

# Safari Adventure

Day 5–July 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

## NGORONGORO CRATER and TARANGIRE NATIONAL PARK

In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight . . . Hey guys! We just came back from our first weekend excursion in Tanzania! It was one of the most extravagant, eye catching experiences that most of us have ever been through! Yesterday, our fantabulous safari adventure began as we ventured to Tarangire National Park on a three and a half hour drive in these super cool jeeps of six to seven people! One of the first beautiful sights we saw at Tarangire was the hundreds of beautiful zebras that roamed the grasslands! It's one thing to see zebras in books and national geographic films, but it's completely different when you see the animals so close. It was so real and each moment was more breath taking than the next! There were also



more than twenty different species of unique colorful birds that rested on the branches of these gigantic hollow trees! Then we saw tons of wildebeests trotting in huge numbers across the spacious plains! Their manes looked so smooth, but they looked pretty mean too!! At the beginning, we saw mostly zebras and wildebeests, but then we saw a few elephants! They were humongous, and moved much faster than we thought they would move



given their heavy weight! We also saw a little baby elephant with its mama and baba (Swahili for mother and father)! It was so cute! Right before lunch, we saw this stampede of zebras and wildebeests that crossed right in front of our jeep! It was so fabulous! One group even saw a few lions in the distance! Every time someone spotted an animal, we would stand up on our seats and gaze into the scorching sun and take pictures of the gorgeous creatures roaming across the earth. Finally, it was lunch time! We were so hungry and exhausted from the drive to the national park! We stopped at this fantastic overlook of the grasslands below, and we ate these box lunches together. As we ate, tiny monkeys swarmed our tables as the swung on the branches of the nearby trees! They were so cute, and really domesticated. We all took selfies with the monkeys too! One of the monkeys was so used to human interaction that it jumped onto one of the tables and grabbed a package of crackers! After lunch, we took a few more monkey selfies and pictures of the view, and then re-boarded the jeeps! We then saw a lot more elephants and what seemed like a thousand more zebras and wildebeests! A few elephants crossed in front of our jeeps, so we got a close-up look at their bold bodies, and tusks of shining ivory. We then saw a giraffe up close as well! The giraffe was so exciting to watch, as it slowly sauntered across the dirt road! Though we took a lot of pictures, looking at the animals with our naked eye was much more exciting! Finally, we saw a few buffalos and the cutest animals so far were the little warthogs that jumped across the grass! They had what looked like really cute mohawks of brown fur, that flopped up and down as they moved! We then drove out of the national park, took a little bathroom stop and headed to our hotel which was about forty minutes away! At the hotel, we had to wait for about thirty minutes, because they mixed up the rooms! In the end it all worked out, even though some of the rooms contained more than a welcomed number of spiders and other insects! Though the showers weren't warm, we went to bed with full stomachs and

prepared for tomorrow's wake-up call at 5:00 in the morning!  
Overall, we had a breathtaking experience at Tarangire!

The next day, we woke up super early! At 6:00 AM we ate breakfast, and at 6:45, we got back on our jeeps and headed toward Ngorongoro Crater! It was super cold, and as we were shivering in the jeeps, we went down to the crater on this extremely foggy winding road that spiraled down this really steep mountain! The drivers could barely see, and we all thought we



were going to plunge off of the side of the cliff! Once we got down to the base of the mountain, it warmed up a bit, but was still freezing! We saw tons of zebras again, as well as plains filled with thousands of wildebeests! We saw a baby zebra that was super cute! The first animal we saw was an ostrich! It was so big and its feathers were huge as well! We got to view it up-close too! We then saw several small gazelle chewing on the tall grasses and flowers near the road! As we turned the corner, we came to a small pond where laid a lazy hippo



whose back popped out of the surface of the water! It was so cool! Then, we saw the lions! Apparently they are nocturnal so unfortunately they were sleeping! After the sleeping lions, we drove to this really beautiful pond, where more than twenty hippos were relaxing under the morning sun! Occasionally, they would pop out of the water! Then we ate our box lunches again in the jeeps, and headed out of the park! On the way out, we spotted what seemed like a thousand of tiny pink flamingos on the bank of the crater! It was such an extravagant sight! Back on the road, our jeep was having some trouble getting up the super scary winding road that spiraled around the mountain! It was quite the adventure, but eventually we made it up the mountain! We finally arrived back at the home base in Arusha at around 6:30 PM, and we all agreed that the safari experience filled with adventure, beauty, and discovery, was like no other! The power went out during dinner, but it's on again, and we are all watching Disney's "The Lion King" to wrap up the wonderful safari extravaganza! Acuta matata!



More later,

Ariana Finkelstein