Tour Code
E15

ADVENTURESABROAD

EGYPT, KENYA & TANZANIA

27 days

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Day 1 Arrive in Cairo

Welcome to Cairo, where the Nile's life-giving waters have sustained one of history's greatest civilisations for over five millennia. The city's Arabic name, Al-Qahira, means "The Vanquisher" - a fitting title for this sprawling metropolis of over 21 million souls.

As you transfer to the hotel, you enter a city nicknamed "The City of a Thousand Minarets" for its Islamic architectural splendour. Cairo has long served as the political and cultural heartbeat of the Arab world, where ancient stones stand alongside modern towers and where the calls to prayer echo across neighborhoods both wealthy and humble. Tonight we gather with fellow travellers for our first evening meal, beginning an extraordinary journey through lands where humanity first learned to build monuments for eternity.

Overnight in Cairo (Giza/Pyramids)

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Cairo: Great Pyramids & the Sphinx - Grand Egyptian Museum

This morning we stand before the Great Pyramids of Giza, one of humanity's most audacious architectural achievements. Over 100,000 labourers toiled for two decades to raise Cheops' eternal tomb 135 metres (443 feet) skyward using more than two million stone blocks, each weighing an average of 2.5 tonnes. The precision astounds - the base covers 5.3 hectares yet the sides vary by only 4 centimetres. You may venture inside through narrow passages to explore the inner chambers where pharaohs dreamed of immortality (optional, extra fee).

The enigmatic Sphinx crouches nearby, carved from a single limestone outcrop. For 4,500 years this lion-bodied, human-headed guardian has gazed across the desert toward the rising sun. Ancient Greeks named it after their mythical riddling monster - a fitting metaphor for a monument that still poses unanswered questions to archaeologists and visitors alike.

We then journey to the spectacular Grand Egyptian Museum, one of the world's largest archaeological museums. This architectural marvel houses over 100,000 artefacts spanning 7,000 years of civilization. We break for lunch at onsite restaurants before our guided exploration of the "Kingship and Eternity" galleries. The Hanging Obelisk soars overhead in the dramatic atrium, while the Colossal Statue of Ramesses II - weighing 83 tonnes - commands the grand staircase. Victory columns, sarcophagi, and treasures reveal the extraordinary sophistication of ancient Egyptian culture.

Our visit culminates with "Tutankhamun - The Immersive Exhibition," where state-of-the-art digital projections transport us through 3,400 years into the mesmerizing world of the boy king who died at just nineteen yet achieved immortality through his undisturbed tomb.

Overnight in Cairo (Giza).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Cairo: Dahshur, Memphis & Saqqara

We journey south through fertile Nile Valley villages to Dahshur, where Pharaoh Senefru's experimental pyramids tell the story of architectural evolution. Built between 2613-2589 BCE, the Bent Pyramid and Red Pyramid represent crucial learning that made the Great Pyramid possible—the transition from stepped to smooth-sided design that would define Egypt's architectural legacy. The Bent Pyramid earned its name from the abrupt angle change partway up, likely due to structural concerns during construction. The Red Pyramid, named for the russet hue of its weathered limestone, was the first true smooth-sided pyramid successfully completed.

From Dahshur we continue to Memphis, capital during the Old Kingdom (2700-2180 BCE), where colossal statues reveal the grandeur of this ancient administrative centre. The fallen colossus of Ramesses II, carved from a single piece of limestone, once stood 13 metres tall guarding the temple entrance. Though horizontal now, the statue's intricate detail—from the delicate pleating of the royal nemes headdress to the serene expression on the pharaoh's face—demonstrates the extraordinary skill of ancient sculptors.

Our final stop brings us to Saqqara's necropolis, dominated by the Step Pyramid—Egypt's oldest major stone building. Master architect Imhotep revolutionised tomb design in the 27th century BCE, stacking six levels until his creation soared 62 metres high. This represents the critical moment when Egyptian funerary architecture evolved from simple mud-brick mastabas to the monumental stone pyramids that followed.

We also explore the mysterious Serapeum, where sacred Apis bulls associated with god Ptah were entombed. An avenue of sphinxes leads to underground corridors housing massive stone sarcophagi—testament to the extraordinary role animals played in Egyptian religious life.

