



ABSOLUTE ADVENTURE TRAVEL

The Houston Museum of Natural Science

Presents

Tantalizing Tanzania - a fabulous African Photo Safari and Cultural Experience

led by Dr. Dan Brooks.

July 24th to August 5th 2003

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Tanzania 2003

Your Itinerary at a glance:

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------|--|
| 24-Jul | Thursday | | Depart Houston |
| 25-Jul | Friday | Day 1. | Arrive Kilimanjaro Transfer Arusha Overnight Willy's Cottages. |
| 26-Jul | Saturday | Day 2. | Depart from Arusha to Sinya. Overnight Sinya Camp. |
| 27-Jul | Sunday | Day 3. | Sinya Camp. Depart from Sinya to Lake Manyara and |
| 28-Jul | Monday | Day 4. | Ngorongoro foot hills. Overnight Karutu Farm |
| 29-Jul | Tuesday | Day 5. | Depart Early in the morning for hunting with bushman, Visit of Boma, & Walking safari in Lake Eyasi Overnight Karutu Farm |
| 30-Jul | Wednesday | Day 6. | Depart for Ngorongoro Crater. Afternoon Crater tour Overnight Ngorongoro Serena Lodge |
| 31-Jul | Thursday | Day 7. | Full day in Ngorongoro Crater Overnight Ngorongoro Serena Lodge |
| 1-Aug | Friday | Day 8. | Visit to Olduvai Gorge Transfer to Serengeti Overnight luxury mobile camp |
| 2-Aug | Saturday | Day 9. | Full day in Serengeti Overnight luxury mobile camp |
| 3-Aug | Sunday | Day 10. | Full day in Serengeti Overnight luxury mobile camp |
| 4-Aug | Monday | Day 11. | Scheduled flight from Seronera to Arusha Day room at Willy's Cottages Transfer Kilimanjaro International airport Fly to Amsterdam |
| 5-Aug | Tuesday | | Return to Houston |

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Thursday July 24th: The party will fly from Houston Intercontinental Airport on Northwest Airlines/KLM to Amsterdam. Flight currently scheduled to depart at 3:40pm. Meal on flight.

Day 2 Friday July 25th: You arrive at Amsterdam Schiphol airport. This is a very nice airport, and you will have about two hours to explore the shops and restaurants before boarding the direct flight to Kilimanjaro International Airport, Tanzania. The flight is scheduled to arrive at 8:30pm.

You will be met at the airport by our hosts and driven into the town of Arusha, about 40 minutes away. Tonight you will stay at Willy's Cottages located on the edge of Arusha beneath Mount Meru.

Meal on flight.

Day 3 Saturday July 26th: After a good breakfast you will take the short drive from Willy's Cottages to Sinya Camp. The drive is about two hours as you drive north around the base of Mount Meru passing several Maasai villages and the warriors bright robes make a beautiful sight. After a little while you will turn off the road and head across country towards the western slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. You may well start to see game, typically antelopes including the unusual Gerenuk, with its stretched neck adapted to allow it to browse the higher branches. You will be traveling in a 4x4 safari vehicle and if you happen upon animals of particular interest you will have the luxury of stopping and observing them.

You will arrive at Sinya Camp in time for lunch and a short rest in the afternoon. Around 3:30pm tea will be served before you join your driver guide in an open 4x4 safari vehicle and take your first game drive in Sinya.

After two or three hours exploring you will return to camp in time to freshen up before a first class dinner, 'al fresco' under the stars of the Southern hemisphere and the unforgettable sight of Kilimanjaro illuminated by the moon.

Overnight: Sinya Camp Permanent Tents.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 4, Sunday July 27th: You will have the whole day to explore Sinya. The day will start early as you are woken by the Askaris (Maasai guards) with your choice of tea or coffee or other morning drink of your choice, before you set out at dawn for your morning game drive.

Brunch will be served when you return to camp.

Today you have the opportunity of visiting the local Maasai boma and it is a remarkable cultural experience. This is the 'real thing' not a facsimile set up for the tourist market. These Maasai see very little of the western man and they have not adapted their ways to meet our preferred tastes. A few minutes with these delightful people is as close as you will ever come to a journey back in time.

