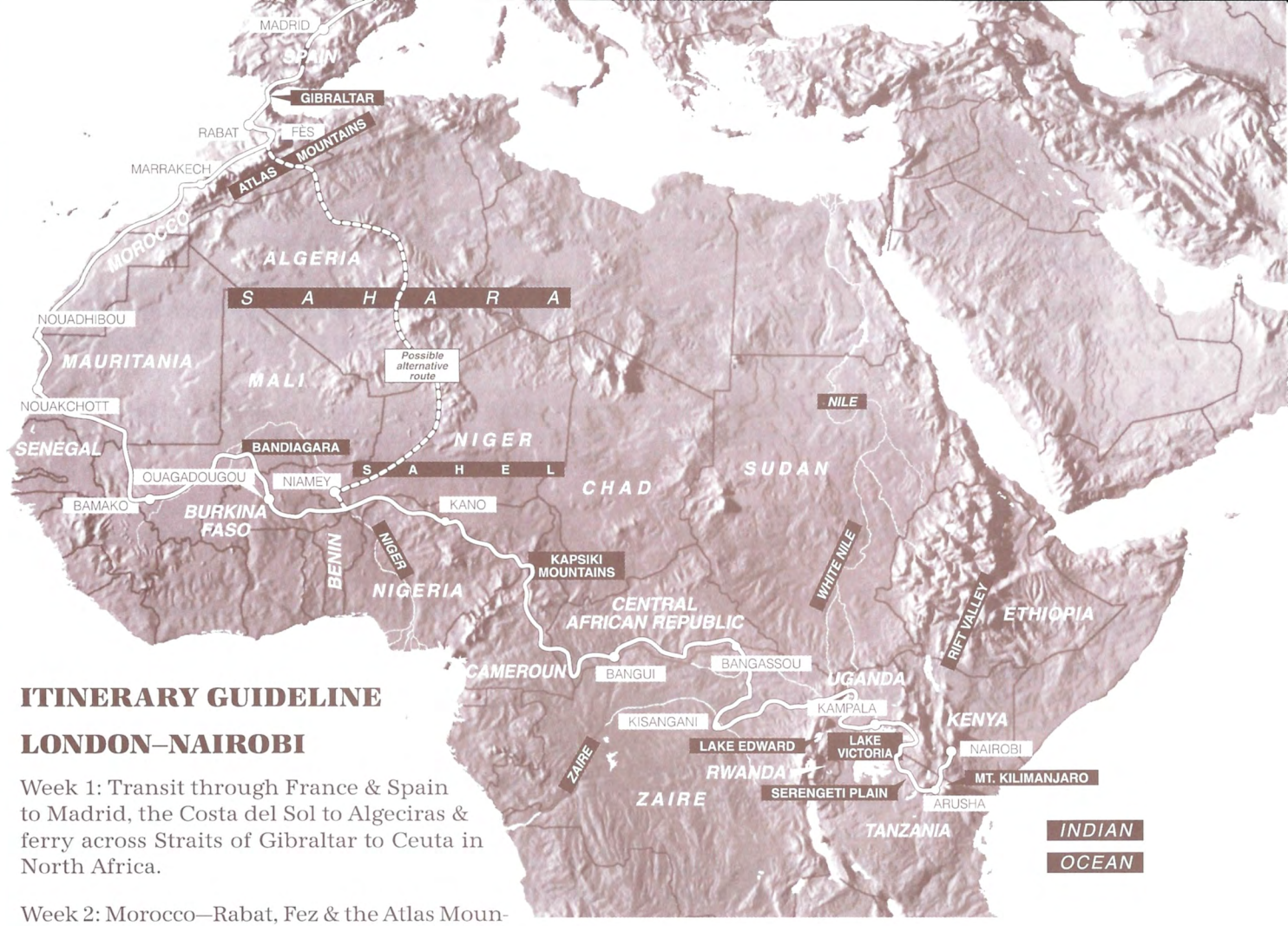
THE GREAT SAFARI

with

ENCOUNTER OVERLAND

LONDON to NAIROBI
(or vice versa)
16 weeks 11,000 miles
(18,000kms)

EUROPE, MOROCCO, WESTERN SAHARA, MAURITANIA, MALI, BURKINA FASO, NIGER, NIGERIA, CAMEROUN, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, ZAIRE, UGANDA, TANZANIA, KENYA



ITINERARY GUIDELINE

LONDON–NAIROBI

Week 1: Transit through France & Spain to Madrid, the Costa del Sol to Algeciras & ferry across Straits of Gibraltar to Ceuta in North Africa.

