



41 Day Cape to Kenya Overland Tour

DAY 1: Cape Town – Western Cape - Gariep River

Our overland safari begins in cosmopolitan Cape Town, overlooked by Table Mountain and bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, one of the world's most picturesque cities. Before we leave the city we take a tour of the Cape Flats – Cape Town's famous townships, visiting some of the local people and community projects in the area. The townships illustrate both South Africa's tumultuous history and its hope for the future and make a fascinating visit. From here we head north through South Africa's western and northern Cape provinces, a fertile area of winelands and wild flowers in the south that gradually turns drier and rockier as we head north towards the Namibian border. We camp in the western Cape area overnight on the way to the Gariep (Orange) River. There will be time tonight to settle in to life on the road, properly meet the rest of the group and enjoy our first night under the huge African sky.

DAY 2 – 5: Fish River Canyon – Namib Naukluft Park

We enter Namibia and arrive at the awesome Fish River Canyon. One of the natural wonders of Africa, some 500m deep and over 160km long, this is the second largest canyon in the world (after the Grand Canyon, USA). Again, there are plenty of opportunities for keen photographers as we spend time around this area and visit the canyon's infamous sharp river bend known as 'Hell's Corner.' After a night near the canyon we continue north until we reach the Namib Naukluft Park, containing the world's oldest desert and the highest sand dunes. Some of Sossusvlei's dunes are over 300m high and a popular activity here is to trek to the top of one of them in time to watch the sun rise over the open desert. A spectacular sight but be warned, it's an energy sapping climb to the top! Another well worthwhile option is to continue deeper into the park for a nature walk across the salt pans and valley floor, amidst the dunes – a real glimpse of Namibia's unspoilt natural environment. Bring your camera - the shifting colours of the desert as the sun climbs throughout the mid/late morning offer some brilliant photographic opportunities.

DAY 6 – 7: Swakopmund

Continuing on, we drive out of the desert and hit the Atlantic coast at Swakopmund, a small town redolent of Namibia's colonial past but with modern adventure oriented attractions for the visitor. Swakopmund is Namibia's main seaside resort, sandwiched neatly between the desert and the ocean, and is a delightful coastal oasis. Try some adventure desert based activities if you wish –quad biking, sand boarding, skydiving (weather permitting) – or else simply walk along the promenade admiring the ocean and indulge in the town's café culture.

DAY 8: Cape Cross Seal Colony - Spitzkoppe

We leave Swakopmund and continue north, stopping briefly at Cape Cross where, in 1486, the Portuguese mariner Diego Cão first set foot on the coast of southwest Africa. Cape Cross is also home to some 80,000 seals, the largest seal colony along this stretch of coast-line. It's an impressive sight, if not just for the number of seals but also for the immense noise and smell!

Leaving the Cape we turn inland to the beautiful Damaraland region and stop at Spitzkoppe to admire ancient bushman paintings still visible on the peculiar rock formations.

DAY 9 – 11: Etosha National Park - Windhoek

We make our way north to Etosha National Park, a vast reserve of over 20,000 sq km surrounding a central salt depression or 'pan.' The pan is seasonally full of water but specially managed waterholes sustain some 114 mammal and 340 bird species. We spend two nights here, usually making camp near a floodlit waterhole. Observers frequently see a range of night visitors including elephant, giraffe, zebra, even lion and hyena, making it one of the most memorable wildlife encounters in Namibia. After two nights we leave Etosha and turn south to the Windhoek, the capital, a city steeped in German architecture and atmosphere. Take the opportunity to enjoy a night out at one of the local taverns!

DAY 12 – 17: Ghanzi – Okavango Delta – Chobe National Park

Leaving Windhoek we travel west into the Kalahari region and cross into Botswana. Our first stop is at the town of Ghanzi. Here, in this midst of (seemingly) barren terrain we meet the Bushman and have a guided bush walk for a glimpse of this ancient people's way of life. We stay the night nearby before continuing north to Maun for our next national park - the Okavango Delta. The Okavango is a natural wetland spreading over some 1,600,000ha of northern Botswana. The Okavango River rises in Angola (farther to the north) and flows south dividing repeatedly after crossing into Botswana to form an intricate floodplain of channels and which spreads out into a broad flat inland delta – the only one of its kind. Here we explore amongst the giant lily pads, tall grasses and labyrinthine channels in search of hippo, crocodile and a variety of birds. We travel on foot and by mokoro (dugout canoe) and camp for a night on one of the river islands.

