



BACKGROUND

Land and Climate

Tanzania is slightly larger than Nigeria, or twice as big as the U.S. state of California. It consists of mainland Tanganyika and three low coral islands that lie off the coast in the Indian Ocean: Mafia, Pemba, and Zanzibar. The combined size of these humid islands is slightly less than the U.S. state of Rhode Island. Tanganyika is a land of great variation. It either shares or borders three of Africa's Great Lakes (Victoria, Nyasa, and Tanganyika). Most of the country is highland plateau, low-lying coastal plain, or upland plain (the Serengeti). Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest point in Africa, rises to 19,340 feet (5,895 meters). Africa's lowest point is the floor of Lake Tanganyika, at 1,174 feet (358 meters) below sea level, which is also the world's longest freshwater lake. Tanzania's many national parks and reserves protect a variety of species, including the lion, elephant, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus.

Tanzania's equatorial climate—hot, humid, and 90°F (32°C) on the coast—is tempered by inland elevations where temperatures are mild to chilly. Rains fall primarily from March to May and from October to December, with seasonal variations from north to south.

History

Early Inhabitants

Various peoples inhabited the area now known as Tanzania for thousands of years before traders from southern Arabia began arriving in the eighth century. The Arabs founded the

city of Kilwa as they began settling the coast. Over many generations, Arabs mixed with the local Bantu populations to produce both the Swahili language and the modern peoples of the coastal regions.

European Influence

The Portuguese arrived in the 15th century. They, together with Arabic overlords from Muscat and Oman, developed a series of populous and powerful trading cities and sultanates—particularly on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. The sultanate of Zanzibar firmly controlled both the islands and the mainland coast until the mid-1800s.

In 1884, representatives of the German Society for Colonization began establishing agreements with tribal leaders on the mainland, placing them under German influence. In 1885, the area of present-day Tanzania (except for Zanzibar, which became a British protectorate) became a German protectorate.

During the Maji Maji Rebellion, between 1905 and 1907, several African communities in the area under German control mounted an armed resistance to the Germans. *Maji* means “water,” a word used to describe the rebellion because Kinjikitile Ngwale (an important leader in the rebellion) convinced the rebels that German bullets would turn to water as soon as they hit them, provided the rebels used a special, “sacred” water. Though Germany suppressed the uprising, the event forced Germany to devote more administrative resources to the area. The rebellion also served as a unifying force for the various African communities in the area. Germany gave its possession to Britain following World War I, and it was renamed Tanganyika.

Independence and Democracy

In 1961, Tanganyika was granted independence, and independence followed for Zanzibar in 1963. In 1964, the two nations merged to form Tanzania and became a socialist republic under Julius Nyerere, who served as president until 1985. His Revolutionary Party (CCM—Chama Cha Mapinduzi) worked to unite a nation of many ethnic groups. For decades, the CCM was the only legal party, but constitutional changes in 1992 allowed for multiparty elections starting in 1995. Despite these changes, the CCM remained in power. Since 1995, Zanzibar, a semiautonomous region of Tanzania that elects its own president and legislature to handle internal affairs, has held several contentious local elections that have been marred by fraud accusations and occasional violence.

Modern Politics

Nationwide, the CCM continues to maintain its grip on the presidency and parliament, although a unified opposition and anger over corruption weakened the CCM's majority following 2015 elections, the most competitive in Tanzania's history. However, under President John Magufuli's rule, the government became i

ncreasingly authoritarian and received international criticism for its repression of political opponents, journalists, and LGBT people. Following Magufuli's death in 2021, his vice president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, was sworn in as Tanzania's first female president. Despite being one of Africa's most politically stable countries,

corruption remains a major problem in Tanzania.

THE PEOPLE

Population

About a third of Tanzanians live in urban areas. The largest city is the quickly growing Dar es Salaam, which has more than seven million residents living in it and its surrounding region. Dar es Salaam is known locally as Bongoland; the nickname is based on the Swahili word *bongo* (brain) because the city is seen as a place where one must use cunning and intelligence to survive. Plans for Dodoma to replace Dar es Salaam as the nation's capital were implemented in 1974, and though the transition was officially declared complete in 1996, in practice Dar es Salaam continues to serve as the capital and is still home to many government offices.

Nearly half of all Tanzanians are younger than age 15. Ninety-nine percent of the mainland population is African, coming from more than 130 ethnic groups. Many of these groups are Bantu-speaking. The Sukuma is the largest group. The merchant and trader populations are dominated by people of Lebanese, Palestinian, Indian, and Omani origin. Arabs are most numerous on Zanzibar. Refugees from countries affected by conflict in the region live in border areas and, increasingly, in Dar es Salaam. A growing number of Chinese nationals have moved to the country in recent years in search of jobs. Their success in finding work has caused some resentment among native Tanzanians, spurring the government to require employers to fill positions with locals before hiring a foreigner.