Other activities will include the opportunity for a game walk, or you may simply choose to relax in camp and perhaps, get your journal started.

After tea the afternoon game drive will be available followed by dinner.

Overnight: Sinya Camp Permanent Tents.
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Sinya Camp:

Sinya Camp is a permanent luxury tented camp located on the Western side of Mount Kilimanjaro, immediately across the border from Amboseli National Park. The border has no fence so many of the animals routinely move from one area to the other.

The large tents have double beds and en suite facilities and are beautifully situated, unusually far apart for delightful privacy, under large acacia trees. The view from your tent is of the glaciated summit of Mount Kilimanjaro and there is no better sight in Africa. This camp has gone straight into our "Top 5 Destinations in Africa."

The camp is located in a private Maasai concession and is exclusive to Kibo Safaris, who will be your hosts throughout your stay in Tanzania. The beauty of this exclusivity is seen in many ways; you are able to enjoy the privacy of the concession without being interrupted by other tour operators - you will not see the mini vans one constantly tries to avoid in Amboseli and other areas. As you are not in a National Park night drives and guided walks are allowed and encouraged, and it is a great thing to walk through the bush in the safe hands of your Maasai warrior guides. Possibly most exciting of all, the Maasai people are still quite unspoiled by our presence and if you visit their boma (Traditional village surrounded by thorn fence) they are as interested in you and your appearance as you are in them - an increasingly rare phenomenon in our ever shrinking world.

There is a lot of game here; we saw many elephant, lion, hippo, zebra and various antelope. These are not the vast herds that you will see in the Serengeti but the experience of seeing these fabulous animals from your private game vehicle, without hordes of fellow tourists, is one that you will never forget.

Game Drives:

Game drives throughout Africa are arranged when the animals are most likely to be active, and this is early morning and late afternoon and dusk. The game typically shelters from the sun during the heat of the day and we try to do the same. The drives last about three hours and usually include a stop for tea or coffee in the mornings and 'sundowners' (the traditional euphemism for cocktails at sunset) in the evenings.

Safaris Vehicles:

In the National Parks of East Africa it is required that we travel in closed vehicles. These are either mini buses (which you want to avoid) or 4x4 safari vehicles, typically Land Rovers or Land Cruisers. The vehicles we will be using are custom built Land Cruisers. The vehicle is stretched to allow ample legroom for the tallest guest, seats just four guests so everyone has a window seat. Additionally, roof hatches have been added allowing you to stand and view the game in the open air. In addition, each vehicle will have communication radios, mammals, birds and plants guide books, cool box for water and cold drinks, thermos with tea and coffee and sand bags for you to rest your camera on.

As Sinya is a private concession it is not subject to National Park rules and game drive vehicles are open sided in the Southern Africa tradition, letting you feel especially close to the game.

Your Guides:

Your guide is a critical factor in the success of your vacation. Our guides are among the most well trained, friendly, and resourceful you will ever meet. They love to show off their knowledge and you are encouraged to ask questions.

Many of our guides have worked on long film projects with noted European wildlife film makers and they know how to set you in the best position to take those prize winning photographs.

They love to get off the beaten path and enjoy long days observing animals and birds.

We impose no mileage limits on your game drives and the guides are free to follow the game or visit a distant tribe.

Day 5, Monday July 28th: This morning you have our last opportunity for a game drive at Sinya as, after breakfast, you drive back to Arusha and on towards Karutu Farm on the Ngorongoro Highlands. The drive is about four hours and the majority is on good roads.

You will pass by Lake Manyara National Park and climb up the steep sides of the Rift Valley from where you can see Lake Manyara stretching away to the South. We often see herds of elephant on the plains beneath and watch for the baboons along the roadside and Maribou Storks in the trees.

You will arrive at Karatu Farm in time for a relaxing afternoon. This is not in a game reserve so you are free to walk around and explore.

