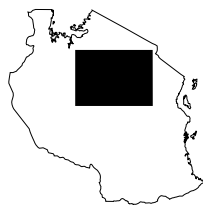


Central Tanzania

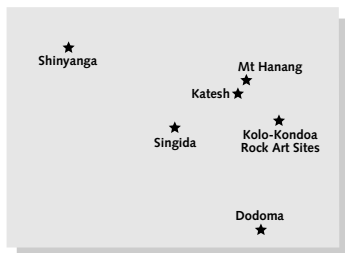


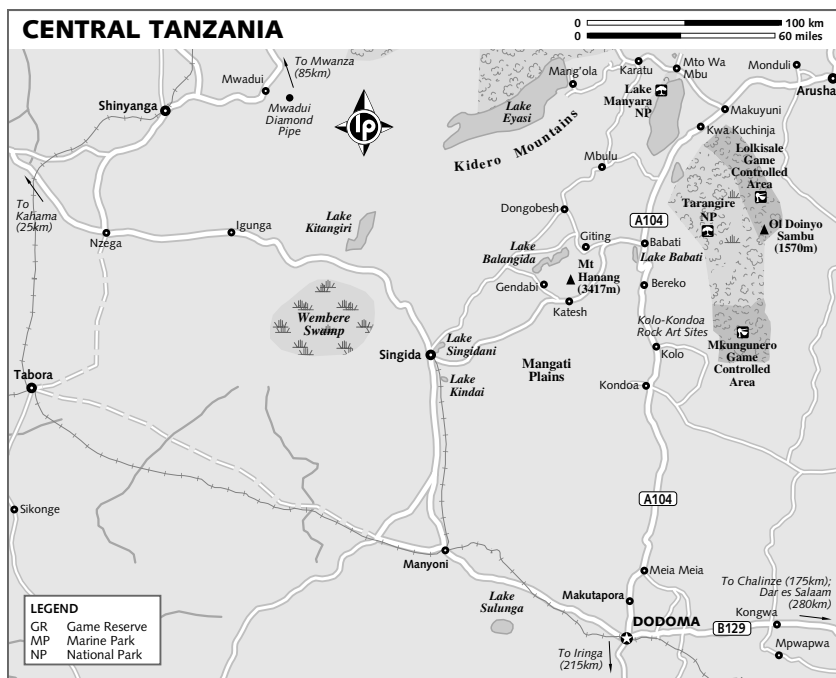
Well off most tourist itineraries, central Tanzania has long gotten a bad rap. Its semi-arid climate and lack of permanent rivers discouraged early settlement. More recently, crowds have stayed away due in part to a terrible (albeit now improving) road network. But the region has long historical roots – some of Tanzania’s earliest peoples were at home here – and for hardy travellers looking to head off the beaten path, it offers several attractions. Prime among these are the enigmatic Kolo-Kondoa rock art paintings - now a Unesco World Heritage Site. Mt Hanang is another draw, as Tanzania’s fourth-highest peak and gateway to the colourful Barabaig and other local tribes. Dodoma – Tanzania’s legislative capital and seat of the Bunge (parliament) – makes an amenable stop, with good facilities and a paved road link to Dar es Salaam. Well northwest are Singida, with its pretty lakes, and the gold – and diamond-mining areas around Shinyanga.

Central Tanzania’s main appeal, however, is the window it offers on areas little-touched by visitors, and its constantly changing panoramas. South of Lake Victoria, the green, open landscapes of Usukuma (home of the Sukuma people), with small lakes, egrets, long-horned zebu cattle and round, thatched Sukuma-style houses, give way to drier, baobab-studded tracts around Shinyanga and then the countryside around Singida, notable for its massive boulders, lakes and water birds. Dodoma itself is flat, arid and in part treeless, but to the north, the terrain becomes densely wooded and hillier, opening to beautiful vistas around Kondoa. Further north, around Babati, are lush farmlands edged by the soaring wall of the Rift Valley escarpment. If you’re prepared to rough things with transport and accommodation, you’ll undoubtedly have a memorable time here.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visiting the enigmatic **Kolo-Kondoa rock art sites** (p236)
- Enjoying the comparative creature comforts of **Dodoma** (opposite), and getting a glimpse of its new parliament building
- Getting to know the Barabaig and other peoples around **Mt Hanang** (p236)
- Experiencing the colourful **mnada** (auction/market; p236) near Katesh
- Relishing travel completely off the beaten path in **Singida** (p239) or **Shinyanga** (p238)





Getting There & Around

There are flights between Dodoma and Arusha, and sometimes between Dodoma and Dar es Salaam on Coastal Aviation, and Precision Air stops in Shinyanga on some of its flights in and out of Mwanza. Otherwise, all travel in central Tanzania is by road – generally rough, although the network is slowly being improved. The Dodoma to Arusha trunk road has been recently graded in part, and paving work is underway between Nzega, Singida and Dodoma. From Nzega to Shinyanga and on to Mwanza is also paved. Buses run on all major routes; allow plenty of time, and expect the occasional breakdown.

