

Cultural Considerations

Tanzania Excursion



Growth International Volunteer Excursions

The Roots of Change

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Pre-Trip Supplemental Learning Materials

Prepare for your upcoming trip by diving into these informative resources.

1. [Documentary: Nat Geo Wild Islands History](#)
 - a. Gain insights into the history of Zanzibar with this 2017 documentary. While some information may be slightly outdated, it provides valuable context for your upcoming trip.
2. [Book: Zanzibar Uhuru](#)
 - a. Explore life in post-revolution Zanzibar through the narrative of two women in this engaging book.
3. [Article: Reasons behind education woes in Zanzibar](#)
 - a. Get a brief overview of the current challenges in the Zanzibar education system with this informative article.

Tanzania Cultural Considerations

Tanzania is an extraordinary blend of cultures and landscapes, offering a sensory explosion. As you step onto the vibrant island of Zanzibar, you'll encounter a unique culture surrounded by crystal blue waters. Women adorned in colorful scarves pass by, and Swahili greetings fill the air in the Kairo village. The local Zanzibaris, Maasai from the mainland, and recent modern influences create a diverse tapestry of ethnic experiences, promising numerous unique adventures.

While Zanzibar is part of Tanzania, it has its own distinct identity. Only integrated with the mainland in 1964, Zanzibar boasts a rich culture reflected in religion, food, and customs. Beyond the shared Swahili language, cultural considerations vary between locations.

Zanzibar Island serves as a melting pot for modern and ancient cultures and traditions. Approximately 95% of the population is Muslim, fostering a warm and welcoming atmosphere. However, it's crucial for us, as guests on the island, to be culturally aware and respectful due to the religious and conservative nature of the locals.

To fully immerse yourself in the Tanzanian experience, consider these cultural considerations:

Affection in Public: While the GIVE family embraces a culture of love, it's essential to be mindful that public displays of affection between men and women go against local customs in Zanzibar. Embrace the differences in our cultures and be respectful during your stay.

Dressing Conservatively: Modesty is highly valued in Tanzanian culture. In Zanzibar, women cover their shoulders and knees with loose-fitting attire when in public. Understanding and respecting this aspect of their religion and culture is paramount. Embrace the opportunity to explore local markets for culturally appropriate clothing.

Holy Places: Zanzibar Island boasts numerous mosques integral to its culture. Show utmost respect when near these religious landmarks. The daily calls to prayer, occurring six times a day from 4 am, are a significant part of Zanzibari life. While not alarming, maintain a quiet and respectful demeanor during these calls.

Hakuna Matata: This Swahili phrase, translating to "no worries" or "take it easy," embodies Tanzanian life. Expect a more relaxed pace, appreciating each moment without rushing. Patience is key, as life unfolds at a different rhythm than what we're accustomed to in the Western world.

Gifts for Children: While we encourage bringing donations to support the communities, kindly refrain from directly distributing gifts to children, as it may encourage begging. All volunteer donations will be responsibly allocated by GIVE's Education team and school teachers to best serve the community.

Swahili Language – Key Phrases

Hello/What's up – *mambo*

Goodbye/See you later – *kwaheri/baadaye*

How are you? – *habari yako?*

I'm good – *Nzuri/poa*

Thank you – *Asante*

Please - *tafadhali*

What is your name? – *jina lako nani?*

My name is ____ - *Jina langu* ____

Where are you from? – *unataka wapi?*

I'm from ____ - *nimetoka* ____

Good morning – *habari za asubuhi*

Good night – *usiku mwema*

Very delicious/tasty – *tam sana*

Excuse me / Sorry – *samahani*

Sorry - *pole*

How much is this? – *bei gani*

No worries – *hakuna matata*

You're welcome - *karibu*

Slowly – *pole pole*

Tribes of Tanzania

Tanzania stands out as an incredibly diverse region, boasting not only a rich environment but also a mosaic of cultures represented by over 120 distinct tribes and ethnic groups.

The Sukuma, the largest tribe in Tanzania, encompasses a population of over 5 million individuals scattered throughout the country. While a significant portion resides in rural areas, many Sukuma people call major cities like Mwanza and Dar es Salaam home. Primarily engaged in farming, they cultivate crops such as potatoes, maize, rice, and cotton, alongside traditional cattle herding.

During our journey, our interactions will prominently feature the Maasai tribe. With numerous Maasai students at our school, we'll have the opportunity to witness their traditional homelands en route to safari.

Maasai:

Population in Tanzania: Approximately 800,000

Origin: Lower Nile Valley

The Maasai, known for their traditionally nomadic lifestyle, historically traversed landscapes with their cattle and families in search of fresh pastures. Urbanization has altered this way of life, and today, most Maasai reside near Game Parks in northern Tanzania. While their traditional language is Maa, some have adopted Swahili, Tanzania's official language, through education. Traditional Maasai attire includes a red cloth wrapped around the body, though variations exist based on age and location. Young men, for instance, wear black for months following their circumcision, and blue cloth may be worn in honor of their ancestors.