



A SPECTACULAR WILDLIFE ADVENTURE IN KENYA & TANZANIA ELEPHANTASTIC!



THIS MONSTROUS BULL ELEPHANT comes thundering out of the bushes, its trunk as thick as a tree, its tusks gleaming like bayonets! Its ears flap wildly, and its beady little eyes are red with rage. It skids to a halt 10 metres from where I'm standing, its huge grey body wreathed in clouds of dust. It raises its trunk, splitting the air with a

scream. And as it begins its death-charge ... I wake up.

Phew! Nightmares like that are common, I'm told, on your first safari. But far from having nightmares, I actually found these great grey giants utterly fascinating. I mean, try to get your head around these **jumbo-facts**:

- Africa's elephants each consume more than 200kgs of greenage per day (which explains the football-sized doos!) – washing it down with 200+ litres of water!
- They're on the go 16-to-20 hours each day – eating, drinking and sniffing out the next leafy meal. They'll walk all day if necessary (their home-range can be thousands of square kilometres), grabbing a snooze in the shade. They'll even lie down and snore, if it's safe!
- Elephants are extremely social, raising their kids in strong family units (mainly cows and calves) led by the oldest matriarch.
- Baby elephants are remarkably playful, drinking from their mum until they're four-to-six years old. But when young bulls hit puberty they're urged to go and do their own (largely solitary) thing.
- This lifestyle obviously agrees with the boys: healthy males can live for 60 or 70 years, reaching a height of three-and-a-half metres and a weight of five tonnes!
- Africa's elephants are equipped with oversized heads, but skulls full of air-pockets (to lighten things up). They have toenails (instead of hooves) ... spongy pads on the soles of their feet

(enabling them to move silently) ... & enormous flappy ears (providing stunning hearing plus air-conditioning).

- Their tusks are worth their weight in gold (good for digging, foraging, pushing trees over and fighting). And their extra-thick skin (3cm in places) is so sensitive-to-touch that a baby can run between the mother's legs and not get squashed.



- That multi-purpose trunk serves as a nose, arm, hand, tool, drinking straw and weapon (powerful enough to kill a lion with a single swipe). And two lobes on the tips of their trunks act like fingers – grasping seeds, roots, fruit, flowers, leaves (even removing the odd thorn).
- Finally, **these jumbos aren't dumbos!** With the aid of 'dungcams' (remote-control cameras disguised as dung-heaps), researchers now suspect that elephants are as smart as the great apes – talking to each other with complex sounds and signals, co-ordinating group movements across vast distances, sharing hand-me-down knowledge of tasty diets and remote water-holes, celebrating birth and mourning their dead ...