

Topdeck

EAST AFRICAN EXPLORER 21 DAY



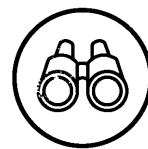
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TOPDECKER, meet Non-Commissionable

What could be better than sand, sun and safari? If you're looking to combine a beach getaway with once-in-a-lifetime wildlife encounters, then this all-encompassing African adventure will suit you more than a pith hat suits a park ranger. Relax on tropical island Zanzibar and recline on Lake Malawi's beaches, before getting up close and personal to the famed 'Big Five' at the Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Crater. Good times, guaranteed.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Explorer

20

Nights



Download app

53

Meals

Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on...

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

IMPORTANT: please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.



YOUR ITINERARY



AWESOME
TRIP
LEADER

DAY 1 | LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA TO LUSAKA

This morning we make the most of our time in adventure-loving Livingstone and visit the thundering Victoria Falls themselves. At over a mile wide and some 100 metres deep in high water, the falls form the largest curtain of falling water in the world with spray visible from 20 kilometres away - hence the local name Mosi au Tunya ('smoke that thunders'). Later today, we make tracks for Zambia's urban metropolis, Lusaka. A commercial hub and centre for the government, Lusaka is home to dusty tree-lined streets, soviet looking buildings and bustling local markets that ooze African flair. Our campsite for the evening is set in a tranquil and relaxing spot on a farm, far from the hustle and bustle of the city.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 2 | LUSAKA TO SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK

We leave early and take the Great Eastern Road through lush countryside and small villages, crossing the Luangwa River to the South Luangwa National Park. This area of outstanding natural beauty is rightly known as one of the greatest wildlife sanctuaries in the world. The concentration of animals around the Luangwa River and its oxbow lagoons is among the most intense in Africa. On arrival we set up camp and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure to enjoy the many activities on offer, from walking safaris, night game drives and village walks.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 3 | SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK

What better way to start the day than with a morning game drive along the river's edge to see the abundance of animal and birdlife inhabiting the area? After the game drive, take advantage of The Warthogs Bar and swimming pool (which is the best place to cool off during the hot hours of the day) and the many activities on offer that you may have missed the day before.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Village tour
- Walking safari
- Game drive

DAY 4 | SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK TO KANDE BEACH MALAWAI

Leaving Zambia behind, we cross the border to Malawi stopping at the capital, Lilongwe, before taking the eastern road to Lake Malawi. Formally known as 'Lake Nyasa', Lake Malawi covers almost a fifth of the country's area and provides the livelihood for many of the Malawi people. Fishermen, fish traders, canoe and net makers all ply their trade on its shores, so expect to see fishermen in their bwato (dugout canoe made from hollowed out tree trunk) fishing on the lake at the break of day. We arrive at camp on the lake's shore in the afternoon and have the rest of the day to swim and explore the beach and surrounding area.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Horse riding
- Village walk

DAY 5 | KANDE BEACH

While here, try some of the watersports typically available, take part in some optional horse riding or just relax by the lakeside and go for a dip in its warm waters anytime the need arises. It's also worth taking the time to get to know some of the locals, often regarded as amongst the friendliest in Africa, to gain an insight into their way of life. Please note: Although we do our best to adhere to the campsites described in this itinerary, the crew may need to make some alterations to the itinerary published here.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Horse riding
- Village walk

DAY 6 | KANDE BEACH TO CHITIMBA BEACH

We take a scenic drive through rubber plantations to Mzuzu, the capital of the northern region and the third largest town in Malawi, where we stop for a short while to grab supplies and check out the markets before arriving at Chitimba Beach for the next two nights.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 7 | CHITIMBA BEACH

Enjoy time on the beach or shop at a large curios market, where you can test your bargaining skills and buy some of Malawi's famous ornate carved chairs. Alternatively, take an optional hike to Manchewe Falls or embark on the Chihanga walk with a local guide. These trails are beautifully serene, but can take up to ten hours so be sure to rest up beforehand!