Language

Swahili (also called *kiswahili*), the primary official language, is used in schools, by newspapers, and on radio and television. Swahili developed along the coasts of Kenya and Tanzania as a trade language between Africans and Arabs. It is a mixture of various Bantu languages, Arabic, and English. Tanzanian Swahili follows a more traditional form than the Swahili that is spoken in Kenya. Zanzibar is considered to have the purest Swahili, which locals call *kiunguja*. Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first president, made Swahili official at the time of independence to foster pride in the people's African identity. To help spread use of the language, he urged people to buy radios, and Radio Tanzania began broadcasting in Swahili. The language is still taught on the radio.

English, the second official language, is used in business, government, and higher education. More than one hundred languages are spoken in Tanzania. Most people speak the language associated with their ethnic group at home, but they generally also speak Swahili.

Religion

Precise religion statistics on Tanzania's population are not available because the government does not collect that information. Most estimates say that about 61 percent of Tanzanians are Christian and 35 percent are Muslim, while the remainder follow Indigenous beliefs or are unaffiliated.

Tanzanian Christians are split fairly evenly between Catholics and Protestants. It is not unusual for professed Christians to mix their beliefs with local traditions. Thus, a local priest and a traditional healer might carry equal respect in a "Christian" village. The two belief systems are not considered contradictory because each has a place in the people's daily lives. Muslims and Christians coexist peacefully and may even celebrate each other's holidays. The government is neutral in religious matters.

On Zanzibar, nearly all inhabitants are Muslim. Muslims believe *Allah* (God) chose the prophet Muhammad and revealed the words of the *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book) to him through the angel Gabriel. As part of the practice of Islam, Muslims profess the name of *Allah* and proclaim Muhammad's calling. They pray five times daily and hope to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, sometime in their life.

General Attitudes

Tanzanian social systems are group oriented, regardless of ethnic affiliation. Individuals are generally expected to put themselves second to group welfare because group needs are considered more important than those of an individual. Consequently, Tanzanians tend to be extremely polite and generous people, particularly in public. It is considered impolite to pass a person (unless in a large crowd) without showing a sign of recognition, even if only a smile. Any kind of verbal abuse or criticism, especially in public, is usually considered a major offense that negatively reflects on the person's upbringing and background. Displays of negative emotion, except among close family and friends, are considered a sign of weakness and therefore highly inappropriate, especially among men.

Tanzanians are generally proud of the peace their country

has maintained despite the numerous ethnicities and religions of its people. Their acceptance extends to foreigners from both Africa and other parts of the world, as Tanzanians are considered to be a friendly people. Education, wealth, and uniformity are traits generally valued in others. Many wealthy people use their resources to assist immediate and extended family and friends. Appearance tends to be very important; doing all that one can to appear clean and well kempt shows respect to others. A respect for elders is especially important. Any older person can act as a disciplinarian to a younger person, even if the two are not related.

Personal Appearance

Urban Tanzanians tend to dress conservatively and in Western-style clothing. Special outfits are often reserved for days of worship. Young people in particular generally wear jeans, T-shirts, and tennis shoes. Shorts and other revealing attire are not considered proper, except in clearly defined work or recreational situations. The government regulates certain business dress standards; most office workers wear Western business attire. Women may wear pantsuits, though long skirts and dresses are still considered the most modest clothing for women, especially in rural areas.

In villages, some people wear colorful traditional clothing associated with their specific ethnic group. Many wear readily available secondhand clothing from the United States or Europe and imported clothing from China and India. Muslim men might wear a *kanzu* (long, embroidered cotton gown) with a matching skullcap. Some wear a *kanzu* only when going to the mosque. Tanzanian women often wear several *kanga*, rectangular pieces of colorful cotton fabric worn as a skirt, top, or head covering. It is also common for a mother to use a *kanga* to carry her baby on her back. In contrast to *kanga*, *vitenge* are thicker pieces of fabric used to make clothing that is customized in design and size. Muslim women might cover their hair but almost never their faces. Zanzibari women often wear a large black shawl called a *buibui*. Rural footwear usually consists of simple sandals or flip-flops. Even for those without electricity, having ironed clothes—including T-shirts—is important to most. Tanzanians who do not take the time to iron may be considered lazy, rude, and poorly raised.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings

Each region has a variety of non-Swahili greetings particular to the local ethnic groups, but Swahili is understood by virtually all people. The most common Swahili greeting is *Hujambo* (or *Hanjambo* for multiple people). A more casual greeting is *Mambo*, which may be answered with *Poa* (Cool). The response to *Hujambo* is *Sijambo* (I'm fine). *Hatujambo* means "We're fine." When greeting older people or authority figures, *Shikamoo* (literally, "I hold your feet") is used, to which the answer is *Maharaba* (roughly, "I am delighted"). These exchanges are followed by a drawn-out series of questions about one's home, family, work, or other activities. For example, one might ask *Habari za nyumbani?* (How are

things at your home?). A common response is *Salama* ("In peace," or "without problems"). A typical greeting when approaching someone's home is *Hodi* (Is anyone there?), which is yelled at the gate, through an open door, or when knocking on a door. The response is *Karibu* ("Welcome" for one person) or *Karibuni* ("Welcome" for more than one person).

