🌿 Years 9 & 10 Arusha & Moshi Trip 2025 🌊🚣‍♂️🌌

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Day 1: Take-off

Sunday 18th, May 2025 was the first day of many electrifying days of our trip to Arusha (p.s. We didn't literally take off). It was around 4.45 a.m. that people started arriving and gathering around impatiently, waiting to board the bus. As expected, Mwanza hadn't quite woken up at that time. Mwanza's morning air was crisp, it had everybody shivering beneath their hoodies. Oh my, I can't believe we're actually leaving today, you would hear someone say, whilst rubbing their hands together against the cold. I know, right? you would hear someone else exclaim, before releasing a long yawn. Everybody had that mix of tired eyes, but everybody was wearing wide smiles. Most people had their shoulders hunched because of the morning cold, but one thing is for sure, they had their hearts lifted, anticipating for the moment we would all board the bus and head towards Arusha, a land we weren't familiar with.

Okay, that's everybody, say your farewells, we are heading off shortly, one of the teachers had said. Everybody was afluttered to be leaving, but at the same time, it was a bit emotional knowing that we would be far away from the comfort and warmth of our families and homes. Nonetheless, we were all excited because an unforgettable journey, adventure, voyage was beckoning for us, a truly memorable experience was awaiting us.

Just before the sun came out to greet everyone, the bus rolled out of Mwanza, music low, windows foggy, and everyone settling in. A gentle buzz of idle chatter filled the bus while some students began taking out their neck pillows, preparing for the long journey ahead. It only took us a matter of a couple of hours to start singing songs, energetically playing games like Would You Rather, 20 Questions, I Spy, Truth or Dare, and many more. Soon the air was filled with infectious laughter and giggles.

A few hours after that, the games quieted down, people began to share stories, playing mini made-up games. Snacks, biscuits, juice packets, and the odd pack of sweets someone had managed to hide in their bag began circulating around the bus. At about 2, we stopped at a shady area where everybody enjoyed their lunch and stretched their bodies, admiring the picturesque scenery.

Back in the bus, as we neared Arusha, and as dusk was approaching, everything changed. The sun ran away and suffering began to fall. The grass outside became greener and our windows fogged up. The air got cooler and the sky more dramatic. The grey clouds were so picturesque they looked like a Vincent van Gogh painting. The change in scenery alerted us that the world around us was shifting. We were finally entering a new area.

It got dark quickly and we had already entered Arusha. Everybody was amazed by how different Arusha was from Mwanza. Tall buildings built by the most talented architects, clean roads, massive shops, welcoming cafes. Seeing the contrast between Arusha and Mwanza was truly a magnificent sight. Around 8 p.m. we pulled up at the Keys Hotel where a warm dinner was waiting for us. We were all welcomed like royals and the benevolent staff even sang a Swahili welcoming song. Of course, we had to join in. After a delightful hearty dinner, we circled up for a short briefing. Then we all dragged ourselves to our assigned rooms along with our roomies.

Everybody was drained after the long ride on the bus. So after everybody had had a warm shower, everybody collapsed onto their beds. Day 1 wasn't just a road trip, it was our road trip filled with an overflowing bucket-load of memories. It was only day 1, but already it felt like we were part of something big and beautiful.

Day 2: Scene after scene

Finally, day 2 had arrived. Oh, how impatiently we had awaited for that day. That promised to be thrilling. We began our morning by having a delicious breakfast. That morning was the definition of a perfect morning. On that day, our first stop was the Chemka Hot Springs. They were located an hour or so away from our hotel.

As soon as we arrived, we completely forgot of the dull sky above us because we had stepped into a scene taken straight out of a fantasy book. The crystal clear water with hints of marine and aqua blue welcomed us with open arms. The lush green trees and bushes around the hot springs made the area look even more ethereal because it was like they were hiding that hidden getaway. Honestly, the beauty of the hot springs were unreal. Everybody then changed rapidly, afraid of losing time spent in the lukewarm water. That made you feel as if getting out was a serious crime.

Everyone splashed around in the water, swam to different areas in the hot springs to admire the gob-smacking views. In the hot springs, there was a slightly wide path where you would swim, leading you to a wide area enclosed by trees and bushes. The water there was even more clear and more blue, looking upwards and all around us was like looking into a picture taken out of a travel magazine. That wasn't the only fun part. Oh boy, it wasn't. As soon as we entered the welcoming water, tiny fish would surprise us by nibbling at our feet, giving us a free spa treatment. It was a magical sensation, but it brought about a few, or rather, a lot of unexpected happy squeals.

