teva

Arusha, Tanzania

FIELD GUIDE No. 02

The Slow Safari Photography Guide

How to photograph wildlife not as a chase,
but as an act of patient attention.

Written by George Shango

MSc Wildlife Biology · Wildlife Photographer · Teva EcoTravels

DISCOVER · EXPERIENCE · CONNECT

Slow safaris for deep travellers

A LETTER, BEFORE WE BEGIN

On photography,

and patience.

I am a wildlife biologist. I learned the animals before I learned the camera. This matters, I think, more than any technical advice I could offer you in the pages that follow.

Most wildlife photography guides will teach you about gear. The right lens. The fastest body. The most expensive teleconverter. They are not wrong, exactly — equipment matters at the margins. But equipment is rarely what separates a forgettable safari photograph from a transformative one.

What separates them is something quieter. It is the photographer's ability to slow down. To wait. To anticipate. To understand what the animal is about to do, ten seconds before the animal does it. To be still enough that the moment, when it arrives, finds you ready.

This guide is my attempt to teach that. It is not a manual for your camera; your camera came with one of those, and it does the job. It is a guide to the photographer's mind. To the inner work that makes the outer image possible.

There are some technical chapters here, too, because the technical and the philosophical cannot be fully separated. But the heart of this guide is patience. The heart is present. The heart is the slow, attentive work that turns a tourist with a camera into a wildlife photographer.

Read it slowly. Take what helps you. Leave the rest. And when you are ready to come to Tanzania and practice it in the field, I will be here.

With warmth from Arusha,

George Shango
MSc Wildlife Biology · @georgeshango
Founder, Teva EcoTravels · Arusha, Tanzania

WHAT'S INSIDE

Ten chapters.

One slower way of seeing.

This guide is part philosophy, part field manual. Read it cover to cover or skip to the chapter that calls you. All of it is designed to make you a more patient, more present, and more capable wildlife photographer, long before you ever land in Tanzania.

CHAPTER 01

The Mind of the Wildlife Photographer

The work that happens before you ever raise the camera.

CHAPTER 01

Photography is mostly mental.

I have guided hundreds of photographers in Tanzania. I have watched serious hobbyists with twenty thousand dollars of equipment come home with images that lack a soul. And I have watched first-time travellers with nothing, but a phone come home with photographs that make me stop, every time I see them.

The difference between them is rarely equipment. It is almost always the mind they brought with them into the field.

Wildlife photography is the most patient form of photography there is. Landscape photographers can wait for light, but the mountain will still be there tomorrow. Portrait photographers can ask the subject to hold still. Wildlife photographers have neither of these luxuries. The animal moves on its own time. The light shifts on its own time. And the moment, the one moment that takes a photograph rather than a snapshot, arrives once, briefly, and leaves.

Everything in this guide flows from that single truth. Your job, as a wildlife photographer, is not to make the moment happen. It is to be ready when the moment chooses to happen near you.

THE THREE MENTAL HABITS

01.

Arrive empty.

Most photographers arrive at a sighting with an idea of the shot they want. This is the wrong posture. The animal does not know your idea. It will do what it does. Arrive empty, open to whatever the moment offers, and you will be ready for the moments your imagination could not have predicted.

02.

Stay longer than you think.

The single most common mistake I see, especially among new photographers, is leaving too early. Twenty minutes with a sleeping lion can feel like a waste of time. But the lion will wake. And when it does, the photographer who stayed will be there. The photographer who left will be miles away, chasing something else.

03.

Watch with your eyes before your viewfinder.

When you arrive at a sighting, do not lift the camera immediately. Watch for a minute. Or two. Or five. Understand what the animal is doing, where the light is, and what direction it might move. Then raise the camera. You will make better photographs because you saw before you shot.

CHAPTER 01 · CONTINUED

The biologist's advantage.

I want to share one thing here that I rarely see written anywhere else. The single greatest asset a wildlife photographer can have is not a long lens. It is knowing what the animal is about to do, ten seconds before it does it.

