TOUR CODE

TZ2

ADVENTURESABROAD

TANZANIA & MADAGASCAR

with Zanzibar

27 days

Updated 27/09/2013

Day 1 *Arrive in Nairobi*

Today we arrive in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

Part of Maasai land when the British arrived, this modern capital grew with the development of the railway. Derived from a Maasai word meaning "Cold Water," Nairobi is a pleasant mix of colonial British with modern and traditional African influences.

Overnight in Nairobi. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 *Nairobi - Amboseli National Park*

Today we travel south from Nairobi to the Amboseli National Park. Just across the border from Tanzania, this park is situated on the African plain at the foot of snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, the continent's tallest mountain at 5894 m (19,300 feet). Here the cone-shaped mountain seems to hover majestically over the shimmering African plains.

The Amboseli National Park is also famous for its large herds of elephants. Here they cover themselves in red dust, giving them an even more imposing appearance. On this afternoon's game drive we hope to view animals grazing on the open plain with Mt Kilimanjaro providing the classic backdrop (weather permitting).

Overnight in the Amboseli National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 3 *Amboseli, Kenya - Lake Manyara National Park, Tanzania*

This morning we cross the border into Tanzania and travel to Lake Manyara National Park via the town of Arusha, the starting point for the northern safari routes of Tanzania.

Manyara is the smallest of the northern parks in Tanzania (330 sq km, of which two thirds is the actual lake) hosting a wide variety of vegetation, ranging from savannah to ground water forest to riparian habitats. The park is host to thousands of pelicans, ibis and flamingo that can be heard from afar. Other common visitors to this beautiful lake are hippos and the majestic African fish eagle, which can be seen swooping down from its perch to snatch a fish from the still waters of the lake.

After lunch at our lodge we will have an afternoon game drive in the park, located at the base of the Great Rift Valley escarpment and comprising of forest, woodland, grasslands, and swamps. Wildlife interest at Lake Manyara is not confined to bird life only; animals such as buffalo, elephant, giraffe, impala, hippo and a great variety of smaller animals also inhabit the park.

Overnight at Lake Manyara. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 *Lake Manyara - Serengeti National Park*

This morning we enter the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a beautiful rolling landscape with periodic views over the Ngorongoro Crater. Before descending onto the Serengeti Plain, we'll stop at a viewpoint overlooking the crater. The name "Serengeti" derives from a Maasai word meaning "Land-without-end." This is a land of superlatives, both in the vast landscape that surrounds you and the incredible biodiversity it supports. It is here that you have a chance to witness one of the most compelling natural dramas on earth -- the annual migration, a sight unparalleled anywhere in the natural world. Our afternoon game drive provides an excellent introduction to this fantastic landscape and the biodiversity it supports.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 5 *Serengeti National Park*

Today we have a full day of game viewing on the Serengeti. We will visit the "kopjes," a series of low, incongruous hills dotting the open landscape that often provide a vantage point for hungry predators contemplating the endless stream of hoofed animals parading past them. Depending on the season and the timing of the rains, up to 1.5 million wildebeest and a half a million zebra embark on a single-minded and perilous quest for water and grazing land. Following this spectacle, of course, are the meat-eating opportunists, hoping to capitalize on the physical toll this journey exacts on the desperate grazers. Even outside of "migration" time, large herds are still seen as they bear their young and feed, gaining strength for their annual return to the park's northern reaches. Resident species that do not migrate make for rewarding animal viewing in any season.

It may be possible to take an optional hot-air balloon safari over the plains at daybreak. Speak to your booking agent at the time of reservation.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 6 *Serengeti - Olduvai Gorge - Ngorongoro Conservation Area*

Travelling back to Ngorongoro today we make a stop at Olduvai Gorge, site of the Leakey excavations in the 1960s and 70s that established this region as the prehistoric habitat of some of the earliest species of hominids with some finds dating back 1.8 million years. Experts in the life sciences have argued that the Olduvai contribution to the story of human origins remains unsurpassed by any other prehistoric site in the world. A small museum on site outlines the unique geological and human history of the area.

Called the 'eighth wonder of the world' and stretching across some 8300 sq km, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area boasts a blend of landscapes, wildlife, people and archaeology that is unsurpassed in Africa. The volcanoes, grasslands, waterfalls and mountain forests are home to an abundance of animals and to the Maasai. Ngorongoro Crater is one of the world's greatest natural spectacles and its magical setting and abundant wildlife never fail to enthrall visitors.

