



Safaris since 1974

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**2005 SAFARI TRAILS**

Gary's Scheduled Safaris

<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination</u>	<u>Tariff</u>
3-15 Feb	2005 TANZANIA: The Great Migration	\$6950 (land & air)
6-18 Mar	2005 SOUTH AFRICA: Ken Blanchard Group	\$9995 (land & air)
16-28 May	2005 TANZANIA: Baobabs to Endless Plains	\$6995 (land & air)
8-23 Jun	2005 BOTSWANA: Bryan Family Safari	\$9995 (land & air)
15-28 Jul	2005 ZAMBIA: Hommert Central Group	\$9565 (land & air)
1-15 Aug	2005 KENYA: Saville Family Safari	\$7250 (land & air)
15-26 Sep	2005 ZAMBIA: A Wildlife Paradise	\$8795 (land & air)

Brian's Scheduled Safaris

<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination</u>	<u>Tariff</u>
26 Dec-10 Jan 2005	TANZANIA: Folks of the Flint Hills Walking Safari	(Private)
23 May-4 Jun 2005	KENYA: Bearcasts Meet African Cats Safari (Vehicle & Luxury Tent Camp/Lodge Safari) <i>Cowabunga Safaris' travel agent can arrange airfare from Kansas City for \$1700 per person (est.)*</i>	\$2200 (land only)
11-23 June 2005	TANZANIA: Kilimanjaro to Serengeti (Vehicle & Luxury Tent Camp/Lodge Safari; optional walks) <i>Cowabunga Safaris' travel agent can arrange airfare from Kansas City for \$1995 per person (est.)*</i>	\$3995 (land only)

**\*A NOTE ON AIRFARE:**

Cowabunga Safaris' travel agents can possibly quote CHEAPER AIRFARE *if contacted early*. The airfare quoted above is a conservative estimate on our part, but can only be guaranteed up to 121 days before departure. **Inside 121 days, prices will almost assuredly be more expensive, or no seats available** -- a reflection of the continent's lower flight volume when compared to other regions of the world. Also, safarists are NOT limited to departing from, say, Kansas City; our travel agent is happy to quote airfare from any city on request. As always, we're happy to consult with you about air arrangements -- and Africa -- at no obligation.

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**Eat Dessert First...  
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The *JUST NOW* News - A now-and-then Newsletter for alumni and friends of COWABUNGA SAFARIS published whenever we have enough news and time to put it together.

The  
**JUST  
NOW  
News**  
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## The Edge of Africa

Gary K. Clarke

After more than 120 safaris, in May 2004 I visited for the first time Gabon, Central Africa.

Sometimes called "The Edge of Africa," Gabon straddles the equator and is where the forest meets the Atlantic Ocean. The country supports a mosaic of forests, savannas and mountains that contain lowland gorilla, forest elephant, mandrill, chimpanzee, red buffalo, and a wealth of other species. A series of *National Geographic* articles have followed Michael Fay's Megatransect to Gabon across 2,000 miles of untamed Africa, all on foot. Fay then convinced the president of Gabon, Omar Bongo, to establish 13 national parks for conservation and tourism.

Researching my antiquarian map collection I came across a classic map of what is now Gabon by the famous explorer Richard F. Burton. Published in 1876 it is simply titled THE LANDS OF THE GORILLA. Mountain ranges, bays, rivers, even villages, are shown, but most of the designations are simply GORILLA COUNTRY. One, however, does indicate a tribal group and says: "MOSHOBO? (Said to be cannibals)."

On one trek in Gabon we went in search of lowland gorillas. We were tense, alert and cautious -- not because of gorillas, but from concern about meeting elephant or buffalo in such close quarters (their spoor was everywhere). The path, when there was one, was undulating and uneven. After many hours we heard gorillas (and chimps) but did not see them. Yet we did get sightings of monkeys I had never seen before: mustached guenon, putty-nosed monkey, grey-cheeked mangabey and red-capped monkey. I would get to observe and photograph gorillas later, on a more civil trek on "Gorilla Island," where a family of gorilla have been introduced. On the island are also engaging orphan gorilla being hand raised by researchers.

Gabon offers unique sightings and species behavior. While I did not see elephants on the beach and hippos swimming in the Atlantic Ocean (as reported in *National Geographic*), I did see spot-necked otter, sitatunga, and manatee. And our excursion up the Mpivi River was fantastic. The river, a narrow waterway with gallery forest towering to the heavens on either side, is a "Heart of Darkness" setting. The water is **BLACK** and the brilliant green vegetation creates mirror-image reflections. I saw more African finfoots, a seldom seen waterbird, in one afternoon than I had on all my previous safaris

### *The Edge of Africa, continued*

But the most surprising oddity was – believe it or not – crocodiles in trees! Large trees have grown at an angle toward the center of the river, probably seeking light. From a distance there appears to be a H-U-G-E monitor lizard nesting on a tree trunk over the water. No, wait: through binoculars it looks like slender-snouted crocodile – in a tree! As you get closer, it is! And then SPLASH! I've never seen this previously or even a reference in the literature. What causes this unique behavior? I have a theory – ask me.

So, a few highlights from my first venture to an intriguing, new destination. The most dangerous part of my journey, however, was in Paris. While waiting for my connecting flight to Libreville I sat for 12 hours at Charles de Gaulle airport in the new, multi-million dollar showcase terminal. I noticed tiny cracks of light breaking through the concrete ceiling but continued with my reading – HA! Four days later the roof collapsed and killed five people.

## Lengai and Nyaminyami – Spirits of Africa

Brian J. Hesse

Soon after Gary's return from Gabon, I led a trekking safari in northern Tanzania. It was the first Cowabunga Safari of its kind in the 30+ year history of the company.

Usually in the company of friendly, spear-toting, non-English speaking Maasai guides (both the Maasai and I had to knock the rust off of our Swahili, given their first language is Maa), we trekked in the Crater highlands and up Oldupai Gorge, descended onto the floor of the Ngorongoro Crater, explored the Serengeti, traversed the Sanjan Canyon and Arthai Plains, and then descended the Great Rift escarpment to Lake Natron. The safari culminated in a climb of *Ol Doinyo Lengai*: The Maasai's "Mountain of God." Imagine the magic of standing atop an active volcano with the Great Rift far below, a freezing wind dispersing steam from surrounding vents. All was punctuated with a long, low moan from deep within Lengai.

After Tanzania I returned to Zimbabwe for a third-ever Cowabunga horseback safari in the Mavuradonha Mountains, followed by a familiar favorite: a canoeing safari on the mythical Zambezi! The spirit of the Zambezi, *Nyaminyami*, was with us throughout: we had fantastic encounters with everything from elephant to sable. A highlight for me was fly-fishing for Tiger fish on the Zambezi, with cape buffalo and hinno nearby