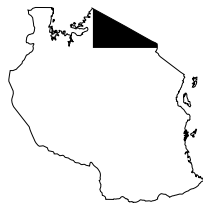


# Northern Tanzania



With snow-capped Mt Kilimanjaro, the wildlife-packed Ngorongoro Crater and the vast plains of the Serengeti, northern Tanzania embodies what is for many quintessential Africa. While the main attractions are trekking to the top of Africa and wildlife watching on the northern safari circuit, there's much more: haunting calls of water birds fill the air at serene Lake Eyasi; beautiful Mt Meru beckons with unforgettable sunrise panoramas from its summit; the barren landscapes of the Crater Highlands offer rugged but satisfying hiking; and lively rural markets draw traders from miles around to haggle over everything from a head of cattle to a kilo of maize. Enjoy delightful highland lodges amid the coffee plantations around Karatu, take in the Rift Valley vistas around Lake Manyara, experience the subtleties of the Tarangire ecosystem or simply take in all the contrasts, as world-class safari lodges jostle for space with mud-thatch houses, and red-cloaked Maasai warriors follow centuries-old traditions while office workers brush by in Western dress.

Exploring northern Tanzania is relatively easy. Tourist infrastructure is good, with many accommodation and dining options in major towns. There's direct air access from Europe and elsewhere in East Africa via Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA), a major hub. The main caveat is price – the north is Tanzania's most costly region, especially if you do an organised safari. If you don't mind roughing things a bit, there are some inexpensive alternatives, including an array of Cultural Tourism Programs (p204).

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Waking up to the sounds and rhythms of the **Serengeti** (p216)
- Descending into the ethereal blue-green vistas of **Ngorongoro Crater** (p223)
- Trekking on **Mt Kilimanjaro** (p191), or catching the sun's first rays from Mt Meru's **Rhino Point** (p209)
- Watching elephants amid gnarled baobabs in **Tarangire National Park** (p214)
- Taking in the stunning Rift Valley vistas around **Lake Manyara** (p212)





## National Parks & Reserves

Northern Tanzania's parks have put this region on the tourist map, with the famed 'northern circuit' taking in the most popular protected areas in the country: Serengeti, Tarangire, Lake Manyara, Arusha and Mt Kilimanjaro National Parks and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Other protected areas include the extended ecosystems of the Serengeti and Tarangire National Parks.

## Getting There & Around

There are good air connections into Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) and Arusha airport, and to airstrips in Serengeti, Lake Manyara and Tarangire National Parks. An airstrip is planned soon near Lake Eyasi.

The main road is the tarmac highway running from Dar es Salaam via Moshi through to the Ngorongoro Crater. Heading southwest, the route is tarmac as far as Kwa Kuchinja, near Tarangire National Park. The bus network covers almost all directions.

## MOSHI

☎ 027

Moshi, which sits at about 850m at the foot of Mt Kilimanjaro, makes an unassuming introduction to the splendours of the north. It's a low-key place with marabou storks perched in the trees, an appealing blend of African and Asian influences, and a self-sufficient, prosperous feel, due in large part to its status as the centre of one of Tanzania's major coffee-growing regions. It's also the capital of the densely populated Kilimanjaro region and a major educational centre, with one of the highest per-capita concentrations of secondary schools in the country.

Most visitors use Moshi as a starting point for climbing Mt Kilimanjaro, although it's a pleasant enough place in its own right to relax for a couple of days. It's also less expensive than nearby Arusha.

## Information

### IMMIGRATION OFFICE

**Immigration office** (Boma Rd; ☎ 7.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri) Visa extensions handled while you wait.

### INTERNET ACCESS

**EasyCom** (Ground fl, Kahawa House, Clock Tower roundabout; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 7.30am-8.30pm)

**Fahari Cyber Café** (Hill St; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Sat) Next to the Coffee Shop.

**Kicheko.com** (Mawenzi Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 9am-8pm)  
**Twiga Communications Cybercafé** (Old Moshi Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8.30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun) Northeast of the Clock Tower roundabout.

## MEDICAL SERVICES & EMERGENCIES

**First Health CRCT Hospital** (☎ 027-275 4051; Rindi Lane) Next to Standard Chartered Bank.

**Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre** (☎ 027-275 4377/8; Sokoine Rd) Generally considered to have the best medical facilities in Moshi; 3km northwest of town off Kilimanjaro Rd.

## MONEY

**Executive Bureau de Change** (Boma Rd; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) Cash and travellers cheques.

