

# WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY ADVENTURE

PRE-TRIP DOSSIER 2009/2010

## AFRICA



This is a 12 day wildlife adventure by photographers, for photographers. We have designed an integrated programme of travel and discussion to create the most wonderful opportunities you could ever imagine - for beginners and advanced photographers alike. You get 2 leaders, a guaranteed maximum group size of 8 and the experience of a lifetime.

*African  
Encounter*

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

by Ewen Bell



## ITINERARY

### Day 1 – Arusha

On our first day we all due to meet at 5:30pm in the lounge/bar at Mount Meru Game Lodge just outside Arusha town. Our first night is designed for the group to meet one another and receive briefing from the tour leader and Ewen Bell, our photographic guru for the trip. Your dinner is included at MMGL and will give us all ample time to talk and discuss the exciting safari ahead. Ewen will also take the opportunity to discuss the fundamentals and philosophy behind the photographic journey.

Mount Meru Game Lodge (dinner and breakfast)

### Days 2 + 3 – Kilimanjaro

After breakfast we will be collected and driven to Ndarakwai Camp about 60 kilometres from MMGL. Ndarakwai is situated on a private conservancy with stunning views of Mount Kilimanjaro. It is here that we will get our first introduction to some of Africa's famous wildlife. But this stop is as much about the people as it is the views of Kilimanjaro and wildlife sightings.

We will visit a number of local Maasai villages, get a glimpse of their traditional way of life and have the opportunity to photograph these uniquely colourful people. Understanding the tribal culture in Africa is also important to appreciate the challenges that face wildlife conservation in the modern era.

Ndarakwai Camp (full board)

### Days 4 + 5 – Ngorongoro

We leave Ndarakwai for Ngorongoro, a drive of between 4 and 5 hours. After checking in at our lodge on the edge of the crater, and a spot of lunch, we descend down into the crater itself for an afternoon of game viewing. The concentration of wildlife to be found in Ngorongoro is astonishing and you will definitely

need a second visit into the crater on day two. Depending on the group's wishes we might also be able to visit Ol Moti and Empakai craters a short drive north of Ngorongoro. Amazing photographic opportunities abound. A lunch down in the crater is planned for the second day.

Ngorongoro Serena Lodge (full board)

### Days 6 + 7 + 8 – Serengeti / Ndutu

Leaving Ngorongoro we travel west descending down to the short grass plains of the Serengeti. Our first stop is the Ndutu region just south of Serengeti National Park in an area renowned for its amazing wildlife. Our days are spend exploring Ndutu searching for lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, giraffe and the vast array of wildlife to be found in this area. Depending on the season we may also seek out the wildebeest migration with its associated groups of zebra and predators in attendance.

Ndutu Safari Lodge (full board)

### Days 9 + 10 + 11 – Serengeti / Mbalageti

Staying in the Serengeti we move further west to seek out the wildebeest migration and traverse many miles of grassy plains to the Mbalageti river. From our camp on Mwamveni Hill we look out over the Serengeti, spending our days seeking out the animals that make this area home. We celebrate our last night together with a bush dinner out on the Serengeti plains.

Mbalageti Serengeti Camp (full board)

