailing, snorkeling, deep sea fishing and horseback riding are offered. Humpback whales can sometimes be seen from shore. Access is by a 10-minute charter flight or 1 hour road transfer from Dar es Salaam.

Lazy Lagoon Island

Lazy Lagoon Island is a private island retreat 44 miles (70 km) north of Dar es Salaam in the Zanzibar channel. It is approximately 4 miles (6 km) off shore from the historic slave town of Bagamoyo. The island is protected by coral and the delicate ecosystem still attracts suni antelope, duiker, and Galago bushbabies.

ACCOMMODATION — TOURIST CLASS: • **Lazy Lagoon Island Lodge** is the only lodge on the island and offers 12 individual beach cottages, each opening out on the white sand beach. Activities include sailing, windsurfing, kayaking and snorkeling as well as a guided tour around the Kaole ruins and Bagamoyo Slave Town.

Zanzibar

Zanzibar (known to the locals as Unguja) and its sister island, Pemba, grow 75% of the world’s cloves. A beautiful island, Zanzibar is only 22 miles (35 km) from the mainland — a 20-minute, scheduled or charter flight from Dar es Salaam or a 90-minute hydrofoil ride. There are also several scheduled flights from Arusha taking about 60 minutes.

The narrow streets and Arabic architecture of historical Zanzibar City are exceptionally mystical and beautiful on a moonlit night. Main attractions include the **Zanzibar Museum**, former British Consulate, **Arab Old Fort**, the **Anglican Cathedral** built on the site of the former slave market, **Sultan’s Palace**, town market and Indian bazaar. Livingstone’s and Burton’s houses are near the picturesque old Dhow Harbour, where traditional dhows are repaired and built. Antique shops stocked with Arab clocks, kettles, brass trays, Zanzibar beds, carved doors and frames have special atmospheres all their own.

The **Spice Tour** travels north of Stone Town and includes a visit to one or more spice gardens and farms. Various spices and plants, including cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, vanilla, ginger and black pepper, along with fruits such as tamarind, guava, rose-apple and several types of mango and bananas, may be seen, touched, smelled and purchased. The **Dolphin Experience** offered from the southern end of the island is also worth considering.

Zanzibar’s colorful market

Good restaurants include Mercury’s, the Zanzibar Serena Inn, and The Archipelago located next to the Tembo Hotel in Stone Town. Just outside of town, Mtoni Marine also has a good restaurant. At 236 Hurumzi (formerly *Emerson & Green*) the Tower Top Restaurant serves a limited seating for dinner each night and is quite popular.

Zanzibar

A dhow sails along the coast

Luxurious Baraza

Matemwe Retreat

The more pristine coral reefs off Zanzibar offer a superb diving or snorkeling experience. In addition to a mind-boggling diversity of brightly colored reef fish, dolphins, green turtles and the largest of all fishes— the harmless whale shark— are fairly numerous in the waters around Zanzibar.

For a taste of what Zanzibar was like prior to the arrival of the traders, sultans and farmers, a visit to **Jozani Forest** is highly recommended. This small patch of remaining forest — mostly palm, pandanus and mahogany trees— is home to the unique Zanzibar red colobus, one of Africa’s rarest and most endangered primates. Among birds, the equally rare Fischer’s turaco may also be seen at Jozani, along with paradise flycatcher, banded wattle-eye and numerous other species.

The roads in Zanzibar are good and it is approximately a 1 to 1.5 hour drive to reach your beach resort from the Zanzibar Airport.

ACCOMMODATION IN ZANZIBAR STONE TOWN — FIRST CLASS: • **The Beyt Al Chai** — Stone House Inn, located on the famous Kelele Square, has 5 air-conditioned suites. • **Zanzibar Serena Inn**, located on the waterfront in Stone Town, has 51 rooms (most with private balconies), seafront restaurant, bar and swimming pool. Guests have access to a beautiful private beach at the Mangapwani Caves.

