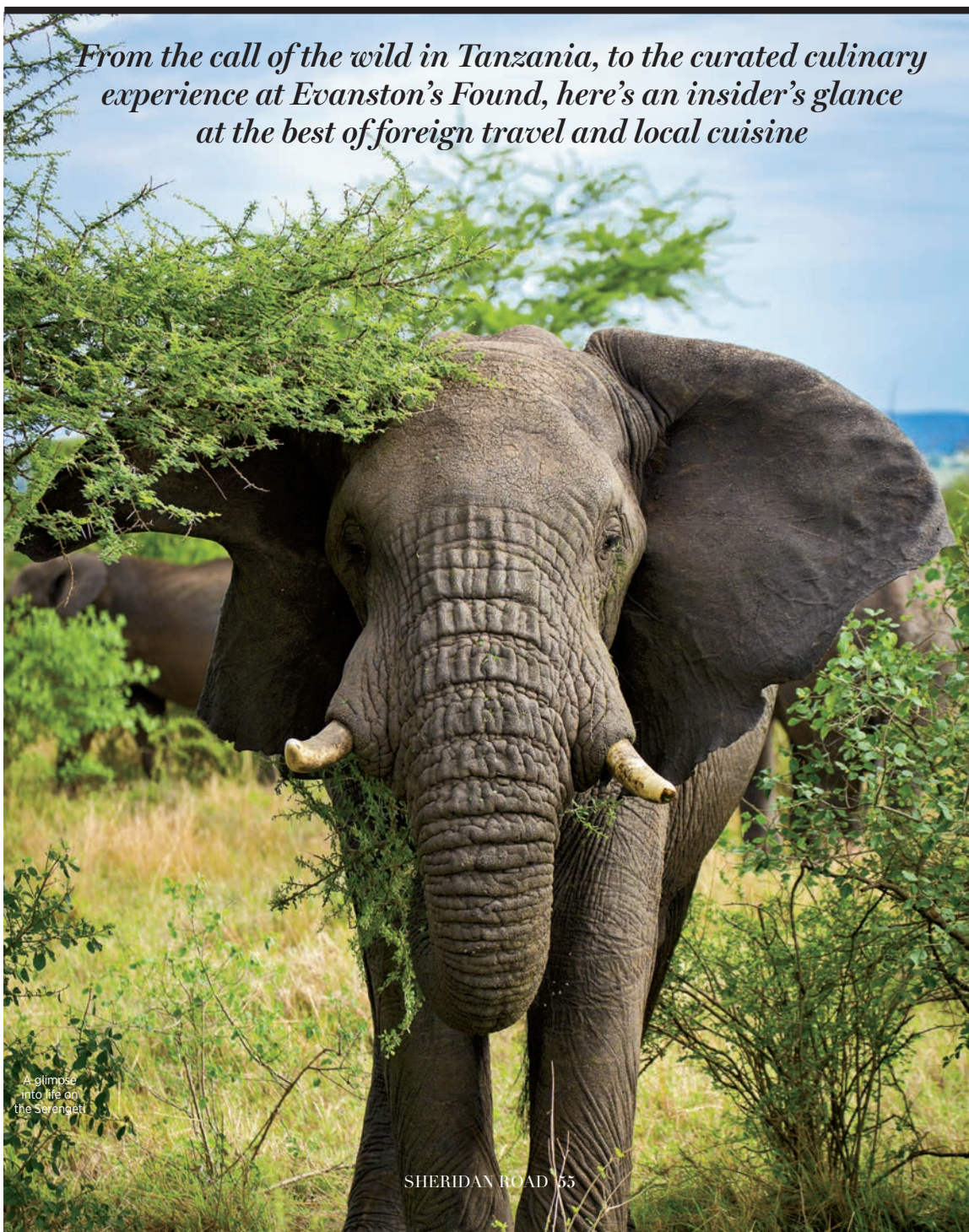


# FOOD & TRAVEL

FIRST CLASS DINING AND TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

*From the call of the wild in Tanzania, to the curated culinary experience at Evanston's Found, here's an insider's glance at the best of foreign travel and local cuisine*



