

EXPEDITIONARY CULTURE **FIELD GUIDE**

Tanzania



About this Guide

This guide is designed to prepare you to deploy to culturally complex environments and achieve mission objectives. The fundamental information contained within will help you understand the cultural dimension of your assigned location and gain skills necessary for success.



The guide consists of two parts:

Part 1 introduces “Culture General,” the foundational knowledge you need to operate effectively in any global environment.

Part 2 presents “Culture Specific” Tanzania, focusing on unique cultural features of Tanzanian society and is designed to complement other pre-deployment training. It applies culture-

general concepts to help increase your knowledge of your assigned deployment location.



For further information, visit the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) website at

www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/ or contact AFCLC’s Region Team at AFCLC.Region@us.af.mil.

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PART 1 – CULTURE GENERAL

What is Culture?

Fundamental to all aspects of human existence, culture shapes the way humans view life and functions as a tool we use to adapt to our social and physical environments. A culture is the sum of all of the beliefs, values, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning for a society. All human beings have culture, and individuals within a culture share a general set of beliefs and values.



Members of a culture also usually assign the same meanings to the symbols in that culture. A symbol is when one thing – an image, word, object, idea, or story – represents another thing. For example, the American flag is a physical and visual

symbol of a core American value – freedom. At the same time, the story of George Washington admitting to having chopped down a cherry tree is also symbolic, representing the importance Americans place on personal honesty and leadership integrity.

Force Multiplier

The military services have learned through experience the importance of understanding other cultures. Unlike the 20th-century bipolar world order that dominated US strategy for nearly half a century, today the US military is operating in what we classify as asymmetric or irregular conflict zones where the notion of cross-cultural interactions is on the leading edge of our engagement strategies.

We have come to view the people themselves, rather than the political system or physical environment, as the decisive feature in conflict areas. Our primary objective hinges on influencing constructive change through peaceful means where possible. We achieve this endeavor by encouraging local nationals to focus on developing stable political, social, and

economic institutions that reflect their cultural beliefs and traditions.

Therefore, understanding the basic concepts of culture serves as a force multiplier. Achieving an awareness and respect of a society's values and beliefs enables deploying forces to build relationships with people from other cultures, positively influence their actions, and ultimately achieve mission success.

Cultural Domains

Culture is not just represented by the beliefs we carry internally, but also by our behaviors and by the systems members of a culture create to organize their lives. These systems, such as political or educational institutions, help us to live in a manner that is appropriate to our culture and encourages us to perpetuate that culture into the future.

We can organize these behaviors and systems into categories – what the Air Force refers to as “cultural domains” – in order to better understand the primary values and characteristics of a society. A cross-culturally competent military member can use these domains – which include kinship, language and communication, and social and political systems among others (see chart on next page) – as tools for understanding and adapting to any culture. For example, by understanding the ways different cultures define family or kinship, a deployed military member can more effectively interact with members of that culture.

Social Behaviors Across Cultures

While humankind shares basic behaviors, various groups enact or even group those behaviors differently across cultural boundaries. For example, all societies obtain food for survival, although agrarian societies generally produce their own food for limited consumption using very basic techniques.

Conversely, industrialized nations have more sophisticated market economies, producing foodstuffs for



universal consumption. Likewise, all cultures value history and tradition, although they represent these concepts through a variety of unique forms of symbolism. While the dominant world religions share the belief in one God, their worship practices vary with their traditional historical development. Similarly, in many kin-based cultures where familial bonds are foundational to social identity, it is customary for family or friends to serve as godparents, while for other societies this practice is nearly non-existent.

Worldview

One of our basic human behaviors is the tendency to classify others as similar or different according to our cultural standard.



As depicted in the chart below, we can apply the 12 cultural domains to help us compare similarities and differences across cultures. We evaluate others' behavior to determine if they are "people like me" or "people not like me." Consequently, we assume

that individuals falling into the "like me" category share our perspectives and values.

12 Domains of Culture



This collective perspective forms our worldview – how we see the world and understand our place in it. Your worldview functions as a lens through which you see and understand the world. It helps you to interpret your experiences and the values and behaviors of other people that you encounter. Consider your worldview as a way of framing behavior, providing an accountability standard for our actions and a logical explanation of why we individually or collectively act in a certain manner.

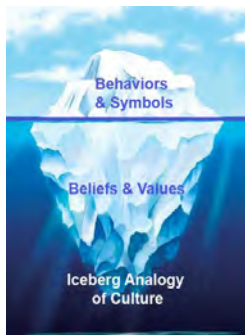
Cultural Belief System

An important component of a worldview is our belief system. A community's belief system sets its universal standards of what is good and bad, defines right and wrong behavior, and assigns a value of meaningful or meaningless. Our beliefs form the fundamental values we hold to be true – regardless of whether there is physical evidence to support these ideas. Beliefs are a central facet of human culture. They are shared views about world order and how the universe was physically and socially constructed.

While all people have beliefs, their specific components tend to vary depending upon respective world views. What people classify as good or bad, right or wrong depends on our deeply-held beliefs we started developing early in life that have help shape our characters. Likewise, these values are ingrained in our personalities and shape our behavior patterns and our self-identities. Because cultural beliefs are intensely held, they are difficult, though not impossible, to change.

Core Beliefs

Core beliefs shape and influence certain behaviors and also serve to rationalize those behaviors. Therefore, knowledge of individual or group beliefs can be useful in comprehending or making sense of their activities. We will use the iceberg model for classifying culture to illustrate two levels



of meaning, as depicted. Beliefs and values, portrayed by the deeper and greater level of the submerged iceberg, are seldom visible, but are indicated / hinted at / referenced by our behaviors and symbols (top level). It is important to recognize, though, that the parts of culture that are not visible (under the waterline) are informing and shaping what is being made visible (above the waterline).

In many cases, different worldviews may present behaviors that are contrary to our own beliefs, particularly in many regions where US forces deploy. Your ability to suspend judgment in order to understand another perspective is essential to establishing relationships with your host-nation counterparts. The ability to withhold your opinion and strive to understand a culture from a member of that culture's perspective is known as cultural relativism. It often involves taking an alternate perspective when interpreting others' behaviors and is critical to your ability to achieve mission success.

As you travel throughout the African Continent, you will encounter cultural patterns of meaning that are common among most African countries. What follows is a general description of 12 cultural domains which are used to frame those commonalities.

CULTURAL DOMAINS

1. History and Myth

History and myth are related concepts. History is a record of the past that is based on verifiable facts and events. Myth can act as a type of historical record, although it is usually a story which members of a culture use to explain community origins or important events that are not verifiable or which occurred prior to written language.



Africa has a history that spans the entire existence of humankind. In ancient times prior to the emergence of written languages, history and

wisdom were preserved across generations and ethnic boundaries through oral folk legends or myths. Most early human evolution began as hunting and gathering cultures in East and South Africa, with countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa renowned for their early human sites. In the last several millennia, the development of agriculture and pastoralism (animal herding) replaced hunting and gathering lifestyles.

Ancient civilizations evolved in all corners of Africa, inspired in part by peoples from the Middle East bringing trade, beliefs, customs, language, and on occasion, colonization. Far from being isolated empires, the African civilizations were intimately connected by commerce and marriage throughout various regions of the continent, and when confronted by outsiders, managed to adapt to their influences. Eventually, Arab traders introduced Islam to Africa and also instituted the Trans-Saharan African slave trade that lasted from the 7th to 19th Centuries.

The “golden age” of European exploration, which lasted from the 18th to mid-20th century, prompted the wholesale exploitation of Africans resources – first human assets through slavery, followed by natural resources such as minerals, precious gems and metals, and wildlife, thereby diminishing most of what was traditional and African.

The introduction of the European Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade altered the slave trade through both the sheer number of Africans enslaved and through the cementing of a racist ideology of Black inferiority to legitimize the institution of slavery. Slavery decimated the African continent for over 400 years through the forced relocation of an estimated 25 to 30 million Africans worldwide. This figure does not include those Africans who died aboard ships or during capture. While abolition of the slave trade dissolved the institution of slavery, it



did not end the European presence on the African continent nor did it drastically alter their attitudes towards Africans.

Starting in the mid-19th century, European colonialism served to redefine African ethnic relations on a large scale; however, as African societies began to resist colonial rule and seek their independence, widespread ethnic conflict and genocide occurred. Sustained westernization and globalization continue to shape the continent through poverty, disease, and social reform. A history still to be recorded, Africa's future identity faces many challenges in critical areas such as environmental change, ethnic strife, women's health and security, and education.

2. Political and Social Relations

Political relations are the ways in which members of a community organize leadership, power, and authority. Social relations are all of the ways in which individuals are linked to others in their community.

Traditional African political organizations in the form of bands, tribes, and chiefdoms have existed for several millennia and continue to



influence contemporary African governments. Uncommon in modern society, bands are limited to hunting and gathering economies, such as the !Kung of the southern African Kalahari Desert and foragers of central African forests.

Tribes are still represented today across the African political landscape, although the use of the word "tribe" is sometimes misinterpreted due to its western notion of "primitiveness" and oftentimes substituted with the term "ethnic group." Lacking centralized authority, tribes are organized around segmented descent groups or in some cases age groups.

Everyday governance is discharged through councils of respected elders and sanctioned through ritual and other means. East African pastoralist groups such as the Maasai,

along with some West African tribes and the Berbers in North Africa, represent this type of organization.

Chiefdoms or kingdoms are ruled by kings or queens from a royal clan and generally incorporate millions of subjects. Kingdoms such as the Zulu or Swazi in southern Africa developed through conquest, while others like Ghana's Ashante developed through an association of related traditional states. However, colonialism eventually diluted the power and



reach of these empires, whose leaders were often retained as indirect rulers or figureheads.

Today, all three of these political organizations still exist, although in the confines of modern African nation-states created by

colonial powers who had little regard or understanding of African cultures. This juxtaposition of modernity with tradition has caused severe conflict throughout the continent.

Challenged to construct their respective "national" identities, regional leaders attempt to do so by diluting the traditionally cohesive power of ancestry. These national ruling elites, who derive their power from wealth and commerce rather than tribal affiliation, feel threatened by loyalty to these traditional organizations, labeling their rule as "tribalism."

This "class versus descent" scrimmage for power has resulted in conflicts across the continent and a dramatic divergence of interests. As a means to overcome these and other issues on the continent, a 55-nation federation, the African Union (AU), was formed in 2002. AU's charter is to promote "greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples" by building partnerships in all segments of "civil society."

3. Religion and Spirituality

Religion is a cultural belief system that provides meaning to members of a community. Religious and spiritual beliefs help preserve the social order by defining proper behavior. They also create social unity by defining shared identity, offer

individuals peace of mind, and explain the causes of events in a society. Prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity, the African continent consisted of orally transmitted indigenous religious practices. As in many societies, African indigenous



beliefs influenced diet, subsistence patterns, family structures, marriage practices, and healing and burial processes. In essence, Africans constructed their worldview through their indigenous religions.

Today, the African continent is primarily either Muslim or Christian. Other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism exist as pockets in different regions of the continent, primarily in urban areas. The historical trajectories of Islamic and Christian expansion in Africa offer intriguing commonalities in how Africans across the continent initially reacted to the introduction of each of those religions. For example, it is common throughout the continent to find a blending of many elements of indigenous religious practices with local Islam and Christianity.

Consequently, many African native religions share similarities with religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in their understanding of God as the creator and ruler of all life, although He is considered untouchable by humans.

However, unlike Christianity and Islam, many African indigenous religions believe that God is not directly involved in people's lives. To them there is a spirit world populated with former good and bad human beings. The good spirits intercede with God on behalf of their living families to whom they then relay God's will through dreams and acquired



possessions. The bad spirits work to bring misfortune through sickness, death, or natural disasters to those who behave inappropriately.

Many indigenous African religions revere "nature" spirits living in the sky, water, and forests. These impersonal spirits help protect people from harm and provide them with life's essential ingredients such as water, sun, and wildlife. This belief system is commonly referred to as animism.

Just as spirits mediate relations between God and humans, religious specialists act as mediators between spirits and humans to provide protection from harm.

4. Family and Kinship

The domain of family and kinship refers to groups of people related through blood ties, marriage, or through strong emotional bonds that influence them to treat each other like family members (often called "fictive kin"). The traditional African family with respect to marriage, family structure, and descent is a much different arrangement than is found in most American families. Likewise, there are several components of the traditional African family that are common to all African cultures.



First, perhaps the most difficult feature to reconcile to Americans is that of polygyny – the practice of a husband having more than one wife. A benefit of this arrangement is that it promotes societal alliances through marriage, procreation, and family wealth through female labor.

Second, due to polygyny, the family in most African cultures has historically consisted of an expanded set of kin or relatives that extends well beyond the American notion of a nuclear family. This arrangement created a family environment where children considered all siblings as "brothers and sisters" and all of the wives/mothers as "mother."

Third, the extended African family traces descent through either the male or female side of the family, a practice which differs considerably from the American family. Patrilineal descent (through the male side of the family) is the more common approach and usually features polygyny. The matrilineal (through the female bloodline) marriage pattern is more uncommon and almost always features monogamy – it is rare to encounter a wife having more than one husband.

Lastly, it is common for two or more blood lines (lineages) to share a common ancestor and collectively form a clan, which is the largest social unit. Clans do not have formal leaders or organizational structures. Membership is transferred from father to child and cuts across ethnic and social boundaries.

The dramatic social changes in Africa during and after colonialism in the last 4 decades have obviously affected the traditional family, and variations on these 3 features can be found across the continent.

5. Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological/reproductive differences between males and females, while gender is a more flexible concept that refers to a culture's categorizing of masculine and feminine behaviors, symbols, and social roles. Gender roles in Africa follow no single model nor is there a generalized concept of sex and common standard of sexual behavior.

Prehistorically, gender role differentiation in Africa's hunting and gathering cultures was based on a division of labor featuring different, yet complementary, sets of responsibilities for males and females, adults and children. Females gathered

over half the caloric needs from natural vegetation, while also reproducing and raising offspring. Males were primarily hunters but also assisted with gathering.

These gender patterns continued as agricultural practices advanced.



Females shared in farming while continuing to provide for the family's subsistence, and males produced the cash crops. Pastoralists like the Maasai of Kenya traditionally have featured males involved in cattle-raising and females in food production.

The 19th-century European colonial period introduced a cash economy into Africa, with female labor used to produce the cash crops. By inserting male authority over females, colonial administrators disrupted the distinct yet complementary male/female relationship that had been traditionally African.

More recently, western influence across the continent has dramatically altered the traditional gender roles. Educational and professional opportunities for females, along with increased family migrations to urban areas, have radically altered traditional male and female gender roles.

Likewise, the number of singles parents and even child- or other relative-led families has increased with the predominance of HIV/AIDS-related deaths and warfare, further altering traditional gender responsibilities. Additionally, ethnic conflicts involving abuse of women are prevalent in many unstable countries, and while the rubric of traditional African gender generally remains, the forces of change are gradually ripping it away.

6. Language and Communication

Language is a system for sharing information symbolically, whereby words are used to represent ideas. Communication is



defined as the cultural practice of sharing meaning in interaction, both verbally and non-verbally. America is predominantly a monolingual society, where traditionally, fluency in a second language has been considered a luxury rather than a necessity. Conversely, national survival for many societies in Africa required them throughout their existence to

adopt multilingual practices, if for no other reason than to preserve their native heritage.

You may find it challenging to comprehend the scope of Africa's linguistic diversity. There are over 2,000 African languages (many spoken-only) from 6 major language families, and perhaps 100 of these languages are used to communicate among the more dominant ethnic groups such as Berber, Swahili, Yoruba, and others.