### Day 12 – Arusha

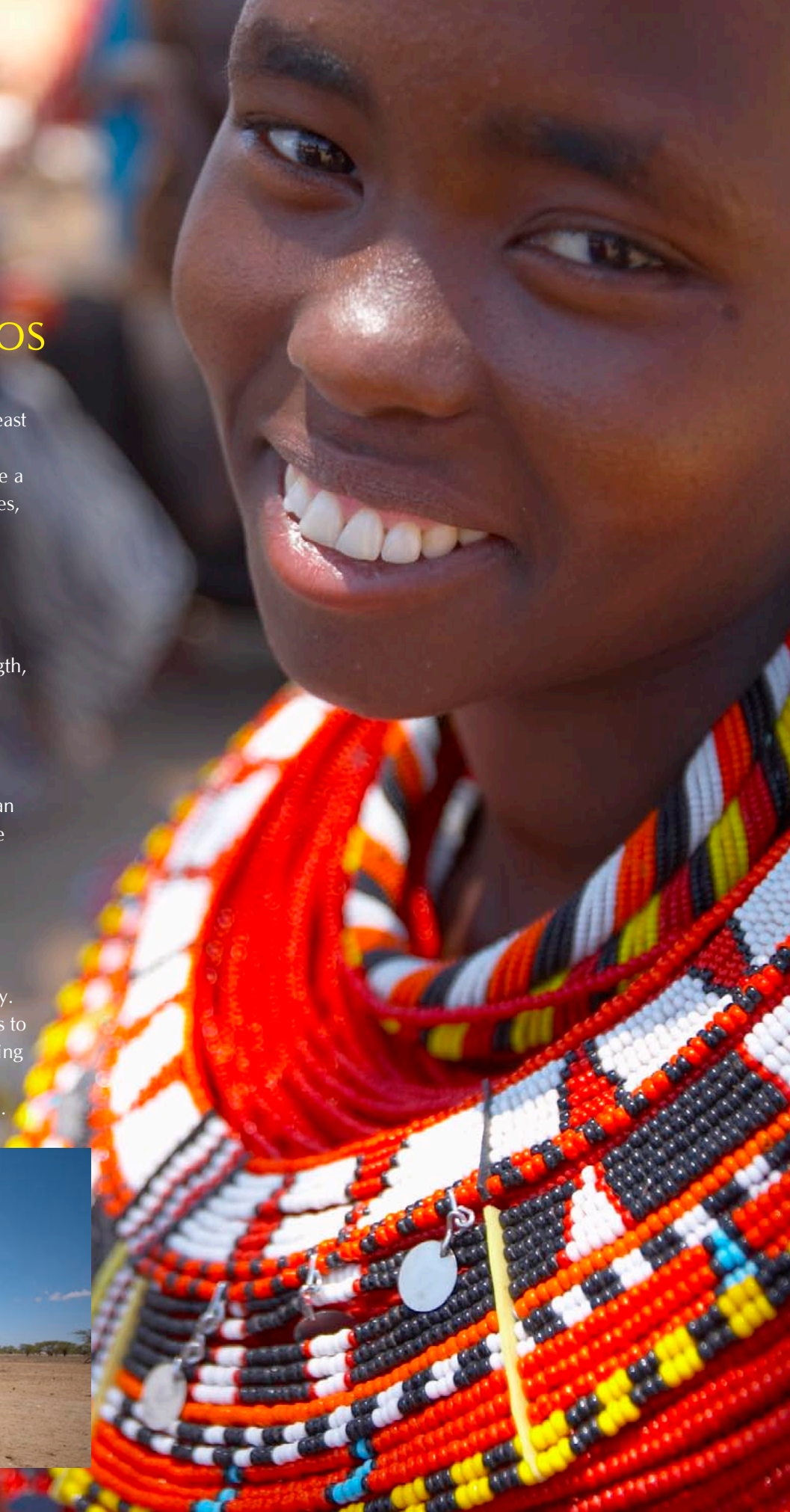
We will all be flying out of the Serengeti today. Those continuing on to Rwanda to see the Mountain Gorillas will fly directly to Kigali in Rwanda whilst the remainder will fly directly back to Arusha and connect with their onward arrangements.

## TAKE BETTER PHOTOS

The photographic opportunities designed into this trip are aimed at people with at least a fundamental knowledge of their camera, but who want to learn more. You will have a chance to discuss techniques and principles, then immediately go out and practice. This will not give you a qualification, but hopefully will give you confidence and direction to take better photos.

A basic knowledge of aperture, focal length, depth of field and exposure is useful, but not essential. We will even help you learn the technical use of your camera, if that's what you need. For more experienced photographers the itinerary alone will be an inspiration for your artistic output, plus the chance to share the safaris with an award winning travel journalist.

People of many different skill levels and ambition will be gathered for the journey, so expect to be in the company of diversity. This tour will appeal to anyone who wants to immerse themselves in the process exploring the craft, coming face to face with African wildlife and getting a taste of tribal culture.