A glimpse  
into life on  
the Serengeti

SHERIDAN ROAD 55



## FIRST CLASS



Four Seasons  
Serengeti

# JUNGLE WORLD

*Amazing wildlife, snow-capped mountains, idyllic beaches, and  
fascinating cultures—East Africa has it all.*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA LUBIN

SHERIDAN ROAD 61



# FIRST CLASS



Four Seasons



We hear a booming roar out in the darkness. I freeze mid-bite in the middle of dinner and my eyes widen. Lions. The hair stands up on my arms. One of the staff shines a big flashlight into the dark void in front of us. Flashes of trees and then reflected eyes. It's one thing to see them during the day on our safari, but another to be sitting here in the dark listening to lions roar nearby out in the Serengeti.

Just a few days earlier we arrived in Tanzania in East Africa, a place to which I've never been and was excited to discover the new sights, sounds, and smells. As I stepped off the plane, the warm air enveloped my skin and I could smell burning brush in the distance.

Amazing wildlife, snow-capped Kilimanjaro, idyllic beaches, fascinating cultures—Tanzania has all this plus it's one of the best places to go on a safari thanks to the abundance of wildlife. It's the only country in the world to declare at least 25 percent of its total area to reserves and wildlife national parks. Thousands of wildebeest stampede across the Serengeti plains. Lion cubs play with their mama in the Ngorongoro Crater. Hundreds of hippos jostle for space and massive elephant herds cross the land on their seasonal migration routes. It's the place of movies and far-flung dreams.

Shadows of Africa is one of many safari companies here. They offer a range of customizable trips and different styles of accommodation from budget to luxury. Our small group ventures out in our safari vehicle, an overland truck with an open-air top that can pop up—allowing us to snap hundreds of photos and seek out the “big five”—elephant, Cape buffalo, rhinoceros, lion, and leopard, plus so much more, including: zebras, giraffes, gazelles, impalas, warthogs, baboons, and mongoose.

During our safari, we travel to the world famous Serengeti, Tarangire National Park, and the Ngorongoro Crater, the world's largest inactive, intact, and unfilled volcanic caldera. Today, it is home to more than 120 species of mammals including some of East Africa's endangered last black rhinos. The landscape is breathtaking, but it's the sheer amount of animals that stuns.

## A STAY IN THE SERENGETI

The Serengeti ecosystem spans 12,000 square miles and hosts the largest animal migration in the world. It is so vast, so huge, and we really only get to see a small part.

Staying at the Four Seasons Serengeti is like watching a huge panoramic IMAX movie, except this is no film. This is the real thing. The hotel sits right in the heart of the world famous national park with stunning wildlife just off the deck as entertainment.

The rustic yet luxurious suite-rooms are designed with local materials of wood and natural stone tile. It's surreal to fall asleep to the sounds of the savanna, but we're sure to lock our screen door as we're told the baboons like to come in for a visit.

Nearly everything centers around the outdoor deck and infinity pool with its close proximity to the watering hole. It's nice to get out of a dusty, jostling safari vehicle for a day or two and sit here while the animals come to you. The water attracts elephants, zebra, wildebeest, lions, and giraffes. Although there is a drop in height between you and them, there are no fences, no boundaries, no limits. This is not Disney World. It's open land for all.



# FIRST CLASS



Zanzibar

## SANCTUARY SWALA: PEACE IN THE TANZANIA WILDERNESS

We decided to stay longer in Tanzania after our safari ended and ventured back to a remote corner of the Tarangire National Park, one of the least visited parks in Tanzania, yet one that teems with wildlife. Sanctuary Swala is about a four-hour drive from Arusha. It's the first hotel at which I've stayed where on the way there, I pass zebras, giraffes, and warthogs (and tsetse flies, bring repellent with Deet).

Upon arrival, an attendant escorts us to our permanent tent. One of twelve canvas pavilions, each tent has a bleached hardwood floor, upholstered chairs in a sitting area, fluffy white duvets on comfy beds, a full en-suite bathroom, and an indoor and outdoor shower. There is a wooden deck surrounding the tent. You can sit on your front porch and watch zebras and elephants walk right on by. It's dreamlike.