**Exim Bank** (Boma Rd) ATM (Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, Cirrus).

**NBC** (Clock Tower roundabout) Cash and travellers cheques; ATM (Visa card).

**Stanbic Bank** (Boma Rd) ATM (Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, Cirrus).

**Standard Chartered Bank** (Rindi Lane) ATM (Visa).

## TELEPHONE

**EasyCom** (Ground fl, Kahawa House, Clock Tower roundabout; ☎ 7.30am-8.30pm) International dialling from Tsh200 per minute.

**Telephone Service** (Clock Tower roundabout; ☎ 8am-6pm) Opposite TTCL.

**TTCL** (cnr Boma & Mawenzi Rds) Card phones; near the Clock Tower.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**The Coffee Shop** (☎ 027-275 2707; Hill St), **Tanzania Coffee Lounge** (☎ 027-275 1006; Chagga St) and the rooftop bar at **Kindoroko Hotel** (☎ 027-275 4054; www.kindorokohotel.com; Mawenzi Rd) are good places to meet other travellers. The Coffee Shop sells the *Moshi Guide*, with useful info for longer-term stays. For listings and info, see www.kiliweb.com.

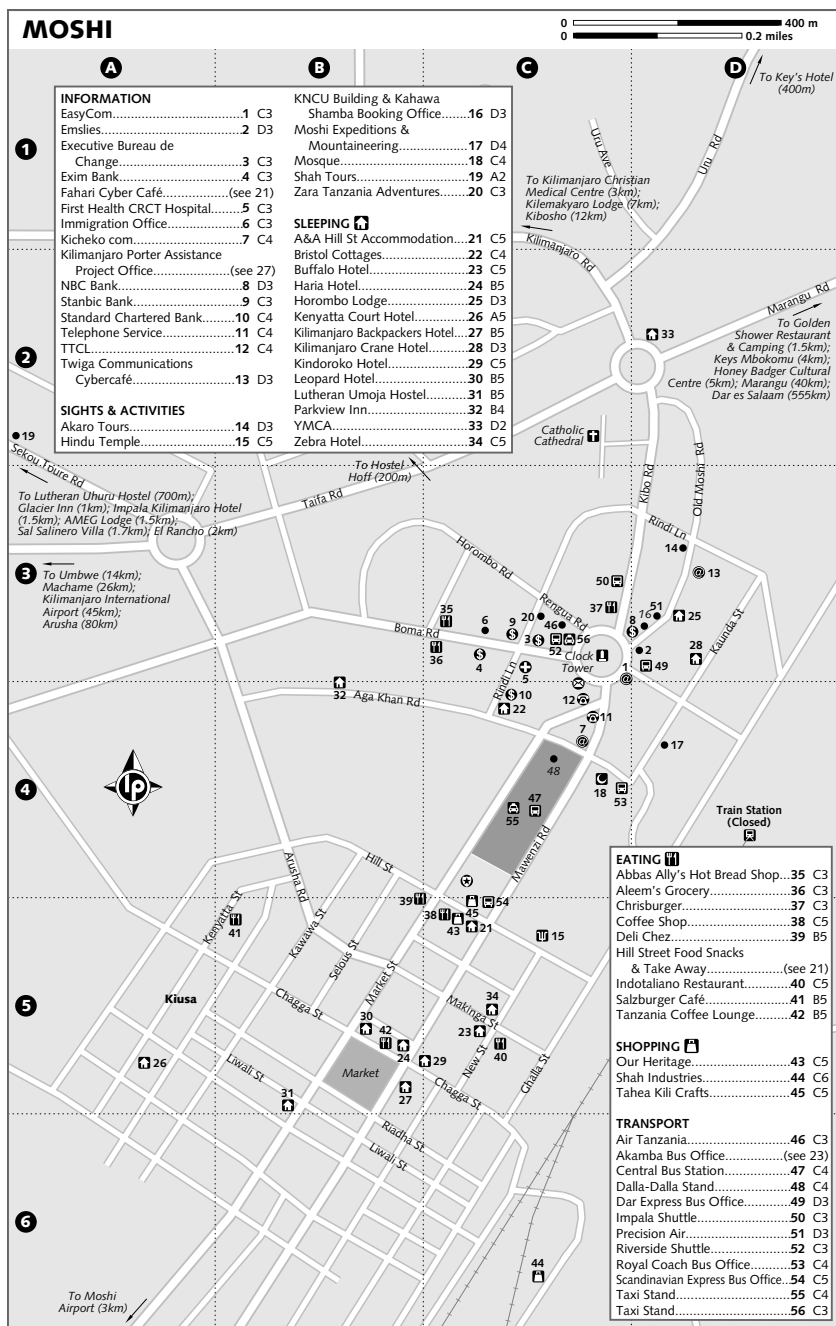
## TRAVEL AGENCIES

For trekking operators, see p54.

