

SERENGETI SAFARI TOURS: INSIGHTS FROM A LOCAL TANZANIAN EXPERT



A Handbook For Everything You Need
To Know About Going on Safari



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Welcome to the Serengeti Safari Handbook! Whether you're just starting to plan your safari adventure or you'll soon be hopping on a plane, this resource will help you prepare for exploring the magnificent Serengeti National Park in Tanzania.

From what to expect on a game drive to the various activities and excursions you can add to your safari tour, we've compiled all the information you need to feel confident and excited about your African holiday. Plus, we're sharing insider tips and insights from Musaddiq, a local Tanzanian with more than 30 years of safari experience and expertise, on how to make the most of your trip.

No matter if you are traveling with family, taking a lovebird's getaway, or embarking on a solo Tanzanian vacation, this guide is your starting point for the adventure of a lifetime. Let's start exploring.

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THE GREAT MIGRATION

Each year, millions of wildebeest, zebras, and other herbivores cross the vast plains of the Serengeti ecosystem in what's known as the Great Migration. It's one of the most incredible natural phenomena to take place, and it rightfully earns a top spot in most safari-goers' bucket lists.

The migration is a year-round event that takes place in a circular pattern, covering both the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania and the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. The majority of the action happens in Tanzania, which makes the Serengeti the ideal destination to witness the herds.

The timing of your visit will determine the specific location and spectacle you will witness. From December to March, the herds gather in the southern Serengeti, where they give birth to their young. In January and February, nearly 8,000 calves are born daily—adding up to an amazing half a million baby wildebeest by the end of the season!

As the dry season sets in around June, the herds begin their journey towards the western corridor of the Serengeti, crossing the Grumeti River. This river crossing is a popular choice for travelers, as the animals brave crocodile-infested waters in a dramatic spectacle for cervical.

From July to October, the herds continue their migration northwards, reaching the northern Serengeti and eventually crossing into the Maasai Mara in Kenya. If you're on safari during this time, you'll have the chance to witness the Mara River crossing, one of the biggest challenges wildebeest face during their trek.



Advice From Musaddiq, a Local Tanzanian Expert:

GREAT MIGRATION PRO TIPS:

- » Book your trip with timing in mind to ensure you're in the right place at the right time.
- » Avoid the rainy season, as heavy downpours can make the roads impassable and hinder wildlife sightings.
- » Be prepared for long drives and bumpy roads as you follow the herds—but know the reward of witnessing this natural spectacle is truly unforgettable.
- » Be mindful of responsible tourism practices and avoid disturbing the animals' natural behavior.

"If you're eager to see the iconic river crossings at the Mara River, my advice is to visit the Kogatende Region from July to October. For those wanting to experience the calving season, January to February is the best time to visit the Ndutu Region. If thrilling predator action with wildebeest excites you, plan your trip between December and March and visit the Ndutu Region.

The wildebeest migrations arrive in the Seronera Region in April, stay through May, and return again in November, making these months ideal for visiting this region. And June is perfect for observing the herds in the Grumeti region! It can be complex, and there are options, but each period offers a unique aspect of the Great Migration, so tailor your visit to your specific interests, and know in advance what you'll see."



THE BIG FIVE

The Serengeti is an ecosystem like you've never seen, home to lions, leopards, elephants, buffalos, and rhinoceroses—AKA the Big Five. The creatures are the epitome of African wildlife and, for many, capturing even a glimpse of them in their natural habitats is a dream come true.

To increase your chances of encountering the Big Five while on your safari, it's essential to choose the right safari tour. Different types of safari tours cater to different preferences and budgets. Whether you opt for a classic game drive, a walking safari, or a hot air balloon safari (or a combination of the three), each offers the potential to witness these incredible animals from unique angles.

Tanzania is home to populations of each of the Big Five, from The Ngorongoro Crater, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to Tarangire National Park to Manyara National Park. But the ultimate destination for spotting these animals is the Serengeti National Park.

To capture the best photographs of the Big Five during your safari, familiarize yourself with the behavior and habitats of the animals to anticipate their movements. Plan your game drives during the golden hours of early morning and late afternoon for optimal lighting.

