

Journey with the Maasai

A walking and 4WD expedition to learn about the Maasai of Tanzania

Location: the African Rift Valley, Tanzania



***This unique small group adventure holiday** is ideal for anyone wanting to acquire an in-depth knowledge of Maasai culture. During the seven-day walking and cultural tour you will be able to experience first-hand important aspects of the nomadic way of life—from traditional village life and rites of passage, to hunting and herding techniques, and use of plants for medicine and nutrition.*

Perhaps the most revered of the great African nomadic tribes, the Maasai originated in the Nile basin and migrated south through Ethiopia to Kenya and Tanzania in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were then known as the fiercest of warriors. Now they struggle to retain their modest lifestyle. Community tourism such as this helps to generate important income for the Maasai guides and their wider families. In addition, the wildlife and community fees we pay on your behalf all help sustain these fragile Maasai communities.

The tour will be led by Tanzania tour leader Sam Diah. Sam has worked for many years developing tours amongst the Maasai tribe, as guide and interpreter. He is multi-lingual and fluent in English and Swahili. He is expert at leading discussions, interpreting and facilitating a truly interesting and informative learning experience in remote tribal villages.

Our Maasai Lands departure can be booked as both a private tour and a small group open departure. The next scheduled open departure is due to take place 23-30 August 2016. The location is within the Great African Rift Valley, northern Tanzania. The region where you will begin your tour is home to several Maasai communities and receives very few visitors—it is far removed from the main safari routes.

Beginning with a walk up to the viewpoint on Mt. Longido, a sacred Maasai mountain, you will then drive and trek across the floor of the Great Rift Valley. Your destination is the magnificent mountain massif, the Crater Highlands, and the world famous Ngorongoro Crater. Here you will be able to see many of the major animal species of Africa, including lion, elephant, and antelope. Your journey with the Maasai ends with a celebratory evening at a special bush camp near Laibone, overlooking Lake Manyara.

There will be options to extend with a Serengeti safari and/or time on Tanzania's mainland coast or Zanzibar.

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Sun 23 Aug Night flight to Nairobi

Depart UK in the evening and arrive East Africa next morning.

Mon 24 Aug Drive to Tanzania and trek to Longido Camp

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Arrive Nairobi 06:30. After meeting with the rest of the group and your tour leader, depart by bus for the frontier at Nmanga (approx. 3hrs), cross into Tanzania and then drive a further half hour to a rendezvous point with the Tanzania support team. After a quick introductory briefing, we will begin the walk to our first camp, Longido Wild Camp, located in the foothills of the dramatic Mt. Longido. It's a one hour walk in the bush, and once we reach camp the team will begin preparing lunch.

In the afternoon, head out for a walk in the surrounding area to get a feel for the geography and to help further acclimatise you to the African bush. This is typical African acacia bush country, and a pleasure to explore on foot.

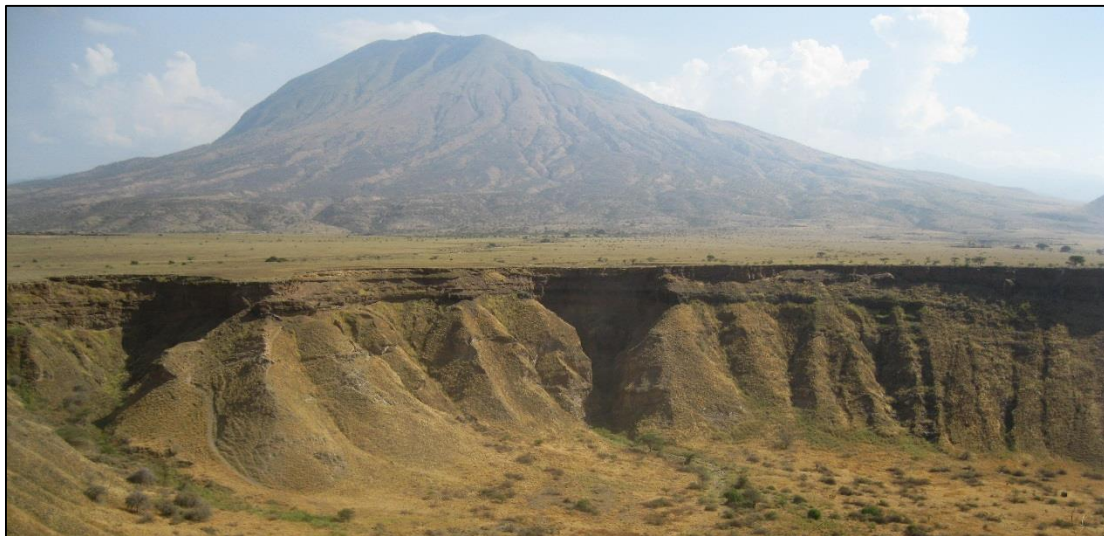


In the evening we will gather around the campfire and Sam will introduce our Maasai guides, who will begin to tell you about their lives and customs. In the evening be sure to look out for the incredible star canopy.

