

Tantalising Tanzania:

From Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar

With Qatar Airways launching flights to Zanzibar on July 1, travel writer Sue Watt reveals the island's exotic charms and explores our other Tanzanian destinations: vibrant Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro's superb safari regions.



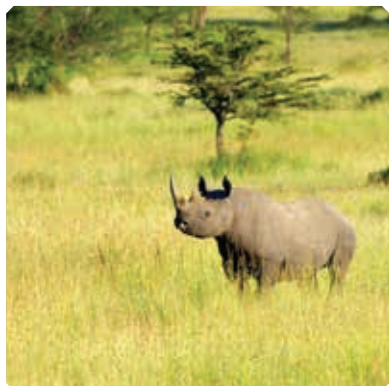




Once a small fishing village called Mzizima, the balmy, bustling city of Dar es Salaam means 'haven of peace' in Arabic. This cosmopolitan port is far from quiet these days, with a population of over four million encompassing Asian, Arabic, European, and African nationalities living in the country's commercial and cultural hub.

Tanzania's capital in all but name (that status belongs to Dodoma in central Tanzania), Dar es Salaam is East Africa's largest and wealthiest city, with towering new skyscrapers and luxury hotels, such as the **Hyatt Regency**, **The Kilimanjaro** overlooking the lively harbour on Kivukoni Front, and a restaurant scene as diverse as its people.

Dar es Salaam was first developed as a trading port by the Sultan of Zanzibar in 1866, and it subsequently came under the colonial rule of both Germany and Britain, a history reflected in its eclectic architectural mix. But for typical Tanzanian architecture, head to **Makumbusho Village Museum** with tribal homes from across the country and daily performances of traditional dances. The **National Museum and House of Culture**, next to the **Botanical Gardens** on Samora Avenue, reveals Tanzanian history. It also includes hominid fossils of *Zinjanthropus* – known as 'the nutcracker man' – discovered by renowned archaeologist Mary Leakey at Olduvai Gorge, near Ngorongoro Crater.