Official languages of African nation-states are few, yet the linguistic diversity expressed across the continent (Nigeria has 250 languages) has prompted an awareness of the value of Africa's linguistic traditions. While most areas of the continent speak the adopted language of their colonial past – such as French and Portuguese in West Africa, French and Arabic in Morocco, and English in Kenya and South Africa – the majority of people also speak one or more traditional “indigenous” languages of their and other ethnic groups. As African independence spread throughout the continent, ethnic groups continued to depend on their indigenous identifiers, such as language, to celebrate their “release” from colonial rule and to

preserve a sense of indigenous identity.



While communication styles tend to vary by ethnic or social groups, Africans generally are friendly and outgoing people although they tend to communicate with reserve to avoid

confrontation. As in most kin-based societies, Africans believe that saving face or protecting one's honor and dignity are of utmost importance; therefore, they avoid public criticism and controversial topics at all costs – even to the extent of withholding their honest opinion or modifying the truth.

Africans admire and even expect extended greetings and small talk, and to attempt to rush or avoid social graces is considered disrespectful. Similarly, Africans avoid direct eye contact when communicating with new acquaintances and people of status,

particularly elders. They also are fond of non-verbal gestures, and it is common throughout African societies for members of the same gender to hold hands or touch while conversing.

7. Learning and Knowledge

All cultures require that the older generation transmit important information to the younger generation. This information can be strictly factual (for example, how to fulfill subsistence and health requirements) and culturally traditional (the beliefs, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning to the community). This knowledge transfer may occur through structured, formalized systems such as schools or through informal learning by watching adults or peers.



The contemporary African educational system hardly resembles the traditional pre-colonial structure, whereby community elders were primarily responsible for preparing youth for adulthood. Their instruction included fundamentals of ethnic ritual and ceremony, along with customary protocol for their distinctive gender roles. A rite-of-passage commemorating their successful journey from childhood to adulthood served as a form of graduation.

European colonialism brought a more structured, formal educational system that catered to a small group of African elite who demonstrated potential to administer expanding colonial territories. Following independence, many African nations adopted the European system because they believed it would prepare them to be more competitive in intra-continental and global marketplaces, thereby enhancing their quality of life.

However, progress in developing and maintaining reliable educational institutions has been slow for a variety of reasons. Since most Africans live in rural environments, they continue to rely heavily on child labor for family survival, resulting in decreased school enrollments or early withdrawals. Likewise, widespread HIV/AIDS epidemics, ethnic conflict, teacher and resource deficits, and inaccessibility to remote rural areas also

hamper progress. According to 2023 statistics, about 100 million African children and youth were out of school, of which 35 million were of primary school age.

8. Time and Space

In every society, people occupy space and time in ways that are not directly linked to physical survival. In low-context western cultures, people tend to be preoccupied with strict time management, devoting less effort to relationship-building. Conversely, most African cultures are traditionally high-context societies, whereby people center their activities on socializing and establishing close associations, having little regard for the passage-of-time.

Only after establishing trust and honor will your typical African counterpart agreeably proceed with business. In his worldview, time is a precious commodity used to establish relationships and form alliances. Any attempt to accelerate the tempo at the expense of social pleasantries will likely result in deadlock.



To an African, close physical proximity between individuals encourages cooperative trust, and for centuries they have viewed human linkage as a

core element to survival. This closeness is best represented in a traditional African village where strong kinship connections are evidenced by a display of close interpersonal relations among family members.

While conventional African concepts of time and space remain intact, throughout the continent western influence and globalization have stepped up the pace of African living, mostly in urban areas. Consequently, rural-to-urban migrations have reshaped traditional social and subsistence patterns.

9. Aesthetics and Recreation

Every culture has its own forms of creative expression that are guided by aesthetic principles of imagination, beauty, skill and style. Prior to 19th-century European colonization of Africa,

recreation served a vital subsistence role, whereby adolescents and adults alike participated in intellectually stimulating leisurely activities that concurrently served to develop essential hunting and pastoral skills.

Games of chance and skill were important to early childhood development, providing social outlets within and outside their community. Featuring wrestling, jumping and running; traditional African sport was steeped in religious ritual.



Along with colonialism came the introduction to Africa of western sports such as soccer, cricket, rugby and track and field. This emphasis on western sport continued to thrive with African independence and globalization, as seen in sporting events such as the Olympics and the World Cup.

Leaders such as Nelson Mandela skillfully employed sport to promote a unified South African nation. Importing the predominantly “white” game of rugby, Mandela used it to fuse a racially divided country following his election in 1992. This event is the theme of the motion picture “Invictus,” exemplifying how sport can serve to create national identities and overcome ethnic division. His efforts have inspired many other African nations to follow suit.



Likewise, East African countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia have produced the world's dominant male and female distance runners, and South Africa, Cameroon and Nigeria emerged as strong contenders in the 2010 World Cup. African nations are now competing in leagues such as the International Basketball Association (FIBA) World Championships, and there is also a growing number of African

basketball players on US college campuses and in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

10. Sustenance and Health

Societies have different methods of transforming natural resources into food. These methods can shape residence patterns, family structures and economics. Theories of disease and healing practices exist in all cultures and serve as adaptive responses to disease and illness.



Despite having only 18% of the global population, Africa is a victim of many of the world's debilitating health disorders. According to the World Health Organization, 65% of the global HIV/AIDS cases and 95% of malarial diseases occur in Africa.

These and other medical conditions are attributed primarily to viral infection and widespread poverty caused by extreme climatic conditions and civil unrest, coupled with inadequate preventative measures. While extensive drought generates widespread famine, civil disturbances generate millions of displaced persons. Likewise, with only 65% of the Sub-



Saharan African population having access to basic drinking water, water-borne bacterial diseases such as cholera and schistosomiasis are common.

Many people in Africa lack access to western medicine, and as a result depend on traditional health practices to combat disease. In addition, some traditional beliefs run counter to western medical practice and perhaps discourage individuals from utilizing those services even when they are available. This problem is further intensified by lack of federal regulatory healthcare management.

While modern healthcare procedures are more common in urban areas, many rural people rely on traditional practitioners who use a variety of plants and herbs to treat patients. Similarly, many families have their own secret remedies. While in some cases traditional medicine proves effective with fewer side effects than modern drugs, traditional practices do not adequately treat many of the more serious conditions.

On a positive note, western influence has stimulated some progress in combating Africa's health crisis. More resources are devoted to achieving basic human security by assessing disease symptoms early and with scientific accuracy.

11. Economics and Resources

This domain refers to beliefs regarding appropriate ways for a society to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. Traditionally having an agrarian-based economy, Africa today remains predominantly agricultural, featuring less industrialization than most other parts of the world. Post-colonial adversities such as civil war, disease, poverty, and unstable dictatorships posed unusual hardship on several young African nations; however, Africa currently stands at the cross-roads of economic development with many nations becoming some of the fastest growing regions in the world.



Colonialism institutionalized the exploitation of Africa's mineral resources, resulting in today's oil industry dominating the economic market in several coastal regions. A surge in global oil prices; a growing African middle class; and reduction in civil wars, foreign aid, and inflation collectively promise a more positive outlook for the future.

Countries such as Botswana, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and South Africa are economically the wealthiest on the continent, with regions such as East Africa showing signs of economic stability. Despite the economic upswing, much of sub-Saharan

Africa's future economic prosperity is held hostage by devastating diseases such as AIDS, particularly in areas of southern Africa, and the growing effects of climate change and man-made environmental degradation throughout the subcontinent.

12. Technology and Material

Societies use technology to transform their physical world, and culture heavily influences the development and use of technology. Africa lags far behind most of the world in manufacturing capacity and output. Even the more economically-developed nations such as South Africa are competitively weak when compared to non-African industrialized nations. During the 1970s and 1980s, Africa experienced some growth in raw exports although this increase did little to boost long-term manufacturing capacity.

Today, Africa is experiencing an actual decline in manufacturing capacity due primarily to a lull in the global economy, along with other indigenous issues such as environmental stress, poor physical and organizational infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled personnel. Likewise, African manufacturing capacity is no match against global powers such as China and significant Southeast Asian markets.



International aid from both governmental and non-governmental organizations has helped African nations establish preliminary economic footholds. For example, many of them have dedicated industrial developmental zones to attract foreign investment and increase export-related manufacturing capacity, although Africa is far removed from having a significant role in the global marketplace in the foreseeable future.

Now that we have introduced general concepts that characterize African society at large, we will now focus on specific features of Tanzanian society.

PART 2 – CULTURE SPECIFIC

1. HISTORY AND MYTH

Historical Overview

The United Republic of Tanzania resulted from the union of two regions with distinct but intertwined histories: mainland Tanganyika and the archipelago of Zanzibar. Although both regions were subject to the same foreign powers throughout much of recent history, they were settled by different ethnic groups which adopted different types of economic activity.

Early Tanganyika

Footprints discovered in the Great Rift Valley indicate that hominids were present in Tanzania as early as 3.6 million years ago. The first modern humans to inhabit the region were hunter-gatherers who closely resembled the Khoe-



San of southern Africa in appearance, culture, and language. The dwellings, rock art, and stone tools which these hunter-gatherers left behind indicate that they were present in Tanzania by 1000 BC at the latest, and probably much earlier. Around that time, Cushitic-speaking pastoralists (animal herders) with stone tools began migrating from present-day Ethiopia and Somalia into the area and settling among the hunter-gatherers.

However, it was not until the early centuries AD that Bantu-speaking farmers and the ancestors of most modern Tanzanians began to arrive in East Africa from the Niger Delta. Although these Bantu-speakers had iron tools, their limited range of crops confined them to only the most fertile regions.

Later, Sudanic and Nilotic peoples who filtered into Tanzania between the 11th and 18th centuries introduced the Bantu-speakers to cattle and cereal crops, allowing them to expand more widely. The new migrants probably assimilated to the culture of the Bantu-speakers over an extended period of time.

Early Zanzibar and the Coast

Little verifiable history of the coast exists prior to the 9th and 10th centuries AD. The Egyptians may have reached the coast of East Africa as early as 2,500 BC, followed by Phoenicians from the eastern Mediterranean about 2,000 years later. Based on Arab texts and Islamic-style architecture from that period, it is clear that Persian Gulf Arabs had trading ties with coastal East Africa.



Arab traders were mainly interested in gold, although they also bought large amounts of ebony, ivory, and spices, bringing in return a wide variety of goods from Arabia and the Far East. They also imported Islam, which became well-established in coastal East Africa (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

Although the Cushitic-speakers appear to have been the first African inhabitants of the coastal region, by the 14th century, nearly all non-Arab inhabitants of the coast and islands were Bantu-speakers. These Bantu languages later mixed with the Arabic spoken by traders to form Swahili, a coastal *lingua franca* (national language, see *Language and Communication*).

Swahili City-States: By the 12th century, the East African coast and nearby islands were dotted with trading posts. Many of the most important; such as Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia, and Kilwa Kisiwani; were located in present-day Tanzania. By the 15th century, about 30 of these trading posts had developed into independent and culturally Islamic Swahili city-states.

Although, full-blooded Africans likely comprised a majority in the Swahili city-states; most artisans, landowners, merchants, and religious leaders were of mixed Afro-Arab descent. Most of the sultans who ruled Swahili city-states were **Shirazi** Persians who originated in the Shiraz region of present-day Iran.

Kilwa Kisiwani, an island located about 150 miles south of Dar es Salaam, was initially the most prominent Swahili city-state. By the 16th century both the island of Zanzibar and the port of Mombasa in present-day Kenya had surpassed Kilwa Kisiwani and remained powerful until the arrival of the Portuguese.

Portuguese Rule

The first Europeans to visit the East African coast arrived in 1498 as part of a voyage led by Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama. Because the Swahili city-states ultimately were unable to unite against the cannon-armed invaders, it took just eight years for the Portuguese to claim control over the entire coast. Despite this rapid conquest, the Portuguese made no systematic attempt to administer all the land they claimed.

Portuguese control began to weaken in the 1580s as several Swahili city-states rebelled and a roving band of 5,000 warriors from present-day Malawi swept up the coast. The situation worsened in the mid-17th century, when Arabs from the Persian Gulf Sultanate of Oman began to help the Swahili city-states rebel. Portuguese control north of present-day Mozambique, which borders Tanzania to the south, ended entirely in 1698, when the Omanis captured Mombasa, Kenya.

Omani Sultanate

Although the Shirazi sultans were just as reluctant to cede autonomy to the Omanis as they had been to the Portuguese, they were unable to unite in resistance. Because the Omanis had their own internal divisions, neither side took decisive control of the coast and islands during the first century of Omani rule: the Omanis nominally held political power, while the Shirazis continued to dominate the regional economy.



Links to the Interior: There were few links between the coast and interior Tanganyika before 1741, when the Busaidi dynasty took power in Oman. The second half of the 18th century saw a revival of coastal trade and greater demand for goods from the interior. Hunters who explored the hinterlands communicated this demand from coastal traders to the people of interior Tanganyika; who responded by supplying ivory, iron, salt, and pottery in exchange for trade goods. By the beginning of the 19th century, Zanzibar had become an important port, and coastal towns like Bagamoyo had come to rely upon it. Farther south, Kilwa Kisiwani had also returned to prominence due to the booming ivory and slave trades.

Political Development in Tanganyika

Although a shared ethnic identity and cohesion did not emerge until the 19th century, most ethnic groups in modern Tanzania had arrived in the region by the end of the 18th century. At that time most parts of interior Tanganyika were inhabited, though sparsely populated. Nevertheless, population growth was significant enough to stimulate political development.

Ntemi Chiefs: One of the most widespread 18th-century political structures was the *ntemi* (chief) system, which was common in western and central Tanzania. Each chief and his advisory council ruled over about 1,000 subjects. Chiefs functioned more like religious leaders than dictators, and it was the chief's responsibility to ensure the health and prosperity of his people. Although some chiefs enjoyed ritual superiority over others, most chiefs did not seek to establish political authority beyond their

own people. By some estimates there were about 200 *ntemi* chiefdoms at the beginning of the 19th century.



Other Political Systems: The early political organization of northwestern Tanzania was largely imported from present-day southern Uganda, where

states comprising a mix of non-Bantu pastoralists and Bantu farmers probably began to form in the 15th century. Despite the diverse origins of their inhabitants, these states eventually became exclusively Bantu-speaking and managed to avoid the sharp class divisions which later plagued neighboring Rwanda and Burundi. As with the *ntemi* chiefdoms, some of the states enjoyed ritual but not political supremacy.

Although there were cultural differences, political structures in eastern and southern Tanganyika were similar to those of the Northwest, while the Southeast remained sparsely populated and largely inhabited by hunter-gatherers. The Northeast was mainly inhabited by Bantu farmers until the Maasai migrated south from present-day Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan during the 17th-18th centuries. Although relations were not always peaceful, the Maasai largely got along with the Bantu and often traded cattle in exchange for iron products.

The Slave Trade

These societies and their political structures were altered greatly by the East African slave trade, which dominated the economy of Tanganyika for the first half of the 19th century. Although farther from key markets in the Americas and therefore not as large as the West African slave trade, the East African slave trade grew in significance after 1807, when Britain banned the slave trade throughout the British Empire and began policing West African seas – the heart of the slave trade – more heavily.



Omani traders derived the greatest benefit from the rise of the East African slave trade because the Omani Sultan controlled Zanzibar and Mombasa, ports near the eastern end of slave routes from the interior. Although some ethnic groups such as the Yao of neighboring Malawi and Tanzania's prominent Nyamwezi grew powerful by helping slave traders, weaker ethnic groups were devastated as their villages were destroyed and their working-age populations were kidnapped for export.

