

28 Day Game Parks & Gorillas

Catch a glimpse of East Africa's diverse landscapes while game-watching on the endless plains of the Masai Mara and Serengeti, Gorilla trekking in Uganda's mystical rainforests, and relaxing on the magnificent beaches on the Indian Ocean island of Zanzibar.

Start / End: Nairobi, Kenya / Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Duration: 28 days

Tour type: Overland camping safari

Group size: Maximum 24 passengers

Safari vehicle: Overland truck

Crew: 2 Crew members

Equipment: 2-Person dome tents with fly sheet and sewn in ground sheets, zip-up insect screens and foam sleeping mattresses. * (Bring own sleeping bag)

Included meals: Breakfast x 22 / Lunch x 23 / Dinner x 21

Reverse trip: No

Website:

www.african-overland-safaris.com/overland-tours/28-day-game-parks-and-gorillas-overland-tour.php

Tour Highlights

- **Kenya** - Great Rift Valley, Lake Nakuru National Park, Masai Mara National Reserve
- **Uganda** - Kampala, Jinja, Lake Bunyonyi, Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, Gorilla Trekking
- **Tanzania** - Meserani Snake Park, Masai Village Walk, Ngorongoro Crater, Olduvai Gorge, Serengeti National Park, Great Rift Valley
- **Zanzibar**

Itinerary

DAYS 1 & 2: Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret

Kenya is East Africa's most popular destination and has a long tradition of tourism and of welcoming visitors. Very often the first word you hear is the Swahili greeting 'Jambo' (hello), often followed by 'Hakuna matata' (no problem!). We recommend you arrive the day before the tour departure in order to relax and overcome any jetlag before your trip. Nairobi has seen rapid growth in recent years but has a comparatively small city centre, a highly interesting city market (great for sharpening your bargaining skills!), as well as craft shops, book shops and plenty of cafes and restaurants to sit and relax in. We depart Nairobi and descend into the 'Great Rift Valley', an enormous cleft in the Earth's surface stretching from the Red Sea to Madagascar but with particularly marked escarpments here in Kenya. Our first stop is Lake Nakuru National Park, a relatively small park (by African standards) located on the Rift Valley floor. Nakuru's shallow soda lake attracts a huge variety of birdlife - especially flamingos, which may gather in such numbers that from the nearby viewing point they form a strikingly pink 'fringe' around the lake-shore. But Lake Nakuru is not simply a bird sanctuary, it is also home to lion, rhino, leopard, warthog, baboon, antelope, and a variety of smaller animals. A delightful introduction to East Africa's wildlife diversity. From Nakuru we continue northwest to Eldoret, and the Uganda frontier.

DAYS 3 to 6: Jinja, Kampala

We cross into Uganda, Winston Churchill's 'Pearl of Africa'. This is a wonderfully fertile country of green terraced hillsides, lush banana plantations, steep mountains and tangled forests. But we spend our first couple of nights on the grassy banks of the River Nile, near the town of Jinja. It was the 19th century British explorer John Hanning Speke who recognised Lake Victoria as the 'source of the Nile' settling a long running dispute about Africa's (and the world's) longest river. From this modest monument, marking the historic spot, the Nile begins its 4132 mile course through Uganda, Sudan and eventually Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea.

Our camp overlooks a dramatic set of rapids known as Bujagali Falls. It is here that we usually have the option to try rafting - an exciting day out for those enjoying the thrill of 'white water'. There is also the opportunity to make some difference to local children at a local school project: 'Softpower' is a locally run voluntary programme aimed at building and improving schools in the Jinja area to which your contribution of a few hours of painting or plastering is always most welcome. Other activities at Jinja include quad biking, village walks and even bungee jumping! From Jinja, we move on to Uganda's capital Kampala, an attractive hilly city bustling with African street life - roadside traders, markets and busy matatu (mini-bus taxi) stands.

DAYS 7 to 13: Gorilla Trek, Nairobi

From Kampala, we travel south and west, skirting Lake Victoria and heading into the mountainous region of southwest Uganda. Although a long drive, the scenery is very rewarding as we cross the equator and pass through areas of thick papyrus which give way to mountain valleys and ancient forests. Heading deep into the Kigezi Highlands we stop at picturesque Lake Bunyoni, an ancient flooded valley, before arriving at Bwindi National Park. This region of Africa is home to the world's remaining 700 mountain gorillas, half of which inhabit Bwindi. [Occasionally we may travel into neighbouring Rwanda to trek for the gorillas.] On the day of our trek we gather in the early morning to meet our local guide and tracker. Walking in small groups we trek into the thick rainforest. The trekking can be demanding at times with uneven terrain and hilly rainforest but the privilege of spending time with a family of these gentle apes makes the effort well worthwhile. To many people, even those who stay in Africa longer than this two week tour, the day's trek and time with the gorillas remains their most exciting wildlife encounter in Africa.