Overnight in Cairo (Giza)

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Cairo - Fly to Aswan: The High Dam, Unfinished Obelisk & Philae Temple

We fly south to Aswan in Upper Egypt, Egypt's sunniest frontier town blessed with the Nile's most beautiful setting. Small enough to walk around yet steeped in ancient importance, Aswan's relaxed pace offers welcome respite after Cairo's intensity.

Our first stop is the High Dam, a modern marvel constructed between 1960 and 1971 to finally tame the Nile's annual flood. This massive engineering project created Lake Nasser, one of the world's largest artificial lakes. From this vantage point, panoramic views stretch north across Aswan's islands and palm groves, while southward the lake extends toward Africa's heart like a shimmering blue ribbon.

By boat we journey to dramatically situated Philae Temple on its island sanctuary. Dedicated to the goddess Isis, this relatively modest complex captivates through its stunning island setting and excellent preservation. The elegant colonnades and intricate hieroglyphic carvings tell stories of gods and pharaohs against the backdrop of Nile waters - creating one of Egypt's most romantic archaeological sites.

We conclude at the Unfinished Obelisk, where ancient stonemasons abandoned their work when cracks appeared during carving directly from bedrock. Had it been completed, this single piece of granite would have stood 42 metres tall and weighed nearly 1,200 tonnes. This remarkable quarry reveals ancient stone-working secrets - chisel marks and ochre-coloured guide-lines remain clearly visible after millennia.

NOTE: Sightseeing order in Upper Egypt may vary with flight schedules and weather. Your Tour Leader will advise of adjustments.

Overnight in Aswan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Aswan: St. Simeon Monastery & Kitchener's Island

This morning we cross the Nile by private boat to the west bank, where our unique adventure begins - a camel trek across sandy desert to the Christian Monastery of St. Simeon. Before mounting up, our Tour Leader and experienced camel handler teach proper riding techniques. This gentle 45-minute journey to the monastery (15 minutes return) suits travellers of any age, with one rider per camel creating an authentic desert experience. Those preferring not to ride can travel comfortably by truck.

Dating from the 6th century and actively used until the 13th century, St. Simeon's Monastery ranks among Egypt's best-preserved Christian sites. The massive mud-brick and stone structure rises dramatically against the desert landscape. We explore the atmospheric chapel where Coptic Christians once worshipped, wander through monks' living quarters imagining their austere daily life, and discover the kitchen, wine press, and storage rooms. Faint traces of Coptic frescoes still adorn some walls - ghostly images of Christ, saints, and geometric patterns that have survived centuries of desert winds.

Returning to the Nile, we cruise among the islands that dot this beautiful stretch of river. The elegant Mausoleum of the Aga Khan rises above the water in pink granite, built in 1957 for the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslims. The main island, Elephantine, earned its evocative name because riverside rocks resemble a herd of elephants bathing in the current. On enchanting Kitchener's Island, we stroll through lush botanical gardens bursting with exotic species collected from across the empire by the British general. Our day concludes with a leisurely felucca sail on one of these graceful traditional vessels, their white lateen sails catching the breeze as they've done for millennia.

Overnight in Aswan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Aswan: Abu Simbel

A pre-dawn departure by road (approximately 3 hours, each way) takes us south from Aswan across the Western Desert to Nubia, or the "Land of the Gold." Our destination this morning is the awe-inspiring Abu Simbel - the imposing rock temples of Ramesses II and his queen, Nefertari.

We have a guided tour of this site, including the interior of the colossal temples. The Temple of Ramesses II, with its immense statues of the Pharaoh seated on his throne, is one of the classic images of the power of the Pharaohs. Four 20-metre (65-foot) colossi flank the entrance, their weathered faces gazing across the desert with timeless authority. Inside the temple you will see well-preserved wall decorations and several murals. There is a wonderful relief of Ramesses presenting captives to various gods, including himself - demonstrating the pharaoh's divine status. We also gain insight into the reconstruction process by visiting the interior of the artificial mountain, where UNESCO's monumental 1960s relocation effort saved these temples from Lake Nasser's rising waters.

We return by road to Aswan in time for a late lunch. When visiting Abu Simbel we choose to travel by road instead of flying as the air schedules tend to be rather restrictive and do not always allow enough time at the site (much time is taken up by check-in, security, boarding, transferring etc). Driving frees us from this inconvenience and adds flexibility, plus allows us to see the High Dam en route. Departing very early ensures that we are at the site at the optimal time for photography; later in the morning, shadows fall across the temple making conditions less than ideal.

