

# Lake Victoria

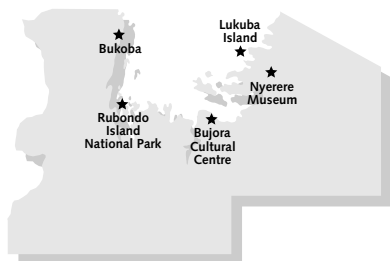


Lake Victoria is Africa's largest lake, and the second-largest freshwater lake in the world. While the Tanzanian portion sees only a trickle of tourists, the region holds many attractions for those who have a bent for the offbeat and who want to immerse themselves in the rhythms of local life. At the Bujora Cultural Centre near Mwanza, you can learn Sukuma dancing and get acquainted with the culture of Tanzania's largest tribal group. Further north at Butiama is the Nyerere museum, an essential stop for anyone interested in the great statesman. Musoma and Bukoba – both with a sleepy, waterside charm – are ideal places for getting a taste of lakeshore life. Bukoba is also notable as the heartland of the Haya people, who had one of the most highly developed early societies on the continent. Mwanza, to the southeast, is Tanzania's second largest city after Dar es Salaam, and an increasingly popular jumping off point for safaris into the Serengeti's Western Corridor. To the southwest is Rubondo Island National Park for bird-watching and relaxing.

The best way to explore the lake region is as part of a larger loop combining Uganda and/or Kenya with Tanzania's northern circuit via the western Serengeti, although you'll need time, and a tolerance for rough roads. While most accommodation is no-frills, there are a few idyllic getaways – notably on Rubondo and Lukuba Islands, and near Mwanza. Most locals you'll meet rely on fishing and small-scale farming for their living, although industry and commercial agriculture – especially coffee and cotton – are increasingly important.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Relaxing and birding in serene **Rubondo Island National Park** (p252)
- Getting into the swing of slow travel, while exploring **Bukoba** (p253) and the surrounding Haya heartland
- Learning about the Sukuma at the **Bujora Cultural Centre** (p250) near Mwanza
- Treating yourself to a night or two at **Lukuba Island Lodge** (p243), offshore from Musoma
- Delving into history at the **Nyerere Museum** (p242) at Butiama



## National Parks & Reserves

Rubondo Island National Park, in the south-western corner of Lake Victoria, is the region's only national park. The Serengeti's Western Corridor is covered in the Northern Tanzania chapter (p216). To the west of Lake Victoria are several game reserves, including Rumanyika Orugundu, Ibanda, Burigi and Biharamulo, although none are developed for tourism.

## Getting There & Around

Mwanza, Musoma and Bukoba all have airports, and there's an airstrip on Rubondo Island.

Tarmac roads connect Mwanza with Musoma and the Kenyan border; Mwanza with Shinyanga and Nzega; and Biharamulo with Bukoba and on to Mutukula and the Ugandan border. There's also an unsealed but well-maintained road from Bunda through the Serengeti's Western Corridor to Seronera. Otherwise, much of the road network is unsealed and rough, although roadworks are underway at a steady pace. Direct buses run along the main routes, and ferries connect Mwanza with Bukoba and with Ukerewe Island.

## LAKE VICTORIA FACTS

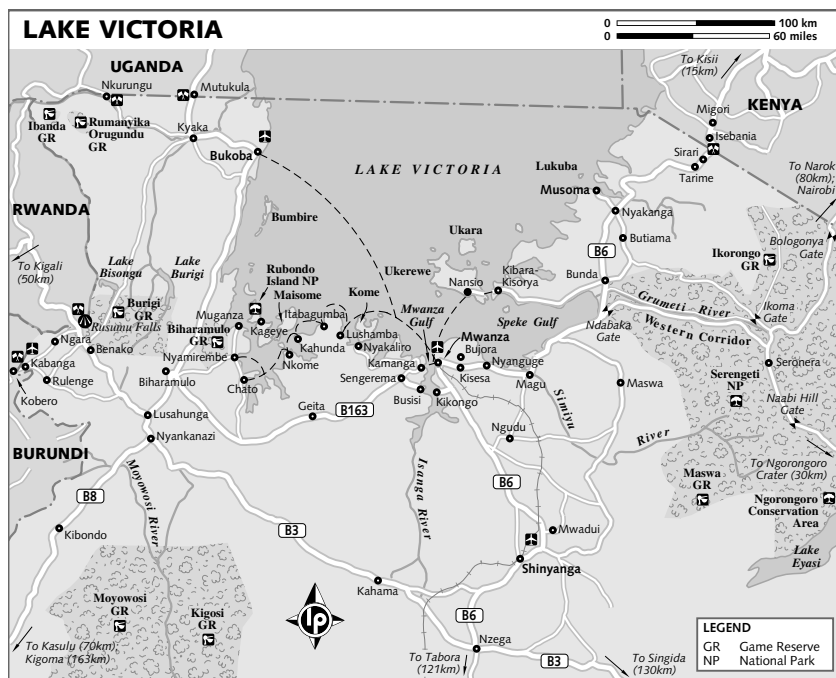
Lake Victoria is:

- 68,800 sq km in area, about half of which is in Tanzania
- 100m above sea level
- the world's second largest freshwater lake by surface area after Lake Superior in North America
- infested with bilharzia in many shoreline areas (swimming isn't recommended)
- inhabited by some of the largest Nile perch in the world

## MUSOMA

☎ 028

Pretty Musoma – capital of the Mara region – sits serenely on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria, in a lovely setting on a peninsula with both sunrise and sunset views over the water. With its bustling market, colourful fishing port and small-town pace, the town makes



an agreeable stop for anyone travelling this way. Its streets, set out in a grid pattern, are lined by small shops and old single-storey Indian trading houses. The surrounding countryside, marked by low, green hills dotted with large boulders, is a melting pot of cultures, with the Kuria, Jita, Luo, Taturu and many more all rubbing shoulders.

About 45km south of Musoma is Butiama, Julius Nyerere's home town. Nyerere attended primary school in the Mwisenge section of Musoma, about 1.5km west of town along the Makoko road.

## Information

There are ATMs (both Visa card only) at NBC, four blocks south of the main street, and at CRDB, one block north of the main street. NBC also changes cash and (with difficulty) travellers cheques. There are internet connections at **Musoma Communications Centre** (per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8.30am-7.30pm), about two blocks east of CRDB on a side street opposite Precision Air, and at **Kokos Internet Café** (per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-7pm), about one block west of CRDB.

There is a large army base in Musoma, and in many areas – particularly around Makoko and along the lake shore – photography is prohibited.

## Sights

### MWALIMU JULIUS K NYERERE MUSEUM

The **Nyerere Museum** (☎ 028-262 1338; [www.museum.or.tz/nyerere.asp](http://www.museum.or.tz/nyerere.asp); adult/student US\$5/2; ☎ 9.30am-6pm), about 45km southeast of Musoma in Butiama, is recommended for anyone interested in the statesman's life and Tanzanian history. It contains memorabilia from the years leading up to Tanzanian independence and from the country's early post-independence days, as well as a large collection of photographs. Boxes of Nyerere's personal effects, including his diaries, a hand-written Swahili translation of part of Plato's *Republic*, and collections of his poetry are also there. Although these are not on display, you may be able to arrange with the curator to view them. A few hundred metres away from the museum is the Nyerere family home, and the graves of Nyerere and his parents.

To get to the museum by public transport, take a minibus to Nyasho (Tsh1200), from where you can get transport to Butiama (Tsh1500). Hiring a taxi will cost about

Tsh20,000 return, including waiting time. If you are driving, there are two routes: follow the Mwanza road for approximately 35km to the signposted turn-off, from where it is 11km further down a dirt road; or follow the Mwanza road to Nyakanga, where you bear southeast along a shorter but rougher road to Butiama.

## Activities

Not to be missed are the stunning **views** over Mara and Musoma bays at sunrise and sunset (the New Tembo Beach Hotel is ideal for the latter). The lively **fishing port** on the eastern edge of town is at its best in the early morning.