Week 2: Morocco—Rabat, Fez & the Atlas Mountains to Todra Gorge & Marrakech.

Week 3: The Atlantic coast into Western Sahara, Layoune opposite the Canary Islands, to Dakhla.

Week 4: Desert tracks to Mauritania, Nouadhibou to the capital Nouakchott.

Week 5: Inland across southern Sahara to oasis villages & Nema. South to Mali, the Niger river & capital of Bamako. Alongside river to Djenne & Mopti.

Week 6: Cliff villages of the Bandiagara Escarpment & Dogon country. To Burkina Faso, Mossi tribal lands to Ouagadougou.

Week 7: Forest & savannah country to Niger. Niamey on the Niger river, vast bush & scrublands of the Sahel to Nigeria & Kano's great market.

Week 8: To Cameroun, highland villages & volcanic cores of the Kapsiki Mountains.

Week 9: South into the rivers & jungles of Central Africa.

Week 10: Elephants antelope & pygmy settlements of Dzanca Sancha National Park, to French colonial city of Bangui.

Week 11: Kembe Falls & Bangassou, ferry across river to Zaire—jungle villages & river crossings to:

Week 12: Buta and Kisangani on the Zaire river. Pygmies of the tall Ituri forest.

Week 13: Bunia, through the Ruwenzori Mountains to Uganda. Murchison Falls and the meeting of the Victoria & Albert Niles.

Week 14: Wildlife of Queen Elizabeth National Park & Kazinga Channel between Lakes Edward & George. Buganda tribal lands to Kampala & Lake Victoria.

Week 15: Across Victoria Nile to Kenya & lake port of Kisumu. Into Tanzania & the grasslands of Serengeti National Park.

Week 16: Wildlife of Serengeti & the Ngorongoro Crater, the Rift Valley & views of Kilimanjaro, to Arusha & Nairobi.

NAIROBI–LONDON

Week 1: To Arusha in Tanzania, the Rift Valley & views of Kilimanjaro, wildlife of the Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti National Parks.

Week 2: Grasslands of Serengeti Park to Lake Victoria & Kenya, lake port of Kisumu & across equator to Uganda, the Victoria Nile & Kampala.

Week 3: Buganda tribal lands to Kazinga Channel between Lakes Edward & George, & wildlife of Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Week 4: Murchison Falls and the meeting of the Victoria & Albert Niles. Through the Ruwenzori Mountains to Zaire & Bunia.

Week 5: Pygmies of the tall Ituri forest, to Kisangani on the Zaire river. Jungles of Central Africa—villages & ferry crossings to Buta.

Week 6: Ferry across Mbomou river to Bangassou in Central African Republic. To Kembe Falls & French colonial city of Bangui.

Week 7: Elephants antelope & pygmy settlements of Dzanca Sancha National Park, & to Bouar.

Week 8: North through Cameroun, across hills of the Massif de l'Adamou and out of the jungles to:

Week 9: The villages, green highlands & volcanic cores of the Kapsiki Mountains into Nigeria.

Week 10: Nigeria & Kano's great market. Vast bush & scrublands of the Sahel to Niamey on the Niger river.

Week 11: Forest & savannah country of Burkina Faso to Ouagadougou, through Mossi tribal lands to Mali. Cliff villages of the Bandiagara Escarpment & Dogon country.

Week 12: Mopti & Djenne in the Niger marshes. Alongside river to Mali's capital Bamako. North into the desert & Nema in Mauritania.