This is what makes my guests' photographs different. They do not necessarily have better cameras than guests on other safaris. They have a guide who can read the wildlife in real time and tell them: In the next minute, the lioness is going to stand. Get ready. She will look toward the herd. That will be your shot.'

You can develop some of this anticipation yourself. It comes from reading books about animal behaviour before you travel. From watching documentaries with the sound off, just observing. From spending time at zoos, paying attention to body language. From asking your guide questions in the field, 'What is she about to do?', and learning the patterns.

"On Day Six, our guide stopped the vehicle and said, 'Watch the cheetah's tail. When it twitches twice, she will run.' Eight seconds later, she ran. I had time to be ready. I made the best photograph of my life that morning."

— Photography guest · The Lens · 2024

THE QUIET TRUTH

Wildlife photography is a partnership between the photographer and their guide. The better the guide, the better the photographs. This is why we limit Lens journeys to four photographers, so I can actually do this work with each one of you, in real time, throughout your journey.

CHAPTER 02

Light — The Only Thing That Matters

Two hours a day are worth photographing in. The rest are practice.

CHAPTER 02

There are only two hours.

If you take only one lesson from this guide, take this one. There are two hours a day worth photographing wildlife in Africa. The hour after sunrise. The hour before sunset. Everything else is practice.

Photographers who do not understand this come home with thousands of images shot in the harsh midday sun, flat, white, contrast-heavy frames that no amount of editing can save. Photographers who understand this come home with two hundred images shot in golden light, warm, soft, three-dimensional, painterly. The two hundred are worth more than the thousands.

This is why every Teva safari vehicle is in the field at dawn and at dusk, every single day. We are not chasing the early-morning game drive because the animals are more active (though they are). We are chasing the light. The animals can be photographed at any time. The light cannot.

WHY DAWN AND DUSK ARE DIFFERENT

Direct overhead sunlight (10 AM to 4 PM) produces light that travels straight down. It creates hard shadows under noses, eyes, and chins. It washes out colours. It flattens depth. It is bad light for almost every form of photography, and especially bad for wildlife, which already has subtle, muted colours that require gentle light to reveal.

At dawn and dusk, the sun is low. The light travels horizontally, almost sideways. It wraps around your subject, revealing its shape and texture. It is warm, the colour temperature is golden, not white. Shadows are long and soft, not hard. Skies are coloured, not white. Everything looks better. Everything photographs better.

> **THE GOLDEN HOUR RULE**
>
> *In Tanzania, the magic light usually lasts from about 6:15 AM to 7:30 AM, and from about 5:30 PM to 6:45 PM. Plan to be in position before it starts. Stay in position until it ends. Sleep at midday if you need to. The light is everything.*

CHAPTER 02 · CONTINUED

Working with the light you have.

LIGHT DIRECTION

Front light (sun behind you, on the animal's face) is the safe default. It illuminates the subject evenly. Beginners should start here.

Side light (sun coming from the left or right of the animal) is more advanced and more rewarding. It reveals texture, the individual hairs of a lion's mane, the ridges of an elephant's skin, and the feather detail on a bird. It is the light most professional wildlife photographers prefer.

Back light (sun behind the animal, facing you) is the hardest and the most beautiful. It creates a halo of light around the animal's outline. It produces silhouettes and rim-lit portraits that are unforgettable. Practice it. When it works, nothing else compares.

CLOUDY DAYS ARE A GIFT

If you have a fully overcast day in Tanzania, soft, even, cloudy light, do not be disappointed. Cloudy light is the most flattering wildlife light there is. It eliminates harsh shadows, brings out subtle colour, and lets you photograph all day instead of two hours. Many of my favourite images were made on cloudy mornings.

THE BLUE HOUR

The 20 minutes before sunrise and 20 minutes after sunset are called the blue hour. The light is dim, the sky is deeply coloured, and the world feels still. For wildlife photography, this is technically difficult; you will need wider apertures, slower shutter speeds, or higher ISOs, but the resulting images, when they work, have a mood that no other time of day produces.

