



Maasai, Ngorongoro National Park

Essential Africa

Tanzania



From its stunning beaches and Indian Ocean islands to its magnificent forests, mountains and open plains, Tanzania has much to offer. **Annabel Skinner**, author of the *Cadogan Guide to Tanzania and Zanzibar*, highlights the best of the country's natural marvels and suggests itineraries designed to appeal to travellers wishing to enjoy an indulgent luxury getaway, a personal wildlife adventure or an exploration of the historic and colourful Swahili coast.

Unspoilt, charismatic, vast. With fourteen per cent of its landmass dedicated to conservation areas and a relatively small number of lodges and camps, Tanzania is the ideal destination for a rewarding and, above all, private safari experience. Whether you're a first-time safari-goer or a serious Africa-buff, and whether your preferred style is barefoot adventure or luxury all the way, you're unlikely to be disappointed. The country has more than enough to satisfy anyone with a yearning for dramatic landscapes, expansive sunsets and starlit nights.

While its wildlife, its national parks, its coral reefs and its mountain slopes

are impressive enough to rival any global alternatives, the country's finer points are fascinating too: the close-knit communities around Kilimanjaro, the wild, natural Usambaras, the strange, spiritual peace of Bagamoyo, the remnants of a once illustrious past from Mafia to Kilwa. Wherever you choose to travel, Tanzania draws you in and insists you appreciate each subtle moment.

Tanzanians themselves share a hard-won sense of national unity. Culturally diverse, they live shoulder to shoulder, joined together by a common language and purpose, and visitors are welcomed with pride.

Serengeti

A national park, an ecosystem, one of the world's most celebrated wildlife reserves: the unfenced boundaries of the 15,000 square kilometre expanse of the Serengeti National Park are flanked by conservation areas and game reserves in an exceptional bid to preserve one of the last great migratory systems and the greatest and most varied collection of wildlife on earth. The 'endless plains' of the Serengeti are the stomping ground of millions of wildebeest and zebra for 9 months of the year; this is wild Africa, alive with energy, a realm of endlessly rewarding safaris.

Tarangire

South of the plains of southern Maasailand, Tarangire National Park covers 2600 square kilometres of grass and flood plains, acacia woodland and dense bush. Dominated by the Tarangire River, the park thrives in the heat from August to October when masses of wildebeest, zebra, buffalo and giraffe migrate to the valley floor. Resident predators suffer lean months to enjoy these feast days. Impressive elephant herds congregate from July to October.

Mahale

The steep, forested slopes of Mahale Mountains National Park are home to approximately 800 of Africa's remaining wild chimpanzees. Further north, Gombe Stream National Park is the site of an alternative chimpanzee research programme in which around 200 chimpanzees are fed and monitored. Chimp-trekking in Mahale requires stamina, trekking through rich woodlands populated by various monkey species and rewarding, diverse birdlife. Inaccessible by road, visitors must fly or arrive by boat from Kigoma, along the southern shores of Lake Tanganyika, the world's longest and least-polluted fresh water lake. Snorkel with iridescent cichlids to conclude an exceptional safari experience.

Katavi

The wide alluvial plains of Katavi are barely visited at all, mainly because there are presently no permanent camps. Miles off the beaten track, Katavi is a remote, classic dry season reserve, superb in the driest months of the year but unpredictable and partially impassable for the remainder. The intrepid few who do venture the distances are well rewarded; the park is home to vast buffalo herds and hippo pods, and concentrations of elephant around February. Wildlife disperses but birdlife proliferates following the short rains in November.



Sundowners in the bush

Ngorongoro Crater

This, the world's largest intact volcanic caldera, forms a spectacular bowl of about 265 square kilometres with walls up to 600 metres high. Home to around 20,000 to 30,000 wild animals at any one time, it provides a rare chance of watching black rhino in the wild. It is cradled within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, inhabited by the Maasai displaced from the Serengeti nearly a century ago.

Kilimanjaro

The snowy peaks of Kilimanjaro rising majestically from fertile green foothills just 330 km south of the equator have become a powerful motif for this land of extremes. Africa's highest mountain is still almost snow-capped, although the familiar ice cover continues to shrink each year and within decades may be just a memory. Hans Meyer was the first European to scale the mountain in 1889; now over 20,000 climbers a year attempt Kibo, highest of its three volcanic cones. The route progresses from tropical forest to heath, moorland to alpine desert, to rock and ice fields at the summit.



CC-ARFICA

Lake Manyara

This shallow lake at the base of the Great Rift Valley attracts flocks of flamingos to its alkaline waters. Famed for its excellent birding, butterflies and tree-climbing lions, the park also has an understated diversity of other game: elephants, giraffe, buffalo, wildebeest, hippo and a vast number of baboons. The habitat varies throughout with grassy floodplains and thick acacia woodland contrasting with the rocky escarpments of the Rift.

Pemba

North of Unguja, Pemba is a surprisingly large rural island and the main source of Zanzibar's cloves. Seaweed farming and even rubber-tapping may also be seen. Pemba has a unique charm, enhanced by its lack of visitors and local reputation as a centre for traditional medicines. Separated from Zanzibar by the Pemba Channel that drops to depths of more than 1000m, this is the place for superb diving and deep-sea fishing – whales, sharks and manta rays are often seen in the deeper channels.

