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Safaris since 1974.

### **Attention!**

The following itinerary is meant to help your safari planning. Since 1974, we at Cowabunga Safaris have done many, many kinds and variations of safaris to Tanzania.

This is only one kind of safari. Do you want something more upscale? Do you want something more rustic and participatory? If you have a different safari in mind, wish to stay longer, or want to travel to other parts of the continent, tell us. We can make it happen.

## **TANZANIA: "The Great Ruaha Safari"**

**Length:** 17 days from the USA; 15 days in Africa

**Accommodations:** 1 night in an upscale lodge; 14 nights in luxury tented camps. All accommodations have private, hot-water showers and en suite toilets. All the places Cowabunga stays are in breathtaking surroundings in or near world-renowned wildlife areas. Pictures of accommodations are available on request.

**Luxury Tented Camps:** An additional explanation... Our luxury tented camps are not the same as the camps you might find on a weekend camping trip in the USA. The tents are large - they are big enough to walk into and stand in -- with comfortable twin beds complete with linen and duvets. All tents are bug-proof with mesh windows, have nightstands next to the beds, and, has been mentioned, possess en suite bathroom facilities.

**Fitness Level:** Although there will be opportunities for optional walks and boat trips, this safari is primarily a vehicle-based safari. This said, many of the

roads in Tanzania, especially in the Ruaha, are rough - that's spelled R-O-U-G-H. Accordingly, it helps to have a minimal level of fitness.

**Group size:** Cowabunga believes in keeping groups small, to better share Africa. Unless otherwise stated, this type of safari will have no more than 10 Safarists. A custom-designed itinerary might have fewer still.

**Food:** You should NOT go on this type of safari to lose weight! All meals cater to western preferences, are first-class, and excellently prepared. Chefs make exquisite cuisine using a wide array of meats, pastas, and fresh vegetables and fruits grown in the area. Desserts are delectable and overwhelming - so much so, we encourage all Safarists to practice the Cowabunga mantra: to "Eat dessert first, because life is so uncertain.")

**Water:** Treated drinking water is provided in some of the places we stay. Everywhere bottled water is available for purchase.

**Alternative Flight Arrangements:**

Due to restricted availability of flights and low-cost fares to Kilimanjaro International Airport in northern Tanzania, some Safarists opt to fly in to and out of Nairobi, Kenya, which is served by more carriers. To do this requires extra hotel, transfer, and visa arrangements - all at additional cost. Safarists also need more time; plan on departing at least one day earlier than the scheduled departure day, and returning a day later. Overland shuttles between Nairobi and Arusha typically take between four and six hours. If you choose to make such alternative flight plans, Cowabunga Safaris stands ready to help make all necessary hotel and shuttle arrangements.

**Stay Longer:** Experiencing all Africa has to offer is a once-in-a-lifetime privilege for most. Accordingly, some Safarists like to stay longer. We at Cowabunga Safaris understand! If, after this safari, you wish to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, or to travel to Zanzibar, or to continue on to other parts of the continent, we can help. In fact, given our love of the continent, you can bet we'll beg to join you!

**Detailed Briefings:** Cowabunga provides in-depth written briefings for all Safarists after they sign-on for any safari. Furthermore, when possible, Cowabunga conducts face-to-face briefings approximately three months before departure. For those who can't make the face-to-face briefings, a detailed transcript of questions and answers is sent to them. Gary, Brian and Nancy always stand ready to brief Safarists at a moment's notice via fax, phone, e-mail or in-person.

**-- A NOTE FROM YOUR SAFARI LEADER --**

Tanzania has long been regarded as a premier wildlife destination. Here, in a country over seven times the size of Kansas, 25% of all land has been set aside for wildlife ecology and conservation. The result is magical: diverse populations of animals in numbers that can defy description, often in the thousands.

