

## Southern Tanzania Explorer - Selous and Ruaha (11 days, 10 nights)



Southern Tanzania hosts some of its country's largest national parks that are teeming with wildlife but - partly due to their remoteness - at the same time are very low on tourist numbers. Starting in Dar Es Salaam we will visit these areas rife with wildlife and birds and spend the maximum amount of time there.

Ingrid Vekemans, your tour leader and professional nature photographer, has been travelling to Africa for almost 30 years and has lost her heart on the continent. She feels at home there and looks forward to sharing her knowledge and passion with the group.

This trip takes place in the high season for a reason. The high season is the dry season in Tanzania. Therefore, the wildlife will be more concentrated around areas where water is available and the vegetation is much less thick. For these two reasons we will be able to spot many more animals than in the low season.

This trip is aimed at people who love nature and wildlife, and who love photographing it (of course non-photographing partners are also welcome!). Unlike normal group tours, we will be looking especially for photographic opportunities, and will take whatever time is required if the situation is interesting from a photographer's point of view. The group is small, which enables a personal approach and provides enough space in the vehicle for the photographic equipment - we will be using 8-seater 4x4 vehicles for a maximum of four people per vehicle. Hence two vehicles will be our transport and Ingrid will split her time evenly between them.

Besides photographing together, with immediate advice and tips, on the no-travel days you can expect more time with Ingrid. On these days there will be dedicated 'feedback' sessions after lunch, where a selection of photos from each participant can be discussed.

A typical day starts early, so we can make optimal use of the first, soft morning light. This often results in the most memorable photographs. Also, this is the time of the day where most animal activity can be seen. Most days we will be taking a packed breakfast, which we can enjoy en route in a scenic area. In the late morning and early afternoon, when the temperature rises, you will be at the lodge, relaxing and/or viewing photos, making a selection for the feedback session. Late afternoon we will set off again to take photos until the light disappears. (Please note that it is obviously not obligatory to participate in all game drives – often good photo opportunities exist within the camps themselves). There is time to freshen up before dinner after which you can linger to discuss the events of the day, or you may prefer the peace and quiet of your room or tent. After all, tomorrow will undoubtedly be another exciting day!

**THIS SAFARI IS OPERATED BY**



## **Day 1**

In the course of the day or evening the participants will arrive in Dar Es Salaam, where they will be picked from the airport and taken to the hotel. Depending on the arrival time of the plane, there will be an afternoon briefing or it might be time for bed.

## **Day 2**

After an early breakfast, we will depart to the Selous in our 4x4's. Around lunch time we will arrive in our luxury tented camp located on the bank of the Rufiji River. Here we will go on a boat ride so we can photograph the various river inhabitants and visitors. We have a good chance of seeing crocodiles, lots of birdlife and mammals that come to the river for a drink or a bath. We return to camp for a hearty meal and a good night's sleep.

During the entire trip we will only sleep in lodges and tented camps that are unfenced and where animals can roam in and out freely. This is wild Africa at its best.

Please note that recently the name of the part of the Selous where we will be staying has been changed to Nyerere National Park, but the name Selous is still commonly used.



## **Day 3**

Today we drive - camera in hand - past lakes, bush and plains towards our next camp on the shores of Lake Manze where we are expected for lunch. Lake Manze is situated in the very heart of the wildlife action. The camp itself is small scale and authentic, and well visited by animals throughout day and night. In the afternoon, after the feedback session, we will further explore this area with our 4x4's. Back at the camp we can talk about our impressions of our new surroundings over dinner. The night sounds of the African wilderness will make us drop off into a refreshing sleep.

## Day 4

This morning we will make a boat trip on the lake, where hippos and water birds are abundant and where possibly also other animals come to quench their thirst. The prodigiously large mammal populations found here, support the claim that the Selous is the greatest surviving African wilderness. Buffalo numbers are estimated at 150,000, and the reserve's 40,000 hippo and 4,000 lion are probably the largest such populations on the continent. Furthermore wildebeest, zebra, impala and giraffe as well as kudu, eland, bushbuck and the like are represented here. It is also one of the most important sanctuaries in Africa for the endangered African wild dog, sable antelope and puku. Crocodiles, spotted hyenas, elephants and leopards inhabit this vast area too.

On top of that, more than 440 bird species have been recorded in the Selous. On the lakes you'll find pink-backed pelicans, storks, African skimmers and giant kingfishers. The sandbanks of the Rufijiriver are home to bee-eater colonies whilst fish eagles, palmnut vultures and ibises nest in the borassus palms around the lakes.

We return to camp to relax and have lunch. After lunch we will have another feedback session after which we will go on safari again. Back at camp we can refresh ourselves, dine and then go for a good sleep to recharge our batteries for the promising day of tomorrow.



## Day 5

Further exploration of the Selous. We'll also be repacking our luggage a bit today. The big travel bags will be taken early tomorrow morning by our drivers who will start the journey to Ruaha by road, while we hang onto our camera bag and a small hand luggage with some essentials. This is necessary because of the luggage restrictions on the domestic flight that we will be taking in the morning.