Overnight in Aswan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Aswan - Luxor via Kom Ombo & Edfu

We farewell Aswan and journey north by road to Kom Ombo Temple, dramatically positioned on a promontory overlooking the Nile. In ancient times, Kom Ombo held strategic importance as a vital trading town on the caravan route from Nubia to Cairo. This unique temple is actually two sanctuaries in one, dedicated to both Horus the falcon-headed sky god and Sobek the crocodile deity. The dual design creates perfect symmetry - everything is doubled, from entrances to sanctuaries.

We see remains of mummified crocodiles, testament to when these fearsome creatures thrived in the Nile's waters and received worship as living gods. Today, crocodiles no longer inhabit Egypt's portion of the great river, but ancient reliefs and mummified specimens remind us of their once-sacred status.

From Kom Ombo we continue to Edfu, home to the largest and most completely preserved Pharaonic temple in Egypt, though ironically built by Greek rulers. Dedicated to Horus, construction began under Ptolemy III in 237 BCE and continued for nearly two centuries. We explore this massive complex enclosed by towering walls and flanked by enormous pylon gateways. Inside, we examine the fascinating Nilometer - an ingenious ancient device for measuring the river's water fluctuations. These measurements weren't merely academic; they determined tax levels, as higher floods meant better harvests and greater tax revenue for the state.

Overnight in Luxor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Karnak Temple & Luxor Temple

We begin with magnificent Karnak Temple, built, enlarged, and decorated over 1,500 extraordinary years. At certain points in ancient history, this served as Egypt's most important religious complex, the beating heart of the kingdom's spiritual life. The tremendous pylon gateway looms before us, while the legendary Avenue of Sphinxes once stretched all the way to the Nile's edge. Inside, we tour the vast hypostyle hall where 134 massive columns soar skyward, their capitals supporting stone roofs that have endured three millennia. The scale demonstrates architectural ambition almost beyond comprehension.

After a break for lunch, evening brings us to Luxor Temple. Built during the New Kingdom, this complex served as focal point for the annual Opet Festival, one of ancient Egypt's most important celebrations. During this festival, priests paraded Amun's golden cult statue down the Nile from nearby Karnak Temple in elaborate boats, accompanied by music, dancing, and offerings. This fertility celebration reinforced the pharaoh's divine connection to the gods and brought the entire community together in shared ritual.

Dedicated to the Theban Triad - Amun, his consort Mut, and their son Chons - Luxor Temple ranks among the largest ancient Egyptian temple complexes. The massive entrance tower built by King Ramesses II still dominates the approach, flanked by colossal seated statues of the great pharaoh himself.

Overnight in Luxor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Luxor: Valley of the Kings

Morning mist rises from the Nile as we cross by boat to the West Bank, where limestone cliffs conceal the most spectacular royal cemetery ever created. The early morning air carries whispers of ancient secrets as we meet our donkey-cart transport for a journey into the Valley of the Kings through New Gourna Village.

Our charming donkey-cart ride takes us through countryside where modern fellahin (farmers) tend fields much as their ancestors did millennia ago. Children wave from mud-brick houses, women carry water jars on their heads, and farmers guide oxen through irrigation channels. This 40-45 minute journey through timeless rural scenes connects us to the eternal rhythms of Nile life before we reunite with road transport for the final approach.

In this isolated valley dominated by pyramid-shaped mountains, we enter the sacred necropolis where New Kingdom pharaohs chose to hide their tombs from grave robbers. For over 500 years, from Tuthmosis I to Ramesses XI, Egypt's god-kings carved elaborate underground palaces into the limestone cliffs. We tour three carefully selected tombs, each revealing different aspects of ancient Egyptian funerary art and beliefs. Note that some tombs have steep stairways and all are quite dark inside (a pocket flashlight proves useful).

The Valley of the Kings represents ancient Egypt's most ambitious attempt to ensure royal immortality. Unlike the obvious pyramids, these hidden tombs were meant to remain secret forever, their elaborate chambers filled with everything a pharaoh needed for the afterlife journey.

We proceed to Queen Hatshepsut's funerary temple - built for Egypt's first woman to rule as pharaoh. Rising in terraced splendour against towering cliffs, this architectural marvel was discovered in the mid-19th century and remains under restoration. As afternoon shadows lengthen across ancient stones, we return through countryside to the East Bank, where we suggest visiting the excellent Luxor Museum or Mummification Museum during free time.

