



The Africa Adventure Company

Love affair Tanzania!

This has been a very special year for us at The Africa Adventure Company. We celebrated our 25th anniversary, and as part of the celebrations I was chosen to accompany our '12 day Explored Safari to Tanzania.

Our small group consisted of the five of us: Charles and Barbara Nance from St Louis Missouri, Judy Maron from San Diego California, Sonia Cohen from Fort Lauderdale Florida and me also Fort Lauderdale Florida.

The sixth and I think we would all agree most important member of our group was our guide Emmanuel Mkenda. This gentle man with the big smile took our safari to the next level – his professionalism, knowledge, patience, skill in locating wildlife and absolute determination to make every minute we were on safari special blew us all away! We learned so much from Mkenda – he is definitely the best kind of ambassador for The Africa Adventure Company, Ranger Safaris and ultimately the wildlife and people of Tanzania.

I met the group in Tanzania at the Kilimanjaro Airport and we started our adventure with the drive to Ndarakwai our first stop. This lovely little camp is located in the foothills of Kilimanjaro and is a gentle introduction into the wonders of game viewing. We enjoyed a game drive , a very interesting game walk in the afternoon and a visit with the local Masai village.



From Left to right: Sonia, Judy, Elena, Ndarakwai Guide, Mkenda, Charles and Barbara



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Elena and Sonia with the young Masai girls and Judy with her personal bead artist.

From the foothills of Kilimanjaro we drove through Arusha and onto Tarangire National Park – and the most wonderful camp Tarangire Treetops. Tarangire proved to be full of wildlife from the moment we drove in to the park. The visit rewarded us with lions, a beautiful male leopard, lots of elephants, buffalo, many more elephants, an African rock python in a tree, a giraffe at a water hole (drinking!) and so many grazers I lost count.



Lion Lumps



Leopard in a tree?



Elephants everywhere

We made it our mission to spread the word about the AAC anniversary throughout Tanzania and Mkenda was kind enough to get the local Masai involved in the celebration.



The next day we began the drive to our next destination, Lake Manyara. Mkenda stopped at the Masaai livestock market – where Masaai from many villages meet together and buy and sell cows, goats and sheep. The vibrant colors and all the human and animal sounds together were really incredible and opened another window into this fascinating culture. During the game drive in the park we were hugely fortunate to see the tree climbing lions here.



Catnapping ... in a tree

The next day we continued with the drive through the Ngorongoro Conservation area on the way to the Crater our next stop. The crater is a wonder of nature. The only non -flooded intact caldera on the planet! The wildlife who live here are concentrated in this small but incredible area and make game viewing really easy. We saw lions, hyenas, black -backed jackal, and elephants. We had lunch with one of the huge elephants who call the crater home. He was eating the bark of a yellow acacia and we were in our vehicle enjoying a lovely packed picnic lunch! We all agreed it was one of our best meals – good company!



Enjoying the view of the crater below



Lunch in Ngorongoro Crater

Next came Oldupai where we stopped at the Leakey's Museum and we then continued the drive to the Serengeti stopping off at the shifting sands. Being game f or everything we all had to climb the sands and continue our AAC anniversary celebration.



Enjoying the view from the shifting sands

As we neared the Serengeti the terrain again began to change . Having had some early rains this year, parts of the park were lush and green and other parts still dry. The Serengeti is amazing in that it has so many different landscapes – from granitic outcrops (called kopjes) to rolling hills and then the vast open plains. It continued to surprise us the whole time we were there.

Where to celebrate our AAC anniversary?? Right, let's do it after lunch.



Lunch in the Serengeti!

Once we arrived at camp and after a nice warm shower we sat around the fire reliving a very exciting and full day. Mkenda had asked us to be up and ready extra early so that we could maximize our day.



Mobile Tented Camp

This is truly one of the best parts of being on safari – the hands on, on the ground (but with all the comforts of home – and then some) ‘Out of Africa’ safari experience.

Our first sighting about 15 minutes from camp was a secretary bird – killing (with some hard kicks that were audible all the way to the vehicle) and then eating a puff adder! Certainly one of the most memorable kills I have ever seen.



Secretary bird with puff adder



Baby Zebra napping



Lions making advances

The Great Migration! We went off to see what was happening at the river only to get there just in time for the tail end of a river crossing! We were so excited and overwhelmed it brought some of us to tears – just the privilege of being witnesses to this awesome spectacle.



In to the river and out the other side!

While waiting to see if any more wildebeest would take the leap – Charles spotted some action close to the river and pointed it out to Mkenda who said one word ‘cheetah’! Off we went to investigate and found a coalition of three male cheetahs who had brought down a juvenile wildebeest and were in the process of lunch. The two of them had moved off to the side while the third took his turn and we then watched them all relax in a nice shady spot with very full bellies!



I love cooking so I had to check out the camp kitchen. The metal box is the oven (it produced some of the most delicious bread we have ever eaten and for desert – a crème caramel)!



Leaving camp behind we started the drive, game viewing along the way to our last night on safari at the beautiful Migration Camp. Arriving at Migration Camp in the late afternoon we all wanted some time to think over the amazing abundance of wildlife we had seen and then some well deserved sundowners on the deck!



The beautiful kopjes, and our banner one last time with the wildebeest as back ground.

Tanzania was truly a revelation for me – having had the privilege of being on safari before the sheer scope of the parks and the abundance of the wildlife was incredible. This was truly an adventure to remember for all of us!

Many thanks to my fellow safariers for making this such a fun safari , and to Mkenda who made this safari special – whose knowledge and pride in his beautiful country touched us all. Your love of what you do and the joy you bring to it is remarkable.