## Day 6

While our drivers start their long trip, we are taken to the local airstrip by the camp staff for a domestic flight to Ruaha National Park. Our lodge conveniently lies on the bank of the Ruaha river. From our private verandah or from the lounge we can observe the coming and going of wildlife in our lodge. We will split our time in Ruaha over two camps in different locations so we can make an even bigger variation of photographs. Ruaha contains an enormous variety of animal species, so the photo opportunities are plentiful.

Guides from the lodge will take us in their vehicles today for our first evening safari in Ruaha. After dinner we can discuss the events of the day, or you may choose to go to bed early to enjoy the sounds of nocturnal Africa before falling asleep.



## Day 7

Early morning will find us setting off with guides and vehicles of the lodge again to explore the area where we're staying. Ruaha is well known for its varied dramatic scenery, which includes rolling hills, large open plains and groves of impressive baobabs. The Great Ruaha River meanders through the southern part of the park and is of vital importance to the animals.

The diversity of habitats ensures a lot of variation in wildlife as well. We are almost certain to see buffalos, zebras, Defassa waterbucks and giraffes, but Lichtenstein's hartebeest, the lesser and greater kudu and the sable and roan antelope are represented here as well. Ruaha National Park is also home to the largest elephant population in Tanzania. Furthermore, it is an excellent park for spotting predators. The lion groups are large, cheetahs hunt on the open plains and leopards hide on the rocks or in the bush. The African wild dog can be found here as well although, given the enormous distances that they cover daily, we need a good dose of luck to see them. Other inhabitants of this vast area include the black-backed jackal, the bat-eared fox and the spotted hyena.

On top of all this, Ruaha is a birder's paradise. In this park alone over 580 different bird species have been recorded. From the little bee-eater to the southern ground hornbill: great and small, we will see them all.

After lunch we have time for a feedback session and we are reunited with our own drivers and our travel bags. Our drivers will take us on an unforgettable afternoon safari in the comfort of our own vehicles. After sunset we can freshen up and recover from this overwhelming day over a hearty dinner.



## Day 8

We leave with packed breakfasts and our luggage, and head deeper into Ruaha National Park, to the area that will become our home for the next few days. After the morning game drive, we check into our new home, a very comfortable, rustic camp that is well visited by the abundant wildlife that inhabits this part of the park.

After lunch and the feedback sessions we can further explore this new area until darkness falls. We will get served a home cooked meal and around the campfire feel one with the African bush.



## Day 9 and 10

Further exploration of Ruaha National Park with morning and afternoon safaris and feedback session after lunch. After our afternoon game drive, we will freshen ourselves up for a relaxed last dinner in this wild part of Africa.



## Day 11

Unfortunately, our group trip has come to an end. After breakfast we will be taken to the local airstrip to catch a flight back to Dar Es Salaam. The trip ends here though of course, you can extend your trip with a couple of nights to relax on the tropical 'spice' island of Zanzibar, with its blue water and white beaches, before flying home totally rested and refreshed. Participants are also welcome to enquire with TUI about extending their stay in Dar Es Salaam, Mahale, Mikumi or Katavi National Park.



**ATTENTION: a change to the above travel schedule is always possible, if the circumstances dictate.**

### Non-exhaustive list of mammals that inhabit the parks visited:

Bushbuck, Kirk's Dik-dik, Eland, Grant's Gazelle, White-bearded Gnu, Lichtenstein's Hartebeest, Impala, Klipspringer, Lesser Kudu, Greater Kudu, Common Waterbuck, Defassa Waterbuck, Sable Antelope, Roan Antelope, Puku, Cape Buffalo, African Elephant, Maasai Giraffe, Hippopotamus, Rock Hyrax, Common Warthog, Burchell's Zebra, Cheetah, Civet, Hunting Dog, Bat-eared Fox, Large-spotted Genet, Striped Hyena, Spotted Hyena, Black-backed Jackal, Leopard, Lion, Banded Mongoose, Dwarf Mongoose, Honey Badger, Serval, Savannah Baboon, Lesser Bushbaby, Green Vervet Monkey, Crested Porcupine., Angolan Colobus Monkey..

There are more than 600 **bird** species in these parks, of which you can find a handful of examples underneath:

Lilac-breasted Roller, European Roller, Pink-backed Pelican, Goliath Heron, Great Egret, Malagasy Squacco Heron, Abdim's Stork, Yellow-billed Stork, Saddle-billed Stork, Open-billed Stork, Marabu Stork, Black Egret, White-backed Night Heron, Hadada Ibis, Sacred Ibis, Egyptian Goose, White-crowned Plover, Spur-winged Plover, African Fish Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Bateleur, Palmnut Vulture, Grey Kestrel, Pel's Fishing Owl, Black-bellied Bustard, Helmeted Guinea Fowl, Malachite Kingfisher, Woodland Kingfisher, Striped Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Giant Kingfisher, Little Bee-eater, White-throated Bee-eater, White-fronted Bee-eater, Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Red-billed Hornbill, Southern Ground-hornbill, Red-billed Oxpecker, Ashy Starling, Crested Barbet, Trumpeter Hornbill, Purple-crested Turaco, Böhm's Bee-eater, Wire-tailed Swallow, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Spoonbill...

