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— TRANSFORMING DREAMS INTO MEMORIES —

17 Day African Splendor – The Beauty of Life



17 days Departs Wednesday, returns Friday

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We're not sure why, but great journeys often involve great contrasts. *African Splendor* is a case in point. We range through 34 degrees of latitude and four countries, but, most

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engagingly and contrastingly, we experience the diverse excitements of Cape Town's urban pizzazz, the watery colossus of Victoria Falls, and the wondrous game lands of the Serengeti–Maasai Mara ecosystem, where the wandering rains compel the planet's most momentous movement of big, interesting mammals. (And then there's the Ngorongoro Crater, which really can't be contrasted with any other place, because there really isn't any other place remotely like it, at least on our home planet.)

17 Day Africa Itinerary: Cape Town To Nairobi



Day 1 En-Rout USA: USA – Cape Town

Day 2-4 Arrival Africa: USA – Capetown - Environ

After a late afternoon or early evening arrival in South Africa's second-largest and most scenic and snazzy city, we'll settle into Cape Town's grande dame hotel, the pink, very pretty, much-loved Mount Nelson.

Nelly, as it's affectionately known, lies in the centre of City Bowl, the rocky natural amphitheatre that embraces old Cape Town. During our two full days we'll make an

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excursion to the area's famed Cape Winelands, lunching at an estate and strolling through one of the Winelands' charming villages (whose names highlight their Dutch heritage: Stellenbosch, Paarl, Franschhoek).

We'll visit Cape Point Nature Reserve and, a little farther south, the Cape of Good Hope. And we'll take the Aerial Cableway to the top of 3,500-foot Table Mountain, centre stage of Cape Town's amazing amphitheatre, getting a feel for why in 1503 António de Saldanha, the first European to visit the Cape, scrambled up Table Mountain as soon as he could: for the huge, informative views and very much for the sheer grandeur.

Day 5-6 Africa: Capetown – Environ – Victoria Falls

A lovely flight northward delivers us to Victoria Falls, *Mosi-oa-Tunya*, "The Smoke That Thunders," not the highest or the widest but the world's grandest and most booming waterfall, a large lakesworth of water flinging itself 360 feet straight down every minute of every day, right before our delighted eyes.

We have a couple of days to appreciate the Falls' subtly shifting moods.

We'll cruise on the Zambezi River, watching elephants and giraffes enjoying their own sundowners, we'll helicopter over the Falls on the Flight of Angels, and we'll wander from one misty vantage point to another, returning for sustenance and leisure to our magnificent Royal Livingstone Hotel in Livingstone, Zambia, named for the almost mythic explorer David Livingstone.*

*In early November, 1855, Livingstone had noticed the Falls' rising mist from many miles away, and when he finally came upon the great cataract, he was so moved that for the first and only time in his 32 years in Africa he "vandalized" nature, as he later wrote, carving his initials on a tree, as if to verify to himself that he had actually seen such a sight as Victoria Falls.

Day 7 Africa: Victoria Falls – Johannesburg

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We fly south from Zambia and Victoria Falls to Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, where we'll take up quarters at the Fairlawns Boutique Hotel & Spa, whose palatial suites set amongst rolling gardens and secluded courtyards are a favourite of Europe's royals.

Day 8 Africa: Johannesburg - Nairobi

A just-over-four-hour flight takes us north to Nairobi—long enough to get thoroughly engrossed in Beryl Markham's great flying/safari memoir *West with the Night*, perhaps. Markham spent her share of time hobnobbing at the famed Norfolk Hotel, but then again, so has just about everybody of note in Nairobi's history, including, as of today: us.

Day 9 Africa: Nairobi - Lake Manyara

Africa is blessed with epic lakes (Tanganyika is the world's second deepest; all the Rift Lakes are gigantic stunners),* but many, including Ernest Hemingway, consider the smaller gem of Lake Manyara—with its diamond-white alkali rim, its million or so coralcolored flamingos, and the deep sapphire waters at its centre—the loveliest of all.

We'll arrive at the lake and the Escarpment Luxury Lodge via Arusha, Tanzania, and settle in to a fine afternoon of game viewing (many tree-climbing lions frequent the lake's Africaembodying scrublands, mahogany forests, and bird-thronged marshlands) followed by a pleasant bush dinner. Tomorrow, before heading out for the Lost World of the Ngorongoro Crater, we'll have time for a guided bush walk in the sweet lakeside morning.