Although Britain originally exerted influence in East Africa in order to check the colonial ambitions of Napoleonic France, it later focused more on keeping African slaves out of British India. Consequently, in 1822, Britain negotiated a treaty with the Omani Sultan making it illegal to sell slaves to Christian powers. Despite the terms of this treaty, the East African slave trade flourished during the 19th century as Britain was more concerned about disrupting the West African slave trade.

End of the Slave Trade: Britain increased trade with Zanzibar during the 19th century, and it was through a treaty between Britain and France that Zanzibar gained its independence from Oman in 1862. Britain eventually leveraged these trading ties, along with its naval power, to ban the East African slave trade: in 1876 Britain blockaded Zanzibar and promised the Zanzibari Sultan full protection against other foreign powers in exchange for a ban on the slave trade. The Sultan had little choice but to agree, and Zanzibar effectively became a British protectorate.

The Colonial Era

Although the Portuguese and the British established a relatively early presence in Zanzibar and coastal East Africa, Europeans remained unfamiliar with the interior until missionaries, traders, and explorers began to traverse the region during the 19th century. One of these explorers, a young German named Karl Peters, signed treaties with African chiefs thereby establishing a basis for German colonization in East Africa.



German Rule: Although Peters initially lacked the support of his government, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck later approved his treaties retroactively in order to gain a bargaining chip in negotiations with Britain. Specifically, Bismarck was interested in gaining control over the British possession of Heligoland, a small but strategically important archipelago off the northern coast of Germany. Bismarck's move

was shrewd, as it forced Britain to choose between straining ties with Germany by challenging its East African claims or endangering trading ties with Zanzibar and dishonoring its commitment to protect the Sultan against foreign powers.

In 1886, Britain and Germany reached an agreement whereby Germany gained most of Tanganyika, Britain retained Kenya, and the Sultan retained the coast and islands. Germany placed its new colony under the control of Karl Peters and the newly created German East Africa Company (GEAC), which promptly dispatched a gunboat to Zanzibar harbor and forced the Sultan to sign away his rights to the coast. Germany did not gain control of Heligoland until another treaty with Britain in 1890.

For the most part, German rule over Tanganyika was a disaster. After suppressing two separate coastal rebellions in 1888 and 1891, the Germans spent the next decade trying to contain an interior rebellion led by Chief Mkwawa of the Hehe ethnic group. Concurrently, Tanganyika was beset by natural disasters: rinderpest (cattle) and locust epidemics, a smallpox outbreak, and a surge in African sleeping sickness. By 1891 the situation had deteriorated to the extent that the GEAC sold German East Africa back to the German government.

Maji Maji Rebellion: Mainly interested in making Tanganyika financially self-sufficient, the Germans imposed harsh labor policies for the cultivation of cash crops (see *Economics and Resources*). One policy relating to cotton cultivation led to the Maji Maji Rebellion of 1905-1907, during which Tanganyikans rebelled under the mistaken belief that **maji**, a holy mixture of water and grain, would make them impervious to bullets (see “Legend of Maji Maji”).

Germany quelled the rebellion through brutal total war tactics which by some estimates killed as many as 250,000 Africans. Partly due to the reaction of an appalled German public, the German government reformed many of its colonial policies.

British Rule: Germany lost control of Tanganyika when defeated by the Allies in World War I, and the newly created League of Nations made the territory a British protectorate. British rule was considerably less eventful than German rule. The British employed agricultural development methods and indirect rule, an administrative system which used indigenous African authorities to implement colonial policy.

The British chose not to develop the manufacturing sector in Tanganyika in order to preserve the market for British exports. Instead, Britain experimented with large-scale, highly regulated agricultural schemes intended to increase production of cash crops such as coffee. As food became scarce during World War II, the British adjusted these policies to promote food self-sufficiency in Tanganyika rather than profits from cash crops.



Post-War Nationalism

After World War II, the United Nations assigned Tanganyika to Britain as a trust territory, thereby obligating Britain to prepare the territory for independence. As part of its efforts to fulfill that mandate, Britain strictly enforced a development plan which required farmers to use prescribed land management and cultivation techniques. Resenting these rules and the way in which they were enforced, Tanganyikans grew more receptive to groups pushing for a swift transition to independence.

Legend of Maji Maji

In ancient times, African legends and myths were oral traditions used to preserve history and wisdom across generations and ethnic boundaries (see *Learning & Knowledge*), teach moral lessons, and entertain. Even in contemporary times, many African societies continue to perpetuate these oral customs through fables, songs, and proverbs.

A unique Tanzanian legend centers on the ***Maji Maji Rebellion*** which began south of Dar es Salaam in 1905 (see “Maji Maji Rebellion”). As the story goes, the German command general during the rebellion arrested two Tanzanian sorcerers who allegedly incited the rebellion. One of the men, Kinjikitile “Bokero” Ngwale, had been selling a ***maji*** (holy mixture) to his fellow countrymen, which he supposedly received from the Snake God known as Koleo (literally means ‘a pair of tongs,’ suggesting that the serpent was a python which squeezed its victims to death and widely worshiped in Africa).

When the Germans hanged Bokero and his colleague, Bokero’s last words revealed that his *dawa* (referring to the famous spiritual powers) would spread carrying with it the spirit of independence. This *dawa* could be manifested in various forms: sprinkled over a person, carried around the neck or in a bottle made from bamboo, or ingested as medicine. Once administered the *dawa* was supposed to render the consumer immunity to German bullets: they would become harmlessly muddy (*maji maji*) and unable to penetrate the body. Despite the professed immunity, the rebellion affected almost 25% of the country, resulting in over 100,000 casualties. A Swahili poet, Abdul Karim Bin Jamaliddini who resided in the Tanzanian region of Lindi, wrote an epic defending those oppressed during the Maji Maji rebellion. The epic was translated and published in Berlin in 1933.



TANU: In 1953, a young teacher named Julius Nyerere became the leader of the newly renamed Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), which had grown out of an earlier group formed to protest colonial policy. The key elements of the TANU platform were to move Tanganyika towards self-government, to forge a strong national identity while discouraging ethnic tribalism, and to alter the composition of government bodies to reflect Tanganyika's African majority.

By the mid-1950s, Britain was open to self-government in Tanganyika, although its vision differed sharply from that of TANU. While Britain supported a slow transition to a balanced and fair system, TANU advocated for an immediate shift to a system based on proportionality. Although Nyerere was willing to consider a guaranteed minority representation plan, he suspected that guaranteed racial parity was nothing more than a ploy to preserve the power of former colonial elites.

Elections: The first election in Tanganyika was held in 1958 in accordance with the British vision. There were three seats in each constituency – one each for whites, Asians, and Africans. However, because TANU backed white and Asian candidates in addition to African candidates, TANU ended up controlling two-thirds of the Legislative Council. Bowing to this clear support for TANU, Britain reduced guaranteed minority representation and relaxed voting requirements for the 1960 election, in which TANU won 70 of 71 seats.

Independence and Union: Tanganyika achieved internal self-government in May 1961 and independence just seven months later. Nyerere became the first Prime Minister. Meanwhile, the residents of Zanzibar voted in a series of elections in which the Arab elite jockeyed for power against the numerically superior Shirazis and Africans. Although the Arab elite retained power as Zanzibar gained independence in December 1963, the Sultan fell to an armed coup just one month later that was followed by considerable violence. On April 26, 1964, Tanganyika and Zanzibar combined to form what would soon be renamed the United Republic of Tanzania.

The United Republic of Tanzania

As Prime Minister of a new, poor, and underdeveloped country, Nyerere took office with two goals: to improve the lives of rural Tanzanians and to forestall the formation of a money-grabbing class of elites. Despite having these priorities, Nyerere avoided radical change during Tanzania's early years. Although his first cabinet consisted of African ministers, Nyerere rarely



empowered them to make decisions. He also heeded Britain's advice and chose a British-style Parliament for Tanzania.

African Socialism: In 1962, Nyerere wrote an essay called "*Ujamaa*," or "Familyhood," in

which he denounced the accumulation of personal wealth and advocated a more equal distribution of economic and political power. Inspired by his idea of "African socialism," Nyerere explained that he still believed in free speech and public debate, but noted that "the only socially defensible use of 'we' is that which includes the whole society" (see *Political and Social Relations*).

The Arusha Declaration: A more complete articulation of African socialism emerged with the Arusha Declaration of 1967, a mission statement authored by the top leaders of TANU. The declaration outlined a series of policies intended to promote good governance, reduce Tanzania's dependence on foreign aid, protect domestic industries, nationalize land ownership, expand access to education, and foster a sense of national pride regardless of ethnic background.

Foreign Policy: Although Tanzania remained resolutely non-aligned during the Cold War, African socialism did not sit well with Western donors. Many of them feared that Tanzania would align with socialist governments such as China and the USSR. Tanzania's vocal opposition to British support for white-ruled Rhodesia and to US involvement in the Congo also did little to help matters. At the same time, Tanzania's foreign policy within Africa became even more expensive as Nyerere vigorously supported militants fighting for independence in Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

Villagization: In hopes of increasing agricultural production through communal farming, Nyerere introduced a policy known as “villagization” in 1967. This strategy encouraged rural Tanzanians to relocate to collective farms and create “Ujamaa” villages. Although villagization was initially voluntary, the government began to forcibly relocate 80% of the population in 1974. The scheme turned out to be unsustainable both for practical reasons, such as infertile land and lack of equipment, and for more fundamental reasons, such as the difficulty of large-scale economic planning and the desire of most people to feed their families before feeding the community.

Economic Problems: Villagization, drought, rising fuel prices, and a costly invasion of Uganda to topple its tyrant leader Idi Amin all combined to leave Tanzania in a desperate economic situation at the end of the 1970s. The international community called for structural adjustments to the Tanzanian economy, although Nyerere resisted. His declining health eventually led Nyerere to resign in 1985 and transfer power to Vice President Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

Tanzania after Nyerere

In 1986, the Mwinyi government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) initiated an Economic Recovery Program (ERP) which loosened currency restrictions and promoted private business. Although supporters argue that the ERP stimulated the economy, critics point to thousands of public sector layoffs, local industries harmed by the elimination of tariffs, and state-owned businesses sold for pennies on the dollar.

As part of the ERP, Tanzania transitioned to multiparty elections in 1995. However, the existence of multiple parties has done little to introduce competition into Tanzanian politics. Since the change was introduced, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the successor party to TANU, has won every election. Mwinyi's successors, Benjamin Mkapa and Jakaya Kikwete, never received less than 60% of the vote. Some opposition parties such as the Civic United Front have accused the ruling party of rigging elections and have organized large-scale protests (see *Political and Social Relations*).



2. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Official Name

United Republic of Tanzania

Political Borders

Kenya: 478 mi

Coastline: 885 mi

Mozambique: 470 mi

Malawi: 295 mi

Zambia: 210 mi

Democratic Republic of the
Congo: 285 mi

Burundi: 280 mi

Rwanda: 135 mi

Uganda: 246 mi



Capital

Dar es Salaam (executive) and Dodoma (legislative)

Demographics

Tanzania's population of 67.5 million is growing about 2.7% per year. With only 37% of the population living in cities in 2023, Tanzania is one of Africa's least urbanized countries. Although Tanzania as a whole has a moderate population density of 197 persons/sq mi, Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago off the Tanzanian coast, is densely populated at 1,990 persons/sq mi. Except for Dar es Salaam, notably few people live along the coast. About 41% of Tanzanians are under age 15.



Flag

The centerpiece of the flag is a thick, yellow-edged black band which connects the lower left and upper right corners. There is a green triangle above the band and a light blue triangle below the band. The colors of are

meant to symbolize several aspects of Tanzania: green represents lush vegetation, gold signifies mineral wealth, black

symbolizes the Tanzanian people, and light blue represents rivers, lakes, and oceans.



Geography

Including Zanzibar, which comprises the Indian Ocean islands of Mafia, Pemba, and Unguja (often itself referred to as Zanzibar); the United Republic of Tanzania has a total area of 365,755 sq mi, making it about twice the size of California. The

main topographical features include a low-lying coastal plain, a large central plateau, and mountainous highlands in the North and West. Average elevations range from sea level along the coast to 6,900-9,900 ft in the highlands, with the central plateau averaging about 3,300-4,600 ft. At 19,341 ft, Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest point in both Tanzania and Africa.

Water: Water accounts for slightly less than 6.5% of Tanzania's total area. Although lakes Nyasa, Victoria, and Tanganyika comprise the bulk of this area, Tanzania's waterways include many rivers, the most important of which are the Pangani in the North, the Ruvuma in the South, the Rufiji in the East, and the Malagarasi in the West.

Climate

Tanzania's tropical climate varies by season and altitude. Due to monsoon winds from the Indian Ocean, the warm and humid coast gets two rainy seasons per year: **masika** from mid-March to May and **mvuli** from November to December. The arid central plateau is cooler than the coast, while the mountains are even cooler and evening temperatures occasionally drop below 60°F. The mountains receive rain throughout the year. Despite these variations, all of Tanzania is at its warmest from December to March and coolest from June to October.

Natural Hazards

Tanzania's location between two fault lines and a low-lying coastline leaves the country vulnerable to earthquakes and follow-on tsunamis, although the country's major natural hazard is drought. Apart from these acute natural threats, longer-term

environmental concerns include deforestation, soil degradation, and the destruction of coral reefs.

Government

The United Republic of Tanzania was formed in 1964 by the union of two republics: Tanganyika, comprising the mainland part of Tanzania, and Zanzibar, comprising the islands of the Zanzibar Archipelago (see *History and Myth*). Although all of Tanzania is ruled by the united government, Zanzibar is semi-autonomous and retains authority over its own internal affairs.

Tanzania is divided into 31 regions (*mkoa*), 26 on the mainland and 5 in Zanzibar. These regions jointly subdivide into 169 districts. Each region has its own Parliament, while each district has its own council. Local chiefdoms were abolished at independence in order to promote a singular national identity. In rural areas, political authority continues to be administered at the local level through village structures.

Executive Branch

The President, currently Samia Suluhu Hassan, is head-of-state, head-of-government, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The President is also responsible for appointing the Prime Minister and selecting a Cabinet from among the members of Parliament. The President is elected by direct popular vote for a maximum of two 5-year terms, and the Constitution requires that the President and Vice President come from different parts of the union: for example, if the President is from the mainland, then the Vice President must be from Zanzibar. Although Zanzibar is subject to the Tanzanian President, it also has its own President (Hussein Mwinyi) who oversees internal affairs.

Legislative Branch

Tanzania has a one-chamber Parliament composed entirely of the National Assembly (**Bunge**), which varies in size but currently has 393 members serving 5-year terms:

- 264 members elected to represent single constituencies
- 113 female members appointed by the political parties in proportion to their share of elected representatives
- 10 members appointed by the President

- 5 members appointed by the House of Representatives of Zanzibar
- the Attorney General

Laws passed by the Bunge apply to Zanzibar only with regard to specifically designated union matters. The Zanzibar House of Representatives has authority in all other matters. The House of Representatives also varies in size and currently is composed of 76 members serving 5-year terms:

- 50 members elected to represent single constituencies
- 20 female members appointed by the political parties in proportion to their share of elected representatives
- 10 members appointed by the President of Zanzibar
- the Speaker of the House
- the Attorney General of Zanzibar

Judicial Branch

Tanzania's legal system is based on British common law and incorporates aspects of customary law, which includes the legal practices of native ethnic groups. Tanzania has four types of courts: primary courts, district and resident magistrates' courts, the High Court, and the Court of Appeal. The Chief Justice, currently Justice Ibrahim Hamis Juma, appoints all judges except those on the High Court and the Court of Appeal, who are appointed by the President.



Unlike mainland Tanzania, Zanzibar recognizes Islamic law (**Shar'ia**) in cases of domestic dispute such as divorce or inheritance in addition to British common law and customary law. Zanzibar has three types of courts: people's district courts, Islamic courts (**kadhis**), and a High Court. Any case heard in these courts which does not concern the Zanzibari Constitution or Islamic law can be appealed in the union Court of Appeal.

