



PROJECT DOSSIER

THE GREAT OVERLAND ENCOUNTER

LONDON to NAIROBI to CAIRO to KATHMANDU

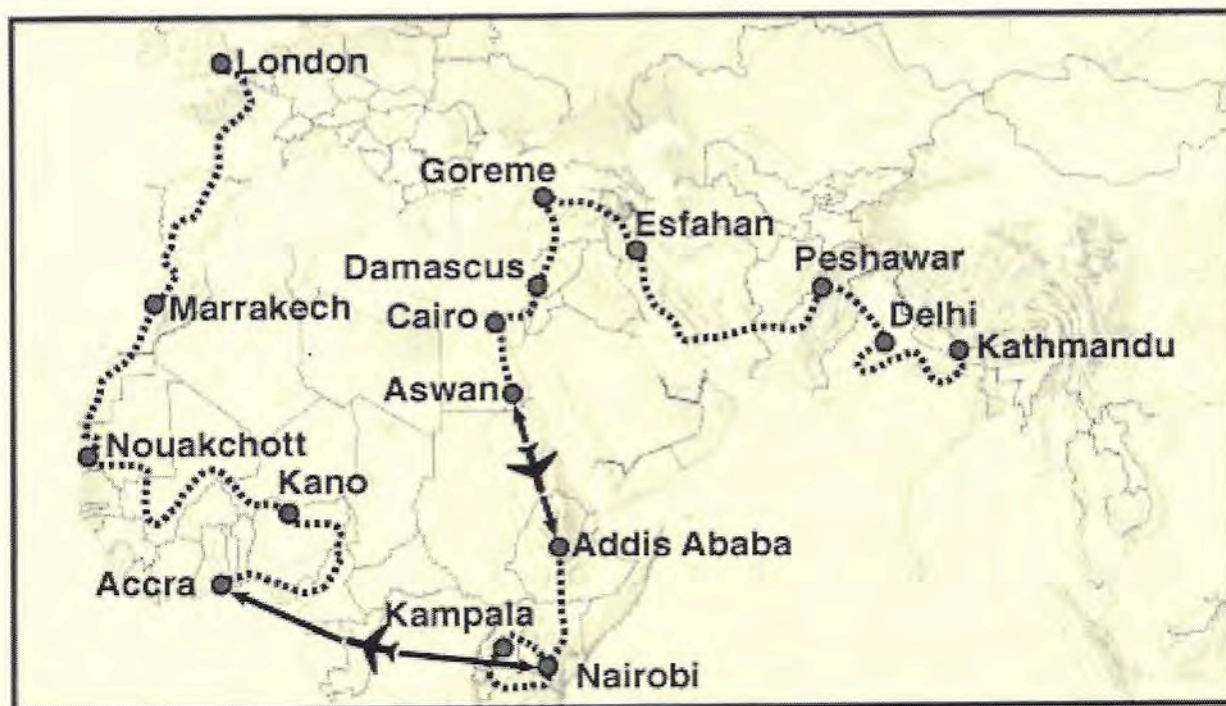
OR

KATHMANDU to CAIRO to NAIROBI to LONDON

34 weeks

32,000 land kms (land distance)

France, Spain, Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroun, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India & Nepal.



Itinerary Guideline

Please note: The revised route/overflight due to political instability in Central Africa & the Democratic Republic of Congo (see last page).

LONDON to NAIROBI to CAIRO to KATHMANDU

Week 1: Transit through France & Spain to Costa del Sol, ferry across Straits of Gibraltar.

Week 2: To Casablanca, drive to Volubilis and the ancient Roman ruins.
To Fez to explore the old Medina, royal palaces and city mosques. Through Berber villages of the Middle Atlas to Georges du Ziz, and the great sand dunes of Erg Chebbi. To the great chasms of the Todra Gorge.

Week 3: The High Atlas Mountains, crossing the Tizi-n-Tichka pass and to Marrakech. Down the Atlantic coast into Western Sahara, Layoune opposite the Canary Islands.

Week 4: To Dakhla, and eventually into the expanse of desert which is Mauritania. From Nouadhibou, Mauritania's second largest city, we follow the desert tracks to the capital Nouakchott with its colourful markets of Saharan wares and large beach busy with Senegalese fishermen. Inland across the southern Sahara over the sand dunes of the Trarza & rock hills of the the southern Sahara over the sand dunes of the Trarza & rock hills of the Massif de l'Assaba following the old trans-Saharan trade routes through oasis villages to Ayoun.

Week 5: Head south to Mali, the Niger river & capital of Bamako. Then through the Niger's inland delta to the medieval, trading town of Djenne with its huge mosque built of sand and mud and colourful weekly market & then to Mopti.

Week 6: Mopti, the bustling port built on the confluence of the Bani and Niger Rivers, then to the Cliff villages of the Bandiagara Escarpment & Dogon country to visit the isolated villages of the Dogon people, whose villages and art still reflect Africa 2000 years ago. To Burkina Faso and Bobo-Dioulasso, the relaxed yet vibrant capital of the Bobo people.

Week 7: Through Mossi tribal lands to Ouagadougou, the capital. Drive through the forest & savannah country to Niger and Niamey on the banks of the Niger river.

Week 8: North through the vast bush & scrublands of the Sahel to Agadez, with its sandy streets, Sudanese mud architecture and Tuareg nomads and camel market, before heading south again to the beautiful Hausa town of Zinder. To Nigeria & one of the great

kingdoms of the Niger, the capital of the Hausa trading empire, Kano.

Week 9: Explore the market, one the largest in Africa and visit the indigo dye pits. South to the Yankari Game Reserve for game viewing and immersion in the warm, crystal clear waters of the Wikki Warm Springs.

