This classic family safari to the wilds of northern Tanzania offers an unmatched blend of world-class wildlife viewing, intrepid nature walks and intimate tribal culture.

The adventure begins with a visit to a 12,000-acre private nature refuge in the Eastern Serengeti Ecosystem where, in just a few years through extensive conservation efforts, wildlife populations have doubled and local Maasai villages are beginning to benefit from community-based tourism initiatives.

From there, head to the Southern Serengeti, which will be bursting at the seams with wildlife. The shorts rain of late November and early December turn the southern plains into a sea of verdant grass attracting large herds of wildebeest and zebra.

Next, travel to the famous Ngorongoro Crater, the largest unbroken volcanic caldera on Earth and home to the world’s densest concentration of mammals—it is possible to see all of “the Big Five” (lion, elephant, Cape buffalo, leopard, and rhinoceros) before lunch!

Finish your safari with a community service project in the Ngorongoro Highlands and some rest and relaxation at the luxurious Gibb’s Farm.

STUDY LEADER: To be announced.

GROUP SIZE: Up to 22 guests

PRICING: Based on per person double occupancy
$8,995 Adult Rate / $8,695 Teen Rate / $8,295 Child Rate / $990 single supplement
SCHEDULE BY DAY
B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26
DEPART US
Depart the US today on flights for Arusha.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27
ARRIVE IN ARUSHA
Arrive this evening in Arusha, where you will be warmly welcomed. Transfer with your group to your comfortable lodge.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28
ARUSHA / EASTERN SERENGETI ECOSYSTEM
Northern Tanzania is a relatively small area, so it only takes a brief scenic flight to bring you to a whole new world of cultural interest and natural beauty. Along the way, take in breathtaking views of Lake Natron and the Maasai “mountain of god”, Ol Doinyo Lengai, which is an active volcano.

You will be welcomed by your guides 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.

Your head guide will give you a brief orientation of the 12,000-acre refuge as you make your way to camp. Enjoy wildlife viewing 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.

You can relax at your Nyumba and enjoy a tasty lunch before your afternoon 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.

This afternoon stretch your legs on a brief but scenic walk. A local wildlife scout will accompany you.

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

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29
EASTERN SERENGETI ECOSYSTEM
Enjoy a light breakfast before heading out on a morning hike. The terrain will be fairly mild, but make sure that you’ve got comfortable shoes with good traction. Being out on the plains on foot at this time of day is magical.

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.

Then meet Maasai elder Nekaaki Kioki, a feisty grandmother and fantastic storyteller. She knows hundreds of Maasai folktales and tells them in a truly dramatic fashion. Gather around the campfire to listen to her tell folktales, which are translated into English.

This evening 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)
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

This morning, you will visit 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.

Afterwards, 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 at the park’s entrance 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 along the way.

Enjoy a boxed lunch on the journey to your next Nyumba camp; there will be plenty to see along the way. Perhaps you will witness a chase between predator and prey, or you will spot a wake of vultures or even a leopard relaxing high in the limbs of an acacia tree.

When you arrive at your Nyumba, the remainder of the day is at leisure before a relaxing dinner and a toast to the New Year.

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

Today experience a full day of wildlife viewing in the Serengeti. 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 lunch outdoors in a scenic spot.

Once you return to your nyumba, 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: Southern Serengeti Nyumba (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

The “Great Migration” has been covered extensively in nature programs, showing some of the most thrilling wildlife moments that have been captured on film. Often misunderstood, the migration is 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.

Early this morning, those with advance reservations will have the opportunity to balloon across the plains during one of your mornings in the Serengeti. A pre-dawn wake-up call leaves you time to drive to the balloon launch site in order to catch the most dramatic light. Then take to the skies just as the sun rises, gliding over the plains and acacia treetops and taking in spectacular views of the Seronera River.
Valley and the surrounding plains. After your descent, enjoy a magnificent champagne breakfast right in the midst of the Serengeti wilderness.