The usual procedure, once we have located the gorilla 'family', is to squat or sit down and simply observe them for around an hour - the time set by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (the national body charged with controlling and maintaining the gorillas in Uganda). Gorillas are sociable creatures, living in groups between 12 and 20 individuals,

usually led by an 'alpha male' (the 'silverback' - so called because of the silver hair on his back which grows once the male gorilla attains maturity). Most people find that the gorillas are remarkably human-like at close quarters - particularly in the social interaction between family members and in 'play' activity in which the young engage. Photography is permitted (although not with a flash and there are restrictions for those who wish to use a video camera.)

Your permit allows you one trek and gorilla viewing (time limited to one hour). However because the authorities maintain strict limits on the number of visitors allowed to view the gorillas each day we may spend several days in the area while all passengers in our group complete the trek and viewing.

We return to Kenya via Kampala and the Rift Valley to Nairobi where we have a day to relax.

NB Depending on the availability of gorilla permits the itinerary on this section of the tour may vary in day to day running order from the above. Also we may visit neighbouring countries, eg Rwanda, for the gorilla trek (instead of Uganda) and that may entail extra visa fees, although we shall endeavour to advise you before departure of any significant change to the tour itinerary.

DAYS 14 to 19: Nairobi, Masai Mara National Reserve

After a day to relax and replenish our supplies we depart Nairobi and make our way across the Rift Valley to the Masai Mara National Reserve. We spend two nights camping on the edge of the Reserve and explore the park on morning and afternoon game drives. The sweeping plains, distant horizons, low slung acacia trees, occasional coppices of vegetation, and plentiful wildlife form a deeply evocative introduction to this wonderful continent. Predators (such as lion, cheetah, leopard) are well represented as are 'scavengers' (hyena, vultures) and the grazing animals - zebra, giraffe, buffalo, impala, gazelle as well as abundant birdlife.

From the Mara, we back across the Rift Valley to Nairobi, where we overnight on our way south to Tanzania.

DAYS 20 to 24: Arusha, Serengeti National Park, Olduvai Gorge, Ngorongoro Crater

After crossing the border at the busy Namanga frontier we come to Arusha. Situated mid-way between Cape Town and Cairo, this is very much Tanzania's 'safari capital' - a bustling city with colourful markets, shops, vehicles and people, all nestling in the shadow of the brooding Mt Meru (4556m). After exploring the curio markets, we head to our camp outside Arusha on the open plains to the west of the city. There is the opportunity to walk or take a camel to one of the local Masai villages and to visit the very informative Snake enclosure. It is from here that we prepare for our two night/three day excursion by 4x4 to Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Crater.

Stopping to see the Olduvai Gorge, made famous by Drs Louis and Mary Leakey for their explorations into early man we descend onto the open plains and wide horizons of the Serengeti. Green after the rains, brown and burnt in the dry this is home to an enormous variety of grazing animals, predators, and birdlife. Flatter and larger than the Masai Mara the Serengeti is simply huge - indeed the name 'derives from the Masai word Siringitu - 'the place where the land moves on forever'. Game viewing here can be superb and camping out in an unfenced campsite where lion and hyena roam nearby is an unforgettable experience.

The following day we drive out of the plains and ascend the outer wall of the Ngorongoro Crater. We spend the night camping on the rim (you may need a jacket as it can be cold at night). At 326 square kilometres in area the Ngorongoro is Africa's largest intact caldera and is a World Heritage Site. If the view from the rim (2400 metres above sea level) is spectacular, the site from the Crater floor (some 600 metres below the rim) is equally enjoyable. All the major mammals are present, except giraffe (which cannot manage the steep slopes leading down one to the Crater floor). We descend the steep access road for a morning of excellent game driving in this dramatic location. After lunch we drive back up the access road for a final view over the Ngorongoro before we retrace our steps back to Arusha and our camp for the evening.