Although local boys plunge daily into the lake – especially from the beaches near New Tembo Beach Hotel, and in Makoko – the waters are infested with bilharzia (*kichocho* in Swahili). To stay on the safe side, try the 25m **swimming pool** (day admission Tsh1500) at Peninsula Beach Hotel (directly opposite Mara Peninsula Hotel). It was closed when we passed through, but supposedly to reopen 'soon'.

Musoma is a good place to learn Swahili, with the well-regarded Makoko Language School (p335) about 5km out of town along the Makoko road.

## Sleeping

### BUDGET

**Anglican Hostel** (☎ 0754-671856; r without/with bathroom Tsh3000/5000) The hostel on this large church-run complex has clean, no-frills rooms that are good shoestring value, and meals are available. It's often fully booked. Head out of town along the Mwanza road for about 2km, and watch for the signpost, from where it's about 200m in.

**New Tembo Beach Hotel** (☎ 028-262 2887; camping per person Tsh5000, r Tsh12,000) This is an amenable choice, and excellent value, with simple, clean rooms – the ones upstairs have a loft bed, those downstairs are all on one level and have a fan – in an ideal setting directly on the lake shore. Also on offer is a nice patch of beach, including space for camping, a restaurant (meals about Tsh3000) and sunset views. It's about 500m from the town centre; take the road out of town past CRDB bank and follow the signs.

**Stigma Hotel** (☎ 028-262 0088; s/d Tsh10,000/12,000) This is a good value, quiet choice in town,

with clean en suite rooms. It's on the same street as NBC bank, about two to three blocks further down.

### MIDRANGE

**Hotel Matvilla** (☎ 028-262 2445; s/d Tsh20,000/30,000; 🍴) Directly opposite Musoma Communications Centre and above the Precision Air office in the town centre, this place caters to local business travellers with small, dark-ish but clean rooms and a restaurant.

**Mara Peninsula Hotel** (☎ 028-264 2526; [marapeninsula@yahoo.com](mailto:marapeninsula@yahoo.com); Makoko road; s/d/ste Tsh25,000/35,000/45,000; 🍴 🚿) The long-standing Peninsula, about 1km from the town centre along the Makoko road, has faded but reasonable rooms, hot water, a somewhat quieter setting than the other more central hotels in this category (except on weekends when there's often a disco across the road), and a restaurant.

### Eating

**Hotel Orange Tree** (☎ 028-262 0021; Kawawa St; meals from Tsh3000; 🍴 lunch & dinner) serves up plates of grilled fish and rice. **Mara Peninsula Hotel** (☎ 028-264 2526; Makoko road; meals about Tsh5000; 🍴 lunch & dinner) has more of the same, plus soups, spaghetti and other standards. **Rama Dishes** (meals from Tsh1000), a local eatery around the corner from NBC bank, is good for plantains or chicken and chips. Further down the same street is a little no-name place selling tasty *nyama choma* (seasoned roasted meat).

For self-catering, try **Flebs Traders** (Main St), or **Kotra's Supermarket** (Mwanza road), about 2.5km from the town centre, which also has a restaurant upstairs. Musoma and the surrounding Mara region is known for its yogurt. To sample some, try the small *mgando* shop just off the main street near the market, and around the corner from Flebs Traders; ask for *maziwa mgando*.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

The airfield is about 1km west of the market (Tsh1000 to Tsh2000 to most hotels). Precision Air flies three times weekly from Dar es Salaam (Tsh2,500,000) en route to Mwanza and Shinyanga. The local Precision Air booking agent is **Global Travel** (☎ 028-262 2707, 0713-264294), opposite Musoma Communications Centre.

### BOAT

Local boats, including those to villages along the lake shore, depart from the Mwigobero section of town near Afrilux Hotel.

### BUS

Frequent buses and minibuses connect Musoma and Mwanza, departing between about 6am and 2pm (Tsh5000, four hours), including the large Mohammed Trans (Tsh5000/10,000 to Mwanza/Shinyanga, departures at 6am, 9am and 1.30pm). Its early bus departs from the main street opposite Flebs Traders; otherwise go to the bus stand. There are minibuses throughout the day to Sirari on the Kenyan border, where you can change to Kenyan transport.

**Scandinavian Express** (☎ 028-262 0006), with its office just off the CRDB bank road (turn off on the street before Kokos Internet Café and head down towards the port), stops at Musoma on its Mwanza–Nairobi–Dar es Salaam route.

*Dalla-dallas* (minibuses) run throughout the day between the town centre and the Makoko section of Musoma. The *dalla-dalla* stand is along the road between town and the airfield.

### LUKUBA ISLAND

This island (known locally as Rukuba, which means 'place of lightning' in the local Kwaya language) is about 12km offshore northwest of Musoma, and actually consists of two main islands, plus numerous smaller islets. The islands are fringed by lush vegetation and dotted with the massive boulders so characteristic of this part of Lake Victoria. Many of the boulders appear to have huge splits, which has given the island its name – according to local belief, the rock splittings are the result of lightning. In addition to several small villages and seasonal fishing camps, the islands are home to monitor lizards, red monkeys and dozens of bird species – about 70 have been identified thus far. They make an enjoyable excursion from Musoma, especially if you're interested in getting a feel for life on the lake, or in birding. Don't miss climbing one enormous, flat-topped boulder for spectacular sunset views. Staff at Lukuba Island Lodge can show you the way.

The lovely and intimate **Lukuba Island Lodge** (☎ 027-254 8840, 027-250 3094; [www.lukubaisland.com](http://www.lukubaisland.com); s/d full board US\$287/520; 🍴), on the smaller of the

two main islands, is the only accommodation and a wonderful getaway. There are just five cosy stone-and-thatch bungalows on the lake shore, a pretty beach, and the chance for short walks, birding and boating. Fully equipped fishing can also be arranged. The cuisine is tasty, the ambience laid-back and the lodge comes highly recommended. Advance bookings are required. The same management operates affiliated small lodges in Mkomazi (p179) and near Lake Eyasi (p228), and can arrange upmarket safaris (taking you well off the usually trodden trails).

### Getting There & Away

There's a public boat between Musoma's Mwigobero port and the main village on the largest of the islands, departing three times daily in each direction, at 7am, 11am and 1pm (Tsh1500, 1½ to two hours). If you time things right, a day trip is quite feasible.

Lukuba Island Lodge has its own speedboat for guests (about one hour, departing from the New Tembo Beach Hotel with advance appointment).

### BUNDA

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Bunda is a minor transport hub and you'll probably pass through here if you're heading to/from Kenya or Ukerewe Island, or coming from the western Serengeti. The bus stand is along the main Mwanza–Musoma highway; nearby are located a few basic and unappealing guesthouses with rooms for about Tsh6000 or less. A better choice is **CN Motel** (☎ 028-262 1064; small/large s Tsh9000/12,000), with clean singles; the extra Tsh3000 gets you a larger bed and a sit-down loo (versus the squat model in the smaller rooms). It's at the northern edge of town along the road to Musoma.

### MWANZA

☎ 028

Booming Mwanza – set on the lake shore and surrounded by hills strewn with enormous boulders – is Tanzania's second-largest city, and the economic heart of the lake region. In addition to being notable for its strong Indian influences, it's a major industrial centre, and its busy port handles much of the cotton, tea and coffee grown in the fertile western part of the country. Yet, despite its size, Mwanza has managed to retain a bit of a village feel, and within just a kilometre or two from the busy

### SUKUMA GREETINGS

<i>Mwanga</i>	Good morning
<i>Mwadeela</i>	Good afternoon
<i>Wabeyja</i>	Thank you

central area, you'll be amid crowing roosters, grazing cattle and small farm plots. The main tribe in the surrounding area is the Sukuma, Tanzania's largest ethnic group.

In addition to being the best base for visiting Rubondo Island National Park, Mwanza is also a convenient starting or finishing point for safaris through the western Serengeti.

