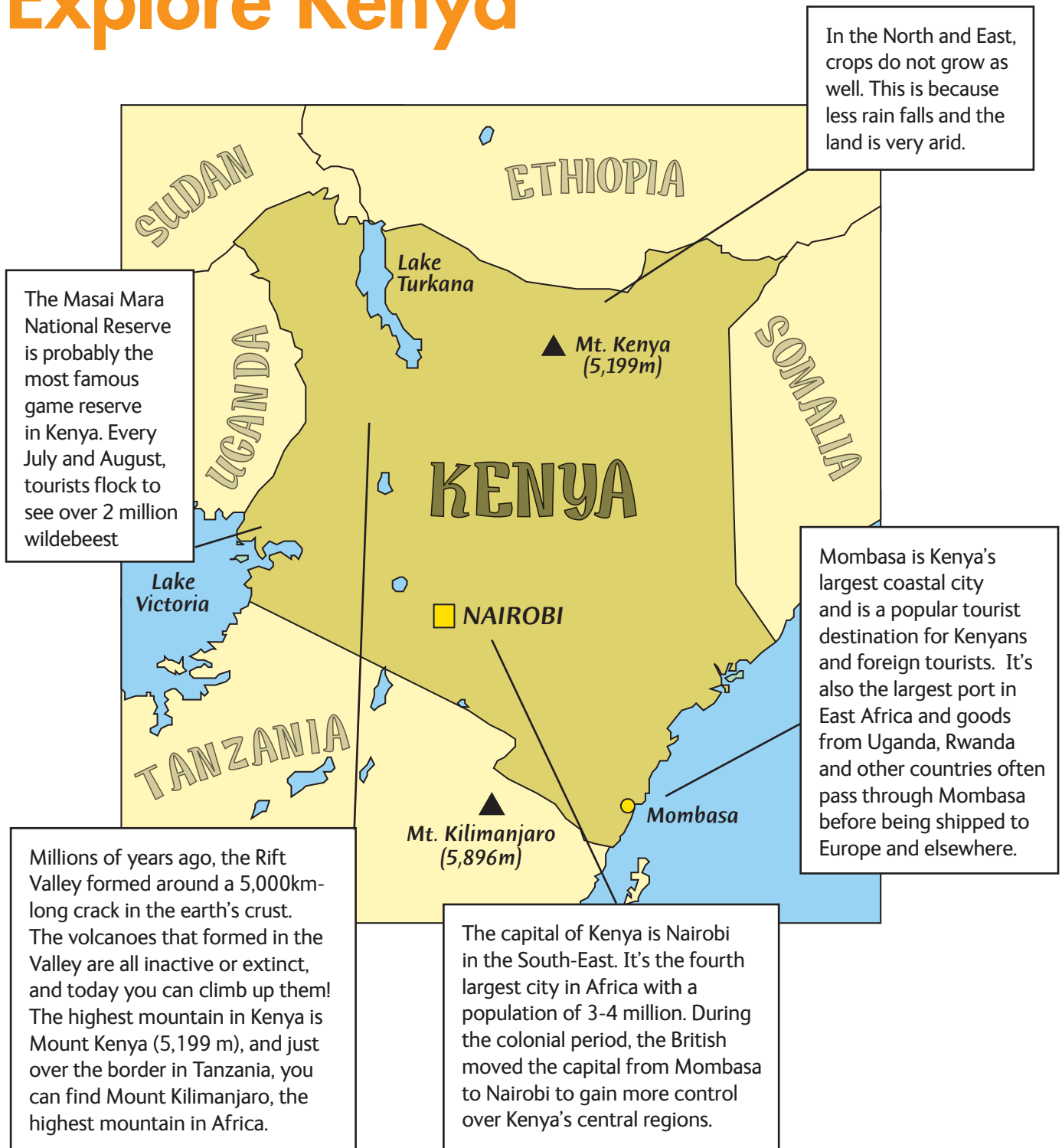


Makutano Junction

A Kenyan TV soap opera

Additional Resource |

Explore Kenya



	Kenya	UK
Population	31.1 million	60.6 million
Life expectancy	55 years	79 years
GDP per capita	£754	£19,500
Infant mortality (per 1,000 births)	65	5

Flag



Here is the Kenyan flag. The colours are symbolic: black represents the people of Kenya: red represents the blood shed during the country's struggle for independence; green represents the land and the white represents peace. The shield in the centre symbolises Kenya's pride and cultural heritage.

