

# Kilimanjaro and Safari Trip Report

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 – September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017



## September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 - Arusha Hotel to Serengeti National Park

We met our safari car, tour guide and driver Beta at our hotel in Arusha. Serengeti NP is a fairly long drive from Arusha, 5 hours, the first ½ is paved, about 2 hours, ¼ a pretty bad dirt road, about 1 hour, and the last ¼ a better dirt road, about 1 ½ hours.

Arusha, with a population of 1.5 million people is a busy city, bustling with small commerce, motorbikes and cars everywhere. A typical under-developed city that is bursting at the seams because of the growth and migration of people from the countryside to the urban areas



Tons of billboards everywhere.









Our first stop to get water and a few snacks. Our safari Toyota Landcruiser with a pop-up roof.





A very popular gasoline station, gas prices about TS2,250 per liter, about US \$4.00 per gallon.





The Arusha Cultural Center.





There is a small airport in Arusha where you can take flights to Serengeti. If I had to do it all over, I would fly one way and drive one way. They mainly use Cessna Caravan aircraft.



As we approached Ngorongoro Conservation Area, we got our first elephant sighting. A huge old male just strolling along. This is next to the paved road, not in the conservation area.



And then some baboons along the side of the road.



There are 16 National Parks in Tanzania, 42,000 square km. Serengeti is one of the top rated NPs. Lake Manyara along the way.



To get to Serengeti, one has to drive through Ngorongoro Conservation Area, this is also where the dirt road begins.



Narrow, with high berms, just wide enough for squeezing 2-way traffic.



Workers maintain the road using hand tools.



Hard to tell from the picture, that is a baboon in the middle of the road.



The Ngorongoro Crater, from rim to rim, it is about 30Km in diameter, the depression is about 20Km wide.



You can see a heard of in the center of the dry grassy area.



We stopped for lunch on the rim.



As we drove towards Serengeti, we began seeing the classic African animals.





We continued, some Maasai tribes along the way.





The road was a challenge in turns.