Men and women shake hands with each other, though a man may wait for a woman to extend her hand before offering his. Parents often are addressed by the name of their oldest son or their other children, rather than by their given name. Thus, the mother of Albert would be known as *Mama Albert*, and the father would be *Baba Albert*.

Gestures

Tanzanians use the right hand to pass and accept items. To use the left hand alone, even in gesturing, is improper. The verbal "tch-tch" sound is considered an insult. In many cases, it is impolite to let the bottom of one's foot or shoe point at someone. Therefore, when sitting, one does not prop up the feet on chairs or tables but places them on the ground. Often, when offering someone a drink, a person may taste the beverage first to show that it is safe for consumption. When hailing a ride from a vehicle, people wave an arm with the palm of the hand facing down if they are willing to pay. They stand with their palms facing up if they are looking for a free ride. Beckoning someone is always done with the palm down; to do so with the palm up is insulting.

Visiting

Visiting is an important social custom; friends and family visit often. Hosts enthusiastically welcome their visitors and do their best to make guests comfortable. Unannounced visits are common and warmly received. Scheduled visits are considered flexible, with guests often arriving two or three hours late, if at all. Most times of the day are acceptable for visiting except late in the evening (after 8 p.m. or so). A host also does not appreciate repeated visits at mealtime. Any guest arriving at mealtime, even if unannounced, is always offered part of the meal. Not sharing a meal would show a lack of hospitality, and refusing the offer of food is impolite. Guests of the opposite sex are entertained with the outside door open.

It is polite for hosts to serve tea (often with milk and sugar), coffee, or another beverage. *Kitumbua* (a fried bread; plural is *vitumbua*) or *maandazi* (small doughnuts) may also be set out. Refusing these refreshments is considered impolite. A first-time visitor customarily brings a small gift to the home. This may include sweets or cookies but not flowers, as flowers are used to express condolences. When guests depart, hosts customarily accompany them part of the way (a few hundred yards) to see them off properly.

Eating

Women customarily serve the male members of the family, including male children old enough to eat independently, before they and the rest of the children eat. Throughout the country, people wash their hands in a bowl or basin of water before each meal. This practice is especially important

because most meals are eaten with the hands. Even if diners use utensils, they wash their hands before eating. Because the left hand traditionally is used for personal hygiene, Tanzanians use only the right hand when eating without utensils. They might use the left to handle difficult foods, such as meat with bones, but never to take food from a communal bowl. Eating from a communal dish is common, especially when it contains *ugali* (a stiff porridge) or rice. It is considered rude to smell food or comment on the smell of the food.

Families on the Indian Ocean coast, as well as in villages and towns along the three lakes (Nyasa, Tanganyika, and Victoria), sit on woven mats on the floor to eat meals. Muslims tend to sit cross-legged on these mats, but others sit with one leg tucked and the other stretched out sideways away from the food. Among Muslims, as well as some rural non-Muslims, men and women often eat separately. When guests are invited, hosts usually serve dinner first and reserve socializing for afterward. Therefore, it is impolite for guests to leave a home immediately after a meal. During the Islamic holy month of *Ramadan*, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset; meals are served in the evening. Throughout all of Tanzania, leftover food is not thrown away but instead saved for a meal (often breakfast) the next day.

LIFESTYLE

Family

Structure

Tanzanian society emphasizes the principle of *ujamaa*, or “familyhood.” Immediate and extended family is not generally distinguished: cousins are referred to as brothers and sisters, and uncles and aunts are referred to as fathers and mothers. Introducing a cousin as a cousin (rather than as a brother or sister) to a friend is offensive.

A typical rural household is large. A family often lives with or near the father's brothers and their families. Less often, the family is joined by the mother's sisters and their families. Living near each other allows family members to more easily provide financial assistance to one another. Urban families are usually smaller and less cohesive than those residing in rural areas. Nationwide, the average number of children per family is four or five.

Parents and Children

The experiences of rural youth differ significantly from those in urban areas. Rural children are more likely to have more direct and frequent interaction with extended family members. Also, chores related to farming and raising livestock shape the development of rural children, while school has a bigger influence on the development of urban children.