On top of all this there is of course also a rich **insect and reptile** world, of which the Nile Crocodile is the largest representative.





## PRACTICALITIES

### TUI

The safari is organised by TUI tours, part of TUI BELGIUM n.v.. The TUI Group is the largest tourism group in the world.

You can apply for your reservation with the TUI BELGIUM n.v. headquarters. To this end you can use the 'PRICE OFFER' button on the respective safari page of the website [www.ingridvekemans.com](http://www.ingridvekemans.com). You will then be sent a free quote.

The invoice and booking terms and conditions will be sent to you by TUI. TUI's general and special conditions are applicable in so far as they do not deviate from the below mentioned terms. You can find all information about this here: <https://www.tui.be/nl/reisvoorwaarden>

In case of cancellation by the traveler - special cancellation conditions: In case of advance payment of accommodation or other services the cancellation costs can be as high as 100% relatively long before departure. This amount has to be increased with the compensation charged by the airline and the administration costs in accordance with the time of cancellation.

The **price** of the trip is ~~9760~~ 9560€ and is based on sharing a double or twin room. The supplement for a single room will be ~~1220~~ 1170€. An advance of 500€ per person will be requested at the time of reservation of the trip, and as soon as departure is guaranteed, a second advance of 1200€ per person will be asked. All prices mentioned on this website are subject to change in case of increase of local taxes or park income and conservation fees and fuel increases.

**Safari period:** 5 until 15 August 2025

**The price is inclusive** of airport transfers, accommodation in comfortable hotels, lodges and tented camps (10 nights), all meals except a possible evening meal on day 1, transport by 4x4 vehicles throughout, bottled water in the vehicles, game drives (two per day except on travel days), 2 boat cruises, domestic flights Selous-Ruaha and Ruaha-Dar Es Salaam, Amref Flying Doctors service, experienced drivers/guides, park entry fees, guiding and advice about the animals and how to photograph them, photo analyses and an experienced and passionate tour leader!

**The price excludes** the international flight and related taxes, Tanzania visa, passport costs, travel insurance, drinks, tips, personal expenses.

**Minimum number of participants:** minimum 5 (maximum 7)

**Minimum age for participants:** 16

As soon as the minimum number of participants is reached, you will be contacted by TUI. TUI will then make you flight proposals for the **international flights**. You can then choose whether to book your flight through TUI or to take care of your international flights yourself. The international flights can be booked at the earliest on 30 August 2024.

#### **Insurance:**

It is strongly recommended for every participant to have cancellation and travel insurance.

**Force majeure:** The photo safaris are normally accompanied by Ingrid Vekemans. Only if Ingrid Vekemans would be prevented through force majeure an alternative - equivalent replacement will be sought in view of a good execution of the travel contract.

#### **Luggage restrictions:**

In order to be sure to have enough freedom to move around the vehicle on travel days, maximum one soft travel bag (dimensions maximum h 40cm x d 40cm x l 80cm) per person is allowed as well as the camera bag. Only if every participant sticks to this restriction, the trip will be comfortable for all. The maximum allowed weight of your luggage will depend on the airline with which you book your flight.

For the return flight from Ruaha to Dar Es the total luggage restriction (checked luggage and hand luggage) is 35 kg per person (or 70 kg per couple) - please take this strictly into account.

### **Requirements for the participants:**

Beginners, as well as more experienced photographers (and their partners) are welcome to join this trip. In order to get the most out of the photographic opportunities, it is however advised that you know the basics of photography (regarding ISO/shutter speed/aperture and light metering), such as you might learn in a basic digital photography or a wildlife photography workshop. The trip is physically not very demanding because we will always be photographing out of a vehicle or a boat. The game drives, however, will start very early in the morning and can last a long time depending on what we see. Participants therefore have to be in good health. It can be surprisingly cold in the mornings, so make sure to pack warm clothing as well!

Participants have to take care of any necessary **vaccinations and medications**. For more information, check <https://www.wanda.be/en>. The information on this website needs to be evaluated by the participant in consultation with a qualified physician. Participants have to make sure they have a **valid international passport (valid at least another 6 months after the date of return) and a visa** for Tanzania. The visa can no longer be purchased locally upon arrival. It must be requested online a few weeks before departure via <https://visa.immigration.go.tz/>. For more information you can go to the Tanzanian embassy in your country. For the last update: see <http://diplomatie.belgium.be>.

Finally, respect for nature and the animals is a must!

Participants have to be aware that Africa sometimes requires patience and understanding: roads can be bumpy and things may not work as efficiently as at home. The pace of life is slower, which should ultimately benefit us all...