### Orientation

Central Mwanza can easily be covered on foot. Within a 10-minute or less walking radius from the clock tower are the passenger ferry docks (just to the west), ATMs, internet cafés, inexpensive guesthouses and shops, the market and transport stands (both to the east) and the train station (to the southwest). Just beyond the train station is Capri Point, a small peninsula with breezes, lake views and a few upmarket hotels.

### Information

#### IMMIGRATION

**Uhamiaji** (Station Rd) Just up from and diagonally opposite the train station.

#### INTERNET ACCESS

**Barmedas.com** (Nkrumah St; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am–7pm) One block north of Nyerere Rd.

**Karibu Corner Internet Café** (cnr Post St & Kenyatta Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 8am–7pm Sat, 9am–7pm Sun)

#### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Aga Khan Medical Centre** (☎ 028-250 2474/0036; Miti Mrefu St; ☎ 24hr) Southeast of the bus station.

**FDS Pharmacy** (☎ 028-250 3284; Post St; ☎ 8am–9pm Mon–Sat, 9am–5pm Sun) At New Mwanza Hotel.

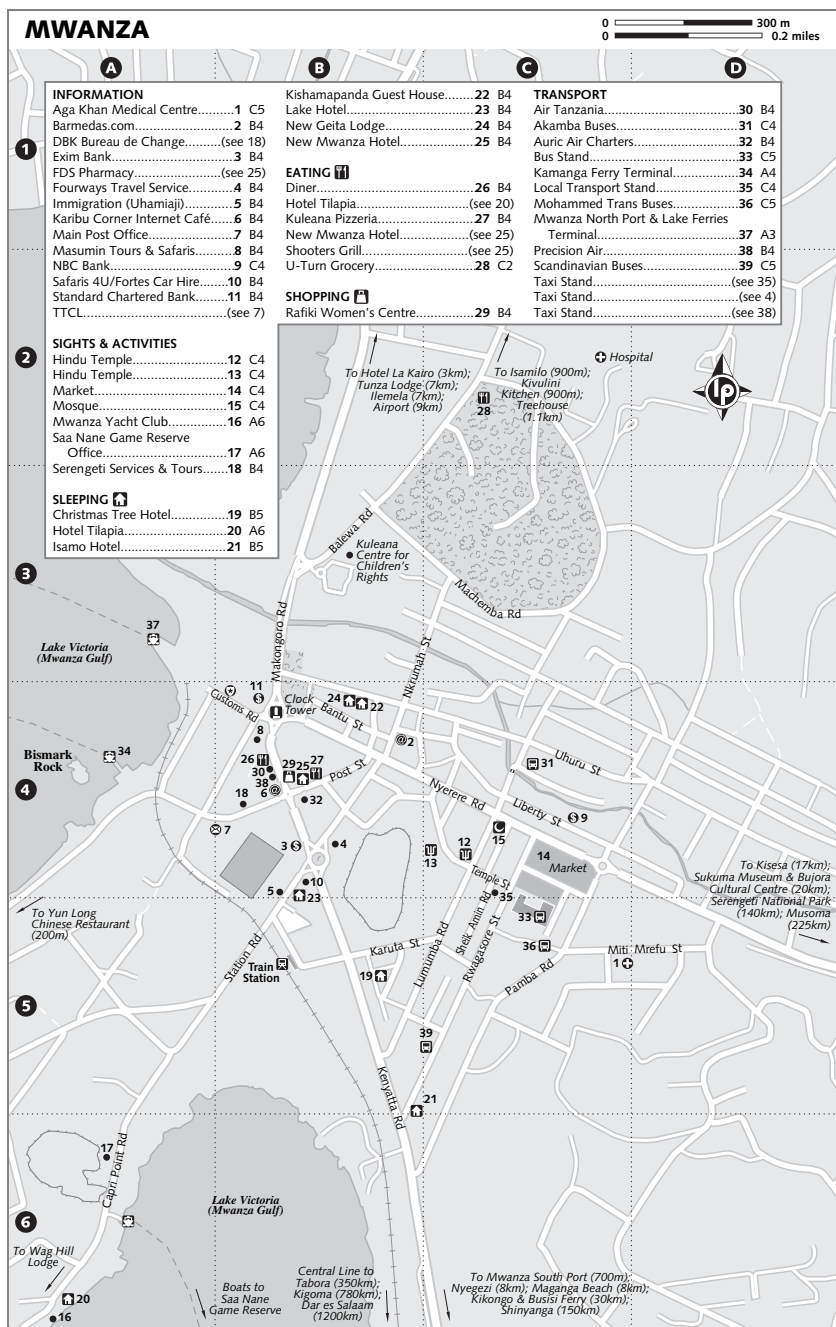
#### MONEY

**DBK Bureau de Change** (Post St) At Serengeti Services & Tours; the easiest place to change cash and travellers cheques.

**Exim Bank** (Kenyatta Rd) ATM (Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, Maestro all should be accepted by the time this book is printed).

**NBC** (Liberty St) ATM (Visa only); also changes travellers cheques.

**Standard Chartered** (Makongoro Rd) ATM (Visa only); near the clock tower.





**POST**

**Main post office** (Post St; ☒ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat)

**TELEPHONE**

**Karibu Corner Internet Café** (cnr Post St & Kenyatta Rd; ☒ 8am–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 8am–7pm Sat, 9am–7pm Sun) Internet dialling for about Tsh200 per minute internationally.

**TTCL** (Post St; ☒ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 4pm Sat) Operator-assisted calls (Tsh1000 per minute internationally) and card phones.

**TRAVEL AGENCIES**

All of the following can help with flight bookings, organising trips to Rubondo Island and Serengeti National Parks, and car hire. Prices for 4WD rental start at about US\$120 per day plus petrol. For a two-day, one-night return trip to Seronera in Serengeti National Park, transport only, expect to pay from US\$350 per vehicle (four to six persons) including petrol. It's not that easy to meet other travellers in Mwanza, so organising a Serengeti safari from here works best if you're already in a group.

**Fourways Travel Service** (☒ 028-250 2620/1853; [www.fourwaystravel.net](http://www.fourwaystravel.net); Station Rd)

**Masumin Tours & Safaris** (☒ 028-250 0192/3295; [www.masumintours.com](http://www.masumintours.com); Kenyatta Rd)

**Safaris 4U/Fortes Car Hire** (☒ 028-250 0561; [www.fortescarhire.co.tz](http://www.fortescarhire.co.tz); Station Rd)

**Serengeti Services & Tours** (☒ 028-250 0061/0754; [www.serengetiservices.com](http://www.serengetiservices.com); Post St)

**Sights & Activities**

Central Mwanza has an Oriental feel due to its many **mosques** and **Hindu temples**, and is well worth a stroll, particularly the area around Temple St. In the area between Temple St west towards Post St, Mwanza's strong Indian influence is particularly evident, with Indian trading houses and pan shops lining the streets. To the southeast is the bustling and chaotic **central market**, where you can find almost anything you could want.

Surrounding Mwanza are many hills and boulders, which offer stunning views over the town and lake. The towering stack of boulders balanced just offshore from Rock Beach Garden Hotel is **Bismarck Rock**, a major local landmark.

**SAA NANE GAME RESERVE**

This little **reserve** (admission Tsh1000) is on a tiny island just off Capri Point. While it could be

a peaceful getaway from the dust of town, it is sadly marred by a dejected-looking collection of caged animals, and not recommended. A boat departs several times daily from next to Hotel Tilapia (Tsh1000, 15 minutes). There's no food or lodging on the island. The reserve's office is on Capri Point Rd, about 200m north of Hotel Tilapia.

**Sleeping**

For information on accommodation north-east of Mwanza near Serengeti National Park's Ndabaka Gate, see under Serengeti National Park (p219).

**BUDGET**

It's sometimes possible to arrange camping on the grounds of the Mwanza Yacht Club, next to Hotel Tilapia on Capri Point. Camping is also possible at **Maganga Beach** (camping per person Tsh3000), on a pretty stretch of lake shore in Nyegezi, about 8km from town. There are no facilities, and no food or drink available, and you'll need a vehicle to get there. The road is sometimes inaccessible during the heavy rains. Otherwise, the closest places for camping are Bujora Cultural Centre (p250), or near the Serengeti's Ndabaka Gate (p219).