CHAPTER 03

Equipment — Honest Advice From the Field

What you actually need. What you do not. What I would buy.

CHAPTER 03

Less than you think.

Most safari packing lists tell you to bring three camera bodies, four lenses, two flashes, and enough memory cards to power a small space mission. Most of this advice comes from gear-review websites whose business model depends on you buying more gear.

Here is honest advice from someone who has guided photographers for a decade. You need less than you think.

THE MINIMUM KIT

- **One camera body** — Any DSLR or mirrorless camera from the last seven years is more than capable. You do not need the newest one.
- **One telephoto lens, 100-400mm or 150-600mm** — This is the most important piece of equipment you will own. A zoom is more useful than a prime because the wildlife will not always cooperate with your focal length.
- **One wide-to-mid zoom, 24-105mm or similar** — For landscapes, environmental wildlife shots, and the inevitable lodge moments.
- **Three batteries** — Cold dawn mornings drain batteries faster than you expect.
- **Four memory cards** — 128GB or larger. Always have one backup empty.
- **A bean bag** — More useful than a tripod for vehicle-based safari photography. We provide these on every Teva vehicle.
- **A microfibre cleaning cloth** — Dust is constant. Clean your front element daily.

> **WHAT YOU DO NOT NEED**
>
> *You do not need: a tripod (rarely useful in a safari vehicle), a flash (do not use one with wildlife — ever), a teleconverter (often degrades image quality), two camera bodies (one is enough if you choose your lens wisely), or a 600mm prime (great if you have one, but unnecessary).*

CHAPTER 03 · CONTINUED

If you are buying a lens, here is what I would buy.

The lens matters more than the camera. If your budget forces a choice between a better body and a better lens, choose the lens, every time. Here are the lenses I most often recommend, depending on budget.

BUDGET TIER ($500-$1,000 USED)

Sigma 150-600mm Contemporary or **Tamron 150-600mm G2**. Both produce excellent images. Both are available used for around $700. Both will be more than sufficient for any safari.

MID-RANGE TIER ($1,500-$2,500)

Canon RF 100-500mm, **Nikon Z 100-400mm**, or **Sony 200-600mm**. Sharper than the budget options, faster autofocus, lighter weight. Worth it if your budget allows.

PROFESSIONAL TIER ($5,000+)

Sony 200-600mm paired with a body that handles low light well, or any 400mm/600mm prime lens. The professional tier is real, but the difference between this and the mid-range is incremental. The difference between mid-range and budget is much more meaningful.

ON PHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

Recent iPhones (15 Pro and later) and Google Pixels (8 Pro and later) are surprisingly capable for wildlife at close range. They will not give you frame-filling lion portraits, but they will give you intimate elephant family shots, landscape images, and behind-the-scenes documentation that often becomes the most cherished memories of the trip. Do not dismiss your phone. Use it alongside your DSLR, not instead.

CHAPTER 04

Camera Settings — Simplified by Scenario

Forget the manual. These are the settings that actually work.

CHAPTER 04

Five scenarios. Five setting recipes.

Camera manuals are written by engineers, not photographers. They teach you what every button does but not when to use it. Below are the five scenarios you will actually encounter on safari, and the settings that work for each.

Set these as custom modes (C1, C2, C3 on most cameras) before you travel. Then in the field, switch between them by turning the dial. No menu diving. No fumbling. You will not miss the moment.

SCENARIO 01 — STATIONARY WILDLIFE (golden hour)

Mode: Aperture priority (Av or A)

Aperture: f/5.6 to f/7.1

ISO: Auto, max 3200

Focus: Single point AF, on the animal's eye

Why: *A stationary lion, leopard, or elephant in good light gives you time. Aperture priority lets you control depth of field. f/5.6-7.1 keeps the whole face sharp. The camera handles the rest.*

SCENARIO 02 — ACTION (lions stalking, cheetah running)

Mode: Shutter priority (Tv or S)

Shutter: 1/1600s or faster

ISO: Auto, max 6400

Focus: Continuous AF (AI-Servo or AF-C), zone or wide-area

Drive: Continuous low (CL)

Why: *Action needs a fast shutter to freeze motion. Continuous AF tracks the subject. Continuous low (3-5 fps) gives you a choice without filling your card.*

CHAPTER 04 · CONTINUED

Three more scenarios.