Remember, the best way to see the Big Five is by booking a safari tour with a reputable operator, like Easy Travel, who prioritizes ethical and responsible wildlife encounters. They will have experienced guides who can take you to the right locations for optimal viewing opportunities, provide valuable insights for capturing incredible photographs, and ensure you're respecting the animals and their habitat.



HOW THE SERENGETI SEASONS CAN IMPACT YOUR SAFARI

There's never a bad time to visit the Serengeti, but your experience there will vary month to month. It's a good idea to plan your trip to Tanzania based on what you are most interested in seeing and doing—whether it's wildlife spotting, trekking, or engaging in the local culture.

Here are some of the basics you can expect season by season:

The green season - January through March

Lush and bursting with color, this is a wonderful time to experience the natural beauty of Tanzania. Calving season begins mid-January, and the game viewing opportunities are plentiful in the central and southern Serengeti. The climate is warm and humid, with occasional scattered showers through February. March brings more unpredictable weather, and with fewer tourists, it's a great time to experience the Great Migration without heavy crowds.

The long rain season - April and May

April is the rainiest month of the year in Tanzania as it kicks off the wet season. With the rain comes the potential for muddy, impassable roads, which can potentially impact your safari. During this month, the Migration typically passes through the Seronera region of Serengeti National Park, heading toward the central and western plains. May brings less rain as the region begins its transition to the dry season. These months have some of the quietest tourist presence, which means you may be able to score better deals and lower rates for accommodations.



The dry season - June through October

The dry season in Tanzania brings warm temperatures, low humidity, and little to no rain. Although the landscape becomes less vibrant, it offers better game viewing opportunities. It's a great time to witness the Great Migration, as wildebeests congregate at watering holes looking for food. June, July, and August are some of the best months to witness the Grumeti and Mara river crossings as the herds head north into Kenya. By the end of October, the looming rain encourages the wildebeest to start heading back south to the central Serengeti. These months are peak tourist season, so it's a good idea to book accommodations in advance.

The short rain season: November and December

Although the holidays draw crowds, these months tend to be less busy as rain begins to pick up again. The landscape begins to freshen as rain drenches the land. The Great Migration continues making its way south, and by December, it settles in Ndutu and the southern Serengeti region for a time to feed and calve. With plentiful food and newly green grasslands, this is a wonderful time to spot wildlife including the return of migratory birds.



Advice From Musaddiq, a Local Tanzanian Expert:

"I recommend visiting the Serengeti for different reasons in every season, as each period has its unique charm, but when you visit plays a big role in what you'll see. Here's what I advise: from December to March, head to the Ndutu Region in the southern Serengeti for thrilling predator action and the calving season. During April and May, the long rains make the Seronera Region lush and vibrant, perfect for a serene safari experience.

June marks the beginning of the dry season, an excellent time to visit the western corridor to see the herds moving towards the Grumeti River. From July to October, the Kogatende Region in the Northern Serengeti is ideal for witnessing the dramatic Mara River crossings. In November, the short rains bring the wildebeest back to the Seronera Region, providing a great safari experience without the peak season crowds."



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE ON SAFARI?

There's no experience quite like going on a safari. Immersed in nature and surrounded by wildlife in their natural habitat, an African safari allows you to fully take in the simplicity and spectacles of untouched wilderness.

Each day on safari is different, but you can expect a combination of thrilling excursions and game drives, as well as time to soak in the beauty of the land and learn about the environment and culture from your guides.

Some of the activities that might be part of your safari itinerary include:



Balloon Safari: Soar above the vast savannahs and witness the breathtaking beauty of Tanzania's wildlife from a unique perspective. As the sun rises, you'll float gently in a hot air balloon, capturing panoramic views of the majestic landscapes and the animals below.



Bush Dinner: Indulge in a truly magical dining experience under the starlit African sky. The flickering candlelight and the distant calls of wildlife create an enchanting ambiance, making this a dining experience like no other.



Canoeing Safari: Immerse yourself in the tranquility of Tanzania's waterways as you embark on a canoeing safari. Glide silently through the calm waters, observing wildlife up close and personal. From graceful hippos to colorful birdlife, connect with nature in a peaceful and serene setting.



