

The logo for Asilia is written in a white, elegant cursive script. The letters are fluid and connected, with a slight shadow effect that makes them stand out against the dark blue background of the central rectangle.

Asilia

GENUINE SAFARIS | GENUINE DIFFERENCE

WELCOME TO THE KURIA TRIBE

Dating back centuries, the stories and traditions of the Kuria people bordering both Kenya and Tanzania are some of the most fascinating in the world. These people have enriched the country through social, economic, political and cultural activities.

Today, there are 44 communities officially recognised by the government and are classified into three linguistic groups: the Bantu, the Nilotic and the Cushitic speakers. The Kuria belong to the Bantu linguistic group and are closely related to the Abalogoli and Kisii communities.

Historically, the Kuria have mainly practised pastoralism and farming. They cultivated finger millet, sweet potatoes, sorghum and cowpeas, and keep cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys. In the past, the Kuria traded with their neighbouring Maasai and Luo communities, with whom they exchanged animals for grains, weapons or ornaments, among other things.

This exhibit celebrates the country's rich heritage through the Kuria community.

NEXT PAGE

MUSIC OF THE KURIA TRIBE

Music plays a vital role in the Kuria tribe. Kuria song and dance has been passed down from generations and is an instrumental part of ceremonial rituals practised by the tribe. Kuria music is most frequently seen in weddings or burial ceremonies, as well as during the harvesting period, where song and dance are used to tell stories about each ritual as part of the celebrations.



**CALABASH AND
SHAKERS**



**TRADITIONAL
DRUM SET**



**WINDPIPE
INSTRUMENT**

NEXT PAGE

READ ABOUT THE KURIA TRIBE ITEMS

Click on each of the below thumbnails to read more about these unique cultural items.

[NEXT PAGE](#)

OSTRICH FEATHERS

Kuria name: Engosira na amachoki agha'inungu

What it is made of:

Ostrich feathers and fibres from the leaf of the wild date palm are used for weaving, as well as coloured cloth for décor.

How it works:

Ostrich feathers are placed into a headrest and used during wedding ceremonies.

What it is used for:

During special celebrations like weddings or circumcisions, this is worn by men while performing the local Kuria dance, Ritungu.



WINDPIPE INSTRUMENT

Kuria name: Ekorongwi or Emborogo

What it is made of:

This wind instrument is made from any kind of round metal pipe, such as a bicycle pressure pump. Eight holes are made, and beeswax is used to cover the end hole.

How it works:

Similarly to a flute, the sound is produced by blowing onto the top end hole, causing air enclosed in the tube to vibrate. The player changes pitch by opening and closing holes along the instrument's length.

What it is used for:

The Ekorongwi is a local traditional instrument used for any kind of ceremonial gathering.



CALABASH OR SHAKERS

Kuria name: Ibhilandi

What it is made of:

The Ibhilandi is made from the calabash fruit plant. This plant can be harvested young to be consumed as a vegetable, or harvested mature to be dried and used as a utensil or instrument as seen here.

How it works:

Plants seeds are placed inside the dried calabash fruit and are played by shaking them.

What it is used for:

The calabash is an instrument, also known as shakers. It is used when performing the Ritungu dance.



TRADITIONAL DRUM SET

Kuria name: Iritungu

What it is made of:

This traditional drum is made from string, wood, animal skin and a metal plate bent to make the shape of a semicircle.

How it works:

The drummer sits and plays the instrument using the strings and the skin around the metal plate. The drumskin vibrates creating soundwaves. The pitch of the drum is dependent on how tightly the skin is wrapped about the metal plate.

What it is used for:

The Ritungu is used for Kuria traditional dances and ceremonies.



VIOLIN

Kuria name: E'Kenombe or E'keghogho

What it is made of:

This traditional violin is made from string, a small piece of wood, an empty metal tin and a bow made from wood and sisal or twine strings.

How it works:

The musician stands while playing this instrument as the energy of a vibrating string is transmitted through the metal tin (body of the violin), allowing the sound to radiate. The bow moves across the strings, and the left hand's fingers change the pitch by pressing down on the strings.

What it is used for:

This traditional Kuria violin is used at dances and ceremonies.



WOODEN FLOPS

Kuria name: Imitiambwi

What it is made of:

These dancing instruments are made from wood and sisal or twine ropes.

How it works:

The wooden blocks are tightened around the feet of men and are smacked against one another or banged on the ground adding an additional layer to Kuria music.

What it is used for:

The Imitiambwi are used when performing the traditional Kuria dance, the Ritungu.