SCENARIO 03 — BIRDS IN FLIGHT

Mode: Shutter priority (Tv or S)

Shutter: 1/2500s or faster

ISO: Auto, max 6400

Focus: Continuous AF, zone or animal-eye detection

Why: *Birds move faster than most mammals. The faster shutter freezes wing motion. Modern animal-eye AF makes birds in flight dramatically easier than it used to be.*

SCENARIO 04 — LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENTAL

Mode: Aperture priority (Av or A)

Aperture: f/8 to f/11

ISO: 100-400

Focus: Single point AF, one-third into the scene

Why: *Smaller apertures (higher f-numbers) keep more of the scene in focus. ISO can be low because you have time and the subject is not moving.*

SCENARIO 05 — LOW LIGHT / DAWN-DUSK / BLUE HOUR

Mode: Manual (M) with Auto ISO

Aperture: Widest available (f/4 or f/5.6)

Shutter: 1/500s minimum (handheld)

ISO: Auto, max 12800

Focus: Single point AF, on the brightest part of the subject

Why: *In challenging light, control both aperture and shutter manually. Let ISO float. Modern cameras handle ISO 6400-12800 well enough that the image will still be usable.*

> **ONE TECHNICAL HABIT**
>
> *Set your shutter speed to a minimum of 1/focal length, doubled. Shooting at 400mm? Minimum 1/800s handheld. This single rule eliminates 80% of the soft images that beginners produce. Memorise it.*

CHAPTER 05

Composition — Where to Put Your Subject

Five quiet rules for making the photograph feel right.

CHAPTER 05

Composition is a quiet language.

Most safari photographers centre their subject in the frame, every time. The result is photographs that look identical to every other photograph anyone has ever made of a lion, an elephant, or a giraffe. The wildlife is there, but the image is not interesting.

Five small habits will fix this. None of them are difficult. All of them will transform your work.

01. THE RULE OF THIRDS

Imagine the frame divided into nine equal squares (a tic-tac-toe board). Place your subject, or the subject's eye, on one of the four intersection points. Not in the centre. The image will feel more balanced, more dynamic, less static.

02. LEAVE SPACE IN THE DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT OR GAZE

If a lioness is walking left to right, place her in the left third of the frame, with space ahead of her. If a leopard is looking up and to the right, place him in the lower left, with sky ahead of his gaze. The image should feel like the subject has somewhere to go or look. This single habit makes your images feel intentional rather than accidental.

03. GET LOW

Most safari photographs are made from a vehicle, looking down at the animal. This is the boring angle. Whenever possible, when you are in a hide, on a walking safari, or when the animal climbs onto a rock or termite mound, get your camera level with the animal's eye. Photographs made at the subject's eye level have intimacy. Photographs made from above do not.

CHAPTER 05 · CONTINUED

Two more compositional habits.

04. FOCUS ON THE EYE — ALWAYS

If the eye is sharp, the photograph works. If the eye is not sharp, almost nothing else matters. Modern cameras have animal-eye detection autofocus; turn it on and trust it. If your camera does not have it, use a single AF point and place it directly on the eye, every time. This is the single most important technical habit in wildlife photography.

05. INCLUDE CONTEXT, SOMETIMES

Tight portraits of animals are wonderful, but a full memory card of tight portraits gets repetitive. Mix in environmental shots that show the animal in its world. An elephant herd dwarfed by Kilimanjaro behind them. A leopard high in an acacia tree against an enormous sky. A lion pride scattered across the vast Serengeti plain. These images have storytelling power that close-ups cannot match. Aim for one environmental shot for every five portraits.

