



Tanzania Photography Safari

Nature Photography Adventures

February 14 - 25, 2024

February 14

Arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport (JRO) near Arusha, Tanzania. After passing through immigration and collecting your baggage, you will be met by personnel from Ranger Safaris and transported to Arusha Serena Hotel.



February 15

We'll start the morning with breakfast and then a short group meeting with our Ranger safari guides. Then it's off in the safari vehicles – we'll pack our belongings and make our way to Tarangire National Park, finding our first exciting animals before we ever make it to Tarangire Sopa Lodge. After checking in and having lunch, we'll head back out into Tarangire National Park on a late day game drive.

Tarangire Sopa Lodge, All meals, drinks extra

February 16

It is all about game drives in Tarangire National Park. This is our best opportunity to photograph baobab trees and elephants. We'll also find ostriches, zebras, giraffes, and several species of antelopes. Cats are a distinct possibility! So are raptors and many other interesting birds!

Tarangire Sopa Lodge, All meals, drinks extra





February 17

We'll have an early breakfast, then pack the vehicle for our transfer to Ngorongoro Crater. Since our lodge is deep within Tarangire National Park, our exit will be very much like a game drive. Have your cameras ready! We may stop, once we leave the park, to photograph Maasai people herding flocks or tilling fields. We'll ascend a great escarpment to reach the Ngorongoro Crater, with panoramic views over this amazing crater. We should make it to our rimside lodging at Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge in time to watch the day end and enjoy dinner. Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, All meals, picnic lunch, drinks extra

February 18 and 19

Our lodge is poised over a key entrance to the Ngorongoro crater. We'll take advantage of that by being at the gate when it opens and being among the first to descend into the crater on these two days. Each day we have a full day in the crater with a picnic lunch. Our guides will work with Bob and Diane to pick routes and show us a huge variety of animals to photograph. We'll keep an ear on the radio and an eye on the traffic, in case some spectacular sighting causes us to deviate from our plans – we are opportunistic in our quest for great wildlife photography opportunities. Back at the lodge for last light over the crater and dinner! Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, All meals, picnic lunch, drinks extra





February 20-23

Eat a big breakfast, then we'll pack the vehicles and begin our journey down off this volcano and out into the Serengeti. Along the way we'll pass Maasai bomas and find groups of giraffes peeking out above scrubby acacia growth. Then we'll be out into the plains... where we will begin to catch glimpses of ungulates, perhaps even of the migration itself. We'll make our way to Lake Masek Camp, our luxury tented home for the next four nights, in time for lunch. After "moving in" we'll venture out for an evening game drive.



For the next two days we'll focus on game drives. We'll either have morning and evening drives with some midday time to lunch and download – or we'll pack a picnic lunch and venture further out into the southern or central Serengeti. We'll search out a variety of hoofed animals, find the great migration, and keep a sharp eye out for those predators that gather for this time when a million baby wildebeest are born – lions, cheetahs, leopards, and hyenas! We'll find all kinds of eagles, storks, and vultures helping deal with fresh kills. We'll find a variety of colorful birds of all sizes. Let's not forget elephants and giraffes – they will be around, too.

Lake Masek Camp, All meals, local drinks included



February 24

We'll pack the vehicles and begin the journey to Lake Manyara Serena Lodge, near Lake Manyara National Park. We may stop for you to look at some regional art, along the way, making it to the lodge for lunch. We'll take a late day drive into the park, where we may find lions perched in trees – the signature situation for this park. We'll most likely find many baboons and flamingos, which may be a ribbon on pink on the lake itself. We'll be looking for elephants and giraffes, too – and for great views of birds.

Lake Manyara Serena Lodge, All meals, drinks extra

February 25

We'll start with a hearty breakfast – and then one last game drive through Lake Manyara National Park. Back to our lodge for lunch and then we'll depart for Arusha and Arusha Serena Lodge where we will have day rooms until our departure times.

Arusha Serena Lodge (dayroom services), breakfast, lunch. Dinner on your own at Lodge

End of program



Tarangire National Park

Tarangire National Park is best known for its elephant herds. It is also our best place to find baobab trees and to compose them. This park is centered around a watershed – in the dry season animals move off the adjacent plains and crowd up to the waterholes. In the wet season, they spread out – some to eat fresh grasses and browse new leaves – while others are following their prey.