Week 13: Oasis villages of the southern Sahara to Nouakchott on the Atlantic, and north to Nouadhibou.

Week 14: Desert tracks & Atlantic shores into the Western Sahara to Dakhla, Layoune to Marrakech.

Week 15: The Atlas Mountains & Todra Gorge to Fez, and Ceuta on the Mediterranean.

Week 16: Ferry across the Straits of Gibraltar to Algeciras & the Costa del Sol. Transit through Spain to Madrid, and 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 expedition and we usually arrive on time. But, by the very nature of transcontinental travel in Africa, 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 8 days of the scheduled end date of The Great Safari. If we are delayed en route, no additional payments to Encounter Overland 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. In the worst of cases this could involve an overflight of the affected area. If this were to happen, Encounter Overland would meet the first US$300 per person of the fare. Should more than this be needed, a contribution from you of up to (but not exceeding) US$300 would be required. Any further amount beyond this would again be met by Encounter Overland.

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 & 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 overnight stops in Madrid, Granada & the Costa del Sol. Ferry (1 hour) across the Straits of Gibraltar to the Spanish North African territory of Ceuta, and Morocco. To the capital Rabat and 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 (7,500ft/2,300m) 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 Western Sahara. To Layoune opposite the Canary Islands and 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 Niger river 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 Niger river 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 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 their 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.

Deep in the jungles of the Central African Republic is the Dzanca Sancha National Park, home to the Baaka pygmies, to elephant, forest antelope and multi coloured jungle bird species. Rarely

seen, there is at least one known colony of lowland gorillas here. The town of Bangui lies in a flame of luxuriant tropical vegetation along the wide Ubangi river. Few roads reach this small capital, the river is the natural lifeline. There are coffee and cotton plantations, red brick mission churches, French patisseries and market stalls piled with exotic tropical fruits.

We ferry across the river to north-east Zaire, to slow tracks through dense jungles and small riverside settlements remote from the centres of power and commerce. Simple ferries carry infrequent vehicles across the network of river crossings. To Buta and Kisangani on the great Zaire river, and into the tall cover of the great Ituri forest where narrow paths tunnel the undergrowth to clearings and encampments of the Mbuti pygmies.

At Epulu's research station we see the forest okapi, an oddity of ancestry and one of Africa's rarest animals. The forests thin as we near the volcanic Ruwenzori ranges, the fabled 'Mountains of the Moon' that split the dense rainforests from the wide reaches of the East African plains. In these hills the close humidity falls away, as wide horizons open to the cool clear air.

THE PLAINS

Across this mountain watershed is Uganda, and the great lakes that are headwaters to the Nile—the 4000 mile (6,500 km) course of the world's longest river.

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.

Across the equator in Queen Elizabeth National Park the 20mile/35km long Kazinga Channel connects Lakes Edward & George. Until the late 1800's this region of savanna bush & river grasses was inhabited by cattle farmers. Then rinderpest killed the herds, the lion took to man-eating—and nature created its own reserve.

Camping at Mweya Lodge & the Park HQ on a promontory in Lake Edward, drive to volcanic craters & baboon cliffs that are home to Uganda kobs, waterbuck, buffalo, lion & hyena; and by launch through the channel with hippo, elephant, pelican, stork & fish eagle along the banks. Through farmlands of the Buganda tribes to Kampala and the north shores of Lake Victoria at Entebbe; rolling hills of tea and coffee plantations in the Kenyan highlands to the wild eastern shores of Lake Victoria. Migrating herds of zebra and wildebeest in their thousands move with the seasons across the Serengeti grassland plains—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 spears and shields 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. From purple dawn to blazing sunset, the raw beauty of Africa's nature is all around.

At the eastern edge of the Serengeti is Olduvai Gorge where, in 1959, the Leakeys discovered the skull and fossil fragments of Homo Habilis. They are 1.8 million years old and Olduvai is possibly where all mankind's ancestors first walked upright and fashioned the first tools. The Ngorongoro Crater is 10 miles/16kms wide and almost sheer sided. From the rim we descend 2200ft/700m into the crater by Landrover—to a caldera floor that is a microcosm of African game—zebra, wildebeeste, elephant and 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. Across the Great Rift Valley the snow covered cone of Mt Kilimanjaro rises above the haze, dominating the plains.

