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Jumping into the Masai Mara

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Kenya's Maasai are a proud and beautiful people. Incredibly tall, wonderfully exotic and colorfully-dressed in brilliant red shukas, they are unmistakable. Living where zebras graze and lions roam in the arid plains of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, these indigenous people have remained virtually unchanged for centuries.

Travelers to the Masai Mara can visit a Maasai village where they will join warriors on bush walks through the savannah or haggle with village women over handcrafted necklaces, warm to the infectious laughter of local school children or, best yet, watch the thrilling spectacle of the Maasai jumping dance.

The adumu, or "jumping dance," is just one in a series of rituals that make up the eunoto, or the ceremony where junior warriors graduate to the ranks of manhood. The ceremonies last upwards of 10 days, at the end of which the young men "jump" into adulthood. The famous adumu dance features young morani warriors assembled in a circle. In the center, a young man holds a stiff, upright pose, heels never touching the ground, while he begins to jump. The higher and more graceful his jumping dance, the more attractive he will be to the observing young women. After a final impressively high jump, the young warrior retires to allow another to enter the circle. The encircling dancers sing -- their pitches rising to match the height of each jump.

After the ceremony is complete, the morani shave off their long hair as evidence of their new status as full-fledged Maasai warriors. They can return to the community from which they had previously been banned, and can enter the presence of women, marry and begin their own families.

You can witness the adumu, and other fascinating traditions of this exotic location on one of Travcoa's luxury tours of Kenya and Tanzania, including the Grand Safari escorted tour and Tanzania & Kenya Flying Safari private tour. For information, call a travel agent or a Travcoa Journey Consultant at 1-800-979-2948, email info@travcoa.com and be sure to check out our private tours and luxury escorted tours throughout Africa and the Middle East.

Topics: Kenya, Tanzania



Image: A colorful Maasai tribesman