Tue 25 Aug To Longido Viewpoint, and on to Kitumbeine Camp

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Wake to an early breakfast (06:00), and then, for the more confident walkers, a tough trek up into the foothills of Longido. We hope to trek up to a high view point (5,487ft). If the weather is clear, you will have stunning views of Mt Meru and Kilimanjaro, and west across the floor of the Rift Valley to the Crater Highlands on the very distant horizon.



This will be your first African mountain on this expedition and learning walking security will be very important. The forested slopes of Longido are rarely visited and they are home to a lot of wild game, including buffalo. It is important to remain close to the Maasai guides who know the mountain well.

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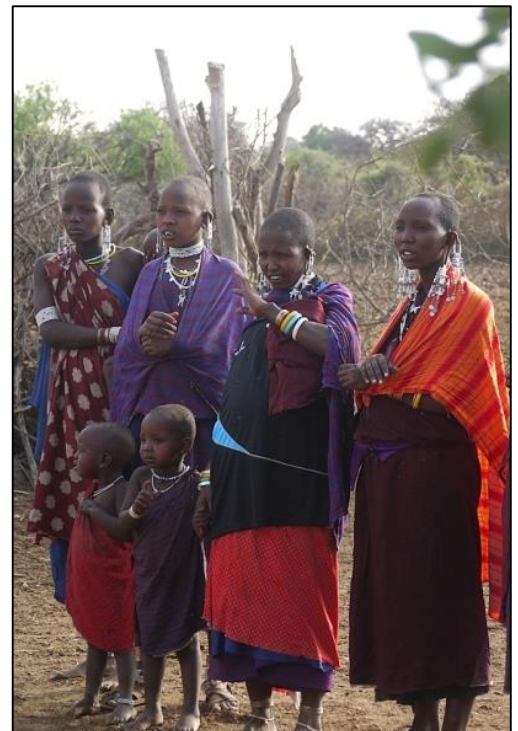


After admiring the view from Longido's viewpoint, we descend to meet the vehicles. Our transfer vehicles will take us across the Arusha-Nairobi main road and onto a rough track. We then proceed further into the bush for one hour, heading west to a picnic lunch point in the shade. After lunch, drive a short distance and then leave the vehicles and proceed to walk to Kitumbeine Village and Kitumbeine Rocky Camp, two kilometres outside the village.

Your climb, drive and trek today will be tough, covering up to 20kms. The experience should give you a good understanding of just how hardy the Maasai, who walk these distances regularly, really are. Today will also provide a chance to get a better feel for Maasai life. You will be walking in the Maasai heartlands, passing through traditional temporary villages with mud-built houses and thorn hedges, where young Maasai boys herd cattle and goats as their forefathers have done for centuries.

The Maasai have struggled to retain their lifestyle over the course of the last century. During the colonial era, the settlement into towns and the control of local government fell mainly to the Bantu tribes who prospered by virtue of their hard work in the rich agricultural lands around Mount Kilimanjaro and Meru. The Maasai were marginalised to areas outside the national parks and away from the towns and their agricultural catchment areas. Their traditional lifestyle has been threatened by modern life.

Your trek will bring important community funds to the Maasai regions you pass through. By displaying an interest in their culture, you will hopefully help encourage the Maasai in their wish to retain their traditions, while at the same time co-existing with other Tanzanians in an emerging economy and a developing education system. Maasai tradition must be allowed to exist alongside modernisation. It is a difficult goal to achieve, but community-based, eco-friendly tourism, such as your holiday, plays an important part.



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Wed 26 Aug

Kitumbeine Mountain and Village, transfer to Ngarirat Camp

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After an early start and breakfast, we drive and trek part way up Kitumbeine Mountain to a viewpoint on a ridge at 6,300ft. The trail is dusty and rocky to start, but soon merges with a well-trodden goat trail. Temperatures should drop as the day proceeds and we begin to gain altitude. Expect to reach the viewpoint early afternoon. Later we trek part way back down and meet the vehicles for a short drive to the Ngarirat swamp, a mostly dry ancient swamp bed, where many wild animals come to drink and graze.