Balance of the day at leisure to enjoy our lodge overlooking the crater.

Overnight in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 7 *Ngorongoro Conservation Area*

Today we enjoy a half-day tour in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.* After an early breakfast we descend into the crater far below for a game drive in this incredible setting, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We explore the Ngorongoro Crater, 20 km (13 miles) wide and 700 m (2,300 feet) high where we may see the "Big Five" as well as many herbivores like wildebeest, gazelle, zebra and hippopotamus, as well as thousands of flamingos on Lake Magadi.

* In order to reduce congestion and stress on wildlife, the Tanzanian government limits visitors to half-day visits of the crater. Depending on what time "window" we are assigned, our excursion may take place first thing in the morning, or later in the afternoon (both of which are equally advantageous for game viewing, given the relatively mild climate at this altitude).

Overnight in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 8 *Ngorongoro - Gibb's Farm - Arusha*

This morning we descend the Ngorongoro Highlands, retracing our steps back to Arusha via a lunch stop at Gibb's Farm. Founded during German colonial times and still privately owned, Gibb's Farm is now a small hotel perched on the outer slopes of the Ngorongoro Highlands, surrounded by coffee plantations with long views over lush and beautiful agricultural country.

We pass again through the town of Mto Wa Mbu ('Mosquito Creek'), famous for its lively cosmopolitan atmosphere and red bananas, which taste the same as regular bananas but their skins are a startling bright red.

We arrive back in Arusha later this afternoon.

Overnight in Arusha. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 9 *Arusha - Zanzibar: Town Tour*

This morning we fly to Zanzibar and transfer to our hotel in Stone Town.

Zanzibar is an archipelago made up of Zanzibar and Pemba Islands, and several islets. Zanzibar Island is 96 km (60 miles) long and 32 km (20 miles) wide, occupying a total area of approximately 1040 km sq (650 sq miles). It is characterised by beautiful sandy beaches with fringing coral reefs, and the magic of historic Stone Town -- said to be the only functioning ancient town in East Africa.

Zanzibar's local people are an incredible mixture of ethnic backgrounds, indicative of her colourful history. Islam is the dominant religion, and practiced by most Zanzibaris, although there are also followers of Christianity and Hinduism. Population is estimated at 800,000, with the largest concentration being Zanzibar City, which has approximately 100,000 inhabitants. Zanzibaris speak Swahili (known locally as Kiswahili), a language spoken extensively in East Africa. Many believe that the purest form is spoken in Zanzibar as it is the birthplace of the language.

This afternoon we have a walking tour of Stone Town, the old city and cultural heart of Zanzibar, little changed in the last 200 years. It is a place of winding alleys, bustling bazaars, mosques and grand Arab houses whose original owners vied with each other over the extravagance of their dwellings. This one-upmanship is particularly reflected in the brass-studded, carved, wooden doors -- there are more than 500 different examples of this handiwork. Our tour takes us to the House of Wonders, the Palace Museum (People's Palace), the old slave market, the Arab Fort, and the Hamamni Persian Baths. Stone Town has some excellent gifts shops with plenty of souvenirs and handicrafts to choose from.

NOTE: The exact order of our Zanzibar sightseeing may vary depending on variables such as weather and other

logistical considerations.

Overnight on Zanzibar (Stone Town). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 10 *Jozani Forest & Stone Town*

This morning we visit the Jozani Natural Forest Reserve located in the central east region of Zanzibar Island, home to the rare red colobus monkey, endemic to Zanzibar. These monkeys are full of character and roam freely. They can also be seen at very close quarters just outside the reserve's perimeter and are incredibly photogenic. Jozani is home to other species including Syke's monkeys, small buck and bushpigs.

This afternoon is free to enjoy Stone Town. Most of the houses that can be seen today were built in the 19th Century when Zanzibar was one of the most important trading centres in the Indian Ocean region. The coraline rock of Zanzibar was a good building material, but it is also easily eroded. This is evident by the large number of houses that are in a bad state of repair. Several buildings have already been renovated and the Stone Town Conservation Authority has been established to coordinate the restoration of the town to its original magnificence.