**Emslies** (☎ 027-275 2701; emslies.sales@eoltz.com; Old Moshi Rd) Airline bookings.

## Sights & Activities

Central Moshi is full of activity and atmosphere and makes an interesting walk, especially the area around the market and Mawenzi Rd, with its vaguely Asian flavour, Hindu temple, mosques and Indian traders. Also fun is catching a glimpse of Kilimanjaro, which hovers



## TANZANIA & COFFEE

Together with Bukoba, Moshi is one of Tanzania's coffee-growing centres, and it's this aromatic bean that has (together with trekking, in more recent years) kept the town's economy alive for much of the past century.

Coffee, which is said to have originated in southwestern Ethiopia, came to Tanzania around the turn of the 19th century, after being introduced by Jesuit missionaries from Réunion. During the British colonial era, the industry flourished, with the formation of successful coffee-marketing cooperatives among the Chagga in and around Moshi. During the 1960s coffee surpassed sisal as Tanzania's main export crop, and today – despite taking a beating from adverse weather conditions and volatile world prices – is still a linchpin of the national economy.

There are two types of coffee. *Coffea arabica*, which accounts for just under 75% of Tanzanian coffee exports, is used to make higher-quality speciality coffees, and is what you'll see growing around Mt Kilimanjaro, Mt Meru and in the Southern Highlands. *Coffea robusta*, more neutral in taste and used to make less expensive blends and soluble coffees, is grown around western Lake Victoria. More than 90% of Tanzanian coffee is grown on tiny smallholder farms, with the rest coming from cooperatives and private estates.

Many souvenir and coffee shops sell gift-packaged bags of fresh coffee, including the Tanzania Coffee Lounge and the Coffee Shop, both in Moshi. Also see p80 for tips on where to get the best brew.

over the horizon to the north, and is best seen in the evening when the clouds part.

There's a 25m swimming pool (adult/child Tsh3000/1500; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, to 4.30pm Sun) at the **YMCA** (☎ 027-275 1754; Taifa Rd); no bikinis permitted.

The area outside Moshi is beautiful, and Machame, Umbwe and other towns above Moshi on Kilimanjaro's lower slopes are linked by easy-to-follow footpaths. To explore them, base yourself out of town at Kilemakyo Lodge (see p186) or in Machame (p187), where all hotels organise hikes for their guests. Another excursion: take a *dalla-dalla* (minibus) from the central bus station to **Kibosho** (Tsh500, 12km), where there's an old German church.

## Sleeping

### BUDGET

**Golden Shower Restaurant** (☎ 027-275 1990; Taifa Rd; camping Tsh3000) Conveniently located, with a small, shaded area to pitch a tent, hot-water showers and a restaurant-bar. It's 1.5km northeast of the centre along the Marangu Rd.

**Kilimanjaro Backpackers Hotel** (☎ 027-275 5159; www.kilimanjarobackpackers.com; Mawenzi Rd; s/d without bathroom US\$4/8/15) Formerly the Da Costa Hotel, this backpacker's standby is run by the same management as the nearby Kindoroko Hotel. It has small, clean rooms, a bar and restaurant.

**Haria Hotel** (☎ 027-275 4054; www.kindorokohotels.com; Mawenzi Rd; d without/with bathroom Tsh6000/10,000) Diagonally opposite Kindoroko Hotel and under the same management, this no-frills establishment has rooms with fans and mosquito nets, and a rooftop patio but no food.

**Honey Badger Cultural Centre** (☎ 027-275 4608/3365; www.hbcc-campsites.com; camping per person with hot shower US\$5; r per person US\$25; meals US\$5) A family-run place with camping on an enclosed lawn, plus basic rooms in the family house, or in a separate dorm block. Cultural activities can be arranged at extra cost. It's 6km from town off the Marangu road.

**Buffalo Hotel** (☎ 027-275 0270, 275 2775; New St; s/d Tsh12,000/15,000, d without bathroom Tsh10,000) The long-standing and popular Buffalo Hotel has straightforward rooms with fan and net, and a restaurant. The entrance is on a small street off Mawenzi Rd.