GAME PARKS & RESERVES

Time spent in the major wildlife reserves and included in the expedition cost is usually Dzanca Sancha (2 days), Queen Elizabeth (2 days), Serengeti (2 days), Ngorongoro Crater (1 day).

GROUP SIZE & STAFF

21 max including EO staff. Plus local guides Fez, Dogon, Kano, Dzanga Sancha, Station de l'Epulu, Queen Elizabeth Park, Serengeti & Ngorongoro Crater.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The heat of the Sahara and West Africa, humid and damp conditions in the central jungles together with minimal facilities throughout much of Africa. Living a nomadic/camping lifestyle for 16 weeks 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 the Sahara.

INCLUDED IN EXPEDITION COST

All transport, food, camping equipment & supplies, local guides, camping fees, tolls, entrance fees & activities as detailed from published starting date of expedition until arrival in Nairobi or London. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

EXPEDITION COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights to/from Nairobi/London, transfers to/from airport & airport taxes, vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major centres (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost). Accommodation and meals in London/Nairobi before/after the expedition.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard EO truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack and a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear, water bottle, personal medicines & 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. Airlines flying in and out of East Africa have a 44lbs/20kg baggage limit.

TRANSPORT

EO expedition truck, Landrovers in Ngorongoro Crater; ferries across English Channel, Straits of Gibraltar & various small rivers in Africa.

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout. Equipped campsites in most of Europe. Occasional & basic campground facilities exist in some main centres/cities of Africa, usually extending to simple washing/showering & toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open "bush" camping with no facilities other than standard EO truck equipment. (Your involvement is needed in camp setup, domestic & day to day routines etc).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches. Expedition 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).

In a few larger cities where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal. Vegetarians usually have no great difficulty maintaining an adequate diet through Africa, though it must be accepted that for a few days at a time in remoter desert and jungle regions fresh supplies may not be available and your meals may need to rely heavily on canned & dehydrated vegetables, cereal staples, canned fruit etc.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the expedition, and which contains not less than 26 blank pages. Your passport should also be free of any evidence of having visited Israel.

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. EO 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 leader/driver. This expedition crosses 13 African nations, 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 and 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. Their up to date details are given in our pre-departure information. Malaria pills are supplied on the expedition.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

To cover personal day to day expenditure en route—drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, (average) en route visa costs, some individual museum entry fees & souvenirs. You should budget £25/$40 per day that you spend in Nairobi after or before the expedition to cover hotel, meals & incidentals.

Ethnic crafts can be tempting, attractive and good value in Africa. Good buys can include Moroccan leatherwork, carpets, copper & brasswork; Saharan & Sahel jewellery & silver; West African masks, carvings & ceramics; Central African beads, musical instruments, cloth & tribal artifacts; East African hardwood carvings, bracelets, baskets, weaving & jewellery. Many small 'treasures' need not cost much at all.

Credit cards are accepted only in a few of the larger cities. Apart from this and your en route visas, Encounter Overland has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in Africa.

ARRIVING AND LEAVING

There will be a pre-departure meeting at our London offices or our Nairobi hotel at 6.00 pm two days before expedition departure date.

Departures from Nairobi—this meeting is also your latest arrival time.

If you are arriving earlier, 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, Indian Ocean beaches at Malindi—1 day's bus or train from Nairobi, or Lamu island—1 hr by air).

PLEASE NOTE
Even though serious delays en route are unlikely, we would prefer that you not have any firm commitments for up to 8 days after scheduled expedition completion date.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

"The Great Safari" expedition is also a part of the "Africa A—Z" (London—Nairobi—Capetown or v.v.), "Africa Encompassed" (London—Nairobi—Cairo or v.v.) and "The Great Overland Encounter" (London—Nairobi—Cairo—Kathmandu or v.v.). On departures from London you may therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing their travels onwards from Nairobi. And on Nairobi departures you may be joining some group members who have already been 'on the road' for 10 weeks from Capetown or 15 weeks from Kathmandu.