**Lake Hotel** (☒ 028-250 0658; Station Rd; ground fl s/d Tsh7200/8400, upstairs d Tsh15,000) This hotel is ageing and very tatty, but its shortcomings are easy to overlook if you've just disembarked from a 24-hour-plus haul on the Central Line train. Upstairs rooms – complete with trickling hot-water shower, fan and mosquito net – are better, and management lets three people sleep in a double for no additional charge.

**Christmas Tree Hotel** (☒ 028-250 2001; off Karuta St; r Tsh15,000) Clean, serviceable rooms with a small double bed – just barely big enough for two – plus hot water and TV. Some have nets, and there's a restaurant. The hotel is tucked away in the town centre just off busy Karuta St, from where it is signposted. There's also a signposted entrance from Kenyatta Rd.

**St Dominic's Pastoral Centre** (Nyakahoja Hostel; ☒ 028-250 0830; off Balewa Rd; s/d Tsh13,000/18,000, without bathroom in old wing Tsh6000/9000) A centrally located church-run hostel offering spartan rooms with shared bathroom (no hot water), plus nicer, newer en suite ones with hot water and a canteen (breakfast Tsh1000, lunch/dinner Tsh2000). It's about five minutes' walk north of the Clock Tower roundabout, and good value.

**COMMUNITY TOURISM SPOTLIGHT: THE TREEHOUSE**

**The Treehouse** (☎ 028-254 1160; [treehouse@streetwise-africa.org](mailto:treehouse@streetwise-africa.org); s/d from US\$45/55, s without bathroom US\$35, 5-person family banda US\$65, volunteer discounts; 🏠) is a lovely B&B-style place that's ideal for anyone who wants to get insights into local life, and for socially conscious travellers. About 70% of earnings go to support the affiliated Streetwise Africa charity, and by staying here, you're making a direct contribution to improving the lot of Mwanza's many street children. Besides spotless, comfortable rooms – a large double with a bathtub, a smaller double with a shower, and a single sharing facilities – there's a balcony with breezes and views of the lake in the distance, plus a family *banda* (thatched-roof hut or shelter; also with views towards the lake), and an internet connection point in the evenings. It's in the Isamilo area about 2km northeast of town and Tsh2000 in a taxi. Visitors who are interested in doing more can speak with staff about sponsoring a child or supporting the translation of books into Swahili for use in the reading programmes.

**Tema Hotel** (r about Tsh18,000) If you need a hotel near the Nyegezi bus stand, try this place. It's located about 10km south of town and about 700m north of the bus stand.

**Isamo Hotel** (☎ 028-254 1616; Rwegasore St; r with fan/air-con Tsh20,000/30,000; 🏠) Clean rooms within easy walking distance from the bus stand.

There are lots of inexpensive guesthouses in the busy central area of town. Many offer unappealing albeit serviceable singles/doubles, most with mosquito nets and some with fan, for about Tsh3500/4500 with shared facilities, though a good number make their living from business by the hour and none are recommended.

Among the marginally better ones:

**Kishamapanda Guest House** (cnr Uhuru & Kishamapanda Sts)

**New Geita Lodge** (Uhuru St)

**MIDRANGE & TOP END**

**Hotel La Kairo** (☎ 028-250 0343/5/6; [la-kairo@tanzania-online.com](mailto:la-kairo@tanzania-online.com); s/d old wing Tsh30,000/35,000, r new wing from Tsh40,000) This once cosy family-run place has expanded massively in recent years. Rooms in the original wing are clean, with fan, and there's a restaurant with good local meals. The adjoining and just-opened high-rise new wing has doubles only, including a few with air-con. It's in the Kirumba area, about 4km north of town, just off the airport road and signposted.

**Tunza Lodge** (☎ 028-256 2215, 0786-788180; [janinebronk@webmail.co.za](mailto:janinebronk@webmail.co.za); s/d Tsh45,000/60,000) An amenable anglers' lodge, with cosy cottages scattered over an expansive lawn sloping down to the lake, a beachside bar and a restaurant. There are great sunset views, weekend beach volleyball games and boat excursions are planned. It's about 8km

from town and 2km from the airport: from town, follow the airport road to the Ilemela *dalla-dalla* station; turn left, and continue down a dirt road about 2.5km to the lake, staying left at the forks and following the signs. Public transport goes as far as Ilemela, from where it's a 20-minute walk, or you can arrange transfers with the lodge. On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays there's a free shuttle service several times daily to the lodge from Kuleana Pizzeria.

**New Mwanza Hotel** (☎ 028-250 1070/1; [www.newmwanzahotel.com](http://www.newmwanzahotel.com); cnr Post St & Kenyatta Rd; s/d from Tsh60,000/75,000; 🏠) This barely three-star place with five-star aspirations is the only 'proper' hotel in the central business area. The bland rooms have TV, and there's a restaurant.

**Hotel Tilapia** (☎ 028-250 0517, 028-250 0617; [www.hoteltilapia.com](http://www.hoteltilapia.com); Capri Point; d/ste from US\$90/110; 🏠 📺 📶) The efficiently run Tilapia – overlooking the water on the eastern side of Capri Point – is the hotel of choice for most foreign business and upmarket travellers in the area, and is frequently fully booked. There's a popular lakeside bar and sundowners deck, a tiny business centre, a restaurant and a choice of either standard rooms or bungalow-style suites, some quite spacious, all well-equipped and most with internet access in the rooms. Buffet breakfast is included in the price, and credit cards are accepted (5% surcharge).

**Wag Hill Lodge** (☎ 028-250 2445, 0754-917974; [www.waghill.com](http://www.waghill.com); per person all-inclusive US\$275; 🏠) For a delightful getaway, especially for anyone interested in getting to know Lake Victoria's ecosystems, or in angling, try the intimate and beautiful Wag Hill. It has just three double bungalows nestled into a forested hillside



surrounded by the lake, and is completely tranquil, with only birds, monkeys and other local wildlife to keep you company. It's on a small peninsula outside of Mwanza, and staff will come and collect you from the Mwanza Yacht Club by boat. Fully equipped fishing and boat transfers to/from Mwanza are included in the price.

## Eating & Drinking

**Kuleana Pizzeria** (☎ 028-256 0566; Post St; meals from Tsh2500; ☎ 7am-9pm) Simple good meals – pizzas, omelettes, sandwiches, fruit and fresh-squeezed juices – and a good mix of locals and expats. It's just down from New Mwanza Hotel.

**Tunza Lodge** (☎ 028-256 2215; meals from Tsh4000, buffet Tsh8500; ☎ lunch & dinner) Tunza Lodge's large, popular restaurant has beef, fish, pasta and Indian dishes. On weekends, there's beach volleyball on the sand out front.

**Kivulini Kitchen** (☎ 0784-558869; meals from Tsh5000; ☎ 9am-11pm) This is a simple one-room place, run by a local women's group, with profits going to a local women's rights organisation. There's an extensive menu, although not everything is available. Best is to ask what the day's special is, and then enjoy the lovely garden area – also with a small children's play area – behind while it's being prepared. Or, to avoid a long wait, order in advance. It's about 2km from town in the Isamilo section of town (Tsh1500 in a taxi, or a 20-minute walk).

**Shooters Grill** (Post St; meals from Tsh5000; ☎ 4pm-midnight Tues-Sun) Under the same management as Shooters Grill in Dar es Salaam, with good meat grills, plus a casino and internet café. It's next to New Mwanza Hotel.

**New Mwanza Hotel** (☎ 028-250 1070/1; www.newmwanzahotel.com; cnr Post St & Kenyatta Rd; meals from Tsh5000; ☎ lunch & dinner) Good Indian cuisine, although dinner doesn't start until 7.30pm.