DODOMA

☎ 026 / pop 150,000

Arid Dodoma sits in not-so-splendid isolation in the geographic centre of the country, at a height of about 1100m. Although the town was located along the old caravan route that connected Lake Tanganyika and Central Africa with the sea, it remained little more than a large village until the construc-

tion of the Central Line railway just after the turn of the 20th century.

Since 1973 Dodoma has been Tanzania's official capital and headquarters of the ruling CCM (Chama Cha Mapinduzi) party. According to the original plan, the entire government was to move to Dodoma by the mid-1980s and the town was to be expanded to ultimately encompass more than 300,000 residents, all living in smaller independent communities set up along the lines of the *ujamaa* (familyhood) village. The plans proved unrealistic for a variety of reasons, including a lack of any sort of viable economic base and an insufficient water supply, and have therefore been abandoned. Today, although the legislature meets in Dodoma – hence the periodic profusion of 4WDs along its dusty streets – Dar es Salaam remains the unrivalled economic and political centre of the country.

There's little reason to come to Dodoma, but if you find yourself here it's not a bad place to spend a day or two. With its grandiose street layout and the imposing architecture of many church and government buildings – all sharply contrasting with the slow-paced

reality of daily life – it's easy to get the feeling that the town is dressed in clothes that are several sizes too big.

Because Dodoma has so many government buildings, photography is prohibited in most areas of town.

Orientation

From the bus stand, the main (Dar es Salaam) road heads west into the centre of town where it meets Kuu St at a large roundabout. Just south of here are the railway tracks, after which everything turns to small dusty lanes. To the north, a warren of small avenues runs off Kuu St into the busiest part of town, with the market and lots of shops. Further north is the airfield, and to the north and east are several large and rather bare residential areas and a few hotels.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

RAL Internet Café (Kuu St; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am–9pm Mon–Sat) Just north of the main roundabout.

MONEY

CRDB (Kuu St) ATM (Visa card only).

NBC (Kuu St) Changes cash and has an ATM (Visa card only).

TanPay/Speed Cash (Dar es Salaam Rd) ATM (Visa card and – soon – MasterCard); opposite the Jamatini *dalla-dalla* (minibus) stand.

POST

Main post office (Railway St; ☎ 8am–6pm) Just west of the train station.

Sights & Activities

The rather forlorn **Museum of Geosciences** (Nyumba ya Mayonyesho ya Madini; Kikuyu St; adult/child Tsh500/100; ☎ 8am–3.30pm Mon–Fri) contains rock samples and geological information on the entire country, and is worth a stop if you are geologically inclined. It's inside the compound of the Ministry of Energy & Minerals, behind New Dodoma Hotel.

There's a small swimming pool at **Climax Club** (admission Tsh3000; ☎ 10am–10pm), about 2.5km west of the city centre, and a cleaner, nicer pool at New Dodoma Hotel (Tsh3500 for nonguests).

Lion Rock, which overlooks Dodoma from the northeast, makes a decent hike (about 45 minutes to the top). There have been some muggings there, so don't take any valuables and go in a group. To get to the base, ask any

dalla-dalla driver heading out on the Arusha road to drop you nearby, or take a taxi (about Tsh2500). The enticing-looking hill to the southwest of town near the swimming pool is off limits because of the nearby prison.

If you're intrigued by religious architecture, Dodoma has several places of interest, including the **Anglican church** in the town centre, the large **Lutheran cathedral** opposite, the **Ismaïli mosque** nearby and the enormous **Catholic cathedral** just west along the railroad tracks.

The **Bunge** (Parliament) is housed in a beautiful new building on the eastern edge of town just off the Dar es Salaam road and is well worth a look, although it was temporarily closed to the public when this book was researched. If public access resumes, you'll need to bring your passport along; otherwise, check out the informative www.parliament.go.tz for some photos. (Photography of both the exterior and interior is strictly prohibited.)

Dodoma is the centre of Tanzania's tiny wine industry, and there are vineyards throughout the surrounding area that were originally started by Italian missionaries in the early 20th century. Most of what is produced is for church use, and the commercially available vintage won't win awards any time soon. However, it's possible to visit some of the wineries to see the production process. The closest one to Dodoma is **Tanganyika Vineyards Company**, about 2km southeast of town off the Dar es Salaam road.

Dodoma is also a good springboard to Kolo (180km north) and Kondoa, and the area's centuries-old **rock paintings** (p236).