Weeks 10 & 11: Continue south crossing the border into Cameroon and to the Waza National Park, regarded as the best game park in West Africa and home to the maneless male lion. Then onto the Kapsiki Mountains, home of the Kirdi people, who live in villages camouflaged against a backdrop of pinnacles and craters of extinct volcanoes. Head south out of the savannah lands of the north and into jungles of Equatorial Africa to Yaounde.

Weeks 12 & 13:

To the coast for some relaxation on the black sand beaches of Limbe.

Through hilly tropical forest to beaches of Kribi and Pygmy villages around Lolodorf. Back into Nigeria, following the southern route along the coast past Lagos, before crossing the border into Benin. Then further along the coast to old slave trading town of Ouidah, also stronghold of voodoo culture and then Grand Popo with its picturesque lagoons and coconut groves. Continue along the beautiful Atlantic coast into Togo, its palmy villages also displaying the local voodoo customs with their fetishes, shrines and festivals. To Togo's bustling capital Lome.

Week 14: Cross into Ghana and drive to Kumasi, capital of the Asante kingdom and home to West Africa's largest cultural centre. Then south through the hills and forests to Kakum National Park for game viewing and walks through the canopy of the rain forest. Back to the coast to explore Ghana's palm fringed beaches and coastal, colonial forts en route to Ghana's capital Accra.

Week 15: Fly from Accra to Nairobi. To Arusha in Tanzania, the Rift Valley & views of Kilimanjaro, wildlife of the Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti National Park, through the grasslands to Lake Victoria & back into Kenya.

Week 16: Lake port of Kisumu and across equator to Uganda, the Victoria Nile &

Kampala (option to white water raft on the Nile, 1 day). Buganda tribal lands to Kazinga Channel between Lakes Edward & George, & wildlife of Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Week 17: North to Murchison Falls and the meeting of the Victoria & Albert Niles, then back into Kenya to the Rift Valley.

Week 18: North to visit Lake Turkana before returning to Nairobi.

Week 19: Midway Layover (7 to 8 days). Time on your own and at own cost, to climb Kilimanjaro or laze on the Indian Ocean beaches of Kenya.

Week 20: Nairobi to Lake Naivasha, foot safari in Hell's Gate National Park. North from Mt Kenya to Kaisut Desert & Marasabit. Into Ethiopia.

Weeks 21 & 22: Abiyata, Ziway & lakes of the Ethiopian Rift Valley into the central highlands and to Addis Ababa, fly to Bahir Dar on Lake Tana & source of the Blue Nile. Tisisat Falls, castles & palaces of Gonder. Return Addis Ababa & fly to Cairo, then by train to Aswan.

Weeks 23 & 24: By road or air to Abu Simbel (optional), downriver aboard felucca sailing boats from Aswan to Kom Ombo. Luxor, Valley of the Kings. Drive to Red Sea & beaches, St Anthony's Monastery to Cairo - the Pyramids & Sphinx & wander the streets of the old city.

Weeks 25-27: Across Sinai Desert to Mt Sinai. Red Sea ferry to Jordan, Aquaba to Petra & Amman. Syria's coastal hills, cedars & olive groves, ancient cities & crusader castles. Turkey, Taurus mountains to Anatolia & cave cities of Cappadocia. To Mt Ararat & Iran.

Week 28-30: Esfahan - gilded mosques & Islam's highest artistry, desert pillars of King Darius' Persepolis. Across Dasht-e-Lut, nomads & camel caravanserai to Zahedan, Pakistan & oasis city of Quetta. Baluchistan & frontier tribal lands to Peshawar, gateway to the Khyber Pass.

Weeks 31 & 32: May-October: Across Indus river & north to Pakistan's jagged Karakoram Himalaya - to Gilgit & the valley of Swat, the Punjab plains to India & Delhi. **November-April:** Across Indus river to Punjab & India's Thar Desert. Jaisalmer, the colours &

riches of Rajasthan, fabulous cities & palaces of Jodhpur & Udaipur, to Delhi.

Weeks 33 & 34: Delhi, palaces of Jaipur, Agra, the Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri. Byways of rural India, temples of Khajuraho to the Ganges & holy city of Varanasi, Himalayan foothills & wildlife of Chitwan National Park to the high Himalayas & Kathmandu.

KATHMANDU to CAIRO to NAIROBI to LONDON

Week 1: Kathmandu to Himalayan foothills & wildlife of Chitwan National Park, Indian plains & the Ganges, holy city of Varanasi, byways of rural India & temples of Khajuraho.

Week 2: Agra & the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, palaces of Jaipur to Delhi.

Weeks 3-5: May-October: Delhi to the Punjab & northern Pakistan, jagged mountains of Karakoram Himalaya - to Gilgit, the valley of Swat & Peshawar, gateway to the Khyber Pass.

November-April: Delhi to the colours of Rajasthan, fabulous cities & palaces of the Maharajahs in Jodhpur & Udaipur, Jaisalmer & Thar Desert to Pakistan & Peshawar. South through the frontier tribal lands of Baluchistan.

Weeks 6 & 7: The oasis city of Quetta to Iran & Zahedan. Across the Dasht-e-Lut Desert, open spaces, nomads & camel caravanserai to the desert pillars of King Darius' Persepolis, Esfahan - city of gilded mosques, gold domes & Islam's highest artistry. To Mt Ararat & Turkey.

Weeks 8 & 9: Turkey's wild Anatolian plateau. Cave cities of Cappadocia, Turkish wine & carpets, the rugged Taurus mountains to the eastern Mediterranean. Syria's coastal hills, cedars & olive groves, waterwheels of Hama, ancient cities & crusader castles, to Damascus.

Week 10: Jordan & Amman, Wadi Musa & Petra, Aqaba & the Red Sea, ferry to Nuweiba in Egypt. Across Sinai to Suez & Cairo.

