



A Guide to Tanzania and Zanzibar



Tanzania Odyssey Limited

5 The Mews, 6 Putney Common SW15 1HL, England



Tel UK 44 (0) 20 8704 1216 | Tel US 1 866 356 4691 | <http://www.tanzaniaodyssey.com> | info@tanzaniiodyssey.com

A guide to the guide

The idea of this guide is to help you decide where in Tanzania you should go. A common theme is that clients can get bamboozled by too much information. We hope this short guide will be enough to set you on the right course, without being too detailed, and as such it is not meant to be definitive. For further details we strongly recommend that you look at our vast website which discusses hundreds of different lodges, all the national parks, beaches and islands, and all with in depth reviews, prices, and often video.

So saying, nothing beats the personal touch so we strongly recommend you either pop into our offices in Putney, or phone to discuss. We are also able to provide “virtual presentation” which simply require you to be sitting in front of a computer.

Important considerations

When to go

The climate in Tanzania is equatorial, with little seasonal variation in temperature, however rainfall does vary considerably. The best time to travel is in our summer and early autumn, when Tanzania is hot, dry and sunny with low humidity, and the game viewing is great. The short rains come in November and the long rains in April and May, but between these months (December to March) is another good time to travel.

Where to stay?

The next consideration is which park will offer the best game viewing and activities for your travel dates – this is especially critical if you want to witness the great migration. Each park has a good range of accommodation to choose from according to your budget and personal taste, including mobile camps, small tented camps, permanent lodges and large hotels. Tented camps can still be extremely luxurious (often with private plunge pools and all the bells and whistles), though the semi-permanent mobile camps that track the path of the migration do lack permanent plumbing.

Budget and timings

Safaris are not cheap, and although the beach hotels are considerably cheaper than the safari lodges, the beach hotels are quite expensive compared to other beach locations in say Asia. Roughly speaking safari lodges in the South of Tanzania tend to cost between \$400 and \$700, safaris in the North of Tanzania tend to cost between \$700 and \$1,000, and beach lodges tend to cost between \$200 and \$300. (all prices are in US Dollars per person per night). *It is also important to note that safaris are tiring and we only recommend up to about a week on safari.*

Special occasions

Whether it is your honeymoon, holiday of a lifetime, birthday celebration, or a family reunion, we will plan it with you, and ensure that it is a memorably superb trip. From hot-air ballooning over the plains of the Serengeti, diving with whale sharks, tracking lion on foot, chartering your private jet, or simply relaxing on a private island, we will make it happen.

Tanzania is wonderful for romantic holidays and honeymoons for so many reasons; it is one of the easiest countries in Africa in which to combine a first-class safari with beach time on an idyllic Indian Ocean island, while its assorted highlights can be easily combined in a neat itinerary with minimal flying time.

Tanzania Overview

The National Parks and Reserves of Tanzania are the best in Africa for wildlife viewing, and most people choose to explore them for at least part of their stay. Most clients take their safari in either the parks of the North (Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Manyara, Tarangire) or the lesser know parks of the South (Selous, Ruaha, Katavi, Mahale) and the pros and cons of each are discussed below. Most visitors to Tanzania end their time on one of Tanzania's islands (most commonly Zanzibar) or one of the beach lodges of its Indian ocean coastline.

Getting there and getting around

Dar es Salaam is the main hub and is served by a number of airlines from Europe including KLM, Swiss, Emirates, though not BA. If you can not get to Dar directly the next best hub is either Nairobi or from the States Johannesburg. It is also worth noting that KLM fly directly to Kilimanjaro (saving a flight up from Dar)

There is a good western owned network of flights connecting all the parks and islands with main hubs in Arusha, Dar and Zanzibar which makes travelling in Tanzania a breeze. As a very rough rule of thumb assume \$200 per flight, and with the exception of Katavi and Mahale flights between the parks, hubs and islands are many times per day

Further afield

Other beaches; it is worth mentioning the islands in the Bazarutu archipelago of Northern Mozambique. These islands are a short (though expensive) flight from Dar and offer a truly "barefoot luxury" experience with amazing untouched reefs and a real frontier feel. Mauritius and the island of the Seychelles are accessible via Nairobi

Other safari countries; the other countries of East Africa are a short hop from Dar allowing good combinations with the Masai Mara in Kenya, Gorilla trekking in Rwanda etc, and the countries of Southern Africa are accessible via a daily flight to Johannesburg.

Northern or Southern Tanzania?

Should you safari in the North or the South of Tanzania, and how long should you spend on safari? This is the most important decision you need to make.