Political Parties

Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM): Since its formation in 1977 from TANU (see *History and Myth*) and the Afro-Shirazi Party, the CCM has dominated Tanzanian politics. Although nominally a socialist party, the CCM has embraced capitalism in recent years.

Opposition: Although they are not nearly as well-represented as the CCM, there are two main opposition parties in Tanzania: the Civic United Front (CUF) and the Party for Democracy and Development (Chadema). Catering to a predominantly Muslim base, the CUF has had trouble expanding its appeal beyond the islands of Pemba and Unguja. Conversely, Chadema has experienced a surge in recent years outside of its traditional stronghold in the far northwest.

Political Climate

Tanzania is politically stable by East African standards and continues to be the only successful union of two African states. However, its stability has been threatened in recent years by rising discontent among some Zanzibaris, especially residents of Pemba. This discontent has found political expression in the form of conflict between the CCM and the CUF.

In all elections since the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1995, the CUF has protested the results and accused the CCM of election fraud. The situation reached a low point in 2000, when a demonstration on Pemba prompted a government crackdown in which 35 people were killed and more than 600 were injured. Although elections in 2005 and 2010 were less violent, both the CUF and Chadema continue to protest CCM dominance. The

situation could change in coming years due to the passage of a power-sharing agreement in 2010.



Defense

The Tanzania People's Defense Force (TPDF) was established in 1964 after a mutiny by Tanzania's

original defense force. Modeled on the Chinese People's Liberation Army, the TPDF is responsible for both defense and development and consists of about 27,000 active-duty troops split between an Army, Navy, and Air Wing. The TPDF mission includes the defense of Tanzania's sovereignty, border security, officer training, natural disaster assistance, public health education, and other social services.

Army: With over 23,000 troops, the Army is by far the largest

branch of the TPDF. Because the TPDF has not fought a war since the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979 (see *History and Myth*), the Army focuses more on internal affairs and border security than it does on external threats. The Army's current priority is to control the flow of refugees and prevent infiltration by guerilla groups near the borders with Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Navy: With over 1,000 personnel and a basic array of attack, patrol, and landing craft; the Navy is not resourced adequately to protect the 885-mile Tanzanian coast against threats such as maritime piracy, drug trafficking, water pollution, and illegal fishing.

Because Tanzania's neighbors face similar challenges, East African navies are seeking efficiencies through cooperative efforts.



Air Wing: With 3,000 Airmen, the Air Wing serves primarily as a transport unit having a small contingent of fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft. As of 2025, they are operating 11 fighters, 1 reconnaissance and 12 transport aircraft, and 4 helicopters.

Cooperation: Tanzania has contributed uniformed UN peacekeepers in various parts of the world since 1995. It currently contributes peacekeepers in five UN missions in Africa and UNIFIL in Lebanon. Under the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), Tanzania is part of its African Standby Force's (ASF). Specifically, Tanzania, falls under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and in 2007 signed the agreement to become part of the SADC Standby Brigade.

Training: The TPDF frequently trains with foreign militaries. Instructors from Britain, China, France, and South Africa often visit Tanzania, while personnel from Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia have studied at Tanzanian military schools. In the second half of the 20th century Tanzania aided independence movements in South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe by harboring and training militants. More recently Tanzania has strengthened military ties with China, specifically with regard to equipment and training.

Tanzanian Air Force Rank Insignia



General



Lieutenant
General



Major
General



Brigadier



Colonel



Lieutenant
Colonel



Major



Captain



Lieutenant



Second
Lieutenant



Officer
Candidate



Warrant
Officer
Class I



Warrant
Officer
Class II



Flight
Sergeant



Sergeant



Corporal



Lance
Corporal

Security Issues

Islamic Extremism: As confirmed by the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, Kenya, Islamic extremism is a threat in Tanzania and East Africa. The Islamic extremist groups based in Tanzania tend to operate in coastal



areas and have been linked to actions ranging from armed assaults on mosques to bombings in Zanzibar. Some analysts have speculated that Al Qaeda sleeper cells are present in the country.

Trafficking: Because three of Tanzania's neighbors –

Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – are or have recently been conflict zones, a steady stream of small arms has flowed through Tanzania in recent years, especially in the Northwest. Tanzania also serves as a transshipment point for South Africa-bound Asian heroin and methaqualone (a sedative-hypnotic drug similar to barbiturates) and Europe-bound shipments of South American cocaine. In addition, Tanzania is a major producer of cannabis.

Refugees: Regional conflict has left Tanzania with one of the largest, if not the largest, refugee population of any country in Africa. With the last Rwandan refugees having been repatriated in 2003, most refugees still in Tanzania are from Burundi or the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2010, the Tanzanian government naturalized over 162,000 Burundian refugees who had been living in Tanzania since 1972. Although the presence of refugees has not resulted in serious ethnic tensions, it has increased pressure on already strained national resources.

Crime: Crime is a serious problem in Tanzania, particularly in densely populated areas where armed robbery, burglary, mugging, and car theft are common. Tourists are sometimes targeted for such crimes, as demonstrated by armed robberies of tour buses, dive boats, and hotels in Zanzibar.

Political Violence: See “Political Climate” above.

Diplomatic Relations

As a bastion of relative stability in a turbulent region, Tanzania has served as a diplomatic broker in recent years between the various warring factions in neighboring countries, including Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Despite suffering significant collateral damage from these conflicts, Tanzania has maintained a firmly neutral position. Consequently, Tanzania maintains cordial or good relations with all neighboring countries.

Much of Tanzania's recent diplomacy has been conducted through regional and continental organizations. Tanzania has partnered with Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda to form the East African Community (EAC), a body which seeks to increase regional cooperation on migration, trade, security, and other matters. Although there are plans to establish a common currency for the EAC and form a federated state in the next few years, these plans have yet to materialize.

Tanzania is also active in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a 16-country organization which seeks to establish political and economic stability in southern Africa, and the African Union (AU), a 55-country organization founded in 2002 to promote African unity and seek solutions to shared challenges. Of note, former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete was chairman of the AU during 2008 and into 2009.

US-Tanzania Relations: Due to former President Nyerere's socialist views (see *History and Myth*), relations between the US and Tanzania were limited before the end of the Cold War. Relations improved as Tanzania adopted a more market-oriented approach in the mid-1980s, and grew stronger after the bombing of the US Embassy in Dar es Salaam in 1998 – an event which horrified Tanzanians and Americans alike. Since then, the US has provided Tanzania financial aid for its anti-terrorist efforts and several other programs (see *Economics and Resources*).



Ethnic Groups

Although it is home to at least 120 ethnic groups from all 4 of Africa's major ethnolinguistic categories (Bantu, Cushitic, Nilo-Hamitic, and Khoe-San), Tanzania has seen little interethnic conflict. To some extent this peaceful coexistence is due to the fact that a distinctive ethnic identity (see *History and Myth*) did not truly emerge until the 19th century, nor was ethnic or religious identity politicized (see *Religion and Spirituality*). Today, about 95% of Tanzanians belong to Bantu-speaking ethnic groups which share extensive cultural and linguistic ties.

Political factors also played a role. Beginning with the Maji Maji Rebellion (see *History and Myth*), Tanzanians of all ethnic groups struggled side-by-side against foreign rule. After independence, the government implemented policies intended to promote a singular national identity and discourage tribalism. One of the most notable policies was the designation of Swahili as the national language (see *Language and Communication*).

Bantu-speaking Ethnic Groups

Sukuma: Encompassing about 18% of the population, the Sukuma are Tanzania's largest ethnic group. They occupy an



area south of Lake Victoria centered in Mwanza, the second largest city in Tanzania. Emerging from a variety of different backgrounds, the Sukuma have organized historically into small, independent chiefdoms. The Sukuma are famous throughout

the country for their innovative and competitive dance tradition. One ritualistic performance involves the Buyeye (snake dance) with live pythons.

Nyamwezi: Closely related to the Sukuma, the Nyamwezi live in the western part of central Tanzania and comprise 3% of the population. While the Nyamwezi organized traditionally in small, independent, and agrarian chiefdoms; the emergence of trade routes led them to form larger trade states.

Chaga: Living mainly in the surroundings of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru, the Chaga are the country's fourth-largest ethnic group. Although the Chaga traditionally had a tendency towards social independence, today they are an integral part of the country's social fabric. They were among the first Tanzanians to grow cash crops and embrace Western religion and education.

Haya: Next in size are the Haya who are centered in the town of Bukoba near Lake Victoria and live alongside members of closely related ethnic groups. The Haya historically have formed centralized states rather than small, independent chiefdoms. The Haya are known for emphasizing education, participating in the coffee trade, and growing bananas as their main food crop.

Gogo: Although the Gogo primarily live near the legislative capital of Dodoma in central Tanzania, they have been heavily exposed to the influence of coastal culture through inland trade routes. Historically they were pastoralists, although today many are agriculturalists. As with the Haya, the Gogo live alongside several small, closely related ethnic groups.

Other Ethnic Groups

Maasai: The Nilotic-speaking Maasai are a nomadic people who live in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. Although most Maasai live in Kenya, there are still about 600,000 living in Tanzania. The Maasai are known for having a strong communal culture in which resources are shared and dwellings are organized around a central space. Much of their land is legally protected as part of Serengeti National Park, a world heritage site which is the flagship of the country's tourism industry. Consequently, the traditional Maasai way of life has come under strain as land resources have become scarcer in order to preserve the indigenous wildlife.



Iraqw: About 500,000 Cushitic, Iraqw-speaking pastoralists live to the west of the Maasai. Related to the Somali and the Oromo ethnic groups found in the Horn of Africa, the Iraqw-speakers are one of the few groups outside of Ethiopia and Somalia to speak a Southern Cushitic language. Among the Iraqw live about 100,000 Sandawe, a group related to the Khoe-San of southern Africa. The Sandawe, and perhaps the Hadzapi (a small group residing in north-central Tanzania), are the only ethnic groups still speaking a Khoe-San language outside of southern Africa.

Makonde: The Makonde live in an area where Tanzania, Malawi, and Mozambique join. As with the Chaga, the Makonde are known for their independence, absorbing relatively few influences during the colonial era. The Makonde are known for carvings and masks as well as a variety of body art, including facial scarring for men and lip plugs for women.

South Asian Descent: As of 2021, over 50,000 people of Indian origin lived in Tanzania. Some are descendants of Sikh settlers brought to Africa on labor contracts in the 1860s. Others are both Hindu and Muslim descendants of emigrants who arrived in the following decades to run trading posts as the interior opened to settlement. Today, Tanzanians of Indian, Pakistani, Lebanese,

and Palestinian descent play a significant role in Tanzania's economy as business owners.

Social Relations

The foundation of Tanzanian society is family, as expressed in the concept of **ujamaa**, or "familyhood." Family is the basis for all social

life, and visits to family homes are common. Family hood extends beyond one's immediate relatives to encompass the extended family and entire communities (see *Family and Kinship*).

A few years after he became Tanzania's first President, Julius Nyerere proposed that ujamaa should be extended to the entire nation through "African socialism" (see of *History and Myth*).



According to the Arusha Declaration, African socialism embodied the notion that society is an extension of the family.

Interactions: Tanzanians value politeness, courtesy, and respect which are embodied in *ujamaa*. They prefer a long greeting ritual which involves pleasantries and inquiries into each other's well-being (see *Language and Communication*).



Visits: Tanzanians are enthusiastic and hospitable hosts. When approaching a Tanzanian home, it is customary to yell "*Hodi!*" (May I enter?) and wait for the response "*Karibu!*" (welcome). All visitors, even those who arrive unannounced, are invited to dine if the visit occurs during a mealtime. Foreign nationals should avoid mealtime visits in order to sidestep their host having to share typically meager food supplies. Also, foreign nationals visiting rural areas are advised to consult with the local leader, such as the village chairman or district commissioner, in order to announce their presence and obtain permission to stay.

Gifts: Having scarce resources, Tanzanians emphasize the necessities of life. First time visitors to a home customarily bring along a small gift, such as sweets or cookies, or among poorer



families, food staples. While flowers are usually used only to express condolences, money is also an acceptable gift at weddings.

Gifts should be presented and received with the right hand supported by the left at the elbow.

When presenting gifts, do not expect acknowledgement as Tanzanians do not always express thanks overtly (see *Language and Communication*).

3. RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Overview

Tanzania is a secular state whose religious freedom is guaranteed in its Constitution. Since the government does not collect information on religious affiliation, reliable statistics are difficult to obtain. It is estimated that 34% of Tanzanians are Muslims, while 63% are Christians. About 1% claim affiliation with traditional African religions, and less than 1% are Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, or Baha'is (Baha'i is a monotheistic religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in 19th century Persia).

Most Tanzanians, even those individuals who are deeply committed Christians or Muslims, profess a belief in aspects of traditional religion such as the power of witchcraft and ancestral spirits. About 33% of the population incorporates traditional beliefs into their daily lives by participating in rituals or consulting religious healers.



Although Muslims and Christians occasionally accuse one another of enjoying special political treatment, the Tanzanian government has been largely successful in maintaining policies conducive to religious freedom. Religion generally is not taught in public schools, and national holidays include both Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas and Muslim holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Hajj, and Maulid (the Prophet's birthday.)

Traditional Beliefs

Traditional religious beliefs vary in Tanzania even within single ethno-linguistic groups, although almost all followers of traditional religions believe in a remote supreme being who created all things. Although this creator presides over daily life, he does not exercise strong influence over daily events.

Instead, it is subordinate spirits such as deceased ancestors who are deeply concerned with daily events and influence humans in both positive and negative ways. Consequently, people honor and seek to placate these spirits through libations

(liquid poured on the ground as an offering) or other rituals performed under the supervision of family heads, chiefs, and healers who use traditional myths to help explain the creation and order of the world.

Individuals who neglect their familial and social responsibilities are believed to bring hardship and suffering upon themselves and their communities, although illness and bad fortune can also be the result of witches practicing evil magic. Religious specialists such as healers and diviners may be called upon to diagnose the root causes of illness and hardship and may prescribe rituals or medicines to restore social order or

counteract the workings of witches. The island of Pemba is an important center of traditional medicine for the region.



Healers: Religious healing practitioners vary widely among Tanzania's different ethnic groups. Among the

Haya, ancestor spirits or **wazee**, communicate with the **omufumu**, the healer, to indicate the source of illness or misfortune and prescribe herbal cures. In some parts of northwestern Tanzania, an **omufumu** will inspect a soccer field before a match for objects that may influence the course of a game.

Among some Swahili people, ritual specialists or **waganga** combine their knowledge of Islamic texts and prayers with indigenous African healing practices. For example, Qur'anic passages may be written on a plate then washed off for the patient to drink or bathe with, or Arabic words or numbers are inscribed onto an amulet for the patient to wear or hold. Other **waganga** use a variety of dancing, singing, or drumming to contact particular spirit types or use special plants to concoct medicines.

Witchcraft: Despite opposition by both Christian and Islamic religious authorities, belief in witchcraft and in the powers of evil spirits continues to be widespread in Tanzania, primarily in the Sukuma tribe. The media frequently report cases of alleged

witches killed by their supposed victims. Those accused of witchcraft are generally elderly people, most often women.

Recently, albinos have been especially targeted and killed for their body parts, which are used in traditional medicines to bring good fortune. Christian, Muslim, and Hindu religious leaders have condemned this practice, preaching against it in sermons and organizing outreach concerts and events to sensitize the population against it.

Islam

This section will first provide a general description of the Islamic belief system and then outline the introduction of Islam to Tanzania.



