

ECO-TOURISM

Tanzania's modern history began during the 8th century, as city-states were established along the coast as important trading routes. It was conquered by a variety of peoples starting with the Omanis, then the Portuguese, and finally the British. In the 1960s, after gaining independence, the two sovereign states of Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form the United Republic of Tanzania. In fact, the name Tanzania is a portmanteau of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Biodiversity:

Tanzania is famous for its landmarks such as Kilimanjaro, the highest point in Africa and Lake Victoria, the world's second-largest freshwater lake. About 43.7% of Tanzania is listed as a protected area; however, most of the wildlife is found outside existing protected areas. This has led to increased conflicts between humans and wildlife as they compete for the same land resources. Tanzania is also home to important populations of species that are endangered and threatened, such as the black rhinoceros, wild dog, chimpanzee, African elephant, cheetah, and wattled crane. Challenges to conservation include poverty, education, population growth, governance issues, lack of financial resources, and development pressures.

Indigenous Peoples:

Tanzania's population is 99% African, comprising of 120 ethnic groups including the Sukuma, the Haya, the Nyakyusa, the Nyamwezi, and the Chagga. The remaining 1% consists of Asians, Europeans, and Arabs. The two main religions are Christianity and Islam, with the population of Zanzibar being almost 100% Muslim. Although there is only a small community of Asians in Tanzania there have a significant amount of influence on the economy, owning about 40% of the economy in 1998. The Guardian reported in 2011 that Chinese traders in Dar es Salaam were given 30 days to stop trading in a busy market. The deputy industry minister said that Chinese businessmen were allowed into the country as investors, but not as "vendors or shoeshiners", as these jobs could be carried out by locals.

The Maasai are a semi-nomadic pastoralist people who live in Southern Kenya and northern Tanzania and number about a half million people. Their livestock, including cattle, goats, and sheep, are important to their culture and their source of income. The Maasai are also well-known for their warrior "jump" dance in which Maasai *morani* (warriors) leap into the air from a standing position. They have managed to maintain many of traditional ways, although this is more challenging each year.

Recently, in 2014, The Guardian revealed that the president of Tanzania had pledged never to evict the Maasai people after an international outcry condemning a turning of their ancestral land into a commercial hunting ground for Arab royalty. Maasai activists claimed that the government had reintroduced plans to forcibly relocate 40,000 pastoralists to make way for a luxury hunting and safari company. Lazaro Nyalandu, the natural resources and tourism minister, stated that the "government has no such plans and never entertained the idea of evicting the Maasai".

UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

Kilimanjaro National Park: At 5,895 m (1,934 ft), Kilimanjaro is one of the largest volcanoes in the world, and the highest point in Africa. It has three main volcanic peaks, Kibo, Mawenzi, and Shira. The

mountain is encircled by forest, where numerous animals make their home, including elephants, buffalos, and antelopes. Since 1962, Kilimanjaro has lost 55% of its remaining glaciers.

Kondoa Rock-Art Sites: On overhanging slabs of sedimentary rocks, there is a spectacular collection of rock paintings dating back at least two millennia. What makes these images unique are the depictions of domesticated animals that indicate a transition from a hunter-gather society to agro-pastoralist. The rock art sites still play an active role in the rituals of nearby local communities.

Ngorongoro Conservation Area: Spanning vast expanses of highland plains, savanna, woodlands, and forests, the area was established in 1959 as a multiple land use area, with wildlife co-existing with the Maasai. It includes Ngorongoro Crater, the world's largest caldera, and Olduvai Gorge, a 14 km (8mi) long deep ravine. A large population of animals live in the crater, including the endangered black rhinoceros, wildebeest, zebras and gazelles.

Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara: Located off the coast of Tanzania, these two islands are the sites of two port cities, Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara. Both were Swahili trading cities that saw the majority of the Indian Ocean trading, dealing in gold, silver, pearls, perfumes, Arabian crockery, Persian earthenware and Chinese porcelain. Around 1330, the great traveler Ibn Battouta visited Kilwa and described it as one of the most beautiful cities of the world. The ruins include the Great Mosque, a palace with an octagonal bathing pool, and the prison.

Selous Game Reserve: Covering 50,000 sq km (19,300 sq mi), The Selous Game Reserve is one of the largest protected areas in Africa. It is home to some of the largest concentrations of elephant, black rhinoceros, cheetah, giraffe, hippopotamus and crocodile. The birdlife is rich as well with 350 species having been recorded, including the knob-billed duck, the Udzungwa forest partridge and the rufous-winged sunbird.

Serengeti National Park: In May and June, huge herds of wildebeest, gazelles and zebras migrant from the central plains to the water holes of the Serengeti. These herds, numbering in the millions, are followed by prides of lions, spotted hyena, and golden jackal. Other wildlife include leopards, African elephants, black rhinoceros, monkeys, baboons, impalas, crocodiles, and over 500 species.

Stone Town, Zanzibar: Once an important trading port, the Arabs decorated the city with palaces and fine mansions. A maze of winding, narrow streets will take you past mosques, cathedrals, and crumbling homes with overhanging balconies, reflecting influences from both the Arab traders and European missionaries. Stone Town also has great historical importance as one of the main slave-trading ports in East Africa, as well as the base from which its opponents, like David Livingstone, conducted their anti-slavery movement.

National Parks:

Arusha National Park: At dusk and dawn, when its likely that there'll be no clouds, ecotravelers will be able to see the majestic snow-capped peaks of Kilimanjaro from Arusha National Park. However, it is Mount Meru, the fifth highest in Africa, that dominates the park's horizon, and offers a rewarding hike.

Giraffes lumber across the rolling grassy hills between grazing zebra herds, while thousands of flamingos will descend upon the blue-green lakes.

Tarangire National Park: The perfect place for a safari, ecotourists will discover herds of migratory animals such as wildebeest, zebra, buffalo, impala, and elephants crowding upon the National Park's lagoons. Bird lovers will also rejoice, as the swamps attract birds such as the Kori bustard, the stocking-thighed ostrich, and the yellow-collared lovebird. Hiding in the trees, you might find a python, lion, or leopard.

Udzungwa Mountains: Not a conventional safari experience, Udzungwa Mountains is rather a huge draw for hikers. It is the largest and most biodiverse of a chain of a dozen large forest-swathed mountains known as the Eastern Arc. An excellent network of forest trails will take you to either Sanje Waterfall, which plunges 170 m (550 ft), or to Mwanihana peak, with panoramic views of nearby sugar plantations. Bird lovers will also appreciate the Park with its more than 400 bird varieties, including the green-headed oriole.