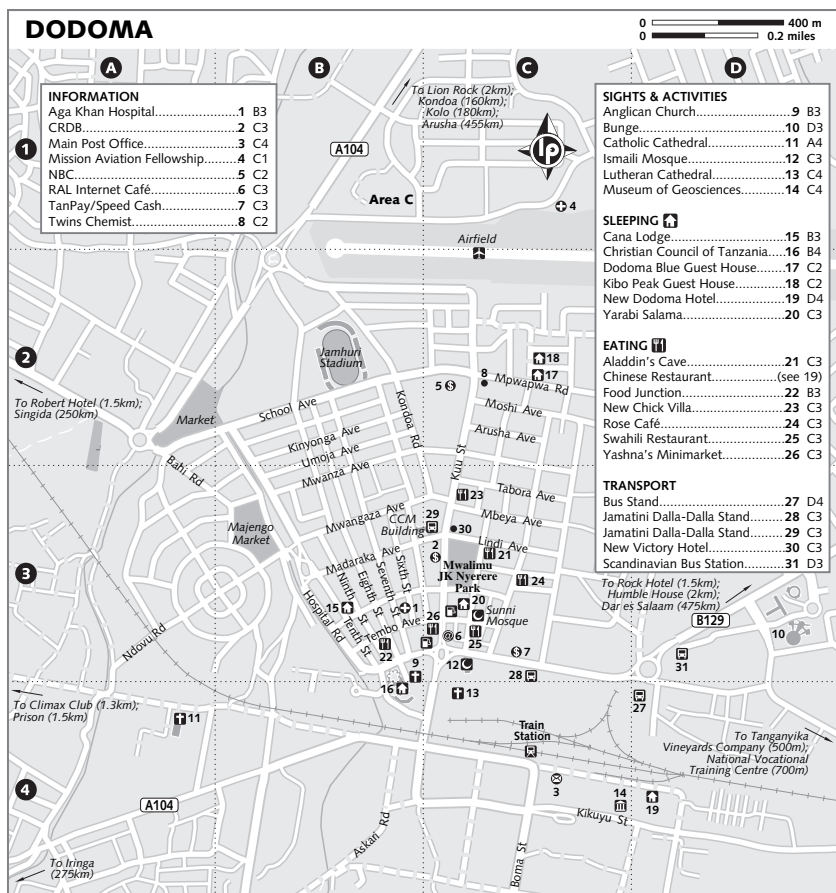
Sleeping

Water supplies are erratic, so expect bucket baths at the cheaper hotels. Also, hotels fill up completely whenever parliament is in session, so don't be surprised if you need to try several before finding a room.

BUDGET

Yarabi Salama (r without bathroom Tsh5000) This cheapest recommendable option near the bus stand has very basic twin-bedded rooms with nets. It's about a 10-minute walk west of the bus stand and is often full.

Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT; s/tw/ste Tsh6000/10,000/12,000) This is the most convenient budget lodging in town, with a central location (at the main roundabout next to the Anglican church,



and an easy walk from the bus stand), no-frills rooms with mosquito nets, and buckets of hot water on request for bathing. Breakfast costs extra (about Tsh2000); other meals can be arranged with advance notice.

Kibo Peak Guest House (☎ 026-232 2902; d without bathroom Tsh7000, s with/without TV Tsh12,000/10,000) This place has clean, reasonable-value rooms with fan and net, and an almost exclusively male clientele. It's about 1.2km north of the main roundabout off Mpwapwa Rd – about a 20-minute walk from the bus stand.

Dodoma Blue Guest House (☎ 026-232 2085; Mpwapwa Rd; r without bathroom Tsh8000, s Tsh12,000) Just by Kibo Peak, this place has spotless, good-value rooms with fan, most with either twin beds or one larger bed. No food available.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

National Vocational Training Centre (VETA; ☎ 026-232 2181; s without bathroom Tsh8500, s/d Tsh13,000/17,000) A good alternative to the standard hotel scene, with simple, clean rooms, professional staff and a slow restaurant. It's set in pleasant grounds about 2km east of the centre off the Dar es Salaam road, and is frequently full. Meals are available from Tsh4000.

Humble House (☎ 026-235 2261, 0754-093302; Area E; s/d Tsh13,000/15,000; ☑) This B&B-style place run by the Anglican church offers spotless good-value rooms (some with Western-style sit-down toilets, others with the squat version, and two sharing a bathroom), a small garden, and lunch and dinner on request.

There are also four family apartments available for long-term rentals (one-month minimum, Tsh188,000). It's mainly an option if you have your own transport or don't mind paying for a taxi, as it's buried away in a maze of dirt lanes in Area E (also known as Ipagala), about 2.5km east of town off the Dar es Salaam road.