DAYS 25 to 28: Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar

We have time in Arusha to replenish our stores before continuing past the shadow of Mt Kilimanjaro (Africa's highest peak at 5895m) to Dar es Salaam and the Indian Ocean. 'Dar' is Tanzania's main port and is a hub of commerce and industry - a hot, humid and bustling city. We set up camp at our campsite on the beach just outside of the city centre, usually having time to browse curio markets - best known for ebony wood - and prepare for our trip to Zanzibar.

Evocative and exotic, Zanzibar conjures up images of idyllic, sandy, palm fringed beaches, romantic winding cobbled alleys and lush tropical forests. You will find all of these and an intriguing past on the island. Zanzibar was once a major trading centre for spices and slaves as well as base for the great 19th century European explorers such as John Hanning Speke, Richard Burton and David Livingstone. Indeed the spice trade is centuries old: Zanzibaris have traded with the people of the Arabian peninsula for generations, plying the ocean in simple dhow sailboats relying on the annual trade winds for passage. The Arab influence is evident in the architecture and diverse street stall offerings of the capital, Stone Town. In fact it can be seen right along the East African coast with the Swahili language and culture displaying the mixing of Arab and African cultures over many centuries.

Our time on the island is not structured and your time is at leisure. Perhaps the best way to see Stone Town is on foot: explore the bazaars, shops, mosques, palaces, courtyards and myriad intricate alleyways of the old town. Spices are grown in plantations nearby and you can take day-tours to visit some and have your senses dazzled by the tastes and scents experienced. But if it's white sand, sparkling ocean and hot sun you prefer - head for the northern beaches and enjoy the Indian Ocean at its best. Try snorkelling and diving, indulge in some sumptuous seafood, or simply relax beneath a coconut palm with a cocktail and a good book.

After three nights we cross back by ferry to the African mainland and Dar es Salaam, where our tour ends.

NB As we leave the truck on the mainland, food and accommodation on Zanzibar is **not included** in the price or Local Payment. The time is yours to enjoy at leisure. Your tour leader will assist (if you wish) by booking suitable and well priced accommodation in Stone Town or on the beach (budget approx \$30-35 per night), unless you would like to book something independently in advance.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS & ACTIVITIES

In order to give you maximum flexibility on tour we offer a number of optional activities on the tour. To help budget, approximate prices are listed below (in US\$ unless otherwise stated. Pricing subject to change and availability).

ACTIVITY	PRICE	ACTIVITY	PRICE
UGANDA		KENYA	
Gorilla Trekking - included in tour price	-	Masai Mara Village Visit	\$25
Quad Biking	\$50		
White Water Rafting	\$95	TANZANIA	
Village Walk	\$10	Ngorongoro & Serengeti Excursion	\$500
Bungy Jumping	\$60	Serengeti Balloon Ride	\$500
Forest Walk	\$5-10	Camel Ride	\$30
ZANZIBAR			
Accommodation & Food (per day)	\$35		
Spice Tour	\$25		
Scuba Diving (Mnemba island)	\$150		
Snorkelling Day Trip	\$30-45		
Dolphin excursion	\$35-\$40		

TOUR INFORMATION

Travelling overland is great fun, but it can also be challenging! This is a participation tour and your help will be needed in setting up the camp each night and assisting (usually on a rota basis) with the various day to day campsite duties, such as shopping, cooking and keeping the truck and camp tidy. But don't worry it's not all hard work and it's a great way to meet the local people and get to know your fellow travellers. Your contribution benefits the success of the tour - most people find the greater their involvement, the greater their enjoyment of the whole trip.

Africa is an adventure destination and travelling here is not always predictable so be prepared to "expect the unexpected" in difficulties or delays which might come our way! However, you'll soon find that the diversity of the African landscape, the wildlife and the communities we pass on our way, make the sometimes rough travel and long driving days worthwhile.

Come with a sense of adventure and a flexible attitude and you will be sure to enjoy your overland tour across this amazing continent.

Tour Style

African Overland Safari

What's Included

Fully equipped safari vehicle, camping and cooking equipment including sleeping mattress, all road tolls and vehicle taxes, transport, services of driver and tour leader, meals as indicated.

What's Not Included

Local Payment excursions, visas, travel insurance, flights, departure taxes, airport transfers, sleeping bag, optional activities, drinks, tips, meals not mentioned in itinerary, items of a personal nature.