Canopy Tree Walk Tour: Suspended high above the ground, you'll walk along elevated walkways, offering a unique perspective of the surrounding ecosystem. Traverse through the lush treetops, spotting birds, monkeys, and other wildlife that call the canopy home.



Coffee Tour: Explore the lush coffee plantations, learn about the intricate process of coffee production, and savor the aroma of freshly roasted beans. Engage with local farmers, hear their stories, and gain a deeper appreciation for the flavors that make Tanzanian coffee renowned worldwide.



Cycling Tour: Embark on an exhilarating cycling tour, pedaling through the stunning landscapes of Tanzania. Feel the wind in your hair as you explore off-the-beaten-path trails, encountering wildlife and immersing yourself in the natural beauty that surrounds you.



Nature Walks: Slow down the pace and embark on leisurely nature walks with experienced guides. Explore the hidden corners of Tanzania's national parks and reserves, learning about the intricate ecosystems and spotting wildlife along the way.



Night Game Drive: Experience the thrill of the African wilderness come alive after dark on a guided night game drive. Equipped with spotlights, you'll venture into the nocturnal realm, where predators roam and unique creatures emerge.



Quad Bike Tour: Get your adrenaline pumping as you embark on a thrilling quad bike tour through Tanzania's rugged terrains. Feel the power of the engine beneath you as you navigate through dusty trails, crossing rivers, and encountering wildlife along the way.



Sundowner: As the African sun begins to set, indulge in a refreshing drink while watching the sky transform into a canvas of vibrant colors. Whether you're perched atop a rocky outcrop or lounging by a tranquil waterhole, the experience of a sundowner is a moment of pure serenity.



Village Visit: Immerse yourself in the vibrant local culture by visiting nearby villages and engaging with the communities. Experience traditional dances, taste local delicacies, and learn about the customs and traditions that have shaped Tanzanian life for generations.



Walking Safari: Accompanied by experienced guides, venture into the heart of nature, tracking wildlife footprints and observing animals in their natural habitat. This intimate experience allows you to truly appreciate the sights, sounds, and scents of the wild.



Advice From Musaddiq, a Local Tanzanian Expert:

Safety is a top priority on safari, and Easy Travel ensures that all necessary precautions are taken to keep you safe throughout your journey. Experienced guides accompany you on game drives and walking safaris, providing valuable insights and ensuring your safety at all times.

When it comes to accommodations, you have various options and price points to choose from. For budget-friendly choices, you can opt for comfortable tented camps or lodges that provide basic amenities without compromising on the safari experience. Mid-range lodges offer a higher level of comfort, with spacious rooms, private bathrooms, and delicious meals. If luxury is what you seek, top-notch lodges provide gourmet dining, luxurious suites, and exclusive wildlife encounters.

"This is what I love about living here. Can you imagine waking up to the sounds of the African bush, the distant roars of lions, and the calls of exotic birds? I always recommend starting your day with an early morning game drive, where you'll see elephants, giraffes, zebras, and other wildlife up close. After a morning of adventure, relax at your lodge with a delicious meal, a refreshing swim, or simply take in the breathtaking scenery. Alternatively, enjoy a meal right in the park, surrounded by nature.

In the afternoon, my advice is to head out for another, but different game drive. The golden light of the setting sun creates perfect conditions for photography and observing animal behavior. Evenings are magical, spent under a starlit sky, enjoying a hearty meal around a campfire, and sharing stories of the day's adventures. You might even spot some nocturnal creatures.

A safari is about more than just wildlife viewing; it's about connecting with nature, learning about conservation, and experiencing the local culture. Each day brings new discoveries and lasting memories."



BRINGING YOUR FAMILY ON SAFARI

Picture this: you and your loved ones, surrounded by the breathtaking landscapes of the Serengeti, spotting majestic wildlife and bonding over one of the world's biggest wonders. A family safari in the Serengeti is an unmatched experience you'll look back on for years to come. Let's dive into what it's like to bring kids on a Serengeti safari and how you can plan the perfect family-friendly trip.