# WHO TRAVELS WITH US

Our photographic journeys appeal to both the young and old, the experienced and novice. Most tours are made up of people aged 25-65, and all of them like-minded souls who enjoy combining travel with photography. It doesn't matter what your skills and interest in photography is, you will enjoy sharing a creative and immersive experience in the African wilderness. You can read feedback from our past travellers by visiting [www.ewenbell.com](http://www.ewenbell.com)



We aim to provide an unparalleled opportunity to practice photography in an exotic land. We help you to get the right sunset, to access the most idyllic wilderness, to meet tribal communities of Masai and to make sure you have the time to explore your craft in the process. You won't be worried about travel and accommodation - it's taken care of for you. And you won't be jammed into a van with 10 other photographers; we guarantee no more than three passengers in each four-wheel drive vehicle on our photo safaris.

We will also encourage people to share their work during the trip. Review is very important and can greatly assist the development of your own personal style. Throughout the trip you will be free to consult with your photographic leader as well.

This will be a 12 day immersion that will provide you with one-on-one instruction with a professional photographer. You will go home with new skills, a different way of thinking about photography and a whole lot of amazing images.

## THE MIGRATION

It's not accident that we chose the late April weeks to arrive in the Serengeti. Every year the annual migration of wildebeest takes place here and hundreds of thousands of animals move through the open ranges heading for the new rainfalls to the north.

It's an exciting time to be in the Serengeti, and we stay on either side of the park to give ourselves the best chance of catching the migration. Each year the timing for the event will be slightly different, depending on weather patterns, but we've given ourselves the best chance of joining the animals.

It won't just be us keeping an eye on the herds of wildebeest, the lions and leopards will too. The sudden explosion of new food in the savannas attracts predators from hundreds of miles away.

In the areas where the big cats have withdrawn we hope to find the less aggressive cheetah. They are the fastest animals on earth, but they are very vulnerable to attacks from the bigger cats. They will not stay and fight if confronted, they simply run. Cheetah found in the territory of a lion will be hunted and killed.

Only one in five cheetah cubs survive in the wild, but in the Serengeti and neighbouring Masi Mara there are efforts in place to protect them and improve the survivability of cheetah families that have been pushed to the edges of the park.

When travellers come and shoot photographs of the wildlife in Africa they help to convince farmers to stop shooting them with guns.





## THE MAASAI

Found mainly in Southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, the Maasai have not strayed from the traditional basic ways of life, preferring to remain nomadic herdsman, moving as their needs necessitate. They believe that their rain God, Ngai, granted all cattle to them for safe keeping when the earth and sky split. In the past the Maasai would raid the cattle of their neighbors claiming that as all cattle belonged to them it was okay to take these cattle from the other tribes. Maasai people worship their cattle. They are the main source of not only food but represent their wealth and status.

The Maasai do not believe that education is important for them as herdsman as they do not need to read and write to be able to look after their cattle.

Today, some Maasai have taken up farming for the trading of crops such as corn and vegetables, but in the main they remain nomadic herders. By rejecting the cash economy and refusing to settle or become farmers has made life difficult and harsh. The Maasai subsist on a diet of cow's blood and milk, which they mix together and drink.

They are extremely colourful in their attire and use scarification and beadwork to good affect in adorning themselves. Their rituals and traditional 'stages of life' social structure are a fascinating insight into this ancient culture. Discovering first hand the traditions and culture of these people is a part of the African experience that is not to be missed.



## LEARN A LITTLE

This is a unique opportunity to learn new techniques, spending one-on-one time with a professional in the field and practising new skills first hand.

Time is set aside during the trip for discussion to introduce new techniques and concepts. There will be frequent opportunities to review your work and discuss your experiences for that day. The techniques covered on this journey are aimed at wildlife photography particularly, but will benefit all areas of your photographic pursuit.

No matter what your level of skill or experience you will learn invaluable techniques on our journey. For 12 days we will be at your disposal to explore the high level concepts and fine detail practicalities of photography.

Beginners can expect to learn basic skills, new ways of thinking about their photography and gain structured themes to help them take great photos in challenging conditions. Advanced photographers are also invited to discuss the world of publishing and journalism, plus new ways to explore the artistic elements of their photography.

## ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

We recommend the use of Digital SLR cameras for this journey, but you are not restricted from using any type of camera you may have, including conventional film SLRs and compact cameras. Digital SLR cameras offer excellent manual controls and plus the ability to review our work at the end of each day - a valuable part of this experience. A minimum of 4Gig of memory cards should accompany your camera, plus an additional 20Gig or greater of external storage (hard drive or laptop).

