

# footsteps of the maasai, tanzania



**This challenge takes place in the wild African bush, home to several Maasai communities. Perhaps the most revered of the great African nomadic tribes, the Maasai originated in the Nile basin and migrated south through Ethiopia to Kenya and Tanzania in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.**

**They were then known as the fiercest of warriors. Now they struggle to retain their modest lifestyle.**

**Starting in the foothills of 2,590m tall Mt. Longido, a sacred Maasai mountain, you will trek across the floor of the Great Rift Valley right to the foothills of the visually stunning Crater Highlands with the Maasai as your guides.**

**En route, you will also have the chance to visit Mt. Kitumbeine, game-filled plains around Nagarirat, Gelai Village and the escarpment of the Great African Rift Valley.**

**Once the challenge is complete, you can celebrate with an optional game drive into the fabulous Ngorongoro Crater.**

## **Day 1: International Departure**

Night flight Heathrow to Nairobi, departing approx. 2000hrs. Our Charity Challenge representative will be there to assist you with the check-in and any last minute questions.

## **Day 2: Drive to Tanzania & Trek to Longido – approx 10kms trek**

This morning you will depart by bus for the frontier at Nmanga (approx 3-4hrs); cross into Tanzania and drive a further half hour to Big Rock Camp located in the foothills of the dramatic Mt. Longido. This is one of the few high peaks in the region that is not volcanic. You will then have an afternoon trek in the bush to the small

community of Longido to help acclimatise you to the African bush, allow you to test your equipment and give you a great insight into typical African acacia bush country. The climate will be very, very hot and dry and may be quite a different style of trekking to the training you may have undertaken. This trek will help you to adjust sufficiently to local conditions. Tonight will be spent in camp.



## **Day 3: Longido to Kitumbeine – 22kms**

Today a vehicle uplift will take you approx 20kms further into the bush heading west towards Kitumbeine to reach the day's trek start-point. You will trek a tough 22kms towards the majestic volcano – Kitumbeine. Passing Maasai villages and herdsmen, you will today have your first views of the celebrated mountain Ol Doiyno Lengai (2,878m), the most sacred Maasai mountain in the region. As on most days from now on, you will have a packed lunch provided. The trail is sandy and sometimes rocky all the way through to Kitumbeine, with only porous dust soil in the last 7kms before reaching the village camp. About 2kms beyond Kitumbeine Village is Kitumbeine Camp. Your trek today will give you a real understanding of how hardy the Maasai are, who walk these distances regularly. By now you will be captivated by the mystical, eternal beauty of this region, which is known as "The Cradle of Mankind". Overnight will be spent at Kitumbeine Camp.

The Maasai peoples are Nilotic – coming originally in vast migrations down from the Nile basin. They crossed into Kenya and Tanzania in the 18th and 19th centuries and became feared and respected by the Bantu tribes who had themselves moved into the region from the south and the west. We can generalise that the Bantu tribes such as Chagga and Meru tended towards agriculture and favoured the fertile foothills of the big mountains. The Maasai tended to a migratory life style and took over large swathes of land for grazing their cattle and goats.

In the Maasai Footsteps region you will see the traditional temporary villages with mud-built houses and thorn hedges; and young Maasai boys herding the cattle and goats as their forefathers have done for centuries.

In time the settlement into towns and the control of local government fell mainly to the Bantu tribes who prospered by virtue of their hard work in the rich agricultural lands around Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru. The Maasai were marginalised to areas outside the national parks and away from the town and their agricultural catchment areas. Their traditional lifestyle has been threatened by modern life.

Your trek will bring important community funds to the Maasai regions you pass through. By showing an interest in their culture, you will help encourage the Maasai in their wish to retain tradition, but co-exist with other Tanzanians in an emerging economy and a developing education system. Tradition must be allowed to exist alongside modernisation. It is a difficult goal to achieve and community based, eco-friendly tourism such as your trek play an important part.



#### **Day 4: Kitumbeine to Nagarirat – approx 10kms**

Today you will enter some wonderful game viewing areas as you head into increasingly hot and arid bush. The trail is dusty and rocky to start becomes increasingly dusty, so bandanas or face masks are very useful. Your over today and tomorrow crossing a low saddle between mounts Kitumbeine and Gelai. Located between these great volcanoes is the old swamp of Nagarirat, which is now a dust bowl. You will camp on a relatively high point with great views over the incredibly beautiful surrounding country.



On this day and the following days you will start to see more of the wild game that populates the region. In particular look out for zebra, gerenuk, and giraffe. The birdlife is rich along the entire route and you will be fascinated by the nests of the weaver birds. The superb starlings, the “Go Away” bird, hoopoes and numerous raptors are seen in the area.

#### **Day 5: Across Dustpans of Nagarirat to Gelai – approx 10kms**

Today you will climb into the foothills of Gelai. This section is very challenging with a lot of uphill on a trail that is rocky underfoot, and all this in very hot weather. Tonight you will camp at Gelai Village Camp site a few minutes walk from the village. You may be interested to learn that Charity Challenge participants have helped build and fund new classrooms at Gelai Village.

#### **Day 6: Sunken Crater & the Lava Plains – approx 22kms**

Today you will begin very early and trek west across untamed bush towards Sunken Crater (22kms). You will cross a beautiful plain marked by dead volcanic vents - your journey bringing you ever closer to the escarpment of the Rift Valley, which rises from the bush up to the Ngorongoro Crater Highlands. Today's trek is likely to be hotter than ever, so wear lots of sun block, reflective clothing and wide-brimmed hats. After lunch you will trek to the impressive Sunken Crater and will be camping overnight at the rim of the crater. Evening temperatures drop and it has been known to be rather windy.

#### **Day 7: Ngorongoro Crater**

After a very early breakfast you will say goodbye to your support team & drive to the bustling town of Mto Wa Mbu and on up the escarpment of the African Rift Valley to the Ngorongoro Crater. The drive to Mto Wa Mbu takes approximately two hours and then a further 90 minutes on to the Carter for those who are taking the optional Ngorongoro Crater Tour.

Those not taking the Crater Tour will be dropped at their hotel/lodge.

The Crater is a natural amphitheatre, where numerous species of game and birds reside. The massive sunken caldera forms a special eco-zone, both remarkable for its geography as well as its inhabitants. Here you will have the option to have a game drive into the crater to see most of the Big Five and plenty of other game.



*“The views from this north-eastern area's 20km-wide, 600m tall Ngorongoro Crater are most impressive. It's been compared to Noah's Ark and the Garden of Eden - and has the added advantage of actually existing. But he'd have no trouble finding lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo and many of the plains herbivores such as wildebeest, Thomson's gazelle, zebra and reedbuck, as well as thousands of flamingo wading in the shallows of Lake Magadi, the soda lake on the floor of the crater.”*

The Lonely Planet.

Optional Ngorongoro Crater tour costs £220pp to be booked through Charity Challenge at least 10 weeks prior to departure. (NB: there must be a minimum of 4 persons for this extension to run.) For those who decide not to do a crater tour you will be transferred directly to your hotel where you will have the rest of the day at your leisure.



### **Day 8: Back to Arusha**

After a leisurely breakfast, you will drive to Arusha for last minute gift shopping with your guide and lunch. Then continue to Kilimanjaro Airport for the night flight to London.

### **Day 9: Arrive UK**

You will arrive back in London in the early hours of the morning.