

~A special invitation to the Greatest Show on Earth~

THE GREAT HERD MIGRATION IN THE SERENGETI

Join us, Barbara and Michael King, in June 2012 for one of the most phenomenal events on earth—a continuous migration of over one million wildebeest, 300,000 Zebras, countless Thompson's Gazelles and lions, cheetahs, and leopards, oh my!!!



The migration of millions of wildlife in the Serengeti ecosystem is a spectacle like no other in the world. Imagine the heart of the Serengeti at dusk—wide open plains, gentle breeze in the glorious orange-pink colors of the setting sun. No street lights, no traffic, the gentle chirping of crickets heralding the end of yet another day in this timeless space. Night falls suddenly enveloping the plains in a thick blanket of black. Up above there is a ceiling of millions of stars which seem to shine

more brightly than anywhere else on earth—welcome to the magic that is AFRICA!

We begin our journey in Arusha, a modern town between Kilimanjaro and the Ngorongoro Crater. We spend the night at the Arusha Coffee Plantation Lodge, tired from our travel but yet excited with the thoughts that we are finally here!

The next day our safari begins. Snow-capped mountains, cavernous valleys, lush forests, and broad plains, and most especially, animals by the thousands await us. Our first stop is Tarangire – a beautiful National park southwest of Arusha – named for the river that cuts through it. The baobabs capture our eyes as we enter the park. The gently rolling countryside is dotted with these majestic trees, which seem to dwarf the animals that feed beneath them.



We will spend the next three days at Swala – a luxury safari camp located in the southern part of the park. We are going to be amazed at the massive herds of elephants which gather right outside our luxury camp. Herds of up to 300 elephants scratch the dry river bed for underground streams, while migratory wildebeest, zebra, buffalo, impala, gazelle,

hartebeest and eland crowd the shrinking lagoons. It's the greatest concentration of wildlife outside the Serengeti ecosystem - a smorgasbord for predators – and the one place in Tanzania

where dry-country antelope such as the stately fringe-eared Oryx and peculiar long-necked gerenuk are regularly observed.



On the fifth day we will travel north to the largest in-tact crater in the world, Ngorongoro Crater, a large unbroken unflooded volcanic caldera. The crater is some 3 million years old, 2,000 feet deep and its floor cover over 100 square miles. The crater is home to all types of wildlife including the endangered black rhino. We will make our home for the next three nights on the rim of this extinct volcano

at Serena Lodge offering unbelievable views across the floor of the crater.



In addition to game drives on the floor of the crater we will visit Olduvai Gorge where the Leakeys discovered the hominoid remains of a 1.8 million year old skeleton of an *Australopithecus boisei*, one of the distinct links of the human evolutionary chain. Evacuated fossils show that this area is one of the oldest sites of hominoid habitation in the world.



In the afternoon we will visit a Maasai village. The Maasai have come to represent Africa at its most primal, a fiercely independent tribe of legendary courage who sternly shun the modern world in favor of traditional rites and customs. The Maasai are undoubtedly one of the most famous traditional cultures on earth. The Maasai have ancestral ties to the Samburu and the Njemps with whom they share a language *Maa*, from which the name Maasai comes. The Maasai are completely nomadic cattle herders, and it is only very recently that any move towards agriculture has become evident.

Cattle are very important to the Maasai, and are the subject of mystical beliefs and reverence. Maasai mythology tells of a time when the earth and sky were joined together, until they were suddenly torn apart, with only the wild fig trees left as bridges between the two. As a gift to the Maasai, God - called *Enkai* sent herds of cattle down through these trees to earth.

Because the Maasai believe cattle are sacred and a direct gift from the heavens, grass is also considered a blessing and sacred. When passing a fig tree, it is customary for the Maasai to push handfuls of grass between the roots, as homage to the source of their herds.



One of the more common Maasai greetings is "I hope your cattle are well."

On day eight we will fly north to the confluence of the Western Serengeti and the Grumeti and Mara rivers. Here we will take our front row seats at the Grumeti Serengeti Tented Camp to view the Great Migration!



Each day we will journey through the thousands of gazing animals and their predators observing a ritual that has been replayed for thousands of year.

The name Serengeti means ‘endless plain’ and here hundreds of thousands of animals are spread out as far as the eye can see in all directions. It’s impossible to capture the sheer number of them with the camera’s lens – it’s something that must be witnessed with the naked eye.

We will also have the option of seeing this vast landscape from the air in a hot air balloon!

Finally on the eleventh morning we fly back to Arusha to prepare for our journey home- filled with wonderful memories and feeling truly blessed to have witness such creation! Already most of us will begin to consider how and when we may return to the magic that is Africa!

Sincerely,

Michael & Barbara

Michael and Barbara King