

# Kenya & Tanzania



Safari trip combined  
with Mombasa beaches  
and Zanzibar

July 1987



## Starting off in Nairobi, Kenya

In the summer of 1987, me and Tove went on our first Safari trip in Africa together. There has been numerous Safaris there after over the years, but this the first one was of course very special as it should be. The light is very magical in Africa, and have you seen the sunset and the sunrise over the plains, then you know what I am talking about.

We spent our first week in and around Nairobi, and used this as our base for different tours including a Safari tour into the Masai Mara, a visit up to Mount Kenya and Samburu National Reserve. The second week was spent on the coast in Mombasa and to the Island of Zanzibar in Tanzania. Masai Mara and the Rift Valley together with the visit to Zanzibar were the highlights of the trip.

In Nairobi we also visited Ngong Hills, in the outskirts of Nairobi, where Karen Blixen lived all those years in the past. The house is today a museum open to the public.

Nairobi is not that exciting, and can be done in a couple of days or so. Our visit included a stop at the historic New Stanley Hotel and the adjacent pub The Thorn Tree Café. This is where, I am told, all the expatriates and Safari visitors flocked back in the 20-ies and 30-ies. There is a lot of memorabilia and photographs from famous people having visited back in the days.





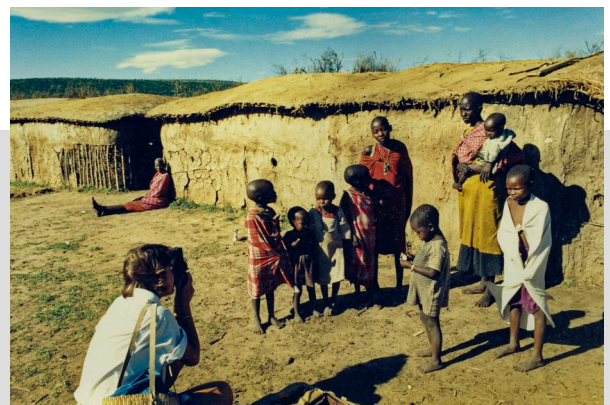
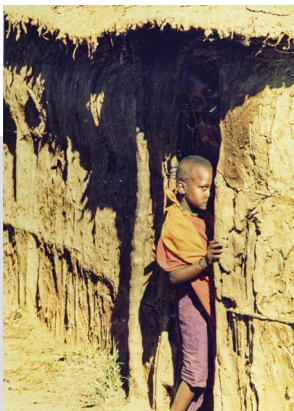
## The Masai Mari, Rift Valley

We decided to book our Safari locally in Nairobi, as there are so many operators to choose from. We stayed with a colleague of my sister working for the Swedish embassy in Nairobi, which was a good arrangement considering travelling on a small budget and all.

We booked a 4-day tour into Masai Mara, which gave us ample time to explore and see most of the wild animals we came for. The roads were at this time, 1987, not the best, and then I am not talking about the national park, where the roads are always only dirt roads. I am talking about the road network in the country as a whole. On the way to Masai Mara we stopped and stayed over at Lake Naivasha which is beautifully situated and full of different species of birds and more. From there we continued to our lodge – the Mara Serena – which is in the Rift Valley close to the Tanzanian border and the mighty Serengeti being an extension of the Masai Mara.

Yes, we did get to see The Big Five (Elephant, Lion, Leopard, Rhinoceros and Water Buffalo) – and many other mammals as well.

We visited a Masai village, which is a customary and included in all tours. This is of course very touristic, but you do get to see how they are living, who they are dressed and yes, they do perform their dances for you. It is important to remember that this as an important way for them to earn some extra money selling locally manufactured textile products etc.





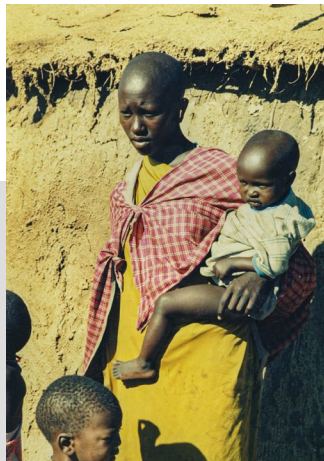
## The beautiful Maasai people

Most of the pictures which I have taken was with an old camera, so the quality is not the best. In addition, they have faded also quite a bit over the years after I finally copied them into the hard disk of my computer.