Canal Lodge (☎ 026-232 1199; Ninth St; s/d from Tsh15,000/22,000, ste Tsh25,000) Spotless and small rooms, plus the inexpensive Galilaya Restaurant and an internet café next door.

New Dodoma Hotel (Dodoma Rock Hotel; ☎ 026-232 1641; reservation_newdodomahotel@yahoo.com; Railway St; s/d with fan Tsh45,000/60,000, with air-con from Tsh65,000/80,000; 🍴 📺 📺) The former Railway Hotel, now completely renovated and Dodoma's most upmarket option, has a large inner courtyard, pleasant, good-value rooms – the suites face the main street and are noisier than the standard rooms – and a very good Chinese restaurant.

There is a plethora of other midrange hotels, all with clean, bland rooms with mosquito net, TV and bathroom, and all remarkably similar in price and standards. They include the following:

Robert Hotel (☎ 026-230 0306/2252, 0784-335629; s without bathroom from Tsh8000, r with air-con Tsh20,000-40,000) In the Kizota area, about 3km west of town on the Singida road. There's a large poster of Switzerland dominating the reception to remind you of where you aren't.

Rock Hotel (☎ 026-232 0027; rockyhotel2003@yahoo.com; s/d Tsh20,000/25,000) About 2km east of town on the Dar es Salaam road.

Eating

Of the hotel restaurants, the Chinese restaurant at New Dodoma Hotel is well worth a stop, offering delicious food and reasonably prompt service. Meals average about Tsh6000.

Aladdin's Cave (snacks Tsh500-1500; 🕒 9.30am-1pm Mon, 9.30am-1pm & 3.30-8.30pm Tue-Sun) Great milkshakes, soft-serve ice cream, yogurt, apples and other snacks. It's one block east of Kuu St, north of the Ismaili mosque.

Food Junction (Tembo Ave; meals from Tsh1000; 🕒 8.30am-3.30pm & 6.45-10pm Mon-Sat) This popular spot for budget meals serves chicken and rice, and various Indian snacks. It's near the main roundabout, two blocks west of Kuu St.

New Chick Villa (Kuu St; meals from Tsh1000; 🕒 10am-6.30pm) Another local favourite, with the usual assortment of snacks, chicken and chips.

Rose Café (meals from Tsh1500; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Good, cheap local meals. It's around the corner from Aladdin's Cave.

Swahili Restaurant (meals from Tsh1500; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Another good local-style place, with a wide selection of inexpensive Indian snacks and standard fare, including yogurt and a few vegetarian dishes. It's near the roundabout and one block north of the Dar es Salaam road.

Yashna's Minimarket (Kuu St) For self-catering try this place behind the petrol station near the main roundabout.

Shopping

Dodoma is noted for its crafts, including *marimbas* (musical instruments played with the thumb), *vibuyu* (carved gourds), wooden stools and other items made by the local Gogo people. Sisal crafts are available from the prison to the west of town with an advance order.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Coastal Aviation flies daily between Dodoma and Arusha (US\$170), and occasionally has available seats on charters to Dar es Salaam (US\$325). The airfield is about 2km north of the main roundabout (Tsh1500 in a taxi).

BUS

The best connection to/from Dar es Salaam is with Scandinavian Express, which has daily departures in each direction at 9.30am (ordinary, Tsh10,000) and 11.15am (luxury, Tsh13,000), both taking six hours. Scandinavian buses depart from the terminal about 1km east of town along the Dar es Salaam road. There are several other daily buses to Dar es Salaam that depart from the main bus stand, with the last departure at about 11am.

To Iringa, there's a daily bus via Makatopora; for details see p284. Going via Chalinze (Urafiki and Shabiby lines) costs Tsh17,000.

To Kondoa (Tsh7000) and Kolo (Tsh10,000) – running along what is actually a section of the old Great North Rd connecting Cape Town and Cairo – Kings Cross and Satellite Coach depart daily at 6am, 10am and noon from the main bus stand. Bookings can be made at the bus stand or at New Victory Hotel, which is off Kuu St at the northern edge of Mwalimu JK Nyerere Park and diagonally opposite the CCM building.

HUKWE ZAWOSE

Hukwe Zawose, a member of central Tanzania's Gogo tribe and one of the country's most famous musicians, was born in the 1930s in Bwigili village outside Dodoma. Although he was known locally for his talents, his star only really began to take off after he was invited to join the national art and dance company that was a predecessor to the College of Arts (Chuo cha Sanaa; p157) in Bagamoyo. In 1980, Zawose relocated to Bagamoyo, where he taught music and further honed his unique style, which features an exceptionally wide vocal range and playing of the *ilimba* (thumb piano), *zeze* (one-stringed violin) and other traditional Gogo instruments. Zawose first appeared at the WOMAD world music festival in 1985, and a long string of international performances and recordings followed, together with his Chibite performing group. Zawose died in 2003 from complications of AIDS, but his legacy is being kept alive through Chibite, which still performs regularly internationally and at the Chuo cha Sanaa, and by the **Zawose Foundation** (www.zawose.org).

