

Northern Tanzania Safari – Your Best Bet Yet, On an African Wildlife Safari Vacation

In terms of African wildlife Safari, Tanzania is without doubt east Africa's leading attraction.

Together with Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia Islands, it offers a combination hard to come by.

Tanzania is one of the few countries with a very large portion of the land dedicated to wildlife. Over a quarter of Tanzania is made up of National Parks, game reserves, and controlled areas. In the North, the remarkable Serengeti plains support over three million animals; further east is Ngorongoro Crater, a magnificent caldera which reveals on its floor an amphitheatre of natural wonders, teeming with animals of different types; nearby, Lake Manyara at the foot of the Rift Valley is a bird watchers paradise. Tanzania has 53,000 sq. km. of inland water. Lake Tanganyika is Africa's deepest and longest fresh water lake. In the north-west, Lake Victoria, the second largest on earth, lies in a huge shallow depression.

Whether you as a potential African Safari seeker appreciates these facts, is another matter all together. It certainly depends on how much information you have come across about Tanzania as a holiday destination.

It is hard to introduce Tanzania without getting distracted by the mighty Kilimanjaro. At 5,895 m, there is mighty Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, which rises majestically out of the dusty bush of the northern Maasai Steppe. Its densely forested sides give way to the blue glaciers and unbelievably white snow of its rounded peak.

A visit to Tanzania will almost certainly lead to interaction with some of the more prominent places in Tanzania. Just a short introduction to some of the places your safari is likely to take you to.

Arusha town

Set almost on the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, Arusha was once a small trading post. If you are looking at doing a safari into the northern part of Tanzania, Arusha town is likely to be your starting point after you land at Kilimanjaro International Airport. Arusha town's other significance, is due to its geographical position in the centre of Africa, it is said to be mid way between the Cape and Cairo. The Arusha National Park, just outside the city is a string of lovely lakes with a miniature volcanic crater hidden in a forest of mahogany and olive on the slopes of Mount Meru.

Mount Kilimanjaro

This is the highest free-standing mountain in Africa. It is also a national park which extends from mountain rain forest to scrub and alpine moorland and finally snow and ice fields at the summit. For the adventures, reliable tour operators will be organize scenic climbs to the roof of Africa.

The Ngorongoro Crater

Certainly one of Africa's true wonders of the natural world and an extraordinary place of haunting beauty, with its grand majestic mountain ring and lake, Ngorongoro, an active volcano some 8 million years ago, covers an area of 264 sq. km and is the largest intact caldera in the world.

Approaching Ngorongoro Crater is a unique experience. The road winds upwards through a beautiful area of tropical rainforest and meadows carpeted with wild flowers. Its enduring charm stems from its overwhelming physical beauty and the abundance of wildlife permanently resident on the crater floor.

Lake Manyara

Set around a shallow alkaline lake, surrounded by ancient baobabs, ground water forest of fig and mahogany and open grasslands, this park lies at the foot of a dramatic escarpment, offering a rich diversity of scenery and wildlife.

Considered as one of Tanzania's most attractive game sanctuaries, it is home to the famous tree-climbing lions. Birdlife is prolific, and a very high density of elephant population coexists with buffalo, zebra, wildebeest and other big game.

Olduvai Gorge

Between the Ngorongoro Conservation area and the Serengeti National Park lies Olduvai Gorge. This remote spot has become famous as the

archaeological site where, in 1959, Dr Mary Leakey discovered Australopithecus Boisei, a hominid said to have lived almost 1.5 million years ago.

A museum overlooking the gorge displays many of their finds, such as prehistoric elephant, enormous ostrich and giant horned sheep, explaining the significance of the geology, fossils and artifacts.

The Serengeti National Park

With 14,500 sq kms. the Serengeti plain is undoubtedly the most famous wildlife sanctuary in the world, unequalled for its natural beauty and the greatest concentration of plains game anywhere. It lies between the shores of Lake Victoria in the east and the Maasai Mara to the North West.

Serengeti is renowned for its black-maned lion and other predators including wild dog, spotted hyena, jackal, cheetah and leopard. The wealth of birdlife is of a special interest including colorful rollers, bee-eaters, kingfishers and sunbirds and a large number of birds of prey.

During the months of May and June, Lake Ndutu at the foot of the Ngorongoro highlands, is the starting point for one of the great natural wonders of nature - the famous annual migration. Nearly 2 million wildebeests and a quarter of a million zebra move in winding columns several miles in length towards the Maasai Mara. An African Safari scheduled to coincide with this event is one that you are not likely to forget.

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