There are some 2 million Maasai people spread equally between Kenya and Tanzania in total They belong to a Nilotic ethnic group. They are probably among the best-known local populations internationally due to their residence near the many game parks on the African Great Lakes, and due to their distinctive customs and dress.

They speak Maa language, but most of the do speak Swahili and English. The Tanzanian and also Kenyan governments have instituted programs to encourage the Maasai to abandon their traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle, but the people have continued their age-old customs. Many Masai tribes throughout Tanzania and Kenya welcome visits to their villages to experience their culture, traditions and lifestyle, in return for a fee.

Two years after this first visit back in 1987, I was back again in 1989.





## Mt. Kenya and Samburu

After a few amazing days in the Masai Mara National Park, it was time to go back to Nairobi. After a night stop-over we set-off again, this time north for Mount Kenya and Samburu National Reserve.

This park has a different flora and fauna, which also attracts different kind of animals. The bird-life especially is amazing here. On the way up north, we also made a stop at the foot of Mount Kenya. Here we visited a salmon and trout fish farming.

Samburu National Reserve is a game reserve on the banks of the Ewaso Ng'iro river in Kenya. The park is 165 km<sup>2</sup> and situated 350 km from Nairobi.

The game which can be found here include the Grevy Zebra, Oryx, reticulated giraffe. One can also find all three big cats, the lion, cheetah and African Leopard, although quite rare. Cape Buffalos, hippos and elephants can also be seen.

We saw also baboons, warthogs, the Grants gazelle, dik-diks, impalas and waterbucks. A black rhinoceros' population has been re-introduced to the park after heavy poaching in the past.

The Lioness Elsa, made famous from the best-selling book and award-winning movie Born Free was raised up here in Samburu National reserve.



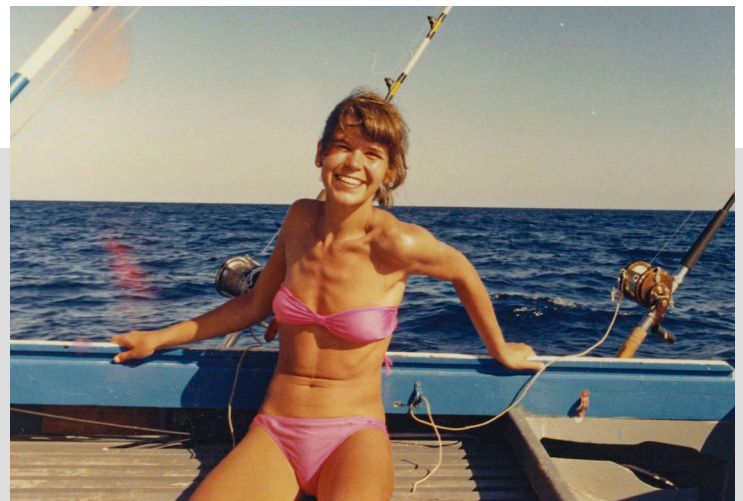


## The Warendale Cottages

Already when we arrive to the Nairobi central train station do you get the feeling of having been transported 100 years back in time. This is a beautiful old colonial style building with arched roofs and metal beams supporting the roof. We have booked first class tickets by train down to the coast of Mombasa and have a coupe to ourselves. The first-class restaurant in which we eat our dinner has real cutlery and linen table cloth. The staff has white gloves when the serve the food. It is very much a feeling of being in a different century all together. The best with the train trip is that we travel through Tsavo National Park. We can sit and enjoy a glass of wine watching the wild animals outside on the Savannah.

Arriving to Mombasa, it becomes very clear that we are now at the coast. The weather here is very humid and hot. We have booked ourselves for a few days in a cottage of our own at the Warandale Cottages on Diani beach in Ukunda. A 4-star hotel at the time and your own cook included. Ali, our cook, made fantastic seafood dishes for us during our stay. Fresh fish, lobster and prawns sold by the fishermen down by the beach every morning.

We went out for a deep see fishing adventure which was enjoyable. After 3 days at the beach we felt we needed a bit more of an adventure and decided to fly down to Stone Town, Zanzibar, Tanzania for a couple of days.





