

## MTT's Recommendations for Private Safaris 2012

There is no time to waste. You need months to arrange a good safari. In the case of Northern Tanzania, the best located camps for February, that magical month for the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and southern Serengeti National Park, are fully booked by the end of the previous year.

Here are my travel suggestions for Africa 2012. Costs are dependent upon many variables. It is better if you write me for specifics and customized safari planning. I look forward to working with you.



MTT TRAVEL VIDEOS: <http://www.youtube.com/user/laughyen> and <http://www.youtube.com/user/mamatembotours>

### **NEW! Gabon**

**When:** All year round; it depends on what you want to see and do.

- June through September: the cool and dry season: good for forest trekking because there are no rain delays, but the skies are overcast and the forest dark which are not good for photography. Wildlife moves into the forests of national parks and collects along saline clearings in the forest.
- July through September, with August as the best: humpback whales migrate up the Atlantic Coast past Gabon to breeding grounds. Whale watching is good from Mayumba National Park in the south or can be arranged as a day or overnight trip closer to Libreville.
- November through January: leatherback turtles lay their eggs on the beaches of Pongara National Park, accessible from Libreville; wildlife, such as elephant, buffalo and hippo move to the beaches of Loango National park.
- October through May: the rainy season, with a mini-dry period in December/January. Spring arrives by late September when the forest bursts into flower. By early January, it is fruit season for primates, birds and other forest wildlife. January is probably one of the best months for forest trekking in the hopes of seeing wild gorillas, not only because of all the fruit in season, but also because it is easier to spot their hand prints on the damp forest floor.



**How Long:** 12 days minimum for a Gabon-only tour. You can also combine a visit to Gabon with the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic next door.

**Why:** You can travel comfortably with a safari to Loango National park or you can undertake an adventurous two-day forest trek to a remote bai in the hopes of spotting reclusive wildlife. The journey is, after all, in getting there. There is also the chance to experience Gabon's colorful "Bwiti" culture.

**Where exactly:** Gabon, West Africa.



## Northern Tanzania

**When:** January through March

**How Long:** minimum 10 days

**Why:**

- The wildebeest migration is in the southern plains of the Serengeti National Park on its border with the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.
- In July of 2011, Tanzania announced that it was shelving its plans to build a new highway, a section of which bisects the Northern Serengeti and which will most certainly adversely affect the migration despite all the official assurances that it won't. This is indeed good news, but I tend to think that this road issue will raise its head again. Things change. See the Serengeti now.
- Tanzania is the perfect choice for a first or family safari.

**Where exactly:** Focus on the migration's best spots Jan through March: the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, especially at Ndutu; the Gol Mountains, which are just outside of the NCA; the southern Serengeti National Park, and depending on the month, the central Serengeti National Park, in an area known as Moru. Consider seasonal and/or mobile camps as your accommodation choice and some hikes in the NCA. I work with a number of associates who offer wonderful camping and walking opportunities for small groups of clients at a time and the ability to get away from it all despite the fact that it is among the north's busiest times.



### **Central Africa: Western Lowland Gorillas and Forest Elephants**

**When:** All year round, with June to October best

**How Long:** 12 days

**Why:** I am passionate about this tour. It is a true adventure and unique wildlife experience which focuses on the world's only families of habituated Western Lowland gorillas; Africa's highest concentrations of forest elephants; and Central African culture. It isn't easy travel but infinitely rewarding, and it growing in popularity. Brazzaville, Republic of Congo; Bangui, the Central African Republic; and Doula, Cameroon can all be used as departure cities for these Central African parks of Nouabale-Ndoki and Dzanga-Ndoki. (Although I am partial to using Brazzaville, as the departure city.) Brazzaville city tours can be arranged upon request for any free days in the city as well as dinner talks with professionals working in Central Africa in the fields of wildlife conservation.

**Where exactly:** Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

**Go to:** [www.CongoWildlifeAdventures.com](http://www.CongoWildlifeAdventures.com) – MTT's ground operation which opened in January 2010 in Brazzaville – for informational PDF.

### **Northern Kenya: Walking Safaris with the Maasai and Samburu Peoples**

**When:** June through October

**How Long:** a minimum of 10 days

**Why:** There is more to Kenya than the Maasai Mara. Its remote north is beautiful walking country, seen by very few visitors; travel here allows you to experience the colorful cultures which call this Kenyan frontier home. There are three levels of walk so finding one to suit your budget is simple. Since each walking safari is customized, they are suitable for all ages, from the very young to the youthful old. If you truly want to **See Another Kenya** then Northern Kenya is

the destination for you. Extensions to the Maasai Mara or to the Kenyan coast can easily be added to a northern program.

