

## Safari So Good!

# Reflections of Tanzania (Lessons from the Serengeti)

## Pat Williams



I recently returned from an 18-day personal odyssey with nine men into the deep bush of Tanzania. This journey was both an opportunity to be "unplugged" from my normal routine of work and personal life, as well as a learning experience about two tribal societies who represent ancient ways of living with the earth. Our tour was called Back to the Rhythm: Claiming Your Place at the Fire, and was led by Richard Leider (author, coach, and speaker) with assistance in Africa from David (Daudi) Peterson of Dorobo Tours. They have both worked together for the past two decades to take men and women on Inventures: a safari experience that is beyond the ordinary, where they encourage purposeful reflection on the changes and experiences within the inner being of each person on the journey.



When I was called to go on this trip, I knew it would be an unforgettable once-in-a-lifetime experience. The Serengeti and Ngora-ngora crater national park are unbelievably beautiful and full of the most magnificent animals and breathtaking scenery on the planet. You are walking on earth where many people believe life began, a place that has remained relatively unspoiled for millions of years. We actually saw where the Leekey's discovered the fossils of the very early hominids and changed the course of human understanding about the age of our species! It was awe-inspiring.



Part of the thrill and challenge of this invention was that we drove and subsequently hiked in some of the most remote areas of Tanzania. Dorobo Tours has exclusive relationships with the Hadzabe and Masai tribes on lands where no one else ventures without permission. Our learning experience was enhanced by tribal leaders who accompanied us at all camps, and who showed us how they



hunt and gather food for survival. (The Hadzabe are hunter-gatherers, while the Masai are pastoral farmers who do not hunt.) In addition to small game and birds, there was one occasion where an elder shot an impala with his bow and poison arrow and quickly took its life for the nourishment of the tribe. While I am not one to enjoy a hunt, nor liked witnessing the killing of a beautiful wild animal, somehow this occasion seemed right. This is how they live, and they respect the balance of nature and what it provides when treated with respect and honor. They use all parts of what they catch and they only hunt for food, not for sport. As David Peterson said, this wild game is God's meat...grazing on the best grasses for centuries with no pesticides or hormones. It is naturally delicious as well as nurturing to the people who live off this land.



Each night in our camps, we held a council circle around the fire. After an inspirational reading of a poem or short story, we each would share our current state of being, an emotional and spiritual check-in. Being totally unplugged from cell phones, television, computers and all other contact with the outside world along with immersion in the glorious landscape of Tanzania the emotions ran the gamut from joy to tears.



This safari was also a metaphorical safari of my internal landscape, an opportunity to slow down, to hear my footsteps in ancient grasses, to walk on rocks that are millions of years old, to view scenery that has not changed much in centuries. We drove up to 9 hours a day in Land Rovers over rutted roads, or simply over the grassland, making our own roads in the bush. We got stuck in the mud at least 4 times, and all had to grab hold of the tow strap. We used the strength of the team to pull the vehicle out. Sometimes the road had to be rebuilt a bit by the natives that were with us. On the days we did not drive, we went on long day hikes to see wildlife and to learn the ways of the villagers along the way.

Although this was not your typical safari of the well-to-do with all the conveniences of luxury lodges and linen tablecloths for dinner, I was pleasantly surprised at the amenities we did have, including delicious food, wine, Guinness and Kilimanjaro beer with dinner. We had hot showers in the afternoon from a solar shower set up in the open. When arriving at the next camp, it was a relief to see the tents all set up, coffee and tea on the fire and dinner being prepared.



There is much more to tell about my many adventures and the changes that have occurred in me both visibly and at a cellular level. I believe and feel that walking, camping, and standing on that ancient earth has begun transforming me in ways I don't yet realize. I feel a new vitality, a new connection, and a new strength of passion for this planet and its inhabitants. And I am glad to be home with my wife, my friends and family. I am grateful that I live in the modern world, but also aware that sometimes it is a bit too modern.

More stories soon. . .

With Tanzania in my heart and soul I finish this narrative for now ~

***Pat***