To Singida, there are daily direct buses (Tsh15,000, five to six hours), many of which come from Dar es Salaam and are full by the time they reach Dodoma (about noon). On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, buses originating in Dodoma depart at 8.30am for Singida.

To Arusha, there are several lines (including Shabiby and Urafiki) going via Chalinze for Tsh18,000 to Tsh22,000.

The *dalla-dalla* stand, known as Jamatini, is on the Dar es Salaam road just east of the Ismaili mosque.

TRAIN

Dodoma lies on the Central Line to Kigoma and Mwanza (it's currently the start and end of both routes until service between Dodoma and Dar es Salaam resumes), and there's also a spur line between Dodoma and Singida; see p361 for more details.

BABATI

☎ 027

The lively market town of Babati is set in fertile countryside along the edge of the Rift Valley escarpment, about 175km southwest of Arusha. It's the main jumping-off point for Mt Hanang climbs and for travel to Singida and beyond along the southern loop via Nzega and Shinyanga to Mwanza and Lake Victoria. Flanking Babati to the southwest is the tranquil **Lake Babati**, fringed by tall reeds and home to hippos and water birds.

Information

There are internet connections at **Rainbow Internet Café** (per hr Tsh2000; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat), behind Motel Paa Paa, and at **Huddinge** (per hr

Tsh2000; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat), which is signposted from the main road at the southern end of town. The National Microfinance bank on the main road changes major currencies (cash only).

The **Cultural Tourism Program office** (☎ 027-253 1088, 0784-397477), next to Kahembe's Guest House, can organise Hanang climbs and trips with local fishers on the lake.

Sleeping

Maitsa Executive Guest House (r with/without bathroom Tsh6000/4000, with bathroom & TV Tsh8000) Maitsa offers simple but clean good-value rooms, each with one large bed and net; there's no food available. It's a five-minute walk from the bus stand, and just up from Kahembe's Guest House.

Kahembe's Guest House (☎ 027-253 1088, 0784-397477; kahembeculture@hotmail.com; s/d US\$15/25) Just across the large field in front of the bus stand, this good place has twin- and double-bedded rooms (the singles have one large-ish double bed) with reliable hot-water showers and TV. Full breakfast, complete with fruit and eggs, is included in the price.

Just off the main road in the town centre near the market area and bus stand are several no-frills places, including **Motel Paa Paa** (☎ 026-253 1111; r with/without bathroom Tsh5000/3000) and **PM Guest House** (s with/without bathroom Tsh5000/3000, tw without bathroom Tsh4000).

Eating

Abida Best Bites (meals from Tsh2000; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Abida is on the side street off the main road towards Dodoma that runs directly next to Dodoma Transport Hotel. It has curries, chips, *ugali* (a staple made from maize or

cassava flour, or both) and even a few vegetarian offerings, and is one of the few places open evenings.

Ango Garden Restaurant (Main Rd; meals Tsh4000; ☑ lunch) Behind the petrol station, this place offers local fare.

Getting There & Away

Mtei line buses run between Arusha and Babati, departing between 6am and 1pm (Tsh5000, 3½ to four hours, three daily). The 6am bus continues on to Kondoa (Tsh4000, about three hours from Babati to Kondoa). The last bus from Babati to Arusha departs at 4pm.

MT HANANG

The volcanic Mt Hanang (3417m) rises steeply above the surrounding plains about 180km southwest of Arusha. It's Tanzania's fourth-highest mountain, with a satisfying trek to the summit, but few visitors know of its existence. The surrounding area is home to a colourful array of ethnic groups, including the Barabaig, who still follow a traditional seminomadic lifestyle and are recognisable by their goatskin garments. Over the past few decades, they have been displaced from some of their lands by large-scale wheat-farming projects.

The most popular route to the top, and the easiest to organise, is the Jorodom Route, which begins in the town of **Katesh** on the mountain's southern side and can be done in one long day (with an additional day necessary for making arrangements). While a guide isn't strictly essential, it's recommended to go with one. This is best arranged through Kahembe's Trekking & Cultural Safaris (p46) in Babati, which is the best contact for doing anything around Hanang or Babati. It costs US\$120 per person for a two-day Hanang climb from Arusha, including Hanang forest reserve fees but excluding transport (nominal cost); email or stop at Kahembe's office in Babati first to organise things. If you're trekking independently, you can arrange a guide through the local municipality office (Idara ya Mkuu wa Ilaya) in Katesh for about Tsh5000 per day. However, don't go with any of the freelancers who hang around Katesh and Babati saying they're with Kahembe's or the municipality, as there have been several instances of travellers who have organised things on their own being taken part

way up the mountain and then relieved of their valuables.

