

THE SERENGETI

The Serengeti is vast and beautiful, and one of Africa's most captivating safari areas. The sheer amount of game here is staggering: estimates suggest up to two million wildebeest, plus perhaps half a million zebra, hundreds of thousands of Thomson's gazelle, and tens of thousands of impala, Grant's gazelle, topi (tsessebe), hartebeest, eland and other antelope – all hunted by the predators for which these plains are famous.

Some of this game resides permanently in 'home' areas, which are great for safaris all year round. But many of the wildebeest and zebra take part in the annual migration (see our migration maps on pages 218–219) – an amazing spectacle shared with Kenya's Maasai Mara (pages 246–249) that is arguably one of the greatest wildlife shows on Earth.

The Serengeti is complex to understand and sadly doesn't always live up to its potential. Some inferior safaris neglect to take into account the wildlife's movements and reach only areas with minimal game, whilst others use sub-standard guides who provide few insights into the environment or the wildlife and destroy any sense of wilderness.

To get the best out of the Serengeti, your trip needs to be planned carefully with an eye for quality. We can help you design the right itinerary for great game viewing, and guarantee you a good guide. Below are some notes, but getting the best from a safari here is complicated; do talk to us to make sure you make the most of this.

THE SOUTHERN PLAINS

Vast short-grass plains cover the south of Serengeti National Park, stretching into the north of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, south-west Loliondo and Maswa Game Reserve. Occasionally, small kopjes harbour good populations of resident game, as do the forests around Lake Ndutu and the nearby Lake Masek. However, around these oases of permanent wildlife, most of this area is flat and open. It's alive with grazing wildebeest from around late-November to April, but for the rest of the year the game on these plains is sparse.

Ndutu Safari Lodge is situated on the boundary of the Ngorongoro Conservation

Area and the Serengeti National Park, with a view towards the small soda lake called Ndutu. Founded in the late 1960s, it is owner-run and down-to-earth. Its 34 stone cottages are comfortable, en suite and spread in linear fashion from either side of the central bar, lounge and dining area. Birdwatchers will enjoy the flamboyant Fischer's lovebirds that come to drink at breakfast time in the dry season, while the resident genets provide nightly entertainment in the bar throughout the year. We think this inexpensive and central base is a great choice to explore the short grass plains of the Serengeti – but it does get very full, so advance bookings are essential.

Lake Masek Tented Camp stands on the shores of the area's second lake. Its main dining area is communal and stylish, with views over the water. Each of its 20 spacious tents is raised on a wooden platform and furnished with large, four-poster double or twin beds, and has a private veranda, outdoor shower and large bathroom.

Standing atop a kopje, **Kusini Camp** is similar to its sibling Swala Camp in Tarangire (see page 212). It's high quality with 12 luxurious en-suite tents on polished wooden decks. Expect towelling bathrobes and lots of comfort. The lounge and dining area have deep couches and the food here is very good.

THE SERONERA AREA

In the heart of the national park, north of the short-grass plains, Seronera has the best features of the Serengeti but, sadly, also some of its worst. Scenically, it's lovely – with open plains, occasional kopjes and a few small ranges of hills. The wildlife is phenomenal, with high densities of relaxed leopard, cheetah and lion living off both resident herbivores and migrating game. Seronera's big drawback is that it is usually very busy.

North-east of Seronera, at the end of a winding road into the Kyabatero Hills, **Serengeti Serena Safari Lodge** enjoys panoramic vistas from many of its 66 en-suite rooms. Its papyrus-filled artificial streams are pleasant, but if you're looking for a budget option in this area then the nearby **Seronera Wildlife Lodge** is simpler and probably better value, however a recent fire means that it's currently closed.

South of Seronera in the Moru Kopjes area, **Serengeti Sopa Lodge** is also a larger property where, though the rooms are slightly dated, the staff are extremely friendly and make for an enjoyable stay. With six identical camps in a 15km radius, each **Kati Kati** camp has ten very simple en-suite tents. These have a less intimate feel than the other tented camps in this area, but are a good option for those where budget is of more concern than luxury.

Nearby, **Dunia Camp** is a very comfortable and high-quality tented camp. It is similar in style to its sister camp, Olakira (page 219), and one of the few good tented camps to occupy a permanent site in this part of the Serengeti. Dunia has eight large, airy tents – each of which has twin or king-size beds, and an en-suite bathroom with flush toilet and hot safari shower. This is one of our top choices in the Seronera area.

Namiri Plains Camp is located an hour and a half east of the central Serengeti, in an area that was previously inaccessible to tourists, having been used for cheetah research. 'Namiri' means 'big cat' in Swahili, and the area is said to hold one of the highest cheetah densities in Africa. It is slightly smaller than Dunia, with just four standard tents, one honeymoon and one family tent. For those who want fantastic game viewing, particularly big cats, and to be away from the crowds, this is a great option.

On the western slopes of Makoma Hills, **Lemala Ewanjan** has just seven spacious

Bat-eared foxes feed on termites, eating as much as 1.15 million each year!





tents and provides a good base to explore the central Serengeti throughout the year. The style here is slightly more contemporary than Dunia, and we found the staff to be very friendly too – it's another tented camp well worth considering in this area.