Weeks 11 & 12: Cairo - the Pyramids & Sphinx. Drive to St Anthony's Monastery & beaches of the Red Sea, the eastern desert to the Nile, Luxor, Valley of the Kings. Up river aboard felucca sailing boats Kom Ombo - Aswan. By road or air to Abu Simbel (optional).

Weeks 13 & 14: Return to Cairo by train and fly to Addis Ababa in the Ethiopian highlands, and on to Bahir Dar on Lake Tana & source of the Blue Nile. Tislat Falls, castles & palaces of Gondar. Return Addis Ababa & drive through central highlands, to Ziway, Abiyata & lakes of the Ethiopian Rift Valley into northern Kenya.

Week 15: South to Marsabit & Kaisut Desert, to Mt Kenya & Lake Naivasha. Foot safari in Hell's Gate National Park, & to Nairobi.

Week 16: Midway layover (7 to 8 days). Time on your own and at your own cost, - to climb Kilimanjaro or laze on Indian Ocean beaches of Kenya.

Week 17: To Arusha in Tanzania, the Rift Valley & views of Kilimanjaro, wildlife of the Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti National Park, through the grasslands to Lake Victoria & back into Kenya.

Week 18: Lake port of Kisumu and across equator to Uganda, the Victoria Nile & Kampala (option to white water raft on the Nile, 1 day). Buganda tribal lands to Kazinga Channel between Lakes Edward & George, & wildlife of Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Week 19: North to Murchison Falls and the meeting of the Victoria & Albert Niles, then back into Kenya to the Rift Valley.

Week 20: Visit Lake Turkana before returning to Nairobi to prepare for the overflight to Accra.

Week 21: Fly to Accra, Ghana's capital, then drive north to Kumasi, the capital of the Asante and home to West Africa's largest cultural centre. Then to the Kakum National Park for game viewing and walks through the canopy of the rainforest. Drive back south to explore Ghana's palm fringed beaches and coastal, colonial forts.

Weeks 22 & 23: Cross the border into Togo and its bustling capital Lome. Continue along the beautiful Atlantic coast, with its palmy villages displaying the local voodoo customs with their fetishes, shrines and festivals. Into Benin to the old trading town of Grand Popo with its picturesque lagoons and coconut groves and then the stronghold of voodoo culture, Ouidah. We cross into Nigeria to Calabar in Cross River State then to Cameroon.

Weeks 24 & 25: Black sand beaches at Limbe and beaches at Kribi. Through hilly tropical forest to Pygmy villages around Lolodorf. North to Yaounde & then to the savannah lands of the north and to the Kapsiki Mountains, home of the Kirdi people, whose villages are camouflaged against the backdrop of pinnacles and craters of extinct volcanoes.

Week 26: Back into Nigeria and more game viewing at the Yankari Game Reserve and the warm, crystal clear waters of the Wikki Warm Springs. Then head north to one of the great kingdoms of the Niger, the capital of the Hausa trading empire, Kano. Explore the market, one of the largest in Africa and visit the indigo dye pits.

Week 27 & 28: Via the beautiful Hausa town of Zinder to Niger. North to Agadez, with its sandy streets, Sudanese mud architecture, Tuareg nomads and large camel market. Through the vast bush and scrublands of the Sahel to Niamey on the banks of the River Niger. Burkina Faso and through Mossi tribal lands to Ouagadougou. To Bobo-Dioulasso, the relaxed yet vibrant capital of the Bobo people.

Week 29: The intriguing rock formations at Sindou. Mali and the Cliff villages of the Bandiagara Escarpment & Dogon country to visit the isolated villages of the Dogon people whose villages and art still reflect Africa 2000 years ago. To Mopti, the bustling port built on the confluence of the Bani and Niger Rivers.

Week 30: Then through the Niger's inland delta to the medieval, trading town of Djenné with its grand mosque built of sand and mud and colourful weekly market. Head north to the capital, Bamako.

Week 31: Into Mauritania to Ayoun & Kiffa, important stops in the once lucrative trans-Saharan trade routes. Through oases villages to rock hills of the Massif de l'Assaba and sand dunes of the southern Sahara. Towards the coast and the capital Nouakchott with its colourful markets of Saharan wares and large beach thronging with Senegalese fishermen.

Week 32: Desert tracks to Nouadhibou, Mauritania's second city and into

Morocco to Dakhla and Layoune opposite the Canary Islands.

Week 33: North to the fascinating city of Marrakech, with its palaces, bazaars and markets. Drive up into the Atlas Mountains, crossing the Tizi-n-Tichka pass. Desert crossing on the edge of the Sahara to the great chasms of the Todra Gorge. Through Berber villages of the Middle Atlas to Georges du Ziz. To Fez to explore the old Medina, royal palaces and city mosques. Volubilis and the ancient Roman ruins, before heading north to Rabat the nations capital and then Casablanca.

Week 34: Ferry across Straits of Gibraltar to Spain & the Costa del Sol. Transit through Europe - to Madrid & the Pyrenees, through France to the English Channel & London.

PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

DELAYS OR FORCED ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

The possibility of some delay en route is planned into this project and we should arrive on time. But, by the very nature of transcontinental travel in Africa & Asia, it should be recognised that longer delays outside our control can still happen. It is suggested that you do not make any firm commitments within 10 days of the scheduled end date of any expedition. If we are delayed en route, no additional payments to Encounter will be asked of you. Major forced changes to our expeditions are unusual in Africa. When they do happen it is because of a border closure or civil insurrection making it impossible or imprudent to enter a particular country or region. If, for reasons beyond Encounter's control, we are obliged to utilise unplanned air or sea transport Encounter would bear the first US\$300 of any additional expenditure arising out of or in connection with the continuation of the trip. Should the additional expenditure exceed US\$300 per person then a contribution would be required by you of up to (but not exceeding) US\$300. Any further amount beyond this would again be met by Encounter.