For all trekking on the mountain you'll need to pay a US\$30 forest reserve fee per person per trip, plus a Tsh2500 village fee per person per trip for climbs on the Jorodom Route. If you're organising things on your own, both fees should be paid prior to the trek at the local municipality office. If you've organised your trek through Kahembe's, staff there will take care of paying the fees for you. The climbing route is described in Lonely Planet's *Trekking in East Africa* guidebook. Allow 10 to 12 hours for the return trek, and get an early start so you have most of the ascent behind you before the sun gets too high. Water supplies up high are unreliable; carry at least 4L with you (even with this you'll probably wish you had more).

Katesh is also known for its large **mnada** (market and auction) held on the 9th and 10th, and again on the 27th of each month. Maasai, Barabaig, Iraqw and other peoples from a wide surrounding area converge at the base of the mountain about a 10-minute walk from town (head out past the bank) to trade their wares. It's a great spot for purchasing everything from *shukas* (blankets) and Barabaig jewellery to cattle and sheep. Bargain hard, and watch out for pickpockets.

There are numerous basic guesthouses in Katesh, the best of which is **Colt** (☎ 027-253 0030; s/d Tsh6000/8000), just past the market, with hot water on request. Others to try include **Tip Top** (r Tsh10,000), near the bus stand, and with cold water only, and the more basic **Hanang View Guesthouse** (s/d Tsh2500/4000), which has nondescript rooms around a cement courtyard and shared bucket baths. None of the guesthouses serve food. For meals, try Kabwogi's, near the Lutheran church.

Mtei line buses from Arusha and Babati pass through Katesh on their way to Singida; the last bus to do this leaves Arusha at 9am. Otherwise, you'll need to spend a night in Babati and catch a bus to Katesh the next morning.

KOLO-KONDOA ROCK ART SITES

The district of Kondoa, especially around the tiny village of Kolo, lies at the centre of one of the most impressive – and most overlooked – collections of ancient rock paintings on the African continent. For anyone with a bent for the offbeat and tolerance for a bit of rugged

travel, the rock art sites make an intriguing and worthwhile detour.

The history of most of the paintings remains shrouded in mystery, with little known about either their artists or their age. While some of the paintings date back more than 3000 years, others are much more recent, probably not more than a few hundred years old. One theory maintains they were made by the Sandawe, who are distantly related linguistically to South Africa's San, a group also renowned for its rock art. Others say the paintings, particularly some of the more recent ones, were done by various Bantu-speaking peoples, who moved into the area at a later date.

The paintings, which are spread in a wide radius throughout the Irangi hills around Kondoa and beyond, range in colour from white to shades of red, orange and brown, and were probably done at least in part using hands and fingers, as well as brushes made of reeds or sticks. Some of the colours were probably made by mixing various pigments with animal fat to form crayons. The paintings contain stylised depictions of humans – often hunting, playing musical instruments or pursuing other activities – as well as various animals, notably giraffes and antelopes. Still others are unintelligible forms, perhaps early attempts at abstract art.

To visit, you'll first need to arrange a permit (Tsh2000) and a guide with the Department of Antiquities along the main road in Kolo. There are estimated to be between 150 and 300 sites, of which only a portion have been officially documented, and even fewer of which are realistically accessible to casual visitors. The closest sites – Kolo B1 (Munguni wa Kolo), B2 and B3, which are also among the most interesting – are spread out in the hills rising up near the seasonal and generally dry Kolo (Hembe) River about 9km northeast of Kolo. It's possible to cover most of this distance with a 4WD, except for the final rocky climb up to the sites. With more time and your own 4WD transport, the Fenga-Thawi complex of sites, scattered between 10km and 20km north and west of Kolo and east of the Bubu River, makes a rewarding complement to the Kolo B1–3 sites, though you'll need to allow at least two to three days to organise things and visit both of these areas.

It is possible to hire a vehicle in Kondoa, but it can be difficult to find a 4WD for a

reasonable price, so if you're interested in exploring more than the Kolo B1–3 sites (which can be reached with some effort in a 2WD with clearance during the dry season), it's best to arrange vehicle hire in advance.

