TANZANIA SAFARI: THE GREAT MIGRATION
FEBRUARY 5–17, 2017

This classic wildlife safari heads deep into the wilds of northern Tanzania, where you'll experience an unmatched blend of world-class wildlife viewing, exhilarating nature walks, and intimate encounters with tribal culture. The safari has been scheduled to coincide with the annual wildebeest migration in the Southern Serengeti.

The adventure begins with a short, scenic flight to a private nature refuge and model for community-based tourism located in the eastern Serengeti ecosystem. Because the refuge is outside the national park's boundaries, we will have the opportunity to game-view on foot as well as in vehicles at night. Additionally, with multiple Maasai villages nearby, there will be opportunities to visit homes and talk with pastoral Maasai, whose semi-nomadic lifestyle is sometimes at odds with Tanzania's vision for growth.

Then on to the iconic Serengeti, where you will spend days exploring the untamed wilderness that lion, cheetah, leopard and millions of hoofed animals call home. Your nights will be spent at two private tented camps which locations have been hand-picked to maximize the wildlife viewing and scenic experience.

We will visit Olduvai Gorge, the site of several of the Leakey family's remarkable discoveries, en route to the lush and verdant Ngorongoro Crater, a massive caldera inhabited by rhinoceros, hippo, flamingo, ostrich, and the black-mane lion. We'll end our journey with two nights at Gibb's Farm, a peaceful, eco-friendly sanctuary nestled in the heart of the breathtakingly beautiful Ngorongoro Highlands.

GROUP SIZE: 10-16 guests

PRICING: (Land only-price does not include airfare)
$8,945 per person, double occupancy (includes Value Added Tax imposed by the Tanzanian government on July 1, 2016) / Single Supplement: $800

STUDY LEADER: To be announced
SCHEDULE BY DAY
B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner; S=Snack

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5
DEPART U.S. FOR TANZANIA

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6
ARRIVAL INTO ARUSHA

Arrive this evening into Arusha, where you will be warmly welcomed. Transfer with the group to the comfortable Rivertrees Country Inn. Have a snack at Rivertrees and enjoy the serenity of the surround forests and streams.

Overnight: Rivertrees Country Inn (Snack)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7
ARUSHA TO EASTERN SERENGETI ECOSYSTEM

Take a brief scenic flight with breathtaking views of Lake Natron and the Maasai "mountain of god", Ol Doinyo Lengai, which is an active volcano.

Your main local guide(s) will welcome you upon arrival at the airstrip. They will accompany you throughout your safari, offering cultural insights, wildlife spotting expertise, and in-depth knowledge of wildlife behavior.

Begin with a brief tour and history of the 12,000-acre refuge as you make your way to camp. Wildlife viewing is possible along the way—one of the tangible results of conservation efforts in the area. Giraffe, eland, dik dik, ostrich, leopard, and even wild dog can be seen in this unique wildlife haven.

Arrive at your Nyumba (camp) in time for a tasty lunch.

In the afternoon, enjoy wildlife viewing in the Eastern Serengeti Ecosystem. Be on the lookout for rarer species such as the bat-eared fox and the smaller animals that are sometimes overlooked, such as the mongoose, hyrax, dik dik, and klipspringer.

Stretch your legs on a brief but scenic walk this afternoon. A local wildlife scout will accompany you and your guide on this walk, pointing out nearby wildlife.

This evening gather for a welcome dinner and the full Tanzanian hospitality that comes with it.

Overnight: Eastern Serengeti Nyumba (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8
EASTERN SERENGETI ECOSYSTEM

In this region—the very definition of "off-the-beaten-path"—live Maasai people who have maintained their traditional culture perhaps more than any other group. Here it is possible to take part in unique cultural visits that are not possible in other parts of the world.

Visit a school in a Maasai village beside the Eastern Serengeti Nature Refuge. As you meet with teachers and students and tour the school grounds, learn more about the role of education in Maasai culture.

Have lunch at your camp in the eastern Serengeti ecosystem.

Immerse yourself in the semi-nomadic culture of the Maasai by visiting a boma, which is a settlement of circular mud-and-dung Maasai homes. Many Maasai still roam the plains of northern Tanzania with their herds of cattle, maintaining their traditions while adapting to new ways of life. Learn more about their extraordinary culture as you tour the boma and take in the scenes of village life.