> **A COMPOSITIONAL TRICK**
>
> *Before you press the shutter, look at all four edges of your viewfinder. Quickly. What is at the top? The bottom? The left? The right? Is there a branch poking in? An ugly shadow? A part of another animal you do not want? You can compose better in two seconds of edge-checking than in five minutes of cropping later.*

CHAPTER 06

Reading Animal Behaviour

The biologist's chapter. How to know what is about to happen.

CHAPTER 06

The animals speak with their bodies.

This is the chapter most photography guides do not write, because most photography guides are not written by biologists. Here is the secret advantage: animals communicate constantly through body language, posture, and small behaviours. If you learn to read them, even a little, you will know what is about to happen before it happens.

And that is when the best photographs are made.

LIONS — WHAT TO WATCH

- **Ears flat back** = aggression or fear. Something is about to happen: fight, flee, or stalk.
- **Tail tip twitching repeatedly** = focused attention, often pre-hunt. Get ready.
- **Yawning, stretching, rolling** = the pride is waking up. Activity is coming in the next 15-30 minutes.
- **Cubs play-fighting near adults** = relaxed, social moments. Good for intimate family portraits.
- **Sudden head lift, ears forward** = something interesting has been spotted. Follow their gaze; that is where the next photograph is.

ELEPHANTS — WHAT TO WATCH

- **Trunk raised, scenting** = curious, often peaceful. The trunk-up portrait is iconic, be ready.
- **Ear-flapping** = usually cooling down, not aggression. Calm.
- **Head shake with ear flap** = warning. Give space.
- **Trunk swinging, foot kicking dust** = agitated. Back off.
- **Calves between adult legs** = protective formation. Photograph respectfully, do not approach.

CHAPTER 06 · CONTINUED

More behaviour to watch for.

CHEETAHS — WHAT TO WATCH

- **Climbing a termite mound** = scanning for prey. A hunt may follow within the hour.
- **Head down, low body, slow walk** = stalking. The chase may begin within seconds.
- **Three short tail flicks** = about to sprint. This is the moment.
- **Sitting upright, watching** = resting and observing. Good portrait opportunity.

LEOPARDS — WHAT TO WATCH

- **In a tree, paws hanging** = relaxed. Stay quiet — they tolerate vehicles longer when calm.
- **Slow tail tip movement** = aware, alert.
- **Ears swivelling independently** = listening intently. Something is nearby.
- **Descending the tree** = a kill is being made, or hunting is beginning. Significant moment.

BIRDS — A QUIET TIP

Most birds defecate immediately before they take flight. It is an evolutionary adaptation to lighten the body for lift-off. If you are photographing a perched bird and you see this happen — get ready, the bird is about to launch. This single observation has produced some of my favourite take-off images.

> **THE BIGGEST INSIGHT**
>
> *The deepest wildlife photography comes from understanding that the animal is not posing for you. It is living its life, and you are briefly present for a small part of it. The more you respect that, the more you observe rather than direct, the more meaningful your images become.*

CHAPTER 07

The Art of Waiting

The single skill that separates photographers from tourists.

CHAPTER 07

Most photographs are missed in the wrong place.

Here is the single hardest skill in wildlife photography. It is also the simplest. Wait.

Most safari photographers cannot sit at one sighting for more than ten minutes. The mind grows restless. The phone is in the pocket. The next park, the next sighting, the next photograph, somewhere out there, must be more interesting than this. So they move on. They drive away. They miss everything.

Meanwhile, the photographer who stays sits with the sleeping lion for an hour, until the lion wakes, stretches, walks toward a kopje, and stands in golden light with the entire pride behind it. That photograph cannot be planned. It can only be received. And it can only be received by the photographer who chose, against every restless instinct, to stay.

I have seen this play out hundreds of times on Teva safaris. The photographers who go home with the strongest portfolios are almost never the ones who covered the most ground. They are the ones who chose, repeatedly, not to leave.