Next stop, Materuni Waterfalls. Day 2 just kept getting better, with Materuni Waterfalls being our next stop. An even more majestic sight was waiting for us. The Materuni Waterfalls were a short distance away from the Chem5ka Hot Springs, so we arrived at the village of Materuni just in time for lunch. We were welcomed warmly by the locals who had prepared for us a hearty lunch. From there, we began making our way to Materuni Waterfalls, passing through thick, sticky mud that tightly clung to our shoes and winding trails going up, around, and down. Only a few people made it up without slipping and falling, showcasing their true hiking skills. But a majority slipped and slid all the way, but every fall came with a burst of laughter. Believe it or not, the mud just made the experience even better, more real. Without it, it couldn't have been the same.

Then finally, we reached the waterfalls. The supremacy of the waterfalls was beyond anything I could ever explain. Words barely do them justice. They were huge, roaring, powerful, a curtain of water crashing down from a cliff into a cold pool below. Some just dipped their feet in and ran away while others chose to go under the crashing water to obtain the full experience. Looking at the majestic waterfalls with the thousands of small water droplets splashing into your eyes and hearing the loud roar of the waterfalls, we realized that we were witnessing something truly exceptional. It was then that we realized that we were living the experience we usually saw in pictures or on the TV. Being present there was truly a privilege to all of us because nothing could compare to seeing the Materuni waterfall live with our own eyes.

As much as we wanted to remain admiring the waterfalls since we felt like we hadn't observed the scenic waterfalls enough, we had to leave because ahead of us was a terrific visit to the coffee plantation just near where we had lunch before going to the waterfalls. Our guide Justin was undeniably an amazing person. His charisma and way of explaining things not only made us understand the concepts he was talking about but also made us laugh. He skilfully broke down how coffee is obtained and prepared for use naturally. It was quite interesting. Here is a simple breakdown of how coffee is made, specifically Arabica coffee found in Arusha.

Coffee beans are actually seeds of little red fruits called coffee cherries. Yup, coffee grows on trees. When the cherries turn ruby red and white, they are hand-picked. Then the outer fruit layer is removed and the beans are soaked to get rid of the slimy coating. They are then left out to sunbathe. Once dry, you pound them using a mortar and pestle as if you were awakening or unlocking some ancient secret recipe. After that, you roast them. Then pound them some more. Then you sieve them, which gives you a lovely aromatic powder which you can boil with water. Then BAM! There you have it, the most savoury coffee ever. Something really fascinating is that the coffee makers have special songs to sing at each stage of the coffee production to keep the spirits alive and not get bored.

Soon after, we headed back to the hotel. At that point, everybody had chattering teeth because a waterfall never leaves you dry, even if you don't swim in it. We enjoyed our warm meals and the warm showers, and the warm showers. Then, after a short while of playing mini-games, we all went straight to bed. All the fun we had that day knocked us down completely. From swimming in the hot springs to slipping through waterfalls and sipping , fresh Arrraaabicaaa coffee, they too had it all, and even more.

Day 3: Into the Forest and Straight into a Fairy Tale

After two incredible days packed with wonder and adrenaline — from exploring the lush beauty of Materuni Falls to swimming in the stunning Chemka Hot Springs — we didn’t think our trip could get any better. But Day 3 proved us wrong. It gave us magic, chaos, laughter, and moments we’ll never forget.

We started the day by checking out of Keys Hotel in Moshi, and drove to Arusha, where we would be staying at the stunning Njiro Legacy Hotel. But first — we had an appointment with adventure at Meru Forest.

The plan? Hike to a hidden waterfall. What we didn't realize was that getting there would feel like a real-life jungle expedition.

From the very start, the terrain demanded our full attention. We weren't just walking down a trail — we were literally trekking through a flowing river, cold water gushing around our feet as we tried to stay balanced on slippery stones. The water was fast, freezing, and unbothered by our struggle.

To reach the waterfall, we had to climb over rocks, jump across streams, grip onto tree roots, and sometimes just hope our shoes wouldn't float away. Luckily, we were given the option to rent Crocs or gum boots, which most of us took advantage of. Still, some brave souls went in their sneakers and paid the soggy price.

We were accompanied once again by Justin, our trusty, cheerful guide from the previous days, who kept the group organized and encouraged us through the rough patches. Alongside him was another unforgettable character — a wild, fearless guy who could mimic bird calls and moved through the forest like he was born in it. We quickly gave him a nickname: Tarzan.

But all the struggle was *worth it*. When we finally arrived, we were stunned into silence.

The waterfall looked like something out of a fantasy movie — powerful and peaceful all at once. It cascaded down through thick forest, the sunlight hitting the mist just right, making the whole scene sparkle. It truly felt like we had stepped into a fairy tale.

We wasted no time taking the most beautiful pictures. The kind that instantly bring you back to that moment — soaked clothes, wild smiles, and water glistening on everyone's faces.

Then came the most *unbelievable* part.