We also recommend that you carry a wide angle lens in addition to telephoto. Most of our journey will focus on the wildlife, but this tour also includes some cultural elements and portrait opportunities that are best captured with 50mm or wide-angle lens. An 18mm focal range is very useful for our visits to villages and for capturing a sense of the landscape.

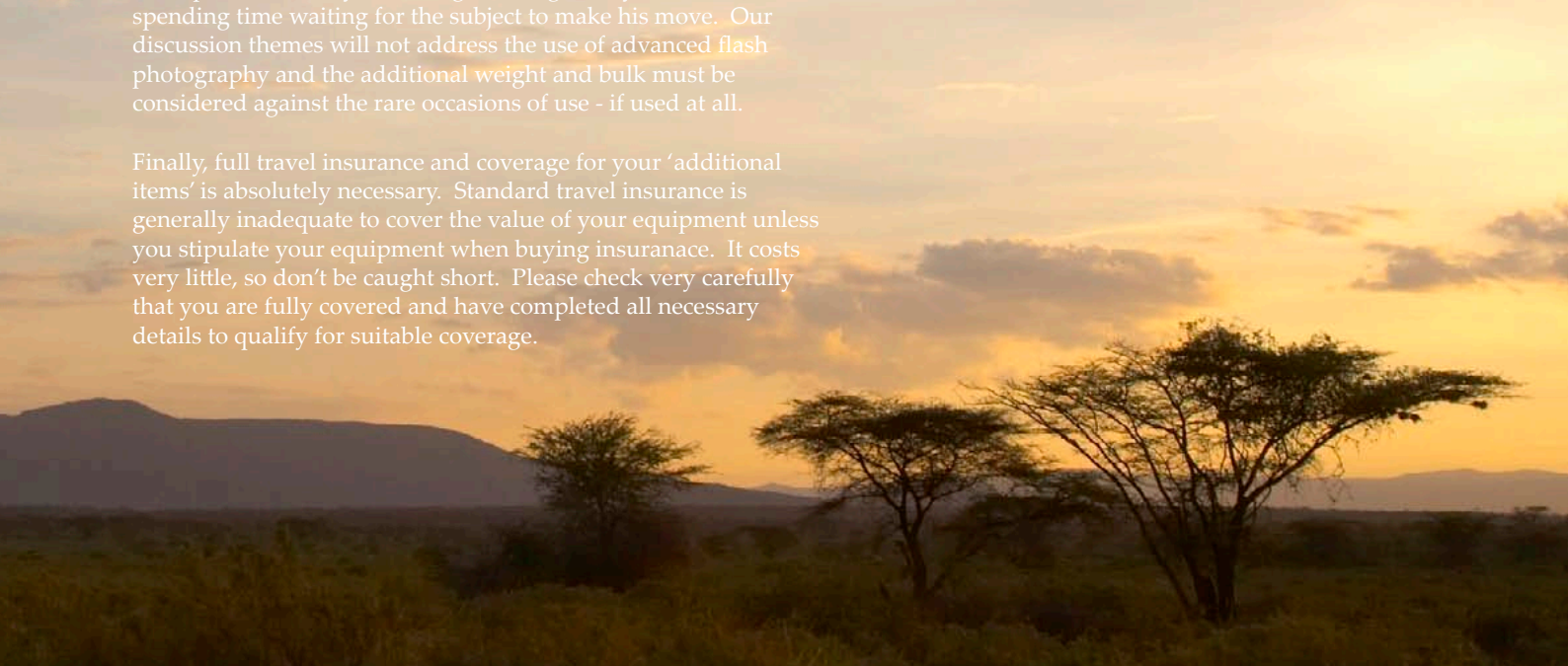
A good telephoto lens is an essential item for this tour, and will be used nearly every day. Many travellers may already have a 70-200mm zoom lens, which is useful on partial-frame DSLR cameras (200mm on a Nikon D60 is the equivalent of 300mm). 100-400mm are the next most common lens and will give you a useful range when shooting wildlife.

If you haven't bought your telephoto lens yet please contact the instructing photographer in advance and he can advise you on a few of the pitfalls. There's little use buying a cheap telephoto lens that doesn't produce sharp images, but even a modest 200mm lens of good quality will achieve results on this tour.