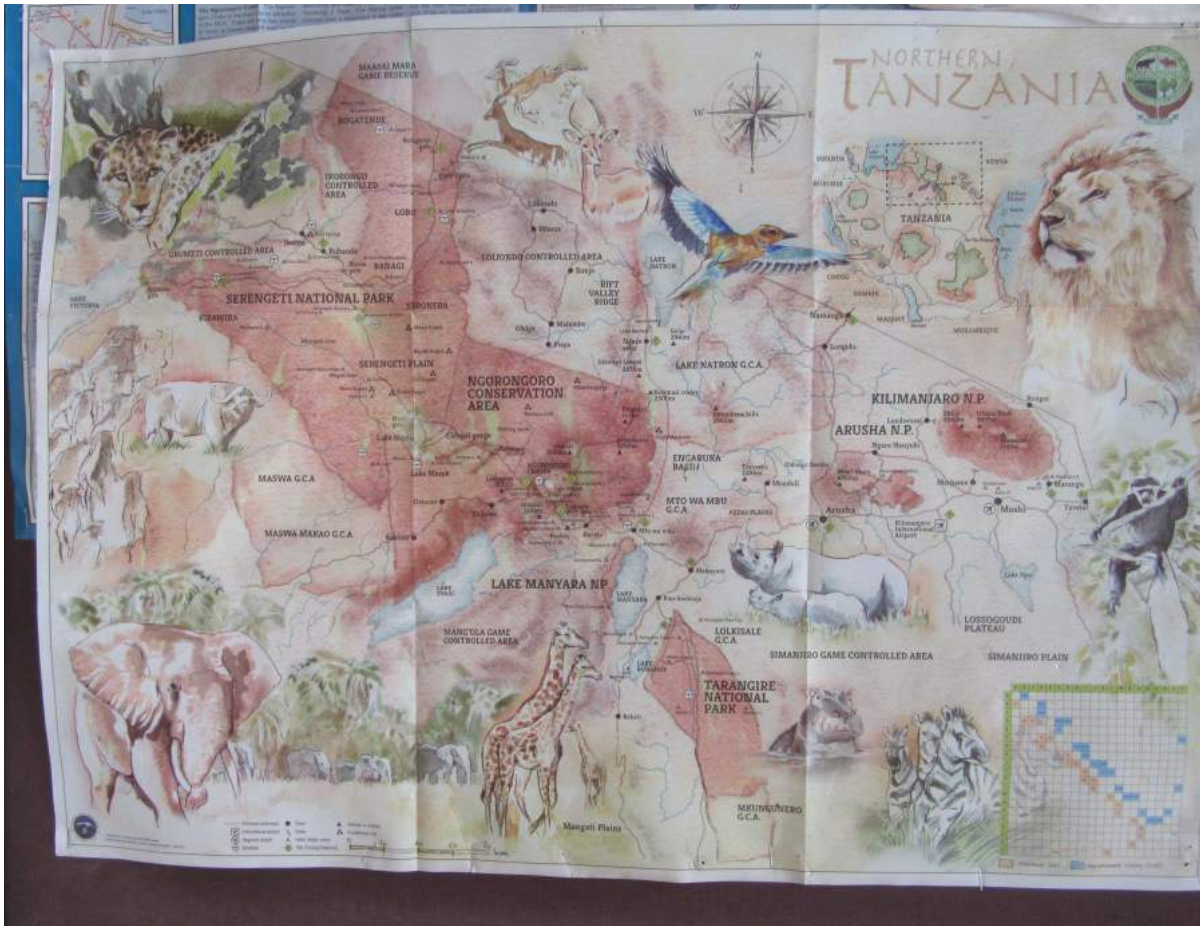


And the wildlife got better and better.



We finally reached the entrance of Serengeti – Endless Plains, about a 5-hour drive from Arusha.