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Escarpment Luxury Lodge

lake manyara, tanzania

Situated on the edge of the Great Rift's slowly receding wall, overlooking the spectacular lake—which Ernest Hemingway considered the most beautiful in Africa—where masses of pink flamingos flock, the Escarpment Luxury Lodge features spacious chalets spread out over its gardeny grounds. Each chalet has a large bedroom and separate lounge, leather sofas, canopied beds, a deep soaking tub, indoor and outdoor showers, and a vastly viewful private deck.

Day 10-11 Africa: **Lake Manyara - Ngorongoro Crater**



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We've got a lot of affection for Ngorongoro, and we attempt to do it justice on pages 70, 76, 81, 93, and 99. In case you'd prefer not to scramble around this brochure at the moment, here's the essence of the crater's tremendous charisma: 25,000 or so large and very viewable mammals—from apex predators to galumphing hippos—inhabit the crater's 100-square-mile floor, and zigzagging up the old volcano's forested wall to its rim (where we'll happily check into the Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge), and gazing for the first or fifth time at the lush lands and their inhabitants in the crater below, is a *great* moment in any traveler's life.



Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge

ngorongoro, tanzania

Also set on the crater's rim, Sopa is an architectural marvel. Its suites include a large solarium overlooking the crater, and the lodge's overall design reflects the vastness of the Africa bush; huge walls of glass—in both the public areas and the stylishly decorated guest suites—frame and bring in the heart of the lodge ever-surprising views of the Ngorongoro Crater and its luminous sunsets.

Day 12-13 Africa: Ngorongoro Crater – Serengeti

We'll make far-ranging game drives in the Serengeti based from the stunningly deluxe Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti, elevated above the great plain, giving us vast, endlessly stimulating views.

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The Serengeti, the known universe’s largest (and, happily for us, most wonderfully watchable) collection of illustrious mammals: elephants, giraffes, tumbling pools of hippos, elegantly slinking serval cats, zebras with incredibly muscular haunches (leading us to wonder why they were never ridden— very weak backs, that’s why), and scores of species more, all of them going about their business

unconcerned by the likes of us. (“But make no mistake,” an old Africa hand once wrote, “these aren’t theme parks.

The truest owners of these lands are the animals who roam them free and, if that’s their nature, fiercely.”) We’ll soak up the essence of the Serengeti from the Sopa Lodge, set on an escarpment overlooking the seemingly limitless plains, enjoying a sundowner after a game drive, watching clouds build up as the day cools, big clouds that “look like you could scoop them up with a spoon,” Elspeth Huxley wrote.*



Serengeti Sopa Lodge

serengeti, tanzania

Magnificently styled after a traditional Maasai *manyatta*, or village, Sopa Lodge fits in with the Serengeti’s sun-bleached colours; floor-to-ceiling windows bring the spectacle of the savannah into the lodge, and guest suites contain private sitting areas and balconies opening over the “warm ocean of life” that is the Serengeti.

Day 14-15 Africa: Serengeti – The Maasai Mara

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Leaving the Serengeti, we fly via Arusha and Nairobi to the Maasai Mara, the northern, more verdant section of the single most salubrious wildlife habitat on this or any known planet, the Serengeti–Maasai Mara ecosystem.

Game drives in the Mara are especially fruitful, combining much multiplicity of landscape with thriving animal populations. Our headquarters here will be either the Mara Explorer Camp or Ngare Serian, both of them riverside, both idyllic, both great favourites of ours.

The camps' tents—you wonder what it would be like to live in one for a year or so—are brilliant examples of the artfulness, creativity, and sheer ingenuity of East Africa's camp architects.



Ngare Serian

maasai mara, kenya

Brimming with African character, Ngare Serian is a small camp—six tents and a homey dining and lounging tent—that we reach by a rope bridge across the Mara River. Serian is an archetypal unfussy, informally welcoming, tranquil camp. Hippos frolic on

the Mara, game drives out of Serian are superb, and the camp's tents—as comfortable as a five-star hotel's choicest rooms—were designed by someone who has safaried enthusiastically and wisely.

Day 16-17 Africa: The Maasai Mara – Nairobi & Flights For Home

Having traversed the continent from Cape to Kenya, we'll fly back to Nairobi, visit the Micato-AmericaShare Harambee Centre in the afternoon, relax in a day room at the Norfolk, have a quiet dinner, and head out to Jomo Kenyatta Airport for our late evening flights home, where we arrive, tired but exalted, on Day 17 of this short but mightily splendid safari.

End of Services.