HIGHLIGHTS & ROUTE

EUROPE & NORTH AFRICA

Our crossing of Europe is a straight transit toward North Africa. From London to France, across the Loire to the wine growing regions of Bordeaux and the lowlands of Aquitaine to the Pyrenees & Spain. Madrid, the hills of Castile and Andalusia to Granada, the Sierra Nevada to the Mediterranean and Algeciras. But, depending on daylight travelling hours and weather conditions, there are full travelling days through France into Spain with scheduled stop in Madrid. Ferry across the Straits of Gibraltar to the Spanish North African territory of Ceuta, and Morocco. To the capital Rabat & royal Fez, where slim minarets and Moorish palaces rise above Africa's greatest medina. In a staggering maze of narrow alleys, merchants sell intricate hammered brass & copper, fabulous carpets and hand-tooled leather. Mule trains crowd the passageways between stalls of vegetables & spices and all of life's necessities.

THE DESERTS

Over the Atlas Mountain passes 2,300m high, the fertile land becomes twisted rock then level sands fading to a distant horizon. To the Todra Gorge, where road and river contest the space beneath sheer rock walls, and the Erg Chebbi - the great sea of dunes and silent shifting sands. Marrakech was the northern terminus on ancient trans-Saharan trade routes, and one of the most important artistic centres of the Islamic world. Soukhs and squares are crowded with traders and storytellers, jugglers and itinerant artisans, camels & desert nomads.

South from the Atlas Mountains to the rocky, desert landscapes of Tan Tan and the western Sahara to Layoune opposite the Canary Islands, then south Dakhla on a narrow peninsula in the Atlantic. It is an arid land of absolute and untouched desert, of nomadic peoples and few settlements. To the empty beaches of Nouadhibou, desert wells and low tide tracks along the Atlantic sands to Nouakchott. Inland across the southern Sahara, the sand & dunes of the Trarza & rock hills of the Massif de l'Assaba. Nema was on one of the most lucrative trans-Saharan trade routes from West Africa to Morocco & the Mediterranean. So great were the riches in gold, precious salt & slaves that the Almoravide dynasty in 11th century Morocco conquered and took control of this region from the Kings of Ghana & Senegal.

Isolated and protected in the desert, even the 17th century Arab conquest brought little change. Slavery was officially abolished here only in 1980

- and most likely the old ways continue in oases deep in the sands.

Bamako on the River Niger desert's southern fringes, and the subtle transfer to black Africa. Now market squares thrive with life and activity, skilled silversmiths hammer and shape distinctive ornaments and trinkets, there are swordmakers and seamsters, weavers and leather pouchmakers and all manner of purveyors of the improbable.

This was the centre of the Songhai and Malinke empires, great mediaeval kingdoms that controlled the movement of all trade throughout West Africa. The River Niger was their artery of life and communication.

Upstream lie the islands and waterways of Mopti in the Niger marshes, and the enormous sand and mud built mosque at Djenne. Further, in the protective cliffs of the Bandiagara Escarpment are the people of the Dogon who, resisting the inroads of Islam from their stronger neighbours, kept faithfully to their old beliefs so that today their villages and art are a mirrored reflection of Africa 2,000 years ago.

To Burkina Faso & the colourful markets of Ouagadougou. Across the branches & tributaries of the Volta rivers to Ouagadougou, the savannah and cattle lands to Niamey in Niger and Kano, Nigeria's city of the north, the great crossroads of trade between the desert lands and the West African kingdoms.

THE JUNGLES

Across northern Nigeria and south into Cameroun the drumbeat of Africa's heart grows stronger as the countryside grows ripe and green. Different sights, different ways and the different sounds of nature instil themselves into the thread and weave of our daily life. In the Kapsiki highlands of northern Cameroun the Kirdi peoples build their villages with tall, conical thatched roofs, pointing skywards to the volcanoes. Giant lava cores, all that is left of ice-age mountains and aeons of erosion, punctuate these beautiful hills.

All roads, like the rivers, lead south - into the lush, dank rainforests of Central Africa. The air is rich and humid, great trees arch overhead, and dappled light filters to forest floor where butterflies cluster in there thousands by sandy pools. The forest is never silent, the undergrowth flashes with the colour and call of brilliant birds, the upper branches dip to the excitement and screech of fleeing monkeys. Towards the coast in the less dense but hilly tropical forests around Lolodorf are the Pygmy villages. Originally nomadic the Pygmies have become increasingly sedentary.

THE COASTAL REGIONS

Out of the forest and onto Cameroon's fine beaches. The beaches north and south of Kribi, with their wild vegetation, white sand and calm waters are among the most beautiful anywhere in Africa. We travel north up this coast via the black sands at Limbe, and into back into Nigeria. After a couple of days driving along the Nigerian coast past the capital Lagos, we enter the country of Benin, sandwiched between the rainforests of Nigeria and Ghana. A flat and sandy plain runs the whole length of the coast broken up by a series of picturesque lakes and lagoons and old trading towns such as Grand Popo, surrounded by coconut groves. As well as Grand Popo, we visit the old town of Ouidah, another important centre of the slave trade. Fantastic Beach Memorial 'the gateway of no return' pays tribute to the slaves that were sent to the Americas. It is also an important Voodoo stronghold, where the cult is obviously surviving, present in the many altars and temples scattered about town, including the python temple, where sleepy snakes wrapped around your person will give you vitality and protection! Into Togo, and the palmy coastal villages where the Voodoo culture is also openly displayed with fetishes, shrines and festivals. In the capital Lome, aside from the food, craft and general bric-a-brac is the Fetish Market at Akodessewa, a myriad of stalls displaying animal skulls, bird carcasses, statues, bells and other magical and herbal medicines, all the ingredients of traditional medicine and religion.