A good quality day pack will be an essential part of the packing list. Crumpler and Lowe make excellent packs that are designed for camera equipment. Ideally your pack should be comfortable, spacious, and practical. Remember that you will be travelling with your full kit for days on end, so it's worth buying something comfortable and with a little extra room to fit both your camera gear and your daily necessities.

Flash equipment and tripods are not recommended, although monopods are handy for taking the weight off your arms when spending time waiting for the subject to make his move. Our discussion themes will not address the use of advanced flash photography and the additional weight and bulk must be considered against the rare occasions of use - if used at all.

Finally, full travel insurance and coverage for your 'additional items' is absolutely necessary. Standard travel insurance is generally inadequate to cover the value of your equipment unless you stipulate your equipment when buying insurance. It costs very little, so don't be caught short. Please check very carefully that you are fully covered and have completed all necessary details to qualify for suitable coverage.



## ABOUT YOUR LEADERS

You will enjoy the company of two leaders for this journey. One is there to help you travel, the other to help you learn about travel photography.

Patrick Brakespear has been operating specialised African adventures for over 7 years, and is pretty handy with a camera himself. He lives in Australia and journeys across to East Africa several times a year, including this photography tour. By dealing directly with his company, African Encounter, you get the best price, exceptional service and the most customised itinerary possible.

You won't find a better tour operator to explore Africa with, and Patrick will be with us every step of the journey to ensure the logistics run smoothly.

Ewen Bell lives for travel and photography, and has exhibited his wildlife work on Borneo, published his big cats from Kenya and shot the Big 5 in Tanzania and Zambia. Ewen's work is published in brochures for numerous travel companies and appears in regular travel publications including the Escape Weekend editions across Australia, Melbourne's Herald Sun travel section and Vacations and Travel Magazine.

Ewen has been chosen by ASTW as the 2007 Australian Travel Photographer of the Year.

Both Ewen's and Patrick's passion for photography will be evident in the design of the tour - it's an adventure by photographers for photographers.

## ABOUT ACCOMMODATION

The standard of accommodation for our tour in Africa will be very high, and the style of accommodation a mix of lodges and tented camps. Even the most rustic of camps will be very comfortable, provide electricity for our laptops and cameras of an evening, and all meals are included every single day.

You will not be pitching tents or unpacking a truck - we will return to our lodge or camp at the end of every safari to enjoy a drink, sumptuous meal and all conveniences prepared for our comfort.

This trip operates on a twin share basis, hence single travellers will be allocated a same-sex room mate. Please ask for a single-room rate if you do not wish to share your accommodation for the duration of the trip.

Please ask for an elective single-supplement if you do not wish to share your accommodation for the duration of the trip.



## PRE-TRIP ESSENTIALS

### Additional Accommodation

Should you require extra accommodation in Arusha we can offer you competitive rates at our hotel. Please book extra nights when you book your trip. Rooms cost will be advised upon request and may vary according to season and proximity to date of travel.

### Visas

Most western nations will require a visa before arrival in Tanzania, so be sure to contact the consulate in your country before confirming plans to travel and make sure you have a visa before you leave.

### Money

The official currency of Tanzania is the Tanzanian Shilling (TZS), which should be used for all transactions. Banks and ATM's are only available in the city of Arusha, but you will only need money for souvenirs and drinks. We do advise that you carry some cash currency in US Dollars as a backup, and do not rely on credit cards for settling bar tabs. Travellers Cheques are rarely accepted

Approximate exchange rates are:

AUD\$1 = 1090 TZS

US\$1 = 1150 TZS

GBP£ = 2350 TZS

### Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$20 per day to cover additional expenses above the included meals. Drinks and souvenirs are not included on the trip, but all park entrance fees, internal travel expenses and accommodation are covered.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in an African Encounter tour that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

### Health

There are no specific health requirements for travelling in Tanzania, however, we recommend that you visit a travel medicine doctor before travelling. Please advise your doctor that you plan to travel just after the rainy season and they may

recommend anti-malaria tablets to guard against infection. You should carry a well stocked first aid kit with you when you travel.

### Group Size

8 maximum. Each group will have the services of a tour leader, photographic instructor and various local guides.