During young adulthood, rural dwellers often focus on finding a spouse, while urban residents generally seek to obtain a university education. Children leave home soon after obtaining enough education to become self-reliant—upon graduation or as early as age 14 for those who do not complete their schooling. Unmarried adult males especially are expected to leave their parents' home because staying is

considered irresponsible and lazy. Females may stay with their parents until marriage, though in urban areas many rent their own place.

Upon becoming independent, children are expected to provide for their parents or other family members if needed. When parents become elderly, the responsibility to care for them generally falls evenly among the children, though the oldest child often feels a greater obligation.

Gender Roles

Both mothers and fathers are expected to provide their children with food, clothing, shelter, and education. The father is the traditional head of the household, disciplinarian, and breadwinner, but mothers wield substantial power as the day-to-day managers of the family. They oversee the child rearing (including helping with discipline), farming, cooking, and other domestic tasks. Urban women are more likely to be involved in informal economic activities or to be formally employed than their rural counterparts. In rural areas, gender roles are strictly defined. For example, a man would be considered crazy (*kichaa*) if seen carrying water.

In areas where traditional societies have denied women rights, the government is actively seeking to increase the opportunities available to women, who generally enjoy formal legal equality with men. For example, schools for women have been established in areas where female education has been customarily forbidden. There is also a quota for female members of the national legislature. Tanzania's new draft constitution that has yet to be approved includes measures designed to bolster gender equality, including greater access to land ownership for women. However, many customary laws and practices remain discriminatory.

Housing

Rural

Tanzania is a mainly rural nation, and most dwellings are mud-brick huts covered with grass thatch or tin roofs. Homes may take many years to build, with families adding bit by bit to the structure as they get the money to do so. Few people have access to electricity and running water. Toilets are often shared by many families and, for reasons of sanitation, located at a distance from living quarters.

Floors are mud or cement, depending on the financial circumstances of the occupants, and the décor is usually simple. Most objects found in the home tend to be usable, such as clay pots, baskets, and grass mats. Families may share a bed, though parents strive to at least have a bed for themselves, one for their sons, and another for their daughters. Living and working areas often merge. It is common to see chickens wandering around the kitchen or piles of maize stacked up in the courtyard.

Many people in rural areas own their homes because of the lower cost of land. (In practice, plots of land are purchased and sold, though technically the government owns all land in Tanzania and collects small annual dues from all landowners.)

Urban

Urban accommodation also tends to be very basic. The beautiful whitewashed buildings of Stone Town in Zanzibar are a dramatic exception. Urban homes are very close to each

other because of the limited space available. They are usually made of concrete blocks that are painted white, though they may be painted other colors as well.

Squat toilets are the norm, and a bucket of water may be used for flushing, while showers are taken by pouring water from a bucket as well. Warm water heated over a wood or charcoal fire is considered a luxury for many. In larger cities, Western-style homes with indoor plumbing are now being built, but only the very rich can afford piped hot water. In most houses, rooms are small and are generally shared by more than one person.

Home ownership is especially difficult in urban areas like Dar es Salaam because land is very expensive. The potentially high cost of renting a room in major urban areas, along with high levels of unemployment, results in a significant level of homelessness.

Dating and Marriage

Dating and Courtship

Western-style dating habits are uncommon among the majority of people, especially those destined for arranged marriages. In families where marriages are not arranged, boys may begin establishing relationships as early as 14 and girls as young as 12. In some tribes, girls may be promised to an older male at birth and sometimes are sent to live with their future husband's family when they are as young as eight or nine. Premarital sexual relationships are common, though public displays of affection are not.

Engagement

Couples who do begin dating generally become engaged very quickly, though engagements may last as long as five years. In relationships that did not involve family matchmaking, engagements are frequently broken off, usually because of extended family disagreements or financial problems.

The groom's family normally gives a bride-price to the bride's family for two reasons. First, it is a way to show respect for the bride's parents—to thank them for raising her. Second, it helps compensate for the loss of a productive member of the bride's family. This is important especially in rural areas because extended families share work responsibilities. Because the bride-price can be very expensive, families often must ask for financial assistance from extended family members. The bride-price may consist of money, cattle, or crops, though it can also be paid through “bride-service,” in which the groom provides labor for the bride's family.

Marriage in Society

Marriage is considered important as a symbol of manhood and womanhood. Men generally marry around age 25, and women marry at 18 on average. In 2016, Tanzania raised the legal age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18. Traditionally, marriages have been arranged, often within the extended family. Today, while individual preference is permitted, marriages between cousins are still encouraged—especially in rural areas. This practice is becoming less common in cities. While marrying or forming relationships outside of one's ethnic group is no longer objectionable, relationships outside of one's religious group are still discouraged. When Christians and Muslims marry, the Christian is encouraged to

convert to Islam.