Serengeti Pioneer Camp is slightly higher end than those listed above. It's a smart tented camp built in the shadow of a kopje, with impressive views. Early explorer memorabilia decorates each of the 12 tented en-suite rooms and well-appointed main areas. As with its sister camps (Migration Camp, page 221 and The Manor, page 214) you can expect comfort and great service here.

The Greater Serengeti & Mara Ecosystem

Tanzania's Serengeti National Park covers about 15,000km², whilst the neighbouring Maasai Mara, in Kenya, extends to 1,510 km² – all mostly flat or gently rolling grasslands, interspersed with the occasional rock outcrop, or kopje. These parks are the centre of a whole ecosystem which covers more than double that area. This includes Tanzania's Grumeti Reserve, Ikorongo Game Reserve, Loliondo Game Controlled Area, Maswa Game Reserve, and part of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, as well as numerous Kenyan conservancies surrounding the Maasai Mara National Reserve. This combined area is often referred to as the **Serengeti-Mara ecosystem**.

“With much assistance from Expert Africa we really were able to tailor make our honeymoon and it made the world of difference. It meant we could focus on the things we were most interested in, we could move on from one location to the next at our own pace and we could adjust the budget up or down accordingly by tweaking here and there.

Our whole trip was fantastic. It had a rocky start as our flight leaving the UK was actually cancelled, however we were able to ring Expert Africa in the middle of the night explain the problem and by the time we arrived in Tanzania a new schedule had been re-arranged for us by James that minimised any loss of activities. Having this peace of mind was invaluable.”

Mr & Mrs H, Nottinghamshire, July 2015

SERENGETI WILDEBEEST MIGRATION

SERENGETI WILDEBEEST MIGRATION

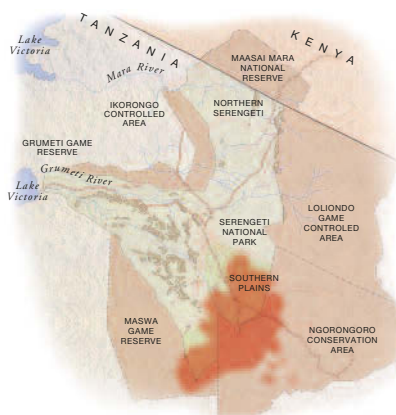
Many of the Serengeti's wildebeest, accompanied by large numbers of zebra, and smaller numbers of Grant's gazelle, Thomson's gazelle, eland and impala, migrate every year – forming what's often known as the Serengeti Wildebeest Migration, or simply the Great Migration. Dictated by the search for fresh grazing and better drinking water, their movements follow a somewhat predictable pattern through the Serengeti and into the Mara in Kenya – though the precise route changes in line with the year's rainfall. These maps show when and where the migration is likely to be in a typical year, however it's very important to note that weather patterns are increasingly hard to predict and in recent years the herds have been moving quite differently year on year. Please use these pages as a rough guide, rather than an infallible timetable, and it's important to understand that sightings are never guaranteed.

Usually, Tanzania's 'short rains' begin in early November. Shortly after this, in late **November and December**, the migrating

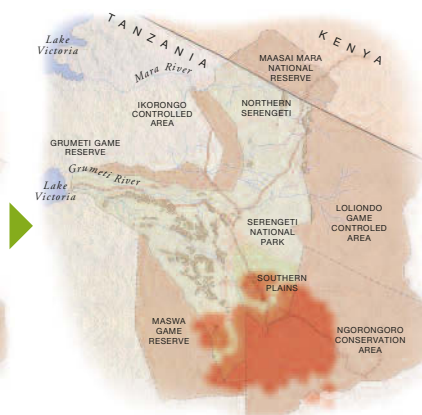
herds begin to arrive in great numbers on the Serengeti's short-grass Southern Plains (page 216). These extend all the way down

to Ndutu, including the north of the *Ngorongoro Conservation Area*, and east all the way to *Loliondo Game Controlled Area* (page 223). Animals are everywhere, feeding on the fresh, nutritious grasses, and they normally stay here through **January to March**. Many calve in a short window around February. Gradually they spread west across the plains, and by around April they begin migrating north.

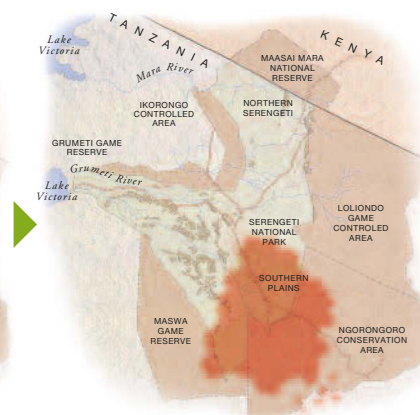
By **May** the area around Moru Kopjes and west of Seronera becomes hectic with a series of moving columns, often containing thousands of animals. Some head due north of Seronera, but most trek more north-west. Once they start to move, the pace can be quite rapid, and so the central Serengeti (Seronera Area) (page 216) is a



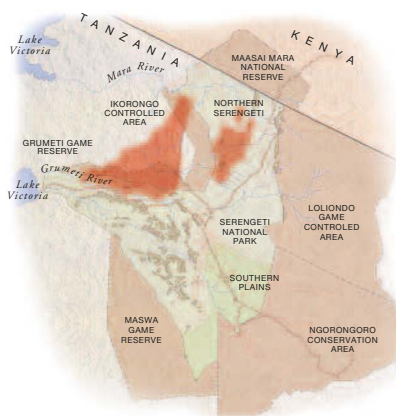
January: The herds are on the short grasses of the Southern Plains, southern *Loliondo Game Controlled Area* and the northern *Ngorongoro Conservation Area*.



