

Masai warriors at the Masai Mara National Reserve.



A CLASSIC, WITH A TWIST

Tanzania

HIGHLIGHTS The **Serengeti**, site of the Great Migration; **Mount Kilimanjaro**, Africa's highest peak; the volcanic, game-rich **Ngorongoro Crater** basin; the UNESCO-listed Stone Town on **Zanzibar** island.

As with the Mara in Kenya, the Serengeti has been plagued with mass tourism and overcrowding. But innovative operators are taking travelers to the country's less visited corners. Last June luxe lodging company **Singita Grumeti Reserves** (singita.com) unveiled its first mobile safaris in its 340,000-acre concession near the Serengeti. Eco-camping outfitter Wayo Africa visits remote **Lake Eyasi**, a salt lake south of the park. In the undeveloped north, the government has chosen a few companies to build small lodges, including Nomad Tanzania's **Lamai Serengeti**, whose 12 rooms blend into rocky hills. Even farther-flung regions are coming to the fore: In the jungle-covered Mahale chimp habitat, Nomad's **Greystoke Mahale** has six thatched-roof huts on Lake Tanganyika. In 2010, **Amara Selous** (amara-tanzania.com) opened with 12 suites (all with private plunge pools) in southern Tanzania's untamed Selous Game Reserve.

WHEN TO GO

Jan Feb Mar Apr May **Jun**
Jul **Aug** **Sep** **Oct** Nov Dec

TOP OPERATORS

- ▶ **Aardvark Safaris** aardvarksafaris.com; 7 days from \$5,500.
- ▶ **George Mavroudis Safaris** gmsafaris.com; 11 days from \$11,000.
- ▶ **Nomad Tanzania** nomad-tanzania.com; 7 days from \$5,400.
- ▶ **Rothschild Safaris** rothschildsafaris.com; 7 days from \$2,380.
- ▶ **Wayo Africa** wayoafrika.com; 7 days from \$2,400.



Blue wildebeest in Kenya's Amboseli National Park.

SAFARI EXPERT



Douglas Nagi

From
Kenya

Company
Cottars Safari Service
(cottars.com)

First-Time Safari

"The Mara is as close to *Out of Africa* as you can get, and perfect for novice safari-goers. Nowhere else can you see all of the Big Five in a matter of hours and watch the annual migration of more than a million wildebeests."

COMMUNITY & CONSERVATION

Kenya

HIGHLIGHTS The **Masai Mara National Reserve**, home to the Great Migration; the private game reserves of the **Laikipia** region; the vibrant capital, **Nairobi**.

Traditionally the most romantic of safari destinations, Kenya lost much of its luster over the past three decades because of congestion in its parks and rampant political corruption. But there's a fresh energy in the countryside, evident in a new breed of lodges—and lodge owners—that emphasize community and preservation. Proceeds from the eight-cottage **Olarro** (olarrokenya.com), on the Mara's eastern perimeter, go to build local schools, clinics, and wells. The seven-tent **Mara Plains Camp** (greatplainsconservation.com) operates game-viewing trips in a conservancy run in partnership with the Masai. **Segera Retreat** (wilderness-safaris.com), meanwhile, is set to open eight solar-powered villas on a reclaimed Laikipia cattle ranch in July. Family-owned properties are also playing up the personalities of their owners. In Laikipia, **Lemarti's Camp** (lemartiscamp.com) is owned by Nairobi fashion designer Anna Trzebinski and her Samburu husband. Near Amboseli National Park, **Oi Donyo Lodge** (greatplainsconservation.com) is the revamped lodge of legendary conservationist Richard Bonham.

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TOP OPERATORS

- ▶ **Big Five Tours & Expeditions** bigfive.com; 7 days from \$6,000.
- ▶ **Cottars Safari Service** cottars.com; 7 days from \$5,950.
- ▶ **Extraordinary Journeys** ejafrica.com; 7 days from \$3,500.
- ▶ **Journeys by Design** journeysbydesign.com; 8 days from \$7,395.
- ▶ **Micato Safaris** micato.com; 7 days from \$11,200.
- ▶ **Safari & Conservation Company** thesafariandconservationcompany.com; 9 days from \$4,997.

SAFETY NOTE

The U.S. State Department currently has a travel warning issued for Kenya. Check with your tour operator and hotels on what security precautions they take.