**Diner** (Kenyatta Rd; meals from Tsh6000; ☎ dinner) Despite the drab exterior and sometimes spotty service, the food here – an extensive selection of Indian dishes, plus some Chinese fare as well – is usually delicious. It's just down from the Air Tanzania office.

**Hotel Tilapia** (☎ 028-250 0517/0617; www.hoteltilapia.com; Capri Point; meals from Tsh6000; ☎ lunch & dinner) Pizzas, Indian cuisine and continental fare served on a breezy terrace overlooking the lake, plus a bar.

**Yun Long Chinese Restaurant** (meals Tsh6000-12,000; ☎ lunch & dinner) Good Chinese food and sun-downers overlooking Bismarck Rock and the lake. Turn left one block west of the post office and continue along the dirt road running parallel to the water for about 500m, crossing the railroad tracks.

For self-catering, try **U-Turn Grocery** (Balewa Rd; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm & 6-8pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun).

## Shopping

**Rafiki Women's Centre** (Kenyatta Rd; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat) This unsigned place diagonally opposite Precision Air has a small but good array of crafts from Tanzania and Kenya. On Sundays, staff set up a display of crafts inside the New Mwanza Hotel between 9am and 1pm.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Mwanza's airport is in the process of being upgraded, so expect changes here.

There are daily flights to/from Dar es Salaam (Tsh170,000) and to/from Bukoba (Tsh120,000) on **Air Tanzania** (☎ 028-250 1059, 028-250 0046; Kenyatta Rd) and **Precision Air** (☎ 028-250 0819; pwwmz@africaonline.co.tz; Kenyatta Rd), with many of the Precision Air flights between Dar es Salaam and Mwanza going via Shinyanga and/or Musoma. Precision also flies several times weekly between Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) and Mwanza (Tsh160,000).

**Coastal Aviation** (☎ 028-256 0441, 0784-520949; mwanza@coastal.cc; at the airport) flies daily in the high season between Arusha and Mwanza via Seronera, and sometimes also has flights between Mwanza and Rubondo.

For air charters to Rubondo Island or elsewhere, contact **Auric Air Charters** (☎ 028-256 1286, 028-256 0524; www.auricair.com; cnr Post St & Kenyatta Rd), **RenAir** (☎ 028-256 2069, 028-256 1158; www.renair.com) at the airport, or Coastal Aviation.

### BOAT

Passenger ferries connect Mwanza with Bukoba and with several islands in Lake Victoria, including Ukerewe and Maisome (for Rubondo Island). For schedule and fare information, see p358.

Ferries to Bukoba use Mwanza's North Port, near the Clock Tower. For Ukerewe, departures are also from North Port. Cargo boats to Port Bell (Uganda) and Kenya depart

from Mwanza South Port, about 1.5km south-east of the centre.

For information on the ferries crossing the Mwanza Gulf, see the Mwanza to Bukoba section (p251).

## BUS

Except as noted following, departures for Shinyanga and other points south are currently from the main bus stand near the market. A new bus stand for the southern routes is soon to open at Nyegezi, about 10km south of town along the Shinyanga road. Once operational, this will be the main departure and arrival point, although some lines may still start/finish at the city bus stand. Buses for Musoma, Nairobi and other points north depart from Nyakato, about 6km north of town along the Musoma road (Tsh250 in a *dalla-dalla* and about Tsh5000 in a taxi).

All Scandinavian Express buses depart at the **Scandinavian office** (☎ 028-250 3315; Rwegasore St) south of the market. Akamba buses start from the **Akamba office** (☎ 028-250 0272), off Mtakuja St, and just north of the small footbridge near Majukano Hotel. Mohammed Trans buses depart from the Mohammed Trans office (just off Miti Mrefu St) diagonally up from the main town bus stand.

To Musoma, Mohammed Trans and other lines go regularly from 6am until about 2pm (Tsh5000, three hours); some buses continue to the Kenyan border. Mohammed Trans departures are at 6.30am, 8.30am, noon and 2.30pm.

To Tabora (Tsh10,000, seven hours), Mohammed Trans goes daily via Shinyanga, departing in each direction at 6am and 1pm. Mohammed Trans also runs almost hourly buses to Shinyanga (Tsh4000, three hours).

To Bukoba, it's best to do the trip in stages via Biharamulo. The road journey is rough (until you get to Biharamulo, where it gets smoother); most travellers take the ferry or fly.

To Geita, there's a daily bus, usually continuing to Biharamulo (Tsh5500), from where there are connections to Bukoba, Lusahunga and on to Benako and Ngara for the Rwanda and Burundi borders. However, to Benako and Ngara it's faster – albeit a considerably longer distance – to go along the paved route via Shinyanga and Kahama (eight hours between Kahama and Benako).

To Muganza (for Rubondo Island), there are sporadic direct buses (Tsh6500, eight hours). It is better to go to Biharamulo and then from there get transport to Nyamirembe and on to Muganza.

To Arusha/Moshi and Dar es Salaam, the best route is via Nairobi (Tsh50,000 plus US\$20 for a Kenyan transit visa, about 30 hours to Dar es Salaam; Tsh20,000, about 15 hours to Nairobi). Both Scandinavian and Akamba do the route; for Akamba, you'll need to change buses in Nairobi. Alternatively, you can try the long loop via Singida, which has improved considerably in recent times with the paving of sections of the Nzege–Singida road.

To Kigoma (Tsh15,000, 15 hours), there are two buses daily, going via Biharamulo and Lusahunga, and departing Mwanza at 4.30am. The no-frills Shinyanga Motel next to the Mwanza bus stand is a local favourite and a convenient overnight spot for passengers departing on this route.

See p349 for details of buses to Kenya and Uganda.

## TRAIN

Mwanza is the terminus of a branch of the Central Line. See p361 for routes, schedules and fares.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Mwanza's airport is 10km north of town (Tsh6000 in a taxi). *Dalla-dallas* (Tsh200) leave from near the Clock Tower.

### BUS & TAXI

*Dalla-dallas* for destinations along the Musoma road, including Kisesa and Igoma (for Bujora) depart from the Bugando Hill stand, southeast of the market, while those running along the airport road depart from near the Clock Tower. *Dalla-dallas* to Nyegezi depart from Nyerere Rd.

There are taxi stands near the market, at the intersection of Station and Kenyatta Rds in front of Fourways Travel, and in front of the Precision Air office.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

All the companies listed under Travel Agencies (p246) arrange car rental.

## SUKUMA DANCING

The Sukuma – Tanzania's largest tribal group, with about 15% of the country's population – are renowned throughout the region for their pulsating dancing. Dancers are divided into two competing dance societies, the Bagika and the Bagulu, that travel throughout Sukumaland (the Sukuma heartland around Mwanza and southern Lake Victoria), competing. The culmination is at the annual Bulabo dance festival in Bujora, which begins each year on the religious feast of Corpus Christi (about 60 days after Easter) and lasts for about two weeks. The most famous dances are those using animals, including the Bagulu *banungule* (hyena dance) and the Bagika *bazwilli bayeye* (snake and porcupine dance). Before beginning, the dancers are treated with traditional medicaments to protect themselves from injury. (And it's not unheard of for the animals, too, to be given a spot of something to calm their tempers.)

## AROUND MWANZA

### Sukuma Museum & Bujora Cultural Centre

If you're interested in learning about Sukuma culture, the **Sukuma Museum & Bujora Cultural Centre** (<http://photo.net/sukuma>; admission Tsh3000; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Sat, 1–6pm Sun) makes a worthwhile day trip from Mwanza. The centrepiece is an open-air museum where, among other things, you'll see traditional Sukuma dwellings, the house of a traditional healer, a wooden trough used for rainmaking potions and a blacksmith's house and tools. There is also a large map showing the old Sukuma kingdoms, and nearby a rotating cylinder illustrating different Sukuma systems for counting from one to 10. Traditionally, these systems were used by various Sukuma age-based groups as a sort of secret language or symbol of initiation. Each group – girls, boys, women, men – had its own counting system, which would be used within the group, but which would not be understood by members of any other group.

