

ADVENTURES

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TANZANIA JOURNEY: NGORONGORO HIGHLANDS TREK AND SERENGETI SAFARI

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the wonder and thrill of African safaris in multiple national parks
- Spend your nights under the twinkling stars in tented camps
- Trek off the beaten path on the Ngorongoro Highlands
- Immerse yourself in Maasai culture, hospitality, and traditions
- Spot Tanzania's Big 5: lions, leopards, elephants, buffalo, and rhinos
- Explore Tanzania's best parks: the Serengeti, Tarangire, Lake Manyara, and Lake Natron

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OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Welcome to Tanzania! Arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport where you will be met by AGC representatives, who will transfer you to the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro via Moshi for our stay at Chanya Lodge.

Overnight: Chanya Lodge

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

After a delicious breakfast, we head out to Old Moshi for a fascinating full day of historical and cultural immersion. We catch our first glimpse of the fertile and lush countryside surrounding Mount Kilimanjaro, filled with banana and coffee farms galore. Your local guide will guide you through this typical rural Tanzanian mountain village, learning about farming practices, and the life of the Chagga people and their chiefdom system. You will see coffee plantations, hear the story of Chief Meli and hike through the forest of Kilimanjaro. Visit historical sites and find out about the rich history of Old Moshi as you hear stories dating back prior to German and British colonization in the area.

A walk to Kidia village will give us a chance to visit the Kidia Lutheran Church, an original stone church built by German missionaries (one of the first churches built on the mountain), as well as Kidia dispensary where we can learn about Doctor Bruno Gutman. We will then be hosted by a typical modern Chagga family living on the mountain slopes and to understand how traditional farming subsistence life coexists with modern lifestyles. We will learn to prepare a typical local meal using traditional cooking methods, and get to taste the fruits of our labor!

We will return back to our hotel after an adventure-filled day. After dinner, make sure to take time to sit by the fire, and enjoy the stars before heading to bed.

Overnight: Chanya Lodge

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3

Today's adventure takes us northeast from Moshi to the hidden gem that is Arusha National Park—a compact yet wildly diverse haven teeming with wildlife. Despite its smaller size, this park packs a punch, boasting three distinct ecosystems where an impressive variety of animals thrive. Keep your eyes peeled for the elusive leopard slinking through the underbrush or the ever-watchful hyena lurking in the shadows. And for the bird enthusiasts? Nearly 400 species call this park home, from vibrant year-round residents to seasonal migratory visitors that grace the landscape between October and April.

After an exciting game drive, we'll swap four wheels for two feet, setting off on a three-hour guided hike through the park. Led by an armed ranger, this trek offers an intimate and immersive way to experience the wilderness—far from the confines of a safari vehicle. We have several scenic routes to choose from, each offering its own surprises, whether it's a close-up look at the towering fig trees, breathtaking views of Mount Meru, or encounters with grazing wildlife along the way. Feel the rhythm of the land beneath your feet and let nature set the pace.

With hearts full and cameras brimming with memories, we make our way to Tumbili Lodge, a tranquil retreat just outside Arusha city. Here, we'll unwind over a well-earned dinner, surrounded by lush greenery and the soothing sounds of nature. A perfect end to a day of discovery!

Overnight: Tumbili Lodge, Arusha

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Walking safari and game drive, hiking 3 hours

DAY 4

Start your day with a touch of creativity and inspiration as we visit the Shanga Workshop, a hidden gem nestled within the lush grounds of Arusha Coffee Lodge. Here, artisans with disabilities craft beautiful, one-of-a-kind pieces from recycled materials—everything from delicate beadwork to mesmerizing glass-blown creations. Feel free to try your hand at the craft or simply enjoy the vibrant energy of this self-sustaining social enterprise (and maybe pick up a unique souvenir or two!).

From here, it's time to trade artistry for adventure as we head to Tarangire National Park. En route, we'll enjoy a leisurely picnic lunch before diving into an afternoon of wildlife encounters. Tarangire is famous for its striking baobab trees, towering termite mounds, and, of course, its massive herds of elephants—one of the largest populations in all of Tanzania! During the dry season, the Tarangire River becomes a lifeline, drawing elephants and antelope from miles away, offering spectacular wildlife viewing. And for the bird lovers? With over 550 species calling this park home, your binoculars will be working overtime.

As the afternoon fades, we arrive at the stunningly situated Tarangire Safari Lodge, perched on a cliff top overlooking the riverbed. Settle in, soak up the sweeping views, and savor a sundowner as the sky melts into hues of gold and crimson. But don't get too comfortable—the night still holds adventure!