Accommodation

We use 2-person dome tents with fly sheets, built in ground sheets, zip-up insect screens and thick foam sleeping mattresses. We mainly use designated campsites, which often have permanent wash and shower facilities, electricity points and sometimes even a small shop and bar/restaurant.

Please Note:

- Accommodation and meals in Nairobi on nights 14 & 15 are not included in the tour price or Local Payment. Please put aside between US\$25 to US\$35 per night for meals and accommodation.
- Accommodation and meals on Zanzibar (days 25 to 28) are not included in tour price or Local Payment – please allow US\$30 to US\$35 per night.

Transport

24-seater, self contained, custom-built safari truck with onboard tables, plug sockets, freezer, library, i-pod jack, safety features and 70-litre individual lockers.

Meals

Meals included are - Breakfast (B) x 22, Lunch (L) x 23, Dinner (D) x 21

These meals are prepared in camp by the group and help preparing the meals is invited. Most dietary requirements can be catered for on the road. Please ensure you inform us of any special requirements when you book or at your earliest convenience.

Game Park Visits

In order to maximise the quality of game driving and to comply with local authority rulings, some of our National Park visits and game viewing is carried out using services provided by local African ground handlers. As well as enhancing our experience it also allows us to contribute at a 'grassroots' level to local economies from which local people benefit. These local services are included in the Inclusive Local Payment.

Gorilla Permits

The Uganda Wildlife Authority imposes strict regulations regarding the gorilla trekking permits. One of these is that permits must be booked and paid in advance. In order for us to do this we must collect your permit money, in addition to your normal deposit, at the time of booking. Like your deposit, the permit money is not refundable if you cancel your tour. The permits currently (Oct 2010) cost US\$510 per person.

On rare occasions, subject to permit availability, we may purchase trekking permits to view the gorillas in neighbouring Rwanda.

TOUR PREPARATION

Booking Information

When you make a confirmed booking for your tour you will be sent your booking documents and a predeparture booklet with detailed information to help you prepare for your trip. Once you have paid in full you will receive a Travel Voucher giving details of your joining hotel. Nairobi and Dar es Salaam are well served by a number of airlines and your travel agent can advise on flights to the start of the tour.

Joining Information

This tour starts in Nairobi. The pre-departure meeting is held at 18:00 on the evening prior to departure. The tour departs at 08:00 on day 1 and ends in Dar es Salaam on day 28.

Meeting point in Nairobi: **Boulevard Hotel**
Address: Harry Thuku Road
PO Box 42831
Nairobi
Tel +245 2 337 221 or +245 2 227 567/8/9
Fax +245 2 334 071
Email: hotel@hotelboulevardkenya.com

Pre-dep. meeting: 18:00 prior to departure day
Tour start time: 08:00 on day 1

Tour end point: Dar es Salaam or Zanzibar.

Tour end time: Late afternoon / early evening (depending on ferry timetables) on day 28

Pre-tour Accommodation

This tour departs Nairobi on day 1; we strongly recommend therefore that you plan to arrive the day before departure to overcome any jet-lag and to acclimatise to Africa. We would be happy to book pre-tour accommodation for you – please call or email us (or speak to your agent) with your arrival details and accommodation requirements. However please book early to avoid disappointment and the risk of having to find more expensive (or less convenient) lodgings. If time allows, you may wish to plan a night or two after your tour in Dar es Salaam. Our camp is right on the beach and accommodation is usually available locally (on arrival). Alternatively you may wish to finish your tour in Zanzibar, and simply not return to Dar on the last day. That's fine by us – Zanzibar has regular flights to Dar es Salaam and to Nairobi and you can simply fly out of there if you wish. Simply tell your tour leader early in the trip what you plan to do so he (or she) can make a note to purchase a one way ferry only for you (rather than return to Dar).

See below for a guide to extra accommodation costs. These prices are correct at time of print but are subject to change so please check with us for current prices.

