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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.

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: "Trekking and Adventure Camping Safari"

-- SAFARI OVERVIEW --

- Length:** 15 days from the USA, departing from Detroit; 12 days in Africa
- Accommodations:** 3 nights in lodges; 9 nights adventure camping in two-person domed tents.
- Gear:** All camping equipment (i.e., cooking gear, tent, sleeping mat, wash basins, "bush showers," water purifiers, etcetera) is provided. However, Safarists need to bring their own sleeping bag, or rent one in Africa for the duration of the safari for \$50. Individuals should also bring a towel, flashlight(s), and *broken-in* trekking gear (e.g., boots, hat, daypack, sunblock, layers of clothes, flip-flops/water sandals, etcetera... Cowabunga's "Safari Briefing," provided under separate cover, covers such items in detail).
- Fitness Level:** Individuals need to have an ability to trek up to six hours a day over broken ground and gametrails while carrying a daypack with camera, water bottle, jacket and snacks (a support vehicle, rendezvoused with in the evenings, carries all food, water supplies, luggage and camping

gear). The Ol Doinyo Lengai Summit Trek (Day 12) is particularly demanding due to the steep grade of the mountain and the loose volcanic gravel under foot.*

* As an alternative to trekking at every opportunity, some individuals may opt to ride in the support vehicle. An alternative trek can be arranged for those who choose not to undertake the Ol Doinyo Lengai Summit climb on Day 12.

Group size: Not counting our Maasai warrior escorts, this safari could have as few as two Safarists, or as many as ten.

Food: Lodge meals are buffet style, consisting of a wide array of meats, pastas, vegetables, fruits and desserts served to western preferences. A "safari cook" prepares all meals while adventure camping. Adventure camping breakfasts consist of breads, fruits, cereal, hot porridge, juice, and hot coffee or tea. Boxed lunches taken while trekking consist of sandwiches, breads, vegetables, and fruits. Hot evening meals -- prepared on a campfire, and then consumed around it -- are more substantial, but likewise consist of meats, pastas, breads, vegetables, and fruits.

Water: Ample bottled- and treated-water is provided. Safarists are also provided with refillable one-liter, hard-plastic water bottles ideal for trekking.

"Facilities": Depending on where we are, bathing can be done in proper campground-like showers, washbasins, or bush showers (if a tree is available). Similarly, calls of nature can be answered through a mixture of long-drops, short-drops, or improvised arrangements (if a bush is available); be sure to ask Brian about Tanzanian "John Wayne" toilet paper, which is provided.

Cost: TBD

* Ironically, adventure camping often costs more in East Africa than staying in permanent camps and lodges - a reflection of the difficult logistics involved. Airfare is always expensive, given the distance to Africa and the relatively few carriers which serve the continent.

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!

-- A NOTE FROM YOUR SAFARI LEADER --

This safari was conceived of *The Tree Where Man Was Born*.

Possibly more than any other, this book, Peter Matthiessen's poetic classic, captures the essence of northern Tanzania's magic, mystery, and history. It recounts adventures through vast lands populated with wild animals and traditional people, lands which not only inspire, but demand, respect and reverence. The spiritual (and often literal) epicenter of this awe is Ol Doinyo Lengai -- the Maasai's "Mountain of God." Matthiessen returns to it again and again in his writing. Ol Doinyo Lengai similarly pervades this Safari, influencing it long before, and well after, our attempt to summit its majestic form.

Mostly on foot, occasionally in a vehicle, on this Safari we go where few westerners have been, following in Matthiessen's footsteps: Mt. Lemagarut; Sonjo Canyon; Selei Plain; Lake Natron; Gelai Volcano; the Kitumbeine Mountains... We also take in renowned places like the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater. We scale mountains. We trek expanses. We camp on sweeping vistas. We interact with diverse, resilient cultures. The logistics involved are daunting, the rewards great.

In this itinerary one finds Matthiessen's words. But only in Tanzania can you truly find their powerful resonance.

-- THE ADVENTURE --

Day 1 **EN ROUTE**

... The anticipation I felt, the sense of origins, of innocence and mystery, like a marvelous childhood faculty restored... (Something)

made me restless, the stillness in this ancient continent, the echo of so much that had died away, the imminence of so much as yet unknown.

Our Safari begins! We depart the USA in the late afternoon on our overnight flight to Amsterdam on Northwest/KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. (D/B)

Day 2 ARUSHA COFFEE LODGE

Dark Meru is gaunt... under the peaks the cotton clouds, filling with light, nudge and nestle like balloons in the corners of the dead volcano.