After an early dinner, we venture back into the wild for an exhilarating night game drive. With a specialist guide, armed ranger, and expert tracker leading the way, we'll navigate the darkened landscape in an open vehicle, our senses heightened by the sounds of the African night. Who's out and about? Perhaps a stealthy leopard on the prowl, a pride of lions on the hunt, or the rare and elusive civet cat. Porcupines, genets, and hyenas may also make an appearance, their nocturnal antics a stark contrast to the daytime safari experience. And above us? A canopy of stars so dazzling, it feels close enough to touch.

Eventually, we return to the lodge, hearts still pounding from the thrill of the night. As you slip into bed, the distant calls of the wild will be your lullaby, a perfect end to a day packed with wonder.

Overnight: Tarangire Safari Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Morning and evening game drive

DAY 5

After a more leisurely breakfast, take an on-route game drive in Tarangire National Park as you exit the park and continue to the town of Mto Wa Mbu, literally meaning River of Mosquito, adjacent to Lake Manyara National Park. Isoitok Camp Manyara is a tented camp deeply connected with the community and offers grassroots cultural immersion opportunities within the local Maasai community.

We'll continue to Karatu, where we will visit the Tanzanite Experience, learning about this rare and sought-after gemstone. The museum provides insights into its formation, mining, and cutting process, along with the myths and legends surrounding Tanzanite.

Next up, the remarkable FAME hospital in the highlands of Karatu for an inspiring talk on its journey to become a premier medical facility. Hear about the founders and how they realized their dream of building such an ambitious hospital in Tanzania and learn about its humble beginnings with simple outreach clinics in remote areas. Mid afternoon we head to our lodge for dinner and a little rest and relaxation..

Overnight: Escarpment Luxury Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Game drive, Tanzanite, FAME Hospital

DAY 6

Prepare for a day of discovery as we head to the vibrant town of Mto Wa Mbu, a true melting pot of Tanzanian cultures. A local guide leads us through winding backstreets, where the rhythm of daily life unfolds before us. Here, diverse communities—including the Mbugwe, Iraqw, Gorowa, Irangi, Chagga, and Maasai—live side by side, each preserving their rich traditions.

Every visit is unique, offering encounters with artisans and farmers honing age-old crafts. We may find ourselves sampling banana beer with a Chagga family, learning the secrets of palm oil pressing from a Kigoma farmer, or watching the intricate weaving of papyrus baskets by the Rangi people. Along the way, rice farmers, bow and arrow makers, and master woodcarvers share their skills, offering a window into their world.

Our morning adventure culminates in a feast of flavors—a homemade Tanzanian meal prepared by a local women's group, bursting with traditional spices and fresh, indigenous ingredients.

Rejuvenated, we return to Escarpment Luxury Lodge for a leisurely afternoon. Whether you choose to lounge by the pool, indulge in a spa treatment, or simply soak in the breathtaking scenery, the rest of the day is yours to enjoy. As the sun dips below the horizon, gather for dinner and another peaceful night at the lodge.

Overnight: Escarpment Luxury Lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Mto wa Mbu Cultural Immersion

DAY 7

Today's journey takes us into one of Africa's greatest natural wonders—the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. As we pass through the highlands town of Karatu, anticipation builds for the breathtaking sights ahead. Soon, we enter this UNESCO World Heritage Site, where Maasai pastoralists and their livestock coexist with some of Tanzania's most iconic wildlife.

The adventure begins with a descent into the Ngorongoro Crater, an ancient caldera that shelters over 20,000 animals, including elephants, lions, zebras, and the critically endangered black rhino. With luck, we may even spot all of the Big Five! A scenic picnic lunch within the crater allows us to soak in this awe-inspiring landscape before we ascend once more.

Leaving the crater behind, we venture north into the remote and untouched Ngorongoro Highlands. The landscapes shift dramatically as we pass Olmoti Crater and the towering peak of Mount Lolmasin. Eventually, we arrive at the stunning Empakaai Crater, a hidden gem known for its emerald-hued lake and mist-shrouded rim.

At the crater's edge, our private luxury camp awaits, nestled in this otherworldly terrain. A short nature walk offers a chance to spot bushbuck, buffalo, and blue monkeys, while panoramic views stretch towards Ol Doinyo Lengai volcano, Lake Natron, and even Mount Kilimanjaro on a clear day. As twilight descends, we gather around a crackling campfire, enjoying a hearty dinner beneath the dazzling African night sky.

Overnight: Tented Camping, Empakaai Crater

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Game Drive and Empakaai Crater walk

DAY 8

Awaken to the crisp mountain air and the aroma of fresh coffee. Today begins our Ngorongoro Highlands trek!