Tonight you may choose to attend the optional Sound and Light show at Karnak Temple, where ancient stories unfold against illuminated columns.

We do not include King Tut's tomb, as it's very small and relatively uninteresting, but we allow time if you wish to see it (separate ticket).

Overnight in Luxor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Luxor: Valley of the Queens

This morning we cross the Nile once more to explore the Valley of the Queens, known to ancient Egyptians as "Set Neferu" - the "Seat of Beauty." This evocative necropolis served as the eternal resting place for royal women of the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties, though despite its name, the valley holds far more than queens' tombs. Princes, princesses, and high-ranking nobles also found their final rest in these painted chambers carved into the western cliffs.

Of approximately eighty tombs, only a handful open to visitors; we tour three carefully selected examples. The artwork here differs from the kings' tombs - more intimate, often featuring family scenes and goddesses protecting the deceased. Vibrant colours remain remarkably

preserved in the dry desert air. An optional visit to Queen Nefertari's spectacular tomb is available for an extra charge (your Tour Leader advises the current fee). Nefertari's tomb, discovered in 1904, contains some of the finest ancient Egyptian art ever found - the colours so vivid they seem painted yesterday rather than 3,200 years ago.

We also explore Deir el-Medina, the fascinating workers' village where artisans and craftsmen who created the royal tombs lived with their families. These weren't slaves but skilled, well-paid professionals who left behind a treasure trove of everyday artefacts revealing intimate details of ordinary ancient Egyptian life. Finally, we tour the massive mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu. Ancient belief held this site sacred as the place where the god Amun first manifested on earth. Both Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III built temples here before Ramesses III constructed his even grander complex, its walls covered with detailed reliefs of military campaigns and religious rituals.

Due to periodic unannounced closures, your Tour Leader may substitute the equally fascinating Tombs of the Nobles.

Overnight in Luxor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Luxor: Dendera Temple & Time at Leisure

This morning we enjoy an excursion to the fascinating temple of Dendera located north of Luxor on the banks of the Nile.

Dendera Temple is one of the best-preserved temple complexes in Egypt. Located in the city of Qena (60 km/37 miles north of Luxor) Dendera was constructed for the worship of Goddess Hathor, goddess of love, beauty, and motherhood in the ancient Egyptian religion. The temple was founded by pharaoh Pepi I (2250 BCE) and continued during the New Kingdom (1550-1080 BCE). What was left dates back to the Greco-Roman time in Egypt. The recent cleaning of the ceiling of Dendera Temple has revealed some of the most vibrant and colourful paintings dating from antiquity. The temple has two decorated crypts, two halls with ceilings supported by columns and two funeral chapels, from where the famous "zodiac" from the Louvre comes.

We return to Luxor for some well-deserved free time for independent exploration, shopping, napping etc after some full days of touring. The Luxor Museum is also worthwhile, as it displays a very good contextual story of Luxor and the nearby valley of the Kings and Queens. The wooden sarcophagi are the highlight - so vivid that it's hard to believe they are thousands of years old.

Overnight in Luxor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Luxor - Cairo, Egypt - Overnight Flight to Kenya

This morning we fly to Cairo and proceed to the famous Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, where we see some of Egypt's most beloved treasures. Among the 100,000 pieces housed on the museum's two floors is the famous exhibit of Tutankhamun whose tomb was discovered by Howard Carter in 1922. The tomb and treasures of this young Pharaoh, modest by Pharaonic Egyptian standards, is perhaps the best preserved of the discovered tombs. We also see archaeological relics from the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom and Greco-Roman periods. Our tour today is fully guided by our English-speaking guide. We also allow some time for you to explore the treasures on your own (Mummies Room: extra cost).

Later this evening, we bid adieu to our Egypt group and Tour Leader and fly overnight to Nairobi.* On arrival we will join other participants starting their tour in Nairobi.

* NOTE: We do not include the cost of this flight in the tour price because we are often able to get a better price if we include this in travellers' over ticket to/from the tour. Customers who prefer to book their own air can request a quote for this sector to ensure that they will be flying with other tour participants.