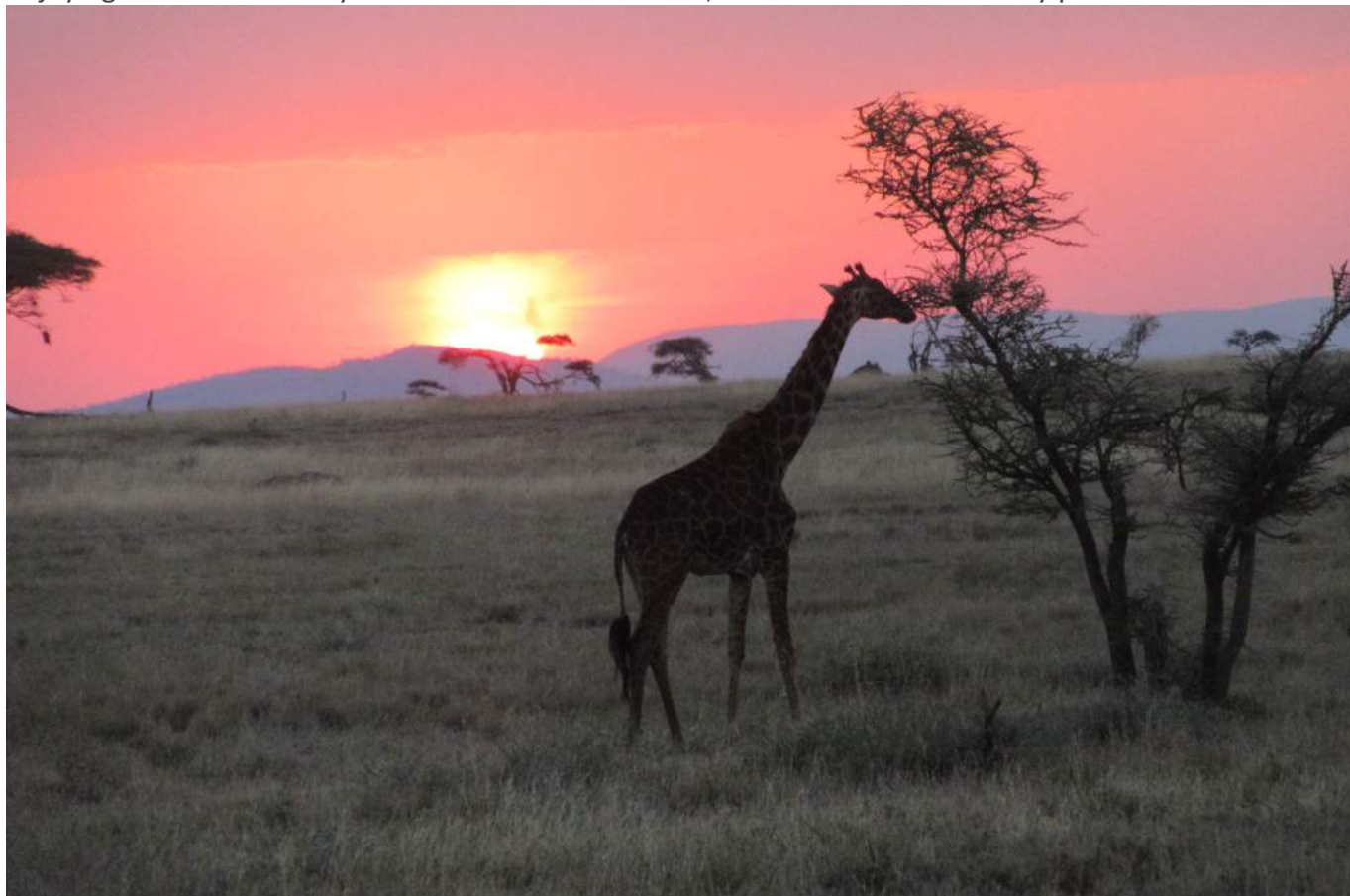




More road construction.



We spent the rest of the day and next 2 days in Serengeti. It was awesome, spotting animals and enjoying the solitude. Very few tourists. As the sun set, here are some end of day pictures.



Our hotel was Mbugani Camp, “close to nature and comforts of home”, it was tent with real beds and warm showers and toilets. I felt like I was in nature but truly comfortable. They served daily full breakfast and dinner, and packed a box lunch for the day. Simply awesome.



And we had animals right there. You could hear the lions roaring at night and had to be accompanied by a hotel staff member after between 7PM and 6AM.





This poor buffalo was attacked by a pack of lions and somehow managed to survive, his name is Magabba and he is a steady resident at the campsite.



These storks also hung out regularly in the evenings.



Every night before dinner, there was a bonfire for the guests to enjoy.



What follows is a collection of pictures of wildlife, starting with the “Big Five”- Elephant, Black Rhinoceros, Buffalo, Lion and Leopard



This is how close we were to the elephants.



The ever-elusive rhino. There are 19 left at Serengeti and to protect them, they have game wardens protecting them from poacher 24x7. Seeing one in full view is extremely rare, but we get this glimpse at 2 grown ones and a baby. They looked better through the binoculars.



Buffaloes were abundant





This can give a perspective on their size.



The mighty lion



Lions were not afraid of cars, they just lounged around.







And finally, the leopard.





Caroline kept a log of all the animals we saw. The “big five” plus all the ones below.

Giraffe	Black Face Velvet Monkey
Baboons	Serval
Zebras	Banded Mongoose
Gazelle	Hippos
Wildebeest	Grey heron
Ostrich	Waterbuck
Vulture	Flamingos
Tawny Eagle	Nile Crocodile
Termite Mounds	Rock Hyrax
Guinea Fowl	Marabou Stork
Hartebeest	African Rock Python
Warthog	Rueppell's Griffon Vulture
Secretary Bird	Golden Jackal
Hyena	Leopard Tortoise
Kori Bustard	Cheetah
Topi	Camel
Black Backed Jackal	Grey Crowned Crane
Impalas	Egyptian Goose
Dik Dik	Superb Starling

Pretty much in the order above, starting with the Giraffe.



Baboons



Zebras and Hartebeest



Gazelles



Wildebeest and a Warthog in the back.



Ostrich, they are huge.





The ugly Vulture.





Tawny Eagle



Termite Mounds



Guinea Fowl



Warthog



Hyena



Secretary Bird



Kori Bustard



Topi



Topis would always have one or two looking out for danger.



Family of Jackal



Impalas among the zebras



Dik Dik



Black Face Velvet Monkey



Serval





Banded Mongoose, he small, standing on the left of the tree trunk.



Now for the Hippos, we saw lots of them



Here is one crossing the road on his way to the water, notice the size.



It's a Hippo party.



Gray Heron



Waterbuck



Flamingos



Nile Crocodile, Beta, our guide was a master at spotting wildlife.



Rock Hyrax, lots of little creatures.



Caroline made friends with one of them



Marabou Stork, lots of these hanging around our camp.