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Livingstone day hike

DAY 8 | CHITIMBA BEACH TO IRINGA, TANZANIA

Leaving Chitimba Beach, we travel the short distance north to cross the border into Tanzania. We steadily climb through Tanzania's Southern Highlands all the way to Kisolanza Farm House. This farm is at an altitude of 1,600 metres, ensuring a pleasantly fresh climate in one of the most scenic areas of Tanzania. Home to the Ghaui family for over 70 years, Kisolanza remains a working farm, which provides organic meat (beef, lamb and chicken) and vegetables to the surrounding markets as well as further afield in Dar es Salaam. The farmhouse is famous for its hot showers, chocolate brownies and hot chocolate that can be bought from a quaint, candlelit bar. Note: time to indulge!



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 9 | IRINGA TO MIKUMI NATIONAL PARK AREA

Today we make our way east to Mikumi National Park. This evening we'll sip sundowners at the local bar before gathering around the open fire and stargazing at our camp, which is just a stone's throw away from the park.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 10 | MIKUMI NATIONAL PARK TO DAR ES SALAAM

With luck, we may spot forest elephants or giraffes feeding near the side of the road on our way to Dar es Salaam. 'Dar' is Tanzania's hub of commerce and industry, and is a hot, humid and bustling seaport city of high rises, colourful markets and Arabesque architecture. We set up camp at our site on the beach just outside of the city centre, usually having time to browse the local markets (best known for ebony wood carvings) and prepare for our own trip to Zanzibar.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 11 | DAR ES SALAAM TO ZANZIBAR

Today we ferry across to the magical 'Spice Island' of Zanzibar to spend three blissful nights. Discover the island's idyllic, palm-fringed beaches, winding cobbled alleys and lush tropical forests, as well as its intriguing history as a major trading centre for spices. For centuries, Zanzibaris would trade with the people of the Arabian Peninsula and ply the ocean in simple dhow sailboats, relying on the annual trade winds for passage. The Arab influence is evident in the architecture and diverse street stall offerings of the capital, Stone Town, so keep your eyes peeled when wandering the city's historic pathways. The next four days are on your own watch, so spend your time exploring at your own pace. Please note: As we leave the truck on the mainland, basic safari lodge/hotel accommodation and breakfast on Zanzibar is included. However, lunches and dinners are your own to arrange. We usually divide our nights here between accommodation in Stone Town and accommodation on one of the northern beaches, but there are no set activities - the time is entirely yours to do as you please.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Spice tour
- Visit a former slave market site
- Visit the Arabic Fort
- Visit the Palace Museum

DAY 12 | ZANZIBAR

Awake to another day in this dreamlike haven. If it's white sand, a sparkling ocean and hot sun you're after, head to the northern beaches and enjoy the Indian Ocean at its best. Try your hand at snorkelling and diving, indulge in some sumptuous seafood, or simply relax beneath a coconut palm with a cocktail and a good book.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Spice tour
- Scuba diving
- Visit Mnemba Island
- Dhow snorkeling safari
- Massage

DAY 13 | ZANZIBAR

Variety is the spice of life, and on Zanzibar island, spices are abundant. Embark on a day tour to the nearby spice plantations and have your senses dazzled by the tastes and scents that infiltrate the air.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Spice tour
- Scuba diving
- Visit Mnemba Island
- Dhow snorkeling safari
- Massage

DAY 14 | ZANZIBAR

Don your comfiest walking attire and set out to explore Stone Town on foot. Get lost in the labyrinth of laneways at the bazaars and marvel at the array of ancient maritime trinkets, vibrant fabrics and ornate wooden carvings. Be sure to pay a visit to the city's mosques, palaces, courtyards and alleyways for a living history lesson of this fascinating island.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Spice tour
- Scuba diving
- Visit Mnemba Island
- Dhow snorkelling safari
- Massage

DAY 15 | ZANZIBAR TO DAR ES SALAAM

Time to bid farewell to this picture-perfect paradise. Sneak in some last-minute shopping or relish one last dip, before catching the ferry back to Dar on the African mainland. Tonight, our campsite on the coast awaits.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