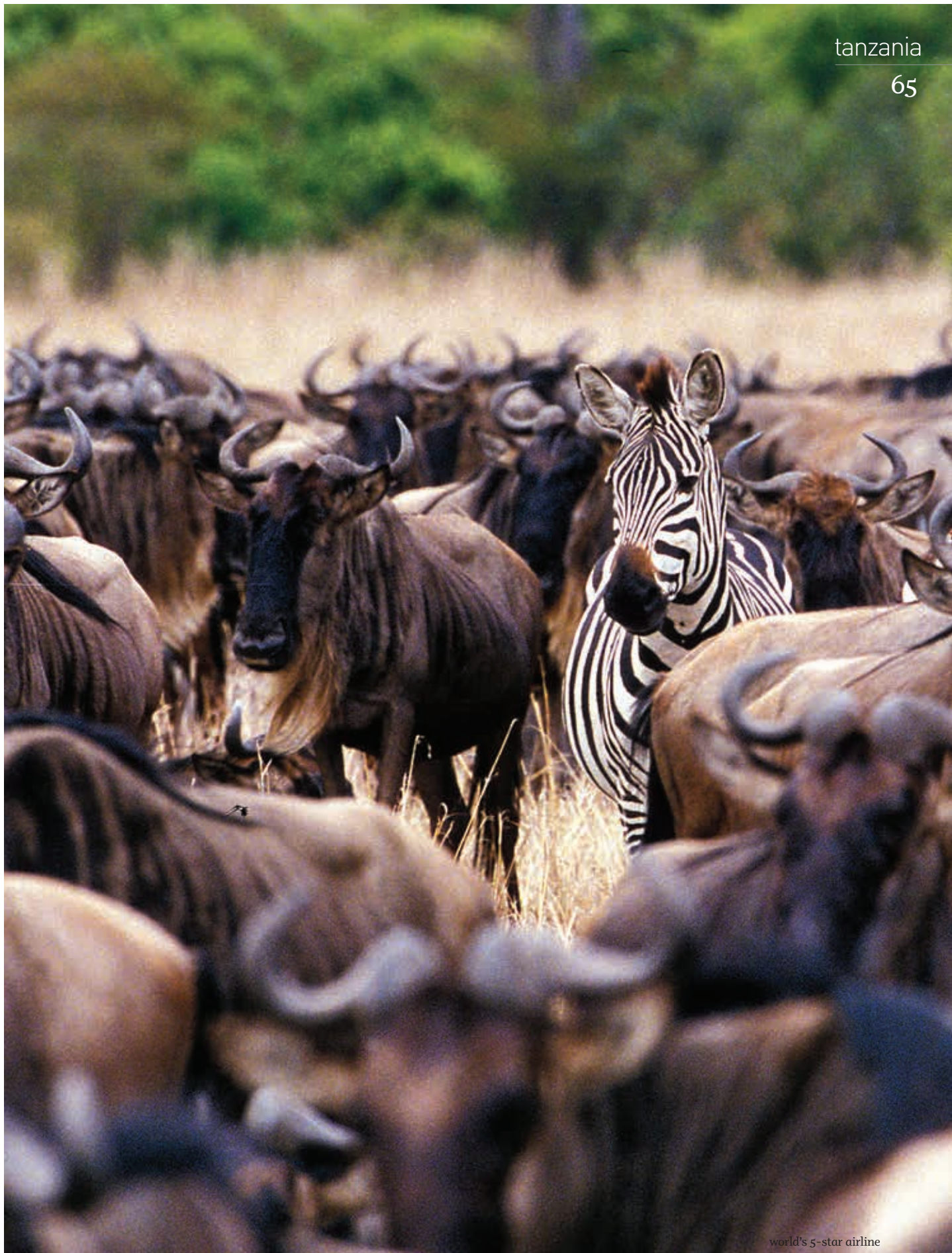
A vast caldera measuring 260km², **Ngorongoro Crater** is home to a staggering 30,000 animals. Even without the wildlife, the scenery itself merits a visit with the dramatic 600m escarpment dropping steeply to the crater floor. Right on the rim of the crater lies **Beyond Ngorongoro Crater Lodge**, one of Africa's most sumptuous lodges, full of beautiful antiques, chandeliers, and swathes of silk and organza.

The lodge is located close to the crater gates, convenient for early morning access to beat the crowds. Within the first hour of our game drive, we saw four of the **Big Five**. A rhino grazed peacefully near the road, oblivious to his vulnerability and rarity due to poaching across Africa. Two male lions with impressive dark manes lay in the sun while three females and their cubs rested in the shade of an acacia. A small herd of elephants ambled through the forest, and grumpy buffalo watched us watching them as we drove by. The crater just teems with wildlife, with everything from tiny Thomson's gazelle to huge hippos wallowing in mud, and zebras and wildebeest roaming the plains.

Nearby **Serengeti** is renowned for its **great wildebeest migration**. From July to October, some two million animals pound across the plains from northern Serengeti to Kenya's Maasai Mara following the rains and fresh grasses. They make for spectacular if potentially gruesome sightings at river crossings as crocodiles and predators lie in wait.

Yet come here when the wildebeest have left and you'll see a different Serengeti, one with plenty of resident wildlife, particularly big cats, rhino, and elephants, but few visitors. Staying at the award-winning and elegant **Asilia Sayari Camp** in February, it felt as though we had the Serengeti to ourselves. "When the noisy wildebeest neighbours have left, you get time to stop and see all the other animals," our guide John commented.







Until recently, the eastern Serengeti was closed to tourists, reserved for big cat research, but top safari operator Asilia has just opened the first camp in the area, **Namiri Plains**. It's an excellent and, at present, exclusive location. The migration can be experienced by guests as the herds move east and then south from October through to February, when over 500,000 calves are born, before heading west on their cyclical route. A legacy of the big cat research, it's also a superb spot for cat lovers – in just three days we saw several cheetahs, a leopard and her tiny baby, and nearly 60 lions here, from mischievous little cubs and doting mums to big, dozing daddies.

