Tanzania and the Serengeti Plains

FEBRUARY 25 – MARCH 13, 2019

Travel these wild African plains to discover a state of being where glorious nature can rejuvenate and inspire the hungriest of human souls.
The Serengeti ecosystem is arguably one of the greatest wildlife areas in the world. Here, in an annual spectacle unmatched on the planet, 1.5 million wildebeests, 200,000 plains zebras and 250,000 Thomson’s gazelles drift back and forth across the African savannah in search of the vital green flush of grass that follows the seasonal rains. In February each year, these life-giving rains transform the southern Serengeti in Tanzania into verdant grassland and the great herds gather there to give birth to a new generation. In the short span of a few weeks, half a million wobbly wildebeest calves struggle to gain their balance in the tenuous first minutes of life. We will be there to witness this breathtaking natural wonder.

With the newborns come the uninvited dinner guests: lithe tawny lions, fleet-footed cheetahs, rapacious hyenas, cunning jackals and hungry vultures. Add to this wilderness marvel scores of multi-coloured birds, silhouettes of umbrella acacia trees, the boisterous bellowing of water-loving hippos, and the star-littered night skies and you have the ingredients for a life-altering experience. In this extraordinary setting, it feels as if little has changed since humankind’s distant ancestors strode across a fresh field of volcanic ash leaving us a fossilized signature of their passage. When you travel these wild African plains you discover a state of being where glorious nature can rejuvenate and inspire the hungriest of human souls.
Itinerary

FEB. 25 – 27  Depart Calgary for the overnight journey to Tanzania. Arrive in the lush, green city of Arusha, Tanzania at a comfortable altitude of 1300 meters, slightly higher than that of Calgary.

FEB. 28  After breakfast we will travel to Arusha, National Park. We spend our day at leisure to recover from jet lag and savor the easy pace of the pleasant surroundings. Explore the beautiful hotel grounds, bird watch or take a relaxing dip in the pool, all while you enjoy great views of Mount Meru, it is Tanzania’s second-highest mountain after Kilimanjaro.

MARCH 1 – 2  We travel west in private safari vehicles to beautiful baobab studded Tarangire National Park. Explore this wildlife-rich preserve in morning and afternoon game drives. In the dry season the shrunken Tarangire River is the only water for many kilometers around. The promise of moisture lures a multitude of wildlife to the river’s edge. Clusters of elephants, buffalo, kudu, oryx, and eland crowd the shrinking pools. The park is the one place in Tanzania where dry-country antelope such as the fringe-eared oryx and the elegant long-necked gerenuk are regularly seen. As well, Tarangire’s famous lions climb trees as do its leopards, lounging in the branches of a sausage tree, their presence only betrayed by the nervous twitch of a tail. Some say Tarangire is the best bird watching destination in the country with over 550 species reported including colorful hornbills, kingfishers, rollers, and dazzling flocks of yellow-collared lovebirds.

MARCH 3 – 5  Explore Ngorongoro Crater. Stay in a luxury lodge on the crater’s rim and each day descend 600 meters to the floor of the caldera. During the descent green candelabra trees give way to the familiar acacias of the African plains. The relatively small crater, just 260 square kilometers, is a wildlife Garden of Eden packed with 30,000 animals. Unlike wildlife in the neighboring Serengeti, the animals in Ngorongoro do not migrate because water is plentiful in the crater year-round. Enjoy large herds of buffalo and sizeable numbers of hartebeest, eland and waterbuck. Ngorongoro is one of the few places in Africa where black rhinos can still be seen. Among the predators, there are prides of black-maned lions, as well as cheetahs, leopards, hyenas and jackals. Lake Magadi in the center of the crater is home to flamingos feeding on the algae-rich waters and elegant crowned cranes as well as a multitude of other bird species.

MARCH 6 – 9  We enjoy morning and evening game drives to savour the abundance of wildlife in the Ndutu area of the Serengeti ecosystem. Ndutu is in the heart of the short grassy plains where the great herds gather to give birth. The wildebeest birthing season is hard to describe—the numbers, the noise, the smells, the commotion—that combine to imbue the experience with the enthralling drama and gravity of life on the African savannah. On one of the days, travel to Olduvai Gorge where the legendary archeologists, Drs. Mary and Louis Leakey, found hominid remains of Homo habilis, and Homo erectus. The gorge is described as one of the most important paleoanthropological sites in the world and has been instrumental in understanding early human evolution.

MARCH 10 – 11  Travel deeper into the Serengeti ecosystem to explore Serengeti National Park. Unlike the open grassy plains of the Ndutu area, here the savannah is dotted with acacia woodlands. In morning and afternoon game drives, continue to discover the differing niches of the grass-eaters and those that prey upon them. The Serengeti is second to none in providing visitors with intimate views of wild Africa, and as Tennyson aptly described “Nature, red in tooth and claw.” Capture the sorts of African images, with your memory and your camera that documentaries are made of.

MARCH 12  Return to Arusha for the return flight home.

MARCH 13  Arrive home.

Accompanying Instructor

Dr. Wayne Lynch is an internationally-recognized naturalist, science writer and professional wildlife photographer. His photo credits include hundreds of magazine covers, thousands of calendar shots, and tens of thousands of images published in over 60 countries. He is also a popular guest speaker, and audiences worldwide applaud his practical and entertaining approach to natural history. As well, he is the author and photographer of over 50 natural history books for children, young adults and adults. He is an elected fellow of the Explorers Club and the Arctic Institute of North America, and his biography has been included in the Canadian Who’s Who, published by the University of Toronto, since 1996. Wayne has made over two dozen trips to the Serengeti. He has planned and accompanied trips for Continuing Education to Brazil, Namibia, Arctic Norway, Kenya, Boreal Canada and Ecuador’s Galapagos Islands.

Photos courtesy of Dr. Wayne Lynch
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### Personal information

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**DATE OF BIRTH (MM/DD/YYYY)**

**HOME PHONE**

**WORK PHONE**

**CELL PHONE**

**ADDRESS**

**EMAIL**

**FAX**

**OFFICIAL NAME (As it appears on your passport):**

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Final payment and a non-refundable deposit of $500 must accompany this registration. Remit by credit card, cheque or money order in Canadian funds payable to University of Calgary.

- [ ] CHEQUE ENCLOSED
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