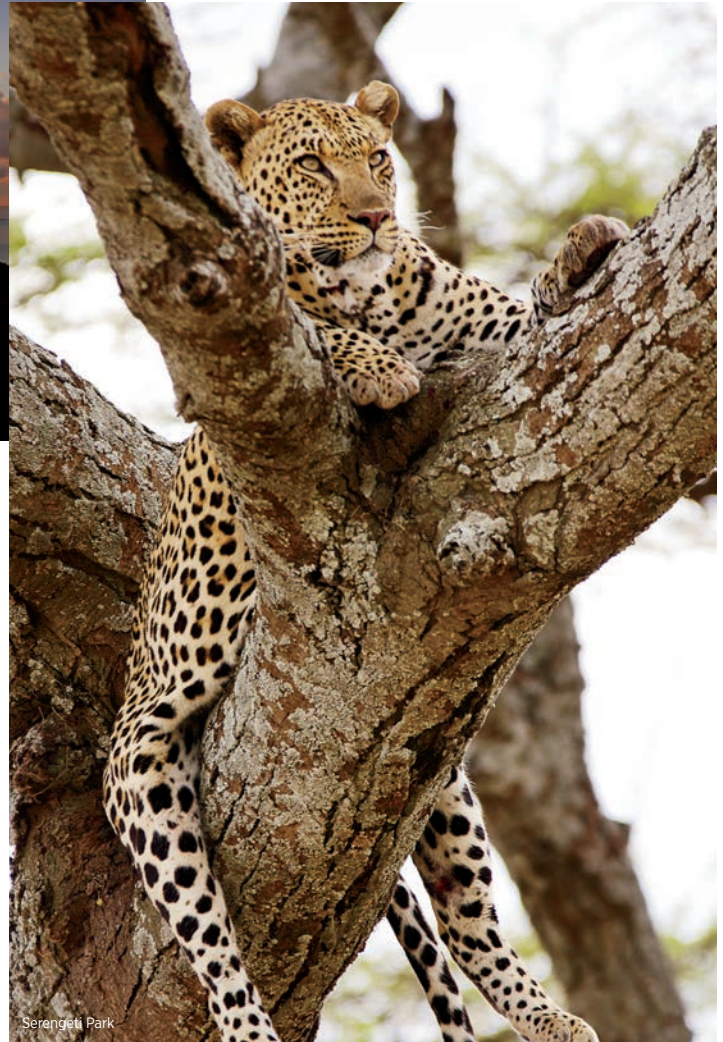
Since it's a small place, dining at Sanctuary Swala is an intimate affair. Breakfast is served before the morning game activity. Lunch can be enjoyed back in camp or picnic baskets can be arranged for guests going out on safari. As evening sets in, there are drinks and canapés around the campfire followed by a three course dinner.

Each day at camp, you can join a safari drive, take an early walking safari at dawn, or even go jogging with one of the staff just outside of the park at a local football field.

## RELAX IN ZANZIBAR

At the end of it all, there's no better place to take some time to just relax and absorb all that we just saw than Zanzibar. We take a quick (tiny) flight over to this island steeped in history and mystique and head to the northeast coast. We check into a villa at Matemwe Retreat, considered some of the most exclusive villas on the exotic island. Each guest has a dedicated butler and all the amenities of an upscale resort—select your own menu with the chef each morning, sip a cocktail in your private plunge pool and enjoy a massage in the privacy of your own villa.

Our sprawling open-air villa has shuttered, wooden doors all around leading out to a gorgeous, wood veranda with a thatched roof, hammock, seating areas, and an outdoor bar made from what



Serengeti Park

looks like the dhow (traditional Swahili wooden boat) that ply the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean just below, which we can see from our deck. There is a huge bedroom and bathroom and topping it all off is a rooftop deck with a huge sectional couch and a small pool.

It's hard to leave the room, but if you do there are snorkeling trips, a reef walk, sailing, kayaking, fishing trips, and kite surfing. Beach access is just a short stroll down two different paths on the property. Locals are out everyday fishing and looking for octopus and other seafood in the shallow waters.

Watching the sun sink into the Indian Ocean at the end of the day from our rooftop is a magical end to this once-in-a-lifetime getaway on the other side of the world.