

African Sojourns

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TANZANIA COUNTRY INFORMATION



In preparation for your Tanzania Sojourn please find below some interesting facts about the country. For further information you can visit the official Tanzania Tourism Authority's website: www.tanzaniatouristboard.com and <http://tanzaniatourisonline.net>



The country:

Situated in East Africa, just south of the equator, mainland Tanzania lies between the area of the great lakes; Victoria, Tanganyika and Malawi - with the Indian Ocean on its' coastline to the east. It has land borders with Uganda and Kenya to the north, Mozambique and Malawi to the south, Zambia to the southwest and Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda to the west. The

country lies at an altitude of over 1,000ft, apart from a coastal strip varying in width from 10 to 40 miles. The greater part of the country is made up of plateau averaging 3,000 to 4,500ft in height. Mountains are grouped in various sections. The Pare and Usambara ranges are in the northeast and the Livingstone Mountains in the southwest. Kilimanjaro (19,340ft) in the north is the highest mountain in Africa.

On the borders are three large lakes; Victoria, the second-largest freshwater lake in the world, Tanganyika, second only to Lake Baykal as the deepest in the world; and Lake Malawi. Lakes within Tanzania include Natron, Eyasi, Manyara and Rukwa. Even though three great African rivers; the Nile, the Zaire and the Zambezi, have their origins in Tanzania, the country has few permanent rivers. During half the year, the central plateau has no running water, but in the rainy season flooding presents a problem.

Currency

The local currency is the Tanzanian Shilling (Tsh). Visitors can take in any amount of foreign currency, subject to declaration. Taking out of foreign currency is limited to the amount declared upon arrival. Import and export of Tanzanian currency is however prohibited. USD cash in small denominations, in notes no older than 2006 series, are the most widely accepted currency and can be changed at hotels and banks. It is not recommended to change money on the street.

Credit cards are not widely accepted, and when accepted the exchange rate is often unfavourable. But it is still a good idea to have access to one in case of emergency. ATM points are found in most of the larger towns. Keep in mind that when using a credit card, the charge appearing on your monthly statement is not necessarily calculated at the exchange rate that was in effect on the day that you actually made the purchase so you may see a higher or lower amount than what you originally expected.

Passport and visa:

You must have a valid passport that does not expire for at least **six months** after your return home date. Please ensure your passport has sufficient blank pages for any visas required and for entry/departure stamps. You must have at least **2 blank visa pages** to enable the entry visa to be issued. Visa requirements vary frequently so please check with the appropriate Embassy or Consulate well in advance for up to date information and if you can obtain this on arrival. All passport holders require a visa to enter Tanzania. The cost depending on your passport is usually USD50 per person for a single entry visa, USD70 per person for a double entry visa and USD100 per person for a multiple entry visa (subject to change at any time).

Health:

Medical facilities are limited and medicines are sometimes unavailable, even in Dar es Salaam. There are hospitals on Zanzibar that can treat minor ailments. For any major medical problems, including dental work, travellers should consider obtaining medical treatment in Nairobi or South Africa where more advanced medical care is available.

Tap water in Tanzania is unsafe to drink. Travellers are strongly urged to use bottled water for drinking and food preparation.

Much of East Africa is at altitude and the sun is hot. Particularly if you are fair skinned, you may burn easily. It is therefore necessary to take precautions by applying high factor sunscreen and to stay out of the direct sunlight. We would advise you to wear a hat whilst you are out in the mid day sun. Please use plenty of high factor sunscreen, try to stay out of the direct sunlight and drink plenty of fluids.

Yellow fever vaccination is required and you may be asked to produce a certificate at entry ports. Malaria is endemic but is preventable; use insect repellent, cover up at sundown, sleep under a mosquito net and take anti-malaria prophylactics as advised by your doctor.

As with most things, prevention is better than cure and early diagnosis speeds recovery. Try to avoid tick bites by wearing long sleeved shirts, long pants and shoes when you walk in the bush; apply insect repellent to exposed skin and always check yourself after you have walked in the bush". <http://www.ar.co.za/articles/tickbite.html>

Vaccines recommended, but are not compulsory, for your visit to Tanzania also include those against: Tetanus, Diphtheria, Polio, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, Rabies and Meningitis. Please remember that you are staying in the best accommodations available and that the water and health regulations in these accommodations are of international standard.

Power:

Voltage in Tanzania is 230V AC and most plugs are the English standard square pin and some are the round pins. While on safari if you need to have your video battery/camera re-charged this can be done while you are out on an activity, therefore, please bring a spare battery for use while the other is being charged. In some camps transformers are provided but to be sure you may wish to bring one in case. Electrical plug outlets are generally not available in individual rooms.