For those who opt not to take the balloon excursion, there is much to discover within arm’s reach of camp. For instance, learn how to identify animal footprints and bird calls with your guide. How do you tell the difference between the footprint of a dik-dik and a Thomson’s gazelle? How about a leopard and a lion? A guide will take you on a walk and show you the tricks to identifying signs of wildlife.

This afternoon spend more time seeking out wildlife and exploring the Serengeti’s rich landscapes. 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.

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

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2
SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK / NGORONGORO HIGHLANDS

As you go from the Serengeti to the Ngorongoro Highlands, 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, one of the world’s greatest prehistoric archeological sites. Archeologists have been making thrilling discoveries for nearly a century in this deep ravine where the fossilized remains of animals and hominids date as far back as two million years. A brief lecture and small museum tour are included.

Enjoy a boxed lunch as you continue your drive.

Your drive concludes in the highlands, where rich volcanic soil makes for some of the most fertile land in Tanzania. Here you arrive at your home for the next three nights: the tranquil Gibb’s Farm.

Established in the 1920s as a German colonial coffee plantation, Gibb’s Farm has been an important part of the history of the Ngorongoro Highlands for over 80 years. While still a working coffee estate and farm, Gibb’s has been refurbished as a warm, rustic, luxury inn. It resonates with the perfect harmony of nature and culture, luxury and sustainability, magnificent accommodation and historic preservation.

You may choose to spend the afternoon relaxing on the verandah with tea, or take advantage of innumerable optional activities: a farm or garden tour, mountain biking (additional fee), bird watching, coffee roasting, and more.

Overnight: Gibb’s Farm (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3
NGORONGORO CRATER

Established in the late 1950s, Ngorongoro Conservation Area balances wildlife preservation alongside human settlements. The area covers about 3,200 square miles from the shore of Lake Eyasi to the south, the edge of the Great Rift Valley to the east, the border of the Loliondo Game Controlled Area to the North and the boundaries of Serengeti National Park to the west. Resident wildlife populations in the crater and seasonal migratory populations around the Serengeti make this an integral part of Tanzania’s ecology. In addition, the abundance of Maasai settlements makes it a cultural epicenter within northern Tanzania.

Today visit the Ngorongoro Crater, where wildlife tends to gather in droves. With luck, you might even see rhinoceros and big cats such as lion and cheetah. The diversity of species often inspires awe, from baboons and elephants in the Lerai Forest to wildebeest and mountain reedbuck over the crater’s grassy floor.
Enjoy a bush lunch on the floor of the Ngorongoro Crater.

Back at Gibb’s Farm 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 star-gazing.

Overnight: Gibb’s Farm (B, L, D)

MONDAY, JANUARY 4
Ngorongoro Highlands / Community Service Project

For the first half of the day you have the opportunity to work side-by-side with local residents building or mending classrooms, reading to children, teaching English, teaching sports, or doing crafts, among other things.

Then savor lunch at Gibb’s Farm, where nearly every ingredient comes fresh from the estate’s organic farm.

This afternoon is at leisure. Perhaps take a leisurely stroll on your own through the gardens at Gibb’s Farm to stretch your legs. Enjoy the quiet atmosphere, the abundance of beautiful plantings and the views out into the surrounding highlands.

This evening gather for a farewell dinner. 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)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5
Drive Back to Arusha

Enjoy your last morning in the Ngorongoro Highlands before driving back to Arusha, where you will catch your departing flight later in the day.

Make a stop at the Cultural Heritage Center in Arusha. The center attracts many travelers each year with its abundance of wooden carvings, artifacts, apparel, and crafts. It 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 displays some of the finest African art in Tanzania.

During a special farewell lunch in Arusha, 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.

The lodge will provide a light snack before transferring as a Group to the Airport.

Day Room: Mount Meru Hotel (B, L)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6
Return to U.S.