**A&A Hill Street Accommodation** (☎ 027-275 3455, 0754-299469; sajjad\_omar@hotmail.com; Hill St; s/d/tr Tsh12,000/15,000/18,000) Clean, quiet, good-value rooms with fans in a convenient location just one block from the bus stand, with an internet café and inexpensive restaurant just below. There's no breakfast.

**Kindoroko Hotel** (☎ 027-275 4054; www.kindoroko-hotels.com; Mawenzi Rd; s/d US\$15/30, d/tr without bathroom US\$15/45; ☎) Another long-standing and perennially busy place an easy walk from the bus stand, with small but clean and good-

value rooms, a rooftop bar, a forex bureau and a restaurant.

**Hostel Hoff** (☎ 0787-225908; www.foot2afrika.com; dm with half board & laundry US\$15) Spotless, good-value hostel-style accommodation that's ideal for longer-term stays. Staff can give tips and assistance for anyone who is seriously interested in longer-term volunteering in Moshi. Check out the website first. It's at the northern end of town – head west along the Arusha road from the YMCA roundabout for about 300m, taking the first right onto a small, unpaved road. The hostel is about 200m further on the right.

**Kenyatta Court Hotel** (☎ 027-275 4801; kenyatta.courthotel@yahoo.com; Kenyatta Rd; s/d US\$20/25) Clean rooms with nets and air-con or fan and meals, a few blocks from Salzburger Café in the Kiusa area, away from the main clutch of budget hotels, and about 15 minutes' walk from the central bus station.

**Zebra Hotel** (☎ 027-275 0611; New St; s/d/tr US\$30/35/45) A new-ish high-rise next to Buffalo Hotel with clean, good-value rooms with hot water, and a restaurant.

Other recommendations:

**YMCA** (☎ 027-275 1754; Taifa Rd; s/d without bathroom US\$10/13; 🏠) Spartan, noisy rooms, some with views over Kilimanjaro, and a clean 25m swimming pool. It's north of the Clock Tower on the roundabout between Kibo and Taifa Rds.

**Lutheran Umoja Hostel** (☎ 027-275 0902; uhuru@elct.org; cnr Market & Liwali Sts; s/d Tsh12,000/18,000, without bathroom Tsh6000/10,000) Clean, no-frills rooms around a small courtyard.

**Horombo Lodge** (☎ 027-275 0134; horombohotel@yahoo.com; Old Moshi Rd; s/d US\$20/30) Diagonally opposite Precision Air, it has sterile rooms with fans and a restaurant.

## MIDRANGE

**Lutheran Uhuru Hostel** (☎ 027-275 4084; www.uhuru-hostel.com; Sekou Toure Rd; s/d US\$20/30, newer wing US\$40/50, annexe without bathroom US\$15/20; 🏠) This place has spotless good-value rooms – those in the new wing have balconies – in leafy, expansive grounds, and a good restaurant with meals from Tsh4000. Across the street are some budget rooms in a rustic annexe with shared facilities and kitchen. Rooms are wheelchair-accessible, and the hostel can organise safaris. It's 3km northwest of the town centre on the Arusha road (Tsh2000 in a taxi) and an ideal choice for families.

**Leopard Hotel** (☎ 027-275 0884; www.leopardhotel.com; Market St; s/d US\$35/45; 🏠) Bland but well-

appointed rooms in a busy downtown location. Adjoining is the Kili Attik music bar.

**Key's Hotel** (☎ 027-275 2250; www.keys-hotels.com; Uru Rd; s/d US\$30/40, with air-con US\$50/60; 🏠 🏠) Key's, about 1.5km northeast of the Clock Tower on a quiet side street, has been popular with travellers for years. Accommodation is in spacious, high-ceilinged rooms in the main building, or in small, dark rondavels out back for the same price, and there's a restaurant and a bar. If full, there's Keys Mbokomu (s/d US\$25/45, with air-con US\$45/65), 4km from town off the Marangu Rd.

**Parkview Inn** (☎ 027-275 0711; www.pvim.com; Aga Khan Rd; s/d US\$40/50; 🏠 🏠) This small business travellers hotel has modern rooms with internet access, a quiet, central location and a small restaurant. It's signposted just off the Arusha road.