Money

The currency in Kenya is shillings (KSh). There are about KSh120 in £1, so a shilling is worth a bit less than 1p. The slang for a shilling is a 'bob'.

Languages

The official languages of Kenya are Swahili (or Kiswahili) and English, although there are over 60 languages spoken in the country! Most of these are African languages.

Here is some basic Swahili to get you started:

Jambo	<i>Hello</i>
Habari?	<i>How are you?</i>
Mzuri Sana	<i>I'm fine</i>
Unasema Kiingereza?	<i>Do you speak English?</i>
Asante	<i>Thank you</i>

National Anthem

The Kenyan national anthem was chosen in 1963. The tune comes from a traditional song which mothers in the Pokomo region sing to their children.

There are two sets of words; one in *Swahili* and one in *English*. You can listen to the Kenyan national anthem by clicking on this link: <http://www.national-anthems.net/real/KE>

Kiswahili:

*Ee Mungu nguvu yetu
Ilete baraka kwetu
Haki iwe ngao na mlinzi
Natukae na undugu
Amani na uhuru
Raha tupate na ustawi.
Amkeni ndugu zetu
Tufanye sote bidii
Nasi tujitoe kwa nguvu
Nchi yetu ya Kenya
Tunayoipenda
Tuwe tayari kuilinda
Natujenge taifa letu
Ee, ndio wajibu wetu
Kenya istahili heshima
Tuungane mikono
Pamoja kazini
Kila siku tuwe na shukrani*

English:

*O God of all creation
Bless this our land and nation
Justice be our shield and defender
May we dwell in unity
Peace and liberty
Plenty be found within our borders.
Let one and all arise
With hearts both strong and true
Service be our earnest endeavour
And our homeland of Kenya
Heritage of splendour
Firm may we stand to defend.
Let all with one accord
In common bond united
Build this our nation together
And the glory of Kenya
The fruit of our labour
Fill every heart with thanksgiving.*

History

Rift Valley, which runs through the centre of Kenya, is known as “the cradle of mankind” as a result of the now famous archaeological digs by the Leakey family. They discovered several hominoid skulls, one of which is thought to be 3.5 million years old.

Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula and Shirazis from Persia began to visit the coast of Kenya from the 8th century AD onwards. They traded and settled there, over the years, bringing glassware, textiles and wine in return for ivory, slaves and rhino horn.

The British constructed a railway from Mombasa to Uganda and white settlers began to move into the fertile highlands north of Nairobi in search of farming land in the late 19th century. Much of this land originally belonged to either the Maasai tribe or the Kikuyu tribe; the Kikuyu nursed a particular grievance against the British and the resulting alienation of land.

In 1953 a herd of white farmer’s cattle were killed, followed shortly by a massacre of 23 Kikuyu thought to be loyal to the British colonial regime.

The Mau Mau rebellion had begun. The British defeated the Mau Mau by 1956, but over 13,500 Africans had died and just over 100 Europeans, with a further 20,000 Kikuyus thrown into detention camps. Jomo Kenyatta (a Kikuyu) was arrested and put on trial for allegedly being a Mau Mau leader and sentenced to seven years in a remote jail in Turkana (N.W. Kenya).

Independence came to Kenya on 12 December, 1963 with Kenyatta as the first president. He died in 1978 and under his rule, Kenya was to become one of the most stable and prosperous African nations.

Tourism

Tourism in Kenya has been increasing rapidly since the 1960s and is now the country’s biggest export. Most tourists come from Germany although the UK isn’t far behind. The most popular tourist destinations are the coastal resorts and safari parks.