TOURIST CLASS: • **Zanzibar Palace Hotel** has 9 rooms (2 of which are suites). The hotel is located in the heart of Stone Town. • **Kisiwa House** is a luxurious hotel in Stone Town. Located on a quiet street in the heart of the historical town, the hotel provides modern amenities in an intimate atmosphere. Burdani (deluxe) rooms, Junior and Senior Suites are all decorated in sumptuous Swahili and include en suite bathrooms, flat screen televisions, air-conditioning, in-room safe, hairdryer, minibar and upscale toiletries. Enjoy dining at the Darini Restaurant which is a delightful fusion of traditional and continental specialties or the Courtyard Lounge which serves teas, coffee and freshly baked pastries. • **Zanzibar Grand Palace**, a new property built to replicate a historic building, offers 32 deluxe rooms and 2 suites. There is a rooftop restaurant and dock café. • **Dhow Palace**, located in the heart of Stone Town about 300 yards (300m) from the waterfront and has 30 tastefully decorated fan-cooled rooms and rooftop restaurant (no alcoholic beverages served), with panoramic views of Stone Town. • **Tembo Hotel** has 40 air-conditioned rooms, restaurant (no alcoholic beverages served), and a swimming pool. From its waterfront location, ships are constantly seen, passing enroute to and from the harbor.

The crystal blue water off Matemwe

A luxury pavilion at Kilindi

ACCOMMODATION ON THE BEACH — DELUXE: • **Baraza** is a “6-star” property located on a fabulous beach with 33 very spacious 1- and 2-bedroom villas with private plunge pools, several restaurants, swimming pool, and one of the top spas in East Africa. • **Matemwe Retreat** is a private section to Matemwe (see below in First Class) which features 4 exclusive 2-story suites with air-conditioned bedrooms on the first floor and a private sun terrace with plunge pool on the second. I love the 15 minute or so drive on the sand road along the coast through a fishing village to get to the property. This really sets the scene for the remote beach holiday! • **Kilindi** is located on a pristine section of beach and has 15 luxury pavilions – each with private plunge pools (some units with 2 pools). The eco-resort uses solar power and state-of-the-art water treatment and recycling. Guests enjoy regional cuisine, an infinity pool, superb spa and lush tropical gardens. Extensive water sports and excursions are available. This is a great property for honeymooners and others wishing for privacy. • **The Palms** is situated along a pristine white beach on the east coast of the island and consists of 6 villas featuring a bedroom, living room, Jacuzzi and private terrace overlooking the Indian Ocean. There is a swimming pool, dining room, evening bar and pool bar and massage facilities.

FIRST CLASS: • **Matemwe Lodge**, perched on the cliffs overlooking the northeast coast, has 12 bungalows with private verandahs with hammocks to enjoy the sea views. There are 2 swimming pools, restaurant, dive center and a variety of optional excursions that can be booked. • **Matemwe Beach House**, a private 3-bedroom villa set right on the beach, has a swimming pool and is

rented on an exclusive basis. Ideal for families, the house has a dedicated butler and chef. • **Blue Bay Beach Resort** is situated on a fine, white sand beach on the east coast of Zanzibar. This 25-acre (10 hectare) property has 112 air-conditioned rooms and suites in 2-story bungalows, 2 restaurants, 2 bars and a large swimming pool. Scuba diving and water sports are offered. • **Karafuu Hotel**, located on the east coast of Zanzibar about a 90-minute drive from the airport or Stone Town, has 89 air-conditioned rooms in bungalows, 5 restaurants, 2 bars, sports and entertainment facilities, spa and swimming pool. • **Breezes Beach Club**, located on the east coast near the village of Bwejuu, has 70 bedrooms in 2-story bungalows set on an unspoiled beach, 2 restaurants, 2 bars, conference facility, fitness center, flood-lit tennis court, disco and scuba diving center. • **Ras Nungwi Beach Hotel**, located about 36 miles (60 km) north of Zanzibar airport on the northern tip of the island, has 32 rooms, 2 restaurants, bar, swimming pool, PADI dive center, deep-sea fishing, water skiing and windsurfing. • **La Gemma dell 'Est** is located on the Northwest coast of Zanzibar on a magnificent stretch of beach where you are able to swim during low and high tide. The resort has 138 rooms including 41 suites, and a massive swimming pool with a sunken bar, restaurant, full water sports centre, big game fishing facility, full PADI certified dive school, diving, snorkeling, waterskiing, windsurfing, kayaking, and dhow cruises. • **Royal Zanzibar Hotel** is located on the northern tip of the island with a great beach, with 100 rooms and suites.