Overnight on Zanzibar (Stone Town). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Spice Tour - East Coast*

The history of Zanzibar would be incomplete without a 'spice tour.' Cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper and many other spices were as important to the Sultans of Oman as the infamous slave trade. They can be seen in the plantations just outside Zanzibar town, and our morning tour includes opportunities to dazzle the senses with fresh spices. A detailed description is given about a variety of spices and their uses in cooking and cosmetics. It is fascinating the sheer number of spices produced and their incredible value for many ailments and culinary applications.

We then travel to our resort-style hotel located on a beach outside of Stone Town.

Overnight on Zanzibar. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 12 *Zanzibar: East Coast Resort*

A day at leisure to enjoy the beach and to rest up after our journey…

Overnight on Zanzibar. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 13 *Zanzibar, Tanzania - Nairobi, Kenya*

Today we fly from Zanzibar to Nairobi.* Time permitting in Nairobi you may chose to take an optional excursion to Giraffe Manor or alternative sightseeing. Your Tour Leader will help you plan your day.

* NOTE: Due to ever-changing flight schedules to Madagascar, we may have to leave Zanzibar a day earlier or later in order to make the connection; the routing may also go through Johannesburg instead of Nairobi. Final arrangements will be advised closer to departure. Due to a lack of air connections in the region, we regret in advance if this journey is somewhat convoluted.

Overnight in Nairobi. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 14 *Nairobi, Kenya - Antananarivo, Madagascar*

Today we fly from Kenya to Antananarivo (Tana), the Malagasy capital city.

Antananarivo means ‘City of the Thousand', supposedly because a thousand warriors protected it. Until the French conquest in 1895 Madagascar's history centred around the royal palace or rova, and the rock cliffs near the palace became known as Ampamarinana, ‘the place of the hurling', as Christian martyrs met their fate at the command of the Queen. There was no reason for the French to move the capital elsewhere: its pleasant climate made it an agreeable place to live, and plenty of French money and planning went into the city we see today.

Overnight in Antananarivo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 15 *Antananarivo - Antsirabe*

In the morning we will have a panoramic sightseeing tour of Antananarivo. Tana has the quality of a child's picture book, with brightly coloured houses stacked upon the hillsides, mauve jacarandas and purple bougainvillea against a deep blue, and rice paddies that are tended right up to the edge of the city. Tana does not have much in the way of "tourist attractions" per se, but we will pause at the Rova, the shell of the Royal Palace built in 1864 for Queen Ranavalona II by the Scotsman, James Cameron. Everything that was wooden burned in 1996, but the imposing stone fortress of a shell still stands.

We then leave the capital and travel towards Antsirabe, founded in 1872 by Norwegian missionaries attracted by the cool climate (1500m / 4,700 ft) and the healing properties of the thermal springs. Along the crest of the island lie the central highlands, a plateau region of red soil giving the country the nickname, "the Red Island."

Antsirabe means "place of much salt," and is the agricultural and industrial centre of Madagascar. This is the centre of a rich agricultural area lying on the slopes of the island's second highest peak.

Overnight in Antsirabe. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 16 *Antsirabe - Ambositra - Ranomafana*

Leaving Antsirabe we continue through typical highland scenery of rice paddies and low hills. We stop in Ambositra, the centre of Madagascar's wood carving industry where even the houses have ornately carved wooden balconies and shutters. There is an abundant choice of good quality carved figures and marquetry in several shops.

From Ambositra the scenery becomes increasingly spectacular. We now pass remnants of the western limit of the rainforest. The road runs up and down steep hills, past neat rice paddies interspersed with eucalyptus and pine groves. Our stunning descent into Ranomafana takes us from dry highland vegetation to lush greenery and flowers. We have beautiful views of the tumbling waters of the Namorana River and the lovely unbroken green of virgin forest.

The village of Ranomafana is situated by a river in the lush greenness of the eastern rainforest. The name Ranomafana means "hot water" and it was the waters, not the lemurs, which drew visitors in the colonial days to this place. Today the draw here is the Ranomafana National Park, a fragment of high altitude rainforest that first came to world attention with the discovery of the golden bamboo lemur in 1986.

NOTE: There are some moderate to strenuous walks on this tour that, though optional, are an integral part of experiencing the highlights of the country. Reasonable level of physical fitness and steadiness on one's feet is important for the participant to fully and comfortably enjoy such tour activities.