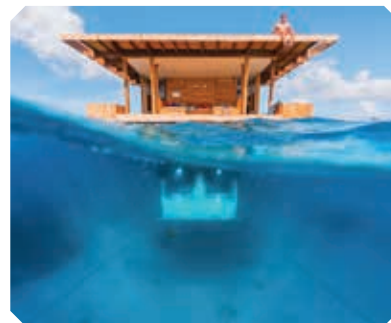
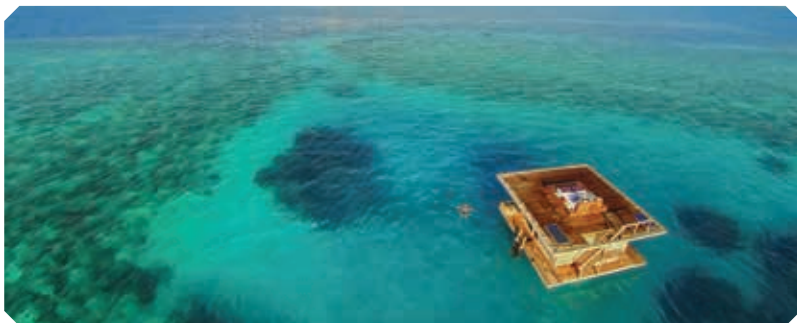
No trip to Tanzania is complete without a visit to its glorious Indian Ocean islands. We arrived in Zanzibar in style, flying to the island then driving just over an hour to the eastern shore for a 10-minute boat ride to **&Beyond Mnemba Island**, a lodge that is the epitome of barefoot luxury. With just 10



bandas, or rooms of understated indulgence, stylishly simple and white, this private island is perfect for diving and snorkelling, or for simply lazing on the beach recovering from the early-morning starts of safari life. Children are welcome here too, and Mnemba, like the rest of Zanzibar, is perfect for little adventurers.

Zanzibar's beaches are the stuff of picture postcards, with colourful coral reefs, sand as soft as white pepper, and azure seas. The east coast is more tidal, and the sea leaves behind myriad rock

pools demanding exploration, full of tiny crabs and starfish. Inland, **spice tours** provide an onslaught for the senses; you can visit the plantations for which the archipelago is famous, with the chance to try cinnamon, cloves, peppers, and nutmeg among many others. Indeed, spices were an important part of Zanzibar's history, which, along with slavery and ivory, made it one of the most lucrative trading centres in the Indian Ocean during its 19th-century heyday.



PEMBA ISLAND, ZANZIBAR'S LITTLE SISTER

Although many think of Zanzibar as an island, it is actually an archipelago of two larger islands, **Unguja** (commonly known as Zanzibar) and **Pemba**, with several smaller ones scattered around their coastlines. If you enjoy travelling off the beaten path, then Pemba, accessible by plane or ferry from Zanzibar, is the place for you. The two islands are as different as chalk and cheese. In contrast to Zanzibar, Pemba is hilly, green, and relatively undeveloped as a tourist destination, although it does have a smattering of good lodges. These include the beautiful, award-winning **Fundu Lagoon** with a secluded sandy beach on the island's southwest coast, and **Manta Resort**, which has a striking new underwater room with a sleeping deck four metres beneath the surface. The island also offers some of the world's best diving, with the Pemba Channel's deep drop-offs and dramatic walls tempting sharks, barracudas, tuna, and manta rays.





Stone Town, Zanzibar's heart and soul, exudes the island's rich history. You can easily spend hours here, wandering around the labyrinth of narrow streets and cobbled alleys, now filled with tiny stalls and craft shops, and its grand Omani palaces with ornate wooden doors and balconies. Explore the imposing **Old Fort**, built in 1700 by Omanis as a defence against the Portuguese. Or discover nearby **Beit-el-Ajaib** or 'House of Wonder', Zanzibar's tallest building, and **Beit al-Sahel**, both former sultans' palaces that today house museums on local history.