### Packing

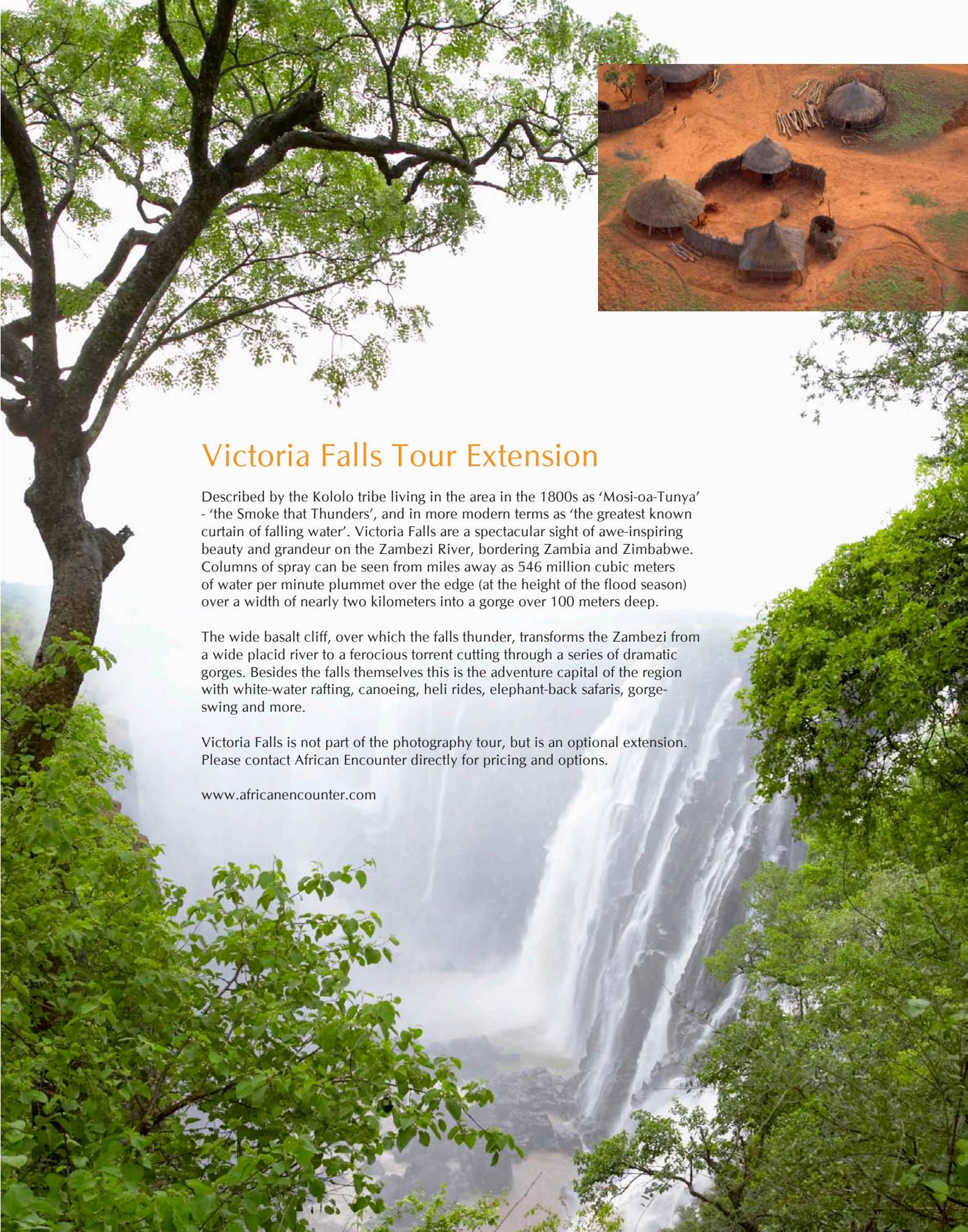
You will be required to carry your own luggage at times and bags will need to be loaded on and off trains and up and down stairs at stations. For this reason we recommend that you pack as lightly as possible in a backpack. This trip covers rural and northern areas during the cooler seasons so temperatures can plummet at night. Please remember to bring warm clothes for cold nights and chilly mornings.