Also on the grounds is the **royal drum pavilion**, built in the shape of the stool used by Sukuma kings. On the pavilion's upper level is a collection of royal drums that are still played on church feast days, official government visits and at other special events. Traditionally, each Sukuma kingdom had a special place such as this one – though not on the same scale – for preserving its royal drums.

The **round church** in the centre of the museum was built in 1969 by David Fumbuka Clement, the Québécois missionary priest who founded the museum. Inside are some traditionally styled altar pieces. Although services (10am Sunday) are in Swahili, much of the singing is in Sukuma.

On request, the museum can organise performances of **traditional drumming and dancing**

for a flat fee of Tsh60,000 per performance, for up to 10 persons. It's best to arrange this in advance, although sometimes you can organise things on the spot. It's also possible to arrange **Sukuma drumming lessons**. There are no set fees; you'll need to negotiate with the instructors, but don't expect it to be cheap. An English-speaking guide is available at the museum.

### SLEEPING & EATING

There's **camping** (per person Tsh4000) on the grounds of the centre, and no-frills **rooms** (s/d without bathroom Tsh3000/6000) with mosquito nets and tiny windows. Bucket showers can be arranged, as can meals, with advance notice. Otherwise, you can bring your own food and cook it yourself, or make arrangements for staff to cook it. The closest market is in Kisesa, about 3km away.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Bujora is about 20km east of Mwanza off the Musoma road. Take a *dalla-dalla* to Igoma, from where you can get a 4WD or pick-up on to Kisesa. Once in Kisesa, walk a short way along the main road until you see the sign for Bujora Primary School (Shule ya Msingi Bujora). Turn left at the sign and follow the small dirt road for about 2km to 3km to the cultural centre. There is no public transport along this road.

En route from Mwanza, around 2km past Igoma on the western side of the main road, is a graveyard for victims of the 1996 sinking of the Lake Victoria ferry MV *Bukoba*.

### Ukerewe

The large and densely populated Ukerewe Island is in the southeastern corner of Lake Victoria, and north of Mwanza. It is well off

the beaten track, with no paved roads and – outside Nansio, the major town – no electricity. While there isn't much to 'do' here, the island makes an intriguing, offbeat diversion and, with its friendly people and rocky terrain broken by lake vistas and tiny patches of forest, it's an ideal place for getting acquainted with local life. Staff at Gallu Beach Hotel are the best connections for arranging walking and bicycle tours of the island.

### SLEEPING & EATING

There's no running water at either place here, but buckets are provided.

**Gallu Beach Hotel** (☎ 0784-682488; [www.gallu.net](http://www.gallu.net); s/d/tr with shared bathroom Tsh6000/7000/10,000) This unassuming local guesthouse in Nansio town has clean but very basic rooms and arguably the best meals – all local style – in Nansio. The website is also a good general source of information on the island.

**Monarch Hotel** (s/d Tsh15,000/25,000/32,000) Just a few minutes' walk from the ferry on the lake shore, this is Nansio's only proper hotel, with self-contained rooms and a small restaurant.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

The MV *Butiama* and MV *Clarius* sail on alternate days between Mwanza's North Port and Nansio, departing Mwanza at 9am and 2pm, and departing Nansio at 8am and 1.30pm (Tsh5000/3500 for 2nd/3rd class plus US\$5 port tax, two hours).

It's also possible to reach Nansio from Bunda, about 30km north of the Serengeti's Ndabaka Gate on the Mwanza–Musoma road, which means that you can go from Mwanza to Ukerewe and then on towards Musoma or the Serengeti, or vice-versa, without backtracking. Via public transport, take any vehicle between Mwanza and Musoma and disembark at Bunda. From Bunda, you can get transport to Kibara-Kisorya (Tsh3500), from where it's

a short boat ride (Tsh500 to Tsh1000, 30 minutes) to Ukerewe. This route is usually operated by a vehicle ferry, though it was under repair as this book was researched. When operational, it runs every two to three hours, with the first departure from the mainland at about 8am, and the last at 5.30pm. Plan on leaving Bunda by about 3pm at the latest in order to connect with the last ferry to Ukerewe.

There is little public transport on Ukerewe. A few vehicles meet boat arrivals, and there are daily *dalla-dallas* between Nansio and Rugezi for catching the boat over to Kibara-Kisorya (Tsh500). Otherwise, the only option is walking or bargaining for a lift on a bicycle.

### MWANZA TO BUKOBA

Travelling by road from Mwanza westwards along the southern part of Lake Victoria entails crossing the Mwanza Gulf between Mwanza and Sengerema. There are two ferries. The northernmost (Kamanga) ferry docks just south of the passenger ferry terminal at Mwanza North Port, and is the more reliable of the two, departing Mwanza at 8.30am, 10.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm (except Sunday), 4.30pm and 6.30pm (per person/vehicle Tsh200/3500, 30 minutes). Departures from Kamanga are every two hours from 8am until 6pm, except there's no 2pm ferry on Sunday. If you are continuing from Kamanga to Sengerema or Geita, see if the Geita bus is in the vehicle queue lined up to board the ferry. If it is, it's worth buying your bus ticket before crossing to avoid the rush on the other side. If there's no bus, the only option is the *dalla-dallas*, which wait on the other side.

The more southerly government-run Busisi ferry operates in theory until 10pm but is frequently broken and shouldn't be counted on – although most Mwanza–Kigoma buses use this route. Its eastern terminus is at Kikongo, about 30km south of Mwanza.

### CHILDREN OF THE RAIN-MAKER

One of Ukerewe's most famous sons is Aniceti Kitereza (1896–1981), actually born near Mwanza on the mainland, but grandson of a Ukerewe chief. After a career spent as a translator (he read or spoke eight languages, including Greek and Latin), Kitereza set out to write the biography of his grandfather, King Machunda. The two-volume work – currently available only in German as *Die Kinder der Regenmacher* (Children of the Rain-maker) and *Die Schlagentöter* (The Snake-killer) – weaves priceless strands of local mythology, folk tales and traditional customs into the main family chronicle. Kitereza wrote originally in Kikwere, and later translated his work by hand into Swahili, though he did not live to see the book published.

Once across the Mwanza Gulf, the main towns of interest en route to Bukoba are **Geita** and **Biharamulo**.

Geita has gained prominence in recent times as the centre of Tanzania's now booming gold mining industry – gold was first found in the area in the early 20th century. The town itself is nothing much, but has decent infrastructure and an array of inexpensive hotels. For something a bit nicer, try **Hotel Erin** (r Tsh23,000) on the edge of town, with clean rooms with hot water and a garden.

About 120km further on along a still unrehabilitated road is Biharamulo, a small and dusty but oddly appealing old German colonial settlement. The fortified German boma, perched up on a hill just outside town, was renovated some years ago as a simple guest house. It's currently closed, but worth checking out, at least to see if you can camp. Otherwise, it is worth trying the basic **Savannah Guest House** (r without bathroom Tsh4500) or the better **Robert Hotel** (r Tsh6500), both in the town centre.

Biharamulo is a minor transport hub, and it's easy to get onward transport to Lusahunga – another regional transport hub – with onward connections to Nzega, Kigoma, and the Burundi and Rwanda borders. Southeast of Biharamulo, along the road from Geita, is the turn-off to reach Nyamirembe and then Muganza village – a potential jumping off point for Rubondo Island National Park. See opposite.

Heading north from Biharamulo, the road passes by the 1300 sq km **Biharamulo Game Reserve**, and the adjacent (to the west) **Burigi Game Reserve**. Neither reserve has tourist facilities, although it is reported that animal populations, particularly in Burigi, have made somewhat of a comeback after suffering severely with the large refugee influxes in the area during the 1990s. Roan antelopes, topis, impalas, waterbucks and sitatungas are present, as are elephants, giraffes, zebras and more.