For much of this Safari we are "under canvas" in a way reminiscent of how Roosevelt, Ruark, and Hemingway went on Safari. Our tents, however, provide extraordinary comfort. The tents are stand-up, walk-in ones with large interiors and en suite facilities. It is a fantastic experience. Sleeping and living under canvas provides the *feel* of Africa, allowing the sounds and cycles of the bush to reach one better, thereby giving a complete connection with nature.

## -- THE ADVENTURE --

\* \* \* \* \*

### **An African Wilderness**

In October 1992 for the first time Cowabunga Safaris ventured deep into the interior of Tanzania to a little known and seldom visited area -- Ruaha. Officially designated as a National Park, Ruaha is so much more: it is a true African Wilderness.

Dominated by the Great Ruaha River, the area contains four distinct ecological habitats. It is so unlike the familiar "northern circuit" of Tanzania that it seems more like Zimbabwe. And it is the one place in Tanzania where some of Africa's most spectacular antelope occur: roan and sable, as well as both greater and lesser kudu.

The original 1992 Ruaha Safari was born around the campfire one evening under a Serengeti sky. Those present had been to many of the fabled destinations on the African continent: Kalahari Desert, Etosha Pan, Okavango Delta, Zambezi Valley, Ngorongoro Crater, Zanzibar, even the Selous and Lake Turkana. But none of us had been to the Great Ruaha.

That settled it.

We'd go. And we did.

For two long days we drove over rugged (or non-existent) roads in 4WD Land Rovers from Tarangire to Ruaha. At Ruaha we enjoyed the spectacular scenery of our camp setting, had intensive but productive game drives, and watched at the Great Ruaha River as a marvelous array of African wildlife paused to drink: zebra, waterbuck, Cape buffalo, impala, giraffe, kudu, wart hog, baboon, mongoose, and elephants/elephants/elephants! Hippos and crocodile were also prevalent, not to mention a wide variety of bird life.

The Great Ruaha Safari that we now offer actually was born during our 1992 Safari in the Ruaha. Based on our experience, we have redeveloped the itinerary to eliminate the grueling two-day drive,

and added a charter flight from Tarangire to the charming town of Iringa, a short drive from Ruaha.

We've still included Lake Manyara and fully staffed tented camps in Tarangire National Park and on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater. But it's the Ruaha that is special because it truly is off the Safari trail and we are pleased to feature it in this unforgettable Safari.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Day 1 EN ROUTE**

We depart the USA on our KLM flight to Amsterdam. Dinner is served as we cross the North Atlantic and breakfast prior to our morning arrival at Schipol Airport, Amsterdam. (D/B)

### **Day 2 EN ROUTE/ARUSHA**

We have several hours in Amsterdam before the KLM flight from Schipol Airport to Kilimanjaro International Airport near Arusha, Tanzania. Upon arrival we transfer to the Arusha Resort Centre for overnight. (D/S)

### **Day 3 NGORONGORO CRATER**

After breakfast in Arusha we drive (about 4 hours) in 4WD Land Rovers to the Ngorongoro Crater in time for lunch. Our accommodations for the next three nights are on the east rim of the Crater in a private tented camp set up just for us. These are deluxe tents -- large and roomy with canopied "front porches", camp chairs and table. The tents are lighted by battery operated 12 volt lamps with a hurricane kerosene lantern outside. (No noisy generators in our Camps.) Each tent has its own bucket shower and toilet. The dining tent is large, spacious and airy and we guarantee you won't lose weight on this Safari as the food is marvelous.