Overnight flight to Nairobi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 13 Arrival in Nairobi, Kenya

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.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Nairobi - Ol Pejeta Conservancy

Today we travel from Nairobi, through the "White Highlands," so called because of the large number of Europeans who settled here, northwards to the lower slopes of Mt Kenya, rising to 5199 m (16,728 feet), Africa's second highest peak. Our (+/- 4 hour) drive will take us into the Central Highlands, the heartland of the Kikuyu people. This is a very fertile region, well-watered, intensively cultivated, and thickly forested. The land was coveted by the Europeans who began arriving in ever-increasing numbers once the railway through the area was completed. The settlers established coffee and tea plantations on the eastern slopes of Mt Kenya and cultivated wheat on the western slopes.

Our destination is Sweetwaters, a luxury tented camp clustered around a water hole and set in the pristine calm of the private Ol Pejeta Conservancy, a non-profit organization supporting endangered species, tourism and community outreach. Ol Pejeta is East Africa's largest Black Rhino sanctuary, the only place in Kenya to see chimpanzees, and holds some of the highest predator densities in Kenya.

This afternoon we'll enjoy our first game drive within the conservancy.

Overnight at Sweetwaters.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 15 Ol Pejeta Conservancy

Ol Pejeta Conservancy is a sprawling landscape, a mosaic of diverse habitats stretching across over 350 square kilometers. Imagine rolling grass plains, interspersed with wooded grasslands, acacia woodlands, and patches of dense evergreen thickets – all contributing to a rich and varied ecosystem. This diversity of habitats supports an astounding variety of animals, including, of course, the iconic "Big Five" – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo.

Today, we'll immerse ourselves in this wildlife haven with both morning and afternoon game drives, maximizing our chances of encountering its incredible inhabitants. But that's not all! We'll also have the unique opportunity to visit the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary, a truly special place. This sanctuary is the only one of its kind in Kenya, providing a refuge for the highly endangered and remarkably intelligent chimpanzee species. These chimpanzees, often orphaned or rescued from abusive situations in West and Central Africa, find a safe and nurturing home here. The sanctuary's dedicated staff carefully nurses them back to health, allowing them to live out their days in the security of a vast, natural enclosure. It's a chance to witness these fascinating primates up close and learn about the important conservation work being done to protect them.

Overnight at Sweetwaters Camp.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 16 Ol Pejeta - Great Rift Valley - Lake Nakuru National Park

This morning we travel to Lake Nakuru, a shallow soda lake in the Rift Valley (+/- 5 hours). The Rift Valley was created millions of years ago under the strain of enormous volcanic eruptions which resulted in a giant split in the earth's surface from Syria to Mozambique. Lava flowed into the valley, forming escarpments on either side of the gigantic trough which can be up to 80 km (50 miles) wide, big enough to be visible

from space. At the lake, depending on the water levels, we may have the opportunity to see flamingos,* in addition to the over 340 species of birds that have been recorded in the Rift Valley!

Lake Nakuru is very shallow and can fluctuate up to five metres (12 feet) each day. When the water is low, you can see a white band of crystallized soda along the shoreline. This is also one of the best places in Kenya to view the rare White Rhino as we explore the park on our afternoon game drive.

* This, and other Rift Valley lakes, have been known in the past for huge numbers of flamingos; however, this can be very "hit and miss" owing to seasonal variations in rainfall and water level, and the increasing frequency of drought. The best we can do is hope for the best!

Overnight in Lake Nakuru National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 17 Lake Nakuru - Maasai Mara National Reserve

We rise early this morning and bid farewell to Lake Nakuru National Park, continuing our journey through the dramatic landscapes of the Great Rift Valley. Our route takes us past the serene beauty of Lake Naivasha and the imposing presence of nearby Mount Longonot. This relatively young volcano serves as a stark reminder of the Rift Valley's turbulent geological history. Our drive time today is approximately six hours (plus time for a lunch break en route), which includes a stretch on a less-than-perfect road.

Early-to-mid afternoon, we'll arrive at our lodge nestled within the world-renowned Maasai Mara National Reserve. After check-in and a well-deserved breather, we'll embark on another thrilling game drive, venturing out into the reserve in search of its incredible inhabitants. The possibilities are endless, and every game drive offers a unique and unforgettable experience.

The Maasai Mara is essentially a seamless extension of the vast Serengeti ecosystem, and it boasts an astonishing concentration of wildlife. This reserve is home to the largest population of lions in all of Kenya, a testament to its rich biodiversity. Large herds of plains game roam freely across the Mara's grasslands, creating a spectacle of nature at its finest. The Maasai Mara is also arguably the best place in Kenya to spot cheetahs, those sleek and graceful hunters.