Mafia

Once a strategic Indian Ocean trading post visited by dhows, Mafia Island became Tanzania's first Marine Park, and now provides colourful diving and fishing opportunities. Just 30 minutes flight from Dar, Mafia is home to rural farming and fishing communities whose lives continue just as they have for millennia. This is its charm: a virtually unchanged island home with just a few tourist lodges. The fascinating ruins of Chole island can be reached by ferry, and further historic links to the ancient ruins of Kilwa and surrounding islands are a short flight away.



Dhow, Mnemba

CC-ARFICA





Get planning!



The Serengeti or Selous, Zanzibar or Mafia?
Tanzania has so much to offer, but how to cram it into one itinerary?

Indulgent Tanzania



- Grumeti Reserves
- Zanzibar
- Katavi
- Mnemba Island

■ Days 1 to 4: Grumeti Reserves

Experience the ultimate in safari style by flying in to the Grumeti Reserves, a private tract of 340,000 hectares bordering the northwestern Serengeti. From the flagship lodge Sasakwa you can safari on horseback, walk, camp, or float in your private infinity plunge pool as the sun sets over the Serengeti. Play croquet, take time out at the gym or pop in for restorative spa treatments between game drives, returning each night to one of seven very special suites.

■ Days 5 to 8: Zanzibar

Zanzibar's The Palms has six elegant private villas, each with plunge pool and views across the gardens to the sea. Each villa lays claim to a wooden, muslin-curtained beach hut for peaceful sand-side relaxation on a white, powder soft beach. Pad between massages at the pleasantly Zen-inspired frangipani spa before returning to sun-dappled lunch bar or dining room for fabulous Indian Ocean cuisine.

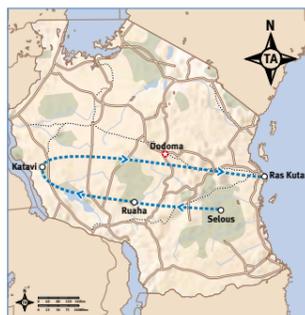
■ Days 9 to 12: Mnemba Island

Transferring to Mnemba by private speedboat from Zanzibar is an experience in itself, skimming clear azure waters past diving dolphin to a desert island idyll. With shell-studded sun-blached sands and a colourful, clear coral reef, with privacy, luxury, diving and drinks all included, Mnemba has all that the island connoisseur requires!



Camping out with a mobile safari

Authentic Tanzania



- Selous
- Ruaha
- Katavi
- Ras Kutani

■ Days 1 to 4: Selous

Fly to Selous Safari Camp to explore the waterways around the great Rufiji River on foot, by boat and in open safari vehicles. Stay in one of nine luxurious lakeside tents, or seek alternative accommodation in one of eight superb hillside cottages at Beho Beho, or the stone riverside cottages at Sand Rivers.

■ Days 5 to 7: Ruaha

West of the Selous, Ruaha starkly contrasts with its watery neighbour just an hour's flight away. Small tented camps such as Jongomero and Mwangusi provide secluded luxury from which to explore the scorched-earth plains. Walks and game drives offer glimpses of huge buffalo herds and 20-strong lion prides.

■ Days 8 to 10: Katavi

Flying into Katavi is a step into the Africa of old. Chada Katavi is a six-tent camp located at the forest edge of the great plains. One of only two camps in the park, it provides an authentic experience for true safari-buffs.

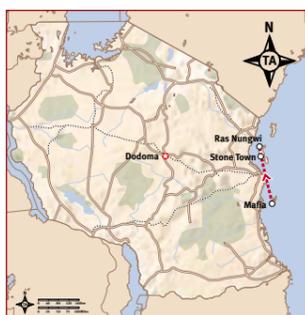
■ Days 11 to 14: Ras Kutani

The peaceful oasis of Ras Kutani is a short flight from Dar. Crafted locally from indigenous wood, each of the 12 bandas is shrouded in the privacy of the rainforest and overlooks a pristine, deserted beach. Activities include horse riding and nature walking; the perfect end to any trip.



Migrating wildebeest

Indian Ocean Islands



- Mafia
- Stone Town, Zanzibar
- Ras Nungwi, Zanzibar
- Pemba Island

■ Days 1 to 4: Mafia

A time-forgotten archipelago located to the south of Zanzibar, Mafia, with its offshore marine park, is diving and snorkelling paradise. The main island has a couple of small luxury lodges, all specialising in diving and fishing, including Kinasi Lodge, a fantastic, discreetly luxurious, palm-fringed hideaway with an ample pool and great dive school.

■ Days 5 to 6: Stone Town, Zanzibar

Fly to Zanzibar and stay in the intimate, charismatic Beyt al Chai, a wonderful converted Zanzibari private home with just 6 rooms overlooking Kelele Square. A perfect location for exploring the myriad passageways and Arabic decorations of Stone Town, or arranging day trips to the nearby Chumbe and Prison Island.