**Kilimanjaro Crane Hotel** (☎ 027-275 1114; www.kilimanjaro-crane-hotels.com; Kaunda St; s/d US\$40/50; 🏠 🏠 🏠) This reliable and recommended midrange establishment has good-value rooms with fans, nets, TV and large beds backing a small garden. Downstairs is a restaurant and souvenir shop and upstairs is a rooftop terrace-bar. It's on a small side street running parallel to and just east of Old Moshi Rd.

**Bristol Cottages** (☎ 027-275 5083; briscot@kilinet.co.tz; Rindi Lane; s/d/tr cottages US\$60/72/90, s/d from US\$45/60; 🏠) Spotless, modern attached cottages – some with air-con and others with fans – in quiet grounds adjoining Standard Chartered Bank. There are also newer rooms in a two-storey block, and a small restaurant.

## TOP END

**Sal Salinero Villa** (☎ 027-275 2240, 027-275 0420; salinerohotel@yahoo.com; s/d US\$65/75, upstairs s/d US\$75/85; 🏠 🏠 🏠) A private villa with seven spacious, well-equipped rooms, hardwood flooring, a large, winding staircase and an outdoor bar surrounded by green lawns. It's in the Shanty Town area, just off Lema Rd.

**AMEG Lodge** (☎ 027-275 0175; www.ameglodge.com; s/d from US\$69/99; 🏠 🏠) Comfortable, spacious rooms in detached cottages – with TV, small porches and fans – set around a grassy compound. There's also a gym, and a restaurant. It's signposted off Lema Rd in Shanty Town.

**Impala Kilimanjaro Hotel** (☎ 027-275 3443/4; www.impalahotel.com; Lema Rd; s/d US\$72/83; 🏠) Well-appointed rooms in prim and tranquil grounds, plus a restaurant. It's about 4km northwest of the clock tower roundabout in



Shanty Town, and under the same management as Impala Hotel in Arusha.

**Kilemakyo Lodge** (☎ 027-275 4925; www.kilimanjarosafari.com; s/d/tr US\$75/125/185) Rooms here – in en suite stone rondavels with TV – are fine, though undistinguished, but the hilltop setting, in a good walking area and with wide views, more than compensates. It's about 7km from the town centre off the Kibosho road (about Tsh6000 in a taxi). There's a restaurant and outdoor tables for sundowners with Kilimanjaro in the distance.

## Eating & Drinking

**Coffee Shop** (☎ 027-275 2707; Hill St; snacks & meals from Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon, to 8pm Tue-Fri, to 6pm Sat) A laid-back vibe, garden seating, good coffee, and an assortment of homemade breads, cakes, yogurt, breakfast and light meals. Proceeds go to a church project.

**Tanzania Coffee Lounge** (☎ 027-275 1006; Chagga St; snacks from Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun) Milkshakes, bagels, great coffees and cappuccino, waffles and an internet connection.

**Hill Street Food Snacks & Take Away** (Hill St; snacks from Tsh1500) Cheap plates of local fast food below A&A Hill Street Accommodation.

**Salzburger Café** (☎ 027-275 0681; Kenyatta St; meals Tsh3500-5000; ☎ 8am-11pm) The Alps meet Africa at this classic place, which comes complete with waiters sporting faux-leopard skin vests, Austrian *kneipe* (bar) décor on the walls and a selection of good, cheap dishes (try Chicken Mambo Yote), all with amusing menu descriptions.

**Deli Chez** (☎ 027-275 1144; Hill St; meals Tsh3500-Tsh7000; ☎ lunch & dinner) Reasonably priced Indian food – both veg and nonveg – plus continental dishes and burgers.

**Indotaliano Restaurant** (☎ 027-275 2195; New St; meals about Tsh4000; ☎ 10am-11pm) The Indo portion of the menu – a range of standards, including some veg dishes – at this small, dark pavement restaurant is better than the Italian part (mediocre pizzas). It's just opposite Buffalo Hotel.

**El Rancho** (☎ 027-275 5115; meals from Tsh4000; ☎ closed Monday) Tasty Indian food, including some vegetarian dishes, in a garden setting. It's about 3km northwest of the centre off Lema Rd (no public transport).

For self-catering, try **Aleem's Grocery** (Boma Rd) or **Abbas Ally's Hot Bread Shop** (Boma Rd), situated opposite.