Time-permitting, we may have the opportunity to visit a local Maasai village. This cultural immersion would provide a fascinating glimpse into the Maasai people's traditional way of life, allowing us to meet its residents and learn about their customs and beliefs. If time constraints prevent us from visiting the village today, we'll make every effort to arrange this experience on our return journey to Nairobi.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 18 Maasai Mara National Reserve

The Maasai Mara National Reserve, a seemingly endless expanse of rolling grasslands, sits at the northern edge of the vast Serengeti Plain. Widely regarded as Kenya's premier park, the Mara plays a crucial role in one of nature's greatest spectacles: the annual wildebeest migration. These massive herds journey north from Tanzania around the end of June, gracing the Mara with their presence before returning south around the end of September. This incredible movement of animals is a sight to behold.

"The Mara," as it's affectionately known, is a haven for wildlife, supporting all of the famed "Big Five" – lion, elephant, leopard, rhinoceros, and buffalo. Beyond these iconic creatures, the reserve teems with an astonishing abundance of herding animals, including zebras, gazelles, and antelopes, as well as a rich diversity of other wildlife. As you traverse the reserve, you'll likely encounter the stately Maasai men and youth, easily recognizable by their distinctive attire, tending to their cattle and goats along the roadside. Their presence adds a unique cultural dimension to the Mara's natural beauty.

Today we've dedicated a full day to exploring this remarkable reserve, with both morning and afternoon game drives planned. This will give us ample opportunity to witness the incredible wildlife that calls the Maasai Mara home, from the majestic predators to the vast herds of herbivores, and everything in between. Every game drive in the Mara is a unique adventure, filled with the potential for unforgettable encounters.

In the Mara you will also have an optional opportunity to ascend over the northern Serengeti at daybreak in a hot air balloon (optional

expense). From over 300m (984 feet) above, you will be able to view the vast land and the myriad animals that inhabit the Maasai Mara. Today or tomorrow are the best days to participate in this activity - details sent upon booking.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 19 Maasai Mara National Reserve

We enjoy another full day with game viewing in Maasai Mara. Depending on the season and current game locations and viewing conditions, we may divide our day into morning and afternoon drives, or take our lunches with us in order to venture further into the reserve if conditions warrant.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 20 Maasai Mara - Nairobi

After breakfast, we'll embark on our journey back to Nairobi. The drive itself is expected to take approximately six hours, factoring in comfort stops along the way.

A highlight of our return journey will be a visit to the Karen Blixen Museum, conveniently located just outside of Nairobi. This isn't just a quick photo opportunity; we'll delve into the fascinating story of Baroness Karen Blixen-Finecke. Imagine stepping back in time to the 1920s and 30s – this Danish Baroness made Kenya her home in 1918 and lived here until 1931. It was during this period that she drew inspiration for her most famous work, "Out of Africa," published in 1937 under her pen name, Isaac Dineson.

The museum itself is Blixen's beautifully restored former home. It offers a unique glimpse into her life in colonial Kenya, showcasing the style and furnishings of the era. As we tour the house, we'll learn about her struggles and triumphs, her relationships, and the profound connection she felt to the African landscape. It's a chance to connect with the author behind the iconic book and gain a deeper understanding of the historical context that shaped her writing.

We'll make a lunch stop in the vicinity before continuing to our Nairobi hotel.

Overnight in Nairobi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 21 Nairobi - Amboseli National Park

Our adventure continues today as we journey south from the bustling city of Nairobi to the breathtaking Amboseli National Park. The drive is estimated to take around four hours, though this can vary slightly depending on the specific location of our lodge within the park and, of course, the wildlife we encounter along the way. Keep your eyes peeled – you never know what surprises the African bush might have in store!

Amboseli National Park boasts a truly spectacular setting. Straddling the border with Tanzania, it lies on the vast African plain, offering unparalleled views of the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro. Towering above the landscape at a staggering 5894 meters (19,300 feet), Kilimanjaro is the highest peak on the entire African continent. Its iconic, snow-capped cone often appears to float ethereally above the shimmering plains, creating a truly awe-inspiring vista.