The Serengeti National Park is a haven for wildlife enthusiasts of all ages. Your children's faces will light up as they witness the Great Migration and feel transported into the world of Disney's *The Lion King*. Teens will be thrilled by the adventure opportunities, like hot air balloon rides and game drives. And parents have the opportunity to learn, explore, and play alongside little ones.

When planning a family safari, consider the benefits of private and small group tours. Private tours allow you to have a dedicated guide who can tailor the experience to suit your family's interests and pace. They can even customize game drives to focus on the animals your children are most excited to see. Everyone will have a blast trying to identify different species, from the Big Five to graceful giraffes and playful monkeys, and learning about their unique characteristics.



To make the most of your family safari, choose accommodations that cater to children. Many lodges in the Serengeti offer family-friendly amenities, such as swimming pools and play areas. These provide a fun and relaxing environment for your kids to unwind after a day of adventure. And don't worry about meals—the lodges have you covered with delicious and kid-friendly options, as well as local cuisine and fresh flavors for more adventurous eaters.

As you explore the Serengeti, encourage your children to document their experiences. Let them bring a journal or a camera to capture their observations and impressions. They'll stay more engaged while creating a beautiful keepsake of their safari adventure.



Advice From Musaddiq, a Local Tanzanian Expert:

"Bringing your family on safari is an incredible adventure and a fantastic way to create lifelong memories together, and I see it quite often. To make the most of your trip, I recommend choosing family-friendly lodges with family suites, kid-friendly meals, and fun activities for children. Since you're bringing children, plan a balanced itinerary with shorter game drives and mix in nature walks, cultural visits, and time for swimming or just relaxing at the lodge.

Make sure to choose experienced guides who know how to make safaris fun and safe for all ages, following all the necessary guidelines around wildlife. Pack smart with comfortable clothes, hats, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Binoculars and a camera can make the adventure even more exciting for the kids!

Before you travel, check with your doctor about any vaccinations or medications you might need. Encourage your kids to ask questions, take notes, and maybe even keep a safari journal to capture their experiences. Be flexible with your plans; sometimes a relaxing afternoon at the lodge can be just as enjoyable as a game drive. A family safari is a perfect way to bond, explore new horizons, and have fun together."



Advice From Musaddiq, a Local Tanzanian Expert:

"A honeymoon or couples safari is one of the most romantic and unforgettable experiences you can share. Enjoy intimate meals under the stars, savoring delicious cuisine while listening to the calls of the wild. Many lodges offer special honeymoon packages, including private bush or beach dinners, sunset cocktails and cruises, and even hot air balloon rides over the Serengeti. These experiences are designed to add an extra touch of romance to your trip.

For instance, you can relax in the afternoons with a couple's spa treatment, or simply enjoy the stunning views from your private deck. The serene environment and the beauty of the landscape provide the perfect backdrop for relaxation and connection.

I recommend choosing a tour operator that understands how important these romantic moments are, and ensuring you're not just treated like any other guest. A specific honeymoon safari can offer that, whether it's a surprise breakfast in the bush or a secluded picnic spot, you want to ensure your safari is filled with romance to focus on each other as well as adventure."

WHAT A HONEYMOON OR COUPLES SAFARI IS LIKE

Going on a Serengeti safari with your significant other is sure to bring you closer as you get swept away in the beauty of the plains. Going hand-in-hand on private game drives, experiencing the awe of being in the presence of fierce and wild animals, and basking in the sounds of sleeping under the stars—the opportunities for special moments are endless.

Wondering if a safari can truly be romantic? Absolutely! Many lodges in the Serengeti offer private dining experiences, allowing you to enjoy romantic meals in a secluded setting. Or picture taking a hot air balloon ride over the Serengeti at sunrise, where you'll witness breathtaking views as the world wakes up below you. Take a guided nature walk together and enjoy the slower pace and intimate vantage point of seeing the Serengeti on foot. Or indulge in a couple's spa treatment, where you can unwind and rejuvenate amidst the tranquility of the African bush.