Into Ghana and through the steep scarp and forest country with its misty hillside villages to Kumasi, the ancient capital of the Ashante Empire and the main centre of West Africa's cultural heritage. Grand colonial buildings have become worn with time and painted with layers of ochre-red dust. Visit the palace of the current Ashanti King and the old Kumasi Fort, or wander the markets for Asante crafts. We travel north to the Kakum National Park, an area of 360 square metres of protected forest, harbouring monkeys, elephants, antelope, warthogs and buffalo. The highlight of a visit here is the 300 metre aerial walkway through the canopy of the rainforest, where giant hardwoods and palms compete for space. Back to Ghana's coast where the beaches are scenic and tropical, with fishermen selling their catch in the shade of the palms. All along the coast are numerous forts and castles, some built 500 years ago, by the Europeans to protect their interests in the trade of gold, ivory and, later, slaves. Elmina, Saint Georges's Castle, is the oldest European monument in sub-Saharan Africa, built by the Portuguese in 1482. Then to Accra, Ghana's

sprawling capital city where we take our flight to East Africa.

THE PLAINS

To Arusha with views of the snow covered cone of Mt Kilimanjaro rising above the plains. Across the Great Rift Valley that runs through Africa from Lake Malawi to Ethiopia to the Ngorongoro Crater which is 16kms wide and almost sheer sided. From the rim we descend 700m into the crater by landrover. Every species of the plains are concentrated among the grasslands, woods, salt licks and lakes of this amazing natural sanctuary. Herds graze around small lakes, lion & cheetah watch from the shade of acacia trees. At the eastern edge of the Serengeti is Olduvai Gorge where in 1959 the Leakeys discovered the 1.8 million year old skull and fossil fragments of Homo Habilis. Migrating herds of zebra and wildebeest in their thousands move with the seasons across the Serengeti grasslands - the world's greatest preserve of wildlife. The chances are excellent for frequent meetings with elephant & rhino, gazelle, giraffe, leopard, hippo and buffalo, lion & cheetah. Ochre robed Masai tribesmen armed with spear and shield roam just as freely - with allegiance neither to frontier nor distant government. There are unforgettable nights camped under spreading acacia trees, with the sounds and calls of the wild just beyond the flickering firelight. Along the wild eastern shores of Lake Victoria we pass back into Kenya before crossing the equator and back into Uganda to the farmlands of the Buganda Tribes and the great lakes that are headwaters to the Nile - the 6,500 km course of the world's longest river. In Queen Elizabeth National Park the 35km long Kazinga Channel connects Lakes Edward & George. Volcanic craters & baboon cliffs are home to Uganda kobs, waterbuck, buffalo, lion & hyena. By launch through the channel with hippo & elephant, pelican, stork & fish eagle along the banks. To Murchison Falls where the Victoria Nile is squeezed to a few metres of thundering width, plunging sheer into a narrow rock gorge. The absolute volume of water forced through such a tight space, and the ability to stand right at its edge, make the falls an unforgettable sight. Into northern Kenya, a vast area bordering Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia and home to the legendary 'Jade Sea' - Lake Turkana, Kenya's largest lake where in the 1960s human skulls were discovered, believed to be about 2 ½ million years old. This area is less visited than other parts of Kenya and many of the tribes here have little contact with the modern world. It's an area of great beauty, mostly sand and scrub desert, punctuated with acacia thorn trees, festooned with weaver-birds

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nests, extinct volcanoes with barren lava beds, oases of lush vegetation surrounded by craggy mountains and islands of forests. Here you may see the giant eland, Grevy's zebra with their saucer like ears and herds of domesticated camel, while the lake is home to the largest population of Nile crocodile.

After exploring this region we return to Nairobi.

IN NAIROBI: Seven to eight days break under your own arrangements. See **MIDWAY LAYOVER**

RIFT VALLEY & THE NILE

The Great Rift Valley is a wide and often dramatic geological fault running from Mozambique & Lake Malawi through Tanzania & Kenya (spawning Mts Kilimanjaro & Kenya on the way) to Ethiopia and the Red Sea, the river Jordan & the Dead Sea. Lake Naivasha, 100kms from Nairobi, is one of the freshwater lakes of the Valley, and home to a huge variety of bird species. Joy Adamson (Born Free) built a house here; the small Hell's Gate National Park is one of only two in the country to allow access on foot. The gorge & cliffs protect zebra, baboon, ostrich & gazelle which in turn attract leopard & cheetah. To Thomson's Falls at 2400m in the cool Aberdare Hills, past the snow peaks of Mt Kenya to the wild and undeveloped tribal territories of the northern frontier. Across the lands of the Samburu to the scrub of the Kaisut Desert - canyons and camels, craggy mountains, volcanic craters and sudden oases of forested hills. Marsabit is the town of the north, a market & meeting place for the Rendille, Boran & Galla peoples - clothed in hide, wearing multicoloured beads & necklaces, fierce in tradition and independence of ways.

Climbing roads into the central highlands of Ethiopia 2-3,000m along the chain of Rift Valley lakes (Awasa, Langano, Abiyata & Ziway).

It is a beautiful, lush land with a temperate climate of woodlands & eucalyptus, small towns, wheat & tobacco. To Addis Ababa beneath Mt Entoto, the Mercato is one of the largest and liveliest in Africa, with everything from beer & vegetables to gold & silver jewellery, frankincense & myrrh.