Something has happened here, is happening, will happen - whole landscapes seem alert...

We have an early morning arrival in Amsterdam where we connect on to our KLM nonstop daylight flight over Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. We fly the length of the Sahara following the course of the Nile, over the Great Rift Valley, and across the equator into Kilimanjaro International Airport outside Arusha, Tanzania. We are met by our driver-guide and transported to the Arusha Coffee Lodge, in the shadow of Mt. Meru. Mt. Meru is the second highest mountain in Tanzania, after Kilimanjaro, and the fifth highest in Africa. In the cool to cold night, we should be able to see its impressive 14,976-foot silhouette towering above us. *Karibu Tanzania!* (B/L/D)

Day 3 NGORONGORO CRATER

In East Africa, one is never far from the Great Rift, which splits the earth's crust from the Dead Sea south to the Zambezi River, and east and west in broken cracks from the Gulf of Aden to the Valley of the Congo. In places, the Rift is forty miles across, a trench of sun and tawny heat walled by plateaus.

After a leisurely breakfast and stroll around the lush grounds of the Arusha Coffee Lodge, we clamber into our 4x4 vehicle. We spend the morning traversing the floor of the Great Rift Valley, passing through semi-arid lands on a smooth, sealed highway. Around mid-morning we pass through the colorful town of Mto wa Mbu ("Mosquito Creek"), near Lake Manyara at the base of the Great Rift Valley Escarpment. The town is an eclectic market town where several tribes converge to form a rich linguistic mix. Indeed, Mto wa Mbu is the only place on the African continent where four major African language groups - Bantu, Khoisan, Cushitic, and Nilotic - are spoken in the same area.

...In a kingdom of black rains, the Crater Highlands mounted toward the rim of Ngorongoro...

After driving up the Gregorian Escarpment (part of the western side of the Great Rift Valley), we are afforded a wonderful view of Lake Manyara and its environs. Proceeding

across the Mbuyuland Plateau, we ascend into dense montane forests of the Ngorongoro Crater Highlands. Be sure to watch for tusk marks in the vertical cliffs along the side of the road; this is where elephants dig for minerals. At an elevation of nearly 7,500 feet, we catch our first awe-inspiring glimpse of the Crater itself. This afternoon we descend over 2,000 feet on to the Crater floor for an extended gamedrive. In the early evening, we climb back out and perch ourselves on the Crater rim at the Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge. The Lodge has a dining room, bar and lounge, reception, shop, rooms with en suite facilities, and best of all, picture windows with *unbelievable* views. We are in a perfect position to watch the many moods of the Crater, with its ever-changing clouds, colors, and shadows. B/L/D

Day 4 MT. LEMAGARUT SUMMIT TREK

Away from the Ngorongoro road, the Crater Highlands, girt by dead volcanoes that rise ten thousand feet and more into clouds, are little known.

In the company of an armed park ranger (we are in animal country, after all), we attempt to reach the 10,273-foot summit of Mt. Lemagarut. The mountain is the last major mountain before the vast Serengeti plains. From its upper slopes we should be able to see the Serengeti to the west, the Gol Mountains to the north, Lake Eyasi to the south, as well as part of the Ngorongoro Crater floor to the east, now nearly a mile lower than us! Lemagarut forms an interesting ecosystem of grasslands interspersed with forested gorges. We overnight once again at the Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge, the warmth and shelter of the lodge providing a pleasant retreat from the cold, damp conditions which frequently mark June nights in the Ngorongoro Highlands. B/L/D

Day 5 NGORONGORO CRATER to OLDUVAI GORGE TREK

The Maasai speak of the benevolent Black God who brings rain, and the malevolent Red God who begrudges it, the Black God living in dark thunderheads and the Red in the merciless dry-season sun; Black God and Red are different tempers of Ngai, for God is embodied in the rain and the fierce heat, besides ruling the great pastures of the sky. Looming thunder is feared: the Red God seeks to pierce Black God's kingdoms, in hope of bringing harm to man. But in distant thunder the Maasai hear the Black God saying, "Let man be..."

