

A multigenerational family safari in Tanzania

The year is 1.75 million B.C.

Outside of what would become Africa's Great Rift Valley, there are no hominids anywhere on earth.

I was hunting migrating antelopes in what would become Olduvai Gorge, when a flash flood surprised me, trapped me, drowned me, and buried me for nearly 2 million years.

The first words spoken in my presence were in English. A woman's voice. "I found him."



Tanzania: Timeless migration

ULTRALUXURY TRAVEL

This issue of *FourThought* explores the questions which arose for a multigenerational family — questions about ultraluxury travel, private aviation, emergency medical care, and personal security — as they planned a trip to Tanzania for a safari on the Serengeti Plain. In a trip designed personally for the family, each element of the trip has been tailored to the requirements of all three generations as they travel together.

• The Wilson Family

The patriarch of the Wilson family (not the family's actual name) is fulfilling a life-long dream to take his family on an African safari. He is the retired founder of a San Francisco-based wealth management company. His son is a principal of a Silicon Valley venture capital company.

The elder Mr. Wilson and his wife are both in their 70's. While Mrs. Wilson's health is reasonably good, she's concerned about her husband who has suffered two heart attacks in the last ten years. The younger Mr. Wilson and his wife are in their 40's. They have four children — a daughter 15, a son 12, another son 8, and another daughter 5. The younger Wilsons are thrilled to be able to take their children on such an adventure, and to have Mr. Wilson's parents with them. But they have health concerns for the generation older than them and the next generation — their children. And they have personal security concerns for all involved in the trip.

• The migration

The African safari experience can be enjoyed in a number of countries down the eastern side of Africa — from Kenya to South Africa. We advised the Wilson family to select Tanzania for a number of reasons — mild climate, fewer visitors, unique geography, and much-improved visitor infrastructure. But the principal reason for recommending Tanzania is the world's greatest wildlife spectacle — the annual migration of nearly two million wildebeest, gazelles, and zebras, and the predators which follow and feed on them.

The grazing animals — relying on millions of years of encoded memory — follow a circular path — some 1,400 miles long — in search of the short, sweet grass that sprouts after the rains. The presence of the giant herds is as predictable as the rains. Timing your trip to be in the right place in Tanzania at the right time is the key.

• Two types of accommodation

The Serengeti Plain now hosts a number of very luxurious safari lodges — the result of an unusual partnership between South African safari companies, global luxury hotel brands, and United States hedge fund managers. The Wilson family is taking advantage of this up-to-date infrastructure by taking over an entire lodge for their exclusive use. They want the privacy and security that this affords, as well as the ability to restructure the daily rhythm of life in a safari lodge to their preferences. This rhythm is familiar to anyone who's been on a safari — the day begins very early with a game drive followed by a big breakfast, the middle of the day is often spent idling at the lodge before another game drive begin-



ning in the late afternoon and extending into the evening. It's difficult to change this routine at a lodge you are sharing with others.

The second part of the Wilson's safari will be spent in a mobile tented camp. The tented camp — which is surprisingly comfortable — is managed by an experienced team who move the camp to stay close to the heart of the migration. As with the lodge, the mobile tented camp will be occupied solely by the Wilson family, so they retain the control, privacy, and security they seek. And sleeping in the canvas accommodation puts them closer to the animals — closer to the experience of those who first explored east Africa — and gives you a sense that you are surrounded by — and connected to — the wilderness in a way not possible when you're sleeping indoors.

• Beyond the Serengeti

Choosing Tanzania as a safari destination will give the Wilsons opportunities for other experiences as well. Other wildlife experiences can be had nearby at the Ngorongoro Crater — the world's largest unbroken, unflooded volcanic caldera — and at Lake Manyara — where some of the most memorable scenes from the movie *Out of Africa* were filmed. There is also the opportunity to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's highest stand-alone mountain. And the Wilsons (who use every opportunity to contribute to their children's education) intend to take their children to see the Laetoli footprints and Olduvai Gorge, where Mary Leakey made the breakthrough discovery of the *Zinjanthropus* skull in 1959.