Communications:

The country code for Tanzania is +255. The outgoing international code is 00 for the United States, or 000 for all other countries. Public call boxes in post offices and main towns operate on a card system, available from most small shops. Several cellular phone companies operate in Tanzania and roaming lines work near most major cities and towns. Mobile phones are based on GSM 900/1800 network. Coverage is however limited and you are advised to check beforehand whether your GSM phone has access if you are travelling outside the main urban centres. Internet cafes are plentiful in major city centers.

Most, though not necessarily all the camps and lodges you will visit have good radio communications or satellite phone in case you need to keep in touch with the outside world.

Crime:

Visitors should always be alert and cautious especially in the cities. Street crime in Dar es Salaam is common. Pedestrians on beaches and footpaths, both in isolated areas and in popular tourist venues, are often targeted for robbery or assault. This is especially true on Zanzibar and in Dar es Salaam and its environs. Visitors should limit the amount of cash they carry and leave valuables, such as passports, jewellery and airline tickets, in a hotel safe or other secure place. Cameras are highly coveted by thieves, and should be guarded carefully. Because of the potential for fraud, credit cards should only be used in reputable tourist hotels. Travellers are warned to avoid walking alone after dark.

Logistics:

All the major towns in Tanzania are connected by tarmac all weather roads. But outside this network, quality deteriorates. Due to the geographical size of Africa and limitations of time, it is often convenient - and quite normal - to shorten travelling time by flying, normally in small 5 - 16 seat aircraft suitable for bush landing strips. Scheduled and charter services are used, utilising single and twin engine aircraft, piston and turbine. You will always be met off your flight connections.

NOTE: luggage restrictions on internal flights vary, but may be as little as 10-15kg per person, please check before departure.

Tanzania has three international airports: Dar es Salaam International Airport (which handles most international flights), Kilimanjaro International Airport and Zanzibar International Airport.

During Your Trip

On arrival in each country you will be met and briefed you on matters relating to your safari. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have. However, please respect the requests and decisions made by each camp/operator as they take on a great responsibility when taking you into the bush and any requests will be made in your best interests.

Language

The official language is English, the national language is Kiswahili. There are also many local African tongues, reflecting the tribal diversity of the country. Outside the cities and towns, far fewer local people speak English than in comparable areas in Kenya. It's said that the Swahili spoken on Zanzibar is of a much purer form than elsewhere, and quite a few travellers' head to the island to learn it. Written Swahili is based on the language spoken on the east African coast. Arabic is widely spoken in the coastal areas, particularly in Zanzibar.

Useful KiSwahili greetings:

<i>Greeting (to locals)</i>	<i>Habari gani</i>
<i>Greeting (to foreigner)</i>	<i>Jambo, shikamuu</i>
<i>Thank you (correct reply to greeting)</i>	<i>Marahaba</i>
<i>Thank you</i>	<i>Asante</i>
<i>Goodbye / We'll see you</i>	<i>Kwaheri / Tutaonana</i>
<i>You are welcome, come in</i>	<i>Karibu</i>

Time:

Tanzania is 3 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

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Dress code and Etiquette:

On safari, bright coloured clothing is not appropriate. We suggest you pack brown, beige and khaki clothing. Short sleeve shirts, shorts and trouser for men are sufficient. For ladies, short sleeve blouses, slacks and skirts are ideal though in the national parks and touristy places such as Arusha and Dar es Salaam you may get along with shorts (not too short) and trousers.

At the coast and Zanzibar where Muslims are predominant women need to dress modestly, so as not to offend local sensibilities. Swimwear is perfectly acceptable at beaches and hotel premises. Nudity is totally unacceptable in the whole country.

Tanzania is one of the least urbanised countries in sub-Saharan Africa, but traditional African ideals are being deliberately adapted to modern life. The Tanzanians are friendly to foreigners and amongst themselves. Politeness, respect and modesty are also highly valued, so it would be very helpful to learn some Swahili greetings before visiting. Take the time to greet people before you ask them for directions.

Handshakes are very important in social etiquette. Tanzanians frequently continue holding hands throughout a conversation. Note that the right hand is usually used for eating, while the left is traditionally used for toilet duties - you should try not to pass items to others with your left hand. When receiving items from others, do so with both hands, or with the right hand while touching the left hand to your right elbow.

Climate:

There are three main climatic areas in Tanzania; the coastal area and immediate hinterland, where conditions are tropical with temperatures averaging 26.6°C (80°), rainfall varying from, 40 to 76 inches and high in humidity; the central plateau, which is hot and dry (rainfall 20 to 30 inches), although with considerable daily and seasonal temperature variations and the third region is the semi-temperate highland areas, where the climate is healthy and cool. There is seasonal variation in the Lake Victoria area. The eastern sections average only 30 to 40 inches of rain, while the western parts receive up to 90 inches. There are two rainy seasons; from November to December and from April to mid-June.