Overnight Karatu Farm
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 6, Tuesday, July 29th: Another early start as you take a day trip to Lake Eyasi to experience another of the great cultural experiences in East Africa, the Hadzabi or Watindiga bushmen. Lake Eyasi is a soda lake in the Rift Valley, and the bushmen still inhabit this dry and rugged landscape, hunting with bows and arrows; gathering roots, tubers and wild fruits, just as they have been for more than 10,000 years. There is another interesting tribe in this area, the Datoga (also called the Barabaig or Mang'ati) who for many years fought over grazing land with the Maasai.

You will spend the day with the bushmen, experiencing their way of life, and, if you are particularly lucky, joining one of their hunting parties.

You will return to Karutu Farm in time for dinner.

Overnight Karutu Farm
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 7, Wednesday, July 30th: It is a very short drive, perhaps forty minutes, from Karutu to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the Ngorongoro Crater, so you will have a leisurely start to the day.

At the Park gate there is a small museum you may enjoy and a shop selling all sorts of interesting articles, guide books and similar things. From the gate the road winds steeply uphill as you climb towards the rim of Ngorongoro. The landscape will have changed as you are now in a Montane Forest eco system and you will start to see sign of elephant and Cape buffalo.

The first time you see the crater, from a 'lookout' that suddenly appears as you drive to the top of what remains of the once vast volcano, is an unforgettable experience. It is, we believe, one of the great views in the world. The crater floor is some 2,000 feet beneath you and stretches away about as far as the eye can see and nothing you have seen on film or television does it justice. It simply has to be seen to be believed.

Overnight Ngorongoro Serena Lodge
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The Ngorongoro Serena Safari Lodge:

As if in a land before time, Ngorongoro Serena Safari Lodge is built into the rim of a dormant and collapsed volcano (known as a caldera), the plant and ivy-covered native stone blending masterfully with its surroundings.

Most guest rooms have private terraces with views of the crater floor where countless animals make their home. At Ngorongoro Serena Lodge visitors co-exist in perfect harmony with the natural environment and the wildlife that inhabits it.

Guest rooms are spacious with central heating, prehistoric cave paintings and balconies overlooking the Ngorongoro Crater. The furniture is created from rich hardwood timber. Due to the prevailing cool climate in the region, the lounge and dining room are set indoors overlooking the Ngorongoro Crater through large picture glass panels. All areas are complimented by log fires (the lodge is at 6,000 feet) which greatly enhance the atmosphere especially in the evenings. The unique design of the Lodge continues in the restaurant and bar with magnificent examples of prehistoric cave paintings found in the nearby Olduvai Gorge.

The full-service lounge has an outdoor balcony and a fixed telescope for guests' use. Fresh fruit juices, soft drinks, tea and coffee, cocktails, wines, spirits and liqueurs are available to guests throughout the day. It is a cozy place enhanced with comfortable easy chairs to relax in after a long safari or before and after meals.

Day 8, Thursday July 31st: After breakfast your guide will take you back to the Crater for a full day of exploration. You will have the same guides and vehicles that traveled with you from Sinya. This is a big advantage as you will not have to rely upon the services of the Hotels staff and gives the freedom to travel at your own pace.

Overnight Ngorongoro Serena Lodge
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 9, Friday August 1st: This morning you will be driven west towards the Serengeti. The route is across country but the road is well kept and driving is easy. Along the way you will see much game in the rolling hillsides either side of you. After a short drive you will arrive at Olduvai Gorge, the "birthplace of man".

After a visit to the Olduvai site and museum you will continue west into the Serengeti. Tonight you will enjoy your first night in a luxury safari camp. The camp crew will have driven out a couple of days ahead of you and prepared a fabulous camp somewhere in the Serengeti. The precise location will be determined, as much as possible, but the current location of animal herds and we will try to get you as close as possible.

This is a fabulous safari experience, very much in the Hemingway tradition but with the most comfortable facilities and first class service throughout.

Overnight: Luxury Mobile Camp
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 10 & 11, Saturday & Sunday August 2nd & 3rd: You have two full days to explore the wonders of the Serengeti. Your guides and vehicles will be available to take you on full day or, shorter if you prefer, game drives through the wonders of the Serengeti.

