

56 day Best of Africa 2010 CAE0456

Route: Cape Town to Nairobi, via mountain gorillas

DAY 1 SOUTH AFRICA, CEDERBERG MOUNTAIN REGION

After a short stop to view Table Mountain we drive north to the Cederberg region. In the afternoon (weather permitting) we go on a guided walk to see Bushmen paintings and learn about the native fauna and flora.

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2 NAMAQUALAND – ORANGE/GARIEP RIVER

Today we travel to the Gariep/Orange River. We spend the night under the stars and sit at the campfire getting to know each another.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 NAMIBIA, ORANGE/GARIEP RIVER - FISH RIVER CANYON

You can choose between a morning on the riverbank or the half day canoe on the river. After lunch we travel north to the Fish River Canyon.

Optional Activities: Orange/Gariep River Half Day Canoe Adventure.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 NAMIB-NAUKLUFT NATIONAL PARK

From the Fish River Canyon we continue into the remote hinterland. We arrive at camp in the afternoon and enjoy a short hike at Sesriem Canyon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 SOSSUSVLEI DUNES - NAMIB-NAUKLUFT NATIONAL PARK

We wake before dawn so we can hike up Dune 45 and watch the sunrise. After breakfast we join a local expert on a guided tour explaining the desert ecosystem.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 / 7	SWAKOPMUND
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Today we cross the Tropic of Capricorn (where we stop for a photo) on our way to Namibia's Atlantic coast. In Swakopmund you will be briefed on the optional activities available here. Day 7 is free for you to explore the town or try one of the many adventure activities.

Optional Activities: Quadbiking, Sandboarding, Sky Diving, Dolphin Cruise, Scenic Flights, Fishing etc.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner (Dinner on day 7 only)

DAY 8	SPITZKOPPE
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We leave all the trappings of modern life behind us and drive inland to the mysterious Spitzkoppe. Tonight we camp in the wild.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9	HIMBA TRIBES
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After some early morning exploration we continue inland and drive towards Kamanjab. The Himba are a pastoral people and predominantly breed cattle or goats, they are easily recognisable by their unique style of dress.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 / 11	ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK
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Etosha NP is the venue for some of the most unique game viewing experiences in Africa. We will go on various game drives, and spend our evenings at the abundant water holes for some excellent game photography.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12	WINDHOEK
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After an early morning game drive we set off towards Windhoek in the centre of Namibia. On the way we stop at a popular craft market. In the afternoon we go on a short city tour.

Optional Activities: Dinner out at Joe's Beer House.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 13	BOTSWANA, GHANZI
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It is a scenic drive to the Buitepos border, where we cross into Botswana. Once at camp we will meet with a local Bushmen community and experience some traditional Tribal Dancing.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 14 / 15 / 16	MAUN AND OKAVANGO DELTA
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Another early day! Our journey takes us from Ghanzi towards Maun. We spend the night here and prepare for our two night bush-camping experience. Your guides will provide you with a briefing about the next few days' activities and the community run tourism operation.

From here we will enter the Delta using local transport. If the water level allows we will take a mokoro (traditional canoe) trip as well as a nature walk with the local people.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 17	GWETA
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We leave the Delta behind us and travel east to Gweta, which is located halfway between Maun and Nata, near the Makgadikgadi Pans NP.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 18	CHOBE NATIONAL PARK
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When we arrive at Kasane we set up camp on the bank of the Chobe River. The afternoon is spent game viewing from a boat in the Chobe NP. This is an excellent opportunity to view Africa's spectacular wildlife. You will have the chance to experience an early morning game drive the following day.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 19	ZIMBABWE, VICTORIA FALLS
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On arrival in Victoria Falls we have time to plan the next day's adventure activities before we visit the spectacular Victoria Falls NP and experience the thundering of the mighty Zambezi. The popular optional sunset cruise includes dinner and drinks.

Optional Activities: Chobe morning game drive, Zambezi Sunset Cruise

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 20 / 21	VICTORIA FALLS
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Most people will spend the day White Water Rafting, a not -to-be-missed experience of a lifetime! Vic Falls offers many exciting alternatives.

Optional Activities: White Water Rafting, Bungee Jumping, Elephant Excursion, Dinner out.

