DAY 1

Depart Dar Es Salaam for Kilwa Beach Lodge in Kilwa Masoko, southern Tanzania.

On leaving Dar es Salaam you pass through many acres of farmland growing a variety of tropical fruits, as well as areas of natural wilderness that stretch away on either side of the road. After a journey of around 6 hours, including a break, you reach Kilwa Masoko, and from there it is a short hop to Masoko Pwani and Kilwa Beach Lodge.

Kilwa Beach Lodge is set on Masoko Pwani, a beautiful coconut lined beach, and the trees around the lodge provide the perfect shade to enjoy a welcome drink. The sea is warm and completely safe for a swim – which is just what you may need after the road journey.

The lodge offers a variety of accommodation options all of which are scattered along the beach and positioned to take maximum effect of the cooling sea breeze that blows throughout the day.

Later on you can enjoy drinks including cocktails at Babu’s Bar and then a meal in the restaurant, or for those special nights a private table on the beach - good food and good times are guaranteed!

Fish caught within the last few hours are the mainstay of meals, supplemented with tender squid, king-prawns, lobster and crab. Most of the vegetables and spices are bought in Kilwa market so the menu involves Swahili fusion dishes. Vegetarians will be in heaven, as the markets are heaving with pulses which are central to the Swahili diet.

DAY 2

An early start allows for a half day trip to Kilwa Kisiwani ruins, which were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site due to their influence on the birth of Swahili culture. What is now a fishing village was, a thousand years ago, a major port occupied by Shirazi Arabs.

In around 800 AD the Shirazi Arabs travelled by dhow from modern-day Oman, when Europe was still embroiled in the dark ages.

They minted gold and sold spices, jewellery and slaves, whilst holding licentious parties under the light of the moon.

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Within a few years these entrepreneurs amassed an unimaginable fortune by trading in gold mined deep in the African interior - modern day Zimbabwe. Soon the island became a commercial centre for the Islamic world and beyond. Mosques, a market place and an ostentatious palace were built.

These can all be seen today in various states of ruin, as well as the thousand-year-old resting place of the Sultan and his family. Over the centuries Kisiwani’s fortunes fluctuated with changing gold-prices and the arrival of the Portuguese Vasco da Gama, who built the crenulated gereza-fort which greets you at the harbour.

You will travel over in a traditional dhow and will be shown round the island by a local, English-speaking guide. On the way back from the ruins it is possible to return via the mangrove-lined river channel, with the chance to spot hippos and crocodiles along the way.

A few days of relaxation: cool drink in hand, swinging on a hammock in the warm sea breeze – this is many people’s idea of a perfect day at Kilwa Beach Lodge. For the more adventurous we can organize snorkeling or diving on some of the nearby patch reefs. Underwater you will find a world of texture and colour: metallic-blue starfish, giant clams with royal-purple lips and baby puffer fish floating past.

You may see a lionfish lurking under a shelf, his mane-like tentacles fanning out along his backbone. These waters also shelter five species of turtle, including the rare loggerhead turtle, as well as dolphins and whales, although sightings are rare.

Another activity available is fishing. You could make a fishing trip in a dhow with local fishermen who are happy to take guests out in these locally constructed boats which have ploughed the Indian Ocean for 1,000 years. You can learn how to sail these wooden vessels, then relax with a rod and tackle. For those after large game fish, we can arrange full day trips with another company based in Kilwa.
Kilwa Beach Lodge supports the non-government organisation KIYODEA, which is improving people’s lives in Kilwa District through education, medical and AIDS awareness programs. The on-site biological research centre is a means of income generation for the NGO and all guests are encouraged to visit the centre during their stay.

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**DAY 5**

Leave early morning to return to Dar Es Salaam, stopping on route at Kilwa Kivinje. This was the German administrative capital of the southern region. You will see the *boma* which was apparently built to provide office space, although its specific functions are still the subject of speculation. Like grass growing over a ruin, it has been incorporated it into daily life. Kilwa Kivinje is now a fishing port with a very picturesque bay.

Kivinje also bears witness to a grimmer aspect of German colonisation. The Mwembe Kinyonga memorial was built by the town’s inhabitants on the site where Tanzanian participants in the Maji-Maji rebellion were hanged. This uprising took place at the turn of the twentieth century and sowed the seeds of Independence.

From Kivinje you continue your transfer back to Dar es Salaam, arriving early evening.