Common-law marriages are not legally recognized. Christian marriages tend to be monogamous. However, males in Muslim and traditional families may legally have as many as four wives. Polygamy is more common in rural areas. Sexual relations between same-sex partners are illegal, and same-sex marriage is unrecognized in Tanzania. In addition to facing discrimination and harassment, LGBTQ people are often subject to imprisonment.

Weddings

Weddings usually center on a religious ceremony, though there are differences between urban and rural weddings. Urban brides wear white dresses, and grooms wear Western suits. After the ceremony, the couple is driven around in a motorcade to have pictures taken and is dropped off at a rented hall, where a reception is held. Guests can expect speeches, drinking, and dancing and often bring gifts for the new couple, which vary according to the tribal background of the couple.

Couples in rural areas are more likely to wear traditional clothing and take part in traditional dances following the wedding ceremony. The parents of the bride and groom give the couple their blessing. Food served at these celebrations usually includes the traditional foods of the couple's ethnic group and geographical location. For example, one can expect to see rice and fish dishes served at a wedding for a couple from the south (where rice and fish are popular), but not from the north, where goats are usually slaughtered and barbecued for the wedding feast.

Divorce

Divorce is frowned upon and is therefore uncommon, though it is more prevalent among urban residents than rural ones and rates are on the rise. Divorced women, especially those with children, find it difficult to establish future marital relationships because they are seen as untrustworthy. A divorced woman is considered shameful to her whole family, and it is very rare for a divorced woman to remarry. It is rather common and considered acceptable for a divorced man to remarry.

Life Cycle

Birth

Pregnant women and women with very young children are highly respected in society and are given privileges, such as being allowed to cut to the front of a line. The birth of a child is a special occasion. The family of the newborn can expect many well-wishers, many of whom bring gifts to the family, usually something that the baby will use. Naming a child is primarily the personal decision of the child's parents, though relatives are often allowed to have their say. Names often have a religious or a tribal influence.

Rural women often return to field work within a few weeks of giving birth, while formally employed women are entitled to about three months of paid maternity leave. Fathers are allowed, and usually take, up to three days of paternity leave. Following the birth of a child, a woman is cared for by her mother or another close female relative or friend for 40 days (or, among some groups, three months).

Milestones

Childhood in Tanzania often includes more work than is typical for children in the West. As early as age five, Tanzanian children, especially girls, are given serious domestic responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings, cleaning, cooking, and even working in the fields or herding cattle. In some societies, a child is considered an adult after puberty. A traditional dance or ritual formally makes the child an adult. Girls may be promised in marriage at a very young age, before the onset of menstruation, at which point they are considered women. In a small number of tribes, boys are still ceremonially circumcised at age 13, though the practice is sharply declining.

Throughout Tanzania, the transition to adulthood is marked by children leaving their parents' home and starting their own lives. Those who do not leave home are still socially considered to be children, even if they reach 18, the age of legal adulthood.

Death

Funerals are large and often expensive events. A death is generally marked by a parade, in which the coffin is carried through the streets in the company of mourners and a band of trumpeters, with many singing sorrowful songs. While the coffin for a deceased member of a wealthy family may be quite expensive, most coffins are inexpensive and usually locally made.

People are typically buried on their family's plot of land, near the home. Muslims are wrapped in a shroud and buried within 24 hours of death, in an area reserved for Muslims only. In a Christian ceremony, people gather at the gravesite, where an assigned family member reads aloud a brief history of the deceased person's life. The presiding pastor then offers a prayer before the coffin is put into the ground.

In rural villages, following the death of a husband or father, his family comes together for three days of mourning. During this time, the fate of his assets is decided, which often leaves his wife destitute and dependent on one of the husband's brothers for survival. This is because according to many local customs, women must access land through a husband or male relative and laws stipulating otherwise are not enforced.

Diet

Important staple foods are rice, bananas, and *ugali* (a stiff porridge made from maize, millet, sorghum, or cassava). These are typically eaten with a meat stew or a sauce made of green leafy vegetables (cabbage, Swiss chard, spinach), *dagaa* (small fish), beans, or cowpeas. Rice is the staple of much of the coastal area and is often cooked with a variety of spices (including cloves, curry, cinnamon, cumin, and hot peppers), which are mixed directly into the water as the rice cooks. This dish is called *pilau*. Cooked bananas are a starch staple in much of northern Tanzania (particularly around Lake Victoria and in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro) and in the southwest around Mbeya and Lake Nyasa. Bananas are prepared in a variety of ways, including roasted, fried, or made into a paste and mixed with meat and gravy.

Other fruits include mangoes, guavas, pineapples, jackfruit, breadfruit, and oranges. Chicken, goat, and lamb are often served as *nyama choma* (roasted meat). *Kitumbua* and

sugarcane are popular snack or energy foods. Devout Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.