Despite the recently elevated status of the rock art sites to a World Heritage Site, visitors are not exactly flocking here. Dodoma and Arusha are the logical jumping-off points for independent travellers, but for anything organised it can be difficult to find a safari operator in Arusha willing to sort things out for you. One to try for upmarket tours is **East African Safari & Touring Company** (www.eastafrican-safari.info). Budget-level visits can be arranged with Kahembe's Trekking & Cultural Safaris (p46; about US\$45 per person per day plus US\$120 for transport) or the energetic **Moshi Changai** (☎ 0784-948858; www.tanzaniaculturaltours.com), who runs reasonably priced visits to the main sites as well as a cultural tourism programme focused on the local Irangi people. You can contact Moshi directly or organise your visit through the Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) Tourist Information Centre in Arusha (p197); ask for the Kondoa-Rangi Cultural Tourism Program.

There's a basic but pleasant **camp site** (camping per person Tsh2000) near the Kolo (Hembe) river bed about 4km from Kolo off the road leading east from the main junction and the Antiquities office, for which you'll need to be fully equipped. Otherwise, the closest overnight base is Kondoa, 20km south, where there are numerous no-frills guesthouses (see p238).

Kolo is about 100km south of Babati and 275km southwest of Arusha. The best connections are from Babati, from where there are several buses daily to Kolo and on to Kondoa, 20km further on (Tsh4000 Babati to Kondoa). Alternatively, there's at least one direct bus daily between Arusha and Kondoa via Kolo, leaving Arusha at 6am (Tsh8000, six hours). Kolo can also be reached from Dodoma, 180km to the south; see p234.

KONDOA

☎ 026

This small, dusty district capital – centre of the Irangi people and a former stop along the old caravan route between the interior and the coast – is of interest nowadays almost exclusively as a springboard to visit the Kolo-Kondoa rock art sites (opposite). There's no

internet connection in town, and no ATM, although the local branch of NMB changes dollars and euros cash. Kondoa is about 3km off the main Babati–Dodoma road. En route into town is an old suspension bridge dating to German colonial days and a collection of old German buildings, now mostly used as government buildings.

Sleeping & Eating

New Planet (☎ 026-236 0357; s/d Tsh10,000/12,000, without bathroom Tsh8000/10,000), less than five minutes' walk from the bus stand, is the best place to stay. It has clean rooms with nets, fan and TV, buckets of hot water available on request and good meals at the attached **restaurant** (meals from Tsh3000). Just down the street, and under the same management, is **New Pluto Guest House** (r without bathroom Tsh4000), which has small, clean no-frills rooms.

Should these be booked out, **New Geneva in Africa** (r Tsh12,000) – with an array of large plastic giraffes and other animals out front – and **Sunset Beach Hotel** (r Tsh10,000) both have decent rooms and meals, though rooms at Sunset Beach tend to be on the noisy side on weekends and holidays thanks to a blaring TV in the bar area. Both are well signposted, but inconveniently located from the bus stand – Sunset Beach is at least a 15-minute walk past New Planet.

Getting There & Away

Kings Cross, Satellite and Machame Inv bus lines run daily along the rather rough road between Kondoa and Dodoma, departing Kondoa at 6am, 8am, 10am and 12.30pm (Tsh7000, four to six hours). From Kondoa to Kolo (Tsh3000, one hour) and on to Babati, departures are at 6am, 11am and 1pm. Hiring a taxi to the rock art sites (Kolo B1–3 sites) will cost from Tsh30,000 and can be arranged through New Planet.

SHINYANGA

☎ 028

The large, bustling and sprawling town of Shinyanga lies near the centre of an important mineral mining area and has boomed in recent years with the increase in diamond and gold mining in Tanzania. One of the world's largest diamond pipes, Mwadui, is signposted just a couple of kilometres off the main tarmac road about 30km north of town. After long operating at only a fraction

of capacity, it is once again taking off, with DeBeers having resumed operations here. Further south and west towards Geita are important gold-mining areas. If you have the time, you could investigate the **Minerals Museum** (Makumbusho ya Madini), signposted 3km from town.

The main tarmac road runs along the eastern edge of town, with the market, bus stand and guesthouse areas spreading westwards from here.

NBC (Mwanza Rd), along the main tarmac road just south of Shinyanga Motel, has an ATM. There's an **internet café** (Mwanza Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm Sat) next to the post office and just north of Shinyanga Motel.

Sleeping & Eating

Makoa Hotel (r downstairs/upstairs Tsh15,000/20,000) A new place with small, spotless rooms, all with net and TV, and a restaurant. It's diagonally opposite and one block in from the bus stand, and signposted near the Mohammed Trans booking office.

Mwoleka Hotel (☎ 028-276 2249; r Tsh15,000–25,000, ste Tsh40,000) A block up from Makoa Hotel, directly opposite and one block in from the bus stand, the Mwoleka is of similar standard, though rooms are older and not quite as good value.