Each morning will start with a wake up call and a cup of tea or coffee followed by breakfast. Then you set out on your day's adventure returning in the afternoon with time to freshen up before drinks around the camp fire and dinner.

Overnight: Luxury Mobile Camp
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 12, Monday August 4th: All too soon your safari is drawing to a close and this morning we will drive you to the Seronera Airstrip and your short flight back to Arusha. In Arusha you will be met at the airport and transferred to Willy's Cottages where you have a day room. This evening we have planned an early 'Farewell Dinner' before your drive to Kilimanjaro International airport where we will assist you with check in for your journey home.

Day room Willy's Cottages
Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 13, Tuesday August 5th: Return to Houston
This afternoon you arrive back in Houston.

End of Services.

The Ngorongoro Crater

Three million years ago, Ngorongoro, one of the highest peaks in Africa, towered alongside Kilimanjaro in northern Tanzania. Our earliest ancestors witnessed the restless volcano's collapse, forming what is today the world's largest intact caldera (likened to a giant soup bowl with a flat base and steep sides.) Today, Ngorongoro remains a place of drama and beauty - the most remarkable wildlife haven on our planet.

Ngorongoro Crater, 12 miles wide, is the world's largest intact caldera. Before the cataclysmic collapse of its cone 2 million years ago, this volcanic mountain may have been taller than Kilimanjaro. Its rim, which averages 7,600 feet elevation, is cloaked in moist montane forest and grassland, hosting elephants, golden-winged and eastern double-collared sunbirds, stonechats and Jackson's widowbird. At 5,600 feet elevation, the crater floor is primarily grassland, with patches of spring-fed marshes, freshwater ponds, a salt lake, and small forests.

The Crater is an African Eden, teeming with 30,000 wild animals, including black rhino, elephant, leopard, buffalo, cheetah, hyena, zebra, wildebeest, warthog, hippo, Thomson's gazelle, eland and reedbuck as well as prides of lion that include the magnificent black-maned males. For those who wish to see the fierce cats of Tanzania, the crater is a dream come true: an abundance of predators are drawn by the vast herds of antelope. The golden jackal is frequently seen during the day, while the black-backed jackal and bat-eared fox are most active after dark. There are lots of colorful flamingoes and a variety of other water birds around the soda lake on the crater floor. More than a 100 species of bird not found in the Serengeti have been found in the crater.

In the conservation area, which covers almost 5,000 square miles, 42,000 Maasai live and farm in harmony with wild and dangerous animals. The area also has a special place in the heart of African conservationists: On the rim of the crater stands a simple memorial. It commemorates Michael Grzimek, who died here in 1959 while filming the epic African documentary, "Serengeti Shall Not Die". The inscription reads simply: "he gave all he possessed for the wild animals of Africa, including his life."

The Ngorongoro Crater is part of the equatorial Serengeti ecosystem, along with the Maasai Mara Game Reserve and Serengeti National Park. Unlike the latter two wildlife sanctuaries, migration here is modest because the Ngorongoro Crater has an abundant year-round water supply and the precipitous walls of this collapsed extinct volcano discourage (but don't totally eliminate) migrating.

Another key difference is the animals within the Ngorongoro Crater are better habituated to us wanting to see them, so it's easier to view them up close. This is one of the reasons that some seasoned travelers believe that the Ngorongoro Crater is the best wildlife preserve in East Africa.

Olduvai Gorge

Olduvai Gorge the 'Crater of Mankind' is world famous for the Archaeological discoveries made there by Dr. Louis Leakey and Mary Leakey. The site is located about 10 to 15 minutes off the main road between Serengeti and Ngorongoro. Olduvai Gorge generated interest in the archeological world as early as 1911, when German Professor Katurinkle, whilst looking for butterflies in the gorge, found some fossil bones.

The gorge is a very steep sided ravine roughly 30 miles long and 295 ft. deep. Exposed deposits show rich fossil fauna, many hominid remains and items belonging to the one of the oldest stone tool technologies, called Olduwan. The time span of the objects recovered date from 2,100,000 to 15,000 years ago.