Origins of Islam

Islam dates to the 6th century when God's final Prophet, Muhammad, was born in Mecca in what is today Saudi Arabia. Muslims believe that while Muhammad was meditating in the desert, the Archangel Gabriel visited him over a 23-year period, revealing the Qur'an, or the "Holy Book," to guide their everyday life. The Qur'an represents a core belief that helps shape Muslims' lifelong.

Muslim Sects

Islam is divided into two sects: Sunni and Shi'a. Sunni, the largest grouping in the world, are distinguished by their belief that the leader (*Caliph*) of the Muslim community (*Ummah*) should be elected. Conversely, members of the Shi'a sect believe the Muslim leader should be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

Sufi Tradition: The Sufi tradition of Islam is characterized by mysticism and ritualistic prayer. Many Sufis belong to religious brotherhoods whose members adhere to teachings from their spiritual leaders. Adhering to Sunni tradition, Sufis are not fundamentalists.

Five Pillars of Islam

There are five basic principles of the Islamic faith that all Muslims accept and follow.

- **Profession of Faith (*Shahada*):** “There is no god but God (Allah) and Muhammad is His Messenger.”
- **Prayer (*Salat*):** Performed five times a day facing toward the Ka’aba in Mecca. The Ka’aba is considered the center of the Muslim world and a unifying focal point for Islamic worship.
- **Charity (*Zakat*):** An obligatory tithe or donation to the poor.
- **Fasting (*Sawm*):** Involves abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations from sunrise to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan (30 days).
- **Pilgrimage to Mecca (The *Hajj*):** Every adult Muslim who is physically and financially able is expected to perform the pilgrimage at least once in his or her lifetime.



Shared Perspectives

Many Islamic tenets parallel the other two major world religions, Judaism and Christianity. In fact, Muslims consider Christians and Jews “people of the Book,” referring to biblical scriptures, because they share their monotheistic belief in one God.

Abraham: All three faiths trace their lineage back to Abraham, known as *Ibrahim* in Islam. Christians and Jews trace their line back to Abraham, his wife Sarah, and their son Isaac; while Muslims believe that they descend from Abraham and his Egyptian concubine, Hagar, and their son Ismail.

Scriptures: The Qur’an contains similar moral teachings as those found in the Christian Bible’s Old and New Testaments, and Muslims view Islam as a completion of previous revelations to Jewish and Christian prophets. However, Muslims believe the Christians distorted God’s word and that Muhammad received the true revelation of God.

Jesus: The three religions differ significantly over the role of Jesus. While Christians consider Him the divine Messiah who fulfills the Jewish Scriptures, Jews are still waiting for the

Messiah to come. Muslims recognize Jesus as having been a prophet, but do not acknowledge the Christian view of His divinity. They do not believe in the Christian Trinity.

View of Death: Muslims believe that the time of death, like birth, is determined by Allah. While people grieve the loss of family members or friends, they do not view death itself as a negative event, as Muslims believe that a person who lived a good life goes on to live in Heaven.

Concept of Jihad

The concept of Jihad, or inner striving, is a fundamental element within Islam. Traditionally, it is the principled and moral pursuit of God's will to lead a virtuous life. It should not be confused with



the publicized violence often associated with Jihad. Most Muslims are strongly opposed to terrorism and consider it to be contrary to Islamic beliefs.

Ramadan

Ramadan is a month-long time for inner reflection, self-control, and focus on God. During this time,

Muslims who are physically able are required to fast from dawn to sunset. Many Muslims believe that denying their hunger tempers them to learn self-control, appreciate the difficulties of the poor, and gain spiritual renewal – by fasting, one learns to appreciate the good in life. It is common for Muslims to break their fast at sunset with a light meal of dates followed by prayer and then dinner.

Ramadan is observed during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar (see *Time & Space*) and includes three holy days.

- **Lailat ul-Qadr:** Known as “The Night of Power,” this holy day commemorates Muhammad receiving the first verses of the Qur’an.
- **Eid-al-Adha:** This “Festival of Sacrifice” commemorates Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael (Isaac according to the Christian faith), as proof of his loyalty to God. It is celebrated the same day the Hajj ends.

- **Eid-al-Fitr:** This 3-day “Festival of Fast-Breaking” is celebrated at Ramadan’s end.

Introduction of Islam to Tanzania

The earliest evidence of Islam in East Africa is the foundation of a mosque which dates to 830 AD, and the oldest intact building in East Africa is a mosque in Zanzibar which dates to 1007. By 1332 Muslims populated many coastal settlements, and Arabic was spoken throughout the region. Unlike the purposeful expansion of Christianity through the efforts of missionaries and imperialists, the spread of Islam in East Africa was a byproduct of contact between Africans and Muslim traders. Consequently, Islam was confined to the coast for many years. As trade links strengthened under the rule of Omani Arabs in the 17th and 18th centuries, Islam began to extend into the interior along trade routes.



Although Muslims on the coast retained a significant degree of political autonomy under German and British rule (see *History and Myth*) and were even initially favored for administrative jobs, both powers eventually began to prefer Christian converts. This change, along with increased Christian missionary activity and perceived disparities in education and healthcare, resulted in protests by some Muslims. It was not until the struggle for independence in the mid-20th century that Muslim political consciousness became widespread.

Christianity

Introduction of Christianity to Tanzania

The first successful missionaries in present-day Tanzania were representatives of three Catholic organizations – the White Fathers, the Holy Ghost Fathers, and the Benedictine monks – who arrived in the 1860s. These groups worked in the largely hostile interior region, where several were instrumental in bringing attention to the devastating effects of the slave trade.

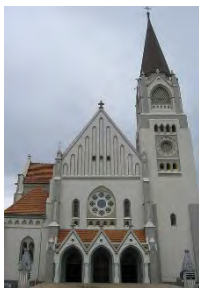
Many early Protestant missionaries were also explorers whose accounts of their adventures generated great interest in Europe.

For example, David Livingstone and the Universities Mission to Central Africa established several mission stations in the 1860s that were intended both to convert Africans and introduce legitimate commerce as an alternative to slavery.

German Protestants arrived a few years later with the institution of German rule. Because German policy stressed education, missionaries founded schools and educational institutes, and by 1914 they were educating over 150,000 Tanzanians. Most mission schools used Swahili as the language of instruction, contributing to its diffusion throughout the country (see *Learning and Knowledge* and *Language and Communication*).

Religion Today

Although both Christianity and Islam are thriving in modern Tanzania, neither faith is expanding. Because most Tanzanians continue to practice the faith in which they were raised, there are no more than a handful of potential converts. In interreligious marriages, it is socially more acceptable for a Muslim woman to convert to Christianity than it is for a Muslim man.



There have been instances of Christian and Muslim leaders disparaging the other religion in “open-air sermons.” For the most part, religious conflict is generally seen as less of an issue than crime, corruption, and unemployment.

The state’s recognition of both Islamic and customary law in issues of marriage, divorce, and inheritance (see *Political and Social Relations*), and its emphasis on a shared national identity across social boundaries has contributed to a climate of religious tolerance.

Christianity: Slightly more than half of Tanzania’s Christians are Roman Catholic, and the remainder are Protestant, mostly Lutheran or Anglican. A much smaller number of Tanzania’s Protestants belong to Pentecostal churches which emphasize the Holy Spirit, divine prophecy, and speaking in tongues.

About 5% of Tanzania’s Christians belong to African Independent Churches, which grew out of European mission

churches and later incorporated healing practices and other aspects of traditional African religion into their services. Other denominations, including Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses, are also represented.

Islam: Tanzanian Muslims mostly live in cities, along the coast, or in the Zanzibar archipelago, which is over 98% Muslim. The majority of Tanzania's Muslims follow Sunni Islam, while about 7% belong to the Shi'a sect. About 6% follow the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, which originated in India and while part of an international network, is considered heretical by other Muslims. Smaller numbers belong to Muslim Brotherhoods having ties to Saudi Arabia or associate with loosely organized and less orthodox Sufi whose practices are more mystical.



The National Muslim Council of Tanzania is very active, recently calling for the creation of Islamic courts (*kadhis* – see *Political and Social Relations*) and the appointment of a *mufti*, or Islamic religious leader, on the mainland.

Interfaith Cooperation: Both Muslim and Christian leaders participate in the Commission on Peace, Development, and Reconciliation in order to encourage dialogue and unity across religions. Tanzania also has a Minister for Social and Political Affairs who is charged with promoting social understanding among Tanzania's diverse political and religious groups.

Religion and Politics: The country's relatively peaceful post-independence history (see *History and Myth*) is in large part due to respect for religious freedom and a conscious effort to separate religion and politics. The Political Parties law of 1992 forbids parties to form base on religion, race, tribe, or region. Consequently, Tanzanians do not generally vote along ethnic or religious lines. Although Tanzania's first President Julius Nyerere was a member of the Roman Catholic Church, his party found its initial support among urban Muslims. The former President Jakaya Kikwete is a Muslim who was elected with 80% of the vote, while his predecessor was a Christian who received 72% of the vote in his defeat of a Muslim candidate.

4. FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Overview

The importance of family and kinship in Tanzanian society is best captured by the concept of **undugu**, which connotes a sense of compassion and generosity towards others. Undugu underscores the role of the large extended family unit, which consists of multiple nuclear families (parents and their offspring) within a lineage (discussed below). The extended family functions as a social safety network in which connected family members help relatives secure education, employment, healthcare, and other necessities.

However, this system has been strained by the effects of urbanization and ongoing economic hardship (see *Economics and Resources*). Modern trends promoted by Westernization have caused many Tanzanians to seek employment in fast-paced urban centers where time and space constraints have reduced the large extended family network to a single nuclear family model.

Family Structure

Kinship is traced differently among the respective ethnic groups. Some coastal groups such as the Makonde and Yao are “matrilineal,” meaning that they trace kinship through the mother’s lineage. The majority of groups – an estimated 80% – are “patrilineal” and therefore trace kinship from father to son.



Clans: Clans are defined by shared descent from a common, though perhaps mythical, ancestor who lived many generations ago. Members of the same clan generally do not live in a single location, and membership is largely symbolic but nevertheless significant. In most ethnic groups, members usually marry outside the clan.

Lineages: Lineages are defined by shared descent from a common, non-mythical ancestor. They are smaller than clans and their members usually group together in a particular place. Thus, lineages can fulfill political and economic functions such as having authority over the land cultivated by its members. The

importance of lineage varies by ethnic group and region. For example, the Sukuma and Nyamwezi ethnic groups place little importance upon lineage and instead rely upon the local community to fill many of the same social roles. Even in communities where lineage is important, multiple lineages usually live side-by-side and cooperate with one another.



Residence

Designed to protect against heat and rain at minimum cost, housing in Tanzania tends to be inexpensive and practical. Houses are generally built from mud brick or a mixture of sticks and brush, with concrete or mud floors and corrugated

metal or thatched grass roofs. Although items which serve a functional purpose tend to be the only decorations, some households also display a picture of the President. Due to Tanzania's rapid urbanization, the housing supply in cities has failed to keep pace with demand, leading to a lack of affordable housing.

Marriage

In the context of Tanzania's social system, marriage joins two lineages and provides for their continuation through their offspring. Although individuals have some degree of choice in selecting a spouse, dating in the Western sense is rare, and final approval of any match rests with representatives of the lineages involved. This approach reflects the Tanzanian view that marriage is mainly a union between lineages rather than individuals.

Bridewealth: Among patrilineal ethnic groups a newly married woman becomes a member of her new husband's family. Consequently, in order to compensate for the loss of a productive worker and loved family member, a groom pays bridewealth to the bride's father's family. Although cattle are the most common and traditional form of bridewealth, goods such as beer, cloth, meat, and money are also used.

Weddings: Tanzanian weddings tend to be large, extravagant, and expensive; therefore, it is both common and acceptable for

wedding expenses to drive families into debt. In order to defray costs, some families collect donations or plan joint weddings in which multiple couples are married at the same ceremony.

Christian weddings begin with a church ceremony, followed by a reception where guests eat, drink, and dance to live music and often enjoy a ride home at the expense of the host. Guests are expected to bring gifts.

Polygyny: About 20% of Tanzanian women are married to men who engage in polygyny, the practice of having multiple wives. Although polygyny is permitted by most ethnic groups and by Islamic law, it has declined in popularity due both to the cost of supporting multiple families and to the rise of Christianity, which prohibits polygyny. Tanzanians who still practice polygyny live mainly in rural areas.

Islamic Weddings

Muslims usually wed in the Islamic tradition regardless of their ethnic background. Islamic weddings differ from Christian weddings in several key respects. First, Islamic weddings typically occur during **Sawwal**, the 10th month of the Islamic calendar. Second, devout Muslims will never serve or consume alcohol at the reception. Third and most notably, the bride undergoes an extensive preparation ritual prior to the ceremony: female members of the groom's family first bathe the bride then decorate her with henna (dye made from an indigenous plant) and apply a scent by wafting incense.

Children

Tanzanians treasure their children and on average expect to raise about five of them. In general, Tanzanian parents tend to be strict disciplinarians who discourage excessive self-expression, do not tolerate misbehavior, and assign children household chores beginning at a very young age.

Rites-of-Passage

The following rites-of-passage ceremonies mark life's various stages or transitions.

Birth: The birth of a child is particularly significant for new mothers because a Tanzanian female is not seen as a mature woman until she has given birth to a healthy child. Furthermore, after reaching this milestone, a mother is often referred to in terms of her child's name. For example, the mother of Jakaya would be called "Mama Jakaya." This practice underscores the degree to which women are identified with the duties of motherhood and derive social respect from childrearing (see *Sex and Gender*).

Tanzanian children traditionally have been delivered at home with the help of trusted older females experienced in assisting with childbirth. Despite the increasing availability of Western-style medical care in Tanzania, many women still prefer the emotional comfort provided by this traditional system. Consequently, the government now trains some traditional birth attendants to perform clean and hygienic deliveries and to recognize complications requiring professional attention.

Development: With the help of a *kanga*, or colorful rectangular shawl, infants remain strapped to the back of their mother nearly constantly for the initial period following birth. Daughters are expected to begin caring for younger siblings at a very early age, and both boys and girls may be expected to herd livestock or perform other chores as early as age 3 or 4. Some ethnic groups observe puberty ceremonies for boys, girls, or both. These ceremonies sometimes involve female genital mutilation (see *Sex and Gender*) and male circumcision.



Death and Funerals

Tanzanians tend to view death as a serious but not necessarily depressing event. Funeral services often involve a parade, complete with a brass band, and the receptions which follow involve lots of eating and music. Tanzania is particularly noted for its funeral dances, in which mourners dance in silence to an austere drumbeat punctuated only by the soft lament of wind instruments. Tanzanians believe that ancestors can impact daily events and continue to honor the deceased for years to follow (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

5. SEX AND GENDER

Overview

Gender equality remains a distant ideal in Tanzania. Women generally have a lower standard of living, and some forms of gender-based violence are common and even socially acceptable to both men and women. Although the government has begun to establish a legal framework which promotes gender equality, many challenges still remain.

Gender Roles and Work

The division of labor common in traditional Tanzanian society still applies in many rural areas. Under this system, men are responsible for tending livestock, marketing produce, making decisions on behalf of the family, and performing heavy labor such as preparing fields for cultivation. Women are responsible for everything else, including childcare, most agricultural labor, and all domestic work.



Generally, women aged 25-34 spend a larger share of their time working than any other segment of the population. Traditionally inferior in status, as of 2023, females earn roughly 4% less than their male counterparts.

Women in Politics

Holding 148 seats in 2025, women comprise roughly 38% of the **Bunge** or National Assembly (see *Political and Social Relations*) – higher than the proportion in the US Congress (28%). Most of those women were not elected directly but hold seats created specifically to increase female representation and filled by the political parties.