Overnight in Ranomafana. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 17 *Ranomafana National Park*

Today we enjoy morning and evening walks/hikes in the park. Hidden in these trees are at least 12 species of lemur: diademed (Milne-Edwards) sifaka, red-bellied lemur, red-fronted lemur, ruffed lemur and three species of bamboo lemur. At night you can add mouse lemur, avahi, lepilemur, fat-tailed dwarf lemur, and even aye-aye. Then there are more than 110 species of birds with 36 endemic; reptiles, butterflies and other insects. There is also much variety in the vegetation and scenery, all of which can be observed from well-constructed trails.

During our walks through the park we are most likely to see red-fronted brown lemurs and perhaps the rarer red-bellied lemur. The golden bamboo lemur is less easily seen. The most memorable of the easily found lemurs is a subspecies of the diademed sifaka, Milne-Edward's sifaka. Unlike the more familiar Verreaux's sifaka which is largely white, this is dark brown with cream-coloured sides.

Overnight in Ranomafana. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 18 *Ranomafana - Fianarantsoa*

This morning we depart from Ranomafana and journey onwards to Fianarantsoa. On our way we pass forest, open country, rice paddies modest country homes as we begin the approach to Fianarantsoa.

Fianarantsoa means 'Place of good learning'. It was founded in 1830 as the administrative capital of Betsileo and is one of the more attractive Malagasy towns. The Upper Town, with its narrow winding streets and plethora of churches, is one of our stops today. Fianarantsoa also has a wonderful market, which features a great variety of herbal medicines and dried fish brought up by train from Manakara.

Overnight in Fianarantsoa. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 19 *Fianarantsoa - Ambalavao - Ranohira*

This morning we drive through fields of rice, corn, potatoes, coffee and even grapes to arrive in Ambalavao where the famous Malagasy 'Antaimoro' paper is made. Antaimoro paper is traditionally made from the bark of the araho tree from the eastern forests, but sisal paste is now sometimes used. After the bark is pounded and softened in water it is smoothed on to linen trays to dry in the sun. While still tacky, dried flowers are pressed into it and brushed over with a thin solution of the liquid bark to hold the flowers in place. The tradition began with Muslim immigrants who wrote Koranic verses on the paper, the only form of writing known in Madagascar before a written Malagasy language was developed nearly five hundred years later using the Roman alphabet.

Ambalavao is also the place where the highly agricultural highland Betsileo tribe (who the most skilled rice cultivators in Madagascar), meet the nomadic, non-agricultural Bara tribal peoples who count their wealth in cattle, not unlike the Masaai in East Africa.

This afternoon we drive to Ranohira through a truly awesome landscape at the foot of the Isalo Mountains.

Overnight in Ranohira. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 20 *Isalo National Park*

Today we spend exploring the Isalo National Park on foot.*

Established in 1962, the Isalo National Park protects 815 sq km of sandstone massif wildly eroded by wind and rain into bizarre ridges (known as "runiformes") featuring wild forms, impressive gorges and canyons, and tiny stalagmite pinnacles. The climate is dry tropical with warm temperatures all year around.

One of our options today is a walk to the Piscine Naturelle where a natural stone cave overlooks a crystal-clear waterfall flowing into a deep green pool surrounded by leafy pandanus trees. This tranquil pool is a virtual oasis in the heat, and offers a welcome relief after the long hike to get there.

* NOTE: Due to the nature of the terrain and the heat in this area, the walks here are more difficult on average than others on our program. By now your Tour Leader should have a good sense of overall group abilities and individual limitations and can provide advice on your suitability for today's excursions.

Overnight in Ranohira. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 21 *Ranohira - Toliara*

This morning as we drive from Ranohira to Toliara (Tulear), the rugged mountains give way to grasslands. There are some charming villages along the our way, and closer to Toliara we'll see baobab trees and pass through a cotton-growing region.

The name of the town is thought to derive from an encounter with an early sailor who asked a local inhabitant where he might moor his boat. The Malagasy replied: "toly eroa," or "mooring down there." Toliara is relatively modern (1895), designed by a seemingly uninspired French architect. His tree-planting was more successful aesthetically, and the shady tamarind trees provide welcome respite from the sun.

Overnight in Toliara. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 22 *Toliara - Andasibe-Mantadia*

This morning we fly back to the capital from where we travel my road to Andasibe-Mantadia (Perinet).

We have an early start for our road journey to the popular rainforest reserve of Andasibe-Mantadia (formerly known as Perinet). The drive over the highlands and escarpment is pleasant and the scenery is stunning. Since this is in the eastern escarpment, the climate is cooler and the rain falls mostly at night. The mist-enshrouded rainforest creates an awesome spectacle in the early morning.