## RUBONDO ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

If you relish tranquil surroundings away from the crowds, Rubondo Island National Park, in the southwestern corner of Lake Victoria, is one of Tanzania's best kept secrets. In addition to its excellent **birding**, it offers **fishing**, quiet **beaches** and low-key but rewarding **wildlife watching**. Almost 400

bird species have been identified here, including stately fish eagles, herons, storks, ibis, kingfishers and cormorants. Keeping them company is a wealth of butterflies, and populations of chimpanzees, hippos, crocodiles, giraffes and even elephants (the latter were introduced several decades ago). The island is also one of the few places in East Africa where you can observe the sitatunga, an amphibious antelope that likes to hide among the marshes and reeds along the shoreline. If you find yourself in the region, Rubondo is a complete change of pace from Tanzania's other parks, and well worth a detour.

In addition to Rubondo Island, the park encompasses several smaller nearby islands. It was gazetted in 1977 with a total area of 460 sq km, around 240 sq km of which is land.

## Information

Park entry fees are US\$20/5 per adult/child aged five to 15 years. For camping fees, see p77. There is also a US\$50 per week sport-fishing fee. The park is open year-round, but the best time to visit is from June to early November, before the rains set in.

For camp site bookings and information contact the senior park warden. From Mwanza, this is best done via radio, arranged through any of the travel agencies listed in that section (p246). Park headquarters are at Kageye on the island's eastern side.

Both the park and Rubondo Island Camp organise chimpanzee tracking. However, if your primary interest is chimps, your chances of sightings and close-up observation are better in Gombe Stream or Mahale Mountains National Parks (see the Western Tanzania chapter, p257).

## Sleeping

The park has an ordinary camp site and some nice double *bandas* on the lake shore just south of park headquarters; both should be booked in advance through the park warden. There's a tiny shop selling a few basics, but it's better to bring all essentials with you.

**Rubondo Island Camp** (☎ 027-250 8790; [www.africanconservancycompany.com](http://www.africanconservancycompany.com); s/d full board plus airstrip transfers US\$265/400, s/d all-inclusive US\$450/770; 📍) This intimate luxury camp has a wonderful lakeside setting, cosy en suite tents, tasty cuisine and a highly relaxing ambience. Excursions

include guided walks, boat trips and fishing. Ask about low season discounts.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Most guests staying at Rubondo Island Camp arrive via a chartered flight arranged through the camp. It costs about US\$350/500 one way from Mwanza for a three-/five-seater plane. For charter companies, see p248.

### BOAT

The cheapest, most adventurous and most time consuming way to reach the park is to travel by ferry or bus to one of the villages on the lake shore opposite Rubondo Island, from where you can arrange a boat pick-up with park headquarters. The main villages for doing this are Muganza (on the mainland southwest of Rubondo), Nyamirembe (25km south of Muganza), Nkome (southeast of Rubondo) and Maisome (on Maisome Island, just east of Rubondo). For Nyamirembe, where there's a park officer stationed, and Muganza, there are several direct buses weekly from Mwanza along a rough road. If you get stuck for the night, there are a few basic guesthouses in both places with rooms for about Tsh3000. For Nyamirembe as well as Nkome and Maisome, there are occasional ferry connections, although none were running at the time this book was researched; check at Mwanza North Port for an update. Nkome can also be reached by bus via a rough road (allow a full day from Mwanza); if you're driving you can leave your vehicle at the ranger post there, which is also where you can sleep until the boat comes to collect you.

You will need to radio park headquarters in advance to let them know you'll be arriving this way; in Mwanza, travel agencies or the Saa Nane Game Reserve office can help you call, and there's also a radio at the police station in Muganza. Plan on paying from about Tsh40,000 per boat from Muganza, and up to double this from Nyamirembe (US\$80 to US\$100), Nkome or Maisome, although with some negotiating you may be able to get it for less. Local fishing boats don't generally enter Rubondo, though if you can manage to sort out the permissions in advance with park headquarters, the captains will give you a much better price deal.

## BUKOKA

☎ 028

Bukoba is a bustling town with an attractive waterside setting and amenable small-town feel, and makes a convenient stop if you're travelling between Tanzania and Uganda or Rwanda.

The surrounding Kagera region is home of the Haya people, known for their powerful kingdoms (see the boxed text, p255). Prior to the rise of the Haya kingdoms, Kagera was at the heart of a highly advanced early society known for its techniques of steel production. Various artefacts, including remnants of kilns estimated to be close to 2000 years old, indicate that steel production was well developed here long before equivalent techniques were known in Europe. Although there are no traces of this now in Bukoba, there is a small display on Iron Age findings from the region at the National Museum in Dar es Salaam.

The town of Bukoba traces its roots to 1890, when Emin Pasha (Eduard Schnitzer) – a German doctor and inveterate wanderer – arrived on the western shores of Lake Victoria as part of efforts to establish a German foothold in the region. Since then, the town has kept itself alive through a flourishing local coffee industry and a busy regional port (the second largest on the Tanzanian lake shore).

## Information

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Bukoba Cybercafé** (cnr Jamhuri & Kashozi Rds; per hr Tsh500; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat)

**Post Office Internet Café** (cnr Barongo & Mosque Sts; per hr Tsh500; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun)

### MONEY

**NBC** (Jamhuri Rd) ATM (Visa); changes cash and travellers cheques.

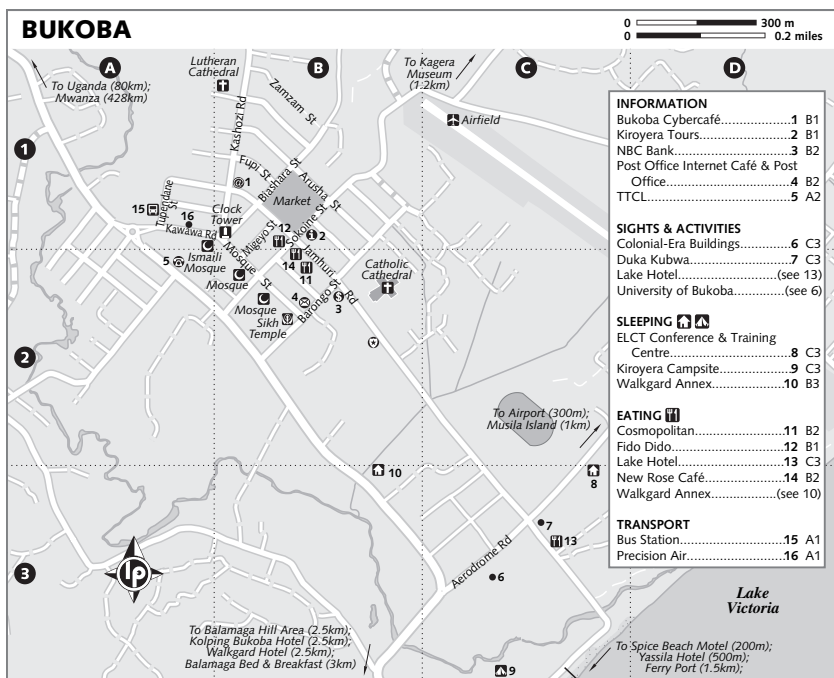
### TELEPHONE

**TTC** (☎ 7.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) For operator-assisted calls.

## Sights & Activities

Along the lake are some **colonial-era buildings**, now housing the university and some government offices. More intriguing are the scattered traces of the network of powerful Haya kingdoms that once held sway in this area (see the boxed text, p255). Although the legacy of





the kingdoms is preserved today primarily in oral tradition, there are still a few remnants of **royal dwellings** and other spots of interest that can be visited within a half-day's trip from town. Kiroyera Tours (p256) has information leaflets on the various options and can help you organise tours.

At the eastern edge of town near the lake is the old **Lake Hotel** – functioning now in name only – where Ava Gardner and Frank Sinatra reportedly enjoyed a drink or two when filming *Mogambo* in the area northwest of the Kagera River near the Uganda border. Just up the road towards town is the crumbling **Duka Kubwa** ('Big Shop'), which served as the local general store during the German colonial era, and is said to be Bukoba's oldest building.