DESCRIPTION	PRICE	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Nairobi		Zanzibar	
Pre-tour accommodation – Triple (p/p/p/n)	\$50	Post-tour accommodation – (p/p/p/n)	\$35
Pre-tour accommodation – Twin (p/p/p/n)	\$65	Dar es Salaam	
Pre-tour accommodation – Single (p/p/p/n)	\$95	Post-tour accommodation – Banda Twin (p/p/p/n)	\$55
		Post-tour accommodation – Banda Single (p/p/p/n)	\$65

What to bring

Please try to keep your luggage to a minimum, bearing in mind that most airlines impose a 20kg limit. It should be brought in a soft holdall or rucksack along with a smaller day bag. You will need to bring a mixture of lightweight clothing and warm clothing for the evenings and early morning game drives. You also need a sleeping bag (and small pillow if preferred). We recommended you pack a small torch or headlamp, mosquito spray and a money pouch/ belt that can be easily hidden. Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables and use your hotel safe to store the bulk of your money, passport, and airline tickets. A full 'What to Bring' list is included in our pre-departure booklet (online version), issued when you book.

Vaccinations / Health

The table below indicates the vaccinations suggested for travel on this tour but should be treated as a guide only. You should seek professional medical advice from your GP or clinic at least six weeks prior to departure.

Please be aware that the areas visited on this tour are malarial. We strongly recommend your seeking professional medical advice for the appropriate anti-malarial tablets.

COUNTRY	Tetanus	Diphtheria	Polio	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Typhoid	Meningitis	Rabies	Yellow Fever	Malaria
Uganda	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R*	R
Kenya	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R*	R
Tanzania	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R*	R

C = Compulsory; R = Recommended; * = If travelling from infected countries a certificate of proof may be required

Visa Requirements

The table below indicates the visas required for travel to the countries on this tour but should be treated as a guide only. At least one month prior to travel seek confirmation from embassies or a visa specialist, that these requirements are still current. For UK citizens the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) offers free up-to-date travel info: www.fco.gov.uk

COUNTRY	UK	AUS	NZ	USA	CAN	BEL	IRE	NED	ITA	GER	AUT	SWE	FIN	NOR	MEX
Uganda	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kenya	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tanzania	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y = Yes; N = No

MONEY MATTERS

Personal Expenses

Naturally you will require extra money for your own personal spending on the tour, for snacks, drinks, souvenirs, tips and items of a personal nature. Everybody has different spending habits but as a guideline we suggest you budget US\$15-25 per day. Also keep US\$ cash for relevant airport taxes and visas needed, optional activities and any additional accommodation before or after your tour.

- **Spending money** is best carried as cash in US dollars, Sterling or Euro which can then be transferred into local currency on arrival. Your guide can advise how and when you can change the rest of your money throughout the tour.

- **Currencies** are as follows: Kenyan Shilling; Tanzania (including Zanzibar): Tanzania Shilling; Uganda shilling.
- **ATM machines** are found in Nairobi, Kampala, Arusha, Dar es Salaam and on Zanzibar BUT may be unreliable and therefore we recommend you do not rely on them!
- **Credit cards** can be used to pay for optional activities although charges may be may be high by western standards (+/- 5%).
- **Travellers cheques** can be difficult to cash but make suitable emergency funds.

We recommend you bring your spending money in several different ways (some cash, some t/cheques, some cards); your guide can best advise on what to use where.

Local Payment

A Local Payment (LP) is to be paid to your tour leader at the pre -departure meeting. The LP fund is administered by the tour leader in conjunction with the group and covers most meals, all game drives using our own vehicle, campsite fees and meals prepared at the truck (usually two or three per day). You can choose to pay either the Basic Local Payment at the beginning, and then pay for your excursions along the way, or else you may pay for everything up front in the Fully Inclusive Local Payment.

Payment must be made in **US\$ cash in clean, post-2005 edition notes**. Traveller's cheques and credit cards **cannot be accepted** as means of payment. The LP amounts set out in the brochure are estimates of local costs at the time of printing. It is subject to inflation, exchange rate changes and local price rises. These may vary from the amounts set out in the brochure or website and on rare occasion where there is a shortfall, passengers will be asked to contribute further. Conversely, where there is a surplus of LP funds at the end of the tour, it will be refunded equally amongst all passengers.

Tipping

This is always a matter for your own individual discretion but as in many areas where tourism is an important contributor to the economy, it has become customary to give a small gratuity to local staff, including your tour leader and driver, at the end of a tour if services rendered have been to your satisfaction.

Insurance

It is a booking condition that you have full travel insurance valid for the duration of your tour to cover you for medical emergency and repatriation to your home country. Your guide will ask you for a copy of this when you join the tour. It is also important that you leave a copy of your insurance with the person nominated as your emergency contact. We can recommend a respected, specialist travel insurance provider for this tour.