The South of Tanzania (the most popular parks are Selous and Ruaha) is far less visited than the parks of the North, and allows short or extended walking safaris, safaris by boat, as well as safaris by open-sided vehicle. The parks have small (usually tented) lodges which are tend to be cheaper than the tented lodges of the north. Since it is cheap and easy to fly in and out of Selous, Selous is perfect for a short (3 to 4 night), and reasonably cheap safari. For those looking for a longer safari in the South, the combination of Selous and Ruaha is superb.

The North of Tanzania (the most popular parks are the Ngorongoro Crater, and the Serengeti) is much more visited than the South. It is possible to escape the crowds by heading to the far North of the Serengeti but otherwise you will see many other vehicles on safari. The annual migration of the wildebeest in the Serengeti is justifiably one of the most spectacular sights on the planet and is seen year round in the Serengeti. The Serengeti is also one of the best parks in Africa in which to see the cats. Though very crowded, the Ngorongoro Crater is one of the seven natural wonders of the world. Price-wise the North is about 50% more expensive than the South and the flights are longer and more expensive. As a rule of thumb walking and boating safaris are not possible in the North and the vehicles are closed sided

As well as being expensive, Safaris are tiring, often involving long days in a land cruiser starting before dawn and most clients tend to take a short 3 to 4 nights safari in the South, or a 7 to 8 day safari either in the North or South. Longer safaris are possible but the experience can get a bit repetitive

A guide to the North of Tanzania



The iconic Serengeti National Park, the Ngorongoro Crater and the Great Migration (which together comprise most people's idea of 'safari'), and Mount Kilimanjaro are all to be found in the North. However, so are plenty of tourists and as a result, prices are higher than in the South and it can be harder to achieve the authentic African wilderness experience. Activities in the North are constrained by National Park regulations and as a general rule night drives, walking safaris and fly camping are not permitted (though as with all rules there are exceptions)

The Serengeti is where most people spend the majority of their time. Huge expanses of short grass plains make game viewing exceptionally good. The Serengeti is justifiably famous for its huge concentrations of game especially the predators, and of course the migration all year round. There are 3 main regions – the North, the Western corridor and the Central Serengeti and the time of year is key in choosing where to stay. It is worth noting that there are a number of operators offering mobile camps that track the migration please see our [animating map](#)

Unique and diverse the Crater, though a “must see”, is surprisingly small once inside and most people find that one day is quite sufficient to drive around. Its relative smallness compared to the vast expanse of the Serengeti means that you will see many other vehicles often bumper to bumper. The key decision is whether to stay on one of the large hotels on the rim of the Crater itself (such as the Sopa or Serena) with amazing views, or stay in an area called Karatu (half way between Manyara and the Crater at somewhere like Plantation Lodge) and, as well as being less busy, allows for more activities including visits to local villages

Tarangire is a Great Park, especially for elephants, in season (July to October) though it is plagued by tsetse flies, and Lake Manyara is a small national park worth visiting for only a morning en route to somewhere else.

Where to stay

As mentioned before the lodges in the North tend to be more expensive than those in the South. At the top of the scale are amazing lodges like the Crater Lodge and Sasakwa at about \$1,600. Most of the good camps tend to be between \$800 and \$1,000 and include Faru Faru, Sayari, Olakira, Nomads, Oliver's, and Serengeti under canvas. In this price bracket are mobile tented camps (such as Olakira), permanent tented camps (such as Sayari), and permanent lodges (such as Klein's). It is hard to find any good tented lodges cheaper than this, though it is possible to take a driving circuit and stay in hotels which do not have their own vehicles (such as the Serena or Sopa chain, Plantation Lodge, Kirurumu) for about \$600 on the basis of 2 people and \$500 on the basis of 4 people.

For more information including reviews, maps, slideshows and videos please [click here](#)

A guide to the South of Tanzania



The South of Tanzania includes Selous Game Reserve and Ruaha National Park, each very different from the other but both of which offer outstanding game viewing and a fabulous safari experience. Fewer visitors here mean lower prices (in the region of \$400-\$700 per person per night), better value for money and plenty of isolated wilderness where you won't see another person.

As the Selous is a game reserve rather than a national park, a wider range of activities is on offer including walking and boating safaris, game drives by open-sided vehicles, and fly camping. As the South is always fly-in/fly-out, it is ideal for a short 3- or 4-night safari, although to visit both Selous and Ruaha would require longer.

The Ruaha is a perfect contrast to the Selous – its parched red earth landscape contrasts with the green and watery Selous. Even fewer visitors make it to Ruaha than to the Selous and it also offers game drives by open-sided vehicles fly camping, and walking safaris.

Further west

Very few people venture further to the West of Ruaha, and for that reason we have not devoted much space to the next two parks. First up is Katavi; a vast and totally undiscovered park with vast plains (similar to the Serengeti) which attracts huge herds of buffalo and supports many prides of lion. And finally on the shores of Lake Tanganyika Mahale mountains is a unique location where once can trek with chimps in the morning and snorkel and sunbath on the lake in the afternoon.