This evening we will go for a walk through the Analamzaotra Special Reserve. There are at least nine species of lemur here, (including the recent discovery of the aye-aye). Our most likely encounter will be with a troop of grey bamboo lemurs which are diurnal and sometimes feed on the bamboo near the warden's house. On a nocturnal lemur hunt one should also look for mouse lemurs and the greater dwarf lemur, which hibernates during the cold season.

Overnight in Andasibe-Mantadia. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 23 *Andasibe-Mantadia / Analamazaotra*

Today we visit Analamazaotra Special Reserve (walks/hikes in the reserve). This reserve protects the largest of the lemur family, the indri. It stands about three feet high, with a barely visible tail, and black and white markings. You will be an observer: most people see indris in Analamazaotra Special Reserve, and if they don't see them they hear them. It is their voice that makes this lemur extra special: while other lemurs grunt, the indri "sings." It is an eerie, wailing sound somewhere between the song of a whale and a police-siren, and it carries for up to two miles as they call to each other across the forest.

In Malagasy the indri is called Babakoto. There are various legends connected with the indri, which reveals the esteem in which the local people hold them. A popular legend tells of a man who climbed a forest tree to gather wild honey and was severely stung by the bees. Losing his hold, he fell, but was caught by a huge indri which carried him on its back to safety.

This is also a good place for bird watching. There are flowering trees of a species much favoured by the Madagascar green sunbird, which has an iridescent green head and throat. There are also plenty of the cuckoo-like blue couas, blue pigeons, paradise flycatchers, two species of falcon (Newton falcon and Madagascar falcon), two species of black vasa parrot, and many others.

Overnight in Andasibe-Mantadia. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 24 *Andasibe-Mantadia - Antananarivo - Berenty*

Today we travel back to Tana from where we fly to Fort Dauphin (Taolagnaro). On arrival we drive to Berenty through beautiful landscape (mountains, endemic plants, baobab, cactus, sisal). The reserve lies some 80 km to the west of Tolagnaro, amid a vast sisal plantation, and the drive there is part of the experience. For the first half of the journey the skyline is composed of rugged green mountains, and "Travellers' trees" (ravenala) dot the landscape. Near Ranopiso is a grove of the very rare three-cornered palm, Neodypsis decary.

We will first stop to visit some pitcher plants whose nearest relatives are in Asia. The yellow 'flowers' (actually modified leaves) lure insects into their sticky depths where they are digested, probably for their nitrogen content.

Before reaching the spiny forest we will stop at an Antanosy 'tomb' (actually the dead are buried elsewhere) known as the tomb of Ranonda. It was carved by the renowned sculptor Fiasia. The artistry of this unpainted wooden memorial is of a very high standard although the carvings are deteriorating in the frequently wet weather.

Berenty is famous for its population of ring-tailed lemurs and sifakas. Henri de Heaulme, and now his son Jean, have made this one of the best-studied 260 hectares of forest in Madagascar. Although in the arid south, its location along the river Mandrare ensures a well-watered habitat for the large variety of animals that live there. In previous years the forest itself was threatened by the rampant spread of the cactus-like 'rubber vine', Cissus quadrangularis, but this is being vigorously tackled.

The following species of lemur are often seen: brown lemur, ring-tailed lemur and sifaka. The lemurs here are well-used to people. There are approximately 350 ring-tailed lemurs in Berenty, and the population has stayed remarkably stable considering that only about a quarter of the babies survive to adulthood. The young are born in September and at first cling to their mother's belly, later climbing on to her back and riding jockey-style.

Overnight at Berenty Private Reserve. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 25 *Berenty Private Reserve*

We have a full day to experience Berenty.

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Overnight at Berenty Private Reserve. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 26 *Berenty - Fort Dauphin - Antananarivo*

Today we drive back to Fort Dauphin from where we fly to Antananarivo in the mid-afternoon.

Overnight in Antananarivo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 27 *Departure*

Departure from Antananarivo.

NOTE: Ever-changing air schedules from Antananarivo may necessitate an extra overnight at the end of the tour which has NOT been included in tour pricing. Land only passengers please confirm dates with Adventures Abroad BEFORE booking your flights.

BON VOYAGE! Meal plan: Breakfast.