For a genuine taste of Zanzibari life, head to the lively nightly food market in **Forodhani Gardens** on the seafront of Stone Town, where stalls compete to sell all kinds of fish, cassava, curries, and kebabs, washed down with fresh coconut or sugar-cane juice. Or for a more sedate experience, enjoy a luscious dinner at **Emmerson Spice Rooftop Teahouse** as the sun sets gently over this beguiling island. 🌿



FAMILY ADVENTURES IN ZANZIBAR



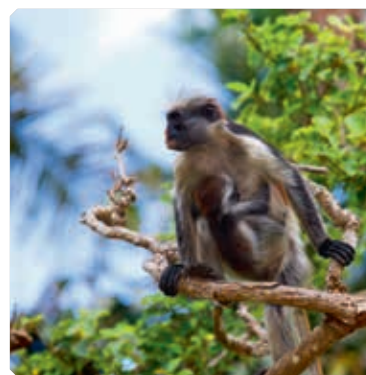
SAFARI BLUE

Children are welcome on Safari Blue's sea adventures to Menai Bay Conservation Area. Snorkel from a sandbank over two reefs, climb an enormous baobab tree, explore coral beaches, and sail on a local *ngalawa* fishing boat. A buffet lunch of fresh fish and fruit is prepared on Kwale Island, and a traditional sailing *dhow* takes you back to Zanzibar. Watch out for dolphins – they regularly swim alongside the boats. safariblue.net



CHUMBE ISLAND CORAL PARK

Lying off Zanzibar's southwest coast, this private island eco-lodge and marine reserve has pristine coral gardens undisturbed for decades. They offer snorkel trips to see vibrant corals, over 400 fish species, and hawksbill turtles. Patient guides will teach you how to snorkel and there's an informative education centre for guests and a classroom for visiting students. Nature trails lead through the island's lush coral-rag forest with superb views from the top of the island's lighthouse. chumbeisland.com



JOZANI FOREST

Jozani Forest is a protected reserve home to rare red colobus monkeys, endemic to Zanzibar. The forest has varied wildlife visible on nature trails including mongoose, bush babies, Sykes' monkeys, Ader's duikers, and plenty of birds and butterflies. But the red colobus are the stars: playful and endearing, they're easy to see, often in groups of 30 or more, and not at all shy of tourists.

My Tanzania and Zanzibar

By Sue Watt



AZIZA MBWANA, NGORONGORO CRATER GUIDE

Out of around 2,000 guides employed in Tanzania's safari business, fewer than 10 are women, and Aziza Mbwana is one of the best. Now Deputy Head Ranger for &Beyond Ngorongoro Crater Lodge, Aziza began guiding 10 years ago and loves sharing her knowledge and infectious enthusiasm for wildlife.



KARAMBEZI CAFÉ, HOTEL SEA CLIFF, DAR ES SALAAM

Karambezi, on the Msasani Peninsula, is one of the most relaxing places for dinner in Dar es Salaam. Part of the stylish Hotel Sea Cliff, it's set on wooden decking overlooking the Indian Ocean, with beautiful views, delicious meals, and the sound of the sea. Its speciality is the seafood platter. karambezicafe.com



MATEMWE BEACH, ZANZIBAR

On Zanzibar's east coast, Matemwe Beach seems to go on forever. Full of glimpses of local life, it has its own distinctive charm with women gathering seaweed as the tide recedes, children playing after school, and fishermen setting off for their daily catch in traditional *dhows* with billowing sails.

✈️ FLIGHT FREQUENCY

Qatar Airways has two flights a day from Doha to Dar es Salaam; daily flights to Kilimanjaro via Dar es Salaam; and will commence services to Zanzibar via Kilimanjaro on July 1.