

Footprints 2009 – April Edition

FEATURED DESTINATION – SERENGETI & MASAI MARA

The Great Migration – An Epic World Wonder

An endless river of life stretching across the horizon, charging its way forward, accompanied by primal grunts and the low rumbling of thousands of hooves. The annual Great Migration in the Serengeti and Masai Mara reserves is one of the greatest wildlife spectacles in the world, taking place between June and October. Green Route East Africa can take you there, in magical style!

The movement of vast herds of wildebeest and other grazing herbivores across the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem commences in Tanzania and follows a roughly circular route up to the sanctuary of Kenya's Masai Mara, before the game return from whence they came.

When the availability of grass on the plains of the South Eastern Serengeti dwindles and the scent of rain in the north beckons, this provides the impetus for the herds to gather on an immense scale. They begin their trek in search of greener pastures by first heading west and then northwards.

Animal migration on this scale is a purely natural, spontaneous phenomenon and was originally noted in this region in the 1960s. As it is driven by a host of conditions including rainfall and the availability of green grass, its actual start and end dates are impossible to predict from year to year.

The numbers are so great they are hard to visualise! It is estimated that during the trek, over 1.5million wildebeest, 200,000 zebra, 18,000 eland and 500,000 Thompson's gazelle join throngs of resident herbivores such as buffalo, impala, giraffe, waterbuck, warthog and elephant along the way. With such a variety of game on hand, the predators are not far behind. Crocodiles lie in wait for the endless mass of wildebeest attempting to cross the churning Grumeti and Mara rivers. Lion, hyena, cheetah, leopard and jackals take advantage of the multitudinous opportunities to hunt and feast.

It is an extraordinary journey, a battle for survival which only the strongest will win. Dubbed a "New Wonder of the World" by USA Today in 2006, the inextricable cycle of renewal, feast, famine, life and death on such a large scale is indeed one of nature's greatest wonders.

Witnessing the Great Migration first hand is a hair raising, exhilarating and breathtaking experience. When it comes to viewing options for this majestic spectacle, the opportunities are almost as endless. Keep your feet on the ground with early morning game drives, horse safaris or walking safaris accompanied by Masai warriors, or for something different, enjoy an exciting aerial view of the masses from a hot air balloon!

The Serengeti and Masai Mara reserves are also host to an array of safari lodges and private camps that suit all incentive budgets. Access is usually by charter plane from Arusha Airport in Tanzania or Wilson Airport in Nairobi, depending on which reserve you plan to visit.

Can Green Route create the safari of a lifetime for you?

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