TOURIST CLASS: • **Sandies Mapezi Beach Club**, located on a beautiful beach on the east coast 28 miles (45 km) from the airport, has 87 spacious rooms (all with air-conditioning), 2 restaurants, 3 bars, tennis courts and a swimming pool. Activities include mountain biking, archery, snorkeling, beach volleyball, table tennis, wind surfing, canoeing and deep-sea fishing. • **Unguja Lodge**, located at the southern tip of Zanzibar, has 11 self-contained villas (8 with sea views, the others with lush gardens terraces). There is a restaurant, bar, pool, library and PADI certified dive center.

Chumbe Island Coral Park

Located 6 miles (10 km) by boat from Stone Town, this nature reserve offers forest and marine nature trails, over half a mile (1 km) of protected reef, great bird watching and snorkeling. Over 40 species of birds, including the endangered roseate tern have been recorded on the island, and 370 families of fish have been identified on the colorful reefs that drop off to about 50 feet (16 m).

ACCOMMODATION — TOURIST CLASS: • **Chumbe Island Lodge** offers 7 palm-thatched bungalows set in the forest and facing the ocean. Each bungalow has solar-powered lights and is equipped to catch, filter and solar-heat its own water for warm showers.

Mnemba Island

Mnemba is an exclusive island located 2 miles (3 km) northeast of the Zanzibar mainland. The island is only 1 mile (1.5 km) in circumference and is idyllic for anyone who wants to truly get away from it all.

Mnemba's reefs are among the best around Zanzibar, and, along with a bewildering variety of spectacular reef fish, encounters with green turtles and whale sharks are fairly common. Humpback whales pass through the straits between Mnemba and the mainland, and pods of common dolphins are seen almost daily. The huge coconut crab is an occasional visitor and the charming little ghost crabs are abundant on the pearly white beach. A variety of birds roost on Mnemba's secure sandbanks, including crab plovers, dimorphic egret, lesser crested tern and a host of Eurasian migratory waders.

ACCOMMODATION — DELUXE: • **Mnemba Island Lodge** is an exclusive island getaway with 10 thatched beachside cottages. Wind surfing, fly-fishing, kayaking, sundowner dhow cruises, snorkeling and scuba diving are available. The lodge is an hour by road, followed by 20 minutes by boat from Stone Town.

Pemba Island

Pemba is located 16 miles (25 km) north of Zanzibar Island near the Kenyan border and offers some of the best scuba diving and deep-sea fishing in all of sub-Saharan Africa. The Pemba Channel runs between Pemba and the mainland with depths up to 2,625 feet (800 m). Sheer underwater walls drop 150 to 600 feet (45 to 183 m) just off the coastline. Divers often see eagle ray, grouper, tuna and a variety of tropical fish.

Access to the island is by boat transfer to Pemba Harbor (Mkoani) or by a 20-minute scheduled or private charter flight.

ACCOMMODATION — FIRST CLASS: • **Fundu Lagoon**, set on 3 miles (4.5 km) of private beach, has 18 bungalows (some on the beach and some on the ridge), a restaurant, 2 bars and a PADI dive center. Activities include snorkeling, scuba diving, sailing, fishing, water skiing and kayaking.

TOURIST CLASS: • **Manta Resort** has 15 comfortable rustic cabins, completely open in the front and built on raised platforms. There is a dive shop and scuba diving and snorkeling excursions are offered.

Mafia Island

A 40-minute flight south from Dar es Salaam or Zanzibar, this island offers some of the best big-game fishing in the world. Species caught include marlin, sailfish, tuna and shark. The diving is also very good.

ACCOMMODATION — FIRST CLASS: • **Kinasi Lodge** has 14 private chalets and is set on a hillside overlooking Chole Bay. Scuba diving, snorkeling, sport fishing, sailing and wind surfing are offered. Other activities include excursions to historic sites, villages, forests, secluded beaches and bays. • **Pole Pole Resort** offers 7 luxury bungalows. Built into its natural surroundings with traditional makuti roofing, the resort offers a variety of different activities including scuba diving, snorkeling and fishing.

TOURIST CLASS: • **Mafia Island Lodge**, located on Chole Bay, has 40 rooms. Scuba diving, snorkeling, deep-sea fishing, water skiing, sailing and motor boating are offered.
