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Hekima Safari

Tanzania Safari Travel Guide

Tanzania Safari Guide

Having the reputation of the best country for a wildlife safari, Tanzania offers unparalleled experiences in its National Parks.

Worries out. We will take of everything from picking you up at the airport to saying a final goodbye.

However, you certainly have many questions about the preparations for this fantastic trip.

Below we have gathered the answers to the most popular questions frequently asked by our tourists.

However, if something important is missing - contact we at bookings@hekima-safaris.com. We are always here to help you.

- **Preparing for a safari**
- **Safaris in National parks and Game Reserves**
- **Booking and paying for your trip**
- **Getting to Tanzania**
- **Accommodation in Tanzania**
- **Security in Tanzania**

Preparing for a safari

What are “Safari” and a “game drive”?

A Safari (“trip” in Swahili – the lingua franca of Eastern and Central Africa) is generally a tour of the wilds of the National Parks, usually using customized 4x4 vehicles.

Our safaris start in either Moshi or Arusha in the North of Tanzania with a 2-3 hour drive to one of the National Parks. This is followed by a game drive in the Park, where you can see the multitudes of wild animals of this part of Africa in their natural habitat. The most popular and well-known of the Parks are Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Tarangire, Arusha and Lake Manyara. There also are a number of less-

known, but no less fascinating Parks, such as: Rubondo, Mkomazi, Saadani, etc. Tanzania safaris in the latter parks are organized individually.

Game drives generally end around 5 in the evening. The group then drives to the lodge booked for that night.

What is a Lodge?

Lodges are small hotels usually situated in or near a national Park. Lodges offer greater privacy and a sense of exclusivity by having detached bungalows or tents set amidst the African nature. The exterior of many of the Lodges mirror the traditional local architecture while providing great comfort.

What should I bring with me on safari?

We recommend comfortable light clothing for the day and something warmer for the evenings, which can be chilly in the northern highlands. Comfortable walking shoes are a must for those planning on walking in the parks (must be booked in advance). You will further need a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.

Are there any restrictions for those wishing to visit National Parks?

There are no age restrictions for Park visitors. That said, one should be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time in a vehicle. Game drives usually take most of the day, beginning in the morning and ending just before the Park gates close at 6 PM, which could tax younger travelers. Therefore, we do not recommend taking children younger than 2 on safari. On the other hand, game drives can be tailored to suit any client's personal preferences in terms of duration. There also are picnic spots, which give one an opportunity to stretch and enjoy the tranquility of the African bush.

How is a safari in Tanzania different from one in another country?

The joint Safari Bookings and National Geographic ratings for 2015 placed Tanzania first in the list of countries for African Safaris. There are two factors that make Tanzania exceptional: hunting is strictly prohibited in all the National Parks, which makes for one of the highest densities of wildlife on the continent; high Park fees keep the number of visitors relatively low, making for a more exclusive experience. Moreover, unlike other countries, where one often finds small family cars on the road, all Safaris in Tanzania are conducted using off-road vehicles, which enhances the sense of being in the wild.

Safaris in National parks and Game Reserves

What is the duration of a safari?

The duration of any safari depends solely upon the client's wishes. One can have a day's game drive in one of the closer Parks, or opt for an extensive tour of several Parks, which could take 2 weeks or more. A day's game drive usually lasts between 4 and 8 hours, with the rest of the day being spent at the lodge, all of which provide comfortable accommodation with Wi-Fi (although one should not expect to always have a fast connection), good food, and – in most cases – a swimming pool.

At what time do safaris start?

We recommend leaving the lodge as early as possible (6:30-7AM). There are a number of reasons for this: mornings tend to be cooler, which is more comfortable for you and brings you to the bush when the animals are most active; you have a chance of getting to the Park ahead of other tourists; all the park fees in Tanzania are paid by the day, regardless of the time spent within the Park, with 6PM being closing time, so getting there early gives you more time to enjoy the wilds of Africa before you have to return to your lodge.

That said, the above is but a recommendation. Our guides' foremost concern is client satisfaction, and they will adjust all the schedules according to your wishes.

What is a safari vehicle?

Hekima Safaris Heritage fleet of safari vehicles consists of customized 2014-2016 Toyota Land Cruiser 4x4 vehicles. All the vehicles have ergonomic seats, fridges for cold drinks and snacks, electrical outlets for device charging, binoculars and first-aid kits. Pop-up roofs, which allow you to stand up and observe and take photos in greater comfort, are also part of the package.

Is food available during a safari?

All our safari packages are sold on a full-board basis. Breakfasts are taken at the lodge, lunches come in the form of lunch boxes, which you can enjoy at one of the picnic spots within the Park, and dinners are once again taken at the lodge.