Shinyanga Motel (☎ 028-276 2458/2369; r Tsh25,000, with air-con from Tsh30,000; ☎) Opposite the train station, this multistorey orange building has simple but clean and large twin-bedded rooms with nets, window screens, fan, TV and hot water. Food is available on order.

Karena Hotel (☎ 028-276 2205/3031; karenahotel ltd@yahoo.com; s/d from Tsh30,000/35,000, with air-con Tsh35,000/40,000, ste from Tsh45,000; ☎) Currently the most 'upmarket' place in town, this hotel has small but clean and reasonable tiled rooms and a restaurant. It's somewhat inconveniently located unless you have your own transport – about 1.5km from the bus stand, and off the dusty Old Shinyanga road near Kambarage Stadium.

For local-style meals, take a taxi to 'dara-jani' (Tsh1500) – the small bridge about 1km up from NBC bank along the main road. Just in from the roadside are small *bandas* (thatched-roof shelters with wooden or earthen walls) and tables and vendors selling grilled goat meat with chips and drinks. Pick out the cut you'd like, and they'll grill it while you wait.

Getting There & Away

Precision Air stops several times weekly in Shinyanga en route between Mwanza, Arusha and Dar es Salaam. Mohammed Trans goes daily to Tabora (Tsh5500, six hours, departing by 7am; book in advance) and Mwanza (Tsh3000, three hours, several departures between 6am and 8.30am). Departures are from its office, on a side street opposite the bus stand.

There are also daily buses to Kahama (four hours), from where you can get onward transport to Kigoma, or to Rwanda and Burundi via Nyankanazi junction.

NZEGA

☎ 026

This small junction town is where the roads to Kahama (and on to the Rwanda and Burundi borders) and Singida branch off from the Mwanza–Tabora road, which from Nzega southward turns from good tarmac into rough dirt (or mud, depending on the season). It's not a bad place to stop for the night, with a surprisingly decent guesthouse and a bustling market where you'll hear almost exclusively Nyamwezi and other local languages spoken, rather than Swahili.

Note that if you're driving from Shinyanga, there's an earlier turn-off towards Kahama at Tinde junction, north of Nzega. Onward transport has improved greatly in recent times – the road to Singida is now tarmac as far as Igunga and for a stretch from Singida westwards, with only one section in the middle still unpaved.

The best guesthouse is **Forest Guest House** (☎ 026-269 2555; r Tsh10,000–12,000, ste Tsh25,000). It's about 1km from the bus stand (Tsh1500 in a taxi), just off the old (unpaved) Kahama road and signposted. Rooms are clean and self-contained, and prices include breakfast. For inexpensive snacks and light meals, try **Garden Café** (snacks from Tsh250), around the corner from the market.

SINGIDA

☎ 026

It's difficult to think of a compelling reason to visit Singida, other than that it's completely off the beaten track, but if you're travelling between the Lake Victoria area and central Tanzania it makes a convenient stop-over,

and it's the overnight stop of choice for buses travelling between Arusha and Mwanza via the rugged southwestern loop.

The surrounding area is attractive, dotted with huge granite boulders and two lakes – Lake Singidani (just north of town) and the smaller Lake Kindai (to the south) – both of which attract flamingos, pelicans and many other water birds.

Thanks to all the through traffic and Singida's status as regional capital, the town has reasonably good infrastructure, including an **internet café** (per hr Tsh2000), just north of the market, and an NBC bank with an ATM (Visa card only), near the post office, on the northern side of town.

Sleeping & Eating

Stanley Hotel (☎ 026-250 2351; s/d without bathroom Tsh7000/9500, d Tsh16,000) This reliable place near the bus stand has small but quite decent rooms with TV and bathroom. The popular restaurant (meals about Tsh4000) serves up large portions of chicken and chips and other standard dishes.

J-Four (Legho) Motel (☎ 026-250 2526; r Tsh17,000) Quieter than the Stanley and also a reasonable choice, the J-Four has a small garden, a restaurant and rooms with nets and bathrooms. The main disadvantage is the location – it's on the northwestern edge of town, about 10 minutes on foot from the bus stand.

Shana Resort (snacks & meals from Tsh1000), just west of the market, has juices and local dishes, while Florida, nearby, has the usual assortment of snacks, chicken and fries.

Getting There & Away

There are at least two daily buses along the slowly improving route between Singida and Arusha (eight hours), and the trip can feasibly be done in a day, although it's a lot more enjoyable to break the trip at Babati or Katesh (for Mt Hanang). The road on to Nzega and Shinyanga is in the process of being tarmacked, and much improved; it is also traversed by daily buses. Daily buses also run between Singida and Dodoma (Tsh15,000, five to six hours), or you can take the train (p361). There's also a daily direct bus between Singida and Dar es Salaam via Dodoma, departing in both directions at about 6am (12 hours).

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