Fly to the northern town of Bahir Dar on Lake Tana, source of the Blue Nile. Drive to Tisisat Falls and the old capital of Gonder. This was once part of the ancient Axum Empire, of the Queen of Sheba, and trade with Egypt, Greece and India in ivory, silks & spice. Then Axum faded & Gonder rose. Castles and palaces, showing influences from Europe, North Africa and Arabia were built by the emperors during the height of Gonder's

power in the 17th & 18th centuries. Monasteries and beautifully muralled churches reflect the area's 1,700 year association with Christianity.

We return by air to Addis, & fly to Cairo from where we travel by train to Aswan in Upper Egypt. The option to drive south to Abu Simbel. Fronting this incredible rock temple, four colossal statues of Ramses II guard the southern approaches to Egypt. Back at Aswan the river is studded with rocks and islands, amongst which glide graceful white feluccas - traditional shallow draft Nile sailing boats. On one of these islands are the lovely temples of Philae.

Boarding feluccas we sail slowly down stream to Kom Ombo's temples and tombs of the 'Old Kingdom'. Then by road to Luxor and time to visit the Valleys of the Kings.

A route across the eastern desert brings us to Hurghada on the Red Sea - time to rest and relax, swim & explore the coral reefs. From the solitude of St Anthony's Monastery to the streets of Cairo - the Treasures of Tutankhamun, the Pyramids and inscrutable Sphinx.

THE LEVANT, EASTERN TURKEY AND PERSIA

From Cairo across the Sinai to Nuweiba. Ferry to Jordan & the sands & beaches of Aqaba, washed by the warm, crystal-clear waters of the Red Sea. The dry ravines and narrow chasm walls of Wadi Musa reveal the red sandstone temples and treasure-houses of Petra where for centuries the Nabataean Arabs maintained an independent city-state, collecting and controlling the flow of wealth throughout the known world. To Amman and the crossroads of Damascus.

Style driven boulevards and plazas cannot hide the intriguing undertow in cobbled backstreets and pavement coffee houses, in whispered secrets over hookah pipes and along the cornucopian alleys of the covered bazaar.

In the quiet hills of cedar and olive groves behind Syria's Mediterranean coast, the imposing crusader stronghold of Krak des Chevaliers seems oddly out of place.

The cold stone lines of mediaeval Europe echo to another era in the Levant's long story. North into Turkey's Taurus Mountains, the high Anatolian Plateau and the steppes of central Asia. Early Christians fled to Cappadocia and built completely underground cities. Churches, tunnel-linked houses and villages are carved out of the ravines and cliffs of soft sandstone at Goreme. Life in Cappadocia has gone unchanged for centuries, time's only influence is slow erosion. Turkey's best wines and most colourful carpets are also here. The Anatolian scenery is magnificent & rugged, nomad descendants of

Genghis Khan's Mongols and the cameleers of Silk Road caravans still pitch their black tents here, moving across central Asia without regard to frontiers.

Mt Ararat marks our entry into Iran, to Esfahan's beautiful squares and blue tiled mosques that project the highest achievements of Islamic art and architecture. The pillars of Persepolis stand over the dust of King Darius' great Empire, the Dasht-e-Lut's dramatic landscape of arid rock and parched plains leads to crumbling caravanserais, to the tents and wandering camels of the Kashgai tribes.

PAKISTAN, INDIA & NEPAL

From the small border town of Zahedan we cross into Pakistan and the tribal desert lands of Baluchistan to the desert city of Quetta. Pathan villages of the Afghan hills to Peshawar, gateway to the Khyber Pass, and a frontier town of frenetic bazaars and dubious dealings. Of opium & carpets, precious stones, firearms and ammunition.

The bridge at Attock across the great River Indus heralds a suddenly different land. Ahead lie the great plains of the Indian sub-continent, green and fertile from the deluge of summer monsoons, prized by history's invaders - Aryans, Alexander's Greeks, Tartars, Afghans & Moghuls. Here is proud Rawalpindi so dear to the British Raj; the Red Fort & Shalimar Gardens of Lahore - city that Kipling loved to hate, where the swirl of commerce & daily life is celebrated with wild abandon and Punjabi panache.

From May to October: During the hot weather, we head north into the Karakoram Mountains - dramatic western teeth of the Himalaya. To the scenery and pastoral settings of the Swat valley, the Murree Hills and Gilgit on the upper Indus beneath the snows of Nanga Parbat 8,100m.

From November to April: During the cool weather, we move south into India's Thar Desert and the colours of Rajasthan. To Jaisalmer, hilltop 12th century town springing straight from the pages of 'Arabian Nights'. Jodhpur's cliff fortress, museum of artistic & martial perfections and excess; and Udaipur - graceful lake city of island palaces and gardens.

Dawn spills across the wide Jumna and Ganges rivers, exploding a day of new sounds and sights, of heady aromas and a spirit of India that invades the soul. Here is the formal ceremony and politics of Delhi, the marble shades of royal Agra and the Taj Mahal, the pastel palaces and incomprehensible wealth of Jaipur's Maharajahs. There is evocative silence in the empty Moghul city of Fatehpur Sikri and enlightenment among the erotic carvings of the Karma Sutra at

Khajuraho. There is calm conviction in the pilgrim's devout steps towards the holy waters of the goddess Ganges at Varanasi.

India also lives along her backroads, in shadows of morning mist and shafts of dappled sunlight, the quiet footfall of a wayward elephant and the accepting smiles of village life.

In Nepal's teak forested lowlands tiger and rhinoceros stalk the riverbanks of the Royal Chitwan National Park. (Optional day on elephant back through park, on foot with guide, & dugout canoe along river - approx US\$30. Asian rhinoceros, deer, gaurial crocodile, waterfowl & raptors, rare tiger). Our road ends against a backdrop of Himalayan giants that crowd the horizons to improbable heights, in the pagodas and palaces of Kathmandu - where everywhere the eye is instructed upward.