Other recommendations:

**Chrisburger** (☎ 027-275 0419; Kibo Rd; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Burgers and snacks.

**Glacier Inn** (cnr Lema & Kilimanjaro Rds; ☎ 4pm-late) Drinks and local-style meals in a large garden.

## Shopping

Some places to try for crafts:

**Our Heritage** (Hill St) Carvings, beadwork and other crafts; next to the Coffee Shop.

**Shah Industries** (☎ 027-275 2414; shahind@kilinet.co.tz) Leatherwork and other crafts, many made by people with disabilities. It's south of town over the railway tracks.

**Tahea Kili Crafts** (Hill St) Opposite the Coffee Shop, with batiks, basketry, woodcarvings and more; a portion of profits goes to a local women's group.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Most flights to Moshi use Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA), 50km west of town off the main highway. There's also the small Moshi airport about 3km southwest of town along the extension of Market St, which handles occasional charters. A contact here is www.kili-air.com.

From KIA, there are daily flights to Dar es Salaam (Tsh168,500), Zanzibar (Tsh168,500) and Entebbe (Uganda) on **Air Tanzania** (☎ 027-275 5205; Rengua Rd), near the Clock Tower. **Precision Air** (☎ 027-275 3495; Old Moshi Rd) has daily flights connecting KIA with Dar es Salaam, Mwanza (via Shinyanga, Tsh170,000 to Mwanza) and Nairobi (Kenya; US\$227).

### BUS

Buses and minibuses run throughout the day to Arusha (Tsh1200, one to 1½ hours) and Marangu (Tsh1000, one hour).

Akamba goes daily to Nairobi en route from Dar es Salaam, departing Moshi about 1.30pm. Alternatively, take one of the shuttle buses, departing Moshi at 6.30am and 11.30am, though you'll need to wait an hour in Arusha in transit; see p350. **Riverside** (1st fl, THB Bldg, Boma Rd) is just off the Clock Tower Roundabout, and **Impala** (☎ 275 3444; Kibo Rd) is just north of the Clock Tower.

To Dar es Salaam, lines include Dar Express (Tsh17,000), with Moshi departures (all originating in Arusha) at 6.30am, 7.15am, 8.30am, 9.30am and 10.30am; Royal Coach (Tsh22,000), originating in Arusha and departing Moshi

at 10.15am; and Scandinavian Express, departing Moshi at 9.30am (Tsh17,000) and 12.30pm (Tsh23,000). Akamba also goes to Dar (Tsh20,000), en route from Nairobi. If you're trying to get to Dar es Salaam in time for the afternoon ferry to Zanzibar, Dar Express' 6.30am bus usually arrives in time.

To get to Mwanza, the best lines are Scandinavian and Akamba, both of which should be booked in advance.

Except as noted, all transport leaves from the central bus station in the town centre between Market St and Mawenzi Rd. The station is chaotic and full of touts and disreputable types wanting to take advantage of new arrivals, and it can be quite intimidating getting off the bus (which is a good reason to take one of the lines that let you disembark at their offices). To minimise hassles, look for the area of the station where the taxis are gathered before disembarking and head straight over and hire a driver there, rather than getting caught in the fray by the bus door. Unless you know Moshi, it's worth paying the Tsh1500 to Tsh2000 for a taxi to your hotel, even if it's close enough to walk, just to get away from the station. When leaving Moshi, the best thing is to go to the station the day before without your luggage and book your ticket then, so that the next morning you can just arrive and board.

Bus offices include the following:

**Akamba** (☎ 027-275 3908; cnr New & Makinga Sts)

Around the corner from Buffalo Hotel.

**Dar Express** (Old Moshi Rd) Opposite KCNU Coffee Tree Hotel, off the Clock Tower roundabout.

**Royal Coach** (Aga Khan Rd) Opposite the bus stand, and just down from the mosque.

**Scandinavian Express** (☎ 027-275 1387; Mawenzi Rd)

One block south of the bus stand, opposite the Hindu temple.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Both Air Tanzania and Precision Air have free transport to/from KIA for their flights, departing from their offices two hours before flight time. Riverside and Impala (p350) have a shuttle to/from KIA (US\$10), departing from their Moshi offices at 6pm daily and coordinated with KLM flight departures. They also meet arriving passengers on KLM.

### TAXI & DALLA-DALLA

There are taxi stands near the Clock Tower and at the bus station. *Dalla-dallas* depart from next to the bus station.

