



# Off the Beaten Safari Track

Tanzania "On The Fly" ... Selous to Kigoma

Photos and story by Karen Hoffman

**T**wenty four hours in the Selous (pronounced Se-loo) is certainly not long enough for a wildlife safari in the world's second largest protected area and Africa's largest game reserve! But thanks to Coastal Travel Services, a charter flight took our press group of ten journalists from Dar es Salaam for the one hour scenic flight over this 21,000 square mile park. Declared a World Heritage Site in 1982 and more than half the size of the state of Ohio, the Selous is three and three quarters times as large as the more famous Serengeti in Northern Tanzania.

We arrived at the air strip where the staff of the Selous Safari Camp met us. Game viewing began immediately as we spotted giraffe, zebra and impala on the way to the luxury tented Selous Safari camp (formerly the Mbuyuni Safari Camp). Each of the 12 tents has a wonderful view of the Rufiji river, which, as the largest in East Africa, divides the park in half. Each tent is well appointed with every convenience, while totally eco-friendly, including private bathroom facilities inside the tent and an enclosed outdoor shower. We enjoyed river sunsets from the quiet of our own porch or from the camp's 'dungu' style (raised covered structure), open-sided, dining, bar and lounge area.



One of the unique attractions of the Selous is that it is the only game reserve in Tanzania to offer the visitor the opportunity of a boat safari, walking safari and game drive! And in 24 hours we did it all. After a gourmet lunch on the day we arrived, we climbed into the open four-wheel drive vehicles for an afternoon game drive. And here is a major attraction of the Selous-no traffic jams in the bush. You go on a game drive, often encountering no other vehicles. What you do encounter are the herds of elephants (Selous has about 50,000), and the pride of lions feasting on their recent kill. Instead of the chatter of other tourists, you hear only the new and thrilling sounds of the bush.

We returned after four hours, hot and dusty, but cameras ready for our next venture: a sunset boat safari. We fanned out on the Rufiji River in small, open, outboard motor boats. Our game viewing continued- spotting crocodiles, hippos, buffalo, rhino and elephant- all from the water. Everyone becomes a bird enthusiast with the stunning colors and variety of bird species found along the river banks. While sunsets everywhere are 'breathtaking moments', the combination of the cloud formations and river

foliage called for quiet meditation to absorb the spectacular curtain of light mirrored in the water. The camaraderie of the bush evening at the bar area is followed by dinner. Sal Economos, an American from the New York area, is manager of the camp and is also responsible for these tasty menus! All meals are family style around a large table, which encourages friendships and of course, game viewing boasting! For those guests who have more than the 24 hour fast track and have time for a refreshing swim, the Selous Safari Camp has a lovely pool, with luxurious lounges and protection from the hot sun.

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