This remote trek with fresh air, peace, and tranquility in the wilderness, offers the world's most stunning sights: misty forests and rolling hills, ancient craters and colorful blazes of Maasai who inhabit this unique land. You will be rewarded with striking views of ancient and recent volcanic mountains, including Mt Lolmasin, Gilai, Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru. While trekking, your guides will carry the tents, cooking equipment, and luggage, while you have your day pack with water, layers, and snacks! An armed ranger will also accompany the group for safety whilst you trek in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Each day will be an approximate 5-7 hour trek.

Descend by foot into Empakaai's crater floor, a 984ft descent. Take time to appreciate the lush landscape and wildlife in this crater, which is famous for the pink flamingos that congregate here, turning the lakeshore a pretty pink. After exploring the rainforest inside the crater, we begin our ascent out of the crater. You meet the Maasai herders and their donkeys, who will carry all of our gear to the next camp. We trek downwards into the highland meadows to the small Maasai village of Nayobi, a trading center for the local communities. Here, we will take a short rest and have a delicious picnic lunch prepared by their cooks.

We end our hike today at Acacia camp. This campsite is set under these yellow-barked acacia trees, with magnificent views of Ol Doinyo Lengai, the Maasai Mountain of God.

Overnight: Tented camping at Acacia Camp

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Empakaai to Acacia Camp: 10.4 miles, 5hrs hiking, Elevation gain 1,053', Elevation loss 2,838ft

DAY 9

After an early breakfast, we embark on a dramatic trek into the Rift Valley, where the landscapes shift from rolling green highlands to the arid expanse of the valley floor. As we follow the edge of the Great East African Rift Valley Escarpment wall, Lake Natron shimmers in the distance while the perfectly shaped stratovolcano, Ol Doinyo Lengai dominates the view eastwards. We continue through Pembe Ya Swala and onto an ancient trading route to the foot of Lengai. For centuries the Maasai on the lower plains near Lake Natron have traded their goods with the Maasai of the Ngorongoro Highlands.

Upon reaching the base of the volcano, transition to the remote Maasai village of Ngare Sero. Here, a hidden waterfall oasis awaits—an inviting respite where cool, crystal-clear waters flow from a fissure in the escarpment wall. This remote village is set against the backdrop of the Rift Valley Escarpment and the picturesque Ol Doinyo Lengai, the only active carbonite volcano in the world. (it has the world's lowest lava temperatures), last erupting in February 2006. Lengai is of great spiritual significance to the Maasai. This isolated corner of Tanzania opens up a world of stunning geographical landscapes, all created through the ancient tectonic plate movements of millions of years. The area is a great demonstration of how humans can adapt to almost any environment.

After a refreshing dip, we journey to Lake Natron Halisi Tented Camp, where a well-earned hot meal and shower await. Later, we toast to the day's adventure with sundowner drinks on a hilltop, watching as the sky ignites in shades of gold and crimson. The evening is capped with a mesmerizing performance of throat singing and rhythmic dances by the Morani Maasai warriors.

Overnight: Lake Natron Halisi Tented Camp

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Acacia Camp to Ol Doinyo Lengai Base: 6.2 miles, 4 - 5 hours, Elevation gain: 240 ft; Elevation loss 3,133 ft

DAY 10

After a leisurely morning, we take a walk to see the scenic Lake Natron, an almost surreal giant alkaline lake which is part of the Rift Valley chain of soda lakes. Set at an altitude of 2,000ft, below the Rift Valley Escarpment, Lake Natron offers incredible bird and game viewing. It is the only breeding ground for East Africa's millions of flamingos, who usually congregate to breed here between August and October. Witness the age-old practice of extracting dried alkaline crust (Magadi) from the lake bed and how it is used medicinally and as a nutritional supplement for cattle and local cooking. From here, drive to the Hominid Footprints to see some of the oldest footprints of Homo Sapiens, dating about 120,000 years. There are more than 400 footprints crisscrossing the dark gray mudflat near the lake.

After a delicious homemade lunch, we head to the Ngare Sero waterfalls oasis for a refreshing afternoon canyon walk! Walk through the rocky Ngare Sero River Gorge via the Saitoti River Trail until you reach the waterfalls, which is fed through underground water springs all the way from Ngorongoro Highlands. Take a natural shower in the waterfalls, plunge in the natural pool and relax in its cooling water.

Late afternoon, return to the camp. We finish our evening with a celebratory traditional Maasai goat BBQ and campfire. Try your hand at spear throwing the Maasai way, traditional fire making and sampling the various soups/teas Maasai drink to complement their health and wellbeing. Enjoy the warm light of the fire while listening to the crackling of firewood and the distant sounds of hyenas.