Nevertheless, women are well represented in other ways. Women account for 7 of 29 Cabinet Ministers, including the Ministers of Health, Minister of Industry and Trade, and Minister of Defence and National Service. In addition, women account for 37% of justices in Tanzania's Court of Appeals.

Gender-Based Violence

Violence against women is a major problem in Tanzania. According to the World Bank, nearly 17% of Tanzanian women have suffered from sexual violence since age 15, and for more than 38% of those women the violence was perpetrated by a current or former male companion. Young women are particularly at risk of gender-based violence when they leave home to attend secondary school (see *Learning and Knowledge*). Women whose husbands drink alcohol were more



than twice as likely to suffer from physical or sexual violence.

Although the Sexual Offenses Special Provisions Act of 1998 makes most forms of gender-based violence illegal, it requires a

high burden of proof and provides for extreme punishments. These factors tend to discourage victims from pressing charges, particularly when the victim is related to or economically dependent upon the perpetrator.

There is no law specifically prohibiting domestic violence, which usually must be prosecuted under standard anti-assault statutes. In addition, many victims of domestic violence are reluctant to seek assistance likely because some police, judges, and hospital staff appear insensitive to victim's situation.

Sex and Procreation

Tanzanians engage in sexual relations relatively early. According to the 2022 census, about 61% of females and 47% of males in the 25-49 age group were sexually active by the time they were 18. Roughly 38% of married women age 15-49 currently use any method of family planning. Among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-49, use of family planning is higher (45%). Long-term methods are gaining traction, implants (14%) and injectables (9%) are the most popular contraceptive methods among women. Low contraceptive use among men with multiple partners (25%) has contributed to the high HIV/AIDS rate (see *Sustenance and Health*).

Tanzanian women also begin to bear children relatively early

(see *Family and Kinship*). Although the mean age at which women have their first child is 19.9, almost 22% of women age 15-19 have already begun to have children. The average woman gives birth to 4 children. Women who are poor, uneducated, or live in rural areas are much more likely to have many children and begin bearing them earlier than their wealthy, educated, or urban counterparts.



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is the practice of deliberately modifying the female sex organs in order to decrease a woman's ability to experience sexual pleasure. FGM is practiced by about 20 of Tanzania's 130 ethnic groups and is most prevalent in the Dodoma and Manyara regions to the northeast. According to the World Bank, about 8% of Tanzanian females have undergone FGM. Although FGM is illegal in Tanzania and declining in popularity, some groups have expressed concern that it is still being practiced in secretive and unsanitary conditions, sometimes resulting in severe complications or death.

Homosexuality in Tanzania

Homosexual activity is taboo in Tanzania and illegal in most cases. In Zanzibar, homosexual activity is punishable by up to 25 years in prison when between two males, or up to 7 years in prison when between two females. Because of the difficulty of establishing proof, the law is rarely enforced. Only homosexual activity between males is prohibited in mainland Tanzania, and it is punishable by at least 30 years in prison. At this time, the US State Department does not have a Status of Forces Agreement in place for Tanzania. Service members will be subject to local laws with regards to this topic.

Modesty Among Islamic Women

According to Islamic tradition, women should cover all parts of their body except the face and hands when they are in public by wearing a ***bai-bui*** (Islamic gown) and ***hijab*** (veil). This style of dress is designed to demonstrate modesty. Although some Tanzanian Muslim women follow this tradition devoutly, others have adapted it (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*).

6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language Overview

Like many African countries, Tanzania has a complex linguistic landscape which includes a colonial language (English), an indigenous majority language (Swahili), and a large number of indigenous minority languages. Unlike many African countries, Tanzania is home to speakers from each of Africa's four major language families: Afro-Asiatic, Khoe-San, Niger-Congo, and Nilo-Saharan.

Indigenous Minority Languages

Tanzanians currently speak more than 100 minority languages as their first language, most of which are associated with particular ethnic groups. Because young and urban Tanzanians prefer to use Swahili and English, many minority languages are at risk of extinction. Although early language policies accused minority languages of "spreading subversive, anti-unity propaganda," the government revised its policy in 1997 to recognize officially the cultural value of minority languages. However, this policy change was not accompanied by programs designed to encourage the use of these languages.

Swahili

Instead, the Tanzanian government has been notably successful in establishing Swahili as the national language. This



achievement is impressive because African governments historically have found it difficult to impose the language of a single ethnic group on a diverse population.

Swahili, also known as Kiswahili, belongs to the Bantu branch of the Niger-Congo

language family and is written in the Latin alphabet. As both a national and official language of Tanzania, Swahili is the primary language of interpersonal interaction, especially between members of different ethnic groups. Swahili is also a popular language of trade and commerce and serves as the language of instruction in primary schools.

Although grammatically derived from the Bantu dialects spoken by inhabitants of the East African coast, Swahili absorbed many new words from Arabic, which was first introduced by Arab traders near the end of the first millennium (see *History and Myth*). These traders also left a lasting cultural legacy which resulted in the emergence of a unique Afro-Arab group known as the Swahili people. Numbering about 500,000 and living primarily in the Zanzibar archipelago and along the coast, the Swahili are Muslim in both aesthetics and spirituality.

Learned by most Tanzanians as a second language, Swahili owes much of its present popularity to President Nyerere (see *History and Myth*). As part of his efforts to forge a strong national identity for Tanzania, Nyerere chose Swahili as the national language. He later pursued a language policy which promoted Swahili through educational decrees, national radio programming, and other avenues.

English

Introduced by British colonists in the late 19th century, English is the primary language of business, government, and post-primary education and is spoken as a second language by about 6.7 million Tanzanians.

Many Tanzanians speak a variant of English which uses non-standard grammar and syntax.

Language Choice

Although English is common in cities, Swahili is the preferred language in most social settings. In rural areas English is spoken only by a minority and generally is not used. Tanzanians appreciate when foreign nationals attempt to learn and use even a small amount of Swahili. Older Tanzanians are more likely to use minority languages, although even parents who speak a minority language among themselves generally speak Swahili to their children. Because they are multilingual, Tanzanians are known to repeat sentences or ideas in multiple languages.



Communication Overview

Communicating competently in Tanzania requires not just knowledge of Swahili or other languages, but also the ability to use those languages effectively. This broader conception of competence includes paralanguage (rate of speech, intonation, volume), nonverbal communication (personal space, touch, gestures – see *Time and Space*), and interaction management (conversation initiation, turn-taking, and termination). When used appropriately, these aspects of communication ensure that statements are interpreted as the speaker intends.

Communication Style

Tanzanian culture is high-context, meaning that Tanzanians rely heavily on paralanguage, nonverbal communication, and interaction management to convey meaning. The significance of spoken words is closely linked to the speaker's tone of voice and facial expression, and even the length of an interaction or the location in which it takes place can contribute to meaning.



Unlike many Westerners, Tanzanians generally prefer to communicate indirectly because they view public confrontation humiliating. For example, Tanzanians prefer not to say “no,” so they often

say **Kesho** (“tomorrow”) to refuse a request politely. Similarly, Tanzanians often use metaphors, proverbs, and stories to make a request or provide a critique. Tanzanians frequently avoid overt conflict through avoidance, silence, or restraint.

Listening: Active listening skills are critical when communicating in a high context society. Foreign nationals must be keenly aware of both verbal and nonverbal context cues and be prepared to respond by smiling, nodding, laughing when appropriate, or touching the speaker's arm. It is best not to interrupt a Tanzanian who is speaking.

Status and Respect: In line with the concept of **Ujamaa** (or “familyhood”, see *History and Myth*), protecting relationships and preserving the community are important goals of communication in Tanzania. Consequently, foreign nationals should avoid

behavior which could damage a Tanzanian's reputation in the eyes of the group.

For example, to avoid public humiliation, foreign nationals should always deliver criticism privately. Similarly, foreign nationals should suppress extreme emotion, as Tanzanians consider such behavior to be highly offensive.

Because many Tanzanians are highly conscious of status, it is important to communicate respect to people in positions of authority, generally through titles (see "Titles" below and *Time and Space*). In addition, elders or people of high status are usually greeted first, followed by men, and finally by women.

Greetings

Greetings are very important in Tanzania, and it is considered offensive to skip or rush a greeting. The minimum greeting is an exchange of hellos and inquiries about well-being, although Tanzanians generally prefer to engage in small talk for several minutes to establish a basic relationship before discussing business or professional matters.

When beginning a conversation with an elder or high-status person, the greeting **Shikamoo** ("I show my respect") should be used and usually followed by the response **Marhaba** ("I am delighted"). For all others, the standard greeting is **Hujambo** for one person and **Hamjambo** for two or more people. These greetings usually are followed by questions about family life, such as **Habari sa nyumbani?** ("How are things in your home?"), to which a common reply is **Salama** ("Peaceful").

As part of the standard greeting process, foreign nationals should be prepared to discuss their family, religion, homeland, reason for coming to Tanzania, and expected duration of stay. Although these personal questions may seem intrusive, they are usually based on good-natured curiosity and are vitally important to building trust and relationships in Tanzania.



Titles

Although some Tanzanians are comfortable with informality, foreign nationals should address a Tanzanian by his title and last name until he requests otherwise. Even Tanzanians who know each other well often use age-specific titles. For example, young women are called *dada* (“sister”), mature women are called *mama* (“mother”), and elderly women are called *bibi* (“grandmother”). Young men are called *kaka* (“brother”), adult men are called *baba* (“father”) or *bwana*, and elderly men are called *babu* (“grandfather”) or *mzee* (“dignified person”). In a practice which reflects their outgoing nature, Tanzanians generally refer to strangers as *ndugu* (“comrade” or “cousin”).

Conversational Topics

The socially acceptable range of topics for conversing with new acquaintances in Tanzania is similar to what it would be in the US, encompassing matters such as family, health, work, sports, and current events. In addition, compliments about Tanzania, its government, or the Swahili language are always welcome. Foreign nationals should refrain from asking Tanzanians about employment status, money, or controversial topics such as politics. Finally, although many Tanzanians have a great sense of humor, foreign nationals should refrain from making jokes about a Tanzanian's family members.



Gestures

Tanzanians never gesture with the index finger. Instead, they summon people by extending an arm with the palm down and then repeatedly scooping all four

non-thumb fingers toward the palm. Similarly, Tanzanians indicate things or people by holding out an open hand with the palm facing up and then motioning with closed fingers in the appropriate direction. Tanzanians also indicate direction with the head and chin.

Language Training Resources

Please view the Air Force Culture and Language Center website at www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/ and click on “Resources” for access to language training and other resources.

Useful Translations

English	Swahili
Do you speak English?	Unasema kiingereza?
Hello/Good day	Hujambo (singular)/Hamjambo (plural)
How are you?	Habari yako?
I am fine	Sijambo
I show my respect (as a greeting)	Shikamoo
Yes	Ndiyo
No	Hapana
OK	Sawa/Mzuri (fine)/Poa (cool)
Good day (AM)	Habari ya asubuhi?
Good day (PM)	Habari ya mchana?
Goodbye	Kwaheri
Please	Tafadhali
Thank you (very much)	Asante (sana)
You're welcome	Karibu
Sorry	Pole
Today	Leo
Tomorrow	Kesho
Yesterday	Jana
What is your name?	Jina lako ni nani?
My name is ____	Jina langu ni ____
I am happy to meet you	Nimefurahi kukutana nawe
Who?	Nani?
What?	Nini?
When?	Lini?
Where?	Wapi?
Why?	Kwa nini?
How much does it cost?	Kiasi gani?
How far?	Jinsi mbali?
Help!	Saidia!/Msaada!
Stop!	Ngoja!/Simama!/Kuacha!
How are things in your home?	Habari sa nyumbani?
Peaceful	Salama
I feel hungry	Mimi nasikia njaa
I understand	Naelewa
I don't understand	Sielewi

7. LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

Literacy

- Total population over age 15 who can read and write: 82.02%
- Male: 85.5%
- Female: 78.7% (2022 estimate)

Traditional Education

Although traditional educational methods in Tanzania varied by ethnic group, the uniform purpose of education was to help young people adapt to their physical and social environment by passing on traditional knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs. All methods combined an emphasis on practical instruction with a wide variety of songs, dances, games, and stories which recounted historical events and illustrated moral principles.

The subjects taught through traditional educational methods were both wide-ranging and relatively fixed. All students received lessons in topics essential to group survival such as agriculture, medicine, morality, civics, and history. Some young people also received lessons in specialized skills such as leadership, rainmaking and other rituals, construction, fishing, and metalworking.

As children matured and advanced through certain life stages such as puberty or marriage, they also received increasing levels of instruction about courtship, behavior codes, and social responsibilities. Each level of instruction was accompanied by an initiation intended to familiarize young people with the duties and privileges associated with their new stage of life.



Introduction of Formal Education

Formal education began in Tanzania with the arrival of Arab traders who founded schools which primarily taught Arabic and Qur'an studies. Although Qur'anic schools were initially confined to the coast, they spread inland as Arab influence expanded (see *History and Myth*).

Christian missionaries began arriving in the region in the second half of the 19th century (see *History and Myth*). One important aspect of their conversion efforts was the education and training of Africans (see *Religion and Myth*).

Education under German Rule

In 1891, administrators in German East Africa (see *History and Myth*) designed a government education system in order to win African hearts and minds while creating a supply of interpreters, tax collectors, clerks, and craftsmen. They chose Swahili as the



language of instruction, and lessons included reading, writing, and arithmetic followed by vocational training. To further promote the education of Africans, the Germans also continued to encourage missionaries to establish their own schools, so that by World War I the mission schools

were educating about 25 times as many students as the government schools (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

Education under British Rule

When the British took control of present-day Tanzania in 1914 (see *History and Myth*), they left the government education system largely intact, while mission schools continued to predominate with a Swahili-language curriculum of religion, ethics, hygiene, literacy, and mathematics. The British instituted vocational training in agriculture, although many Africans saw education as a way to escape agricultural labor and therefore preferred an expansion of post-primary education.

The British response was small-scale and slow. Although they opened a special school at Tabora in 1924 to train artisans, administrators, and clerks; admission was limited to the sons of chiefs. The first secondary school did not open until 1930, and by 1945 there was still only one school in all of Tanganyika which provided a 12th grade education. Academically inclined Tanganyikans had to acquire university studies in either Uganda or Kenya, and on the eve of independence there were only 70 Tanganyikans with university degrees.

Education in Independent Tanzania

A primary concern of the Tanzanian government in the years immediately following independence was to boost secondary school enrollment so that Africans could replace ex-colonial officials. With the Arusha Declaration of 1967 (see *History and Myth*), President Nyerere instead refocused the nation on primary education as a means of providing Tanzanians with the practical skills necessary for an agricultural lifestyle.

In the mid-1970s the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) political party (see *Political and Social Relations*) pursued Nyerere's vision by abolishing primary school fees and setting a goal of universal primary education by 1984. Although Tanzania nearly hit this target in the early 1980s, economic circumstances forced the government to reintroduce partial school fees beginning in 1978, forcing many students to drop out and causing literacy rates to plummet.



The government began to reverse this decline by abolishing school fees again in 2001 and implementing the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP). Although enrollment has soared since, there remain concerns that quantity of education has been prioritized over quality, as budgetary constraints have led to reduced school hours and increased student/teacher ratios.

Modern Education System

Although few students receive a complete formal education, the Tanzanian model includes two years of pre-primary school, seven years of primary school, four years of junior secondary school, two years of senior secondary school, and at least three years of tertiary education.

Tanzania's education system suffers from significant disparities between rural and urban areas. For example, although the ratio of students/teachers for Tanzania as a whole is around 36:1, the rate in rural areas tends to be much higher. In addition, rural areas are less likely to have properly trained science and mathematics instructors. Because girls usually are needed for domestic work or are expected to marry young, the Tanzanian education system also has a significant gender gap.