### KAGERA MUSEUM

This **museum** (☎ 028-222 0203; [kmuseum@kiroyeratours.com](mailto:kmuseum@kiroyeratours.com); Nyamukazi area; admission US\$2, guided tour per group Tsh2500; 🕒 9.30am-6pm) houses a collection of top-notch wildlife photographs from the Kagera region by Danish wildlife photographer Dick Persson, as well as an intriguing collection of local tribal items. For a preview, look for

the exhibition of wildlife photography by the same photographer in the National Museum in Dar es Salaam. The museum is on the far side of Bukoba's airstrip. The easiest way to get here is by following the lake shore past the airstrip. However, as you're officially not permitted to walk across the airfield, it's better to take the long way around, heading northeast along Sokoine St past the market, winding your way to the edge of town, and turning right at the signpost. Kiroyera Tours can sort you out with directions and a guide.

### Sleeping BUDGET

**Kiroyera Campsite** ([www.kiroyeratours.com/campsite.htm](http://www.kiroyeratours.com/campsite.htm); camping per person with own/rented tent US\$3/5, bandas per person US\$10) A great backpackers' spot on the lake shore, and within easy walking distance of the town and the port, with camping and showers, plus simple *bandas* on the sand, local-style meals and a bar.

**Spice Beach Motel** (☎ 028-222 0142;  $\$$ /d Tsh10,000/15,000; 📶) This small guesthouse is at the southeastern edge of town directly on the water, and not far from the port. There's one

single with shared facilities and several small en suite doubles with TV – ask for one facing the lake – and a restaurant.

**ELCT Conference & Training Centre** (☎ 028-222 3121, 028-222 0027; elct-nwd@africaonline.com; Aerodrome Rd; s/d US\$21/30, d without bathroom US\$14; 📶 📺 🚿) A good, long-standing place with clean, comfortable rooms and pleasant grounds along the Aerodrome Rd near the lake. Breakfast costs extra.

### MIDRANGE

**Yassila Hotel** (☎ 028-222 1251; s/d Tsh20,000/30,000, d without bathroom Tsh10,000; 📶 📺) A popular hotel on the lake near Spice Beach Motel and the port. The self-contained rooms have TV and minifridge and some have lake views, and the restaurant serves up good tilapia grills and other dishes.

**Balamaga Bed & Breakfast** (☎ 0787-757289; www.balamagabb.com; s/d from US\$30/40; 📺) Out of town in the Balamaga Hill area above the port, just past Walkgard and Kolping Bukoba hotels, with four spacious, comfortable rooms (two self-contained and two sharing a bathroom), gardens, cable TV and meals.

**Walkgard Hotel** (☎ 028-222 0935; www.walkgard.com; s/d US\$30/40; 📶 📺 🚿) This three-star place is targeted primarily at local business clientele and conferences, with clean, good facilities,

a restaurant and a pool (Tsh2500 for non-guests). Check out a few rooms, as size varies; all come with full breakfast and satellite TV. The hotel is on Balamaga Hill about 3km from the town centre in the Kashura area (Tsh2500 in a taxi), with views over the port. The same management runs Walkgard Annex (☎ 028-222 0935; single/double US\$20/25) in the town centre, with quite acceptable rooms – all with fan, net and TV, and the best ones upstairs – and a restaurant. It's about 300m southeast of the telecom building on the western side of town.

**Kolping Bukoba Hotel** (☎ 028-222 0199; s/d/ste Tsh20,000/30,000/40,000) Next to Walkgard Hotel on Balamaga Hill, and giving it stiff competition. Rooms here are pleasant and just as good if not better value than at the Walkgard, and meals can be arranged.

### Eating

The unassuming **New Rose Café** (Jamhuri Rd) is a local institution, with inexpensive meals and snacks.

The restaurant at Yassila Hotel (see left) is a popular gathering spot, with lake views and tasty pepper steak, grilled tilapia and other dishes. Spice Beach Motel (see opposite) is also good, with an equally nice setting and

### THE HAYA

Bukoba is the heartland of the Haya people, and if you spend much time here, you'll undoubtedly make their acquaintance. The Haya, which today is one of Tanzania's largest tribes, also played a prominent role throughout the country's history. It had one of the most highly developed early societies on the continent, and by the 18th or 19th century was organised into eight different states or kingdoms. Each of these was headed by a powerful and often despotic *mukama* who ruled in part by divine right. It was the *mukama* who controlled all trade and who, at least nominally, owned all property, while land usage was shared among small, patrilineal communes. Order was maintained through a system of appointed chiefs and officials, assisted by an age group-based army. With the arrival of the colonial authorities, this political organisation began to erode. The various Haya groups splintered and many chiefs were replaced by persons considered more malleable and sympathetic to colonial interests.

In the 1920s, in the wake of growing resentment towards these propped-up leaders and to the colonial government, the Haya began to regroup and in 1924 founded the Bukoba Bahaya Union. This association was initially directed towards local political reform but soon developed into the more influential and broad-based African Association. Together with similar groups established elsewhere in the country – notably in the Kilimanjaro region and in Dar es Salaam – it constituted one of Tanzania's earliest political movements and was an important force in the drive towards independence.

Now, the Haya receive as much attention for their dancing – characterised by complicated foot rhythms, and traditionally performed by dancers wearing grass skirts and ankle rattles – and for their singing as for their history. Saida Karoli and Maua – popular female singers in the East African music scene – both come from the area around Bukoba.

## COMMUNITY TOURISM SPOTLIGHT: KIROYERA TOURS

**Kiroyera Tours** (☎ 028-222 0203; www.kiroyeratours.com; Sokoine St) is a clued-up agency opposite the market giving new life to tourism in Bukoba and the surrounding Kagera region, and is an essential stop if you're in Bukoba. It has information on nearby attractions, organises cultural and historical outings in and around town, and can help with bus and ferry ticket bookings. In addition to making Haya culture readily accessible to visitors, Kiroyera has also established several community projects, and in 2006, received the Tanzanian Culture Trust Fund's Zeze award for using tourism as a way to enhance local community development. Also check out www.kagera.org for an overview of the region and ideas for excursions.

slow service. Up the lake shore a bit, the old **Lake Hotel** (meals from Tsh3500) has decent food, a relaxed ambience, lake views and drinks. In town, try the restaurant at **Walkgard Annex** (meals from Tsh4000). Menus throughout feature grilled fish and local dishes, including the Haya staple *matoke* (cooked plantains).

For self-catering, try **Fido Dido** (Jamhuri Rd) or **Cosmopolitan** (Jamhuri Rd).

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

There are daily flights to/from Mwanza (Tsh120,000) on **Precision Air** (☎ 028-222 0861, 028-222 0545; Bukoba Machinery Bldg, Kawawa Rd), with connections to Dar es Salaam. Kiroyera Tours (above) also does flight bookings.

### BOAT

There is a passenger-ferry service between Bukoba and Mwanza on the MV *Victoria*. For schedules and fares, see p358.

Fishing boats depart for tiny Musila Island, offshore from the airport, from just southwest of Spice Beach Motel.

### BUS

Bukoba's roads are getting a facelift – an increasing number of roads in town are now tarmac, and you can go on good tarmac all the way to Kampala (Uganda). Heading south, the road is tarmac as far as Biharamulo. All the bus companies and their ticket offices are based at or near the bus stand at the western end of town. To avoid the hassle, Kiroyera Tours can also help with bus ticket bookings.

Buses go daily to Biharamulo (Tsh4000), from where you can catch onward transport to Lusahunga, and from there on to Ngara or Benako and the Burundi and Rwanda borders.

To Kigoma, there's a bus two or three times weekly, journeying via Biharamulo and Kasulo (Tsh15,000, 12 to 15 hours), though it can work out just as fast to go to Biharamulo and catch onward transport from there.

To Mwanza, you can make your way in stages via Biharamulo, but it's better to take the ferry or fly.

To Dar es Salaam, there are daily connections via Nairobi (Tsh71,500) and three times weekly via Singida and Dodoma (Tsh58,500).

To Uganda and Kenya, several buses go daily from Bukoba to Kampala. See p349 for details.