The Okavango is a very unspoilt area and camping out amidst the bush and the rivers listening to sounds of the African night is an unforgettable experience!

After our return to Maun we make our way to the northern corner of Botswana to Chobe National Park, home to elephant, lion, buffalo, hippo and abundant birdlife, including the famous African fish eagle. Rising early we take a game drive, we rest during in the heat of the day and then in the late afternoon, we take a cruise on the Chobe River – a great opportunity to see hippo and perhaps elephant or buffalo coming to the river to bathe and drink.

DAY 18 – 19: Livingstone – Victoria Falls

Moving on from Chobe we take the ferry across the Zambezi River to Zambia and drive the short distance to the small town of Livingstone. We set up camp at the Waterfront campsite on the banks of the Zambezi, just a few kilometres from the Victoria Falls. The campsite reception will give advice and information about the various optional activities available in the area (typically these include rafting, canoeing, bungee, abseiling, gorge swinging, elephant and horse riding, scenic flights, river cruises), allowing you to plan your time accordingly. But whatever you do, don't forget a visit to the Victoria Falls themselves. At various times of year the spray from the Falls can be seen from up to 20 or 30 kilometres away, hence the local name 'Mosi au Tunya' – the 'smoke that thunders'.

Please Note: 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 restaurant overlooks the Zambezi River and offers a good selection of reasonably priced meals and snacks throughout the day (allow US\$15 - \$30 per meal). Relax and enjoy these few days at your own leisure. Alternatively, take a taxi into Livingstone to try local fare.

DAY 22 – 28: Kafue River - Malawi

From Livingstone, we head north-east into Zambia and stop at the Kafue River to take a short journey by boat on the river to a community camp on the river banks. We spend the night here and have the opportunity to visit the neighbouring village and meet the local people who live here. The

following morning we continue our journey through Lusaka to Malawi - the 'warm heart' of Africa. We descend to Lake Malawi which covers almost a fifth of the country providing a source of livelihood for many of the Malawi people. Fishermen, fish traders, canoe and net makers all ply their trade, and a common sight is that of a fisherman in his *bwato*, (dugout canoe made from a hollowed out tree trunk) fishing on the still lake at the break of day. Enjoy a few days on the beach. Try some of the water-sports typically available, or else simply relax and enjoy the warm fresh waters of Lake Malawi. There is the opportunity to meet the local people, generally known as amongst the friendliest in Africa to gain an insight into their way of life.

DAY 29 – 34: Dar es Salaam - Zanzibar

Leaving Malawi we climb into the hills and cross the border into Tanzania. We continue northeast towards the Indian Ocean coast and the port city of Dar es Salaam. On the way we take the road that runs straight through small Mikumi National Park and with luck, may spot forest elephant or giraffe feeding near the side of the road. 'Dar' is Tanzania's hub of commerce and industry - a hot, humid and bustling city. We set up camp at our campsite near the beach just outside of the city centre with time to browse one of the nearby curio markets best. Ebony wood carvings are a good buy in Dar – but be sure to bargain hard. This is also our 'leaping off' point for our excursion 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.

Please Note: 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 \$30-35 per night), unless you would like to book something independently in advance.

DAY 35 – 37: River Camp - Arusha

We continue the journey northward and inland to the great game parks of East Africa. We may take a night beside the scenic Pangani River on the way north, and a little further on if the weather is clear we gain a view of the magnificent snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak (at 5895m). We drive past the town of Moshi and eventually reach Arusha, a city situated exactly mid way between Cape Town and Cairo. Arusha is Tanzania's 'safari capital', a city of some 2 million inhabitants, a bustling melting pot of markets, vehicles and tribesmen, nestling in the shadow of the brooding Mt Meru (4556m). With time to explore town we head out to our camp just outside of the

city on the edge of the Masai plains. Here there is the opportunity to take a walk or camel ride to one of the local Masai villages, to visit the very interesting Masai museum, and to visit the snake enclosure at the Meserani Snake Park. Wash the African dust down in the camp's popular 'bush' bar. More importantly, it is from here that we prepare for our two night/three day excursion to the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Crater.

DAY 38 – 40: Serengeti National Park – Olduvai Gorge – 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.

DAY 41: Nairobi

After a last night at camp, we make our way across the Masai steppe to the Kenyan frontier at Namanga. Completing formalities we drive the last afternoon to Kenya's burgeoning capital, Nairobi, where our tour ends.