



## 39 Day Ultimate African Adventure Safari - Kenya to Zambia Overland Tour

### DAY 1 – 2: Nairobi – Nakuru – Eldoret

Kenya is a very welcoming country and the first words you will come to know are the Swahili greeting, '*Jambo*' (hello) often followed by a reassuring '*Hakuna matata*' (no problem!).

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. Our first stop is Lake Nakuru National Park, a comparatively small park by African standards, located on the Great Rift Valley's floor. The shallow soda lake around which the national park is set, attracts a huge variety of birdlife. Flamingos in particular gather in their thousands, often forming a strikingly pink 'fringe' around the lake shore as they feed on algae in the alkaline water. Lake Nakuru is also home to rhino, leopard, warthog, baboon, and a variety of smaller animals which we may see during our time here.

From Nakuru we continue northwest through verdant plantations of tea - one of Kenya's biggest exports – to Eldoret, near the Uganda frontier.

### DAY 3 – 6: Jinja - Kampala

We now cross into Uganda, Winston Churchill's 'Pearl of Africa'. This is a wonderfully fertile country of green terraced hillsides, lush banana plantations and tangled forests. On our arrival, we spend a couple of nights on the grassy banks of the River Nile. Here we are not far from Jinja, where the 19th century British explorer John Hanning Speke discovered the 'source of the Nile' and settled 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.

Our camp overlooks a dramatic set of rapids known as Bujagali Falls and while here, we usually have the option to try rafting - an exciting option for those wanting to enjoy the thrill of 'white water'. There is also the chance to make some difference at a local school project. 'Softpower' is a locally run voluntary programme aimed at building and improving local schools in the Jinja area to which your contribution of a few hours of painting or plastering is always most welcome. Other activities here include quad biking, village walks or a 44m bungy jump over the river. From Jinja, we move on to Uganda's capital Kampala, an attractive hilly city vibrant with African street life - roadside traders, markets and busy matatu (mini-bus taxi) stands.

### DAY 7 – 14: Gorilla Trek - Nairobi

From Kampala, we head southwest, skirting the coast of Lake Victoria and heading down into the mountainous region of Uganda. Although a long drive, the scenery is beautiful as we cross the equator and swamp areas of thick papyrus give way to mountain valleys and ancient forests. Heading deep into the Kigezi Highlands we stop at picturesque Lake Bunyoni, an ancient flooded valley with deep waters and scattered islands, before arriving at Bwindi National Park either from the main gates at Buhoma or the southern Nkuringo area. In rare circumstances we may trek in one of the neighbouring countries, depending on availability of gorilla permits. This region of Africa is home the world's remaining 700 mountain gorillas, half of which inhabit Bwindi. Local guides and trackers lead us in small groups through the thick rainforest. The trekking can be demanding and the terrain uneven as we trek through 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 spent with a family of gorillas in their natural habitat remains their most exciting wildlife encounter in Africa.

Each group is allowed to spend one hour with a gorilla family – the time set by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. Photography is permitted (except with a flash, and there are restrictions for those who wish to use a video camera.) Each permit allows one gorilla trek. The authorities maintain strict limits on the number of visitors

allowed to view the gorillas each day so we may spend up to four days in the area while everyone completes the trek and viewing.

We return to Kenya, crossing the Rift Valley and reach bustling Nairobi.

#### **DAY 15 – 18: Nairobi – Masai Mara Game Reserve – Nairobi**

After a day to enjoy Nairobi, we drive west into the famous Masai Mara Game Reserve via the Masai town of Narok. We spend two nights camping on the edge of the park and spend our days in the interior on afternoon and morning game drives. The 'Mara' is the Africa of Hollywood films; sweeping grassy plains, low slung Acacia trees and small coppices of vegetation where perhaps a leopard lurks. The area is excellent for game viewing throughout the year and we hope to spot some, if not all, of the Big 5 - elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard as well as an inspiring array of other African animals and birdlife. Returning to Nairobi, we stay here overnight before finally leaving Kenya to head south into Tanzania.