While the growth of tourism has been good news for Kenya’s economy, its wildlife and ecosystems are suffering. The main problems are:

- Overcrowding in the game parks and building on animals’ natural habitat
- Visitors harassing wildlife in the parks (by driving too close and frightening them)
- Tourists dropping litter, endangering animals and the environment
- Poaching; although hunting is illegal, there is still a black market for ivory and animal skin

Many Kenyans feel that they aren’t reaping the benefits of tourism. The majority of foreign visitors stay in the ‘tourist traps’ around Mombasa and the game reserves, and few venture into the central and northern regions. They often feel that tourists are only interested in the beaches and animals, and don’t want to get to know the Kenyan people or learn about life in Kenya.

Tribes

There are more than 70 tribal groups in Kenya. The tribe most people have heard of is the Maasai, but this tribe actually makes up no more than 5% of the population. 20% of Kenyans are descended from the Kikuyu tribe. There are also many Kenyans of Asian origin, whose ancestors were brought here as workers by the British in the 19th century.

Nowadays, tribal boundaries are less clear due to migration and urbanisation, but cultural heritage is still important to Kenyans. Different tribes have different traditions and beliefs, especially when it comes to issues like religion and FGM.

Sports, Music and Culture

Football is very popular in Kenya, and Premiership games draw big crowds. Some of the characters in Makutano Junction support Mathare United, a team based in Nairobi. Many Kenyans have a favourite English football club too.

Kenya is famous for producing top-class long-distance runners. Catherine Ndereba broke the women’s marathon world record in Chicago in 2001 and took silver in the marathon at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Kenyans love music and Nairobi has a vibrant music scene. Lingala (an upbeat style of dance music with

guitars) is very popular, as well as benga music. Hip-hop and gangster rap can be heard all over Nairobi, with American artists like 50 Cent inspiring homegrown talent like Emmanuel Jal, who performed at Live8 in 2005. Dancehall is also popular; Sean Paul regularly performs in Kenya.

Kenya has produced many famous people; politicians, writers, artists, runners, athletes to name a few. Here's a small fact file on three famous Kenyans ...



Wangari Maathai was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and was praised by the awarding committee as a “source of inspiration for everyone in Africa fighting for sustainable development, democracy and peace”.

She is a leading campaigner in Kenya for the environment, democracy and the rights of women. In 1977 she began an organisation – primarily of women – known as the Green Belt Movement which aimed to curtail the devastating effects of deforestation in Kenya – something for which she was arrested several times. In the late 1980s she thwarted government plans to build a prominent skyscraper in the middle of Nairobi's main park.

Her campaign mobilised poor women to plant some 30 million trees in Kenya; her desire was to produce sustainable wood for fuel use, as well as to combat soil erosion.

Her former husband, whom she divorced in the late 1980s, was said to have remarked that she was “too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn and too hard to control”.



Jomo Kenyatta

spent most of his life campaigning for Kenya's independence.

His efforts cost him seven years in prison when he was convicted - in a trial now generally regarded as rigged - of being a member of the rebel Mau Mau group by the British colonists in Kenya.

But the African Union leader kept up his fight on his release in 1960 and finally led his country to Independence in 1963. He was made Kenya's first President and remained in office until his death on 22 August 1978.

Kenyatta - the name he adopted in the 1920s - is Swahili for “the light of Kenya” and he is widely seen as the founding father of the nation.



Ngugi wa

Thiong'o has been widely regarded as East Africa's most influential writer. He was born James

Ngugi in 1938 in British ruled Kenya. He attended a mission school and became a devout Christian. He later rejected Christianity and in 1976 changed his name from James Ngugi - which he regarded as a sign of colonial influence – to Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

His criticism of colonial rule, Christianity and post colonial abuses earned him as much admiration from the public as trouble from the Kenyan authorities. In the late 1970s he announced that he would not write in English any more and would concentrate on writing books in his mother-tongue, Kikuyu, and Ki-Swahili.

His best known novels include “Weep Not, Child” (1964) – the first novel in English to be published by an East African – “The River Between” (1965) and “A Grain of Wheat” (1967).