Recreation

Sports

Soccer is the most popular sport in Tanzania for both men and women. Tanzanians enjoy watching professional soccer, especially European leagues and the World Cup, and people of all ages enjoy playing the sport themselves. Tennis, volleyball, and netball (mostly among women) are also popular sports. The country is known for its world-class runners. Young girls play *redi*, a game similar to keep-away.

A lack of recreational facilities is a challenge for those wishing to participate in sports, especially in rural areas. Rural children (and some urban ones) are often required to improvise, making toys from materials left over from the local tailor, for example. Sports like basketball and swimming tend to be more common in better-equipped urban areas. Schools may sponsor sports teams and competitions. Commonly sponsored sports include soccer, volleyball, tennis, basketball, and track and field.

Leisure

People enjoy socializing at coffeehouses or at home. Few people have recreational opportunities outside of work, which means that both men and women often tell stories or jokes and sing while working. In their leisure time, men play *bao*, a strategy game for two in which each tries to earn his opponent's pebbles or seeds by moving them in a certain fashion around a board (or the ground). There are many variations, but the game is over when one player is out of playing pieces.

In rural areas, village governments may organize public plays, often performed around traditional events, such as weddings, funerals, and festivals. Few people go to movie theaters because watching movies at home on DVDs or on TV is becoming more common and more popular. Both U.S. American movies and locally made "Bongo" films, which revolve around family life, are standard fare. Tanzanians also enjoy watching television or listening to the radio. Visiting friends is popular among all Tanzanians.

Vacation

Few Tanzanian families go on vacation, and of those that do, most come from urban areas. Families may visit national museums or national parks while vacationing.

The Arts

Traditional *ngoma* music remains one of Tanzania's most popular styles. Dancers follow the rhythm of drums, accompanied by choral singing, xylophones, and whistles. Sung poetry called *taraab*, a product of Arab influence, has developed into a style of music and dance common on Zanzibar and along the mainland coast. Musicians in Dar es Salaam perform these local styles as well as jazz, gospel, and reggae. Each tribe has its own traditional dances and performs them at special occasions. There is a dance competition featuring different groups every year near Lake Victoria.

Tanzania's folk arts include the ebony sculptures of the Makonde people and baskets decorated with detailed geometric patterns. Intricate door carvings on Zanzibar

combine Arabic and local motifs. *Tingatinga* artists paint animals and nature scenes using tiny, brightly colored dots. The Maasai people create intricate beaded jewelry.

Tanzania has a growing local film industry, referred to as Bongo Cinema, a name it derives from Dar es Salaam's nickname, Bongoland. The family-centered films the industry produces are growing in popularity throughout eastern Africa.

Holidays

Tanzania's holidays include New Year's Day (1 January), Zanzibar Revolution Day (12 January), Union Day (26 April), Labor Day (1 May), Saba Saba (International Trade Day, 7 July), Nane Nane (Farmer's Day, 8 August), Nyerere Day (14 October), Independence Day (9 December), and Christmas (25 December).

State Holidays

Zanzibar Revolution Day celebrates the victory of the African locals over the Arab government of Zanzibar in 1964. Union Day is related, as it commemorates the union of the newly free Zanzibar with Tanzania, then called Tanganyika. Both days are celebrated the same way in Zanzibar and the mainland, though Zanzibar Revolution Day has more meaning for the residents of Zanzibar than it does for mainland residents.

Saba Saba is the day of the International Trade Fair, which invites individual traders, government ministries, businesses, and non-governmental organizations to present their products during an exhibition. This holiday is intended to allow people from different corners of the country to sell or buy goods and be able to browse other objects on display. Traditional handicrafts are very popular. Nane Nane is traditionally known as Farmer's Day. This holiday aims to appreciate the contribution of farmers in developing the country. Farmers proudly display and sell their crops. Usually, traditional foods are eaten and traditional dances are performed.

Independence Day is commemorated through parades and presentations by the national defense forces and cultural groups. Nyerere Day celebrates the life of former president Julius Nyerere, who is considered the father of Tanzania. He died on 14 October 1999.

Christian Holidays

Christians celebrate Easter (including Good Friday and Easter Monday) by attending church and visiting with family and friends. Favorite Easter dishes vary by tribe and region. To celebrate Christmas, many travel to visit relatives, and practicing Christians attend church services. People in urban areas may decorate their homes and Christmas trees with lights and give each other gifts. Most people open their gifts on the morning of Boxing Day (26 December) instead of Christmas Day. *Pilau* (a rice dish in which a variety of spices are mixed directly into the water as the rice cooks) is a popular dish for major holidays, including Easter and Christmas.