African Python, these are very hard and rare to see. We were lucky.



Rueppell's Griffon Vulture



Golden Jackal, here is a picture of a baby.



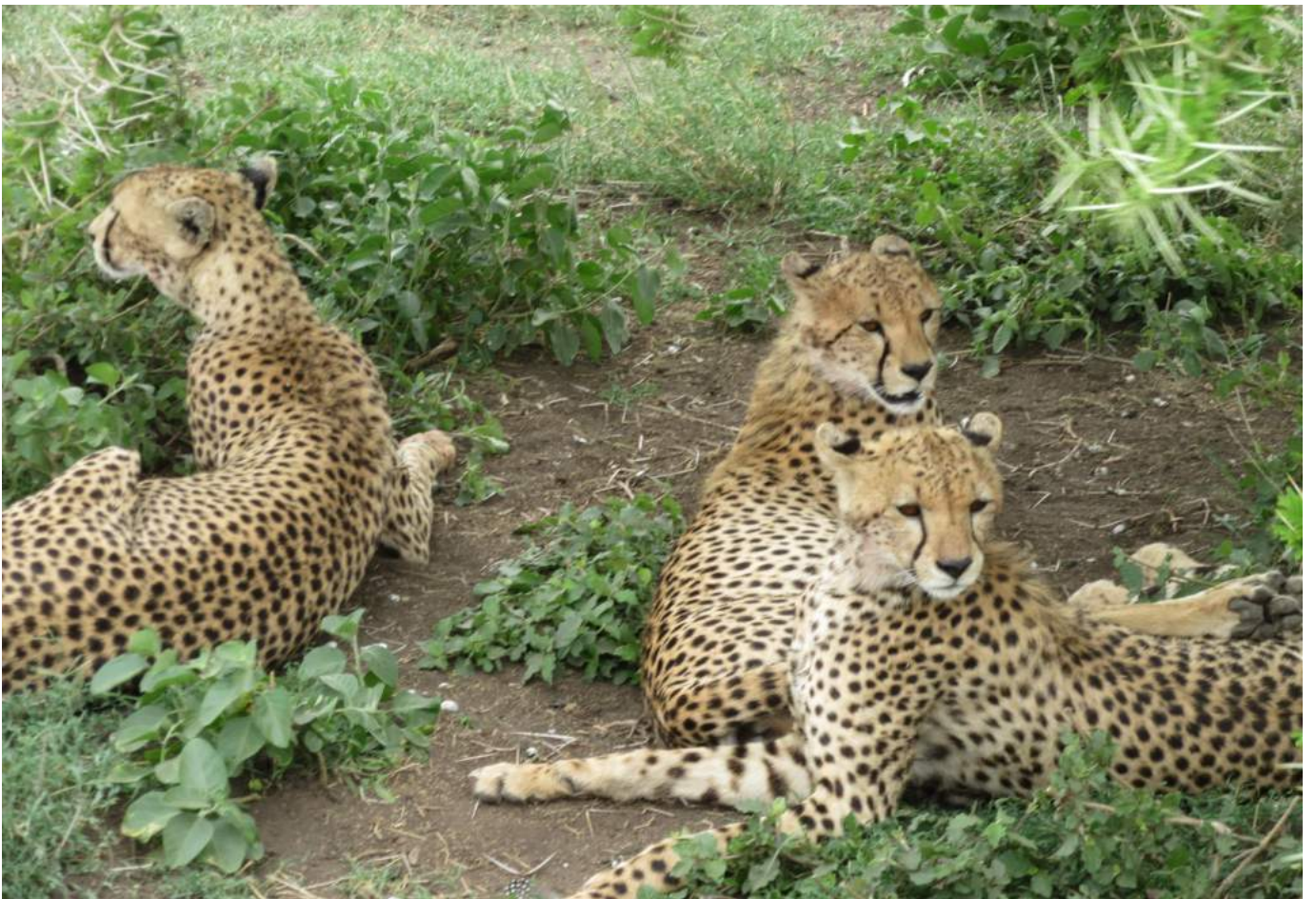
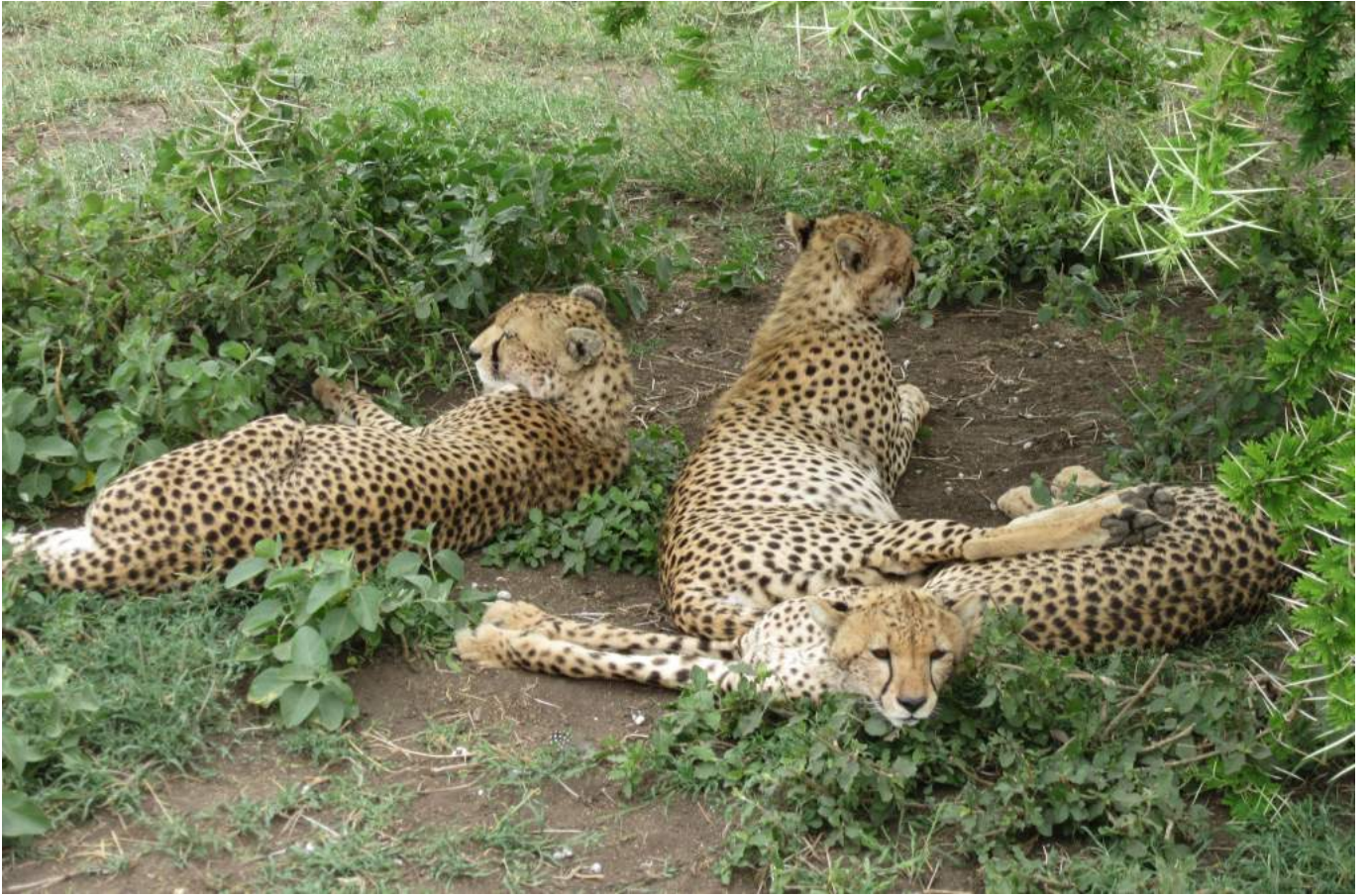
Leopard Tortoise, another fantastic find by Beta, I have no idea how he saw it.