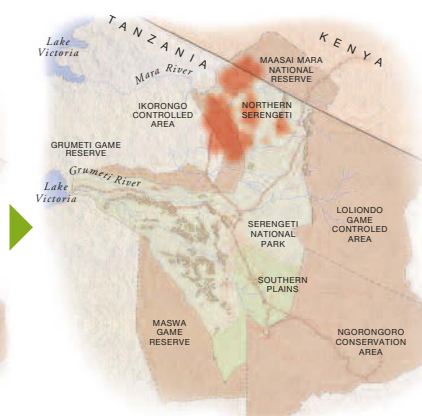
February: The herds spread out across the short-grass plains; many calves are born at this time.



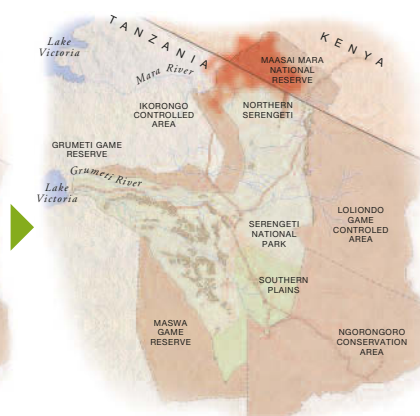
March: Still spread over the *Southern Plains*, but starting to move slightly west.



July: Once north of the river, the herds continue through *Grumeti Reserve* towards the *Northern Serengeti* and Kenya's *Maasai Mara*.



August: The migration continues moving through the *Northern Serengeti* and into the *Maasai Mara*.



September: The herds are in the *Northern Serengeti* and *Maasai Mara*, grazing on either side of the river.

To see these as a series of moving maps explaining this in detail, visit our webpage www.expertafrika.com/tanzania/info/serengeti-wildebeest-migration

good base to access the areas the herds are likely to be. Around **June** they are usually halted in the Western Corridor (page 220). Here they'll often pause, congregating south of the remaining pools in the Grumeti River's bed, before funnelling north through gaps where the river is dry.

During early July the herds continue moving across a broad front: some north-east through *Grumeti Reserve* (page 222) and Ikorongo, others north through the heart of the Serengeti. From mid **July** into **August**, the Northern Serengeti, including the Lobo area (page 221), sees the migration pass through as the herds head for the far north and Kenya's *Maasai Mara* (page 246) – where they'll spread out and remain throughout **September** and **October**. The

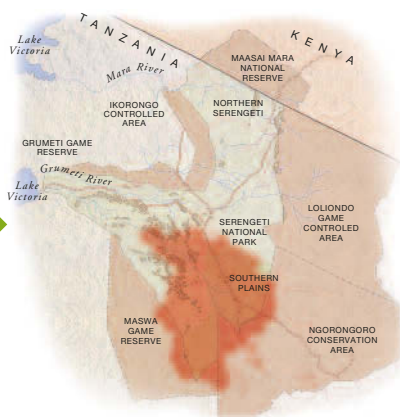
fast-flowing Mara River, which flows westwards from the Maasai Mara into the Serengeti before ending in Lake Victoria, provides the migration's most spectacular obstacle. Animal numbers here often build to an incredible density before waves of panicked crossings ensue: the annual feast for the Mara's large and patient crocodiles. This can be viewed on the side of the northern Serengeti and also in the Mara.

By **November**, the herds are again moving with more accord: returning south through *Loliondo Game Controlled Area* (page 223) and back through the Serengeti National Park's Lobo area (page 221). They are heading for the green shoots that follow the rains on the short-grass plains of the Southern Plains (page 216), arriving in late

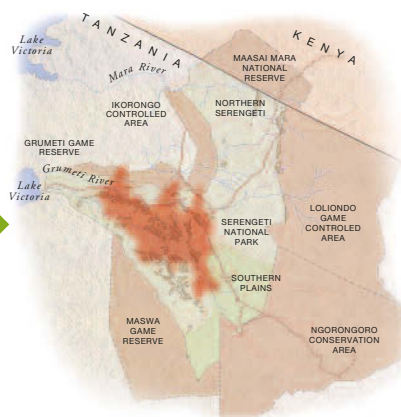


November to December – when the cycle begins again!

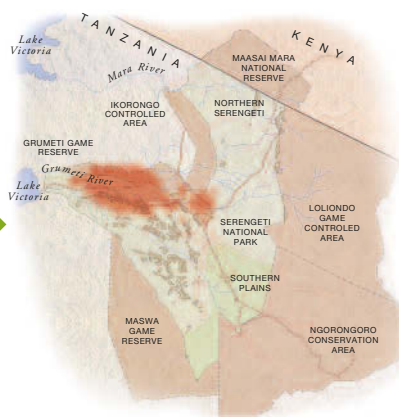
The number of wildebeest in the migration can reach over 1.4 million.