For your comfort, look for couple-friendly or adult-only accommodations. Many lodges offer private suites or secluded tents, providing you with plenty of privacy. Higher-end accommodations also often come with luxurious amenities, such as private plunge pools or outdoor showers, adding an extra touch of romance to your stay. As for sleeping arrangements, you can look forward to cozy and comfortable accommodations that provide the perfect setting for relaxation and romance.

When it comes to dining and transportation, you can expect a seamless experience as a couple. Meals are often served in intimate settings, allowing you to enjoy each other's company while savoring delicious cuisine. Transportation is typically in comfortable safari vehicles, where you can sit close to each other, soak in the stunning landscapes, and plan your return visit!



ADDING A VISIT TO ZANZIBAR TO YOUR SAFARI TOUR

To take your Tanzanian holiday to dream vacation-status, consider adding a visit to Zanzibar, the underrated tropical paradise that perfectly complements a wildlife adventure. While a safari is all about immersing yourself in the rugged beauty of the wilderness, Zanzibar offers a blissful beachy escape with its stunning views and relaxing atmosphere. It's no surprise that combining a Serengeti safari with a trip to Zanzibar is a popular choice for many travelers!

The Zanzibar archipelago located off the coast of Tanzania is renowned for its pristine beaches. Nungwi Beach, located on the northern tip of the island, offers powdery white sand and crystal-clear turquoise waters.

It's the perfect spot for sunbathing, swimming, and even snorkeling. If you're looking for a more secluded beach, head to Paje Beach on the east coast. With its laid-back vibe and stunning sunsets, it's an ideal place to unwind and enjoy the beauty of the Indian Ocean.

Zanzibar also offers a range of cultural experiences and activities. You can explore the Jozani Forest, home to the rare red colobus monkeys, and take a guided tour to learn about the island's unique flora and fauna. Or visit Prison Island, where you can see giant tortoises and enjoy snorkeling in the surrounding coral reefs. Take a spice tour and discover the aromatic history of Zanzibar's famous spices—cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, and more.





Advice From Musaddiq, a Local Tanzanian Expert:

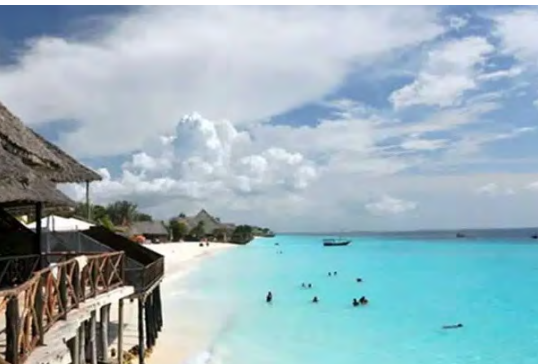
Adventurous souls may love to embark on a fishing tour and try catching some of the Indian Ocean's prized fish. You can go horse riding along the beach or take a cycling tour and pedal your way through local villages. Or hop on a kayak and paddle through the mangroves, spotting marine life along the way.

To add a touch of romance to your Zanzibar experience, embark on a sunset cruise on a dhow (a traditional Arabian ship). Sail along the coast, sipping on refreshing drinks and watching the sun dip below the horizon. And for those seeking some one-on-one time with marine life, a dolphin tour where you can swim alongside these sweet creatures is a must.

Whether you're diving into the depths of the ocean, snorkeling among vibrant coral reefs, exploring the historic Stone Town, or simply relaxing on the beach, Zanzibar offers a perfect balance to your Serengeti safari. Kick off your journey by the sea or end your trip on a more serene note—there's no wrong way to experience this beautiful place.

"I frequently find that travelers who begin with plans for just a safari often decide to add a quick trip to Zanzibar when they discover how beautiful and nearby it is. Although you can go before or after a safari, I prefer after the excitement of wildlife viewing in the Serengeti, to head to Zanzibar's pristine beaches to unwind.

You can enjoy crystal-clear waters, vibrant coral reefs, and rich cultural heritage. Whether you want to explore Stone Town's historic charm, indulge in water sports, or simply relax on the beach, Zanzibar offers a refreshing complement to your safari adventure."





ADDING A KILIMANJARO TREK TO YOUR SAFARI TOUR

Want to take your Tanzanian adventure to new heights? Climbing Kilimanjaro is a dream for many hikers and outdoor enthusiasts, and pairing it with a safari in the Serengeti creates a truly unforgettable experience.