Today we trek out of the Ngorongoro Highlands and down onto the Serengeti plains, accompanied once again by an armed park ranger. It is likely to be cool and wet in the morning (temperatures in the 50s with a light mist), and sunny, dry, and warm by the afternoon (with high temperatures in the upper-80s). Our destination is Olduvai Gorge, often called "The Cradle of Mankind." This narrow gorge is 31 miles long and famous for the fossil hominid finds of Louis and Mary Leakey. En route we pass Maasai villages, grazing cattle, and more than likely, herds of zebra and gazelle. In the late afternoon we

meet up with our driver-guide and vehicle, and then proceed to a specially chosen campsite.
B/L/D

Days 6, 7 & 8 SERENGETI

I saw the first rays of morning fall on the Serengeti Plain... No road was visible, nor any sign of man, only a vast westward prospect spreading away to the clouds of Lake Victoria. Off to the north rose the Gol Mountains, in Maasai Land; in the near distance, scattered trees converged in the dark shadow of Olduvai Gorge. Beyond the shadow, spreading away in a haze of sand and golden grass, sun rays and cloud shadow, lay lion-colored plains that have changed little in millions of years.

After breaking camp, we drive to Naabi Hill where, from the top of it, we can gain some perspective as to the IMMENSITY of the 6,000-square-mile Serengeti. For three days we explore all the Serengeti has to offer, primarily by vehicle due to national park regulations and distances involved. Gameviewing is phenomenal here; wherever one looks - around kopjes, on the savannah, amongst the woodlands, in the rivers -- animals abound. For three nights we adventure camp in the heart of the Serengeti. B/L/D

Day 9 LOLIONDO TREK

...The Maasai believe that all cattle on earth belong to them... Eland and buffalo may be eaten by Maasai, since these are thought of as wild cattle, but no other animal, or fish or fowl, is ever hunted... Maasai herds are still seen intermittently along the eastern boundaries of the park, and a few Moran may turn up at the settlement of Seronera. One-legged or ankles crossed, leaning on their spears, they gaze impassively...

This morning we drive east, toward the Gol Mountains on the eastern edge of the Serengeti ecosystem. After setting up camp (possibly in close proximity to herds of wildebeest and zebra), we are introduced to traditional Maasai warriors who will be our trekking escorts for the next few days. We get to know each other better on an afternoon trek in the Loliondo area. This evening, with the night-sounds of the Serengeti all around, a canvas of stars over head, and subdued conversations in Maa, Swahili and English, time seems irrelevant: it could be the year 1884 or 2004. Surely this is how one was meant to live! B/L/D

Day 10 GOL MOUNTAINS to SONJO CANYON TREK

The Gol is crossed by a canyon... that climbs gradually in a kind of arch and descends again into the Salei Plain.

Today we traverse the Gol Mountains, looking for animals congregated around water sources or in grazing areas. Near the eastern edge of the Gol Mountains, we enter the magnificent Sonjo Canyon. In places the canyon walls are hundreds of feet high and only a few feet wide! At times we may be forced to wade waist deep in water (don't worry, there aren't any crocs). Eventually we emerge onto the Selel Plain, a plateau dotted with rock formations. Here we rendezvous with our vehicle and set up camp. B/L/D

Day 11 SELEI PLAIN to LAKE NATRON TREK

From where we stood, awed by the view, white flats extended a half-mile to the water's edge, where the heat waves rose in a pink fire of thousands of flamingos. All around the north end of the lake the color shimmered, and for some distance down both shores; on the west shore, under the dark Sonjo escarpments, an upside-down forest was reflected. Southeast, the outline of Gelai was a phantom mountain in an amorphous sky, and in the south, the lake vanished in brown vapors that shrouded Ol Doinyo Lengai... In this somber kingdom of day shadows and dead smokes, the fresh pinks of flamingos and the desert rose appeared unnatural...

For much of today we descend the Great Rift Valley escarpment on a steep, rocky Maasai cattle- and goat-trail. We'll likely pass traditional Maasai herdsman, spears in hand, also using the trail (our Maasai escorts are bound to know many of them as clan mates or friends). The trail, plunging off of the plateau with a decline in elevation of nearly 2,000 feet, provides a vital link between the plateau's permanent water sources and grazing areas, and the Great Rift Valley floor's mineral licks. Our destination is Lake Natron.