A supply of water and soft drinks is always available in the car fridge, as well as tea, coffee and snacks (all included in the price of the tour).

How long are the drives between Parks?

The Parks of the North of Tanzania lie relatively close to each other, making for 2 to 3-hour drives in-between.

Can one exit the car during a game drive?

Tanzania National Parks regulations strictly prohibit leaving the vehicle within the Parks, both for the safety of the visitor and that of the fragile local ecosystem. However, this does not mean that you should expect to be cooped up in the car for a whole day. All the Parks are equipped with rest/picnic spots, where you can take a stroll and enjoy lunch in the shade.

Who else is going to be in the car with me?

This depends solely on the type of the tour that you choose to book. Joined safaris are cheaper, as some of the costs are spread out between the members of the group. This also means that you will be spending time with people you have not met before the safari. If you opt for an exclusive tour, the only person other than those you bring with you – be it family or friends – who will be in the vehicle with you is your English-speaking safari driver/guide.

What is a safari guide?

Your driver during any safari with Hekima Safaris Heritage Travel is responsible for your safety and comfort for the duration of the tour. All our drivers are also professional wilderness guides, who will gladly share their knowledge of the African bush and its flora and fauna

Are photo and video recording allowed on safari?

According to National Park regulations, all photo and video recording is allowed without the use of specialized equipment. This means that you may use any photo and video cameras. Permits must be obtained for any recording that may later be used commercially. This does not apply to images and videos that may later be used in social media.

Drones can only be used with permits, which must be obtained in advance. The procedure for this is rather involved and the permits only issued for projects of high social value. Make sure to inform your Tour Manager of the need for such a permit well in advance in order to give us sufficient time for formalities.

Is it safe to bring children on safari?

Bringing children on safari is not only safe, but also highly educational and lots of fun for them. Seeing wild animals in their natural habitat, as opposed to a Zoo, is an experience that they shall carry with them through the rest of their lives. Just keep in mind that spending hours in a safari vehicle may be hard on children younger than 2.

How can we diversify our safari?

One of the most memorable adventures to undertake while on safari is a balloon flight over the Serengeti plains. The flight is about an hour, during which you get a birds-eye view of the famed Serengeti. The Parks that enclose lakes will usually offer canoeing. Those interested in panoramic views of the African bush have the option of chartering single-engine planes for flights over the Parks. Do contact our Tour Managers for further information on these and other activities.

Are chartered flights possible between the Parks?

Airstrips are available at or near all of Tanzania's National Parks. Flying between the Parks – especially when going to one or more of the southern Parks – saves a lot of time, Contact our Tour Managers for further details.

Is Wi-Fi available at hotels and lodges?

All hotels and lodges have Wi-Fi and Internet access. However, one should get used to the idea that transfer speeds will be limited.

Should I tip the safari driver?

Tipping is expected in Tanzania. We recommend \$30-50 per every day of the safari per car, provided you are satisfied with the service.

Booking and paying for your trip

Does the price of a tour include flights to and from Tanzania?

Our standard rates (found on our website) do not include the cost of international flights. Our clients include travelers from all over the world, which makes establishing a universal rate including international air travel impossible. However, our Manager organizing your individual tour can always help with choosing and booking your air tickets.

Do advance payments for the tour need to be made and if so, then what is the latest date before the commencement of the tour when this can be done?

Yes, pre-payment is expected in order to facilitate hotel bookings and expedition logistics. Classic tours incur a 30% advance payment, while Luxury and Premium require 50%. Flights within Tanzania as well as accommodation and excursions in Zanzibar require advance payments in full.

Generally, advance payments are made no later than 60 days before the commencement of the tour. However, if you intend to visit Tanzania in high season (around Christmas holidays and July through August) hotels are best booked well in advance, as the demand for quality tourist accommodation in Tanzania far outstrips the supply. Therefore, your Tour Manager may request that payments for tours falling on those periods be made 4-6 months in advance, especially if a photographic safari is part of the package. When booking larger corporate groups (upwards of 20 pax), payments should be made 6-8 months in advance. This ensures our being able to book your accommodation in quality hotels where the number of rooms available is limited, especially in the run-up to the tourist season.

Can I make full advance payments for the tour, and if so- then how?

Yes, full advance payments can be made to our Tanzanian bank accounts. Please, keep in mind that transfers generally take 3-5 days. All transfer commissions and charges are payable by the client.

What costs, apart from the actual price of the tour, could I expect to incur?

Your tour price does not include the following:

- Visa fees;
- Alcohol at hotels, unless specifically stated under all-inclusive rates;
- Tips for climb crews and safari driver/guides. Crew tips for a Kilimanjaro climb average USD 250 per client. USD 30-50 per vehicle per day are the accepted norm.