The main Olduvai Beds are in a lake basin about 16 miles in diameter. The rocks under the basin date to 5.3 million years ago. There have been seven major Beds distinguished they are ranked from oldest to youngest; Bed I, Bed II, Bed III, Bed IV, the Masek Beds, the Ndotu Beds, and Baisiusiu Beds.

Bed I dates to 2,100,000 years old and is 197 feet thick. It is mainly formed of lava flows, volcanic-ash deposits and other sediments. The upper part of the bed contains varied fauna and evidence of the Olduwan industry. Skeletal remains of hominids are assigned to the *Homo Habilis* and *Australopithecus Boisei* families. Campsites and what is believed to be a butchery site have also been excavated from this bed.

The Hominid living sites in Bed I are found mainly where streams from the volcanic highlands carried fresh water to Olduvai lake. The preservation of the sites was made possible due to the ash falls from the nearby volcanoes and the inconsistency of the lake's depth. The debris found at the sites includes various Olduwan tools, bone and teeth from animals, mainly from fair sized antelopes. Also a loosely built circle of lava blocks was found, suggesting that crude shelters were formed here as well.

The living sites in Beds II-IV are normally found in what would have been river and stream channels. Therefore, many of the sites were displaced by water action. Bed II is 66-98 feet thick and is 1,150,000 to 1,700,000 years old. It has two main divisions of rock layer, upper and lower, that were separated by an erosional break. The lower part of Bed II is similar to Bed I. The upper part was formed after fault shifts had reduced the ancient lakes size. It is in this part of Bed II that the development of the Acheulian industry starts to show. Here also are the remains of *Homo Habilis*, *Homo Erectus* and *Australopithecus Boisei*.

The gorge was modified by fault shifting and erosion. It is after these geographical changes that Beds III and IV were created. These two Beds range from 1,150,000 to 600,000 years ago. These two Beds are separable only in the eastern part of the gorge and are combined elsewhere into a single unit. They have a maximum thickness of about 98 feet and consists mainly of sediment from streams that fed Olduvai Lake.

During a period of major faulting and volcanism roughly 400,000 to 600,000 years ago, the Masek Beds accumulated. They are up to 82 ft. thick and again contain mostly stream sediments with some aeolian (wind-worked) tuff. It is assumed the climate at this time was probably much like today based on the deposits found there. There is only one major archaeological site found in these beds and it is of the Acheulian tool industry.

The Ndutu Beds were formed by faulting, erosion and the filling of the gorge around 32,000 years ago. It consists mainly of aeolian tuff. In this Bed two sites have been found which date to the Middle Stone Age.

The last of the archaeological Beds is the Naisiusiu. It lays in the bottom of the Gorge at what is now the present depth. It only has a depth of 33 ft and also consists of aeolian tuff. It contains one site that has microlithic tools and one complete Homo Sapien skeleton, both of which date to 17,000 years ago.

In 1974 some fossils of hominid tooth were discovered, dating back 2.4 million years. Between half a million and a million years ago, "Homo Erectus", a type of man, wandered around making use of hand axes. Many such tools were found at Olduvai.

More than 150 different species of extinct mammals have been identified from the fossils, as well as many birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. An on-site Museum explains the archeological significance of the discoveries. This area, it seems, is the "Cradle of Mankind". Today, the park hosts approximately 450,000 visitors annually. And 5,000 of those visitors are climbers.

Welcome to the Serengeti

"It was 1913 and great stretches of Africa were still unknown to the white man when Stewart Edward White, an American hunter, set out from Nairobi. Pushing south, he recorded: "We walked for miles over burnt out country... Then I saw the green trees of the river, walked two miles more and found myself in paradise."

He had found Serengeti. In the years since White's excursion under "the high noble arc of the cloudless African sky," Serengeti has come to symbolize paradise to many of us. The Maasai, who had grazed their cattle on the vast grassy plains for millennia had always thought so. To them it was Siringitu - "the place where the land moves on forever."

The Serengeti region encompasses the Serengeti National Park itself, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Maswa Game Reserve, the Loliondo, Grumeti and Ikorongo Controlled Areas and the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. Over 90,000 tourists visit the Park each year.