GAME PARKS & RESERVES

Time spent in the major wildlife reserves and included in the expedition cost is usually Waza National Park (1 day), Kakum National Park (1 day), Queen Elizabeth (2 days), Murchison Falls (1 day), Serengeti (2 days), Ngorongoro Crater (1 day), Hell's Gate (1 day) & Chitwan (1 day).

GROUP SIZE

In Africa: 21 max including Encounter staff. **In Asia,** between Cairo & Kathmandu: 24 max including Encounter staff. Plus local guides Fez, Dogon, Waza Nat. Park, Kakum Nat. Park, Queen Elizabeth Nat. Park in Uganda, Ngorongoro Crater, Peshawar, Jaipur and Chitwan and other sites/centres where the Project Leader considers them an advantage.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The heat of the Sahara, West Africa, humid and damp conditions in the central African jungles together with minimal facilities throughout much of the continent can all take their toll. The hot, monsoon climate of India & Pakistan from May to September can also be difficult. Living a nomadic/camping lifestyle for eight months under these conditions requires a flexible and adaptable approach, and cannot be recommended to many people over the ages of 45-50. Water for personal washing may occasionally need to be restricted in certain regions, e.g. the Sahara.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project.

This amount will be utilised by the Project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN EXPEDITION COST

All transport (except flight between Addis Ababa & Cairo or v.v.), food, camping equipment & supplies, hotels & guest houses in Bahir Dar & Gonder & in Egypt, local guides, camping fees, tolls, entrance fees to the following: guided tour of Medina in Fez, guided trek into Dogon Villages in Bandiagara, in National Parks of Ghana, Uganda & Tanzania, Ngorongoro Crater & Hell's Gate Park in Kenya, monastery at Gonder and at least 2 tombs in the Valley of the Kings in Luxor. The site of the Pyramids and Sphinx in Giza, entrance to Petra & Jerash in Jordan, entrance & guide the environs of Goreme, city & bazaar guide in Peshawar, city & palace tour in Jaipur, Taj Mahal in Agra, temples of Khajuraho, morning tour of Varanasi and Ghats. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

EXPEDITION COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights to/from Kathmandu/London and transfers to/from airport & airport taxes in connection with same; Integral Flight & airport taxes between Addis Ababa & Cairo or v.v. (allow approx. US\$600); vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major centres (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Other individual entry fees to museums/sights not stated before (minimal cost), and individual options inside Chitwan National Park, & Abu Simbel as also noted in Highlights & Route. Accommodation & meals in Kathmandu/London before/after expedition.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit. Malarial prophylaxis is supplied throughout Africa.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack, or a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear Water bottle, personal medicines and toiletries etc. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Soft bags or frameless backpacks are the most suitable kinds of luggage to bring. Most flights into and out of Cairo have a

20kg baggage limit. This limit is also applied to the Integral Flight between Addis Ababa and Cairo (or v.v.)

TRANSPORT

Encounter (4WD in Africa) expedition truck, landrovers in Ngorongoro Crater, on foot Hell's Gate National Park (day hike), internal flights Addis Ababa - Bahir Dar & Gonder - Addis Ababa (approx 1 hr each), chartered local vehicles around Bahir Dar & Gonder, Integral International flight between Addis Ababa & Cairo (approx 3 hrs), train between Cairo & Aswan, chartered bus & driver throughout Egypt, with feluccas between Aswan & Kom Ombo (1 day); ferries across Red Sea between Jordan and Egypt and across English Channel, Straits of Gibraltar & various small central African rivers.

INTEGRAL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT ADDIS ABABA - CAIRO (or v.v.)

Due to the unpredictability of crossing Sudan, especially timings we fly from Addis Ababa to Cairo or v.v. The cost of this flight and taxes are **NOT** included in the published price of the expedition. Payment for the flight is made en route and only in the days immediately before the actual flight date. Payment **must** therefore be made to your Project Leader in cash dollars or in recognised traveller's cheques. The estimated cost of the flight is US\$600. (Prices can change, downward as well as upward, with exchange rates, oil prices and inflation. We cannot therefore guarantee the price to the last dollar, but we are confident that any fluctuation will not be more than 10%). You should budget this amount into your travelling funds and personal spending money. We cannot accept credit card payments for this flight.

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout, apart from traveller's hotels & guest houses on a multi-share basis in Bahir Dar & Gonder (approx 2 - 3 nights), & in Egypt (approx 12 nights), plus: On board train between Cairo and Aswan (1 night) on deck aboard Nile feluccas between Aswan & Kom Ombo (1 night). Equipped campsites are available in most of Europe and parts of Asia.

Occasional & basic campground facilities exist in some cities & centres of Africa, usually extending to simple washing/showering & toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open bush camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. (Your involvement is required in camp setup, domestic & day to day routines etc).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches. Project members are involved in daily fresh food shopping & cooking. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat where available, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves, supplemented by truck supplies of canned & dried goods in areas where fresh supplies are unavailable or severely limited. We frequently bake our own bread). Restaurant/hotel meals in Bahir Dar, Gonder & area, in Egypt & meals prepared by felucca crews on Nile. In larger cities/centres where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will usually be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport(s) that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the expedition, and which does **not** have any evidence of having visited Israel. Visa, entry and exit stamps during the Great Overland Encounter will fill up **40 pages** in your passport. But passports for several nationalities do not even have this number of pages! However, depending on your nationality, you can either be issued with a second passport or have extra pages inserted into your original one. (Details on this are provided in our pre-departure information). Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and even then are subject to sudden change. Some visas need to be obtained before departure, others en route. Encounter or your agent can advise you of all the up to date visa requirements applicable to you, and their costs. We can also help you in obtaining any visas you may require before departure. Visas en route are applied for as a group with the assistance of your Project Leader. This expedition crosses 23 countries, most of which require visas for all or some of us.

