



Tanzania



Full name: United Republic of Tanzania
Population: 41.5 million (UN, 2008)
Capital: Dodoma (official), Dar es Salaam (commercial)
Largest city: Dar es Salaam
Area: 945,087 sq km (364,900 sq miles)
Major languages: English, Swahili
Major religions: Is thought to consist of roughly one-third each Muslims, Christians and the remainder are adherents of traditional religions that centre on ancestor worship, the land and various rituals
Life expectancy: 51 years (men)
54 years (women) (UN)
Monetary unit: 1 Tanzanian shilling = 100 cents
Main exports: coffee, tea, cotton, cashews, sisal and cloves. Subsistence crops include rice, cassava, maize, millet and plantains, nickel, iron, coal, gold and gem stones



History

Tanzania has a long history of human habitation – some of the earliest hominoid fossils in the world were discovered 3 million years ago. More recent migrations of Bantu-speaking tribes from western Africa began around 1000 BC, and with their assimilation came advances in iron and steel production. The Masaai arrived more recently in the 15th century and continued to arrive for another three hundred years. In the late 19th century, the German East African Company gained control of large portions of the Tanzanian mainland. At the end of World War I, the Germans relinquished control over the area to the British. Britain established an internal self-government within the country and the independent Republic of Tanganyika was formed with Nyerere as president. Gradually, Tanzania's leaders created a system of multi-party democracy. In 1995 Benjamin Mkapa was elected president.

Landscapes

- Tanzania is a sovereign state in central East Africa bordered by Kenya and Uganda to the north, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west, and Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique to the south. The country's eastern borders lie on the Indian Ocean.
- Tanzania is mountainous in the northeast, where Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, is situated. To the north and west are the Great Lakes of Lake Victoria (Africa's largest lake) and Lake Tanganyika (Africa's deepest lake, known for its unique species of fish). Central Tanzania comprises a large plateau, with plains and arable land. The eastern shore is hot and humid, with the island of Zanzibar lying just offshore.
- The Kalambo Falls are the second highest in Africa and are located near the southern tip of Lake Tanganyika.

The Economy

80% of the work force is employed through agriculture, which accounts for about 60% of the GDP. Tourism is a rapidly growing market and accounts for about 5% GDP. The mining industry accounts for about 8% GDP although most resources are unexploited. However, daily life for most Tanzanians is a struggle with an average annual income of US\$260. The economy relies heavily on outside donors.

Language and the People

- Tanzania has more than 126 ethnic groups and each ethnic group has its own language. The Sukuma are the largest tribe (13% of the overall population) About 95% of Tanzanians are of Bantu origin.
- No language is official, but Swahili is the national language, used for inter-ethnic communication and for official matters.
- After gaining independence, English was still used for some official issues, and was thus considered national alongside Swahili. Nowadays it is no longer used in the administration, in the parliament or in the government.
- The music of Tanzania stretches from traditional African music to the string-based *taarab* to a distinctive hip hop known as bongo flava. Tanzania has its own distinct African rumba music

Living Conditions

Tanzania is one of the least urbanised countries in East Africa with only 11.5% of the population living in towns and cities. Most people are concentrated around the perimeters of the country – the coast, Lake Victoria and Kilimanjaro while settlement in the wild centre of the country is sparse. Dar es Salaam is the largest city in Tanzania and has an estimated population of over 2 million. The education system is loosely modelled on Great Britain but there is only one state run university. Primary education is in Swahili and tuition is free but costs of uniforms and books is a real hardship for most rural families and only about 5% of all children go onto Secondary school.



Wildlife

- Tanzania contains many large and ecologically significant wildlife parks, including Ngorongoro Crater, Serengeti National Park in the north, and Selous Game Reserve and Mikumi National Park in the south. Gombe National Park in the west is known as the site of Dr Jane Goodall's studies of chimpanzee behavior.
- It is in these habitats that wildlife such as the white-bearded wildebeest participate in a large-scale annual migration. Up to 250,000 wildebeest perish each year in the long and arduous movement to find forage in the dry season.

- One third of Tanzania is covered by miombo woodland and is host to over four million wild animals including the highly endangered black rhino and a variety of turtles. The coast and off-shore island coral reefs host a wealth of marine life that are being threatened by dynamite fishing and a lack of protection.

Environmental Issues

The government set aside one fourth of Tanzania's land to protected parks, game forests and reserves (a total of 12 National Parks and 14 Game Reserves) but severe environmental damage has already occurred in most areas due to deforestation, soil erosion and desertification. The country's parks are generally undeveloped and, with the exception of Serengeti and Kilimanjaro, remain as some of the most wild and pristine areas in East Africa.