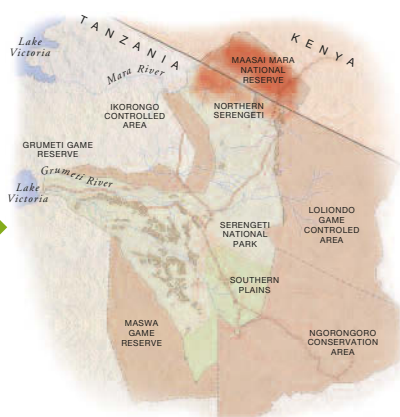
April: The herds gradually begin to move north towards the central Serengeti's *Seronera Area*.



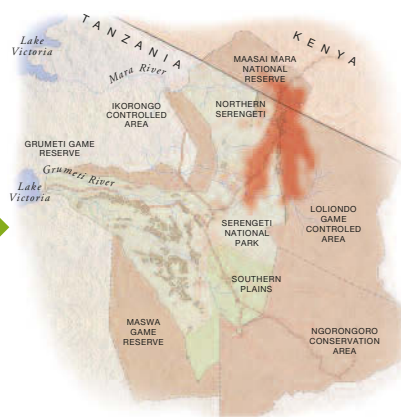
May: The migration is on the move, past the *Seronera Area*, towards the *Western Corridor*.



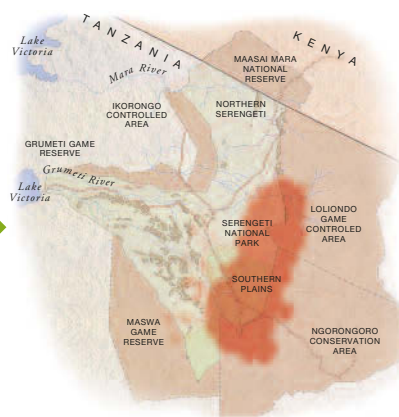
June: The herds gather in the *Western Corridor*, halted briefly by the patchy pools and streams of the Grumeti River.



October: The wildebeest continue to move back and forth across the Mara River, usually heading back into the *Serengeti* towards the end of the month.



November: As the rains start in the *Southern Plains*, the herds migrate south through the *Loliondo Game Controlled Area*, and the east side of the Serengeti National Park.



December: The animals arrive back on the short grasses of the *Southern Plains*, southern *Loliondo Game Controlled Area* and the northern *Ngorongoro Conservation Area*.

Combining the Serengeti with the Maasai Mara

Though the Serengeti and the Maasai Mara border each other and share the same ecosystem, getting from one to the other is not as simple as driving across the plains. The only way to combine the two is to fly. The choices are either to travel back to Arusha, up to Nairobi and across to the Mara; or to use a handy link between the Tanzanian town of Tarime and Migori on the Kenyan side. In this instance, you fly to one, transfer by road to the other, clearing customs along the way, then fly to your end destination. Although the trip is easy, it can take five hours, so it's not exactly quick – though it is a convenient way of transferring between the two.

Mobile Camps

There are a number of semi-permanent camps that are lightweight and designed to move several times throughout the year. This is to ensure that they are in the best location for where they predict the migration to be at different times of the year. **See page 220** for a list of these camps, and then talk to us about which one would suit you at a particular time of the year.

Planning your trip

The *Expert Africa* brochure you're reading describes the range of choices available for your Africa trip, but the best way to start planning is to call us. As we discuss your ideas and answer your questions, you'll find a copy of **The Directory** an invaluable aid. **The**

Directory is our manual of itinerary suggestions, or 'trip ideas'; including guideline prices, flight routings and all the tools you need to arrange a trip with us.

Order a printed copy, or download it from expertafrica.com/order-directory

MOBILE CAMPS IN THE SERENGETI

The Serengeti's **mobile tented camps** are safari camps which can be moved. These are regularly taken down and set up again in a different location; some move every few weeks, others stay in each location for a few months. Most try to anticipate the migration's location when they move, even though most of the sites for these camps need to be booked years in advance, so it's not quite as straightforward as simply packing up and moving from one day to the next if the herds move. Some feel almost permanent – with proper beds, en-suite bathrooms and comfortable mess tents, whilst others are more simply constructed. These camps aren't marked specifically on our map, but their movements are explained below.

Ubuntu is probably one of the simplest tented camps, and moves from the northern Serengeti to the southern plains, and additionally spends some time in the Western Corridor. Although its eight tents are simple in design, visitors here enjoy great food and good levels of service.

Lemala Serengeti belongs to the same family as Lemala Ngorongoro (see page 215) From July until the end of October it's known as **Lemala Mara Camp** and is superbly located a stone's throw from the Mara River. From December until March

this same camp moves to the southern Serengeti, to become **Lemala Ndutu Camp**. Its 12 tents are spacious and luxurious, with two queen-size doubles, or one king size. The communal areas are quirky, with animal skins, big rugs and enticing leather sofas.