If there's a time to avoid coastal Tanzania, it's during the long rainy season from March to May, which has a brief revival from November to January. The best time is between June and September when rainfall is sparse and temperatures orbit around a pleasantly balmy 28°C (83°F). Inland on the plateau, rain during the middle of the year is insignificant and temperatures sink slightly but comfortably.

Dar es Salaam climate data provided by Weather2Travel.com

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Precipitation (mm)	70	50	140	250	200	40	30	20	20	60	130	120
Temperature (°C)	29	29	29	29	28	27	26	27	29	30	31	30

Shopping:

You will find woodcarving, batik, leather goods, woven baskets, masks and beadwork in shops and markets throughout East Africa. In most of the local markets prices are not fixed and bargaining is expected, while in the safari camps and hotels, prices are generally fixed, are much more expensive but with better quality. In the markets you will generally only be able to pay by cash while in the camp and hotel gift shops credit cards are welcome.

Public Holidays:

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday.

01 January, 12 January, 26 April, 01 May, 07 July, 09 December and 25 December.

Islamic holidays change from year to year and may vary by 1-2 days, depending on the sighting of the new moon.

The Tanzania flag:

The flag of Tanzania was adopted on 30 June 1964. It was a merger of the flags of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. A yellow-edged black band from the lower hoist-side corner divides the flag diagonally. The upper triangle (hoist side) is green and the lower triangle is blue. The meaning of the colors is as follows: green represents the natural vegetation present in the country, yellow represents the rich mineral deposits of the country, black represents the skin color of Tanzanians, and blue represents the numerous lakes and rivers and the Indian Ocean.

Economy:

The economy is mostly based on agriculture, which accounts for more than half of the gross domestic product, provides approximately 75 percent of exports, and employs approximately 75 percent of the workforce. Topography and climate, though, limit cultivated crops to only 4 percent of the land area.

Tanzania has vast amounts of minerals including gold, diamonds, coal, iron, uranium, nickel, chromium, tin, platinum, coltan, niobium, natural gas, and others.

Commercial production of natural gas from the Songo Songo Island in the Indian Ocean off the Rufiji Delta commenced in 2004, with the gas being transported by pipeline to Dar es Salaam. The bulk of the gas is converted to electricity by both public utility and private operators. A new gas field is being brought on stream in Mnazi Bay.

In 2011, Tanzania was the fifteenth-largest producer of gold in the world and the third largest in Africa after South Africa and Ghana and just ahead of Mali. The value of the gold produced in Tanzania in 2011 was over US \$2.5 billion, representing 10.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The country is also known for Tanzanite, a type of precious gemstone that is found only in Tanzania.

Recommended reading (in no particular order):

- *The Poisonwood Bible - Barbara Kingsolver*
- *Wangari Maathai - her autobiography Chinua Achebe: Anthills of the Savannah*
- *John Ngugi - Grain of Wheat*
- *John Le Carre - The Constant Gardener*
- *John le Carre - The Mission Song Giles Foden*
- *Mimi and Tutu go Forth - William Boyd*
- *The Ice Cream War - Peter Forbath*
- *The Last Hero- Aiden Hartley*
- *The Zanzibar Chest - Abdulrazak Gurnah*
- *Paradise - Abdulrazak Gurnah*
- *By the Sea - M.G. Vassanji*
- *The Book of Secrets - Peter Mathiessen*
- *Sand Rivers - Peter Mathiessen*
- *African Trilogy Thomas Pakenham –*
- *Scramble for Africa David Read – Waters of the Sanjan*
- *Charles Miller – Battle for the Bundu John Reader – Africa*
- *Biography of a Continent - Michaela Wong*
- *It's Our Turn to Eat (banned in Kenya) Michaela Wong – I didn't do it for you*
- *Jane Goodall books on chimpanzee behavior for visitors to Mahale*
- *Richard D. Estes – The Safari Companion Richard D. Estes – The Behavioural Guide to African Mammals*
- *Terry Stevenson, John Fanshawe – Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa*
- *Collins Field Guide – Mammals of Africa*
- *Jonathan Scott's – Photographic Field guide to the Mammals of Africa*
- *Johnathan Kingdon – The Kingdom Field Guide to African Mammals*
- *Michael Blundell – Wild Flowers of East Africa (currently out of print)*
- *Sasol – Birds of Prey of Africa*
- *Carlo Mari/Harvey Croze – The Serengeti's Great Migration*
- *Mitsuaki Iwago – Serengeti: Natural Order on the African Plain*

African Sojourns wishes you a wonderful and exciting holiday!