



destination UPDATE

TANZANIA & ZANZIBAR

In general, a combination, i.e. safari and beach incentive purely within Tanzania is a rarer option to such a combination in Kenya or even a Kenya safari and Zanzibar programme. This is mainly due to Tanzania requiring a much higher budget due to the additional flights, arrival & departure taxes, higher standards of services and the more limited availability of accommodation.



ABOUT TANZANIA

The scenery is spectacular and the wildlife thrives in Tanzania, with more than 13,000 square miles devoted to national parks. Some of Africa's most exciting wild animals make their home here 35 species of plains-dwelling animals, including Cape Buffalo, Elephants and Lions. There are also unique birds, including Crested and Helmeted Guinea Fowl, Sand Grouse and Francolin. Located on the east coast of Africa, Tanzania is split by the Rift Valley, the continent's oldest valley. Just south of the border with Kenya is Africa's highest mountain, Kilimanjaro, and nearby Ngorongoro Crater, a collapsed volcano that towered alongside Kilimanjaro 3 million years ago.

Tanzania's Serengeti Plain is the continuation of Kenya's Masai Mara. More than 1 million wildebeests migrate through the two countries, making a yearlong loop that returns them to southern Tanzania each February to give birth to their young. When the rains start in April, they move north into the Masai Mara for the summer; in autumn they head south through the Serengeti the most famous segment of their migration.



Within the ancient crater of the extinct Ngorongoro Volcano southeast of the Serengeti, is one of the continent's most beautiful wildlife habitats. Lodges built on the 2,000-foot-high rim afford visitors a spectacular view of the scene below. Here, on 100 square miles of grassland more than 30,000 large animals: Black-maned Lions, Buffalo, Wildebeest, Zebras, Gazelles and rare Black Rhinos, live alongside the Masai tribe and their cattle. A large flock of Flamingos feeds at the lake and more than 100 species of bird not seen in the Serengeti have been recorded here. Evidence of man's earliest existence on earth was discovered at nearby Olduvai Gorge by archaeologists Mary and Louis Leakey.



Entry is through Kilimanjaro International, a modern purpose built airport which operates efficiently and should not prove to be a problem under normal circumstances.

ON SAFARI



Our journey started South West of Kilimanjaro in Tarangire National Park. Not as well known as its illustrious partners Serengeti and Ngorongoro it's a fascinating area famous for its many Baobab trees, (the upside down tree as in winter it looks as though its roots are in the air). The wildlife is very good in the National Park and the bird life is quite exceptional throughout the area.

The principal lodge is the **Tarangire Sopa Lodge**, which has a fine panoramic view over the surrounding countryside. The property would be best suited to a large group; possibly needing a meeting room maybe had a fairly tight budget, but wanted exclusive use of a lodge. The rooms are spacious and well furnished. I just felt that it needed a small amount of extra 'window dressing' to create a little more atmosphere when occupancy is low.



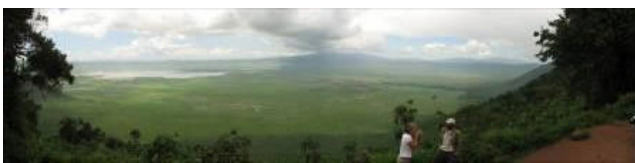
Next fly to the north of the Serengeti close to the Kenya border, circling enroute the most sacred mountain of the Masai people Mount Lengai. Serengeti National Park is Tanzania's largest and most famous park. Named after a Masai word siringet – meaning endless plain, Serengeti has the largest of the migratory game animals in the world.

Kirawira Tented Camp: Of all the lodges and camps I have visited anywhere Kirawira sets the standard that everyone else must beat. Set upon a hill with commanding views of endless savannah, the tented camp allows visitor to feel close to the soul of the African wilderness. Luxurious sleeping and bathing arrangements is complemented by valet service. Victorian and East African elements are blended artfully to create the ultimate safari ambience. Each of the 25 luxury, and I mean luxury, tents are built on a wooden platform with large verandas and decorated with patch-work quilts on canopied beds



Kirawira is at the very top of safari facilities and this is reflected in the price, yet the value for money is outstanding from the personal attention of Julian & Linda Nichols the Camp Managers, the excellent cuisine and being surrounded by some of the best game viewing in the world Kirawira has no equal. As it is so isolated one finds oneself being in the unique situation that you have the whole of the western section of the world famous Serengeti as your private safari park. Put simply, **How can you improve on perfection?**

From Kirawira you can also explore a little of life and culture of the local people. A short drive brings you to **Lake Victoria and a visit to Bunda**, a small local town that is a perfect introduction to the way of life of some of the friendliest people you could possibly meet anywhere. An original idea of Destinations Kenya is a visit to the local school to see, and if you wish, help support the excellent work they do. A relaxing lunch at the delightful Speke Bay Lodge on the shores of Lake Victoria is the perfect end to a fascinating introduction to the African way of life.



