

## **TANZANIA**

### **Location:**

Tanzania is a large country positioned in Eastern Africa bordering the Indian Ocean. The total area taken up by Tanzania is 943,000 square kilometers. The surrounding countries include Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya. The country is located just south of the equator. Whereas the majority of Tanzania lies on the mainland, there are several islands that make up the rest of the country. The official name of the country is the United Republic of Tanzania.

### **History:**

Some of the earliest known human settlements have been found in Tanzania. Remains found by anthropologist, Louis Leakey, such as bones and tools in the Olduvai Gorge area of northern Tanzania date back to more than one million years. In about 500 A.D., the Maasai, who had previously grazed their cattle in Kenya, migrated down the Rift Valley.

In the 1800's, explorers and missionaries from Europe and Germany traveled into mainland Tanzania. European nations competed for control of African territory. Around 1880, Germany took control of the present day mainland of Tanzania. After their successful take-over, the Germans began to force many Africans to work on plantations. This action eventually lead to an uprising in 1905 named the Maji Maji rebellion. The rebellion was eventually stopped, but not before the Germans killed thousands of Africans.

In the meantime, Britain made Zanzibar and Pemba Islands a British protectorate in 1890. After Germany's defeat in World War I, Britain gained control over the mainland and

changed the name to Tanganyika. During this time, people from other parts of the British Empire and Europe began to settle in Tanganyika.

In 1946, Tanganyika became a United Nations trust territory and Britain had to prepare it for independence. In 1954, the Africans formed the Tanganyika African National Union, which was led by Julius Nyerere. The group gained mainland independence in 1961 and in 1963 gained the independence of the island, Zanzibar. Zanzibar and Tanganyika joined together in April of 1964 and took the name of the United Republic of Tanzania in October.

### **Population:**

The total population of Tanzania is 32.9 million in 2001. More than half of Tanzania's people live in the northern third of the country (Facts, 2002). The most current population growth is a staggering three percent. The densest populations are near the mountains in the north and lakes in the west. A large amount of Tanzania's population lives in rural areas.

About 98 percent of Tanzania's population are black Africans. Within this 98 percent, there are about 120 ethnic groups including the Sukuma, Chagga, Makonde, and Nyamwezi peoples.

### **Climate:**

Temperatures in Tanzania change little throughout the year due to the country's closeness to the equator. In the low-lying areas, the average temperature is around 90 degrees Fahrenheit. At higher elevations, the average temperature ranges from 72 degrees to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. The biggest weather change occurs during the rainy season and lasts for

several months. In northern Tanzania, heavy rain falls from March through May. In southern Tanzania, heavy rain begins in October and usually ends in March.

### **Agriculture:**

Although only 5 percent of Tanzania's land is used for farming, agriculture accounts for more than a third of the country's economic production. A variety of food and cash crops are grown in Tanzania. Cash crops, which are grown specifically for sale, include cotton, coffee, tobacco, and cashew nuts. Food crops grown for the inhabitant's use are maize, cassava, beans, millet, and bananas. Sugar, wheat, and rice are also produced, but they are grown on large government-owned plantations. These particular crops are destined for sale outside the country. Coffee is grown mainly on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru.

### **Trade:**

The development of trade in Tanzania began when Arab traders from the Middle East settled along the eastern coast of Africa during the 1100's. In fact, Zanzibar, an island that is part of Tanzania, was a major slave market from the mid 1700's to the late 1800's. During this time span, Arabs sold thousands of black Africans from the mainland into slavery.

Current trade in Tanzania consists mainly of foreign trade. Crops such as coffee, cotton, tea, and tobacco are the countries' main exports. Imports include chemicals, construction material, food, machinery, petroleum, and transportation equipment.

### **Language:**

There are two official languages of Tanzania: Swahili and English. However, many local African languages are also spoken. Swahili had its beginnings as far back as the ninth century. It is one of 400 Bantu languages that are spoken by 150 million people today over the entire southern third of Africa. Swahili is the result of borrowed vocabulary from Arabic and other languages.

During German rule of Tanganyika, the use of Swahili was promoted. Later, under British rule, Swahili was further promoted by government officials and thus, set the scene for its adoption by the entire country. All of the different ethnic groups in Tanzania have their own language, which is used at home. However, all official business is conducted in Swahili. Newspapers, radio, and television (which exists in Zanzibar only) all operate in both Swahili and English.