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 22	ZAMBIA, LUSAKA
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Leaving behind the excitement of Victoria Falls we begin our expedition. The journey towards the bustling Zambian capital of Lusaka takes us along an interesting route.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 23	CHIPATA
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We begin today with some shopping in Lusaka before heading northeast towards Chipata. This is an interesting area full of friendly locals.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 24 / 25	SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK
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Early in the morning we drive from Chipata to the border of the South Luangwa NP where we spend two nights on the riverbank. The next day we visit the community run tribal textile project and a local village. Later this afternoon we enjoy a guided sunset game drive in South Luangwa NP.

On occasion, in the rainy season it is impossible or inadvisable to attempt to reach South Luangwa NP, if this happens an alternative itinerary will be chosen.

Optional Activities: Guided Morning Game Walk in South Luangwa NP

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 26 / 27	MALAWI , LUWAWA FOREST
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Today we cross the Zambia-Malawi border after leaving South Luangwa NP in the early morning. Heading north we enter the highlands of Malawi and spend the night at Luwawa Forest.

Optional Activities: Fishing, Mountain Biking, Hiking.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 28 / 29 / 30 / 31 LAKE MALAWI

We will spend the next couple of carefree days relaxing on the white sandy beaches. For the more adventurous there are endless leisure and water sport activities. Alternatively, soak up the atmosphere and relax in one of the most memorable holiday destinations.

Optional Activities: Scuba diving, parasailing, windsurfing, fishing, canoeing, horse riding

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 32 TANZANIA, IRINGA

As we ascend out of the Great Rift Valley through some spectacular mountain passes, we pass the vast tea plantations in the highlands to our camp outside Iringa.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 33 IRINGA TO DAR ES SALAAM

It is a long drive from Iringa to the historical port city of Dar es Salaam. We actually transit through Mukumi NP, but we do not have time to stop and explore.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 34 / 35 / 36 ZANZIBAR

A local ferry will take us from Dar es Salaam (where we leave the truck) to Stone Town, the capital of Zanzibar. We spend the first night in Stone Town where you will have time to explore the markets and unique architecture. The following day we take a transfer to the northern part of the Island where we will spend 2 days relaxing on the beach.

Optional Activities: Meals, Spice Tours, Dolphin Tours, Scuba Diving, Snorkeling.

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 37 ZANZIBAR- DAR ES SALAAM

Today you leave Zanzibar and catch a late ferry (or flight) back to Dar es Salaam and return to the campsite.

Meals: Dinner

DAY 38	DAR ES SALAAM – ARUSHA
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Today we take a long and scenic drive to Arusha, the safari capital of Tanzania. After arriving in Arusha, those who are going to explore the Serengeti National Park, prepare for their excursion.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 39 / 40	SERENGETI / NGORONGORO
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Today we have the opportunity to go on a three-day trip into the Serengeti. For those not going to the parks, take this time to relax and absorb some of the fascinating local culture.

Optional Activities: Serengeti & Ngorongoro Excursion.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 41	ARUSHA
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Today we visit a local Masai village. Tonight we enjoy a final meal around the truck and talking about the adventures we have had together.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 42	KENYA, NAIROBI
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After crossing the border into Kenya we continue to travel towards Nairobi . Although our tour has ended for some passengers groups like to spend this evening at local restaurant.

Optional Activities: Dinner at Carnivore Restaurant

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 43	NAIROBI TO MARA
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The Masai Mara National Reserve is the Kenyan side of the Serengeti National Park (located in Tanzania). Today the tour will be entering this huge area of spectacular game viewing to photograph some of Africa's most abundant wildlife.

Famous for the annual migration of around 1.5 million wildebeest, the Masai Mara is also home to many other plains animals, including lions. We will only arrive after lunch, but in time for an afternoon game drive.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 44	MARA TO NAIVASHA
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In addition to what we hope will be a successful day's game viewing, cultural interaction with Kenya's native Masai people will round off your experience. After lunch we will leave the Mara to travel to Lake Naivasha.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 45	NAIVASHA (HELLS GATE NP) TO NAKURU NP
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Today we will spend the morning at Hell's Gate NP. The interesting name comes from the huge red-coloured cliffs that form the entrance to the geothermal interior. This is the only National Park where you can go hiking and activities include game and bird watching. The park entry fees are included and one of the more popular optional activities is to go game viewing from a bicycle.

In the afternoon the tour will travel towards Lake Nakuru, the home of the greater and lesser flamingo. White Rhino inhabit the transitional savanna area surrounding the lake and if you are lucky you will get some great pictures.