As we stood there, tired but amazed, Tarzan casually began making actual bird calls, as if welcoming us to the waterfall. And then, just like in a movie, he leapt from rocks right next to the waterfall, landing gracefully with not even a flinch. We watched in awe (and slight horror). If *we* had tried that jump, let's be honest — *we probably wouldn't be here to tell the stories.* 😅

At one point, a friend lost her shoe to the river's current. Without hesitation, Tarzan took off his own shoes and gave them to her, continuing the journey barefoot as if walking on clouds. The guy was *wild*, but weirdly legendary.

Though the way was muddy, slippery, and full of chaotic moments, we couldn't stop laughing. Every stumble became a memory, every splash a story. It was exhausting, exhilarating, and unforgettable.

Afternoon Thrills: Archery, Quad Biking & More

After surviving Meru Forest, we returned and dove straight into another round of fun: archery, zip-lining, paint shooting, and quad biking.

The quad bikes looked like beasts — giant and loud — and made us feel like we were in an off-road video game. Zip-lining gave us that heart-racing, flying feeling, and archery was a test of our aim (spoiler: not all of us were gifted).

For paint shooting, we lined up and took aim at bottles. It wasn't a full-blown paintball match, but it was still *satisfyingly chaotic*. Some of us hit the targets dead-on, others… well, at least we tried. Either way, it added a burst of colour and laughter to the afternoon.

Evening Adventures: Food, Shopping & Friendship

That evening, we freshened up at Njiro Legacy Hotel, got dressed, and headed out for dinner and shopping.

We hit up KFC, and honestly, those fries and wings had never tasted so good. After the kind of day we'd had, even a drink of water would've been gourmet. 😄

Then came the shopping spree at Shoppers. Everyone was in high spirits — picking out snacks, last-minute gifts, or just wandering the aisles. It wasn't just about the items; it was about being together, laughing, and soaking up every last moment of this trip.

Back at the hotel, we had a beautiful dinner. Some people went for a late-night swim, while others relaxed in their rooms — chatting, laughing, packing for the journey ahead, or simply admiring the view and enjoying the last cold breeze of Arusha.

Day 4: Heading Home, Hearts Full

The final morning began quietly at Njiro Legacy. We woke up, packed our bags, and had one last delicious breakfast, savouring the atmosphere of the beautiful hotel that had been our home for a night. By around 8:00 AM, we boarded the bus for the journey back home — a little tired, but filled with joy.

The ride was a perfect ending to the adventure. The bus echoed with laughter, singing, shared snacks, silly conversations, and games. Some people chose to watch the scenery slide by, others tried to catch up on sleep — with their mouths wide open 😆 — and a few simply listened to music and reflected on the trip.

As night fell, the lights in the bus dimmed to a warm orange glow, creating a soft, peaceful atmosphere. It felt like the world outside had gone quiet, while we stayed wrapped up in our own little bubble of memories.

We finally arrived back at school around 12:30 AM, exhausted but glowing with happiness. After thanking our amazing teachers and guides, we said our goodbyes — each of us already missing the magic of the past few days.

All those memories — the laughter, the hikes, the breathtaking views, the friendships, the weird but wonderful moments — had become a part of us. We didn't just return home with souvenirs and photos; we came back with full hearts, unforgettable stories, and a bond that only a trip like this could create.

Final Thoughts: A Chapter I'll Never Forget

This trip was more than a getaway — it was a collection of moments that changed something in all of us. The muddy trails, the soaked clothes clinging to our backs, the waterfalls crashing like something from a dream, and the climb through cold rushing rivers... it all became part of the story.

We laughed so hard it hurt. We sang songs that now live rent-free in our heads. We ate way too much (and not enough at the same time), from crispy KFC to hotel buffets. We tried things we never imagined we would together — zip-lining, quad biking, archery, slipping, falling, and getting right back up again.

But beyond the fun, the adventure, the cold, the heat, the meals and the mud — there was something else.

There was admiration. Unspoken moments that meant more than words could say. A kind of love, subtle and quiet, that only grows when you experience something unforgettable together. Maybe it wasn't dramatic, maybe it wasn't even obvious, but it was real — and it mattered.

We didn't come back with photos to scroll through or videos to replay — but somehow, that made everything more alive. The memories were ours, held in the way we laughed, in the nicknames we gave each other, in the inside jokes that no one else would ever understand.

We stepped off that bus carrying more than just bags. We carried stories, connections, little pieces of ourselves that had been shaped by the places we saw, the people we were with, and the things we dared to feel.

And some part of us — no matter where we go from here — will always belong to this trip.

From Materuni Falls to Meru Forest, from Tarzan jumps to paint shooting, from Chemka Hot Springs to midnight bus rides, this trip was more than just a getaway — it was a collection of magical, chaotic, joyful moments stitched together by friendship.

Arusha, thank you. We came back different — closer, braver, and filled with stories that will live forever.