Primary Education: Primary education is both compulsory and free in Tanzania. Students generally enter at age 7 and finish at age 13, and there are 194 school days-per-year. Although females represented over 50% of enrollments in primary schools, boys typically outperform girls on examinations.

Secondary Education: Although, Tanzania has now abolished secondary school fees, only 36% of students who complete primary school attend junior secondary school, and only 15% of those students attend senior secondary school. Secondary schools are far more common now as the availability of secondary schools more than quintupled from mere 927 schools in 2001 to 5,280 schools by 2021. However, secondary school-age youth in urban areas were more likely to attend secondary school than their counterparts in rural.

Tertiary Education: Between 2005 and 2024 enrollment in universities and university colleges grew significantly from 1.5% to 4%, an increase of more than 250%. While the proportion of females in universities and university colleges has consistently increased at a faster pace than that of male students, less than 45% of those attending universities and university colleges are women.

Vocational Training: Vocational training is delivered through a mix of public sector training centers, private sector schools, and Folk Development Colleges. In contrast to standard private schools, private vocational schools have a strong record of job placement.



HIV/AIDS Education

The Ministry of Education has proposed a number of ways in which education can be used to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic (see *Sustenance and Health*); including parental involvement, after school programs, increased educational opportunity for girls, and distribution of HIV/AIDS information through schools. In addition, a number of non-governmental organizations have focused on bringing prevention education into rural areas.

8. TIME AND SPACE

Concept of Time and Space

Tanzania is a high-context society, meaning its members have close and enduring connections forged through years of interpersonal interactions. Consequently, they are accustomed to implied social behaviors and do not have to rely on explicitly expressed rules. Life generally moves at a slow pace in Tanzania, so patience and a willingness to form relationships are essential for foreign nationals who hope to adapt successfully.

Concept of Time

The Tanzanian concept of time differs sharply from those of most Western cultures. Rather than viewing time as a scarce resource, Tanzanians tend to consider time as a gift to be enjoyed with friends and family, placing less emphasis on planning for the future.



Swahili Time: Swahili Time” is a method of timekeeping which divides the 24-hour day into two 12-hour periods marked by “midnight,” which occurs at dawn or 6am, and “noon,” which occurs at dusk, or 6pm. For example, 1 hour after “midnight” would be 7am to Swahili speakers and 1am for most others. Most Tanzanians are comfortable using both the international timekeeping system and Swahili time and alternate between them as necessary. Scheduled events need to be confirmed to avoid confusion.

Lunar Islamic Calendar: Tanzanian Muslims use the Islamic calendar to determine dates for holidays and festivals (see *Religion and Spirituality*). The Islamic calendar consists of 12 lunar months that last for the length of time between full moons, approximately 29.53 days. Thus, the Islamic calendar is only 354.36 days long, 11 days shorter than the Western calendar. As a result, Islamic holidays fall 11 days earlier, according to the Western calendar, than the previous year. Weeks in the Islamic

calendar begin at sunset on Saturday.

Time and Work: Most businesses open at 8:30am and close around 5:00pm-6:00pm, with banks closing at 3:00pm or 4:00pm. Government offices are usually open from 8:00am-4:00pm. Some banks, shops, and post offices also open on Saturday from 8:30am-1:00pm. Businesses in primarily Muslim areas often close on Fridays, the Islamic day of worship, in order to accommodate prayer services.

Punctuality: Tanzanians generally place more importance on people and relationships than on schedules and tasks, so they are not always punctual in the Western sense.



Personal Space

Tanzanians generally require less personal space than people from Western cultures. In their society, it would be acceptable to sit together in a nearly empty bus or theater. Although the amount of personal space that Tanzanians require varies by gender, ethnic group, religion, and class; an arm's length is generally appropriate. Tanzanians of the same gender tend to prefer to be closer than Tanzanians of different genders.

Touch: As with personal space requirements, touch preferences vary by gender, familiarity, and social status. Physical contact between people of the same gender is acceptable, and males who are close friends often walk hand-in-hand or kiss each other on the cheek or forehead.

Physical contact between people of different genders is traditionally taboo, particularly among Muslims, although non-Muslim men and women typically shake hands. Among Muslims, women normally do not shake hands with men, although adherence to this custom in Tanzania varies widely. Similarly, Muslims do not touch elders at all or others' heads, as they consider the head the holiest part of the body.

Handshakes: Handshakes are a standard part of greeting in Tanzania, especially among men, and tend to be prolonged,

enthusiastic, and gentle to demonstrate humility and consideration. Additionally, grasping the right elbow with the left hand signals an additional degree of respect.

There are three types of handshake in Tanzania. The first type is the Western-style handshake, which is common in business, government, and education. The second type is the fist-bump, which is usually used between friends. The third type is the informal handshake, which begins with a Western-style handshake but is then followed by each person grasping the other person's thumb, and ends in a second Western-style handshake.



Eye Contact: Direct eye contact indicates attention and trust between colleagues and friends and is essential for building business relationships. However, many Tanzanians avoid eye contact when speaking with an elder or foreign national as a way to signify respect. Male foreign nationals should avoid prolonged eye contact with female Tanzanians because it may indicate harassment. Similarly, female foreign nationals should avoid prolonged eye contact with male Tanzanians because it can be viewed as flirtation.

Gestures: Foreign nationals should generally be mindful of the gestures they use, as some movements may be perceived differently than intended. For example, Tanzanians consider standing with hands on the hips as aggressive. Other movements considered rude include slouching, leaning against objects, beckoning with the index finger, yawning without covering the mouth, and exposing the sole of a foot or shoe to another person.

Left Hand: Traditionally, many Tanzanians reserved the left hand for personal hygiene and did not use it for eating, shaking hands, or giving and receiving gifts. In contemporary society, this practice appears to be changing, although foreign nationals are still advised to conform to the traditional practice unless advised to do otherwise.

9. AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

Overview

The aesthetics and recreation of Tanzania are a unique blend of contemporary Western culture and traditional influences from Africa and the Middle East. From clothing and sports to music and dance, Tanzanians have combined aspects of these different traditions to create dynamic new trends and customs.

Dress

Tanzanians who live in urban areas tend to wear conservative, Western-style clothing imported from China, India, Europe, or the US, and this style of dress is often seen as an indicator of social status. In contrast, Tanzanians who live in villages tend to wear traditional attire which varies by ethnic group.

Men: Most urban men wear at least a button-down shirt with trousers and a jacket if not a full suit and tie. Despite the warm climate, shorts are acceptable only for young boys because they are considered too revealing for mature adults.

Many men who live in rural areas still wear traditional garments such as the **kanga**, a large, colorful rectangle of cloth which is tied into a toga-like wrap. Other men, especially Muslims, wear the **kanzu**, an embroidered, floor-length white gown which is worn with a matching **kofia**, or cap. Many Muslims wear the kanzu and kofia only for attending mosque.

Women: Tanzanian women traditionally wear several kangas, or a variant, **kitenges**. Both of these items are colorful rectangles of cloth which can be used to form many different garments, from skirts and tops to head coverings and slings for carrying infants. Muslim women often wear head coverings such as the **bai-bui**, a type of large black scarf, in order to conceal their hair. Tanzanian women also wear jewelry as an indicator of style and social status. The Maasai are especially well known for their fondness for jewelry, and they often wear a dazzling array of necklaces, rings, earrings, and headbands.



Recreation

Sports: The most popular sports in Tanzania are soccer, track and field, and boxing. As the national sport, soccer is widely played and followed throughout the country, and the most popular clubs are Simba (meaning “lion” in Swahili) and the Young African, both based in Dar es Salaam.



Games: Tanzanians enjoy socializing over board games in coffeehouses and homes. One of the most popular board games is **bao**, a variant of the board game mancala which is popular throughout Africa. In

the West, the game is known as Kalah and Oware. The game consists of two players who try to capture all of the game pieces, usually pebbles, by moving them around a carved wooden board or a grid scratched into the ground.

Music and Dance

Traditional Music: Traditional music known as **ngoma** remains popular throughout the country. Drums are the main instrument and are often accompanied by others such as bells, rattles, xylophones, whistles, and tambourines. Choral singing and the Tanzanian **marimba**, a percussion instrument played by stroking metal strips with the thumb, are also common accompaniments.

Traditional Dance: In addition to musical components, ngoma involves an accompanying dance of the same name which is designed to complement its drum music. Many dancers use elaborate props such as live snakes during performances of ngoma. Other traditional dance forms include the expressive and dynamic dances of the Maasai and the masked dances of the Makonde and Makua.

Bendingoma Hybrids: The influence of German and British soldiers led to the creation of **bendingoma**, a fusion of European brass (bendi) and Tanzanian drums and marimbas which is a popular choice for weddings. Modern Tanzanian musicians also blend ngoma with choir music, reggae, and jazz.

Modern: One of the strongest influences on modern Tanzanian music is **lingala**, a musical tradition which traces its roots to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This influence began when Congolese musicians brought **rumba** and **soukous** music to Tanzania and blended it with the heavy drumbeats of traditional Tanzanian music. As exemplified in the work of late Tanzanian musician Remmy Ongala, lingala places a lyrical emphasis on themes such as HIV/AIDS, hunger, and poverty.



Another style of music popular in modern Tanzania is **bongo flava**, which is named for the Swahili words *bongo*, meaning intelligence or brain, and *flava*, meaning cutting-edge. Growing out of Tanzanian hip-hop of the early 1990s, bongo flava blends rap, hip-hop, rhythm and blues, traditional African music, and taarab (see “Zanzibari” below) into a unique rhythm which is popular throughout East Africa.

Zanzibari: Zanzibar has its own unique musical tradition known as **taarab**. Reflecting the influence of Asian and Arab traders, taarab uses a variety of instruments, including ngoma drums, electric keyboards, the Japanese **taishokoto**, the Indian **tabla**, and the Middle Eastern **oud**. Taarab is renowned for its lyrics, which resemble Swahili poetry.

Film

Although the Tanzanian film industry has a short history, it has expanded since the International Film Festival was first held in Zanzibar in 1998. Widely regarded as one of the most important events in the Tanzanian arts industry, the festival hosts both international and Tanzanian films.

Theater

Tanzanian theater incorporates a variety of performance styles, including dance, drama, poetry, and storytelling. The diversity of Tanzanian theater reflects a range of African influences, and different ethnic groups tend to have their own distinct themes. For example, the Sukuma perform the **Bugobogobo**, or “snake dance,” in which a performer feigns a fight with a python before

disentangling himself to the rhythm of drumbeats. Prior to the colonial era, theater represented a platform for social commentary and played a key role in events such as marriages, initiation ceremonies, war preparations, and religious rituals. In modern Tanzania, non-governmental organizations use theater as a medium for public service messages about social issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Literature

Tanzania has a rich and diverse literary tradition in Swahili and works by Tanzanian authors include poems, novels, textbooks, and historical treatises. Known as the “Father of Swahili,” Shaaban bin Robert probably had the greatest impact on Tanzanian prose. Other famous Swahili-language writers include Shafi Adam Shafi, Ebrahim Hussein, Joseph Mbele, and Muhammed Said Abdulla.

Tanzania also has an English-language literary tradition which includes well-known authors such as Abdulrazak Gurnah, Peter Palangyo, William Kamera, and Tolowa Marti Mollel. Although works in indigenous minority languages also have their place in Tanzania’s literary canon, they are almost always in oral form.

Arts and Crafts

Tourism generates the most artistic revenue, and as a result, the best known Tanzanian arts and crafts are fine works designed for tourists and expatriates. These include paintings, wood carvings, baskets, and decorative items made from local materials such as banana fibers and coconut shells.



Painting: The most popular painting style in Tanzania is called **tingatinga**. Created in the 1950s by Edward Saidi Tingatinga, a local artist who

catered to Europeans, tingatinga uses small, brightly colored dots to depict natural scenery and local wildlife. The bright animals and landscapes in tingatinga paintings are often placed against a monochrome background and finished with a glossy seal.

Sculpture: The best-known artworks produced in Tanzania are probably the masks, figurines, and household objects which the Makonde people carve out of ebony. **Ujamaa** carvings, which represent the spirit images, are also popular. In addition, Tanzanians practice **shetani**, a fantastical form of carving which lures viewers into considering a work from several different angles. Zanzibari artists are well known for their door carvings, which merge African and Arab motifs.

Public Holidays

- January 1: New Year's Day
- January 12: Zanzibar Revolution Day
- March – April (*Variable*): Good Friday
- March – April (*Variable*): Easter Monday
- April 7: Heroes Day
- April 26: Union Day
- May 1: Labor Day
- July 7: International Trade Fair Day
- August 8: Farmers Day
- October 14: Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Day
- December 9: Independence and Republic Day
- December 25: Christmas Day
- December 26: Boxing Day
- (*Variable*): Maulid
- (*Variable*): Eid al-Fitr
- (*Variable*): Eid al-Adha

Festivals

In addition to religious holidays, Tanzanians observe traditional festivals such as **Sauti za Busara**, a six-day festival of Swahili music and dance, and **Mwaka Kogwa**, a celebration marking the Shirazi Persian (see *History and Myth*) New Year. Modern festivals in Tanzania generally occur during the summer and showcase arts both local and international. Some of the most prominent include the Bagamoyo Arts Festival, the Festival of the Dhow Countries, the Music Crossroads of Southern Africa, and the Zanzibar International Film Festival (see “Film”).

10. SUSTENANCE AND HEALTH

Dining Customs

Tanzanian dining customs vary by religion and ethnic group, although some practices are observed by all Tanzanians. For example, Tanzanians typically eat with the right hand (see *Time and Space*) without utensils and always wash their hands before meals.

The most notable variations in Tanzanian dining customs are found in the Muslim community. Although many Tanzanians sit with one leg under them and the other leg stretched out, Muslims sit cross-legged to avoid exposing the sole of the foot (see *Time and Space*). Men and women also dine separately in Muslim households.

Hospitality: When Tanzanians receive a guest in their home, they typically serve food prior to socializing which may include meat if the host family can afford it. Tanzanians do not consider it rude for guests to leave a small amount of food on their plate, as this is a sign of satisfaction.

Traditional Diet

The original Tanzanian diet largely consisted of millet, sorghum, fish, fruit, and vegetables. Contact with Arab traders near the end of the first millennium led to the introduction of citrus fruit and the rice dishes known as ***pilau*** and ***biryani***. Hundreds of years later, the Portuguese brought cassava (a starchy root) and peanuts, while the British introduced tea and boiled vegetables.



Typical Meals: Tanzanians usually begin the day with a small breakfast which typically consists of ***chai*** (tea) and ***mandazi*** (fried bread) or ***chapati*** (flatbread). ***Kahawa*** (coffee), biscuits, sweet rolls, buttermilk, and chicken broth are also sometimes included. Lunch is the main meal of the day and nearly always includes ***ugali***, a thick porridge made from corn, cassava, millet, or sorghum. Side dishes served with *ugali* include slices of pumpkin or sweet potatoes, beans, and leafy greens.

Meat: Chicken, lamb, and goat are all popular in Tanzania, although many households cannot afford meat regularly. Instead, sheep, cattle, and goats are kept as a source of milk or a symbol of wealth (see *Economics and Resources*) and are slaughtered only for special occasions. When Tanzanians do eat meat, they particularly enjoy preparations such as **nyama choma** (grilled meat) and **ndafu** (roasted young goat).

Dessert and Snacks: Dessert most often consists of fresh fruits such as mangos, guavas, pineapples, oranges, and jackfruits. Tanzanians also enjoy cakes made from potato or honey. Popular snack foods include chargrilled corn on the cob, fried plantains, fried sweet potatoes, dried fish, peanuts, and popcorn. Meat kebabs rubbed with hot peppers, salt, and lime juice are popular fare in Tanzanian beer bars.