Two World Heritage Sites and two Biosphere Reserves have been established within the 20,000 square mile region. Its unique ecosystem has inspired writers from Ernest Hemingway to Peter Mattheissen, filmmakers like Hugo von Lawick and Alan Root as well as numerous photographers and scientists - many of which have put their works at our disposal to create this website.

The Serengeti ecosystem is one of the oldest on earth. The essential features of climate, vegetation and fauna have barely changed in the past million years. Early man himself made an appearance in Olduvai Gorge about two million years ago. Some patterns of life, death, adaptation and migration are as old as the hills themselves.

It is the migration for which Serengeti is perhaps most famous. Over a million wildebeest and about 200,000 zebras flow south from the northern hills to the southern plains for the short rains every October and November, and then swirl west and north after the long rains in April, May and June. So strong is the ancient instinct to move that no drought, gorge or crocodile infested river can hold them back.

The Wildebeest travel through a variety of parks, reserves and protected areas and through a variety of habitat. Join us to explore the different forms of vegetation and landscapes of the Serengeti ecosystem and meet some of their most fascinating inhabitants.

Welcome to the Serengeti. "

Lota Melamari
Director General
Tanzania National Parks

The Serengeti National Park:

Serengeti National Park is undoubtedly the best-known wildlife sanctuary in the world, unequalled for its natural beauty and scientific value. With more than two million wildebeest, half a million Thomson's gazelle, and a quarter of a million zebra, it has the greatest concentration of plains game in Africa. The wildebeest and zebra moreover form the star cast of a unique spectacular - the annual Serengeti migration.

The Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem is generally defined as the traversing area of one and a half million migrating wildebeest. The Serengeti is widely considered to be the planet's greatest and most spectacular functioning ecosystem. Reasons for this include its sheer size of 20,000 square miles.

There are no fences and the range of the park stretches way past the borders, into Kenya's Maasai Mara, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the Maswa Game Reserve in the south west, the Grumeti and Ikorongo Controlled Areas in the west and the Western Corridor, stretching almost to the shores of Lake Victoria.

The Serengeti contains more than three million large mammals, including more than 35 different species of plains game. Marching in seemingly endless columns, cantering through the dust and cavorting in green pastures, the annual movement across the Serengeti of wildebeest and other grazing ungulates is probably the greatest spectacle in the animal kingdom.

The name 'Serengeti' comes from the Maasai language and appropriately means an 'extended place'. The National Park, with an area of 7,500 square miles is a huge expanse of land, but its ecosystem, which includes the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the Maswa Game Reserve and the Maasai Mara Game reserve (in Kenya), is a vast area. It lies between the shores of Lake Victoria in the west, Lake Eyasi in the south, and the Great Rift Valley to the east. As such, it offers the most complex and least disturbed ecosystem on earth.

A unique combination of diverse habitats enables it to support more than 30 species of large herbivores and nearly 500 species of birds. Its landscape, originally formed by volcanic activity, has been sculptured by the concerted action of wind, rain and sun. It now varies from open grass plains in the south, savannah with scattered acacia trees in the centre, hilly, wooded grassland in the north, to extensive woodland and black clay plains to the west. Small rivers, lakes and swamps are scattered throughout. In the south-east rise the great volcanic massifs and craters of the Ngorongoro Highlands. Each area has its own particular atmosphere and wildlife.

The Serengeti's climate is usually warm and dry. The main rainy season is from March to May, with short rains falling from October to November. The amount of rainfall increases from about 20 inches on the plains in the lee of the Ngorongoro Highlands to about 47 inches on the shores of Lake Victoria. All is lush and green after the rains, but a gradual drying up follows

which restricts plant growth and encourages the animals to migrate in search of permanent waters. With altitudes ranging from 3,000 to 6,069 feet - higher than most of Europe - mean temperatures vary from 59 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit. It is coolest from June to October, particularly in the evenings.