• Philanthropic opportunities

The Wilsons, like many affluent travelers, prefer to travel to places where they can enjoy a vacation while pursuing their charitable interests, and this trip is no different.

Tanzania is a country with many needs. There are organizations in Tanzania that allow volunteers to assist children at orphanages, children's homes, schools, and schools for children with special needs. There are also medical and health care programs, including those focused on HIV and AIDS concerns. There are community development programs as well which need help. And, of course, there are many conservation projects in need of volunteers. The Wilsons have found a way to incorporate this type of charitable work into several days of their trip.

• Family experience

A safari shared with other members (and generations) of your family can be the most unforgettable experience. There's a

real sense of adventure — tracking animals, witnessing them hunt, experiencing the vast wilderness of the Serengeti, and sleeping in tents where the roar of a lion in the distance is the last sound you hear at night.

It's also a trip where you are together constantly — experiencing the thrill of shared adventure, creating memories and stories that enrich the rest of your lives, and enjoying being together as a family.

— True Latitudes

PRIVATE AVIATION

The most difficult issue associated with flying privately on a trip such as this is distance — and the logistical challenges it presents.

The Wilsons are chartering a Gulfstream G550 because of its exceptional range and comfort. While a G550 can with some configurations hold nearly twice as many passengers, the particular aircraft chosen for the Wilsons has only ten seats to make it roomier and more comfortable for the family. But even a G550 at less than capacity will need a fuel stop and crew change on this trip. That will take place in Shannon, Ireland both going and returning. The Wilsons have chosen to cross the bay and depart from Oakland International Airport (instead of San Francisco International) because it is less congested and less often suffers fog-related weather delays. (Other airports in the Bay Area which may be suitable for the Wilsons lack immigration and customs for their return.)

Shannon is a commonly-used refueling and crew-change location. While the stops will be brief, the Shannon catering firm used will remind the Wilsons that they are in Ireland by restocking the plane with Irish food (Bailey's Irish Cream chocolate chip cheesecake) and beverages (Bushmills Irish Whiskey) that they have selected and enjoy.

While Arusha is a slightly more convenient airport to use in northern Tanzania, the Wilsons will fly into and out of Kilimanjaro International Airport because it has a longer runway that the G550 requires and full immigration and customs facilities.

For the last leg of their trip — from Kilimanjaro to their lodge on the Serengeti Plain — the Wilsons will charter a Cessna Caravan II F406. The Cessna — which is available at Kilimanjaro and meets stringent safety standards — is a twin-turboprop aircraft with the capacity to carry the eight Wilsons, their two-person security team, and all of their luggage and security equipment, and can land at the airstrip near their lodge on the Serengeti Plain.

— RYL Jets

MEDICAL CARE

As a family, the Wilsons' principal concern on a safari in Tanzania is disease prevention and medical event management — particularly for the elder Wilsons and the young children. The Wilsons began their preparations by seeing a Global Emergency Medicine (GEM) team three months before their trip. Pertinent medical summaries of each family member were gathered. Patient- and destination-specific medical Black Bags were created. An array of over-the-counter medications, water purification tools, and basic- to military-grade trauma supplies were included. Prescription medications capable of treating conditions such as life-threatening allergic reactions and a variety of infections were also gathered. Members of the medical team created a medical itinerary of reliable local medical facilities along their route. Arrangements for local medical teams to make sched-

uled visits to the safari were also made. Each family member was enrolled in comprehensive evacuation insurance. 24/7 satellite communication with the GEM team added the final means of medical support for a trip of this nature.

Physicians specializing in travel medicine provided pre-travel immunizations and malaria prophylactic medications. There are many subtleties regarding immunizations and prophylactic malaria medications required for this trip that are beyond the expertise of most primary care physicians. Certain malaria-prevention medications can have side effects. The Wilsons tried those prescribed by their travel medicine specialist before their trip to ensure they had no adverse reaction. Their travel medicine specialist also gave them sensible advice on consuming drinking water, ice, and uncooked fruit and vegetables.

