

TANZANIA:

A UNIQUE SAFARI DESTINATION

By: Ted Cookson

WHY TAKE A SAFARI IN NORTHERN TANZANIA RATHER THAN IN KENYA?

Tanzania, with a less-developed tourist infrastructure than Kenya, boasts fewer tourists than does Kenya. In addition, due to the wildlife migration in the Serengeti, from October through early July there is more game in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania's share of the Serengeti Plain, than there is in Masai Mara National Park, which is the northern tip of the Serengeti lying in Kenya.

While the game species to be seen in northern Tanzania and southern Kenya are similar, there is one overwhelming reason for choosing Tanzania for one's safari; and that is Ngorongoro Crater, which is unique in having a captive wildlife population year-round. The remnant of a collapsed volcano which may have rivalled Kilimanjaro in height, the crater is between 16 km and 19 km wide and has an area of 265 square km. The rim of Ngorongoro Crater lies 610 meters above the crater floor. Some 30,000 animals live in the crater, including lion, elephant, buffalo, Thompson's gazelle, wildebeest and zebra. The best seasons for visiting Ngorongoro Crater are December-February and June-July.

The other popular game reserves on northern Tanzania's safari circuit are Serengeti National Park, Lake Manyara and, to a lesser extent, Tarangire National Park.

Serengeti, established in 1951, is the second largest (after Selous) but most famous of Tanzania's national

East Africa is popular among safari enthusiasts from Egypt. While Kenya might be one of the first safari destinations which comes to mind for many, there are good reasons why consideration should also be given to neighbouring Tanzania



parks. Serengeti is best known for the annual migration which occurs across its plains. This phenomenon involves many thousands of game animals.

The major attraction of Lake Manyara, established in 1960 and lying in the Great Rift Valley, is its lions which sleep in the trees! While not everyone is lucky enough to witness this, Manyara is rich enough in elephants, hippos, plains' game and bird life that no tourist is likely to go away complaining.

The best time to visit the much

less-touristed Tarangire, established in 1970, is during the dry season from July to September. During that time the game is heavily concentrated along the river for which the park is named.

WHY TAKE A SAFARI IN KENYA RATHER THAN IN NORTHERN TANZANIA?

If a safari will fall in the period from late July until October, then the best game viewing experience is quite likely to be in Kenya's Masai Mara National Park where the wildebeest migration is then massed.

Those taking a safari in Kenya or in northern Tanzania generally fly from Cairo directly to Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International



Airport. There is an inexpensive shuttle bus service which carries passengers daily from downtown Nairobi to Arusha, Tanzania. The shuttle bus takes about five hours each way. It is from Arusha that safaris in northern Tanzania actually begin. If a safari is taken in Kenya rather than in Tanzania, some ten hours of shuttle bus riding can be avoided.

Although Ethiopian Airlines flies from Cairo to Kilimanjaro International Airport, about an hour west of Arusha, air schedules usually necessitate an overnight in Addis Ababa. For travellers who would like to spend a day or so in the Ethiopian capital, this might have some appeal. But for those who just want to get to their Tanzania safari as efficiently as possible, a Kenya Airways or Egypt Air flight to Nairobi will be the first choice, followed by the five-hour shuttle ride from Nairobi to Arusha.

The quality of the asphalt surfacing on Kenya's road network deteriorates rapidly the farther away from Nairobi one travels; and in general Kenya's roads are not that great. However, the roads in Tanzania are even worse. Since the mid-1990's the quality of northern Tanzania's road network, which was not as good as Kenya's to begin with, has deteriorated even further. Now it is recommended that those who can afford it drive the northern Tanzania safari circuit one way only (from Arusha via Lake Manyara and Ngorongoro Crater to Serengeti) and then fly back from Serengeti to Arusha. From there they can take the shuttle bus back to Nairobi.

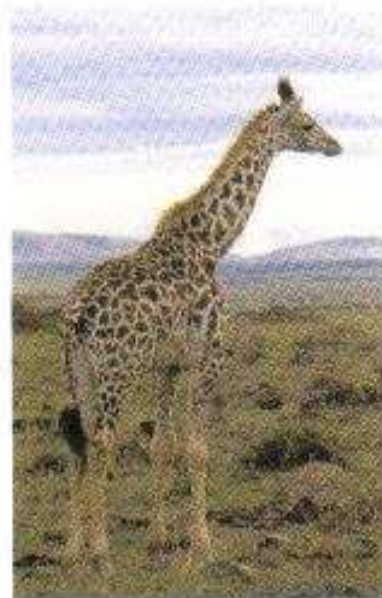
SIMILARITIES BETWEEN NORTHERN TANZANIA AND KENYA

Northern Tanzania and Kenya share the same climate, with a

monsoon season from mid-March through mid-June and also a short rainy season which typically falls in late November and early December.

Northern Tanzania and Kenya also share the same culture, with cattle-tending Masai tribes living in villages scattered along both sides of the border.

Those travellers who elect to combine a visit to the beach with their safari may do so whether they take their safari in northern Tanzania or in Kenya. The Kenya beach resorts of Mombasa, Malindi and Lamu can be reached by air from Nairobi; and the Tanzania beach resort of Zanzibar with its pristine white sandy beaches, spice fields, and famed Islamic stone



architecture in its city core can be accessed via direct flights either from Arusha or from Nairobi.

Similarly, those who elect to combine a climb of 5,895-meter-high Mt. Kilimanjaro with their safari may elect to do their game viewing in either northern Tanzania or in Kenya.

PRACTICALITIES

The cheapest current round trip airfares from Cairo to Nairobi are approximately EGP 3,400 on Kenya Airways and approximately EGP 3,000 on Egypt Air. Kenya Airways flies daily to Nairobi versus only three times a week for Egypt Air. Because Kenya Airways offers more convenient flight times, travellers

can avoid spending a final night in Nairobi. The net result is that Kenya Airways is usually preferred.

Many people wonder how much Tanzania safaris cost. Inexpensive 5-night/6-day private Tanzania camping safari land packages typically run from USD 595 per person when six people share a safari van up to USD 925 per person when only two people share the van. 5-night/6-day group Tanzania lodge-based safari land packages typically run from USD 1,335 to USD 1,500 per person, depending on the month of travel. 6-night/7-day climbs of Mt. Kilimanjaro typically run from USD 865 per person when there are six people in the climbing group up to USD 950 per person when there are only two people in the group.

Other important considerations for a Tanzania safari include tourist visas for both Kenya and Tanzania. Travellers' yellow fever vaccinations must be up-to-date in order to re-enter Egypt after returning from East Africa, and a malaria prophylactic should be begun one week prior to the safari. Visit the U.S. Centres for Disease Control web site, www.cdc.gov/travel, for full details on health requirements.

ABOUT TED COOKSON:

Egypt's most widely-traveled travel agent, Ted has been to every country in the world! He has also visited 307 of the 317 destinations on the list of the Travelers Century Club (visit www.eptours.com and refer to World Travel Club). A travel agent in Cairo since 1986, Ted manages EGYPT PANORAMA TOURS, a full-service travel agency, at 4 Road 79 (between Roads 9 and 10, near the 'El Maadi' metro station) in Maadi.

Contact Egypt Panorama Tours (open 7 days a week 9 AM-5 PM) at:
Tels. 359-0200, 358-5860,
359-1301, Fax 359-1199.
E-mail: ept@link.net.
Web site: www.eptours.com.
(Password for residents:
eptcool)