Afterwards, take to the plains and wilds after dark for a night drive in the Eastern Serengeti Ecosystem. Night drives offer thrills and possible sightings of nocturnal creatures, such as spring hares, aardvarks, and porcupines. More than anything, the night drive offers an adventure few travelers in Tanzania have the chance to experience.

Overnight: Eastern Serengeti Nyumba (B, L, D)
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9
EASTERN SERENGETI ECOSYSTEM TO SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

Head west toward the Serengeti on a rugged road that cuts through a landscape riddled with craggy hills and thickly wooded gullies. Maasai bomas appear seemingly out of nowhere. The rough road to Klein’s Gate takes you along the Grumeti River, which serves as one of the Serengeti’s two main water sources as it flows from one end of the park to the other before emptying into Lake Victoria. At the gate, you enter the Serengeti along its northeast border; the Maasai Mara Game Reserve and Kenyan border are less than 15 miles to the north. From there, traverse over the Serengeti’s acacia-covered northern corridor with wildlife viewing and a boxed lunch along the way.

Make a stop at a collaborative enterprise formed by the Enjipai Women’s Group, a small group of Maasai women with a great entrepreneurial spirit. They paired their skills as artisans and homemakers with their desire to help their own families, as well as the community in general. Now numbering over 100 members, the collaborative already has several successful projects under way. While each member makes an individual profit, a portion of all sales also goes into a community fund which was established for education and healthcare initiatives.

Spend the afternoon wildlife viewing in the Serengeti. The big cats often spend these hours lying drowsily about the plains and up in the trees while many antelope and other animals continue to graze.

Relax at your Nyumba in the evening.

Overnight: Central Serengeti Private Nyumba (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

Go on a wildlife viewing drive in the Serengeti for a full day. Your expert guide will point out wildlife that few others could hope to spot, whether a leopard well-concealed in the trees or a lion deep in the savannah grasses.

Enjoy your camp, whether you get in a workout with a Keep Fit Kit, learn a traditional Tanzanian game from your guide, write in your journal, or simply put up your feet and relax.

Overnight: Central Serengeti Private Nyumba (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

Continue your wildlife viewing with morning and afternoon game drives.

The “Big Five” and the Great Migration are the most well-known of the Serengeti’s offerings, but there is much more to see. Thousands of equally fascinating dramas of a smaller scale play themselves out on these endless plains.

Often misunderstood, the “Great Migration is not a single event, but a perpetual, year-round process involving over one million wildebeest and 200,000 zebra who roam the plains quietly, in search of food and water. While some antelope and hyena may follow the herds, other animals remain in their territories or have separate migratory patterns. The migration’s most dramatic moments often occur when large numbers of wildebeest and zebra make river crossings, during which they must elude predators in a desperate fight for survival. There is no telling exactly when these highly dramatic movements will occur, but all safari-goers are sure to see plenty of wildebeest and zebra while in Tanzania.

What is the story behind the so-called “Big Five”? It actually has nothing to do with the size of the animals. In the 1800s, colonial trophy hunters named buffalo, rhino, elephant, lion, and leopard as the most difficult animals to hunt on foot. Thus, they were named the Big Five. Years later, tourism companies adopted the term and the list became the so-called five must-see animals while on safari. While it is possible to spot all the listed animals on your trip, leopard and rhino sometimes prove difficult to track down as they are both solitary, reclusive species. Ultimately, however, wildlife viewing in the Serengeti is nothing short of amazing.

Overnight: Central Serengeti Private Nyumba (B, L, D)
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

Enjoy the journey to your next Nyumba camp, as there will be plenty to see along the way. Perhaps you will come across a chase between predator and prey; maybe you will spot a wake of vultures; or maybe you will be lucky enough to find a leopard relaxing high in the limbs of an acacia tree.

Arrive at your next camp in time for a satisfying, relaxing lunch.

Explore the pristine landscapes of the Serengeti with your guide's uncanny wildlife spotting instincts leading the way. Expansive plains, rolling hills, dramatic granite outcrops and riverine valleys are home to an endless variety of fascinating creatures, from the lowly dung beetle to the impressive elephant.