Our own experience in Tarangire reflects a wealth of opportunities to photograph elephants. We've found very young babies along with their family units which sometimes range over 50 individuals. We have witness play in the river. We've found young males learning to battle each other. Count on great elephant photography!



The baobab trees are iconic – and this will be your chance to design images with them. Composed with giraffes (which they dwarf) there is a unique juxtaposition of a slender neck and a fat trunk! These trees make a fantastic silhouette against a sunrise or sunset!

In the past we have had good photography opportunities with ostriches, giraffes, lions, hyrax, storks, vultures, eagles, and colorful smaller birds. We'll look for primates, too!



Ngorongoro Crater

This extinct volcanic crater has been likened to a giant fishbowl and a huge Noah's ark. While animals can move in and out, many come to stay – and there is an incredible cross section of hoofed animals, predators, primates, birds, hippos and rhinos inside the crater.

In the past, we have had incredible luck finding and photographing lions, witnessing hyenas on the hunt, following jackals. We have also photographed cheetahs, taken close-ups of Cape buffalo, watched male wildebeest defending territory and young wildebeest taking their first steps. We can almost count on hippos and vervet monkeys – and we'll delight in the variety of large birds including eagles, storks, vultures, secretary birds and more! Rhinos tend to be shy – but sometimes we get closer. And this is the place where big old male elephants come to retire! You won't come back emptyhanded in the crater!



Further, our route down into the crater crosses through an incredible acacia forest. Taking time to create art in that forest is well worth the effort – bring your widest lens for that!

Our plan for the crater is to be waiting at the gate when it opens – that puts us down into this special zone as the light is waking up – and long before the casual crater visitors have finished their morning coffee. We get to explore – and to feel nearly alone in the crater for a while. Later, it can feel crowded (they are managing volume, but it still feels a little congested when someone spots a lion). Our plan gets us back in time to download, enjoy the sunset (and sometimes a lightning show) over the crater and be first in line for dinner!





The Serengeti and the Great Migration

The Serengeti Desert is a vast expanse, basically west of the volcanic region that includes the Ngorongoro Crater and extending north into Southern Kenya. Inside this region, there is a huge herd of wildebeest and zebras that “follow the rains”. The wildebeest have this phenomenal ability to smell rain occurring at a distance – and they are the navigators. The zebras have a much better sense of seeing and reacting to predators and they are the security system. This vast herd is not a solid blob, but spread out in many strings of moving animals.



We are arriving in February, right after the rains typically green up the southern Serengeti. This is also the time when nearly a million wildebeest are being born to this traveling menagerie – that does not slow down for birthing. These babies must hit the ground running, keep up with the herd, and not lose track of their mother in all the confusion. For those that do, there is a host of predators waiting for them to wander away – or just appear lost.



Sometimes the migration is right at Camp Masek, and sometimes we need to go a ways out to intersect it. When we find it, we have unique opportunities to showcase how special all these moving animals are. Sometimes we find them reflecting in water. Other times they plunge in to get the dust off. Sometimes we can find a long string of animals against a horizon. And often we can find a way to isolate individuals and use slow shutter speeds to create a sense of motion.

Wherever we find the herd, the predators are lurking. We’ve witnessed cheetahs making a kill, hyenas running down a calf, lions feasting after a kill, and leopards lying in wait on a tree branch. All of that can make for fun art – and can give us a sense of this world where survival has a lot to do with both genes and luck.

We have had amazing opportunities on past adventures with giraffes in the Serengeti. In this environment, they can stand out from the background. We have had elephants in a variety of positions – including reflecting in pools. We often find mongooses and have fun composing with these cute critters. This is a place of classic sunsets with acacia trees – and sometimes old snags with roosting storks.

Count on making a lot of art in the Serengeti – by then you’ll have moved past trying to photograph everything that walks by and you’ll be working on building great compositions!





Lake Manyara National Park

Lake Manyara sits at the base of a giant uplift, a part of the rift system that extends northward to the Red Sea. This is a brackish lake, a great home to flamingos. On its shores we have photographed giraffes, elephants, Cape buffalo and more.

Between the lake and the rift is a woodland – that holds many opportunities for us. Here we can take our time and photograph baboon interactions. And, this woodland is the place where Lake Manyara's famed tree perching lions hang out. If we can find them, we sometimes have the opportunity to see a lion with a completely different background than we find out in the grasslands. This is a great place to spot birds and work them!