#### **DAY 19 – 22: Arusha, Serengeti National Park, Olduvai Gorge, Ngorongoro Crater**

Our first stop is at Arusha, resting in the shadow of brooding Mt. Meru (4556m). After exploring its markets we head to our camp on the nearby Masai plains. Here, you may like to take a camel ride to a local Masai village, visit the local Snake Park or enjoy Tanzanian hospitality at the lively camp bar. The following morning we begin our two night/three day excursion into the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Crater. The Serengeti's plains are flatter and larger than the Mara, game viewing here is fantastic and camping in unfenced campsites where wildlife roam makes for an unforgettable experience. Leaving via Olduvai Gorge we reach the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater and enjoy the sweeping view of the crater floor. After camping near the top, we head down the following morning for a day of unrivalled game viewing in one of Africa's most exciting national parks.

#### **DAY 23 – 27: Dar es Salaam - Zanzibar**

We leave the Ngorongoro and return for the night to Arusha before continuing past Mt Kilimanjaro to Dar es Salaam. 'Dar' is Tanzania's main port and a hub of commerce and industry. We set up camp on the beach, browse the curio markets and prepare for our trip to Zanzibar. The 'Spice Island' is an island of sandy, palm fringed beaches, romantic winding cobbled alleys and lush tropical forests. After our ferry over to the island our time here is not structured, so you can choose what you would like to do. Your tour leader will help advise on activities available and book your accommodation before arrival. Explore the markets and alleyways of Stone Town, take the popular Spice Tour or soak up the island vibe, relax, snorkel and dive the reefs on the northern beaches.

#### **DAY 28 – 35: Mikumi National Park – Lake Malawi Beaches**

We cross back to the mainland and spend a further night in Dar before driving towards Malawi, passing through the small Mikumi National Park on the way. We enter Malawi - the 'warm heart' of Africa and follow its lake's shoreline south, passing numerous villages as we go. Malawi's highlights are its wonderfully peaceful beaches and welcoming people and we take advantage of this by camping beside the lake for a few days. There is usually a range of water sports including scuba diving available. You will also have the opportunity to meet some of the Malawi people, from the communities near the beach. Malawians are well known amongst travellers as being amongst the friendliest in Africa.

#### **DAY 36 – 39: Lusaka – Livingstone – Victoria Falls**

We head into Zambia and pass through Zambia's capital, Lusaka. We continue to Livingstone near Victoria Falls arriving on day 37 and setting up camp on the banks of the Zambezi River. Free time is given here, allowing you to take advantage of the wide range of optional activities on offer, including activities such as white water rafting, bungee jumping and scenic flights (by helicopter or small plane). A visit to the Victoria Falls, the largest curtain of falling water in the world, is a 'must'. It produces a huge spray, hence the local name Mosi au Tunya – the 'smoke that thunders'.

#### **Please Note:**

- Depending on the availability of gorilla permits the tour itinerary may vary in day to day running order from that published in our brochure. From time to time we may visit neighbouring countries, eg Rwanda,

for the gorilla trek (instead of Uganda) and this may entail extra visa fees although we shall endeavour to advise you before departure of any significant change to the tour itinerary.

- In Nairobi on nights 14 & 15 accommodation is not included in the tour. Please put aside between US\$15-25 per night for meals and accommodation here.
- As we leave the truck on the mainland, when we go to Zanzibar food and accommodation is not included and free time is yours to enjoy the island's activities. Your tour leader will assist the group by booking suitable and well priced accommodation both in Stone Town and on the beach (budget approx \$20-35 per night), unless you would like to book something independently in advance.
- For the sake of practicality, meals in the Livingstone/Victoria Falls area are restricted to breakfasts. This allows you to take on half day or full day activities (some of which include lunch) without having to be back with the group at mealtimes. The Waterfront camp has a beautiful restaurant, overlooking the Zambezi which offers a good selection of reasonably priced meals and snacks throughout the day (we suggest you allow US\$15 per day). Relax and enjoy these few days at your own leisure.