Where to stay

The cheapest good tented lodges are owned by Adventure Camps (Lake Manze in Selous and Mdonya Old River in Ruaha) at the \$400 mark. Next up are the SSC properties (Siwandu in Selous and Jongomero in Ruaha), as well as Mwangusi in Ruaha at the \$600 mark. And at the very top are lodges like Beho Beho and Sand Rivers (both in Selous) and Greystoke in Mahale at about \$1000.

For more information including reviews, maps, slideshows and videos please [click here](#)

A guide to the beaches and islands of Tanzania



Of all Tanzania's islands the most famous is Zanzibar. Zanzibar has mile upon mile of beautiful white coral sand beaches, palm trees and wonderful warm turquoise water. As a word of caution the beaches of Zanzibar are extremely tidal and though some beaches are superb, some are not (as a rule of thumb the best beaches are in the North and the West).

The other two main islands are Pemba and Mafia. A word of warning here that as well as extremely tidal the beaches of Pemba and Mafia are much less appealing than their Zanzibar counterparts, less coral sand and more mangrove beach

Most island hotels offer a range of non-motorised watersports including diving, kite surfing, snorkelling, either as part of the main hotel (such as at Ras Nungwi or Breezes) or from a nearby privately run dive centre that services a number of hotels

Finally, even though Tanzania has hundreds of miles of coastline all the way down to Mozambique the coast remains gloriously undeveloped. The mainland coast lodges are thus much more private than the island lodges. They are also far less tidal and tend to be good for boogie-boarding (unlike the islands)

Where to stay

On Zanzibar at about the \$200 mark Mchanga, Shooting Star and Echo Beach are well run small hotels with good beaches, and at the same sort of price is the much bigger Breezes Beach Club. The next level up, about \$300, brings in the slightly larger Ras Nungwi with an amazing beach and great facilities, and the smaller Matemwe. At the top end are three fairly new and small hotels – Palms and Baraza on the West, and Kilindi at the North - and the very large Residence on the south west

For Stone town clients either tend to visit on a day trip from the beach (about 1 hour) or for those who want to stay overnight there is plenty to do, and there are a number of small boutique hotels of which our favourite is the Zanzibar Palace.

Off Zanzibar there is little choice, for Mafia we recommend Kinasi lodge (about \$200), on Pemba we recommend Fundu Lagoon (about \$500), and if money really is no option then Mnemba island is the place to stay (about \$1500). On the mainland there are really only two choices - our absolute favourite lodge – Ras Kutani (about \$300), and further North near Bagamoyo it the Tides (about \$250)

For more information including reviews, maps, slideshows and videos please [click here](#)

Why Tanzania Odyssey

Independent advice from experts

We really know our stuff. We have been arranging luxury travel to Tanzania since 1999, and we have close relationships with all the suppliers. We have stayed at all the lodges many a time, so we can match an itinerary to your requirements very precisely. You may have come across a fabulous lodge on [TripAdvisor](#) – but if there's an even better (more intimate, more authentic, less expensive) one just round the corner, we'll tell you about it. And if anything goes wrong during your trip, we know who to call and how to get things sorted.

Independently owned and operated

We are not accountable to anybody but you. We don't work on commission. Our only objective is to arrange the best possible trip for you, within your budget, and to ensure that you have a wonderful time.

Industry credentials

Our MD, Marc, is a board director of the [Africa Travel and Tourism Association](#), the UK trade body covering all aspects of travel and tourism to Africa. He is also a judge of the highly respected [Good Safari Guide](#). One of our consultants, Annie, has written the [Cadogan guidebook to Tanzania and Zanzibar](#), now in its 2nd edition.

Testimonials

Countless thousands of clients have been delighted with our service. [Here](#) is what some past clients have had to say about their trips and about us, and we receive regular reviews on [Trust Pilot](#)

Your Money

Our price promise

Booking through us will cost no more - and often considerably less - than booking the same trip with all the individual suppliers directly. We are able to negotiate excellent rates with suppliers, which results in savings for you. In the very unlikely event that you get a cheaper quote for the same trip from a reputable UK bonded tour operator, we will match that quote.

Financial protection

We are [ATOL](#) (ATOL 5397) so whatever might happen to us, your money is protected.

No surcharge for currency fluctuations

Once your trip is deposited we guarantee that we will make no surcharge for currency fluctuations, whatever happens to exchange rates before you actually travel.

In summary, we are able to package a holiday for less than you will be able to arrange directly, without any exchange risk, and you will benefit from our decades of experience in arranging similar trips, our impartial opinions, and the financial security that our ATOL bond offers!