## MACHAME

☎ 027

The rather ill-defined and spread-out village of Machame lies about 25km northwest of Moshi on Mt Kilimanjaro's lower slopes, surrounded by dense vegetation and stands of banana. Most visitors pass through briefly en route to Machame Gate, but with several good hotels and enjoyable hiking in the area it makes an agreeable alternative for those uninclined to conquer the mountain's higher slopes.

The main budget option for organising hikes and cultural activities in the area is the **Machame Cultural Tourism Program** (☎ 027-275 7033) based in Kyalia village, off the Arusha-Moshi road, somewhat past Machame proper, and about 4km before Kilimanjaro's Machame trail head. Its office is in the centre of Kyalia across the field from the *dalla-dalla* stop and next to the blue building with the Tanzanian flag. It's usually closed, but staff live in the nearby houses, so just ask around for cultural tourism. Everything is very basic, and you'll need to be self-sufficient with food and water, but rates are reasonable (Tsh6000 per group per day for a guide plus Tsh4000 per person per day for village development and administration fees). Take a Machame *dalla-dalla* from the main Moshi transport stand to the end of the line (Kyalia village, Tsh700).

For something more upmarket, Protea Hotel Aishi Machame makes a fine base for hikes, and staff can set you up with guides and a full description of the various routes in the area. Makoa Farm (see below) also arranges short cultural walks and horseriding for its guests.

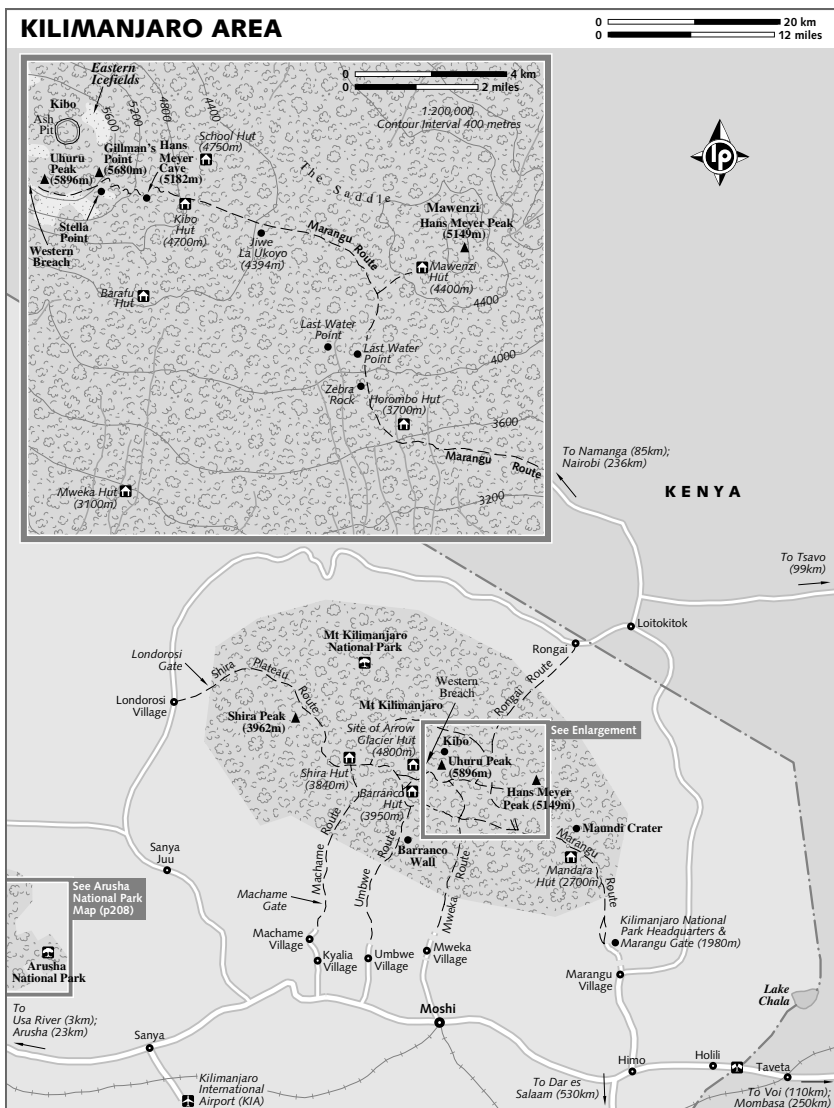
## Sleeping & Eating

The only budget option is home stays arranged through the Machame Cultural Tourism Program.

