

## 14. Oh, Africa!

“Oh, Africa!” This is what I wrote in my journal on the plane returning to the states. “My insides will never be the same after riding so many days on the worst washboard roads you ever saw (they have to get special suspension systems installed in their jeeps in Japan) but it was worth every minute! Watching those 17-foot-tall Giraffes come strolling so elegantly across the savannah, watching the 6-foot long male Lions stretch on their backs like little kittens, seeing a female Lion eating her fresh Wildebeest kill by the watering hole and hearing her powerful jaws snap and crunch his bones, seeing the 5-ton bull Elephant with 4-foot long tusks and watching the female Elephants teach their young how to eat trees, watching those funny, funny Warthogs on their knees grubbing for roots and raising so much dust, seeing 78 fat Hippos in one pond so close together you just felt like jumping on their backs to leap from one ‘rock’ to the other, seeing the giant 7-foot-tall Ostriches mating, watching a pride of 7 female Lions and 4 cubs relaxing after lunch only 5 feet from our jeeps and stretching out on their backs with feet in the air and never a care because they are truly the king of beasts, seeing a sleek and powerful female Cheetah teaching her 6-month old cubs how to stalk a herd of Gazelles, seeing a herd of 400-500 massive Cape Buffalos docilely munching grass, seeing a Leopard stalking a Hyrax in the kopje and another one stretched out lazily on a limb above, seeing and hearing SO many gorgeous birds, following the tail end of the annual migration of 2 million Wildebeests and those wonderful Zebras up to the border of Kenya, seeing a baby Hartebeest just born and still wet right in the middle of our jeep road and knowing that in six hours it will be ready to run and keep up with the herd, visiting Olduvai Gorge where the Leakeys found their first ancient hominid, sipping Kilimanjaro beer on a camp chair in front of our camp tent in the sleepy afternoon while the Serengeti is absolutely silent but for the bees and the ever-present wind, huddling by the campfire when darkness falls, and eating by candlelight in the mess tent, snuggled up in your camp cot during the middle of the night while you hear the Zebras and Giraffes walking around outside and the Lions huffing in the distance and the Hyenas are stealing your bar of soap that you forgot outside when you were washing clothes and the mice and Mongooses are scratching around to see if you left any tidbits of food, waking at dawn to be on the jeep by 6:00 am for the morning game drive, sampling banana beer and wine (it’s not any good, folks!), visiting a Maasai village and taking part in their daily activities like bleeding a cow and putting new thatch on a roof and patting new mud/manure on the outside hut walls, talking with one of the Maasai wives through an interpreter about our practice of monogamy. The Maasai wives were very curious because in the Maasai culture the chief can have as many wives as he has cows to support them. The wife who invited us into her hut said she thinks the Maasai women have it better than we westerners because if a Maasai woman wants to take a lover, she can, and if her lover’s spear is in the ground outside her mud hut, the chief cannot enter, and in addition, the chief must claim and raise any children that come from such a union. All in all, this was an absolutely incredible trip (and definitely worth the 28 hours of tiring travel to get there!)

And now, I invite you, dear reader, to relive the trip with us. Turn up the volume on your favorite African music, get your favorite beverage (maybe not banana beer,) and scroll through the following photos while your mind runs free and you imagine that you are

**ON SAFARI IN AFRICA!**

































































































































