

## Fly camping

The Webster Dictionary defines a “fly camp” as “a temporary advance camp at a distance from a base camp.” The term dates back to the early days of hunting safaris in Africa where outings took the form of one night stands in different locations in pursuit of the animals. To lighten their load the hunters slept under a fly sheet instead of carting along heavy tents.

In *African Game Trails* President Teddy Roosevelt recounts his days “fly camping” in East Africa, replete with a picture by his son Kermit of a bunch of hunters under a makeshift “fly tent.” Ernest Hemingway went fly camping too. Neither had to carry his own fly sheet. They could afford carriers.

These days fly camping is sometimes offered to guests as a single overnight experience away from the main lodge or luxury tented camp. While it provides the same yesteryear intimate experience of

sleeping out in the bush away from distractions, it is done on a much grander scale.

When the guests arrive the camp is already set up by a contingent of experienced staff. The smallish cocoon-shaped tents are made of transparent netting material to allow guests an unobstructed view of the starlit skies while repelling insects. Dining and wining is in the wide open with food to match the stylish silverware and table settings. Chefs in the bush spare no effort to please the palate. Showering is in true bush fashion with a “bucket shower” utilizing hot water from the camp fire. The drop toilet is an environmentally friendly piece of equipment, clean, comfortable and hygienic.

Armed guards protect against the unlikely event of a predator intruding at night. Lions, leopards, hyenas and hippos fill the air with their roars and grunts but keep their distance. This might well be the most memorable shut-eye that anyone could experience. Certainly beats a night of uninterrupted sleep anywhere in the world.



*Fly camping in Katavi, Tanzania*