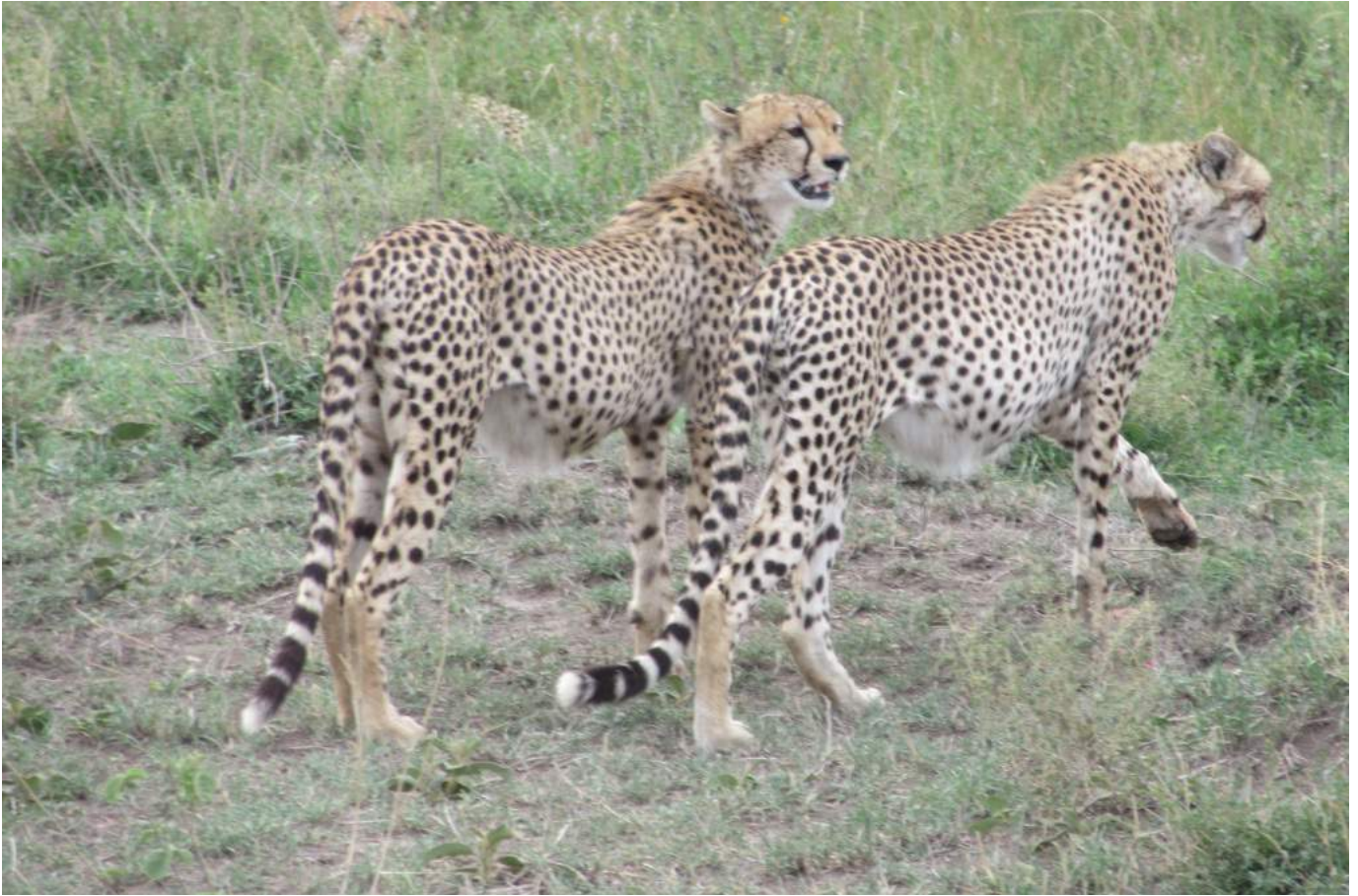


Cheetah, we were very lucky to see this family of cheetah so close. Simply awesome.









Camel, although they are not native to Tanzania



Grey Crowned Crane



Egyptian Goose



Superb Starling



There was beauty everywhere. On the way back we visited Ngorongora Crater. Although not quite as rich as Serengeti, it was definitely worth the stop. We saw many of the more common animals there. The road descending to the crater floor.



The crater's watering hole and our lunch stop. Notice the cloud ring around the rim.





Among other great animals, we saw a few more lions lounging.



And hippos too, here is a mama with her babies.



On our way up the rim.





Leaving the conservation area. This is also where the pavement begins. It felt great driving on a smooth road on the way to Arusha.



A picture of our safari SUV.



