

# THE HEMINGWAY WING SAFARI

14 days | Departs Tuesday, returns Monday

Such is Africa's allure: that a bright fellow like Hemingway would lie in his tent, homesick before he'd even parted from a place that had come to seem more like home than home itself. We're told these days to stick to the *now*, and the *here*, but Hemingway—like many of us lovers of Africa—knew that sometimes you can't micromanage your passions.

The *Hemingway Wing Safari*—a cherished favourite of Micato staff—is a tribute, not only to Africa's tendency to grab hold of our hearts, but also to the old-fashioned and cozy safaris of Hemingway's time, with three tented camps (a little more luxurious than in Ernest's day, but he was never one to avoid intelligently offered luxury), good looks at East Africa's most legendary game parks (and a couple of lesser-known gems), and five swooping flights that bring us into great intimacy with Africa's landscapes.

*All I wanted to do now  
was get back to Africa.  
We had not left it, yet, but  
when I would wake in the  
night I would lie, listening,  
homesick for it already.*

—Ernest Hemingway,  
*Green Hills of Africa*





Migration Camp

DAY 1 *En route*

DAYS 2 & 3 *Nairobi*

We'll be met by our Micato Safari Director and whisked away to a place Hemingway spent many Hemingwayesque hours, the Fairmont Norfolk Hotel. We'll visit the Giraffe Centre and the illuminating National Museum, pay our respects at the newly renovated home of Karen Blixen (who, Hemingway said more than once, should have received the Nobel Prize for literature instead of him). And we'll have a welcoming lunch or dinner at Lavington, the home of Micato's founders, the renowned storytellers Felix and Jane Pinto.

DAYS 4 & 5 *Samburu National Reserve*

We fly 200-plus miles north to the Samburu, in many ways the embodiment of the Africa we've been carrying around in our imagination since we were children (it was the home, for instance, of Elsa the lioness, of *Born Free* fame). Nurtured by the Ewaso Nyiro River, the Samburu is rugged, calmly inviting, and enveloped in the air of remote Old Africa, scented by acacia.

Our camp in the Samburu is a classic: Larsens Camp, set in the riverine forest of the Ewaso Nyiro, much frequented by friendly elephants, whose meanderings we can watch in comfort from the verandas of our airy, superbly designed tents.\* Game drives out of Larsens introduce us to the Samburu's sometimes almost shocking plentitude of large (and cunningly small) mammals, who are just the headliners in a fabulous cast of very natural, very intriguing characters. (Some travellers, having seen and appreciated the Big Five, begin a more difficult search for the Little Five, whose identities we will divulge a little east of here, in *Tanzania Spectacular*.)

\* We remember seeing elephants bathing and frolicking in the Ewaso Nyiro. One group spends ten or so minutes, then clambers up the red dirt bank, politely giving way to the next group.

*There is no feeling like being absolutely alone with creation . . . with nothing spoiled or sullied or abused. . . . A whole world revolves in balance with itself more perfect than the finest symphony.*

—Elspeth Huxley, *The Mottled Lizard*



DAYS 6 & 7 *The Maasai Mara*

South by air to the Maasai Mara, the northern reaches of the Serengeti–Maasai Mara ecosystem, earth’s richest wildlife habitat. Our base for explorations in the fabled Mara is the Fairmont Mara Safari Club, recently voted among the Top 20 in *Travel+Leisure’s* consequential *World’s Best Hotels* list.

Surrounded on three sides by the life-giving Mara River, the Mara Safari Club is a masterpiece of appropriate and generously luxurious design. And it’s a great jumping-off place for extraordinary game drives in the mixed land- and waterscapes of the Mara. We’ll visit a traditional Maasai village as we wend our way through this natural wonderland, the kind of place that moved Hemingway to write, “I loved this country and I felt at home and where a man feels at home, outside of where he’s born, is where he’s meant to go.”

DAYS 8 & 9 *The Serengeti*

“How can one convey the power of Serengeti?” asked Cyril Connolly in *The Evening Colonnade*. “It is an immense, limitless lawn, under a marquee of sky. . . . The light is dazzling, the air delectable; kopjes rise out of the grass at far intervals, some wooded; the magic of the American prairie here blends with the other magic of the animals as they existed before man.”

The Serengeti sometimes does remind us of the American prairie, but in truth it can’t be compared with any other place on earth. Its kopje-dotted landscape, its vast and billowing skies, and especially its astounding wealth of wildlife make it one-of-a-gorgeous-kind. Flying via Nairobi and Arusha, we reach our base, Migration Camp, on the hippo-haven Grumeti River. Known for its superb tents (which, one traveller wrote, “have only one thing in common with normal tents: canvas”) and its dramatic setting in rocky outcrops, Migration Camp is revered for its tranquility (something of a Serengeti specialty).



*The amazing thing was that your staff acted as though we were the only people in the world and that all their efforts were on our behalf. We were pampered. They were unbelievably caring and helpful. As we moved from place to place, we realized that everyone with Micato is caring and helpful. We were entertained, instructed, educated, and advanced along the way by the nicest group of guides and drivers that we could ever imagine.*

—Bill and Lee Shewry



#### DAYS 10 & 11 *Ngorongoro Crater*

Some of us may wish to visit the Olduvai Gorge before heading to one of the earth's wonders, the great, green, animal-nurturing caldera of a once catastrophically cranky, now beneficently mellow volcano, the Ngorongoro.

We're up a little in elevation here on the mammoth crater's rim, in Vail and Aspen altitudes of well over 7,000 feet, and our luxurious and imaginative cabins of Exploreans Ngorongoro Lodge are just an exhilarating drive from the lush and almost park-like floor (but which, make no mistake, is an animal, not a human, kingdom). Being up that high, figuratively and actually, we may recall Isak Dinesen's words in *Out of Africa*, "The air of the African highlands went to my head like wine, I was all the time slightly drunk with it."

#### DAY 12 *Lake Manyara*

Our guy Ernest Hemingway thought Manyara "the loveliest lake in Africa," and, based from our private chalets at the Lake Manyara Escarpment Lodge, regally perched on a cliff, we'll have some tranquil time here to find out why. The lake is a birder's heaven (it's frequented by 300 migratory avians), and the water from its Crater Highlands-supplied springs makes it a forested redoubt for all the most glamorous large mammals, including the famed Manyara tree-climbing lions. (It's a little irreverent, but *tree-lounging* might be a better description.)\*

\* "Not enough birds in the brochure!" said an old Africa hand after we showed him the manuscript. "Lilac-breasted rollers are among the most beautiful sights I've seen in Africa, anywhere, anytime. And I was mesmerized once watching a kingfisher power-dive into a river several times in succession, and when he came up with a fish in his beak on the third try, three of us broke into applause spontaneously."



#### DAYS 13 & 14 *Nairobi and homeward bound*

After a last morning in the bush, we fly to Nairobi, where we'll rest up in day rooms at the Norfolk before our late evening flights.