CLIMBING MT KILIMANJARO

The walking climb of Kilimanjaro (19,337ft/5,894m) is a challenging but very worthwhile experience which is 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. A further travelling day should be allowed at each end to get between Nairobi & Moshi, just across the border in Tanzania at the base of the mountain. The cost of the climb including all government, hut, & entry fees, guide, porters, food, hotel & meals before & after the climb is approximately US$520. This is payable direct to the climb operators in Moshi on your arrival. The climb may be started on any day of the week. If you like, EO can make a confirmed reservation for you. (There is a reservation charge by EO of US$50 for this).

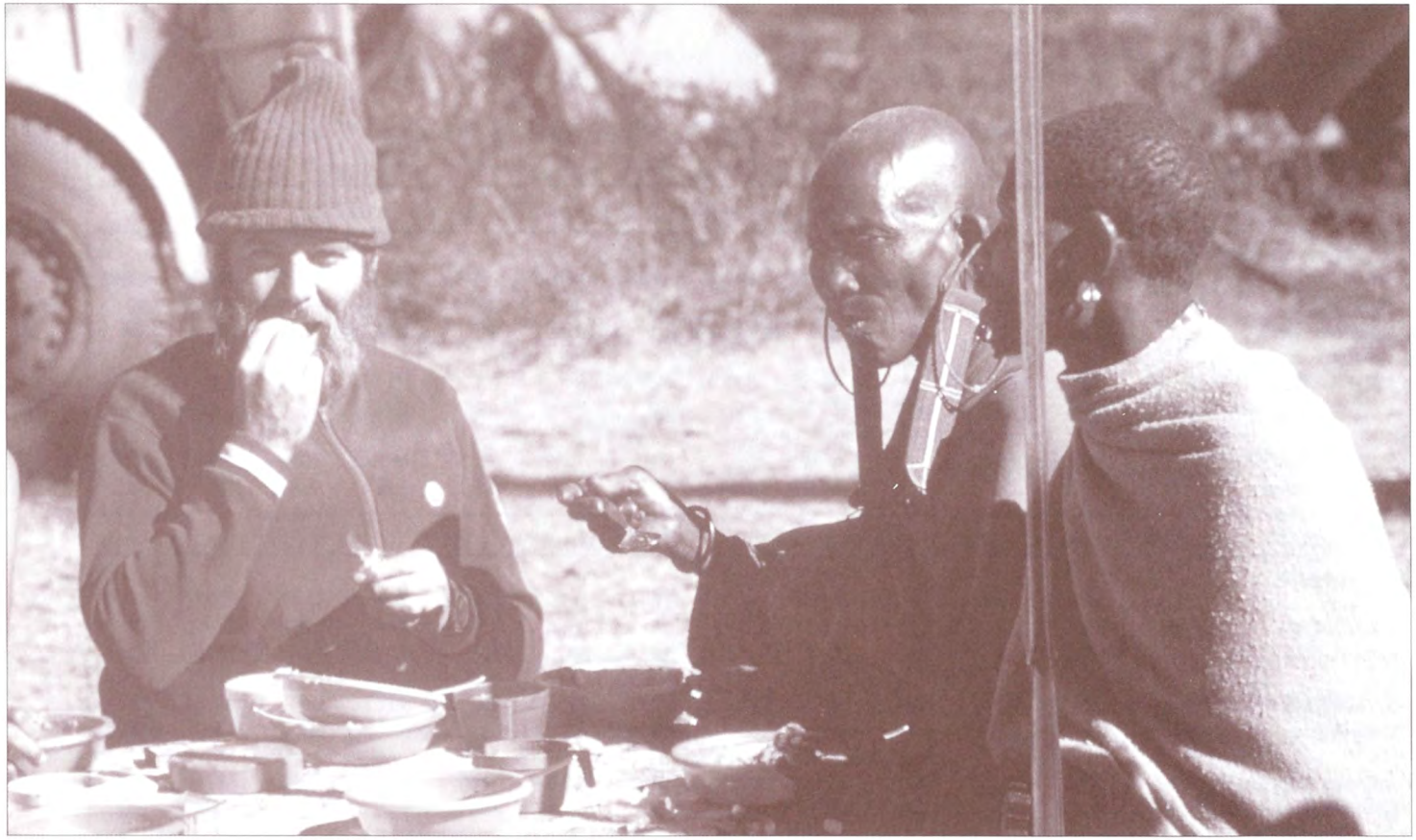
In the peak periods of July—September and December—January reservations are usually necessary as only a limited number of people at a time are allowed on the mountain. If you think you might be interested, ask for our information dossier on Climbing Kilimanjaro.