Olakira Camp typically moves between two different areas: from May to October it's in northern Serengeti where the Bologonja River meets the Mara River. Then from November to March it moves to Ndutu in the southern Serengeti. It is the slightly more luxurious sister to Ubuntu, and has nine large, light-coloured walk-in tents, each with twin or double beds, solar lighting, en-suite flush toilet, brass washbasin, and a bucket shower (hot water on request). Olakira prides itself on imaginative, high-quality food, served in the mess tent or outdoors. It's a smart camp designed to be comfortable, using light fabrics, colourful blankets and rugs on the floor. Olakira and Ubuntu share two superb sister camps in the Mara: Rekeru in the heart of the Maasai Mara National Reserve (page 246), and Naboisho in a conservancy just outside it (page 249).

A third sister to Ubuntu and Olakira is **Kimondo**, which is very similar in design to Olakira; its eight canvas tents are furnished with wrought-iron bedsteads, leather chairs and thick-weave rugs, while chunky wooden tables and soft brown fabrics give it a natural feel inside. Spacious bathrooms have bucket showers and flush toilets. From May to October it's located in the Lamai Wedge – a small pocket of the Serengeti, north of the Mara River and south of the border with Kenya; it then moves to the southern Serengeti between December and March.

Serengeti Safari Camp is much simpler in construction and usually moves five times over the course of the year. Between about December and April, it is on the short-grass plains of the southern Serengeti; in May and November it's normally near the Moru Kopjes; for June and July it moves to the Western Corridor; then from mid-July to late October it's usually on a site near either the Bologonja or Mara River, in the remote northern Serengeti. Each large walk-in tent is traditional in style, with an en-suite bucket shower, eco-flush toilet and solar battery-powered lighting.

Serengeti under Canvas is a similar set-up to Serengeti Safari Camp, with just nine tents (including one better suited to



Lions in the wild live for roughly 12 years

families), which move around the Serengeti throughout the year. With *alfresco* bucket showers, five-star service and excellent food, it is certainly camping at its best, and one of the most luxurious tented options around!

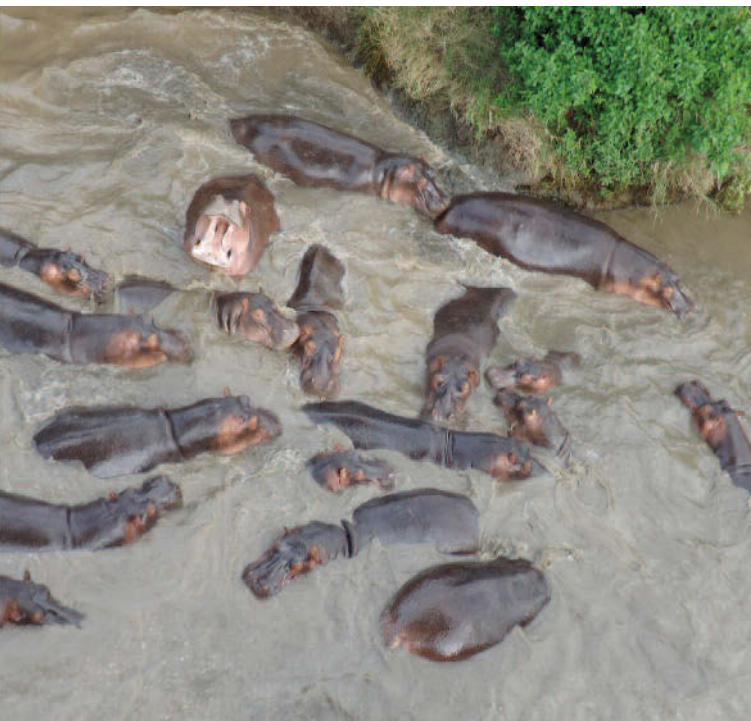
From July until mid-November, **Alex Walker's Serian Camp** and **Serian's Serengeti Mobile** are located in the northern Serengeti within easy reach of the Mara River. The lighter mobile camp, with just four tents, is in the Lamai Wedge, while the larger eight-tented main camp is in the Kogatende area. From December until May the camps move south. The main camp moves down to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, bordering the short grass plains of the southern Serengeti – within fairly easy reach of both the Serengeti, as well as the Ngorongoro Crater (a two-hour drive away); while the mobile camp is set up within tortillias woodland in the Kusini area of the Serengeti. These luxurious camps also come with the added bonus of a private vehicle and guide included in the nightly rates.

THE WESTERN CORRIDOR

Stretching west, almost to Lake Victoria, the Serengeti narrows into the Western Corridor. Here two rivers, the Grumeti and the Mbalageti, run almost parallel, each supporting a band of moist, evergreen forest.

This area sustains a good permanent game population, including plenty of zebra and

Pods of hippo usually consist of 10 to 30 individuals



wildebeest, all the predators, and also forest 'specialists' like colobus monkeys. The birdlife is particularly varied and the migration passes through between about May and July – pausing before crossing the hazardous, crocodile-filled waters of the Grumeti River into the Grumeti Reserve.

Mbalageti Camp stands on Mwanyeni Hill. It's a large, high-quality camp with quirky features and commanding views from its outdoor terrace and swimming pool.

It has 14 very ordinary 'standard' or 'lodge' rooms, 24 luxurious tented chalets and two impressive suites. The lodge rooms are simple, but all are en suite and have a veranda. The chalets and suites are much more stylish, constructed of canvas, stone and thatch and including claw-foot baths. Mbalageti's large lounge/dining area is a very comfortable, spacious place to relax.