■ Days 7 to 10: Ras Nungwi, Zanzibar

Drive to Ras Nungwi on the northernmost tip of the island, a small hotel of 32 rooms stunningly situated on arguably the best beach on Zanzibar. Relax on a lounge, dive

pristine coral gardens or battle sailfish from the deep.

■ Days 11 to 14: Pemba

Fly south to Pemba and experience Fundu Lagoon, 26 makuti thatch huts along the shoreline and forest. The lodge has recently been refurbished and proudly takes an active role in the local community. From here explore Misali Island, nearby sandbars and dive underwater drop-offs.



Sundowners in the bush



Women on the beach, Ras Nungwi, Zanzibar



Canoeing on Fundu Lagoon, Pemba



Lion branching out, Lake Manyara National Park

Tanzania factfile

■ **Language** English (official), Kiswahili (national) and tribal languages

■ **Time zone** GMT+3

■ **International dialling code** +255

■ **Visas** UK passport holders require a visa. Cost £38. Contact: Tanzania High Commission, 3 Stratford Place, London W1C 1AS, tel 020 7569 1470, www.tanzaniaonline.gov.uk. Visas also available at port of entry.

■ **Health** Consult your GP for advice. No vaccination certificates required unless you are arriving from a country infected with yellow fever. Malaria present so be sure to take anti-malarial prophylactics. AMREF Flying Doctors operate an air ambulance and evacuation service.

■ **Money** Tanzania Shilling (Tsh), UK£1 = 2400Tsh, US\$ = 1300Tsh. Travellers cheques and credit cards widely accepted. US\$ in cash is more readily convertible than UK£ in cash.

■ **Costs** Beaches and islands, per person per day: £15 shoestring, £110 mid range, £520 top end; safari parks: £85 shoestring, £270 mid range, £940 top end.

■ Getting there

Dar es Salaam is the main hub for flights from Europe and beyond. Some airlines also fly into Zanzibar and Kilimanjaro.

British Airways

(www.ba.com) flies from London to Dar es Salaam three times a week, in about 9.5 hours (from £600 return). The daily BA flight to Nairobi connects with Kenya Airways flights to Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Kilimanjaro.

Kenya Airways

(www.kenya-airways.com) flies from London to Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Kilimanjaro via Nairobi daily (from £645 return). KLM (www.klm.com) flies from London to Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro daily via Amsterdam (from £660 return).

■ Getting around

Air Coastal Travels (www.coastal.cc) flies to almost every tourist destination in Tanzania, making internal connections easy. They can also arrange private charters. Other internal flights are run by Precision Air (www.precisionairtz.com), Regional Air (www.regional.co.tz) and Zanair (www.zanair.com), among others.

Road A network of roads connects Dar es Salaam with all regions of the country and with Zambia and Kenya. Most main roads are good, though some are appalling, especially to Mtwara in the south east, or into the capital, Dodoma. Take advice regarding driving times. **Train** There is a sporadic TAZARA (Tanzania-Zambia) train service linking Dar es

Salaam with Kapiri Moshi in Zambia via Mbeya. The Tanzanian Railways Corporation runs the Central Line from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma, with branch lines to Mtwara in the northwest and Mpanda in the southwest. Services are extremely slow, with taking at least two days to cross the country. **Safety** Most responsible travellers to Tanzania enjoy a trouble-free experience, although do take insurance and consult the FCO site (www.fco.gov.uk) before you travel.

■ Find out more

Tanzania Tourist Board
www.tanzaniatouristboard.com

Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA)
www.tanzaniaparks.com

Tanzania Government
www.tanzania.go.tz

■ Safari operators

CC Africa
www.ccafrica.com

Nomad Tanzania
www.nomad-tanzania.com

Selous Safari Company
www.selous.com

Amazing Tanzania
www.amazingtanzania.com

■ Specialist tour operators in the UK

Tanzania Odyssey
www.tanzaniaodyssey.com

Simply Tanzania
www.simplytanzania.com

Natural High Safaris
www.naturalhighsafaris.com

■ Books

Tanzania and Zanzibar

by Annabel Skinner
(2nd ed, Cadogan, 2005)

Tanzania: the Bradt Travel Guide

by Philip Briggs
(5th ed, Bradt, 2006)

Zanzibar: the Bradt Travel Guide

by Chris McIntyre
(6th ed, Bradt, 2006)

Right time, right place

The Great Migration

The migrating herds are on the move throughout the year, crossing into Kenya (Masai Mara) between August and October. River crossings are hard to predict, although likely in July and November. In February and March the wildebeest calve; good months for predator action.

Climbing Kilimanjaro

The dry months of July to October are best for attempting the famous Uhuru summit. Of the three more popular routes to the top (Marangu, Machame and Rongai), the latter two allow a better chance of summiting as they include an extra day on the mountain for acclimatisation.

Zanzibar and the beaches

Best beach times are from July to October when the weather is hot with low humidity, and December to March which is very hot but with high humidity.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dry season												
Rainy season												
Coollest												
Hottest												
Best time in Serengeti												
Best time in the southern parks												
Best time in Tarangire												
Best time for diving												