ANKLE BELLS OR SHAKERS

Kuria name: Amaghorro

What it is made of:

This music addition is made from empty, recycled tins. A variety of seed is placed inside the tin and then bound together with sisal string or twine.

How it works:

Both men and women wear these musical additions on their legs while dancing.

What it is used for:

It is a music addition that the Kuria tribe members wear on the legs while performing the Ritungu or Mitiambw.



CLUB

Kuria name: Irungu

What it is made of:

The traditional club is made from a large root or the thicker parts of branches from a tree.

How it works:

An elder from the tribe or a tribe member from the dancing group will hold it while performing the Ritunga dance.

What it is used for:

This club is used while performing the local Kuria dance and can also be used as a defence weapon.



TRADITIONAL HOE

Kuria name: Ekebhai

What it is made of:

The Ekebhai is made by a special craftsman in the tribe using the wood from the omobagai tree.

How it works:

Hold the hoe as you would hold a broom to sweep a floor. Angle the hoe so the tip of the blade enters the soil just below the surface. Use a broad, fluid sweeping motion to slice the tops of the weeds.

What it is used for:

The hoe is an ancient and versatile agricultural and horticultural hand tool used to shape soil, remove weeds, clear soil and harvest root crops. The Kuria tribe use it for weeding maize, rice and sorghum.



BOW AND ARROW

Kuria name: Omote ni Imigwi

What it is made of:

The bow is made of wood that can bend slightly with string or twine. The arrow is made from wood and a metal tip. At times, hunters may dip the metal arrow in tree poisons.

How it works:

The tribe man pulls back on the bowstring, where potential energy is stored in the flexing limbs of the bow as he takes aim at an animal while hunting. When the string is let go, the energy is transferred instantly into the arrow, sending it flying downrange.

What it is used for:

It is used as a traditional weapon for hunting by Kuria people.



MACHETE

Kuria name: Ebhanga

What it is made of:

The machete is made from recycled steel, with a wooden handle. The distinction between a western machete and a Kuria made machete is that it is designed to cut both from sides.

How it works:

The tool is extremely versatile and acts as a knife as well as an axe. It is always tied to the tribe's men's waist.

What it is used for:

The machete blade is used for cutting, while the weighted upper blade provides the force for chopping. It is the Kuria's traditional weapon and is also used for slaughtering animals.



TRADITIONAL, LOCALLY MADE KNIFE

Kuria name: Neghekebhi

What it is made of:

The Neghekebi is made by a blacksmith from scrap iron and with a wooden handle.

How it works:

The blade has a sharp edge designed to puncture, chop, slice or scrape surfaces or materials.

What it is used for:

It is used for the slaughtering of smaller animals and peeling tree bark for cassava and traditional herbs and medicine.



TRADITIONAL BEADS

Kuria name: Necklaces in Kuria — Emesanga
Beads on the head — Engemaita

What it is made of:

The traditional Kuria accessory is made from local beads and sisal string or twine.

How it works:

These are made into traditional Kuria necklaces, worn by the women of the Kuria tribe.

What it is used for:

These beads and traditional necklaces are specifically designed to be worn when dancing. The women feel these beads are attractive and when they dance the beads move and shake around their necks. This is apart of the traditional dancing culture.



WINNOWING TRAY

Kuria name: Orohongo

What it is made of:

The winnowing tray is made by male weavers and used by women for winnowing millet. It is made of sorghum top branches and bamboo, as well as sisal ropes. Women then plaster the inside with cow dung so flour does not stick in between strands.

How it works:

Hold the tray with two hands from each side, with the grains inside.

What it is used for:

It is used for sifting and separating grains and chaff.



STONE MORTAR AND PESTLE

Kuria name: Oroghena

What it is made of:

The Oroghena is made of stone that comes from the river. Shaping the stone is an artwork, done by women, with the aim of getting the stone as smooth as possible.

How it works:

This kitchen tool is used to prepare ingredients or substances by crushing and grinding them into a fine paste or powder. The chef holds the smaller stone on the top and grinds the ingredient from the bottom larger stone.

What it is used for:

It is for grinding grains such as sorghum and cassava.



CLAY POTS

Kuria name: Inyonga

What it is made of:

Soil resources in Northern Tanzania and Kenya vary from sandy to clayey. Kuria women mould pots, plates and dishes from the clay. The surface is then sanded, or polished, with wet stones to create a smooth surface and left to dry. The dry pot is then decorated and fired.

How it works:

These pots are made by older women who have developed their craft. Most cultures have their own signature decorations and these vary from tribe to tribe.

What it is used for:

These clay pots, plates and dishes are used for storing grains, drinking water, milk, porridge, cooking, carrying water from the river and for brewing local beer.

