

The Big Six

By Laura Holt

Tanzanian safari lodges



Singita Mara River **Serengeti**

This new camp opened in the northernmost tip of the Serengeti in December. Situated in an area known as the Lamai Triangle, it offers just six luxury tents, a decked outdoor pool and unfettered views of the Mara River. The area is famed for its year-round wildlife viewing, but the period between August and October is best for close-up views of the Great Migration, when thousands of wildebeest, antelope and zebra make the perilous journey north to the plains of the Maasai Mara, dodging predators as they go. **► Singita Mara River, Serengeti National Park (00 27 21 683 3424; singita.com). Doubles from US\$1,900 (£1,188), all inclusive.**



Jongomero Camp **Ruaha**

In 2008, the Ruaha area was combined with the Usangu wetlands, creating Tanzania's biggest national park. It lies along the ancient arm of the Great Rift Valley, miles from the main cities and airports, making it a tricky spot to reach. But Jongomero Camp rewards those who go the extra distance, with eight luxury tents in an utterly isolated location. Each has draw-back canvas fronts for taking in the sights and sounds of the African bush, sturdy beds and tribal furnishings. **► Jongomero Camp, Ruaha National Park (00 255 22 212 8485; selous.com). Doubles from £680, all inclusive via 020-8704 1216; tanzaniaodyssey.com.**



Saadani Lodge **Saadani**

Saadani National Park is the country's only wildlife sanctuary bordered by the sea, meaning you can spend mornings on a game drive then paddle in Indian Ocean waves come afternoon. Saadani Lodge offers the best of both, with an idyllic beachfront location and a long list of activities. Choose to explore the area on land (to spot buffalo, lions and leopards), by sea (for dolphins and green turtles), or along the Wami River (home to kingfishers, eagles, crocodiles and hippos). **► Saadani Lodge, Saadani National Park (00 255 713 555 678; saadani lodge.com). Doubles from US\$660 (£413), all inclusive.**



Hatari Lodge **Arusha**

This luxury bush hotel, made up of three buildings and nine bedrooms, is set within the confines of Arusha National Park, near Mount Kilimanjaro. A wooden walkway leads down from the camp to a fire pit and viewing platform, from where buffalos, warthogs and giraffes can be spotted by day, and sundowners can be sunk come nightfall. A short drive leads to the Momella lakes, which are a series of shallow mineral pools where flocks of flamingo and Egyptian geese fly in to feed. **► Hatari Lodge, Arusha National Park (00 255 7525 534 56; hatarilodge.com). Doubles US\$600 (£375), all inclusive.**



Sand Rivers **Selous**

Selous is one of the largest game reserves in Africa, harbouring endangered animals such as the black rhino within its far-reaching boundaries. Here, on a remote bend of the Rufiji River amid snaking waterways and oxbow lakes, stands Sand Rivers, with eight open-fronted cottages crafted from simple thatch and stone. They are distinctly upmarket and modern inside, with power showers, canopied beds, decks outside and plunge pools. Safari options include walking, boat and 4x4 excursions. **► Sand Rivers, Selous Game Reserve (020-3137 9905; nomad-tanzania.com). Doubles from US\$675 (£422), all inclusive.**



Crater Lodge **Ngorongoro**

The world's largest caldera nudges the Serengeti in the north and whispers at the Great Rift Valley to the east. Crater Lodge stands on the southern rim of this Unesco-listed wonder, with 32 stilted suites styled to resemble traditional Maasai mud huts (albeit with butler service, glass fronts and broad balconies for surveying the scenery). Daily game drives take guests to the heart of the action, with expert guides and an al fresco "bush lunch" on the crater floor. **► Crater Lodge, Ngorongoro Conservation Area (00 27 11 809 4447; ngorongorocrater.com). Doubles from US\$2,000 (£1,250), all inclusive.**