Random pictures on the way back to Arusha



It was on a Sunday and many people gathered for church services on the side of the road.





We stopped for souvenirs on the way back, Caroline bought a very nice painting for her dorm room.



One last picture of Mount Mero.



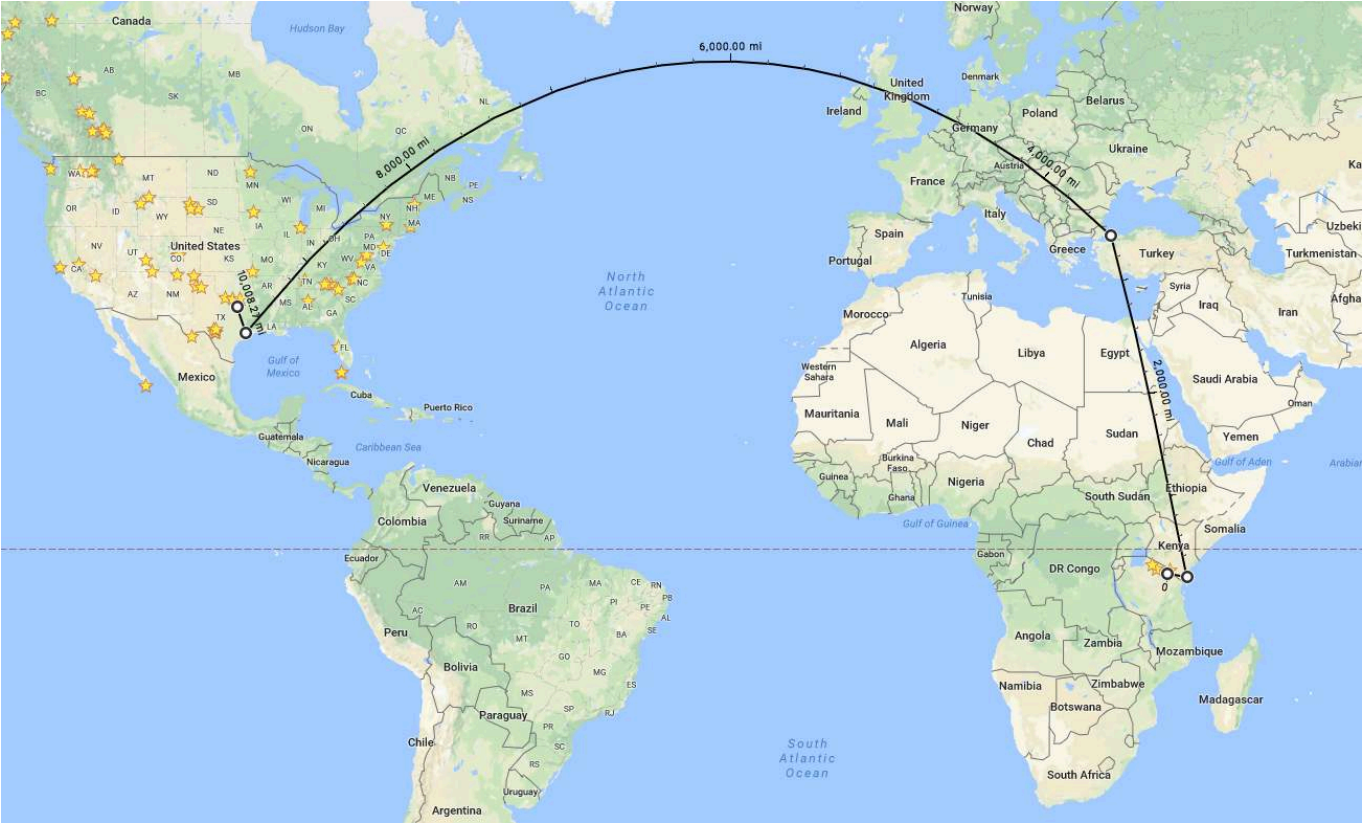
Lots of building. Most of it is done by Chinese construction companies, apparently they are the least expensive and fastest to build.



And now it's time to go home, Turkish Airlines was great. Very good service and all flights on time.



Our Flight took over 26 hours, Kilimanjaro to Mombasa, Kenya to Istanbul, Turkey to Houston and a short leg to Dallas.



A great trip, I have lots of tips and other details if anyone is interested.