HOW TO PRACTICE WAITING

- **Set a minimum stay rule.** When you arrive at a sighting, commit to staying at least 30 minutes, even if nothing seems to be happening. This rule alone will transform your photography.
- **Use the waiting time well.** Study the animal's behaviour. Anticipate where it might move. Practice your settings. Watch the light shift. Refine your composition while you wait.
- **Notice your impatience.** When you feel restless, do not act on it immediately. Sit with the feeling. Most of the time it passes. Most of the time, the animal does something interesting just after the restlessness peaks.
- **Trust your guide.** If your guide says 'wait, something is about to happen,' wait. Guides read the bush in ways guests cannot. We almost always know when a moment is coming.

"On Day Seven, our guide kept us at a sleeping pride for an hour and forty minutes. I almost asked to leave three times.

Then, suddenly, the matriarch stood, looked directly into my lens, and walked past the vehicle so close I could hear her breathing. That moment was the entire trip for me."

— Photography guest · The Lens · 2024

CHAPTER 08

Ethics — Photography That Does No Harm

How to make images that the wildlife would consent to, if it could.

CHAPTER 08

The animal is not your prop.

Wildlife photography has a complicated history. Some of the most famous safari images ever made were captured at the cost of stressing, baiting, or disturbing the very animals they portrayed. We are past the time when that is acceptable, and yet it still happens, every day, in every park.

Teva does not operate that way. We never have. Below are the principles we follow, and the principles I hope you will follow with us.

OUR FIELD ETHICS

- **Never approach closer than recommended distances.** A great photograph is never worth a disturbed animal. Park guidelines are minimums, not targets.
- **No baiting, calling, or luring.** Ever. We do not play recorded calls to draw birds. We do not leave food to attract predators. We let the wildlife come to us in its own time.
- **No off-road driving in ecologically sensitive areas.** The image is not worth the damage to fragile grasslands. We work the angles available from designated tracks.
- **Follow the animal's lead.** If they want distance, they get distance. If they are uncomfortable, we leave. The animal's well-being is more important than our portfolio.
- **Limit time at sensitive sightings.** Kills, dens with cubs, and active hunts are extraordinary opportunities, and also moments of high stress for the animals. We stay long enough to make meaningful images, then move on.
- **Never use flash with wildlife.** The momentary blindness can be dangerous for prey species, disorienting for predators, and damaging to all of them. Use a higher ISO instead.
- **No drones over wildlife.** The sound stresses animals significantly. Drones also disturb other guests' experiences.

> **A PERSONAL COMMITMENT**
>
> *I would rather you leave Tanzania with fewer photographs than have a single image that came at the cost of the animal's wellbeing. The transformation we offer at Teva is real. The wildlife we steward is real. Neither survives if we treat them as resources rather than relations.*

CHAPTER 09

Editing — The Second Half of Every Image

What to do with your photographs once you are home.

CHAPTER 09

Photography is half capture, half choice.

A common misconception is that great wildlife photographs come out of the camera looking like great wildlife photographs. They rarely do. The RAW file is the starting material. The final image is built from it through deliberate, restrained editing.

I want to teach you, briefly, what to do in the weeks after your safari ends. This is when the second half of the work happens.

STEP 01. SHOOT RAW, NOT JPEG

Set your camera to RAW (or RAW + JPEG if you want quick previews). RAW files contain more information than JPEGs, dramatically, and give you flexibility in editing that JPEGs simply do not. If your storage allows it, this is non-negotiable.

STEP 02. CULL RUTHLESSLY

When you get home, you will have somewhere between 2,000 and 10,000 images. The single most important editing skill is choosing which ones to develop and which ones to delete. Aim to keep no more than 5-10% of what you shot. The discipline of culling will improve your photography more than any technical skill.

STEP 03. EDIT WITH RESTRAINT

The biggest mistake new photographers make in editing is over-processing. Cranking saturation, pulling shadows too aggressively, and sharpening too much. The image starts to look like a video game. Restraint is the mark of mature work. Small adjustments. Subtle enhancements. The viewer should not be able to tell, looking at the final image, that you did anything to it.

CHAPTER 09 · CONTINUED

A simple editing workflow.