Kirawira Camp is one of the smallest and smartest of the *Serena* group of hotels, and has an imposing hilltop location: on a clear day you can see for miles across the plains of the Western Corridor.

Kirawira's 25 recently refurbished tents are spacious, and fitted out with quality furnishings. Expect silver service, good food and a lovely swimming pool with great views, but a slightly more formal feel.

Grumeti Serengeti Tented Camp has ten large, en suite ivory tents under thatch, each with an extravagant bed and comfy chairs. Two of these tents are perfect for families, with a shared enclosed lobby area. All of the well-equipped tents have natural décor, with soft greys and ivory colours creating a calm and homely atmosphere.

The swimming pool, bar and all of the ten tents enjoy views of the emerald water-lettuce covered river, and often the resident hippo.

NORTHERN SERENGETI

Stretching from north of Seronera to Kenya's Maasai Mara, the northern Serengeti is gently rolling country, broken by small rivers and occasional hills. There are good permanent populations of wildlife in several areas here.

This part of the park is far from its main entry gate in the south and so receives fewer visitors, although the crossing points can still get very busy. A particularly stunning area is the wild Lamai Wedge – the stretch of land between the Mara River and the Kenyan border. This is also the only

part of the national park where off-road driving is allowed.

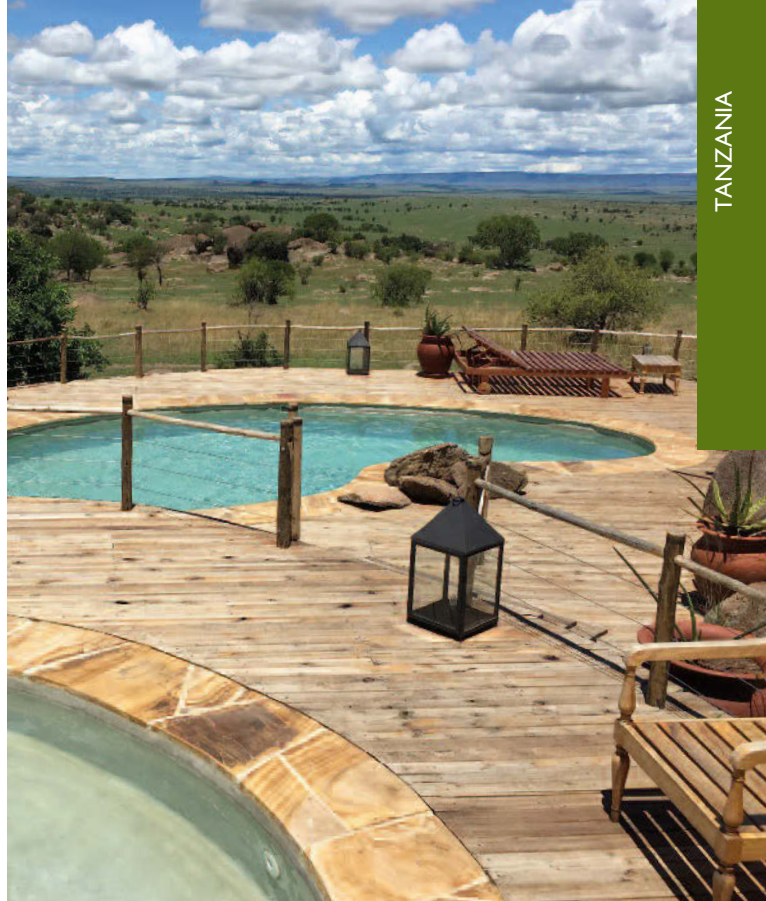
Heading north from Seronera, **Mbuzi Mawe Tented Camp** makes a very comfortable stop between Seronera and the far north – as does the nearby **Four Seasons Serengeti**; with 77 rooms, it is not everyone's idea of an authentic safari, but for those wanting a hotel, top food, an extensive spa, or somewhere more secure for children, it is perfect.

Further north in the Lobo area, perched in a superb position between the huge boulders of the lovely Lobo Kopje, **Lobo Wildlife Lodge** is one of a series of formerly Tanzania government-owned lodges built in the 1970s. With 75 functional rooms it's not exclusive, but if you accept that you're just here to sleep and eat mediocre buffet food – then it's good value and a great location.

On the south side of the Grumeti River, west of Lobo, **Migration Camp** makes the most of its elevated position on a kopje. It's a high-quality camp with 20 canvas rooms, raised on individual wooden decks. Each room is spacious and stylish with a fan, well-chosen fabrics and leather furniture. The en-suite bathroom has a good shower, twin washbasins and a flush toilet. The extensive dining and lounge areas are open to the view.

Close to the Mara River, near the wild Lamai Wedge, is the smart **Sayari Camp**. It has 15 spacious glass-fronted tents, each with stunning views, king-size beds and its own private veranda. The en-suite bathrooms have flush toilets, hot showers and a bathtub. There is also a special honeymoon suite which has a large private deck, and a granite bath with views across the Serengeti. Sayari has excellent resident guides, and works well on a fly-in trip, or as the highlight of a guided safari. The high levels of luxury here does mean Sayari doesn't have a 'wilderness' feel, but it's an excellent camp, and a perfect place to splash out!