Islamic Holidays

Islamic holidays are based on the lunar calendar and fall on different days from year to year. As the holy month of *Ramadan* comes to a close, a three-day feast (*Eid al-Fitr*) is held to break the fast. The Feast of the Sacrifice (*Eid al-Adha*) is the holiday that honors the prophet Abraham's willingness

to sacrifice his son. Muslims also mark the birthday of the prophet Muhammad.

Festivals

Each ethnic group celebrates festivals that differ from each other depending on regional location. The timing of some festivals depends on when an ethnic group harvests their crops and when the rainy season begins or ends. The Sauti za Busara music festival is an annual event held on the island of Zanzibar and attracts artists from the region and beyond.

SOCIETY

Government

Structure

Tanzania is a presidential republic; its president is head of state and head of government. The president is directly elected on the same ballot with the vice president to a five-year term, with a two-term limit. The prime minister is appointed by the president and oversees several national commissions and ministerial portfolios. Zanzibar is a semiautonomous state with an elected president (currently Ali Mohamed Shein).

Tanzania's legislature is the unicameral National Assembly (*Bunge*). Of its 393 members, 264 are elected by popular vote, 113 are women elected by proportional vote, 5 are members of the Zanzibar House of Representatives, 10 are appointed by the president, and 1 is the attorney general. Zanzibar's House of Representatives has authority over matters related to the island. It contains 82 members, including 50 who are elected by popular vote and 20 who are women elected by proportional representation. The remainder of the seats are filled by appointment. Members of both legislatures serve five-year terms.

Political Landscape

Despite lifting a ban on opposition political parties, the Revolutionary Party (CCM—Chama Cha Mapinduzi) remains very powerful and has maintained its ruling status. Political parties based on geographical, religious, or ethnic identities remain forbidden. In part because of this prohibition, Tanzania has enjoyed relative political peace and stability.

The union between Zanzibar and the mainland has been mostly successful, although the Arab majority on Zanzibar desires more control over the island's economy and politics. Zanzibar maintains a semiautonomous status and elects its own president and legislature to handle internal affairs. The transition of Tanzania's capital from Dar es Salaam to the more centrally located Dodoma began in 1974 in order to more easily provide service to other parts of the country. This move was officially completed in 1996, when the National Assembly began meeting in Dodoma. However, many government offices, including all ministries and foreign embassies, remain in Dar es Salaam. Dar es Salaam also remains the country's largest city and commercial capital.

In 2014, Tanzania's ruling party passed a draft constitution despite claims by opposition parties that the drafting process excluded them and that the proposed constitution lacked national consensus. The draft includes measures designed to bolster gender equality, including greater access to land for

women. However, after voter-registration delays, a referendum on the draft constitution was postponed indefinitely in 2015.

Government and the People

Government corruption and press restrictions (especially in Zanzibar) are a concern for many, though freedom of religion and speech (for those outside of the media) are generally respected. CCM electoral victories are often accompanied by accusations of election tampering. The voting age is 18. Save for unusually low voter turnout in 2010, Tanzania usually shows a voter turnout that approaches or exceeds 65 percent. The rights of women, LGBTQ individuals, and refugees are generally not protected in practice. Though women have the right to vote, many in Zanzibar fear voting for candidates their husbands do not support, which may lead a husband to divorce his wife or cast her out of their home.

Economy

Although only about 15 percent of Tanzania's land is suitable for cultivation, agriculture employs 67 percent of the population and accounts for roughly a fourth of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Key exports include coffee, cashew nuts, and cotton. Tanzania also produces gold, diamonds, and other gems. Tourism is another key and growing industry, with the nation's wildlife and natural beauty its primary attractions. Zanzibar's economy historically depended almost entirely on the export of cloves, but tourism has become the main source of income and has contributed to economic growth over the past several years. Major offshore gas deposits have been found and continue to be developed.

Tanzania had a socialist economy for many years after independence, but economic liberalization beginning in the late 1980s encouraged private investment and the creation of new export products. However, continued reforms are needed in order to boost economic performance, as Tanzania ranks among the lowest countries in the world in terms of per capita GDP. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other lenders have provided substantial loans to reduce poverty. Corruption still hampers the economy, and a scandal involving the country's public energy sector in 2014 caused foreign donors to freeze about \$500 million in aid to the government. International funding continues to be an issue as key donors have expressed concern regarding authoritarian rule, LGBTQ rights, civil rights, and other issues. Progress has also been hindered by droughts and flood damage. The currency is the Tanzanian *shilling* (TZS).