For centuries, the vast wilderness of the Serengeti Plains remained virtually uninhabited but about hundred years ago the nomadic Maasai came down from the north with their cattle. The first European to set foot in the area was the German explorer and naturalist Dr. Oscar Baumann, who passed by as an agent of the German Anti-Slavery Committee on his way to Burundi. He was followed by his compatriots who built Fort Ikoma in the north which was used as an administrative centre until it fell to the British in 1917.

The first professional hunters came in 1913. They found the wildlife plentiful, especially the lions, but saw no elephants. Seven years later, an American arrived in a strange new contraption known as a Ford motor-car and news of the wonders of the Serengeti had reached the outside world. Because the hunting of lions made them so scarce (they were considered 'vermin'), it was decided to make a partial Game Reserve in the area in 1921 and a full one in 1929. With the growing awareness of the need for conservation, it was expanded and upgraded to a National Park in 1951. Eight years later the Ngorongoro Conservation Area was established in the south-east as a separate unit.

Travelers are not the only ones who now flock to see the animals and birds of the Serengeti. It has become an important centre of scientific research. In the late fifties, Dr. Bernhard Grizmek and his late son Michael did a pioneering work in aerial surveys of wildlife. It resulted in the best-selling classic *Serengeti Shall Not Die* and a number of films which made the Park a household name.

The Serengeti Research Institute, founded in 1962 at Seronera, has continued their work, providing not only valuable information for the management and conservation of game parks but also original research in ecology and ethology. More is now known about dynamics of the Serengeti than any other ecosystem in the world.

Most visitors enter the Park from the south-east, dropping down from the escarpment of the Ngorongoro Highlands onto the open short grass plains. The road passes by the Olduvai Gorge, where Dr. and Mrs. Leakey found the 1.75 million-year-old remains of *Australopithecus boisei* ('Zinjanthropus') and *Homo habilis* which suggest that our species first evolved in this area. To the west, the Gorge reaches Lake Ndutu where a safari lodge is attractively set amongst trees by the water's edge.

In the open grass plains during the rainy months from November to May hundreds of thousands of wildebeest and Burchell's zebra congregate. The area is the starting point for one of the great wonders of the world: the Serengeti annual migration. Towards the end of May when the grass becomes dry and exhausted, the wildebeest start to mass in huge armies. All is far from peaceful, for it is the rutting season and each male tries to establish a stamping ground. Eventually, after several dummy runs, the animals begin their trek in a column

several miles long to the permanent waters in the north of the Park. After moving westwards, the migration divides by some uncanny instinct, one group turning north-east and the other due north. Once started, little stops the stampede: hundreds often drown at a time in the broad Mara river in the north.

Although outnumbered eight to one, the zebra join in the migration, maintaining their family units of about a dozen members, each with a dominant stallion. Their yelping bark combines with the bleating of the wildebeest to give the typical sound of the migration. Lion, cheetah, hyena and hunting dog follow the wildebeest and zebra, making sure that only the fittest survive. In November, when the grazing is finished in the North, this army of animals surges back to the now green pastures of the south, where they calve and mate before starting the entire cycle again. Normally, the best time to see the animals here is during January and February.

Heading north into the Park, the grass becomes noticeably longer, and it is usual to see Grant's and Thomson's gazelles, as well as the occasional small groups of topi and kongoni. Ostriches and secretary birds stalk the grass, while a family of warthog often scurry away. Out of the vast sea of grass also rise great granite outcrops, known as 'kopjes', which have their own range of vegetation and wildlife.

Towards Seronera, the Park headquarters, the landscape becomes more varied. Hills rise out of plains criss-crossed by small rivers. Umbrella acacia trees appear, elegant and serene, contrasting with the twisted commiphora trees. Then at Seronera a beautiful lodge is built on a kopje, a sculpture of wood and stone set in a tranquil garden. Nearby camping sites offer an opportunity to share the experience of the early explorers.

Cheeky hyraxes and lizards play on the rocks and a profusion of birds - superb starlings, lilac-breasted rollers, barbets and ring-necked doves to name but a few - fill the air with their songs. But all around is some of the wildest bush in Africa. Giraffes nibble the tender leaves of the thorny acacias, buffalo lumber along, and all manner of game - Thomson's and Grant's gazelles, impala, topi and kongoni - graze nervously. At night the soaring cough of the leopard and the whooping laugh of the hyena interrupt the incessant ticking of the cicadas. And then there are famous black-maned lions of Seronera. No longer hunted like vermin, a pride of up to twenty can often be seen in a tawny heap.

