

Tanzania

A Greentours Itinerary

Days 1 & 2

Dar-es-Salaam

We'll depart on our direct flight to Tanzania in the evening arriving early the next morning into Dar-es-Salaam where we'll transfer quickly to the excellent Mediterraneo Hotel. Dar's coastline is classified as an Important Bird Area and from the hotel we can observe African Spoonbill, Sacred Ibis, Sooty Gull and land birds such as numerous species of weaver and beautiful Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu. There is also the option to take a half hour boat ride to Bongoyo Island which has excellent snorkelling in its marine reserve and we'll take a look at the 'bird's paradise trail loop' through attractive coastal thicket. Alternatively just enjoy relaxing by the hotel pool, take a walk along the beach, or enjoy some wonderful seafood.

Day 3

Mikumi National Park

Usually in East African national parks one is restricted to vehicles seeing the wildlife on morning and evening game drives. This tour is different. We will be using 4wd landcruisers to travel about the country however these are merely to get us to the best areas, and in each national park, except Mikumi, we can walk as much as we require.

We'll head inland after breakfast reaching the Kikoboga Lodge in Mikumi National Park for lunch. Buffalo, Elephant, Gazelle, Zebra, Baboon, Giraffe and Warthog are all commonly seen from the dining area. The birdlife is fantastic with many notable Miombo dry woodland species such as Racket-tailed Roller, Pale-billed Hornbill and Dickinson's Kestrel. Other charismatic and colourful species include Palm-nut Vulture and Secretary Bird, Lilac-breasted Roller and Superb Starling. Later in the afternoon we'll continue to Udzungwa National Park, two hours southwest of Mikumi.

Days 4 & 5

Udzungwa National Park

The Udzungwa Mountains are part of a series of ancient and isolated mountain blocks stretching from southern Kenya to south-central Tanzania. The age, isolation and fragmented nature of the forests in these mountains have combined to produce high levels of biodiversity. It is the only national park in Tanzania with unbroken forest from lowland rainforest at 250m rising to Montane forest at 2576m and is home to thirteen species of primate, two of which are strict endemics; the Udzungwa Red Colobus and the Sanje mangabey. The near endemic Highland Mangabey (*Rungwecerbus Kipunji*), only found in the Udzungwa and Kitulo

National Parks, was discovered in 2004. Other species of primate include Sykes' Monkey, Vervet Monkey, Yellow Baboon, Angolan Colobus, Udzungwa Galago, Mountain Galago, Grant's Galago, Greater Galago and Small-eared Galago.

Large game such as Elephant, Buffalo, Lion and Leopard abound, and it is home to the rare Abbot's Duiker, which co-exists with four other forest antelopes, and the newly discovered Grey-faced Sengi.

The top of Sanje Falls is the perfect place for bird and butterfly watching. Udzungwa is one of the top 10 forests for bird conservation in Africa. Of over 400 species of bird those of particular interest include the endemic Udzungwa Forest Partridge, first discovered in 1991 and Rufous-winged Sunbird. 539 species of butterfly have been recorded in the park. Sanje in particular is a Mecca for butterflies; in the upper parts of the falls the large black and turquoise Udzungwa endemic *Papilio hornimani mwanihananae* can be found along with the less conspicuous *Celaenorrhinus sanjeensis* and *Axiocerses kiellandi* which are only known from the forests around Sanje. Forest dependent species include the striking black and red *Mimacraea gelinia* and the common orange and blue *Euphaedra neophron*. The park has high levels of floral endemism and is well known for its African Violets (*Saintpaulia* spp) and Bizzy-lizzies (*Impatiens* spp). Trees such as *Ocotea usambariensis*, *Allanblackia stulmannii* and *Cephalosphaera usambarensis* can grow up to 50 metres in height.