Optional Activities: Bicycle Hire

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 46	LAKE NAKURU TO ELDORET
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We will spend a relaxed morning at Lake Nakuru before driving across the equator to Eldoret. When crossing the equator today there will be opportunity for photography. Eldoret is the 5th largest city in Kenya and is currently the fastest growing. The Great Rift Valley is still the dominant geographical feature of this region and the altitude at Eldoret is 2100 metres above sea level.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 47	ELDORET TO KAMPALA, UGANDA
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Today we cross the border in to Uganda. Border crossings require patience as they can take much longer than one may expect. In the afternoon we will enter Uganda's capital city, Kampala. This evening we have the opportunity to dine out at one of the local restaurants.

Optional Activities: Dinner Out

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 48**KAMPALA - CRESCENT ISLAND EXCURSION**

Although officially this day is set aside for everyone to explore Kampala most people use this day to take an optional day trip to the Chimpanzee Sanctuary of Ngamba Island. This non-profit eco-friendly project was set up in 1998 to care for orphaned chimpanzees. Ngamba Island is situated 23 km from Entebbe (near Kampala) on Lake Victoria and is only accessible by boat.

The Chimpanzee Sanctuary & Wildlife Conservation Trust (CSWCT) manages the project and, as only one third of their operating costs are covered by visitors' fees, all interested parties are encouraged to join 'Friends of the Sanctuary'. Should the weather be unfavourable, or the lake too rough for this excursion, there are many other activities available in Kampala.

Optional Activities: Ngamba Chimpanzee Excursion, Kampala Markets, Dinner Out.

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 49 / 50 / 51**KAMPALA TO GORILLAS**

The Mountain Gorilla is extremely endangered and while exact numbers vary it is widely assumed that there are only 650 left. Visiting the Gorilla's is a great way to support their future on earth as the money spent on permits is used for their protection. An extremely important part of the future conservation of the remaining Gorilla's rests in the community development work – as local communities change their attitudes towards wildlife and start to protect rather than poach the future of the Mountain Gorilla's is assured.

As permits granting permission to visit the gorillas are extremely limited we require flexibility in both the tour itinerary and where we actually visit them. The home of the Mountain Gorillas is completely at odds with man-made borders and so their range encompasses Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Whenever possible we choose to make use of the NP in Uganda, but this depends on the availability of permits. Please note that each permit is only valid for one day. It is normal that the group will be split and will trek on different days; it all depends on the availability of the permits.

Should we not obtain permits to visit the Mountain Gorillas in either Bwindi or Mgahinga NP in Uganda then we will inform all passengers beforehand that the tour will travel to Rwanda or DRC. Visas for all nationalities are available on the DRC and Rwandan borders.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 52 / 53

GORILLAS TO QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

Today we will leave the Gorillas behind and visit some of Uganda's other wild animals at Queen Elizabeth National Park. Many game species are to be found in this mainly Wetland Park including the (elsewhere elusive) giant forest hog, and the legendary tree-climbing lions of the Ishasha Sector.

The 1995 square kilometers of exceptional bio-diversity contain over 600 species of birds and nearly 100 mammals. Game is best viewed from the water and we recommend a sunset cruise on the Kasinga channel.

Optional Activities: Kasinga Channel Sunset Cruise

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 54 / 55

QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK NP TO JINJA

We depart early for the long drive to Jinja where we will spend the entire following day. Jinja is Uganda's second largest city and is famous as the point where the Nile (officially the Victoria Nile) flows out of Lake Victoria and begins the 6695 kilometre journey to Egypt and the Mediterranean. If you do not want to go rafting, why not volunteer for the day at Soft Power Education, a UK registered charity that is doing a wonderful job with the education of Jinja's youth. Spending your day helping out will not only assist their projects, but will also afford you the opportunity to spend a day at grass-root level helping Africa's youth.

Optional Activities: White Water Rafting, Soft Power Education Project

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 56

JINJA TO NAIROBI

It is a very long drive to Nairobi. The city of Nairobi was originally founded as a camp for the Mombassa-Uganda railway in 1899 and had since become the largest city in both Kenya and the East Africa region. As this is the last evening the group may choose to dine together at Nairobi's famous Carnivore Restaurant, where vegetarians are catered for, but not encouraged...

Optional Activities: Meal out in Nairobi

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

NB: The itinerary is flexible and can be changed without notice in order to accommodate the best possible viewing of the Gorillas. The Permit price to visit the Gorillas can also change without notice.