Special Occasions: Tanzanians consider it disgraceful for a guest to leave hungry, especially from a special occasion. Consequently, the typical Tanzanian banquet may include a full-course meal consisting of pilau, potatoes, and a main dish of chicken, meat, or seafood in overabundance. Alcohol also plays a central role at many special occasions except among the more fundamentalist Muslims whose religious beliefs prohibit alcohol consumption.

Beverages

The most popular beverage in Tanzania is tea, which residents drink throughout the day in a variety of contexts. Coffee is also popular, especially when served in the evening with a side of **kashata** (rolls made with coconut or peanuts).



As noted above, non-Muslims enjoy a variety of alcoholic drinks including both spirits and beer. Tanzanians who live along the coast drink a spirit known both as **mnazi** and **tembo**, while residents of the Kilimanjaro region prefer **mbege**. Tanzanians from all corners enjoy **konyagi**, a spirit similar to gin. The most popular beers are lagers including Kilimanjaro, Safari, and Serengeti brands. Tanzanians also enjoy banana wine.

Traditional Medicine

The traditional view of health and disease in Tanzania differs sharply from that of modern medicine. Health is seen as a state of spiritual harmony, and disease is believed to result from any disruption, either physical or non-physical, of that harmony. As a consequence of this traditional view, a number of Tanzanians still believe that the only way to cure disease is to restore spiritual harmony. Healers traditionally perform this task, using herbal medicine, acts of reconciliation, and magic to heal the physical causes of illness and pacify ancestral spirits (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

Because they are trusted, inexpensive, and easily accessible, traditional healers remain the primary source of medical care for most Tanzanians who do not have access to modern healthcare. The Tanzanian Ministry of Health has been working with international organizations since the 1970s to investigate the scientific soundness of traditional medicine and to provide traditional healers with better training.

Modern Healthcare System

After independence, Tanzania's government prohibited the formation of new for-profit health care services. By 1980, all remaining private facilities had been nationalized, and medical care was delivered as free or subsidized services through a network of clinics and hospitals. Declining standards of care and a shortage of healthcare workers led the government to allow private services again in the 1990s.

In 2023, Tanzania had 7,804 dispensaries, 1,126 health centers, and 436 hospitals. Only 33% of facilities offer basic amenities such as consultation rooms and adequate sanitation, and the availability of six types of basic equipment ranges from just 60% in dispensaries to 85% in hospitals. While, 67% of the population lives within 3 miles of a healthcare facility, rural residents have very limited access to dental services, as more than 90% of all dentists are located in urban areas.



The Tanzanian healthcare system is organized at different levels. At the lowest level, a village health post or clinic is typically staffed by two community members who have some limited training and provide instruction to villagers on the prevention of disease and promotion of health. Such health posts usually do not have in-patient or diagnostic facilities, but have been very successful in performing Tanzania's childhood vaccination programs.

At the next level, dispensaries typically service 6,000 to 10,000 people and are staffed by a nurse and assistant, midwife, a woman's and children's health aide, and laboratory assistant. Dispensaries may be able to perform basic laboratory tests.

Some in-patient services may be available at the next level, the health center, which is staffed by a medical officer, roughly equivalent to a physician's assistant, in addition to a midwife and nurse.



Such health centers may also have an ambulance, and each is intended to serve about 50,000 people.

Full hospital services are available only at the district level, where a district health officer oversees several physicians, midwives,

nurses and assistants, pharmaceutical and laboratory technicians, and perhaps a public health nurse. District hospitals are usually public institutions, although in those areas that lack public facilities, the government may fund a hospital run by an NGO. Specialist services such as pediatrics, obstetrics, and gynecology are only available at Tanzania's four regional hospitals.

The Tanzanian healthcare system currently faces a shortage of healthcare professionals, especially doctors. In 2023, Tanzania had less than 10 physicians per 100,000 residents, falling far of the World Health Organization's recommendation of 23 doctors per 100,000 residents.

Health Challenges

Tanzania faces a variety of health challenges, the most significant of which are HIV/AIDS, malaria, other infectious diseases, and malnutrition. Because of these conditions and many other factors, Tanzanians have a life expectancy at birth of just 71 years – roughly 10 years less than the average American.



HIV/AIDS: The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania stands at 4.3% among adults age 15-49, 12th-highest in the world, and the total number of Tanzanians living with HIV/AIDS is estimated at 1.5 million. Although prevalence rates have stabilized and begun to decline in recent years, HIV/AIDS remains the leading cause of mortality in Tanzania among those 5 years and older, accounting for 8% of deaths in 2023.

Malaria: Accounting for 3% of all deaths in 2023, malaria remains the third-most common reason that Tanzanians seek medical care and is the ninth-leading cause of death. Malaria takes a heavy economic toll by reducing worker productivity and increasing healthcare costs. Malaria prevalence has decreased from 14% to 7% as of 2023.



Other Challenges: Usually attributed to poor sanitation and a lack of clean drinking water, diseases such as meningitis, pneumonia,

diarrhea, and tuberculosis (TB) are common in both Tanzania and Africa as a whole. TB is an especially pressing challenge for Tanzania, which has infection rates greater than those of other high burden countries. Malnutrition is also a major problem, especially for children and pregnant women. About 11% of Tanzanian adults are underweight, compared to 2% in the US. The 2022 Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey estimates that 30% of children under 5 are stunted, 12% are underweight.

11. ECONOMICS AND RESOURCES

Overview

In order to achieve the vision of “African socialism” articulated in the Arusha Declaration of 1967 (see *History and Myth*), the Tanzanian government in the late 1960s imposed controls on the economy. These measures included the creation of over 400 state-owned enterprises, the nationalization of banks and insurance companies, and villagization, a policy which compelled many to live in collective farming villages (see *History and Myth*).

By the mid-1980s it was clear these policies were failing: living standards had declined and there were severe shortages of goods and services in the national economy. Consequently, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi began to liberalize the Tanzanian economy by introducing an economic recovery program with the sponsorship of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).



The IMF program initially caused widespread economic hardship (see *History and Myth*), yet it demonstrated Tanzania's commitment to sound economic management and thereby allowed the country to attract greater levels of private investment and foreign aid. Although Tanzania remains one of the

poorest countries in the world, its economy grew an average of 2-7% per year between 2009-2023.

Foreign Aid

Although Tanzania's economic situation has improved in recent years, the government still depends upon foreign investment and aid for 4% of its GDP. In addition to this type of budget support, Tanzania has benefited greatly from debt forgiveness programs. After debt relief from the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the IMF; Tanzania's national debt now stands at 45% of GDP, a relatively sustainable level. The IMF, the World Bank, and other bilateral donors also have provided grants to improve Tanzania's infrastructure (see *Technology and Material*).

Services

Accounting for 29% of GDP and 26% of employment, services comprise the largest sector of Tanzania's economy. The most important sub-sectors are trade and repairs; real estate and business services; public administration; and transportation. These sub-sectors account for over half the output of the services sector.

Agriculture

Most Tanzanians rely upon agriculture for their livelihood, and most farming is conducted by very small enterprises: about 2/3 of Tanzania's cultivated land belongs to individuals who own 12.4 acres of land or less. Many of these small plots are subsistence farms which produce few crops for market. Consequently, although the agriculture sector employs about 64% of the workforce, it only contributes about 24% of GDP.



Nevertheless, agriculture is a significant source of export earnings. Major cash crops include coffee, cotton, cloves, cashews, tea, tobacco, sisal (a plant yielding a stiff fiber used in making twine and rope), sugarcane, and pyrethrum (an insecticide made from chrysanthemums), while food crops include millet, sorghum, lentils, rice, and corn.

In addition to crops, fishing and livestock are important sources of agricultural revenue. Fishing is particularly lucrative, given Tanzania's long coastline and many inland lakes. Commonly caught species include **dagaas** (a type of sardine), Nile perch, and tilapia. Tanzania also raises large numbers of cattle, goats, and sheep.

Land Act

Tanzania's 1999 Land Act was intended to decentralize land administration and encourage land registration by empowering local village governments to recognize existing rights and issue land titles. Slow and uneven implementation has been complicated further by situations in which communal ownership and management is preferred, such as among some pastoralist groups seeking grazing rights.

Industry

Contributing 28% of GDP and 8% of employment, industry is the smallest primary sector of Tanzania's economy. Most industrial activity is concentrated in the manufacturing and construction sub-sectors. Manufacturers in Tanzania tend to be small- or medium-sized enterprises which specialize in food-processing. In addition, some large factories produce building materials; such as corrugated iron, rolled steel, and cement, or import commodities, such as bottled beverages and cigarettes.

Mining: Although mining still accounts for only a small portion of GDP (4%), the sub-sector has grown swiftly in recent years as the government has attempted to lure foreign investment by allowing greater access to the country's natural resources. Tanzania is one of Africa's top gold exporters, and gold comprises the bulk of Tanzania's export earnings. Tanzania also has significant reserves of diamonds, nickel, and iron ore.

Tourism

Involving all three broad economic sectors (agriculture, industry, and services), tourism is estimated to comprise about 4% of GDP. Tanzania is popular among tourists because it has a variety of natural attractions, from safari destinations in the northern mainland, such as Ngorongoro Crater and Mount Kilimanjaro, to beach getaways on the coast and islands. Partly due to targeted marketing campaigns by the Tanzanian tourism authorities, Tanzania is particularly popular among tourists from Italy, the UK, and the USA.



Money

The currency of Tanzania is the Tanzanian shilling (TSh), which is subdivided into 100 cents. The shilling is issued in 5 banknotes (TSh 200, 500, 1,000, 5,000, 10,000) and three coins (TSh 50, 100, 200). Due to high inflation in Tanzania, the exchange rate between the

shilling and the US dollar fluctuates significantly. As a general guide, \$1 has been worth anywhere from TSh 2,200-2,444 over the last 5 years. Although the Bank of Tanzania managed to keep inflation at moderate levels during the early part of the

2000s, an increase in food prices in 2008 pushed inflation into double digits. It has since decreased to 4% in 2023.

Cash: Although credit cards are accepted at some exclusive shops, hotels, and restaurants in major cities like Arusha, Dar es Salaam, and Mwanza; cash is used for the vast majority of transactions in Tanzania. Because it can be difficult to obtain change for large denomination banknotes, foreign nationals are advised to carry a variety of smaller banknotes.

Foreign Trade and Investment

Tanzania's imports, which amounted to \$16.06 billion in 2023, primarily consisted of petroleum, plastics, garments, fertilizers, and wheat purchased from China (32%), India (13%), the UAE (9%), and Saudi Arabia (5%). Tanzania's exports, which totaled \$13.98 billion in 2023, were mainly comprised of gold, petroleum, dried legumes, copper, and coal sold to India (15%), the UAE (14%), Uganda (12%), South Africa (10%), and China (6%).

In recent years, the Tanzanian government has tried to attract foreign investment by addressing hurdles identified by potential investors in the past, including Tanzania's weak justice system and complicated bureaucracy. The government has revised the tax code, allowed foreign banks to operate, and loosened currency rules, although concerns about corruption and Tanzania's weak infrastructure continue to restrain foreign investment.

Standards of Wealth

Cattle have long been considered as a medium of exchange and a symbol of wealth and status. For example, the Sukuma traditionally describe their net worth in terms of cattle, even when their wealth is stored in some other type of asset.



Perceptions of wealth and power, just like many other aspects of Tanzanian society, have shifted in response to urbanization and modernity. Especially in cities, social status is now based on education and monetary wealth.

12. TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIAL

Overview

Tanzania's transportation and communication infrastructure is comparatively small by global standards, although it is expanding rapidly. Rural Tanzania continues to lag behind urban Tanzania in technological advancement.

Transportation

Vehicles: Although Tanzanians have purchased vehicles in greater numbers in recent years, Tanzania still has only a small number of vehicles relative to its population, with just 21 vehicles per 1,000 people. This low rate of vehicle ownership, combined



with a concentration of vehicles in urban areas, leaves many rural Tanzanians remote and isolated and contributes to persistent rural poverty. Despite this deficient in vehicle ownership, Tanzania has a high number of traffic deaths – over 16 per 100,000 people in 2021.

Roadways: Tanzania's 90,225 miles of roads are the primary means of moving both people and freight around the country. Major Tanzanian cities such as Arusha,

Dodoma, and Dar es Salaam are linked to one another and to regional cities by 6,400 miles of highways, and although Tanzania's road network fell into disrepair during the 1970s and 1980s, many sections are now being revitalized with the help of foreign aid.

Railways: The Tanzania Railways Corporation, a state-owned company, runs Tanzania's main rail network, which comprises 130 stations and 2,546 miles of rail. The main network has two lines which run north-south, from port of Tanga to Arusha, and east-west, from Dar es Salaam to Lake Tanganyika. Another rail network consisting of 53 stations and 1,156 miles of rail links Tanzania with Zambia and is run by the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority.

Originally built to help extract the country's valuable minerals, Tanzania's railways declined as road transportation grew in popularity. However, concerns regarding traffic, pollution, and road safety have led the government to consider reviving Tanzania's railways as an alternative to road transportation.

Airways: Tanzania has four international airports located at Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Mwanza, and Zanzibar which provide regular service to cities across the Middle East, India, Europe, and southeastern Africa. In addition to domestic carriers such as Air Tanzania and Precision Air, foreign carriers including British Airways, Air France, Egyptair, Emirates, Swiss Air, and KLM serve Tanzanian airports. Tanzania also has 22 regional airports distributed across the country which provide service for visitors to Tanzania's many tourist destinations.



Ports: In addition to major ports at Mtwara, Tanga, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania has seven minor ports at Zanzibar, Pangani, Bagamoyo, Mafia, Kilwa, Lindi, and Mikindani. All 10 ports are used to export resources such as oil, minerals, and crops. The major ports also import goods such as vehicles and construction materials. With the support of regional rail networks and inland container depots, Tanzania's ports serve not just Tanzania but also other East African countries, including Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Energy

Most of Tanzania's electricity is generated and distributed by the state-owned Tanzania Electricity Supply Company, which primarily relies upon hydropower. Tanzania is also a member of the Southern African Power Pool, a common grid and market for electricity shared by 17 countries. Only 48% of Tanzanians have access to electricity, and about 82% of those with access to electricity live in urban areas. Backed by US development aid, the Irish energy firm ESB International has undertaken a number of projects to increase rural electrification.

Media

Although private media have flourished in Tanzania since the introduction of multi-party politics in the mid-1990s, the state-owned Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) still controls major radio and television networks.

Radio: Radio is the most popular form of media in Tanzania. In addition to a national radio station run by the TBC, the government runs a youth-oriented station known as Parapanda Radio Tanzania, and the government of Zanzibar operates Voice of Tanzania: Zanzibar. Popular private stations include Kiss FM, Radio One, Radio Free Africa, and Radio Uhuru.

Television: Tanzania is home to six major broadcast television stations. Private networks such as Coastal Television Network, Independent Television, Dar es Salaam Television, and Star TV predate public networks, which were not introduced until 2001. The major public stations are TBC and TV Zanzibar.

Print Media: The oldest newspaper in Tanzania is the state-run *Daily News*. Other popular English-language periodicals include dailies like *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* and weekly publications like the *Arusha Times*, *The Business Times*, and *The Express*. The most popular Swahili-language newspapers are *Nipashe*, *Uhuru*, *Alasiri*, and *Tanzania Daima*.

Telecommunications

Telephones: The number of landlines subscribers in Tanzania has reached nearly 76,000. The number of mobile subscribers jumped from just over 100,000 to over 70.2 million, or about 92%



the population. One important result of this growth in mobile services is that it enabled Tanzanian farmers to check market prices via text messaging.

Internet: An estimated 29% of the total population were Internet users in 2023. Roughly 85% of subscribers used mobile phones to access the internet.



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