The best times for game viewing are in the early mornings and late afternoons. By camping on the rim we can get off early so that we have the Crater more or less to ourselves before those staying in the Lodges make their descent. We return to Camp for lunch and later in the afternoon return to the Crater floor for another game drive. Since it is a shorter drive for us into the Crater we are able to stay down later than the lodge dwellers. Up on the rim each evening the sounds of the nocturnal animals are all around and the stars sparkle overhead while we enjoy a comforting fire. Nights are cool as our camp is at 7,000'. We camp in our deluxe tents on the rim of the Crater for three nights. B/L/D

### **Days 4-5 NGORONGORO CRATER**

As somebody once said, "The Ngorongoro Crater is truly a little Garden of Eden, where the 23,000 resident mammals and thousands of birds have all they need in this one place". Often called the "Eighth Wonder of the World", Ngorongoro was an active volcano some eight million years ago. Its cone collapsed leaving a crater, or more properly, a caldera, the largest of its type in the world (102 square miles). The Crater's magic stems from two

factors: sheer physical beauty and the abundance of notable birds and game animals who live here year round and are unconcerned by vehicles. It is a virtual animal paradise, a microcosm of predator and prey. Herds of plains game, as well as rhino, may be viewed against the backdrop of the Crater wall which is constantly in sight.

We, as visitors, become part of the scene, feel the heartbeat of this great Continent and savor every moment of our overnights on the Crater rim. Each day we follow game trails exploring the vast open areas of the Crater. We can photograph from some of the same trails that Hugo van Lawick used in his books *Savage Paradise* and *Last Days in Eden*, the latter heightened by the evocative prose of Elspeth Huxley. It is possible to see elephant, buffalo, lion, hippo, wildebeest, gazelle and hyena. Fortunately the Crater has remained a safe haven for animals and has the only accessible population of black rhino in their natural habitat (not translocated) in East Africa.

The Ngorongoro Crater is only 4% of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a unique experiment in multiple land use. There are the pastoralists and their livestock, wildlife, forests, tourism and archeology. The area is also a vital source of water for all the farming areas to the east and south of the Ngorongoro Crater. Olduvai Gorge is within the Conservation Area and arrangements can be made to visit the site where Mary Leakey found early humanoid remains. B/L/D

## **Day 6           NGORONGORO CRATER/LAKE MANYARA NATIONAL PARK**

After breakfast we travel overland to the Lake Manyara Hotel arriving in time for lunch.

The hotel is built on the edge of the escarpment wall of the Great Rift Valley overlooking Lake Manyara and the Park. After check-in and lunch we'll have a game drive down the escarpment into Lake Manyara National Park. The Park is one of the smallest in Tanzania (123 square miles) but offers an entirely new experience. At the entrance to the Park is a groundwater forest with wild fig, sausage, tamarind and mahogany trees. This habitat soon changes to open grasslands, marshlands and scrub areas. If we're lucky we may see lions in the trees and the elusive Sykes or blue monkey. Another species common to this Park but difficult to spot is the large African monitor lizard. And there are still many elephant to be found in the park. A game drive through Lake Manyara N.P. is a test for the senses: we'll be looking at the sky, in the trees, on the ground, and out both sides of the vehicle, as well as listening for telltale sounds indicating animals in the dense vegetation. Along the shore of Lake Manyara we should see many hippo. Birding at this alkaline lake is excellent -- with flamingos, pelicans and numerous shore and water birds. In fact, over 380 species of birds have been recorded in the Park.

Lake Manyara National Park is the site of extensive studies by Iain and Oria Douglas-Hamilton that resulted in their classic book, *Among the Elephants*.

Dinner and overnight at the Lake Manyara Hotel. B/L/D

### **Day 7            TARANGIRE NATIONAL PARK**

This morning we drive to Tarangire National Park (about 2 hours) which is the third largest Park in Tanzania and has one of the finest concentrations of large baobab trees in all of Africa. Our tented camp is set up for us and we'll spend the next four nights here. B/L/D

### **Days 8-10    TARANGIRE NATIONAL PARK**

Each morning at dawn we have a wake up call of coffee, tea or cocoa at our tents. Typically, we take an early morning game drive (an excellent time to see the animals active) and return to the camp for full breakfast. After breakfast we go out again returning in time for lunch around 1:00 or 2:00 pm after which we relax until the afternoon game drive at 4:00 pm. Driving in Tanzanian Parks is not permitted between 7:00 pm and 6:00 am, so we return to camp at dusk with time to freshen up before sundowners and dinner at 8:00. Mind you, these time frames vary depending on what we see and what the animals are doing.

