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African  
**Overland**  
Tours

## 24 Day Gorilla, Game Parks & Zanzibar (North)

This trip departs from Dar Es Salaam early on Thursday morning. Should you wish to explore Dar Es Salaam, an earlier arrival should be planned and accommodation booked through us.

**Pre Departure Meeting:** Held at the Departure Point at 17h00 the day before your departure.

**Departure Point:** Kipepeo Campsite, Plot 4, Mjimwema, Kigamboni.

**Check-In Time:** 07h30

**Departure Time:** To be advised at pre-departure meeting

### Please Note:

This itinerary should be used as a guide only and may vary from day to day depending on road & weather conditions, political situations and group decisions. All prices & Local Payments are subject to change. Due to Tourism Laws in some of the countries we visit, there may be a truck and crew change during the trip.

### Day 1: Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar

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A ferry from Dar es Salaam takes us to the "Spice Island," where we have the option to spend the next 3 nights. Zanzibar is steeped in history and was one of the major starting points for most East African explorers in their quest for new lands. New passengers may join us to replace those that'll leave us at the end of our excursion to Zanzibar.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Accommodation and Meals are for your own account whilst on Zanzibar, as it is our experience that passengers prefer to explore the island on their own. The Trip Leader joins you and can arrange your accommodation, while meals can be enjoyed from a wide selection of restaurants.

\*For those not opting to visit the island of Zanzibar, the next 3 days are spent at leisure at the beach campsite in Dar es Salaam.

### Days 2 & 3: Zanzibar

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History aside, Zanzibar offers a wealth of experiences for the visitor. Today the quiet streets of the old Stone Town still retain their Arabic influence, from the Medina-like shops to the palaces of the Sultans, who founded their vast empires on the spoils of the slave and ivory trade.

The island is famous for its spices and an excursion around a spice plantation is always a fascinating experience. Other options include a trip to the beautiful beaches and giant tortoises of Prison Island, a full day scuba dive in Nungwe or a fishing trip in a traditional dhow. Mopeds are available for hire if you'd like to explore the more remote areas of the island.



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## 24 Day Gorilla, Game Parks & Zanzibar (North)

Zanzibar is a seafood lover's paradise. Numerous restaurants offer a great variety of the freshest catch from the ocean - crayfish being a popular speciality. Alternatively, mingle with the locals for dinner at the Forodhani Gardens seafront market, where delicious, inexpensive seafood is on offer.

### Day 4: Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam

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Leaving Zanzibar, we return to the mainland in the late afternoon and another night in Dar es Salaam.

### Day 5: Dar es Salaam to Arusha

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From Dar es Salaam we travel through vast sisal plantations to Arusha. On the way, we pass The Pare and Usambara Mountain ranges before driving through the town of Moshi. Moshi is the base for Mount Kilimanjaro climbing expeditions and weather permitting; we may even catch a glimpse of this magical mountain's snowy summit - a photo opportunity not to be missed! Tonight we stay in a lovely campsite in Meserani on the outskirts of Arusha, before heading out on our Optional Excursions to the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater.

### Day 6 to 8: Arusha / Optional Ngorongoro Crater / Serengeti Excursion

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Arusha is a pleasant town situated at the base of Mount Meru and is the starting point for the optional excursions to Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti. We conduct these excursions in locally operated 4WD vehicles, which are adapted for safari use.

For those not opting to visit the Ngorongoro Crater or Serengeti National Park, the next 2 days are spent at leisure enjoying the Meserani reptile park, Masai Cultural Museum and the surrounding villages and craft markets. Alternatively the town of Arusha is close by to explore.

The Optional Ngorongoro/Serengeti excursion takes us via the Masai town of Mtu Wa Mbu (Mosquito River) that lies adjacent to the Lake Manyara National Park and up the Rift Valley Escarpment to the higher lying village of Karatu. Karatu offers magnificent views over the surrounding hills and has many well established wheat farms that add to the picturesque panoramas. We spend the evening at a pleasant campsite in Karatu. The following morning we depart early for the Ngorongoro Conservation area and head into the wildlife rich Ngorongoro Crater. This World Heritage Site boasts some of the best game viewing in Africa – including the elusive Black Rhino.