Late afternoon, enjoy a game viewing trek in the region around the swamp, before heading to Ngarirat Camp for overnight. The views from the camp across the Rift Valley floor to the Maasai Mountain of Ol Doinyo Lengai are simply breath-taking. You can expect to see more wild game today. In particular look out for zebra, gerenuk, and giraffe. The birdlife is rich along the entire route. The superb starlings, the "Go Away" bird, hoopoes and numerous raptors are seen in the area, as are weaver birds, with their fascinating nests.



Tonight we camp at Ngarirat Wild Camp.

Thu 27 Aug

Visit Gelai Village, camp nearby

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Today you will have the chance to explore at greater length the area around Ngarirat. It is a region of great natural beauty, often referred to as the "Cradle of Mankind". On a clear day, the views of Ol Doinyo Lengai, known to the Maasai as the Mountain of God, are wonderful. Expect to be captivated.



In the afternoon, we head to Gelai Village, an important Maasai trading centre at the foot of the immense Gelai Mountain. Gelai is a permanent settlement and provides a contrast to the Maasai boma that we encountered earlier, which are redeveloped each season.

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Gane and Marshall clients have supported a number of development projects at Gelai Village, including the building of a school. (You can learn more on the [Community Projects Africa website](#).)

Fri 28 Aug **Trek & drive to Sunken Crater Camp**

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This morning we shall visit a Maasai boma (a temporary settlement surrounded by thorn hedges) and see and meet the Maasai who live there seasonally. This is a unique opportunity to enter an authentic Maasai village, one that is used as a seasonal dwelling place by the Maasai and their flocks. There are many contrived Maasai villages on the main tourist circuit, but for the most part these exist only for tourists.

You will have a chance to explore the village. Your leader Sam and your Maasai guides will explain to you how the huts are built, how the cooking is done, where people sleep and eat, and the practice of bringing in the animals at night.

Later this morning we hope to visit a special project – a remote Maasai school developed and funded by one of our UK partners. It is effectively a very simple open air classroom, which attracts up to 40 Maasai youngsters each day.

After exploring the village, we walk across untamed bush towards the Sunken Crater. You will cross a beautiful plain marked by dead volcanic vents, your journey bringing you ever closer to the escarpment of the Rift Valley, which rises from the bush up to the Ngorongoro Crater Highlands.

Today is likely to be hotter than previous days, so wear lots of sun block, reflective clothing and wide-brimmed hats.

We hope to reach the impressive Sunken Crater mid-afternoon, and will be camping overnight near the crater. Time allowing, you can explore some of the interesting features of the area, including the volcanic cones, and even descend into the Sunken Crater.

Evening temperatures drop. An early night is recommended today to be rested for the early start tomorrow.



Sat 29 Aug **To Ngorongoro Crater and then to Laibone**

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Wake to tea, coffee and biscuits at 3AM, before we begin the drive (around 4 hours) to Ngorongoro Crater.

The early start is in order to make the most of our time in the Crater, allowing much of the morning and early afternoon to explore its interior.

On the crater floor, grassland blends into swamp, lakes, rivers, woodland and mountains – a haven for a host of wildlife, including the densest predator population in Africa. The crater is home to up to 25,000 large mammals,

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mainly grazers - gazelle, buffalo, eland, hartebeest and warthog. There are a small number of black rhinos here and large herds of elephant.



After exploring the Crater (with lunch), we drive to our special wild camp near Laibone, for a celebratory dinner and a final night in the bush.

Sun 30 Aug Trek to viewpoint, lunch, and drive to airport for extension or flight home. B/L

After breakfast, you can take an optional trek to a magnificent viewpoint. From this viewpoint, high above the camp you can look back across the area you have trekked over the previous week, and down to Lake Manyara.

Then descend in time for lunch in camp, before driving to the airport for your connecting flight to the coast or your overnight flight home.



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Cost: *Our next open group Maasai Lands tour is due to depart in August 2016. The cost of our small group Maasai Lands departure is £1995 per person (before international flights), including all transfers, accommodation, meals and experienced tour leader and guides. The minimum group size for our open groups to run is six persons. Maximum group size is fifteen persons.*

For a private tour,

Extensions: *Contact us for options to extend with a Serengeti safari and/or time on the mainland coast or Zanzibar.*

For more information: contact Jeremy Gane at jeremy@ganeandmarshall.com.