Stylish **Lamai Serengeti** stands just south of the Mara River. The camp is divided into two parts: Main Camp has eight bandas, whilst the smaller Private Camp has just four (and is booked out exclusively to small groups). The bandas combine canvas, plaster and wood to create a very airy, open and natural style. With some of the best views in the Serengeti and high standards of guiding and service, Lamai is proving very popular. Consider a visit here



The pool at Mkombe's Private House

when the migration is in the southern plains and you'll find good resident game and blissfully few other people around. A recent addition is **Mkombe's House Lamai**, a private house sleeping up to 10 guests, designed in the same comfortable and appealing style. It's a really great option for families – especially as there is no minimum age for children.

Lemala Kuria Hills opened in 2013 is a sister camp to Lemala Ngorongoro (page 215), and the seasonal Mara and Ndtutu camps (page 220). This camp is much more luxurious than its sisters, with glass windows, mini-bars and private plunge pools in each of its 15 suites.

Opened in 2012, **Singita Mara River Tented Camp** is also located within the Lamai Wedge, right on the river's edge. The six solar-powered luxury tents (two of which are designed for families) enjoy beautiful views from their outdoor bathtubs, and the central plunge pool is another great spot to watch game pass by.

The word klipspringer literally means 'rock jumper' in Afrikaans



Trip ideas – and prices

In previous years, this *Expert Africa* brochure has always included 'Trip Ideas' with prices. These are suggested itineraries, costing for different times of the year, to help you figure out the style and cost of the trip you want us to create for you. We've now moved this nuts-and-bolts information into a separate manual: **The Directory**, full of up-to-the-minute trip ideas, prices and flight information.

Order a printed copy, or download it from expertafrica.com/order-directory

An early morning hot air balloon ride over the Serengeti

SINGITA GRUMETI RESERVE

The private Singita Grumeti runs along the north side of the Western Corridor, covering almost 1,420km². Within this reserve are several very different luxury lodges and camps, plus a private house. All offer a high degree of exclusivity for watching the migration as it journeys north from around June to August, and all channel profits into local conservation and community-development initiatives.

Singita Explore is a tented operation within the Grumeti Reserve. It offers a very comfortable 'camping' experience in large, luxurious walk-in tents and allows you the chance to experience some of the more remote locations within the reserve. It is always booked out on an exclusive basis, so whether there are two of you or 12, you will have the camp to yourself.

Sabora Tented Camp is a luxurious, beautiful 1920s-style tented camp set out on the plains. The main tent is filled with Persian rugs, 'campaign' furniture and interesting antiques. Each of its nine air-conditioned tents has a four-poster bed, a wardrobe and bureau, and velvet curtains – as well as an en-suite toilet and outdoor shower. There is a library, lounge and dining tent, plus a central swimming pool and tennis court. When the migration passes through, wildebeest and zebra surround

this camp – both a marvellous wildlife sight and a phenomenally noisy affair!

Faru Faru Lodge's nine river-stone, canvas and glass suites have expansive mirrored room dividers and huge picture windows that look down onto a permanent waterhole. The Grumeti River, which changes from sand to fast-flowing water depending on the season, passes very close by, and in the dry season guided walks take place here. Faru Faru is a great option, especially if you love minimalist modern design and prefer the feel of a lodge over a camp.

Set atop Sasakwa Hill with stupendous panoramic views of the plains below, **Sasakwa Lodge** is the grandest of the three properties. Built in the style of an African manor house, it has plush interiors filled with antiques and African *objets d'art*, broad sweeping verandas and manicured gardens. Ten stylish air-conditioned 'cottages' have their own infinity plunge pool. Aside from the fabulous central infinity pool, a small gymnasium, a spa area, tennis courts (clay and all weather), a billiards room and a lounge, Sasakwa offers 4WD safaris and top-class horseriding safaris for experienced riders.