Lake Natron is another world. It is a large, shallow soda lake. Vast salt flats surround it. Its shores are nearly 1,200 feet lower than Lake Manyara, and daytime temperatures often exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Thermal springs bubbling up from the ground are much hotter yet. Still, in this seemingly inhospitable environment one finds life: microorganisms, algae, all kinds of resident and migratory birds, including flamingos in the thousands, even a type of perch found nowhere else, *Talapia Grahami*. This place provides a surreal stopover, foreshadowing "other worldliness" yet to come. We go to bed with Matthiessen's words in our thoughts: ...To Lengai, for the Mountain of God was the beacon in this strangest and most beautiful of all regions that I have come across in Africa. B/L/D

Day 12 OL DOINYO LENGAI SUMMIT TREK

The Mountain of God is a magnificent pure cone, a true mystic volcano, shrouded in pale ash so that it mists into the canopies of clouds, making the whole mountain an illusion.

"What swirls, oozes, spews, goozes, and makes volcanologists sigh? The marvelous mountain with weird lava fountains - Tanzania's Ol Doinyo Lengai." This is how *National Geographic* started its January 2003 article about the active volcano that is "The Mountain of God." According to Maasai beliefs, the 9,440 summit of Ol Doinyo Lengai is home to their god, Engai. As such, it is a place of pilgrimage where one might pray for such important life-sustaining things as rain, cattle, and children. Few westerners have ever been here.

... From my seat on the Mountain of God, I ruled Embagai and the green shifting shadows of the Crater Highlands, climbing away into black clouds like a mythical kingdom. The clouds guarded old volcanoes, Jaeger Summit and Loolmalassin, whose peaks I had never seen. Broad-backed, motionless on the wind, an eagle descended the black river that isolates Lengai from the Highlands. Seen from above, a bird of prey, intent on all beneath, is the very message of silence.

We start our climb of Ol Doinyo Lengai at 1:00 a.m., when temperatures are cool. Though the climb is a non-technical one, it is physically demanding due to the steep grade of the mountain and the loose volcanic gravel under foot. It is our intention to reach the summit just before sunrise, in order to watch the sun's rays wash over the Great Rift Valley floor far below, look for Mt. Kilimanjaro in the east, mark the retreating shadows of nearby volcanoes like Gelai (to the northeast) and Kerimasi (to the southeast), and wonder at the changing colors of Lake Natron in the north. We might even follow our Maasai guide *into* the caldera of Ol Doinyo Lengai, skirting glowing lava flows and grayish-black spatter cones.

Between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. we begin our descent. By midmorning we are back at camp. After brunch and a siesta (or *pumzika* in Swahili), we trek in the late afternoon to a waterfall for a swim. Finally, after a gorgeous sunset, a sundowner or two, and a hearty meal, we gratefully crawl into our tents and collapse into our sleeping bags. What an once-in-a-lifetime, well-earned day! B/L/D

Day 13 GELAI & KITUMBEINE MOUNTAINS TREK

In the distance were the hard white spots that in African landscapes signify far herds of cattle, but here livestock and wild animals were still in balance, as once they were throughout Maasai Land. Everywhere along the track trailed zebra, gazelle, and wildebeest, with a few eland...

This morning we load the vehicle and drive cross-country in an easterly direction. Somewhere just past the Gelai Volcano, in the vicinity of the Kitumbeine Mountains, we make camp. This done, we undertake a leisurely trek; at a minimum we should see giraffe, herds of zebra and gazelle, and all kinds of birds (as always). Keep your eyes open: you never know when, where, or what kind of "unexpected eventualities" might occur! B/L/D

Day 14 LONGIDO to ARUSHA

In the time when (God) created all things, he created the sun. And the sun is born, and dies, and comes again. He created the moon. And the moon is born, and dies, and comes again. And the stars are born, and die, and come again. He created man, and man is born...

Today is our final day in the bush. We drive toward the Kenya/Tanzania border on a little-used dirt track, eventually hitting a tarmac road near the village of Longido. The bustling border town of Namanga is a mere 30 miles or so to the north. Our journey, though, takes us an hour-and-a-half south, past the western side of Mt. Meru and back into Arusha. We return to the Arusha Coffee Lodge, where we have dayrooms. Lunch is on our own. We meet for a farewell dinner before departing for Kilimanjaro International Airport and our KLM flight to Amsterdam. The flight provides the perfect opportunity to reflect on our safari -- and to dream of one's return. B/D

Day 15 AMESTERDAM to DETROIT

We have a morning arrival in Amsterdam where we connect on to our flight to the USA and home. Though this safari is over, memories endure: In every distance stand shrouded landscapes of the past and future. The present is wild blowing light, the sun, a bird, a baobab in heraldic isolation, like the tree where man was born. (B/L/S)



Safaris since 1974.