

Karibu,

after having traveled mainly in south-east asia, the Caribbean and a few african countries, I wanted to share with my wife an experience I had made alone 15 years earlier: a Safari.

My first Safari in South Africa had left me with mixed feelings, so I was looking for a place my wife and I could enjoy for our 3rd wedding anniversary, the real thing, and where else could I have taken her, than to the origins of the word Safari (Maasai word for *travel*), to the origins of Mankind, northern Tanzania. Along the sound of names like Kilimanjaro (the top of Africa), Ngorongoro Crater (said to be the 8th wonder of the world), Serengeti, Olduvai Gorge and Maasai made it an easy decision. So off we went to discover what turned out to be yet another magic place.

On our arrival at Kilimanjaro airport we were greeted by our Maasai guide and our Safari took us from Arusha to Manyara National Park with its lake and thousands of birds, on through the Ngorongoro Conservation Area where the Maasai breed their cattle freely in a luxuriant surrounding and into the Crater with its 360° breathtaking view and my first ever sighting of a Black Rhino. Then we went to follow the migrating Wildebeests in the Serengeti (Maasai word for *great plain without end*).

To my surprise this Safari was to be very different from what I had experienced in the South African bush: here no difficulty to spot the animals, no bush to hide behind and herds of thousands if not millions of Wildebeests, their always present Zebra companions, Gazelles and Buffalos.

As we went deeper into the Serengeti the scene changed: Lions dozing on the Kopjes (occasional rock formations), Giraffes, Elephants, Thomson- and Impala Gazelles all over the place and even the elusive Leopard were at the rendezvous, not to mention the multitude of birds and smaller mammals that we were discovering every day. At lunchtime we were sharing the shade with five young Cheetah males and in the evening, in our tents in the middle of nowhere we listened to the sounds of the night that once turned out to be a herd of about 40 Elephants passing almost silently through our campsite, we couldn't have come closer to nature than that.

But what really made the difference was our guide: a tall and friendly Maasai talking at least 5 languages with a profound knowledge of his people and environment. As the Safari went on we began to get more interested in his culture, and well into our 10 day Safari an idea began to emerge in my mind: what if I could realize my long buried dream at last; what if this was not to be a one shot trip; could there be a way to continue this wonderful experience and give others the chance to live what were enjoying so much? But our Safari had by now reached its end and having briefly talked to our guide about my dream, our ways had to part ... for the time being.

Back home, I started to gather information, and stayed in touch with our Guide who's idea was to create a tanzanian company, so the local economy would benefit from our enterprise. To me that made sense in the way that involving the local population would greatly contribute to the preservation of wildlife, and give them a responsibility to preserve their environment while benefiting from it.

A few weeks later at a family gathering, I talked about my project to my Uncle who had been traveling in East Africa with his Volkswagen in 1961. He told me how he arrived at Hardy Krügers farm in the middle of the shooting of "Hatari" thus having to sleep next to the ruins of the German farmhouse in the Ngorongoro Crater. The best friend of my father, a Pastor also told me he had spent a lot of time in Arusha and Moshi in the 70's and how he had enjoyed it there. All seemed to come together. Over the next few months my dream turned into a common project with our guide, who in the meantime had become a dear friend and five months later **Wildlife Guides of Tanzania** was finally seeing the day.

On reflection our discovery of Tanzania had become more of a human encounter with its extremely welcoming people and especially the Maasai, than just a photo Safari.

This is what we'd like to offer you: not only a mind blowing surrounding but also the discovery of a welcoming people, one of true tradition and in direct contact with their environment.

All our guides are truly experienced Maasai, they know and love their country like no other.

They will make your Safari a unique experience and we hope to share with you our passion: unspoiled nature and friendly people.

Frank M Hinrichs, cofounder & Director of **Wildlife Guides of Tanzania** 2008