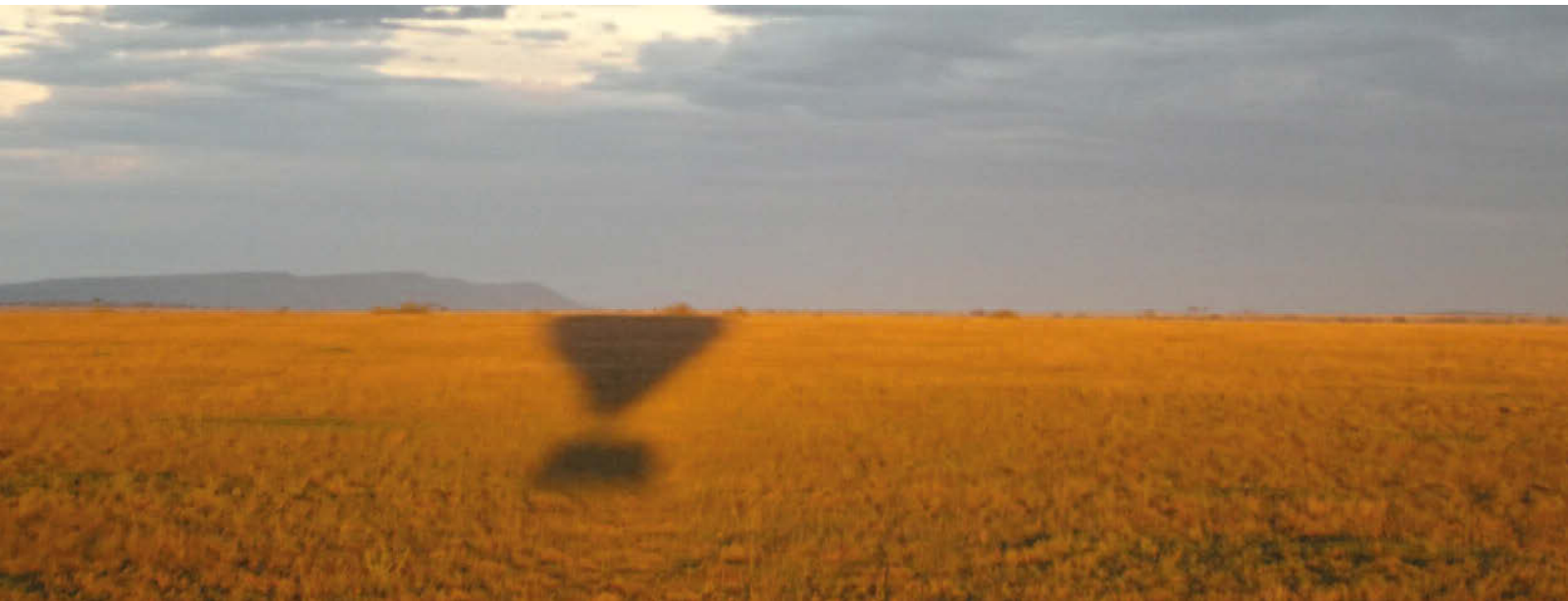
Designed with families or groups of friends in mind, **Singita Serengeti House** is the newest addition to this region. Two suites in



Cheetahs can go from 0 to 96 km/h in just three seconds

the main house, and two in the garden, make it perfect for groups of up to eight. Styled to feel incredibly homely, the house has its own private 25-metre swimming pool and tennis court. With total flexibility in activities, it's great for those who want privacy, and to be able to set the pace of their day. Guests may also make use of the equestrian centre, gym and spa at Sasakwa Lodge.

The properties on the Singita Grumeti Reserve offer some of the most luxurious options in Tanzania. You can expect top-level service, fine dining, and exclusivity here – albeit with a price-tag to match!





LOLIONDO GAME CONTROLLED AREA

East of the Serengeti National Park, between the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the Kenyan border, the area known as Loliondo Game Controlled Area belongs to the Maasai tribes who live there. The western side of Loliondo, beside the park, is very much part of the Serengeti's ecosystem. It has a reasonable amount of resident game and also has a chance of the migration passing through – from about October in the north, through to February–March on its southern plains. There are several camps here which, being outside the national park, can offer night drives and walks (often using Maasai guides), as well as optional visits to local Maasai villages. It's worth noting that in recent years there has been some issues with local villagers overgrazing their cattle on land which should be reserved for wildlife, and as a result the game viewing in the general area isn't perhaps as good as it once was. Overlooking the national park from a perch

on the rocky Kuka Hills, **Klein's Camp** is a permanent luxury lodge set in its own 100km² wilderness concession within Loliondo, and as such doesn't suffer from the issues mentioned above. It's an upmarket lodge, beautifully styled with attentive service. The ten rock-and-thatch cottages (one of which is designed for families) all enjoy immaculate facilities and great views from private verandas. There's a cosy, open-sided lounge-bar for sunset drinks or lazy afternoon card games, an elegant dining room and a swimming pool. With excellent permanent game in this area, activities focus on 4WD and walking safaris, with night drives and trips to visit a Maasai village also available.

Buffalo Luxury Camp is a permanent tented camp with 15 suites, and five smaller chalets, set in northern Loliondo, about 4km from Klein's Gate. The two-level suites are smart and quirky, with dark leather armchairs, animal-skin cushions, recycled aluminium beds, and unique ceramic lampshades. The chalets are more rustic and have lots of character – and we prefer

them! The central areas have stunning views towards the Serengeti, and the manager has set up some easels and paints should anyone be inspired by the view.

Tented Camps in Loliondo

Nduara Loliondo Camp is a semi-permanent camp open from December to April in the Piaya area of southern Loliondo. The six tents at Nduara are traditional Meru-style tents, while the dining and library tents are quite stylish, incorporating elements of a traditional Maasai boma and a Mongolian yurt: large, round structures with holes in the centre of their roofs. The interior design is an unusual mix of brightly coloured fabrics and animal skin. It looks contemporary and interesting, whilst avoiding being gaudy. Nduara's beds are very comfortable, and each tent has an eco-flush toilet and hot bucket shower. Activities include full-day safaris, enlightening excursions to a nearby Maasai village, safari walks and night drives. Adding Nduara to your itinerary will give great variety to your trip, and a break from the more traditional game drives.

Adult male black rhinos weigh up to 1,350 kg and females up to 900 kg

Lion cubs remain hidden for one to two months before being introduced to the rest of the pride