Once you return from wildlife viewing, take time to sit by the fire and relax. Exchange stories of the day, write in your journals or simply enjoy the fresh evening breeze.

Overnight: Serengeti Private Nyumba at Ndutu (B, L, D)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

Your continuing exploration takes you to various parts of the Serengeti ecosystem, including Ndutu, the southernmost corner, where large herds of wildebeest tend to congregate in the so-called green months.

This afternoon, go on a late afternoon walk around your camp and enjoy the sunset. You may see signs of wildlife in the area by identifying spoor, searching for broken branches, and finding animal tracks in the sandy soil.

Overnight: Gibb's Farm (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK TO
NGORONGORO HIGHLANDS

As you follow the meandering path out of Serengeti National Park, you cross grasslands abundant in dramatic granite outcrops called kopjes. The grasslands eventually lead into the wide-open, treeless plains that are so emblematic of the Serengeti. The wooded knolls around Naabi Hill Gate mark your departure from the park, and then it's on to the desert-like bush country.

Make a short stop at Olduvai Gorge, a deep ravine that is the site of fossilized remains of animals and hominids that date as far back as 1.75 million years. Attend a brief lecture, tour the excavation site with an archeologist, and visit the small museum.

Next, head into the Ngorongoro Crater for an afternoon of wildlife viewing. Besides some of the more well-known wonders, enjoy the full diversity of species in the crater, from hyena to hippos.

Your drive concludes in the highlands, when you arrive at the award-winning Gibb's Farm, whose rich volcanic soil makes for some of the most fertile land in Tanzania.

This evening, relax at the Tembo Fire, an open-air sitting area nestled at the foot of the organic gardens. The tradition of the nightly campfire began as a purely practical measure to ensure that elephants—or "tembo" in Swahili—are not tempted to feast in the organic gardens at night. It soon became a popular place to sit and relax at the end of the day. Now, with a comfortable seating area and full bar, the Tembo Fire makes a wonderful place for conversation, storytelling, or stargazing.

Overnight: Gibb's Farm (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15
NGORONGORO HIGHLANDS

For over 80 years, Gibb’s Farm has been an important part of the history of the Ngorongoro Highlands. It began in the 1920s as a German colonial coffee plantation and eventually became the residence of a British World War II veteran, James Gibb, in 1948. Still a working coffee estate and farm, Gibb’s resonates with the perfect harmony of nature and culture, luxury and sustainability,
magnificent accommodation and historic preservation.

More than 220 species of birds have been identified at Gibb’s Farm, with more added to the list each year. In the morning join a naturalist for a birding walk through the farm and gardens and spot a stunning array of avian species, from crowned hawk-eagles to Fischer’s lovebird, from golden-winged sunbird to Abyssinian nightjar.

Savor lunch at Gibb’s Farm, where nearly every ingredient comes fresh from the estate’s organic farm. With delicacies to suit every palate, this is sure to be a memorable meal.

With a view of the coffee farms and forests that surround Gibb’s Farm, take in the accompanying aromas and sounds as you have afternoon tea on the verandah.

Gibb’s Farm sponsors East African artists, from botanical illustrators to Makonde carvers, who live at the farm and develop their work. In fact, it is their sculptures, paintings, and artwork that adorn the many luxury cottages and facilities at Gibb’s. Meet with one of the artists and learn more about his or her work, inspiration and techniques.

Enjoy your farewell dinner in Tanzania, giving you time to reflect on the many sights, adventures, and experiences that you will remember for years and years to come.

Overnight: Gibb’s Farm (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16
DEPARTURE

Depart the highlands for Arusha, where, after a day of leisurely activities, you will catch your departing flight.

In Arusha, stop at the Cultural Heritage Center, a shopping mainstay, that attracts many travelers each year with its abundance of wooden carvings, artifacts, apparel, and crafts. The center also has Tanzanite and other gemstones for sale. While the center caters mostly to tourists, they also have wonderful cultural displays and a separate wing that showcases some of the finest African art in Tanzania.

During a special farewell lunch, you will have time to say goodbye to your safari companions as you prepare for your departures.

Enjoy a day room in Arusha, resting up and readying yourself for your departure.

Later this evening transfer as a group to Kilimanjaro Airport.

Day Room: Rivertrees Country Inn (B, L, S)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17
RETURN TO NORTH AMERICA