En route to Sanje Waterfalls we will walk through spectacular lowland-submontane forest where the Udzungwa Red Colobus, Sanje Mangabey and Black and White Colobus are often found crashing through the trees and feeding on the fruits of trees such as *Parinari excelsa* and *Lettowianthus stellatus* which fringe the Sanje River. Several species of *Saintpaulia* and *Impatiens* are found clinging onto rock faces making up the series of three impressive waterfalls. You can not miss the distinctive cry of the Trumpeter Hornbills and screeching of the Crowned Eagles. We'll seek colourful forest dwelling birds such as Narina Trogon, Peter's Twinspot, Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird and the rare Usambara Weaver. Continuing up above Sanje falls may be lucky enough to spot the newly identified Grey-faced Elephant Shrew or more commonly Chequered Elephant Shrew as we walk through the forest.

A free-ranging group of up to 50 individuals of Sanje Mangabey was habituated in 2006 by Trevor Jones, who also discovered the new genus of primate *Rungwecerbus kipunji* in Undundulu forest on the northwest side of the park. It is a real privilege having the opportunity to observe and follow this fascinating species. The Sanje Mangabey are unusual in that they forage in the trees for fruits and on the ground for insects, often walking upright across open ground on two legs. Local guides constantly follow this group and radio back their location to the park HQ. A maximum group size of six observers are allowed at one time, although up to three groups can view the mangabeys each day. There is an opportunity to join night walks and enjoy the sights and sounds of nocturnal species such as galagos,

hyraxes, bats, nightjars, civets and genets. Night walks are also a great way of spotting chameleons, several of which are again endemic to Udzungwa!

Day 6

Kisolanza Farm via Baobab Valley

On route to Kisolanza, bordered by the western flanks of the Udzungwa National Park, is the spectacular Baobab Valley, where the Great Ruaha River Valley opens out to form a sea of eerie looking Baobab trees. Birdlife is abundant.

Kisolanza is a working farm with cattle, sheep, vegetables, tobacco and flowers. The Ghau family has lived in East Africa for over 100 years running this farm. We will take a guided tour around the farm or one can just wander freely. The food is fantastic with a menu of fresh farm produce and garden herbs served in a wonderfully atmospheric restaurant converted from the ruins of an old mud building. Tea and cake is served on demand!

Days 7 & 8

Mbeya and the Mporoto Ridge

Moving west to Mbeya we'll use the Utengule Coffee Lodge as a base for the next two nights. Only about 40% of the farm's 500 hectares are cultivated, the remainder is left as a nature reserve rich in both flora and fauna and the habitat for over 150 species of birds including the White-browed Scrub-robin, Mountain Wagtail and various sunbirds. We can enjoy the vast panoramic sunset over the mountains of neighbouring Malawi and Zambia whilst feasting on exquisite food on the restaurant terrace.

On Day 8 you can either relax on the farm or join us on a visit to the Mporoto Ridge Forest Reserve. We'll take a short (1 hour) but steep climb through forest to the crater's edge with spectacular views over Rungwe Volcano on the ascent. Angola Black and White Colobus (endemic southern highlands race *sharei*), Vervet and Blue Monkeys are frequently seen here. Other small mammals include endemic semi-melanistic races of Tanganika Mountain Squirrel and Chequered Elephant Shrew. Birds common to these montane forests include Paradise Flycatcher, Fuelleborn's Black Boubou, Olive Woodpecker, Livingstone's Turaco, Mountain Buzzard and Crowned Eagle.

Days 9 – 12

Kitulo Plateau National Park

A memorable journey takes us up apparently endless spectacular hairpin bends through Chimala Forest Reserve onto the highland plateau. For the next few days food and accommodation will be basic, however, the food remains wholesome and tasty and the accommodation clean with friendly staff. After lunch on Day 9 we will take the short 30 minute drive to the Park's edge and enjoy watching Buff-

shouldered Widowbirds displaying on the red-hot pokers (*Kniphofia* spp) and tall terrestrial orchids (*Satyrium* spp) of the marshland.

In 2006 Kitulo was the first African park to be gazetted for its floral diversity – arriving there you will find yourself in one of the great flower gardens of the world. It is referred to by the locals as 'Bustani ya Mungu' meaning the 'Garden of God' and known to botanists as the Serengeti of flowers. There are 45 species of *Disa*, *Satyrium* and *Habenaria* orchids in Tanzania, 31 of them are national endemics, with 26 endemic to Kitulo and neighbouring Kipengere and Uporoto.

The area is also recognised by BirdLife International as an Endemic Bird Area. Tanzania's only population of the rare Denham's bustard is found here, alongside a breeding colony of the endangered blue swallow and range-restricted species such as the Njombe *Cisticola* and Kipengere Seedeater. Large mammals are not prolific but small populations of Reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*), Serval and Leopard have been recently recorded. Lion are also known to pass through the park.

During our stay we'll make several rewarding walks inside the national park. A steady days walk following the Matamba ridge reward you with endemic species such as the pretty pink terrestrial orchid *Disa ukingensis*; the striking white and purple iris *Moraea callista* and abundant *Impatiens rosulata*. The ridge is at around 2700m above sea level and is full of botanical bounty however the gentle walk up to it (half an hour without stopping, much longer for us!) reveals all sorts of fine plants blooming in seepages and on the grassy slopes. *Aloe nuttii*, *Protea humifusa*, *Helichrysum tillandsifolium* and several ericaceous shrubs (*Erica mannii*, *Erica silvatica*, *Phyllica emiirnensis*) favour the most exposed rocky ground.

On another day we'll walk on the upper plateau where we'll encounter stunning grassland species such as the red-hot poker *Kniphofia grantii*, delicate pink Angel's fishing rods *Dierama pendulum*, striking red *Crassula alba*, Edelweiss look-a-like *Alepidia swynnertoni*, and *Pentas decora* with its showy white trumpet-like flowers. The Juniper forests of the Numbe Forest Reserve host a number of beautiful forest dependent species such as the terrestrial orchid *Cynorkis kassneriana* and various *Impatiens* spp.

Another steady walk will take us down the Numbe Valley to a waterfall. We'll concentrate on open grassland species such as Parrot-beak gladioli *Gladiolus dalenii*, canary yellow *Morea tanzanica*, sweetly smelling white *Delphinium leroyi* tinged with pink or blue, and the nodding heads of *Clematoptis villosa*. Along the river margins and in marshy areas we'll see the imposing *Lobelia mildbraedii* and orchids from the genera *Satyrium*, *Habenaria* and *Disa*. Particularly striking is the tall yellow orchid *Satyrium sphaeranthum* and the strange looking but sweet smelling green orchid *Habenaria occlusa*. In addition we will find the sundew *Drosera madagascariensis*, the dainty yellow bulb *Xyris obscura*, elegant *Erica whyteana* and the small purple orchid *Cynorkis anacamptoides*. Other attractive species include the everlasting flower *Helichrysum kirkii* which grow in clumps all over the

grassland. In the evening of Day 12 we'll return to the luxury of Utengule in time for dinner.

Day 13

Utengule Coffee Lodge & Mount Rungwe

Today you can either relax on the Utengule Farm or join us on a visit to Mt Rungwe, a dormant volcano that dominates the skyline. It harbours many of the species mentioned on Day 8 for the Mporoto Ridge as well as the newly discovered Highland Mangabey and rare Abbot's Duiker. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in Tanzania have bought part of this forest focusing on the conservation of this shy mangabey. Again there is prolific birdlife within the dense montane forests. For those who fancy a long walk up to the crater rim at around 2500m the forest gives way to heathland and montane grassland.

An optional dusk walk takes us to the Songwe bat caves where six species of bat roost within the limestone caves of the Songwe river valley. At dusk they emerge in their thousands – a spectacular sight.

Day 14

Overnight Express Train back to Dar-es-Salaam

We'll take the Tazara Overnight Express Train back to Dar-es-Salaam in 1st class 4-berth sleeper apartments, departing Mbeya at two in the afternoon. Described as one of the worlds most scenic train journeys this route follows the southern edge of the Udzungwa National Park into the Selous Game Reserve where you are likely to see large herds of Wildebeest, Buffalo and Elephants moving across the vast plains.

Day 15

Arrive in Dar-es-Salaam

We'll pull into Dar's main station at midday and transfer directly to the Mediterraneo Hotel where you can relax for the afternoon, explore the city, go snorkelling out at Bongoyo Island or just birdwatch along the coast.

Day 16

Return to UK

If you would like to ask about any aspect of this holiday, please call 01298 83563 or email us at enquiries@greentours.co.uk.