INSURANCE & MEDICAL

Everyone must have individual personal travel insurance. Various policies are available, but they must include a minimum of £20,000 or US\$30,000 for medical, hospital & additional expenses including emergency repatriation. You will need to obtain vaccinations against Yellow Fever and Meningitis. Several other vaccinations are strongly recommended though not required by law for travel through Africa & Asia. There up to date details are given in our pre-departure information. Malaria pills are supplied on the African leg of the project (i.e 24 weeks).

MIDWAY LAYOVER

7 to 8 nights following our arrival in Nairobi. This time is at your own expense and under your own arrangements. (Encounter can of course help with accommodation and rates in Nairobi hotels). You should budget US\$250 to US\$300 for this week to cover hotels, food and incidentals. You can find as much or as little as you want to do in this time. Nairobi is an interesting city with plenty to do - National Museum, Nairobi National Park, Karen Blixen's house, Snake Park & Railway Museum, Bomas of Kenya - traditional dance & songs, cinemas, shopping along Kenyatta Avenue & city market. There are tropical beaches on the Indian Ocean at Malindi - 1 day's bus or train from Nairobi, or the magic of Lamu Island - 1 hr by air from Nairobi. Or:

CLIMBING MT KILIMANJARO

The walking climb of Kilimanjaro 5,894m is a challenging but very worthwhile experience not to be missed if you are fit, in the area, and have the inclination & time!

The climb, including hotel in Moshi at start and end, takes 7 days/6 nights with transport to/from Nairobi.

The cost of the climb including all government, hut, & entry fees, guide, porters, food, hotel & meals before & after the climb is approximately US\$600 to US\$750. This is payable direct to the climb operators in Nairobi or Moshi.

The climb may be started on any day of the week. If you like, Encounter can make a confirmed reservation for you. (There is a reservation charge by Encounter of US\$50 for this). In the peak periods of July-September and December-January reservations are necessary as only a limited number of people at a time are allowed on the mountain. If you think you might be interested, ask for our information sheet on Climbing Kilimanjaro (code: MKC).

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

You should allow approximately US\$110 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, occasional lunches in major centres, souvenirs and additional museum/site entrance fees that are not included in the project cost.

You should also allow for your food & accommodation etc during the Midway Layover, and US\$600 for the en route payment for the Integral International flight and taxes between Addis Ababa & Cairo or v.v.

You should budget a further US\$30 per day that you spend in Kathmandu after or before the expedition to cover hotel, meals etc. Ethnic crafts can be tempting, attractive and good value in

Africa, and Asia is a souvenir collector's paradise. Good buys include: Moroccan leatherwork, carpets, copper & brassware; Saharan & Sahel jewellery & silver; West African masks, carvings & ceramics; Central African beads, musical instruments, cloth & tribal artifacts; East African ebony & hardwood carvings, bracelets, baskets, weaving & jewellery; kilims, rugs, tapestry, hand beaten brass & copperware in Egypt, the Middle East & India; silks, miniature paintings, lacquerware, gems & jewellery & inlaid woodwork in the Indian sub-continent. Many small 'treasures' need not cost much at all.

Credit cards are accepted only in a few of the larger cities/centres in Africa, slightly more widely in Asia. Apart from the above, and your en route visas, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money.

ARRIVING AND LEAVING

You must arrive at our London office or our Kathmandu hotel at 18.00 hrs two days before expedition departure date for the pre-departure meeting. On departures from Kathmandu we recommend that you arrive at least 3 days before expedition departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights. (It is safe to say that even a week in the Kathmandu valley is not wasted: city, temples & bazaars, restaurants & nightlife, old city of Bhaktapur, nature reserve, overnight at Nagarkot for sunrise/sunset Himalayan views).

Ending: Even though serious delays en route are unlikely, we would prefer that you not have any firm commitments for up to 10 days after scheduled project.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

In Africa the 'Great Safari' (London-Nairobi or v.v.) & 'Africa Encompassed' (London-Nairobi-Cairo or v.v.) are part of 'The Great Overland Encounter'. In Asia 'The Great Overland Encounter' is also the 'East of Suez' part of 'The Backroads of Asia' (Istanbul-Cairo-Kathmandu or v.v.). On departures from London you may therefore be travelling with some group members who are leaving in Nairobi or Cairo, and joining others from Cairo on to Kathmandu. And on departures from Kathmandu you may be travelling with some group members who are continuing through western Asia from Cairo to Istanbul, while you are joining others in Cairo or Nairobi for the journey across Africa.

**OVERFLIGHT CONTINGENCY FROM
ACCRA TO NAIROBI (OR V.V)**

Due to the ongoing political instability in Central Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, all our Trans Africa Projects are presently overflying this region. The preferred route is from Accra, Ghana to Nairobi, Kenya or vice versa. The overflight contingency involves not only the cost of the international flight & taxes, but other incidental expenses should we need to employ additional transport, accommodation or local agents. According to our conditions – see page 62, section B, point 4, headed Contingencies, we cover the first \$300 US of any such plan, at which point we will require a contribution from you. Presently, the contingency is totalling approx \$550 US, so you should allow for a personal contribution of \$250 to \$275 US which would be paid to the Project Leader at the time of the overflight. Payments will have to be made in cash dollars or travellers cheques – credit card payments cannot unfortunately be accepted.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment

Contingency

Contribution.....

Return flights.....

Integral Flight (Addis - Cairo or v.v.)
& taxes

Cost of Midway Layover
in Nairobi

Visas.....

Vaccinations.....

Insurance.....

Personal spending money.....

Total_____

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.