Amboseli is renowned worldwide for its thriving populations of elephants. These magnificent creatures roam freely across the park's open grasslands, often dusting themselves with the distinctive red soil, which gives their skin a particularly dramatic, almost ochre hue. This afternoon, we'll embark on a game drive within Amboseli. Picture this: herds of elephants grazing peacefully on the open plains, with the colossal Mount Kilimanjaro providing a picture-perfect backdrop. We'll be on the lookout for other incredible wildlife as well, but the chance

to witness these gentle giants in their natural habitat, with such an iconic mountain as a witness, is an experience you won't soon forget (weather permitting, of course – Kilimanjaro can sometimes be shy behind the clouds!).

Overnight in the Amboseli National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 22 Amboseli, Kenya - Lake Manyara National Park, Tanzania

Our Tanzanian adventure begins this morning as we cross the border from Kenya into Tanzania at Namanga. From there, we'll journey onwards to Lake Manyara National Park, passing through the vibrant town of Arusha. Arusha serves as the gateway to Tanzania's renowned northern safari circuit, and it's a bustling hub of activity. Our total travel time today is expected to be around five hours, though the border crossing itself can also sometimes take a little time.

Lake Manyara National Park, though the smallest of the northern Tanzanian parks at 330 square kilometers (two-thirds of which is the lake itself), packs a big punch in terms of biodiversity. Its diverse vegetation ranges from open savannah grasslands to lush groundwater forests and vital riparian habitats, creating a rich tapestry of ecosystems. The lake is a haven for birdlife, most notably thousands of pelicans, ibis, and flamingos. Their calls and vibrant colours create a spectacle that can be experienced even from a distance.

After lunch at our lodge, we'll embark on an e afternoon game drive within Lake Manyara National Park. The park's location at the base of the dramatic Great Rift Valley escarpment adds to its scenic beauty. Its diverse landscape, encompassing forests, woodlands, grasslands, and swamps, provides habitat for a wide array of wildlife. While the birdlife is undoubtedly a major draw, the park also boasts a healthy population of other animals. We'll be on the lookout for buffalo, elephants, graceful giraffes, impalas, hippos, and a fascinating variety of smaller creatures.

Overnight at Lake Manyara.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 23 Lake Manyara - Serengeti National Park

This morning we embark on a scenic journey into the renowned Ngorongoro Conservation Area. This protected area boasts a stunning, rolling landscape, offering periodic, breathtaking glimpses of the Ngorongoro Crater itself. Before we make our descent onto the seemingly endless Serengeti Plain, we'll pause at a designated viewpoint to fully appreciate the sheer scale and beauty of the crater.

The very name "Serengeti" is derived from the Maasai language, meaning "Land-without-end," and it's a fitting description. This is a place of superlatives, where the vastness of the landscape is matched only by the incredible biodiversity it sustains.

Our journey today, including our game drive, will take approximately five hours, though this can vary depending on the wildlife we encounter along the way and the location of our lodge within the Serengeti. This afternoon's game drive will serve as a wonderful introduction to this remarkable landscape and the diverse array of animals that call it home. Our guides will help us spot and identify the various species, sharing their knowledge of the Serengeti ecosystem and the intricate relationships between its inhabitants.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 24 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; today is the best day to participate in this activity -- details will be sent sent upon booking.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 25 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 enthral visitors. Depending on road conditions, gorge stop, animal sightings, and lodge placement, this journey can be 5-6 hours.

Overnight in the vicinity of Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 26 Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Today promises an unforgettable experience as we embark on a half-day tour within the magnificent Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. After an early breakfast to maximize our time, we'll descend into the heart of the Ngorongoro Crater, a truly breathtaking natural wonder. This massive caldera, spanning 20 kilometers (13 miles) in diameter and boasting walls reaching 700 meters (2,300 feet) high, is a microcosm of African wildlife.

The crater floor is a diverse ecosystem teeming with life, and our game drive will take us through this incredible setting. We'll be on the lookout for the famed "Big Five" – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo – any sighting of which is always a thrill. But the crater is also home to a plethora of other fascinating creatures. eep your eyes peeled for herds of wildebeest, graceful gazelles, zebras with their distinctive stripes, and lumbering hippopotamuses. Adding to the spectacle, thousands of vibrant flamingos often gather on Lake Magadi, creating a stunning display of colour against the backdrop of the crater walls.

* 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 vicinity of Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 27 Ngorongoro - Arusha - Depart

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 continue to Arusha to connect with homeward evening flights (a +/- 5 hour journey including lunch).

LAND ONLY PASSENGERS need to take into account our morning journey when booking their flights out of Arusha (JRO). Your departure should occur no earlier than 8:00 pm.

SAFARI NJEMA!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch