

## Southern Tanzania

### A Greentours Itinerary

#### Days 1 & 2

##### Dar-es-Salaam

We'll arrive late evening or early 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 some good 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.

#### Days 3 & 4(am)

##### 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 and/or Land Rovers 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 Vuma Hills Tented camp in Mikumi National Park for lunch. We will take an afternoon safari where Buffalo, Elephant, Gazelle, Zebra, Baboon, Giraffe and Warthog are all commonly seen. 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. In the evening, frequent visitors to the lodge include species such as Honey Badger, porcupine, civet and genet.

#### Days 4(pm) - 6

##### Udzungwa National Park

After an early morning safari and lunch back at the camp we'll continue to Udzungwa National Park, two hours southwest of Mikumi. 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 Kipunji (*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. Although most forest dwelling mammals other than primates are rarely seen, elephants can often be seen eating mangos around camp and a resident leopard is also often heard.

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, however both are rarely seen. 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 mwanihanae* 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 *Parkia filicoidea*, *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 excelar* 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 cannot miss the distinctive cry of the Trumpeter Hornbills and screeching of the Crowned Eagles. Continuing up above Sanje Falls we 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 *Rungwecerbis 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 and bats. Night walks are also a great way of spotting chameleons, several of which are again endemic to Udzungwa!

## **Day 7**

### **Baobab Valley & River Valley, Iringa**

On route to River Valley, 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.

After lunch in Baobab Valley we will gain altitude and enter the Southern Highlands proper, arriving at River valley late afternoon, in time for bird watching along the river and botanising in surrounding grasslands. The night flowering *Savannosiphon euryphyllus*, pollinated by moths, is a highlight.

## **Days 8**

### **Iringa and Isimila Stone-age Site**

After a leisurely morning bird watching/botanizing we will make our way to the attractive town of Iringa, nestled amongst granite boulder strewn hills. Here we have lunch at Neema Crafts and Café which is run by deaf and disabled staff.

After lunch we visit Isimila, a 200,000 year old Stone Age site and associated museum. An excellent circular walk also uncovers a surprisingly impressive gorge filled with sandstone pinnacles capped with basalt and many interesting plants.

Finally, we make our way to Kisolanza Farm where we will stay for the next two nights. 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. 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 9**

### **Kisolanza Farm and Sao Hill wetlands**

Breakfast on the veranda at Kisolanza is a very good way to start the day, especially preceded by an early morning birding walk around the farm. We then take a short walk down to the reservoir to find the resident clawless otter, water birds and plants and then wander back to the restaurant for more culinary delights.

In the afternoon we visit the edges of the Sao Hill wetland where we are introduced to the vast array of terrestrial orchids that inhabit the highlands. *This is also a good spot for montane marsh widow birds and malachite sunbirds.* A tour of the farm can be arranged for those who fancy just relaxing around Kisolanza instead.

## **Days 10 – 12**

### **Kitulo Plateau National Park**

A memorable journey takes us up on to the plateau, passing through the Mpanga-Kipengere Game Reserve with views back over the Lugala escarpment, pointed

volcanic peaks, all covered in Miombo woodland. We will have a picnic lunch next to the Little Ruaha River and will then arrive in Matamba Village midafternoon, in time for an explore and perhaps a bit of material shopping, for those that way inclined!

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.

Each day 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 welwitschii*; 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. 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.

### **Day 13**

#### **Utengule Coffee Lodge & Lungi Farm**

Moving west to Mbeya, with spectacular views out towards Lake Malawi on the way, we'll head to the Utengule Coffee Lodge in time for lunch. This will be our 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.

After an afternoon of bird watching at the base of Lungi Peak, around Lungi coffee farm, we can enjoy the vast panoramic sunset over the mountains of neighbouring Malawi and Zambia whilst feasting on good food on the restaurant terrace.

### **Day 14**

#### **Mporoto Ridge Forest Reserve/Ngozi Crater.**

We'll take a short but steep climb through forest to the craters edge with spectacular views over Rungwe Volcano on the ascent. Angola Black and White Colobus (endemic southern highlands race *sharpei*) and Blue Monkeys are often heard/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. The flowers are however the highlight and include orange *Crocasmia aurea*, purple *Streptocarpus sp* and the handsome pinky-purple orchid *Calanthe sylvatica*.

For those who prefer a more leisurely day then a visit to 'Daraja ya Mungu' meaning the 'Bridge of God' can be organized. It is a natural bridge crossing the Kiriwa River, thought to have been formed around 1800 million years ago by water flowing through cooling lava that spewed out from the nearby Rungwe volcano.

### **Day 15**

#### **Utengule Nature Reserve, Flight to Dar-es-Salaam and departure**

We will spend the morning enjoying the wildlife immediately around the lodge. After lunch we will head to the newly opened Mbeya Airport to begin our journey home. Depending on the timing of the evening flights from Dar there may be time to enjoy a drink and snacks on the roof top terrace of the Kilimanjaro Hotel in town.

**Day16**  
**Arrive UK/Europe**

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