After our game drive in the Crater, we head down the Crater rim and past the 'Cradle of Mankind' on our way to the Serengeti National Park. We cross the vast plains as we game drive through the southern and central areas in the park. Tonight we camp in the bushveld surrounded by the sounds of the African wilderness. In the morning, we head off for another game drive and explore the landscape in search of the resident game. With some luck, we may see some of Africa's 'Big 5'!

After our morning drive, we head back across the plains and the lush Crater rim to our truck at Arusha, where we spend the evening musing over our thrilling wildlife experience.

## 24 Day Gorilla, Game Parks & Zanzibar (North)

### Day 9: Arusha to Namanga (Kenya)

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After a morning spent exploring Arusha's city centre and vibrant craft markets, we head to lunch just outside of town. After lunch, we travel 120 km to the Tanzania / Kenya border. Once the border formalities are complete, we camp at Namanga just over the Kenyan border.

### Day 10: Namanga to Nairobi

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This morning we travel 180 km north to the capital city, Nairobi. On arrival, we head to the Hotel Boulevard, where we deliver the passengers who'll be ending their trip here, before heading to our campsite for the night.

### Day 11: Nairobi to Masai Mara

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This morning we collect the passengers who'll be joining us on the final leg of our trek. We leave the hustle and bustle of Nairobi we climb the escarpment to our first stop, a viewpoint overlooking the spectacular Great Rift Valley. Descending into the Rift Valley, we enter Masai land where these habitual pastoralists are often seen tending their cattle from the side of the road. We pass through the town of Narok, before arriving at our campsite, Acacia Camp. Acacia Camp looks on to the Meguarra hills and the stream that meanders by on the bottom end forms a natural border to the Masai Mara National Reserve.

### Day 12: Masai Mara

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We depart early and spend the day game driving through this natural wilderness – with huge plains, rolling hills and an abundance of game; the Masai Mara offers a spectacular wildlife experience. We keep an eye open for the Big 5 - elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion & leopard. If travelling between July and October, we may get to witness the impressive herds of over 2 million wildebeest, zebra and Thomson's gazelle in their Annual Migration. Tonight we recollect our highlights around the campfire.

### Day 13: Masai Mara to Kericho

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Leaving the Masai Mara early in the morning, we travel to the scenic tea plantations of Kericho, situated on the edge of the Rift Valley Plateau. We spend the night at a campsite on the edge of a Tea Estate and time permitting, can partake in a tour.

### Day 14: Kericho to Kampala (Uganda)

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Today, we cross the border into Uganda where we overnight in the capital city, Kampala. Uganda is a small country of striking physical beauty. Its landscapes vary from the fertile green areas around the northern shores of Lake Victoria to the snow capped Ruwenzori Mountains in the west and the semi-desert region in the north. The political instability that has haunted Uganda in the past has actually had the positive effect of leaving the country free of the over commercialism so common in other parts of Africa. The current administration under President Museveni has

## 24 Day Gorilla, Game Parks & Zanzibar (North)

devoted considerable effort and funds to return Uganda to its former status as one of Africa's most prosperous and, from a tourist's point of view, one of the most appealing and interesting countries to visit.

### Days 15 to 18: Kampala to Lake Bunyoni

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After an early morning departure from Kampala we drive west into the depths of Uganda to our base at the tranquil Lake Bunyoni.

Lake Bunyoni, the deepest Crater Lake in Africa and home to a large and varied number of beautiful birds, is the base from which the optional Gorilla trek takes place. Dependant on where trekking permits are available, we trek in the Magahinga or Bwindi National Parks in Uganda, the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, or the Ruhengeri National Park in Rwanda. The prices of trekking permits fluctuate and may change without prior notice – currently they are priced at US\$500 depending on where we trek. There is a local transport & handling fee of US\$65 to US\$70 per person (this covers the return transfer and the Wildlife Authority's booking fee). For trekking in the DRC or Rwanda, we will also have to purchase an additional visa to enter either country, as well as renewing our Ugandan visa upon re-entry. Please budget accordingly.

#### Trekking Procedures:

The mountain gorilla (Gorilla Gorilla Berengei), of which there are still only about 700 remaining, are one of our closest living relatives. A visit to these gentle giants in their natural environment is a unique and wonderful experience - one you'll never forget. The park rangers monitor the gorillas on a daily basis and have a fairly good idea of where they are. However, they are free roaming animals, and their sighting cannot be guaranteed. As the gorillas share much of our DNA, anyone with even the slightest cold or transferable illness will not be permitted to trek. Trekking is also only open to people over 16 years old.