Driving south toward one of the greatest natural phenomena the **Ngorongoro Conservation Area**. If you travel by road you can even take a short stop at the “**birthplace of man**” at Olduvai Gorge. The small museum and introductory explanation will introduce you the home of oldest known member of our species. A visit can also be arranged as an excursion from your chosen lodge at Ngorongoro.

Nothing prepares you for your first view of the Ngorongoro Crater. How do you describe it? Awesome, spectacular, mesmerising, unbelievable. To be quite truthful you can't, you have to go there to experience one of the greatest views of nature yourself. Along the crater rim the two major lodges are:

Ngorongoro Serena Lodge: All you would expect from the Serena



property, 75 comfortable rooms all with a view over the crater below. Built entirely from local material, mainly stone, the lodge furnishings add to the warm



cosy feel one needs on a chilly night at over 7000 feet. The Serena is

the best choice for the majority of groups.



The other main property is the **Ngorongoro Crater Lodge** and if you want something, for a special group then Crater Lodge is certainly different. A large stilted

lodge, perched on the edge of the crater, it has separate camps of between 6-12 suites each. The public areas are strewn with chandeliers and other

antiques and treasures. Crater Lodge is all a question of personal taste, Its eccentric atmosphere isn't to everyone's liking, I expected the Adams Family on safari to arrive any minute, but my American colleagues thought it absolutely perfect for their market and where greatly impressed.

The **Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge** is another property worth considering. Although I have not visited it personally it comes highly recommended. Opened in 1992, the lodge can accommodate 190 guests in 92 suites with stunning views to the crater floor. Meals are taken in the main restaurant with drinks taken either in the garden or in the main bar. The hotel also has pool where you can relax between safaris.



Most safari trips local operators tend to visit the floor a little later in the morning, I suggest that you ensure that the guards are aware the night before that you want the gates open at the very latest 8 am. What's the difference? Well, apart from meeting a whole herd of



migrating Wildebeest coming up the crater track to meet us, Elephant wandering the forests, Flamingos crowding the soda lake, Black-maned Lions and two Rhinos, one with calf, you've got paradise to yourself. Those who arrive even an hour later would have missed the Rhino completely.

Ngorongoro was a dream come true for me and it not only lived up to the highest expectations I had of it but easily surpassed them. To sum it up from leaving Kirawira to breakfast the following morning a period of 12 hours, I had videoed **THE BIG 5'** Elephant, Lion, Buffalo, Leopard and Rhino plus, Cheetah, Giraffe and many other species of mammals, reptiles and birds, quite, quite, unbelievable.

From Ngorongoro we journeyed south, a relatively short distance to **Lake Manayara** and the



spectacular setting of the Serena Lodge on the edge of the Mto wa Mbu escarpment, overlooking the Great Rift Valley and the stunning Manyara Soda Lake. The circular shape of the buildings is a tribute to indigenous architectural traditions and is famed as having one of the GREAT swimming pools in the world where you can relax and the pool just seems to blends seamlessly with the lake beyond.

This property offers peace and tranquillity, but in my opinion would not stand alone as a single centre safari venue, especially with Ngorongoro so near. It would however complement

Ngorongoro for a group wanting two different styles of safari experience and relaxation.

ZANZIBAR the "Spice Island" is a step back into the past, a truly exotic destination with Arab style buildings standing side by side with the thatched, mud huts of Africa. A tropical paradise of palm studded silver sand beaches and turquoise blue waters set just 25 miles off the coast of mainland Tanzania.

The name Zanzibar is derived from a combination of two Arabic words, '*Zinj*', meaning black, and '*barr*', being the Arabic word for land, resulting in the ancient title - '*Land of the Blacks*' and is the birthplace of Swahili, upon which legends were carried, trade routes were opened and a Sultan's empire prospered. Once the trading centre of the whole of East Africa, Zanzibar attracted Sumerians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Arabs, Chinese and Malays. The great explorers - Burton, Speke, Livingstone and Krapf continued their journeys from these shores.