Transportation and Communications

Most roads, especially in the rural and suburban interior, are not paved; neither are the runways of most of Tanzania's airports. People often travel in *dala dalas* (14-seater vans), on foot, or by bicycle, and they may carry loads with donkeys or oxen. Three-wheeled vehicles called *bajajis* and motorcycle taxis called *boda bodas* are also popular forms of transport. Buses and taxis are available in cities, especially in Dar es Salaam. Taxi fare is negotiated in advance. Trains and buses run between major cities. Between smaller towns, one can ride a small truck or van that has been converted into a

passenger vehicle or ride a *dala dala*. Few Tanzanians own cars. Traffic moves on the left side of the road. Ferries are a popular way to travel between mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, though they are sometimes overcrowded, which occasionally results in fatal accidents. In 2016, a Chinese-funded bridge opened in Dar es Salaam that connects the city center to neighborhoods that lie a short distance across Indian Ocean waters, offering an alternative to ferries for many residents.

Telephone landlines are sparse in rural areas; however, cellular phone networks are spreading. The internet is increasingly available in urban areas. Most Tanzanians who access the internet do so from their phones. Newspapers and broadcast media are closely regulated by the government. There are state-owned radio stations in addition to numerous private ones. State-sponsored television began in 2001, and a few privately owned television stations operate as well. Zanzibar, which has a media policy separate from the mainland, also has several state-run and privately owned radio and television stations.

Education

Structure

Children may begin pre-primary school at age six. Free and compulsory education begins at age seven with primary school, which lasts for seven years. Progression to the next grade is based on passing the national examination for that grade level. Basic secondary school lasts four years and is also free and compulsory. An additional two years of upper advanced secondary school are optional and pursued by those planning on pursuing higher education. In recent years, enforcement has toughened on laws in place to punish parents who do not send their children to school without valid reasons to keep them at home.

Access

Education is highly regarded, but the education system is weak. In 2002, Tanzania abolished tuition at the primary level and saw a significant increase in enrollment rates. In 2016, the government made basic secondary education free as well. Though added years of free, compulsory education has increased access, classroom sizes have ballooned, and Tanzania struggles to keep up with higher enrollment rates.

Most schools are public, and the few private schools that are available are generally located in urban areas. Time in the classroom often comes at the expense of time in the fields, a sacrifice that many families cannot afford to make. Girls are valued at home because of their domestic roles, so boys are more likely to get an education. Additionally, girls who become pregnant are banned by the government from returning to school. As a result of these factors, there is a disparity between the male and female adult literacy rates. Illiteracy is also more common in rural areas, where access to schools is more limited than in urban areas. Those rural children who do attend school often must walk many miles to get there and back, many times in the dark. Volunteer teachers from the United States, Europe, and Australia are commonly found in classrooms helping native teachers, especially in rural schools.

School Life

In the public school system, the main language of instruction at the primary level is Swahili but changes to English in secondary school. Some teachers use a mix of English and Swahili referred to as "Swanglish." Parents who can afford private education for their children, which emphasizes English beginning with the early grades, choose that option for their children in order to better prepare them for secondary classes taught in English. Science subjects are emphasized, as the country has a shortage of engineers, doctors, and pharmacists. Girls and boys have equal access to all school subjects. Older teachers may be less friendly with their students than younger teachers, though all teachers are generally treated respectfully by students. Cheating is becoming more common, as more people believe that it is merely a shortcut to success, though usually students are very hard working. Corporal punishment is common. Because of the distance many students must travel to school from their homes, most secondary schools offer boarding. All students wear uniforms.

Higher Education

Higher education is available at the University of Dar es Salaam, Mzumbe University, the University of Dodoma, Sokoine University of Agriculture, and other technical training institutions. While higher education is becoming more common, the high cost of tuition and fees still prevents most Tanzanians from enrolling.

Health

In rural areas, malaria, sleeping sickness, schistosomiasis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, dengue fever, and intestinal parasitic diseases are common. Quality medical care is generally only available in large cities, with the exception of a few remote, well-run mission hospitals. Rural clinics are available, but they often lack trained personnel and sufficient medical supplies. Tanzania has very few doctors. Cholera epidemics, which can kill scores of people and infect hundreds more, highlight the need for clean water, health education, and better medical care. Bad weather and crop failures put people at risk of malnutrition. About 5 percent of adults ages 15 to 49 have HIV/AIDS.

AT A GLANCE

Contact Information

Embassy of Tanzania, 1232 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20037; phone (202) 939-6125; website www.tanzaniaembassy-us.org. Tanzanian Tourist Board, website www.tanzaniatourism.go.tz/en.

Country and Development Data

Capital	Dodoma
Population	63,852,892 (rank=23)
Area (sq. mi.)	365,754 (rank=30)
Area (sq. km.)	947,300
Human Development Index	160 of 189 countries
Gender Inequality Index	146 of 162 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$2,600
Adult Literacy	86% (male); 78% (female)
Infant Mortality	30.87 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	64 (male); 69 (female)
Currency	Tanzanian Shilling

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