INTERESTING READING

A Good Man in Africa (William Boyd), Things Fall Apart (Chinua Achebe), The Flame Trees of Thika (Elspeth Huxley). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

SPECIFIC DETAILS

On Mailing Lists for receiving letters from home, the best ways to organise & carry your spending money, clothing lists etc are all contained in our pre-departure information.



CLIMATE

France & Spain to the Mediterranean. Cold Winters; Warm Summers; Year round rainfall.

MARITIME

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	3	5	11	16	20	23	25	24	21	14	8	4
Daily Average	Low	-2	-1	2	6	9	13	15	14	11	7	3	0
FAHRENHEIT	High	38	41	51	76	69	74	77	76	69	58	47	39
Daily Average	Low	29	30	35	42	49	55	58	57	52	44	38	32
Relative Humidity		77%	70%	57%	51%	50%	52%	53%	54%	60%	68%	77%	81%
Rainfall in mm		58	44	38	44	55	73	70	76	57	52	55	54

Western Sahara, Mauritania & Mali to Niger & Nigeria. Warm Winters with sandstorms. Hot Summers with rain in south. Hotter & drier inland.

DESERT & SAHEL

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	29	31	32	32	34	33	32	32	34	33	32	28
Daily Average	Low	14	15	17	18	21	23	23	24	24	22	18	13
FAHRENHEIT	High	85	87	89	90	93	92	89	90	93	91	89	83
Daily Average	Low	57	59	63	64	69	73	74	75	75	71	65	56
Relative Humidity		31%	30%	30%	32%	35%	48%	63%	69%	59%	41%	35%	34%
Rainfall in mm		0	3	0	0	0	3	13	104	23	10	3	0

Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Central African Republic & Zaire. Hot, wet & humid.

RAINFOREST

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	31	31	31	31	31	30	29	28	29	30	29	30
Daily Average	Low	21	21	21	21	21	21	19	20	20	20	20	20
FAHRENHEIT	High	88	88	88	88	87	86	84	83	85	86	85	86
Daily Average	Low	69	69	69	70	69	69	67	68	68	68	68	68
Relative Humidity		66%	63%	64%	68%	69%	71%	72%	75%	69%	70%	67%	60%
Rainfall in mm		53	84	178	158	137	114	132	165	183	218	198	84

Uganda, Kenya & Tanzania. Hot days, warm nights. 'Short Rains' Nov/Dec. 'Long Rains' March-May.

PLAINS

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	28	28	27	26	25	25	25	25	27	27	27	27
Daily Average	Low	18	18	18	18	17	17	17	16	17	17	17	17
FAHRENHEIT	High	83	82	81	79	78	77	77	78	80	81	80	80
Daily Average	Low	65	65	64	64	63	63	62	61	62	63	63	63
Relative Humidity		54%	56%	62%	69%	72%	69%	66%	66%	65%	64%	63%	62%
Rainfall in mm		46	61	130	175	147	74	46	86	91	97	122	99

AGENT'S STAMP

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Return flights .....

Visas .....

Vaccinations .....

Insurance .....

Personal spending money .....

TOTAL_____