**Where Exactly:** Laikipia and the Mathew Ranges in Northern Kenya.

### **Southern & Western Tanzania**

**When:** July through October

**How Long:** minimum 10 days

**Why:** Ruaha National Park has some of the prettiest bush anywhere outside of Zambia's Luangwa Valley, while Katavi National Park remains empty wilderness defined by large numbers of animals. If you want to **See Another Tanzania** then the south and west is for you. The Selous Game Reserve is also back on my recommendation list for Southern Tanzania. Consider a combination of the Selous and Ruaha, or Ruaha and Katavi, or all three! Due to the distances involved you will have to fly between these destinations.

**Where exactly:** The Selous Game Reserve, Ruaha National Park, Mikumi National Park and Katavi National Park.

### **Western Tanzania & Northern Zambia Combo**

**When:** July through October

**How Long:** minimum 16 days. Please do not rush this one!

**Why:** a combination of Tanzania's Ruaha and Katavi National Parks (or just Katavi) with Northern Zambia is truly a safari of a lifetime.

**Where:** I suggest beginning in Tanzania and ending in Zambia. You fly in a light air craft between Western Tanzania and Northern Zambia, where, after a few days of rest on Lake Tanganyika's white sand beaches, you embark on a road trip to key Northern Zambian sights such as the Shiwa Ngandu estate, Northern Luangwa National Park (see below for more on North Luangwa), Mutinondo Wilderness Area, and Kundalila Falls. All of these destinations are perfect for walkers, and there is the option of camping at a few of these places as well. The ground operator will provide all the gear and supplies if you do decide to take on a few nights of comfortable camping. For the truly adventurous, and those looking for an extended trip, there are several options of driving into South Luangwa National Park through its back door routes accessed from the north. The great advantage to a road trip is that you get to meet Zambian people too.



**North Luangwa National Park:** it is not widely known that North Luangwa showcases a wildlife phenomenon that is well worth putting on a safari "to-do" list. In this park, lions have long made the significant number of Cape buffalo their favorite prey. As the dry season wears on, and the water supplies dwindle to what remains in the Mwaleshi River, North Luangwa buffalo must stay closer to their drinking source. In an effort to protect themselves against the lions which stalk them, the buffaloes amalgamate to form massive herds – 1000 members strong in some cases. The later you go in the dry season – September/October - the better chance you have of seeing these enormous herds and any predator action that results. You may not even have to leave camp to see them since North Luangwa's three major camps are all along the Mwaleshi River, and the herds will come to the river to drink. Which isn't a bad thing since beginning in September the valley's daily temperature sky rockets, and any bush walks must be done in the very early morning and later on in the afternoon. North Luangwa National Park: I am a definite fan!

### **Zambia: North, South and Central**

**When:** July through October

**How Long:** minimum of ten days

**Why:** Please see the Zambia homepage on the website for the many reasons why I love Zambia so much as a safari destination. As Tanzania grows ever more expensive and ever busier, Zambia becomes an increasingly good alternative. You won't be disappointed if you choose Zambia for your next safari. Serial safari-goers have known about it for years!

- I recommend three destinations for a Zambian wildlife safari: North Luangwa National Park; South Luangwa National Park; and Kafue National Park.
- I discuss North Luangwa in the Northern Zambia section above. It fits well into a Northern Zambia road safari and is especially good for walkers.
- For South Luangwa, I offer a diverse range of safari itineraries taking into account budget, focus and available time, and which of course include all my favorite camps based on spending time at all of them and with all their talented guides. It is a premium park and the place to have many good wildlife observations, including wild dog and leopard.
- Like North Luangwa, Kafue National Park lends itself to inclusion in a road safari. It is Zambia's largest park, divided into northern and southern sectors by the east-west highway. Wilderness Safaris monopolizes accommodations on the western side of north Kafue National Park, but there remain private camps clustered on the western edges of the north park as well as in the adjoining game management areas for anyone looking for a less corporate kind of camp/safari experience. In South Kafue there is a small family-run camp which comes into its best in the late dry season. Its young and

enthusiastic owner-operator Chris knows the surrounding bush intimately. Consider at least three nights here, more if you intend asking Chris to take you fly camping. From this camp you can easily continue on to Livingstone and Vic Falls in the south by a track that runs through the park. I am happy to customize your Kafue road safari.

**Where exactly:** North Luangwa; South Luangwa, Kafue National Park