You should consider bringing the following items:

- Backpack
- Long trousers
- Shorts
- Shirts
- Hat (sun & woolly)
- Thermals
- Fleece Jacket
- Sandals/Light Shoes
- Sunglasses
- Light Rain Coat
- Toiletries
- Small Towel
- Sunscreen
- First Aid Kit
- Mosquito Repellent
- Alarm Clock
- Passport (with 6 months validity and spare pages)
- Passport photo
- Travel Insurance details
- Flight Tickets
- Money - Travellers Checks/Cash/Credit Card

### Important

All information in this Profile is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and African Encounter.



## Victoria Falls Tour Extension

Described by the Kololo tribe living in the area in the 1800s as 'Mosi-oa-Tunya' - 'the Smoke that Thunders', and in more modern terms as 'the greatest known curtain of falling water'. Victoria Falls are a spectacular sight of awe-inspiring beauty and grandeur on the Zambezi River, bordering Zambia and Zimbabwe. Columns of spray can be seen from miles away as 546 million cubic meters of water per minute plummet over the edge (at the height of the flood season) over a width of nearly two kilometers into a gorge over 100 meters deep.

The wide basalt cliff, over which the falls thunder, transforms the Zambezi from a wide placid river to a ferocious torrent cutting through a series of dramatic gorges. Besides the falls themselves this is the adventure capital of the region with white-water rafting, canoeing, heli rides, elephant-back safaris, gorge-swing and more.

Victoria Falls is not part of the photography tour, but is an optional extension. Please contact African Encounter directly for pricing and options.

[www.africanencounter.com](http://www.africanencounter.com)



## Zanzibar Island Tour Extension

Zanzibar is an archipelago of tropical islands nestled in the Indian Ocean. The two principal islands, Zanzibar and Pemba, plus the 50 or so surrounding smaller islands, are known affectionately as the “Spice Islands”, because of their history as producers of cloves and their position on the ancient spice routes. Behind the exotic name lies a violent past. The island was once notorious as the slave and ivory trading capital of Africa. Repeatedly invaded by other cultures, including the Egyptians, Chinese, Portugese, Arabs and British - all of whom left some cultural remnants such as the House of Wonders, a palace of the former Sultans.

Zanzibar is an atmospheric place, full of contradictions and surprises. Spice plantations, Arab houses, Anglican churches. A place where famous African missionaries and explorers once passed through. But Zanzibar is best known for its white sandy beaches and relaxed atmosphere. Enjoy both with 2 nights in Stone Town at the Zanzibar Serena Inn and 3 nights on the beach staying at Matemwe Bungalows.

Zanzibar is not included on the photography tour, but is an optional extension. Please contact African Encounter directly for pricing and options.

[www.africanencounter.com](http://www.africanencounter.com)





## Rwanda Gorilla Trek Tour Extension

The Virunga National Park / Parc National des Volcans (PNV) in northern Rwanda is home to the endangered Mountain Gorilla. The gorillas live in a protected area, free from poachers and can be viewed in their natural mountain habitat at fairly close range. PNV consists of 125 sq km of mountain forest and is home to the six Virunga Volcanoes bordering DRC and Uganda. It is the National Park in which Dian Fossey did her groundbreaking studies and exposed to a mass-audience in the film *Gorillas in the Mist*. There are currently five habituated families of gorillas in PNV and the Park is also home to seventy six mammal species, including a troop of habituated golden monkeys. Nature walks can be undertaken alongside a knowledgeable National Park's guide; climbs of the volcanoes are also possible as well as visiting the tomb of Dian Fossey.

Access to Parc National des Volcans (PNV) begins in the lively town of Ruhengeri, situated at the base of the entrance of the park. Ruhengeri has long been the base point for gorilla visits and entertains a stunning backdrop of Karisimbi, Visoke, Mikeno, Sabyinyo, Gahinga and Muhabura volcanoes. Ruhengeri is easily reached from Rwanda's capital city, Kigali, and is also only a 45-minute drive away from Gisenyi and the stunning Lake Kivu.

The Rwanda Gorilla Trek is not included on the photography tour, but is an optional extension. Please contact African Encounter directly for pricing and options.

[www.africanencounter.com](http://www.africanencounter.com)