Getting to Tanzania

Should I get a Tanzanian tourist visa in advance?

Citizens of the EU and USA can acquire entry visas at international airports in Tanzania as well as other border crossings. Visa costs: generally, USD 50 (USD 100 for the citizens of USA).

Citizens of the following countries should receive a so-called referred visa in the nearest Tanzanian diplomatic institution before coming to Tanzania:

(Data according to the Immigration (Visa) Regulations, 2016)

1. Afghanistan;
2. Abkhazia;
3. Azerbaijan;
4. Bangladesh;
5. Chad;
6. Djibouti;
7. Ethiopia;
8. Eretria;
9. Equatorial Guinea;
10. The Republic of Kazakhstan;
11. The Republic of Kyrgyzstan;
12. Lebanon;
13. Mali;
14. Morocco;
15. Mauritania;
16. Niger;
17. The State of Palestine;
18. Senegal;
19. Somalia;
20. Somaliland;
21. Sri Lanka;
22. Tajikistan;
23. Turkmenistan;
24. Sierra Leone

Which Tanzanian airport should I choose for my arrival?

There are 3 International Airports in Tanzania: Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro. Your Tour Manager will recommend the most convenient of these depending on your itinerary.

Which international carriers fly to Tanzania?

If your comfort during what could be a rather lengthy flight with either tight connections or long layovers outweighs cost considerations, then we recommend that you consult the ratings in the World's Top 100 Airlines 2017.

Otherwise, pick what seems to be the most convenient of the airlines in your price range. Turkish, Emirates, Fly Dubai, KLM, Ethiopian are among the airlines with regular flights to Tanzania.

Who will meet me upon my arrival in Tanzania and what to do if I arrive at night?

One of our drivers will meet you with a sign bearing your/your group's name at your airport of arrival regardless of the time of day.

Accommodation in Tanzania

Can I choose a hotel not included in the usual programmes?

If you are booking a tailor-made tour, then you may choose any hotel and your Tour Manager will calculate the cost difference for you.

What can I expect from the food in Tanzanian hotels? Will I find familiar dishes on the menus?

All tourist hotels adapt their menus to suit European tastes, while also including some local dishes. You should have no problems when it comes to food so long as you make your dietary preferences (vegetarian, allergic, etc.) clear to your Tour Manager when booking.

What is the currency in Tanzania? Can I pay in foreign currencies?

The official currency of Tanzania is the Tanzanian Shilling; the Current rate of exchange is about TShs 2,280/US\$1. You can also make cash payments in US\$. Just keep in mind that notes issued before 2003 may not be accepted or accepted at a lower rate of exchange. You may also change Euros and some other major currencies, though preference is given to US\$ and the rate of exchange for other currencies may not be favourable.

Security in Tanzania

Is Tanzania safe for tourists?

In short- Tanzania is absolutely safe for tourists. Tourism provides a large part of the country's foreign income and the local authorities take matters of security very seriously. Moreover, Tanzania is one of

the most politically stable countries in the region and Tanzanians are very friendly as a people.

This said, some criminality does exist, just as it does everywhere else. We, therefore, recommend that you exercise common sense and follow the rules below:

Avoid the dangerous parts of any town- these are usually mentioned in most books and your guide will be happy to point them out.

- Do not leave your belongings unattended.
- When planning to take photos in towns, it is best to bring along a guide. This is not so much in the interests of safety, but, rather, in order to facilitate communication with the locals, who are – for cultural reasons – not always happy about being photographed and often do not speak English.
- After dark it is best to avoid walking and use taxis for all your travel within town. These are best organized by your tour operator or hotel reception.

How can I avoid contracting such tropical diseases as malaria, yellow fever, etc? What vaccinations do I need before travelling to Tanzania?

There have been no recorded cases of yellow fever in the country's tourist regions (most of the country, really) in the last twenty years. However, when planning to visit the less visited parts, it may be recommended that you get yellow fever vaccination two weeks before your planned travel date. This vaccination is the effective for ten years.

The problem of malaria in Tanzania is greatly exaggerated. Not all species of mosquito carry malaria to begin with, and contracting malaria is unlikely in most parts of the country.

Do I need travel insurance?

We highly recommend that you have your travel insurance regardless of what foreign country you may be visiting. If you are planning a Kilimanjaro climb, make sure that climbing emergencies are covered in your policy at height no less than 6,000 meters. If necessary, your Tour Manager will assist with purchasing such insurance.

Is the water safe in Tanzania?

Yes, all the Hotels our company offers provide safe water. Taking showers and brushing you teeth is never a problem and the water is actually potable. However, we still recommend that you only drink bottled water, which is always available at hotels and shops.