From Seronera, the road to the west runs parallel to the Grumeti river, crossing extensive cotton soil plains. The riverine wood along its banks supports many black and white colobus monkeys while exceptionally large crocodiles take to its waters. In open clearings and on hills, a herd of roan antelope or Patterson's eland sometimes appear.

To the north, the landscape gradually becomes more hilly and wooded. Damaged trees show that this is becoming elephant country, while buffalo, zebra, giraffe and gazelles abound. Another beautiful lodge built on a kopje takes its name from nearby Lobo hill, which appropriately means in Maasai the 'place belonging to one man'. With magnificent views over rolling plains, it must be one of the most haunting and remote places on earth.

Apart from the rhinos, which have been decimated by poachers, and the hunting dogs, which are slowly declining, the Serengeti is alive and well. The wildebeest and buffalo populations have multiplied, benefiting the main predators - lion, cheetah, and hyena. But the ecosystem is delicate and volatile, easily affected by drought, disease or overgrazing. Every effort is therefore being made by the Tanzanian government to conserve this unique heritage for all mankind. For the time being at least, the 'Serengeti Shall Not Die'.

Suggested Packing List

If you are traveling by charter flight **your baggage allowance will be restricted**. The limit is usually 15kgs or 32lbs per person. Please use a **soft-sided bag** or duffel bag to pack for your safari.

Remember that your lodges will provide laundry services each day so you do not need to pack something for every day of your trip and it is recommended that you keep luggage to a minimum for your own comfort and ease of transport, especially if you are using light aircraft transfers.

You will be enjoying the outdoors for much of your vacation, so plan your clothing accordingly. Clothes that will not be ruined if they get dusty or dirty are best, khaki cotton pants and shirts or similar outdoor attire is ideal. The atmosphere is casual in most situations and you will not need dress clothes. Comfort should be your key motivation for what to bring. Light, wash and wear clothes will give you the most use. A warm sweater or pullover should be included. While the coast is hot year round, Nairobi and the western highlands can be cool at night, particularly in July and August, and a light raincoat is advisable. On safari, long pants and long sleeves can help for those sensitive to strong sun.

Dust is prevalent; fortunately most camps and lodges offer laundry service. Some hotels have pools, so you may want to include a swimsuit. Good, comfortable walking shoes are adequate for most situations, hiking boots for trekking in mountain areas. Many travelers pack more than they really need. Try to bring only the minimum clothes necessary.

In Muslim areas, including the coast, be aware of the prevailing customs. Shorts and T-shirts can be frowned upon. For men, long pants are a good idea away from resort areas. Women should wear pants or skirts which reach the knees or longer and tops which cover the shoulders.

Generally, casual comfortable clothing is suitable throughout the year. The most practical items to pack for safari are:

- On safari you should have casual lightweight cotton, khaki or neutral colored clothes. White is not a practical color.
- Khaki, green, beige and neutral colors
- Blouses and shirts, both long and short sleeves (Long sleeved shirts will help protect you from the sun and insects.)
- Casual pants or safari pants for evenings and cooler days

- Shorts or a light skirt
- A jacket and sweater are recommended for early morning and evening game drives especially if you are traveling to Southern Africa during June, July and August.
- Swimwear and beach apparel and sandals for the pool
- Hat with a wide brim and, ideally, a strap to tie under your chin
- Sunglasses (neck string comes in quite handy)
- Comfortable walking shoes or light boots
- Binoculars
- An extra pair of glasses/contact lenses
- Sun screen
- Eye drops
- Skin and hair moisturizers
- Small flashlight
- Personal medications
- moisturizer and lip salve
- Insect repellent
- A photo copy of your passport, credit cards, and airline tickets **(to be kept separately from the originals)**

Laundry Service

Please remember that laundry service is typically available every day, even on a tented safari, so you only need to pack a few clothes.