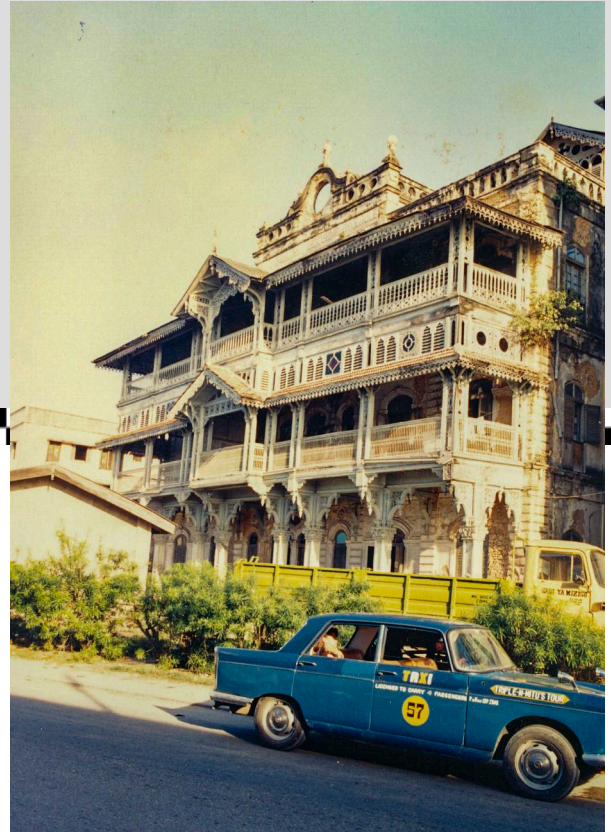
## Stone Town, Zanzibar

We found a small propeller plane to take us **from Mombasa directly to Stone Town, Zanzibar**. The only problem was getting back the same way, as there was only one flight a week in both directions, and we needed to be back up in Mombasa in 3 days-time so that we could take a train back up to Nairobi and catch our flight back home. Anyway, that will sort itself out later no doubt.

We checked in to the old colonial Africa House Hotel in Stone Town right on the beach. This used to be THE hotel and I assume just about the only hotel for westerners in the old days. It was really run-down when we came in 1987 with no maintenance and very few guests as well. The old colonial charm was still there however. They have a lovely veranda where one can sit and enjoy the lovely view overlooking the harbor area. The rooms were gigantic and the fan in the ceiling barely rotated, and much less gave any coolness to the room.

There were practically no tourists around when we were visiting. Nor was the Island prepared for any either. No other hotels to choose from and only a few local were poorly stocked restaurants. There are many fascinating things to see however in Stone Town. The old fort and the central plaza where the slave-trade took place. The city with all the winding and narrow streets is interesting to explore with a mixture of Arabic and French architecture.

The vegetable and fruit market are interesting to visit and very colorful. Here is also the fish market with a strong smell or stench really.





## The Spice Island

Having done the town pretty much, we wanted to explore a bit of the Island as well. What to do? I recommend hiring a local guide with a car who can take you around the roman baths, the temples which are still to be found, although mostly in ruins today. There are also caves where they locked up the slaves before they were being sold off on the market in Stone Town. An estimated 50,000 African slaves are said to have passed here during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when trading with slaves was big. This was during the period when the Sultan of Oman was controlling the Island.

The Island is mostly known today for all the amazing spices and exotic fruit which is grown here. The Arabs brought them here during the same period in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is not without cause the Island is called the Spice Island.

We hired Mr. Mito, a local taxi-driver and guide. He was extremely nice, knowledgeable and helpful in taking us around the island.

Zanzibar is today very exploited with hotels and restaurants scattered all around the island. I have not been back, but have heard from others who have been. I am so glad we had a chance to visit the island when it still was unexploited and had its old charm. I can only imagine what it looks like today.





## A Dhow to Dar-es-Salam

Now for the journey back to Mombasa via Dar-es-Salam. It turned out to be trickier than we had expected. There were no flights or regular ferries when we wanted to go. So, what to do? Well, we went down to the harbor and checked if there were anyone headed back by boat to Dar. We found a guy with a Dhow (Felucca) who was willing to take us. We had to sit on deck with some other locals traveling this way with their produce to be sold off in Dar-es-Salam.

We were not prepared for the rather rough sea during the crossing. The trip took some 5 hours and we got really sunburned. In Dar-es-Salam we now had to find a transport back up to Mombasa again. We did manage to get seats on a bus going up that way via Tanga. The roads had been flooded with torrential rains a few days earlier. So, if the roads were bad before, they were now non-existent I'd say. It took us some 10 hours on this very rough trip back up.

We got through the customs without any problems and having arrived in Mombasa we managed to get ourselves onto the night train back up to Nairobi. A day to rest up and repack our things, we were ready to go back home to Sweden again. We had a memorable and great trip.