When planning a combination trip of Kilimanjaro and Serengeti, keep these considerations in mind:

First, choose the right hiking route for your trek. Some popular routes include the Marangu, Machame, Lemosho, and Rongai routes. Each route offers a unique experience, varying in difficulty, scenery, and duration. It's important to research and select a route that aligns with your fitness level and preferences.

Accommodations during your Kilimanjaro trek will typically be in mountain huts or tents, providing basic but comfortable shelter. These accommodations are designed to offer a place to rest and recharge before continuing the ascent.

The dry seasons of January to March and June to October are generally seen as the best times to trek Kilimanjaro. These months offer clearer skies and better visibility, enhancing your overall trekking experience.

Make safety your top priority. Climb with guides that are certified in Wilderness First Responder (WFR), making them some of the best in the industry. They are experienced, knowledgeable, and genuinely care about your well-being. They will provide valuable insights on climbing techniques, help you acclimatize properly, and ensure you have a safe and enjoyable experience. Keep the potential for sickness or an injury from climbing in mind, and how that could impact your safari.



Now, the question arises: is it better to climb Kilimanjaro before or after your safari? Climbing before your safari allows you to start your trip with a physical and mental challenge, followed by a more relaxed safari experience. It's a great way to test your limits and reward yourself with the serenity of the Serengeti afterward. Keep in mind, however, you will probably be pretty tired after the climb!

On the other hand, climbing Kilimanjaro after your safari may allow you to acclimatize to the altitude more gradually. The safari experience can serve as a gentle transition before embarking on the demanding trek. Additionally, ending your trip with Kilimanjaro allows you to reflect on the beauty of the Serengeti as you hike.

Ultimately, the choice between climbing Kilimanjaro before or after your safari depends on your personal preferences and fitness level. Consider your physical readiness, desired flow of the trip, and the overall experience you want to create.



Advice From Musaddiq, a Local Tanzanian Expert:

"For an extraordinary wildlife experience, I highly recommend adding chimpanzee trekking to your safari. The best place for this adventure is in the Mahale Mountains and Gombe Stream National Parks. The dry season from July to October is the perfect time to visit, as the chimps are easier to locate and the trekking conditions are more favorable.

You'll have the chance to observe these incredible creatures in their natural habitat, watching them interact, play, and forage. Our guides have over 20 years of experience and are inspired by their fathers, who guided during the time of Jane Goodall."

Conservation efforts play a crucial role in protecting chimpanzees and their habitats. By choosing to travel with a reputable tour operator in the tourism industry, you can contribute to conservation initiatives. Reputable operators prioritize sustainable practices and support local communities, ensuring that your visit has a positive impact on the environment and local wildlife.

CHIMPANZEE TREKKING

If you're looking to add an extra dose of adventure and wildlife encounters to your safari, consider including chimpanzee trekking as part of your itinerary. Many travelers choose this exciting add-on outside of the Serengeti because it offers a unique opportunity to observe these fascinating primates in their natural habitat.

Gombe Stream National Park and Mahale Mountains National Park are renowned for their chimpanzee populations. Gombe Stream is famous for being the research site of Jane Goodall, where she conducted groundbreaking studies on chimpanzee behavior. Mahale Mountains, on the other hand, offers a remote and pristine setting, nestled along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Both parks provide incredible opportunities for chimpanzee trekking and close encounters with these intelligent creatures.

When planning your visit, it's important to consider the best time to see chimpanzees. The dry seasons of June to October and December to February are generally recommended, as the chimpanzees are more active and easier to spot during these periods. Of course, chimpanzees are wild animals and their movements can be unpredictable, so sightings are never guaranteed.



Embarking on a Serengeti safari is a truly life changing experience, from the unforgettable wildlife encounters, to the surreal landscapes, to the genuine connections you'll make with your guides, fellow travelers, locals, and the environment itself.

Easy Travel is here to make your Tanzanian holiday a reality, with carefully curated trips designed to immerse you in Africa's iconic safari destination. Explore our upcoming safaris now!

LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN