

Great Lakes of Tanzania

Lake Eyasi

Still nearly unexplored landscape and you will be particularly impressed with it. Lake Eyasi is a mildly alkaline lake stretching for about 50 km (31 miles) to the southwest. To the northeast, as far as your eyes can see, the horizon is dominated by the impressive Crater Highlands, to the north the plains of the Serengeti.

This area is inhabited by small groups of Bushmen – the Hadza and Watindiga who live in groups hunting with bow and arrows and gathering roots, tubers and wild fruits much as humankind lived in the Stone Age. Over 100 years ago, when the stronger Maasai tribes moved into the Ngorongoro and Serengeti, the tribes made the area around Lake Eyasi their home. Another interesting tribe in the area is the Datoga. These are the last remaining tribes of Bushmen in East Africa.

We have been in contact with these natives for many years, and they permit us to accompany them and show us their daily life and hunting methods

Lake Natron

Natron is a very shallow, alkaline lake, 37 mi long and 16 mi wide, situated in the final stretches of the African Rift Valley that scars the continent from the Dead Sea to Mozambique. The high soda content and remote location make it an ideal nesting site for flamingos, whose numbers equal those of Lake Nakuru in Kenya? The lake is also a watering hole for some of the smaller groups of wildebeest that pass this way.

At the southern end of the lake looms Ol Donyo Lengai (9000 ft), a perfectly asymmetrical active volcano. Lengai is the only active Soda Carbonatite volcano in the world and offers fantastic views for those strong enough to climb it. It takes 5-7 hours to climb to the summit and another 3 hours to descend with the opportunity of spending a couple of hours inside the crater when conditions allow. You have to be quite fit to climb Lengai and it is not recommended to those who suffer from vertigo.

The only fresh water in this stark and rugged area is around the Engare Sero River, which runs close by to the camp and offers fine opportunities to cool down in its swiftly-flowing, crystal clear water. The river emerges from a gorge in the escarpment and 2 hour walks up the gorge to an idyllic waterfall or visits to a local Masai Boma are some of the many unique options when visiting this ruggedly scenic area.

A few miles from the Lake we have set up a permanent camp in this remote and scenically beautiful area. This will be the base for our hiking trips into the Gol Mountains and the Serengeti. The camp consists of tents on a permanent base, with shared toilets and showers.

Lake Nyasa

The lake Nyasa is located at the south-west of Tanzania. The lake lies in two countries' territory; Tanzania and Malawi. However, it is bordered by three countries, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique. It is the third largest in Africa (after Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika) being 550 kms in length and 75 kms in width, covering an area of more than 11,400 square kms. In some parts, the lake is as deep as 700 m.

The lake lies in the sided walls of mountain ranges: the forested Livingston Mountains and Nyika Plateau, which provide the magnificent view of the lake from far and the landscape for hikers and backpackers.

Lake Nyasa is also among the Great Rift Valley's lakes, which shares some of the characteristics with Lake Tanganyika. The lake has a distinctive characteristic: 14 rivers pouring their waters into the lake, and only one river which flow out to the sea, River Shire.

Parts of the lake offer nice beaches and places to swim. Matema, in the northern part of the lake is considered to be the best beach for people who like to relax swim along the lake shore. In contrast to other lakes the water of lake Nyasa is bilharzias free. There are also caves and interesting waterfalls to see.

Other activities include local canoeing ride down the river, hiking on surrounding mountains.

Though Lake Nyasa does not receive many tourists, the lake is magnificently attractive and is rich in crocodiles and hippopotamus. For fish lovers, Lake Nyasa is biologically the most diverse lake, containing approximately 30% of world's cichlid species (colorful fish which are easily seen in the lake's clear water).

Lake Tanganyika

Lake Tanganyika is a vast inland sea first made known to the European world in the mid-1800's by the English explorers Richard Burton and John Speke. They pursued it as the source of the Nile, arriving at its shores in February of 1858, only to discover that the Ruzizi River in the north, which they thought to be the Nile, flowed into and not out of the lake.

Tanganyika's waters caress the shores of Tanzania, Burundi, Congo (DRC) and Zambia. It is the longest fresh water lake in the world and the second deepest, after lake Baikal in Russia. The immense depth is because it lies in the Great Rift Valley, which also has created its steep shoreline. It reaches a depth of 4,700 ft, which is an astounding 2100 ft. below sea level.

Lake Tanganyika, with its sapphire waters is surrounded by lush, inspiring terrain, and holds 8% of the world's fresh water. Pure and unspoiled, the lake is a rare gem on an increasingly crowded planet.

Lake Victoria

The largest of all African Lakes, is also the second widest freshwater body in the world. Its extensive surface belongs to the three countries of; Uganda, Tanzania, and part of the northeastern sector to Kenya. The lake occupies a wide depression near the equator, between the east and west Great Rift Valleys, but its drainage basin is relatively small, being slightly less than three times the lake's surface in area. The lake water is drained into the Nile which flows northward via Lake Albert and the White Nile forming the uppermost reaches of the Nile River.

There are many isles in the lake, some of which, especially the Sesse Group, are known for their beautiful landscape, health resorts and sightseeing places. Abundant prehistoric remains found around the lake indicate the early development of agriculture. There are a number of coastal towns such as Kisumu (Kenya), Entebbe (Uganda), Bukoba, Mwanza and Musoma (Tanzania), connected with each other by ship routes, and also to the cities of the Indian Ocean coast by railways.

The dam constructed in 1954 at Owen Falls on the Victoria Nile supplies electricity and water for various uses in Uganda and Kenya.