THE FIVE EDITS I MAKE TO ALMOST EVERY IMAGE

01. White balance. Most cameras get this slightly wrong on safari. Warm it slightly, and your golden hour photographs should look golden.

02. Exposure. Often, the RAW file is half a stop underexposed. Lift it gently until the histogram sits where you want it.

03. Shadows up, highlights down. By small amounts. This recovers detail in dark areas without flattening the image.

04. Clarity/texture. A small boost (5-15%) brings out fur, feather, and skin detail without making the image look harsh.

05. Crop, sometimes. If your composition was not perfect in-camera, crop carefully. But do not crop dramatically, better to compose well in the field than rescue with cropping later.

SOFTWARE I RECOMMEND

Adobe Lightroom Classic remains the industry standard. Subscription-based but excellent. Steep learning curve, but every skill you learn is transferable.

Capture One is preferred by many professional photographers for its colour science. More expensive but exceptional.

Darktable is a free, open-source alternative that does most of what Lightroom does. Worth trying before paying for software.

> THE EDITING RULE
>
> *If you must ask yourself, 'Did I push this too far?' — you did. Undo it. Step back. Look again tomorrow. The best photographs are edited slowly, over multiple sittings, with rest in between.*

CHAPTER 10

When You Are Ready — Practising in Tanzania

How to put all of this into the field. With me, if you wish.

CHAPTER 10

The field is the only real teacher.

Everything in this guide can be read and understood in a few evenings. None of it can be truly learned without practice. Wildlife photography is field work. It must be done in the bush, with real animals, under real light, with real opportunities to miss and real opportunities to capture.

At Teva, we offer four pathways for photographers who want that practice, with personal guidance from me, in the most photogenic country on earth.

THE LENS · ONE DAY · $697

A full day in Arusha National Park or Lake Manyara. Camera fundamentals, animal behaviour, composition, and field practice. Limited to 4 photographers. Perfect for travellers already in Arusha who want to test the waters before committing to longer programs.

THE LENS · WEEKEND INTENSIVE · $1,997

Three days in Tarangire, Tanzania's most underrated park. Theory in the evenings, field practice at dawn and dusk, image review and editing every night. You leave with a portfolio and a transformed eye. Limited to 6 photographers.

THE LENS · FULL JOURNEY · FROM $5,800

Eight days through Tanzania's Northern Circuit, Tarangire, Manyara, Ngorongoro, Serengeti. Photography-optimised vehicles. Dawn departs every single day. Daily mentorship from me in the field. Three image reviews. A full editing workshop. Limited to 4 photographers. This is our flagship program.

THE LENS · ANNUAL MASTERCLASS RETREAT · $8,400

Once a year. Ten days. Specialty species focus (lions in 2025, elephants in 2026). Specialty location access. Application only. The most in-depth photography program we offer.

A FINAL WORD

Tanzania is patient.

Bring the camera. Bring more than the camera.

Thank you for reading this guide. I hope it has been useful, or at least, that it has given you a few quiet ideas to take with you into the field.

Here is the truth I have learned over a decade of guiding photographers through Tanzania. The best wildlife photographs are not made by the photographers with the best equipment. They are made by the photographers who arrived with curiosity, patience, and the willingness to slow down. Cameras can be bought. These qualities have to be practised.

Tanzania is one of the best places on earth to practice them. The light is exceptional. The wildlife is abundant. The vastness invites stillness. And the rhythms of the bush, slow, patient, unhurried, train you to be slow, patient, and unhurried as well.

When you are ready to come, I will be here. With my camera. With a vehicle. With the kind of attention that this work requires. Until then, practice what you have read. Sit still in your own life. Watch the light shift in your own garden. Become the kind of person who can wait. The kind of person who can see.

Karibu sana. Welcome, very welcome.

George Shango
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> A SMALL OFFER
>
> *If you mention this photography guide in your first message to us, I will personally add a complimentary one-hour image review session to your Lens journey, wherever you are in your photography practice. As a thank you for reading this far.*

DISCOVER. EXPERIENCE. CONNECT.

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