At the advice of the GEM team, the elder Mr. Wilson had an appointment with his cardiologist well before the trip. They discussed his cardiac status, including his exercise capability and angina pattern. His cardiologist had Mr. Wilson fitted for knee-high compression stockings to decrease his risk of developing blood clots in his legs during the long flight from Oakland to Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Mr. Wilson was also given extra supplies of his medication and a copy of his most recent EKG to take with him. With Mr. Wilson promising not to attempt anything too strenuous (no climbing Mount Kilimanjaro), his cardiologist was comfortable giving his consent to the trip.

— Black Bag

PERSONAL SECURITY

From the time that they began planning the trip, the Wilsons decided that they wanted personal security from the moment they step off their jet in Kilimanjaro until the jet is airborne taking them home. Given the limited in-country response capabilities for security incidents in Tanzania, this meant they would use the services of a top U.S.-based private security firm.

The security firm chosen has all of the qualifications, experience, and specialized expertise to protect the Wilsons while they're in Tanzania. The firm has the ability to advance, direct, and respond to any family incident in Tanzania — in the same manner that an incident involving a world leader's family would be handled. The two security personnel making the trip are highly-experienced senior security experts.

The first security professional — carrying a medical kit, communications equipment, firearms, emergency supplies, and local currency — will be deployed in Kilimanjaro in advance of the family's arrival. This security advisor will conduct pre-arrival security reviews, interviews, site visits, and other advance preparations, and will undertake all other activity necessary to ensure prompt, safe transport of the family to the Serengeti.

The second security professional will have been on the ground in the Serengeti, and will have completed all preparations for secure stays at both the lodge and the mobile tented camp. This will include visiting each site, vetting emergency contacts, conducting liaison with local police, park wardens, and security contacts, and establishing relationships with additional in-country security resources, if necessary.

The two security professionals will accompany the Wilson family throughout their safari, on all side trips, and on their return to Kilimanjaro for their departure from Tanzania.

— Hillard Heintze



Points to remember when planning a multigenerational family safari in Tanzania

Travel —

Time your trip so that you're in the Serengeti Plain at the same time as the annual great migration. This is the world's greatest wildlife spectacle. Choose two types of accommodation. Take over a luxury safari lodge for the exclusive use of your family during your first few days. Follow that with several days in a mobile tented camp that will enable you to be close to the heart of the migration. Look beyond Tanzania's Serengeti for other opportunities to learn and fulfill your family's educational and philanthropic goals.

Jets —

A trip of this length requires making the right decisions about aircraft type and the many logistical issues presented by such a long flight. A Gulfstream G550 and Cessna Caravan II F406 are the right aircraft for the Wilson's trip. Runway length, immigration and customs facilities, refueling, crew change, and keeping the aircraft stocked with fresh (and appropriate) food and beverages are just some of the issues to address correctly in order to make the flight as quick, safe, and comfortable as possible.

Medicine —

Before taking a trip to Tanzania, a family needs to address the challenge of disease prevention and medical event management with a Global Emergency Medicine team. There is no reason that a multigenerational family cannot enjoy a healthy safari in Tanzania, but, in order to do so, the family needs to prepare. Get advice on immunizations and malaria prophylactics. Take care with what you eat and drink while there. Take a supply of common over-the-counter medications. And — if you have a pre-existing condition like the senior Mr. Wilson's heart problems — get the right medical professional to advise you on how to manage this condition while you're traveling.

Security —

Begin planning for your security on the trip on the same day that you begin planning the trip. A trip to a country with limited in-country response capabilities for security incidents will require your own private security arrangements. A trip of this nature — with arrival and departure, in-country travel, accommodation, and safari drive security concerns — will require a team of at least two very experienced security professionals who arrive at the destination ahead of the family. They will need the proper equipment, as well as the experience to know how to conduct the advance work, protect the family once they arrive, and respond appropriately to any incidents which may occur.

Recommended reading:

Ancestral Passions: The Leakey Family and the Quest for Humankind's Beginnings by Virginia Morell

A biography of the first family of anthropology reveals how their discoveries, collaborations, and rivalries contributed to our knowledge of the origins of humankind.

Barefoot Over the Serengeti by David Read

Read tells his story of growing up in the Serengeti in the 1920's and 1930's, and his boyhood friendship with a young Masai boy.

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