Overnight: Lake Halisi Tented Camp

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Lake walk, Hominid Footprints, BBQ, Waterfall hike: 2.2 miles; elevation gain: 377'.

DAY 11

We start our day with an early morning wake up to visit the local Maasai boma (homestead), a cultural immersion opportunity to understand the typical morning routine and daily life for this semi-nomadic community. Learn about the Maasai clan and homestead structure. Meet the Elders, Moranis (warriors), the boma's women and children and find out about the status and rankings within each age group and within a family. Get a glimpse of livestock rearing, cooking and jewelry making, all whilst supporting the boma. You can try your hand at milking cows and get a glimpse of the daily routines before children/herdsmen head out with their cattle for the day.

Return to camp for breakfast and then drive north eastward to Serengeti National Park. This is a 4 - 5 ride through a bumpy, but unique and fascinating ancient volcanic earth. This is not a transfer, it's a game drive in its own right and seeing the plains of the Serengeti for the first time is an unforgettable moment. We have finally made it to Serengeti National Park! Serengeti, or 'Seringit' in Maa, meaning "endless plains" is one of the oldest ecosystems on earth. The essential features have changed little in a million years; Serengeti's famous plains are interspersed with wooded hills, towering termite mounds, rocky kopjes and rivers lined with acacia trees. Late afternoon head to Nyikani Serengeti Tented Camp for dinner and overnight stay.

Overnight: Nyikani Camp- Central Serengeti

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Maasai Boma visit and Game Drive

DAY 12

We wake up early for a game drive before the heat of the day sets in and animals seek shade. We have the opportunity to see lounging lions, active pools of hippos, and so much more before the sun rises!

We make our way back to camp for breakfast before heading out on a full day game drive through the Serengeti with a picnic lunch en route. The Serengeti National Park was established in 1952, however, the Serengeti ecosystem is far older and greater than the park. The ecosystem reaches over 12,000 sq mi and was previously inhabited by the Maasai. This is home to the famous annual migration of more than a million wildebeest, hundreds of thousands of zebras, and all kinds of antelopes following the rains, undertaking their long journey to new grazing grounds. Also be on the lookout for lions, cheetahs, leopards, and hyenas.

In the late afternoon, we return to Nyikani Camp for campfire stories and our farewell dinner together.

Overnight: Nyikani Camp- Central Serengeti

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Activities: Game drive in Serengeti

ADDITIONAL EXTRA OPTION: Hot air balloon ride across the Serengeti Plains. Leaving around 5am, head to the launch site of the hot air balloon, a good opportunity to get a glimpse of some of the elusive nocturnal inhabitants of Serengeti. As dawn breaks, the spectacular hot air balloon adventure starts. This is a once in a lifetime magical experience of viewing the animals and the vast landscape of the Serengeti plains from a different perspective. Each journey is different and will be dictated by the direction of the wind. Upon return, enjoy a glass of bubbly and exceptional bush breakfast.

DAY 13

After breakfast, we head out for one more game drive! We return to camp for a hot lunch before transferring to Seronera Airstrip for the flight back to Kilimanjaro International Airport, arriving just before 5PM.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Activities: Game drive in Serengeti

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

A private shuttle will pick you up from the Kilimanjaro Airport and take you to our hotel in town.

To get to Tanzania, you may connect in a few cities, so you will need to leave North America at least 1-2 days beforehand to arrive on Day 1.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exitto Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Exitto charges a one-time, non-refundable processing fee of \$50 per passenger.

Accommodations

All accommodations on this trip are very comfortable, high end lodgings. While in Moshi, we will stay at a modern hotel just outside of town with ensuite bathrooms. In Tarangire National Park, you will stay in Tarangire Safari Lodge, one of the most historic camps in the area, with an amazing deck view of the Tarangire River. You can watch elephants and giraffes rest and drink at the river throughout the day. We will spend two nights at the Escarpment Luxury Lodge with hot water, ensuite bathrooms, and panoramic views from your terrace or balcony. While on the trek, all your camping gear will be carried by porters. Each night your tent will be set up with cots, sheets, blankets, and pillows. While you won't be able to shower while on the trek, hot water will be available for you to wash up every morning and evening. While at Natron, we will be staying at Lake Natron Hali Tented Camp. This camp has bucket showers (common for tented camps and function like regular showers), compostable toilets, and fresh water available for washing hands and brushing teeth. While in Serengeti, we will be staying at Nikiyani Camp- Central Serengeti with amazing savannah views. Each tent has ensuite bathrooms, flush toilets, and bucket showers. You will be able to do laundry at most of the Lodge accommodations.

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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