



43 Day Kenya to Cape Town Overland Safari

An epic African overland safari from Kenya to the Cape covering wild and scenic game parks, the only inland delta in the world, one thoroughly tropical island, the third largest freshwater lake in Africa, the world's oldest desert, and the 'smoke that thunders' over the dramatic Victoria Falls.

Discover Africa's best highlights on this comprehensive overland safari.

Itinerary

DAYS 1 to 3: Nairobi, Masai Mara National Reserve

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's scheduled departure in order to relax and overcome any jetlag before starting your trip.

Nairobi, has seen rapid growth in recent years but has a comparatively small city centre, ideal for walking, a highly interesting city market (great for sharpening your bargaining skills!), numerous craft shops, book shops and plenty of cafes and restaurants to try.

We depart the city early on the first day and make our way across the Great Rift Valley to the Masai Mara National Reserve, our first highlight of the tour. We spend two nights camping on the edge of the Masai Mara Reserve with time to 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 Masai Mara, we back across the Rift Valley to Nairobi, where we overnight on our way south to Tanzania.

DAYS 4 to 8: Arusha, Serengeti, 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 on 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 9 to 13: 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 camp near 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.

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.

Eventually we cross back to the mainland to Dar es Salaam by ferry.

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

DAYS 14 to 19: Mikumi National Park, Lake Malawi Beaches

After returning from Zanzibar we spend one further night in Dar es Salaam before driving across country towards Malawi on the main road running through Mikumi National Park. We enter Malawi - the 'warm heart' of Africa - at its northern tip and almost immediately catch a glimpse of the enormous Lake Malawi. Covering almost a fifth of the country's area, the lake provides a source of livelihood for many of the Malawi people and fishermen, fish traders as well as canoe and net makers are common sights along the shoreline. Freshwater and safe for swimming, the lake is a major visitor attraction.

We camp along the lake shore, usually by one of the wonderfully peaceful beaches. There is usually a range of water sports available and time to indulge or simply to relax. The Malawi people are well known amongst travellers as being amongst the friendliest in Africa and there is usually the opportunity to meet some of the local people from the communities near the beach.

DAYS 20 to 25: Lusaka, Livingstone, Victoria Falls

Leaving Malawi we cross into Zambia. We drive over the Luangwa River and pass through the capital city, Lusaka, to Livingstone and Victoria Falls, arriving on day 22 of the tour. Our camp is on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River, one of Africa's major rivers, the largest flowing eastward into the Indian Ocean. Time is at leisure. Take advantage of the wide range of optional activities typically available here: white water rafting, bungee jumping, abseiling, gorge swinging, canoeing, elephant and horse riding, lion walks, game drives and scenic flights. Naturally a visit to the Victoria Falls themselves is a 'must'. At over a mile wide and 100m deep, the 'Falls' is the largest curtain of falling water in the world. Depending on the time of year the spray from the Falls can be seen from 20 or 30 kilometres - 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 selection of reasonably priced meals and snacks throughout the day (we suggest you allow \$30 to \$40 per day). Alternatively Livingstone town is a short taxi ride away, where you can eat out at one of the local restaurants.

DAYS 26 & 27: Chobe National Park

After breakfast we leave Livingstone and travel the short distance to Botswana and the Chobe National Park. Situated in the extreme northern corner of Botswana, Chobe is home to large populations of elephant as well as lion and abundant birdlife, including the African fish-eagle. In the late afternoon, we take an afternoon cruise on the Chobe River - a delightful way to see hippo or elephant, sometimes buffalo, come to the river for bath and drink. Earlier in the day we take an early morning game drive into the park itself for a glimpse of Botswana's premier game reserve.

DAYS 28 to 30: Maun, Okavango Delta

Further south, we cross the fringes of the Kalahari Desert and make our way to Maun and the Okavango Delta. A natural wetland system spreading over some 1.6m hectares of northern Botswana, the results from rivers that rise in Angola and flow south then divide repeatedly to form an intricate floodplain of channels and islands which spreads out into a broad flat inland delta - the only one of its kind in the world. Our overnight excursion gives us the opportunity to explore some of the area on foot and by dugout canoe (makoro). This is a very unspoilt wildlife area. We search amongst the giant lily pads, tall grasses and narrow channels for hippo, crocodile and a variety of birds. We camp for a night in the Delta itself on one of the river islands - an unforgettable wilderness experience!

DAYS 31 & 32: Ghanzi, Windhoek

Leaving the Okavango we travel south-west skirting the Kalahari. We stop at Ghanzi and take a guided Bushman Walk to discover some of the secrets of this immense terrain and gain a glimpse of how the indigenous people live in this area. The following day we continue west into Namibia and stop a night in the capital Windhoek, a city steeped in German atmosphere and architecture. Enjoy the contrast from the previous few nights, perhaps with a flagon of ale at one of the local taverns.

DAYS 33 to 37: Etosha National Park, Cape Cross, Swakopmund

We make our way north to Etosha National Park, a vast reserve of over 20,000 square kilometres in area surrounding a central salt depression or 'pan.' The pan is seasonally filled with water but managed year-round

waterholes sustain some 114 mammal and 340 bird species. We spend two nights in Etosha, camping near a floodlit waterhole which offers exciting night viewing for those who wish to stay up late.

Turning south again, we pass through the eerie Spitzkoppe area and travel along some of the desolate Atlantic coast, stopping to visit the impressive Cape Cross Seal Colony. Home to some 80,000 seals this is the place where in the year 1486, the Portuguese mariner Diego Cão first set foot on the coast of southwest Africa.

We arrive at the colonial town of Swakopmund, Namibia's main seaside resort. Sandwiched neatly between the desert and the ocean, this delightful coastal oasis has developed into something of an adventure centre. Try 'quad biking, sand boarding, or skydiving (weather permitting) or for those preferring a slower pace, take a coastal walk or indulge in Swakopmund's café culture at your own leisure.

DAYS 38 to 40: Sossusvlei, Fish River Canyon

Continuing south through the barren desert we reach the Namib Naukluft Park. The world's oldest desert and containing some of the highest sand dunes in the world - some of Sesriem and Sossusvlei's dunes are over 300m high - this is an ideal spot to clamber to the top of one and see the sun rise over the empty desert. We continue deeper into the park for a nature walk across the saltpans and flat valley floors. Don't forget your camera - the changing colours of the sand as the sun rises and sets throughout the day offer brilliant photographic opportunities.

Continuing to the very south of Namibia we admire the awesome beauty of the 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 America's Grand Canyon. 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.'

DAYS 41 to 43: Gariep River, Cape Town

On our final leg of the journey we leave Namibia and enter South Africa stopping en route for a night next to the desolate but striking Gariep (Orange) River.

We continue south and notice the desert slowly give way to the increasingly fertile Cape Province. On the edge of Cape Town itself lie the Cape Flats, home to Cape Town's townships. We visit 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. Finally we continue to cosmopolitan Cape Town, without doubt one of the world's most beautiful cities. If time allows we recommend you spend a few days exploring the city and surrounds. Take advantage of the variety of activities normally available here - from abseiling Table Mountain and shopping at the V&A Waterfront, to wine tasting in the nearby winelands of Paarl and Stellenbosch.