The Tarangire River is the lifeblood of this park because it has water year round. Although the animals disperse during the rainy season, they come back into the Park to stay through the dry season (approximately May-Dec).

In addition to the magnificent baobabs for which the Park is known, there are sausage trees, flat-topped acacias and Borassa palms. Animal species to watch for are waterbuck, eland, baboon, kudu, gazelle, wildebeest, kongoni, oryx, lion, giraffe and impala. An unusually large elephant population also resides in the Park. B/L/D

### **Day 11            RUAHA NATIONAL PARK**

After breakfast in camp we take our chartered flight to Iringa where we have lunch at the Railway Hotel. Iringa is a charming town at an elevation of 5,000' and remote from the tourist circuit. We will explore the bustling market (which is known for its basketry) before leaving by Land Rover for Ruaha (70 miles).

After entering the Park we cross the Great Ruaha River to reach Ruaha River Camp. Our accommodations the next five nights are in individual stone and wood rondavels. Some are perched on a hill and built right into the kopjes; others are on the banks of the Ruaha River. The dining room and bar are on the hillside with a commanding view. Each sleeping rondavel shares a separate bath and toilet facility in another rondavel. All the rondavels are well spaced so that there is a great deal of privacy. The Camp is rustic with rugged terrain, uneven paths, and some steep steps. B/L/D

### **Days 12-15    RUAHA NATIONAL PARK**

Ruaha National Park is the second largest park in Tanzania. At the request of the local people, it was detached in 1964 from the Rungwa Game Reserve and declared a National Park. The name comes from the river which was called "Luvaha" by the Hehe people and means 'great'. Originally this was probably "Livindi Luvaha", meaning 'great river', but the noun was dropped, as is not uncommon in Bantu languages, leaving the adjective standing

alone. It is therefore somewhat strange that in English the river is called the Great Ruaha which means the Great Great.

During the dry season (when we are there) the river is a life spring to the animals. Large numbers are attracted to it including impala, warthog, giraffe, waterbuck, eland, zebra, buffalo, lion, leopard, hunting dog, cheetah, Grant's gazelle, ostrich, roan and sable antelope. The river is home to unbelievably high numbers of hippo and crocodile. One of the largest concentrations of elephant in Tanzania is found here. It is unique in East Africa because one can see both lesser and greater kudu as well as roan and sable antelope.

The Park has an average altitude of 3,000 feet. The countryside can be divided broadly into four ecological zones, each with its own special atmosphere as well as mammal and bird life. These are the main river valleys with their stands of tall fig, tamarind and Acacia albida trees; the undulating country dominated by the baobab tree but mainly species of Combretum and Commiphora trees and shrubs, with the occasional Acacia tortilis; the Miombo or Brachystegia woodlands where sable antelope are most likely to be found; and areas of open black cotton grassland.

The reason the Ruaha is still such a remote wilderness area is because of the Friend of Conservation -- the tsetse fly. If it hadn't been for the fly, the cattle-keeping people would have moved in years ago and the wildlife driven back to even more remote parts of the country. The tsetse here in Ruaha does not transmit sleeping sickness or any other harmful disease to human beings and certain areas of the Park are comparatively free of tsetse. When found, they do tend to swarm together. Our vehicles are fitted with screens that can be attached when travelling through a swarm.

We have ample time in Ruaha to explore the area at our own pace. B/L/D

#### **Day 16      RUAHA/ARUSHA/AMSTERDAM**

We leave Ruaha this morning after breakfast by charter plane and fly back to Arusha where we have day rooms. The afternoon is free for last minute shopping. We'll meet in the evening for our Farewell Dinner before driving to Kilimanjaro International Airport for our KLM flight to Amsterdam. B/D(D)

#### **Day 17      EN ROUTE HOME**

Morning arrival in Amsterdam where we connect onto our KLM flight to Chicago. (B/L/S)



Safaris since 1974.