### **Religion:**

About 35 percent of the population is Muslim and followers of Islam. Most of the people on the mainland are Christians. The Muslims that reside on the mainland live along the coast and are part of the Swahili culture of the islands.

The widespread practice of Christianity in Tanzania is due to the arrival of missionaries in the mid-1800s. Although one third of Tanzanian's are said to practice Christianity, many continue practicing traditional religions in conjunction with Christianity. The people, who practice the Islamic faith, or Muslims, are required to follow the "five pillars" of their religion. A few requirements of the Muslim religion are: 1) Muslims must pray five times a day, 2) during Ramadan, Muslims must fast from sun-up till sun-down for a month, 3) they must give alms to

the poor, and 4) if they can afford it, they must make a hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca for prayer at least once in a lifetime.

### **Food:**

Most foods eaten in Tanzania are typical of those found throughout East Africa. Ugali is the staple food in the country, which is made from the local grain flour, generally maize (corn). Upon pounding the kernels of maize into flour, it is cooked into a stiff porridge referred to as Ugali. Maize forms not only the basic foodstuff, but is a large portion of the entire diet.

Meat and fresh vegetables make up a very small portion of a Tanzanian's diet. Meat is not readily available and can prove to be quite costly. It is eaten only on special occasions such as the birth of a child, a circumcision, or a wedding. The meat of choice for these special occasions is a young goat called mbuzi.

### **Health:**

The biggest health problems in Tanzania are diseases carried by insects and parasites. Probably the worst threat to Tanzanians today is Malaria. Mosquitoes thrive in the damp low-lying areas of the country and carry this disease. These areas, by nature, are those best for farming. There is no way to prevent the often-fatal disease, however, most children and young adults develop some immunity to the disease. Second to Malaria is Bilharzia, which is carried through water infested with diseased snails.

Sleeping sickness is another disease, which plagues Tanzania. It is carried by the tsetse fly and is also more prevalent near rivers and lakes. Over two-thirds of the territory of Tanzania is infested with this species of fly. Tanzania's health issues are made worse by a rapid population growth, estimated to be about 26 million. Another problem perpetuating the health problems in the country is a high birthrate of about 3.7 percent. Because Tanzania is largely rural, it is extremely difficult to get sufficient medical care to everyone.

### **Economy:**

Tanzania is one of the world's poorest countries. The majority of its population resides in rural areas and farms for a living. Though the government tried to develop industries, the economy is still heavily dependent on agriculture production and importation of goods. In the past, Tanzania operated under a socialist economy. This meant the government controlled the land, labor, and capital of the country. This style of economy caused a decline in production. The government's control over all phases of agricultural production led to inefficient, often corrupt practices. Even when farmers have successfully harvested crops, 30 to 40 percent of it is lost after the harvest because of insects and other damages. In this socialist society, people felt little incentive to work hard because the government controlled prices. Tanzania now operates under a market economy where the government has little control over the factors of production. Since this move, food production has recovered somewhat.

### **Transportation:**

Due to Tanzania's poor economy, transportation resources are limited to a few specific areas and needs. Private car ownership is reserved for the few wealthy or

important officials in Tanzania. For the rest of the population, those who can afford them use bicycles. These bicycles are used most commonly by men who take them to and from work. Other modes of transportation such as railroads, boat transport, and roads are directed toward the needs of business and the economy. Those who visit family usually travel on the rivers and lakes. On lake Victoria, a ferry transports people to the ports of Mwanza, Bukoba, and Musoma. Many people walk great distances along the roads. The railway is still too expensive for most people because of the poverty that exists.

### **Education:**

Under colonial rule and in most modern African countries since independence, most students do not complete secondary school. Only about 20 percent of the government's entire budget had been directed toward education. After Tanzania gained its independence, it was left with very few highly skilled, highly educated citizens, massive amounts of illiterate adults, and millions of children who needed schools to attend. In the whole country, there were only one hundred university graduates.

Today, Tanzania has one of the highest rates of literacy in Africa. For teachers, Tanzania has turned to the United States for Peace Corp volunteers. The country now has two universities, one established in 1961 and the other in 1984.

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