The island is also famous for its beautiful sandy beaches, with fringing coral reefs, warm, clear-blue waters, idyllic islands, excellent reefs for snorkelling and diving, fantastic deep sea fishing and water sports activities.

UNGUJA ISLAND

Unguja Island (also called Zanzibar), is the main island in the Zanzibar archipelago. It harbours the historical stone town and the seat of government. For a visitor, there is a lot to see and experience on Unguja Island. The Capital is historic Stone Town, with its narrow winding streets, vivid markets and colourful buildings

PEMBA ISLAND

Pemba Island, located in the north-east of Unguja Island has been nicknamed as "the green island", due to its scenery and beauty. It is home to the Wapemba ethnic group.

I recommend **Zanzibar** as a combination destination rather than as a stand-alone. It is primarily a destination in which to relax, although it does offer a number of excursions ranging from:



Stone Town: the only functioning historical town in East Africa and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Centre in 2000.

The town is a mixture of the cultures that have passed through it. Arabic buildings mingle with the Gothic architecture of the Anglican Church (built on the site of the slave market) stand beside that of traditional Africa. Heavy wooden doors studded with brass versus houses of such diverse personalities, such as Dr Livingston and Freddie Mercury, who were born on the island, can also be visited.



Spice Plantation Tour: The island is famous for such spices as cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, cardamom, and pepper and seeing them in their natural state can be quite surprising. As some tours can be quite commercialised, we suggest a visit to one which is still community based, thus enhanced by its own simplicity.



Dhow Excursion: Nothing can fully prepare you for a visit to one of Zanzibar's beautiful sandbanks to enjoy a seafood lunch with grilled fish and slipper lobster, gastronomic fruit tasting, coffee and Amarula liqueur, plus snorkelling, dhow sailing and to simply relax. This is quite simply a 'must-do' excursion, a real castaway experience.

HOTELS

The **Zamani Zanzibar Kempinski** is the first internationally branded 5-star hotel on the island. It enjoys a commanding ocean-front position on the island's prestigious north-east coast. Set on 30 acres of landscaped gardens and designed to blend in with its natural surrounding using materials native to the island.



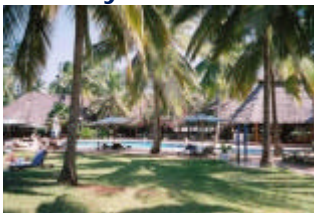
The Zamani Zanzibar Kempinski boasts 110 guest rooms and suites – each with their own private terrace or balcony, a Presidential villa, six private villas, two restaurants, two bars, fitness centre, 2 outdoor swimming pools, tennis court, games room, private jetty, a variety of water sports, cycling, conference room and the largest most extensive spa in Tanzania – Anantara Spa Zanzibar – operated by the world renowned Mandara Spa Thailand.

The hotel's wow factor is best shown in the rooms that are spacious and fully equipped and even include an outside shower and the pool area, with its infinity pool overlooking the Indian Ocean.



The hotel offers numerous locations for private functions, as well as its main restaurant - the Clove and the Red Snapper fish restaurant. Service is surprisingly good and very friendly for a hotel that has only been open a year and trying to set new standards on the island. Of course there are one or two classic cock-ups here and there, but we are assured that the continuing training programme is ironing these out rapidly!

Bluebay Beach Resort offers 88 sea-facing rooms, including 80 superior rooms, six deluxe rooms and two Sultan suites. Set on a 25-acre tropical site fronting the best beach on the island, the Bluebay offers a more relaxed environment to the Zamani and is almost half the price. The hotel offers an attractive spa and Watersports centre, including a PADI



diving centre. It also has an air-conditioned conference room for up to 70 persons. In addition the hotel prides itself on its 'Green Policy', which includes reverse osmosis to purify underground water so that it is fit for human consumption, wastewater treatment, which recycles water from the room, kitchen and laundry to water the hotel's tropical gardens. All rooms are designed to be energy efficient, with non-CFC refrigerators, rubbish separation and recycling. This is a well run hotel and importantly it works for incentive and conference groups alike.



Visas/Taxes: There is a \$50 visa/arrival tax for both Kenya and Tanzania, both can be paid on arrival. Zanzibar also has a \$25 departure tax.