Due to the restrictions on the daily numbers of visitors to these incredible animals, we depart from our base in Bunyoni in small groups over 3-4 days, depending on the group size. Winding our way through arguably some of the most picturesque scenery in Africa, we head to the town of Kisoro where we spend the night (Should we be trekking in Rwanda our overnight will be in Ruhengeri). The following morning, after packing our picnic lunch, we are transferred to a ranger's station where the trek commences. Your rangers will lead you through the cultivated lands and then into the dense rain forest and on to a gorilla family. Trekking can take anywhere from 45 minutes to 8 hours and it can be quite strenuous, so a reasonable level of fitness is required. To ensure the gorillas do not get too used to the presence of humans and because they share many of our genes (and therefore able to catch our diseases), the maximum time permitted to spend with them is 1 hour. You will have plenty of time to watch their activity and to take photographs. The rangers will be able to provide you with a background to the family you are visiting. Once your hour is up, you trek back out of the rain forest to your meeting point where you will be transferred back to the Lake Bunyoni campsite.

You needn't feel like you're exploiting these animals. The ever-growing number of tourists trekking them each day play a vital role in their survival. For years they have been ruthlessly hunted for their hands and heads, which have

## 24 Day Gorilla, Game Parks & Zanzibar (North)

been sold as ashtrays and lampshades! In addition, large numbers have been killed whilst trying to stop poachers stealing the babies for sale to zoos, where they have never lived long. 100% of the gorilla permit cost is used to by the parks authorities to finance patrols that are instrumental in protecting the gorillas from poachers and their lethal snares and on promoting these wonderful animals.

### Lake Bunyoni

For those of us awaiting our day of gorilla trekking, the choice is yours, visit a local village or church, hike in the surrounding hills, canoe, go on a bird watching walk, visit the local markets of Kabale or just spend the days relaxing or swimming in this tranquil lake.

### Day 19: Lake Bunyoni to Kampala

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After marvelling at the experience of our gorilla encounters and enjoying the peaceful Lake Bunyoni, we begin our drive back to Kampala. We cross the Equator for the second time and stop for the classic "one foot in each hemisphere" photo opportunity. We overnight in Kampala and have the opportunity to sample its night life!

### Day 20: Kampala to Jinja

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Today we have the option of visiting the Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary or transferring to Jinja for a selection of adventure activities including white water rafting at the source of the White Nile, quad biking or volunteering at a community project. Spend the afternoon relaxing on the banks of the river, or ticking off the wide variety of water birds in this area.

### Day 21: Jinja to Nakuru (Kenya)

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After our engaging trip through the 'Pearl of Africa', we head back to Kenya. We overnight in Nakuru, Kenya's 4<sup>th</sup> largest town and capital of the Rift Valley Province.

### Day 22: Lake Nakuru National Park

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This morning we head in to Nakuru Town to stock up on supplies before beginning our exploration of the Lake Nakuru National Park - famous for the thousands of lesser and greater flamingos that flock to this soda lake's edge. The numbers vary depending on the water level, and when it's low, the lake almost turns pink. A truly spectacular sight! The park was established as a sanctuary for black and white rhino, which are often seen. We spend the day searching for these pre-historic looking beasts as well as the elusive leopard, encountering buffalo, giraffe, various antelope and the occasional hippo along the way. We overnight at a bush camp within the Park.

### Day 23: Lake Nakuru National Park to Lake Naivasha

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Moving further east, we head to Lake Naivasha, home to a multitude of bird life, the most magnificent being the African Fish Eagle with his regal cry. At 1880 m, this is the highest of the Rift Valley lakes. Time permitting; we spend



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the afternoon enjoying optional excursions like Elsamere (former home to Joy & George Adamson of Born Free fame), a boat ride to the Crescent Island Game Sanctuary or a bike ride around Hell's Gate National Park. Our last night is spent in a lovely campsite on the banks of the lake.

### Day 24: Lake Naivasha to Nairobi

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After breakfast, we head back to Nairobi, arriving at the Hotel Boulevard in the early afternoon. We exchange addresses and part ways, having just experienced a trip of a lifetime!

### **FREE TRIP**

When you book this trip, you are entitled to receive a FREE 3 Day Masai Mara Safari the Sunday after your trip ends. The Local Payment is still applicable for the trip. This fantastic offer must be taken up at the same time you book this trip. Ask us for more details. Conditions apply.



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