DAY 16 | DAR ES SALAAM TO MARANGU

Departing early from Dar es Salaam, we head north past the Usambara and Pare Mountains in the Eastern Arc Mountain Range to Marangu, nestled at the base of the famed Kilimanjaro. The camp takes its name from the surrounding area ('Marangu' means 'full of water' in the local Chagga language, and the lush green surroundings demonstrate the truth of this). If the weather is clear we will gain a view of the magnificent snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 17 | MARANGU TO ARUSHA

Passing through the town of Moshi, we eventually reach Arusha, a bustling melting pot of markets, vehicles and some two million people, all nestled in the shadow of the brooding Mt Meru. With time to explore town, we head out to our camp just outside the city at the edge of the Masai plains. This afternoon, we take a walk to one of the local Maasai villages - inspecting a local school and clinic, a small but hugely interesting Maasai museum, and the snake enclosure at the Meserani Snake Park (if you dare!). It's from here that we will prepare for our included two night/three day excursion to the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Crater.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 18 | ARUSHA TO SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK & NGORONGORO CRATER

This morning calls for a vehicle change-up. We hit the road in a more game park-friendly option and drive west across the Great Rift Valley, entering the Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area. Just try not to drop your jaw as we pass into the park and cruise around the crater rim and down onto the Serengeti plains. Lush and green after the rains and a burnt hue in dry weather, this spectacular landscape is home to an enormous variety of grazing animals, predators and birdlife. Flatter and larger than the Maasai Mara, the Serengeti is simply huge. In fact, the name derives from the Maasai word Siringitu ('the place where the land moves on forever'). We drive to our designated (but unfenced) campsite for the evening for an unforgettable back-to-nature experience.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 19 | SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK & NGORONGORO CRATER

Spend the morning game driving out of the plains, and then ascend the outer wall of the Ngorongoro Crater (after a well-deserved lunch, of course). Pack your warmest jacket, as tonight we camp on the rim of the crater where wildlife also gallivant. At 326 square kilometres in area, the Ngorongoro Crater is Africa's largest intact caldera and a World Heritage Site. If you think the view from the rim at 2,400 metres above sea level is spectacular, the site from the crater floor some 600 metres below will be equally mind-blowing.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 20 | SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK & NGORONGORO CRATER

On the final day of the excursion we descend down the steep dirt road of the Ngorongoro Crater for a morning of game driving. Keep your eye out for all the major mammals - except the towering giraffes, which struggle to manage the steep slopes leading down onto the crater floor. After our game drive, we ascend to our campsite on the rim for a final view over the Ngorongoro Crater, and then pack up our camp and enjoy lunch before retracing our steps to our campsite in Arusha.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 21 | SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK & NGORONGORO CRATER TO NAIROBI, KENYA

After a final night at camp, we make our way across the Maasai Steppe to the Kenyan frontier. Completing formalities at Namanga border post, we drive the last stretch of road to Nairobi, Kenya's capital, where our amazing tour of Africa sadly ends. Until next time!



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch

MEALS

Your included meals are detailed in the 'Included Essentials' section of this document.

While on the road, you will be provided with three meals a day (unless otherwise stated). African Overland trips are participation based, which means you will be expected to do your bit for the team by helping with cooking and cleaning up duties. In some places, we will be able to go out for a meal.

If you have any dietary requirements, we'll make every effort to cater to your needs – as long as you advise your travel agent or Customer Service Consultant when you book. You can also make a note of dietary requirements in the Topdeck app when you check-in.

PLEASE NOTE: Although we'll do everything in our power to cater to your needs, we cannot guarantee this will be possible in every restaurant we visit. We also cannot cater for tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

OTHER INFORMATION

TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



YOUR SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER: if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!

- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

RESPECT ON THE ROAD

RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it! (As long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is.)

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 rainproof jacket
- 1 warm jacket
- Underwear and socks

- Swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Insect repellent
- Conversion plug
- Padlock
- Reusable water bottle
- Sleeping bag (for all camping and Sun & Safari passengers)



THAT'S IT!