**Protea Hotel Aishi Machame** (☎ 027-275 6948, 027-275 6941; [proteaahireservations@satconet.net](mailto:proteaahireservations@satconet.net); s/d US\$115/145; 🍽️) A lovely place, with well-appointed rooms with dark-wood furnishings and beautiful, lush surrounding gardens reminiscent of an old country estate. The hotel is about 6km off the main highway and signposted to the right off the road to the Machame trailhead.

**Makoa Farm** (☎ 0754-312896; [www.makoa-farm.com](http://www.makoa-farm.com); d full board US\$268) This restored 1930s farmstead





is primarily a base for horse-riding safaris, but its guest cottages make a good break for non-riding partners who want to stay behind to relax. Meals are made with farm produce and served family-style together with the owners and an assorted menagerie of pets in the main farmhouse. Animal-lovers and nature enthusiasts only. There's a two-night mini-

num stay; walking and short rides can be arranged (for guests only). It's about 17km from Mochi, off the Machame road and unposted. Most Mochi taxis know the turn-off; otherwise ask for directions when booking. For details on its eight-day West Kilimanjaro safari and other multiday rides, see its website. Previous riding experience is required.

**COMMUNITY TOURISM SPOTLIGHT: KAHAWA SHAMBA**

**Kahawa Shamba** (☎ 027-275 0464, 027-275 2785, 0784-517995; [www.kirurumu.net/kahawa/index.htm](http://www.kirurumu.net/kahawa/index.htm); per person full board US\$110/196) is a laudable community-owned and community-run venture that offers insights into the lives of the Chagga coffee farmers who live on Kilimanjaro's lower slopes. It consists of a handful of Chagga huts near Lyamungo village, southeast of Machame and about 27km from Moshi near Umbwe village. While the huts are authentically constructed, they are outfitted with modern amenities such as en suite showers and twin beds, and are clean and comfortable. Meals with local families can be arranged, as can guided walks and horseriding, village and family visits, and learning about local coffee production methods. Book at least two weeks in advance, either via email, or at Kahawa Shamba's Moshi booking office in the KNCU building just off the Clock Tower roundabout. From Moshi, take a *dalla-dalla* to Kibosho-Umbwe (Tsh800, 45 minutes), from where you'll need to walk 20 to 30 minutes to the Lyamungo-Kibera area and Kahawa Shamba.

**MARANGU**

☎ 027

Nestled on the lower slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro 40km northeast of Moshi, amid dense stands of banana and coffee plants, is the lively, leafy market town of Marangu. The town has an agreeable highland ambience, a cool climate and a good selection of hotels, all of which organise treks. While you'll generally get slightly better budget deals in Moshi, it makes a convenient base for Kili climbs using the Marangu or Rongai routes, and an enjoyable stop in its own right.

Marangu is also the heartland of the Chagga people, and there are possibilities for walks and cultural activities in the surrounding area, including hikes to nearby caves, watching local blacksmiths at work and seeing traditional-style houses. The surrounding area is laced with waterfalls and small streams – *marangu* means 'place of water' – and there are also several nearby waterfalls to visit (most with a small entry charge).

Thanks to the large influx of foreign trekkers, the contrasts between the tourist scene (or the 'developed' world in general) and local life are just as stark in Marangu as in Arusha, although they stand out more in Marangu as it is so much smaller. Well-heeled trekkers come into town outfitted with the latest gear and climbing accessories, and drop from several hundred to several thousand dollars into the coffers of trekking companies, while, nearby, local vendors hawk their wares and struggle to find US\$200 per year to pay secondary-school tuition fees for their children.

**Information**

**Marangu Computer Centre** (per hr Tsh2000; ☎ 8am–6pm) Behind the post office.

**Sights & Activities**

Most hotels can arrange **walks and cultural activities** in the area. Good bets for learning more about local culture are Banana Jungle Lodge and Kilimanjaro Mountain Resort, both of which have authentic models of traditional Chagga houses. At Kilimanjaro Mountain Resort, there's also the **Chagga Live Museum** (admission US\$2; ☎ 10am–5pm), a small, outdoor museum illustrating traditional Chagga life. Most hotels can also provide English-speaking guides (US\$10 to US\$15 per person per day) to other attractions in the area, including caves that were used by the Chagga for hiding during the era of Maasai raids about 200 years ago, a sacred tree, local blacksmiths' workshops and waterfalls. About 6km southwest of Marangu is **Ngangu Hill**, with views and the small, old Kilema mission church nearby.

It's possible to do a **day hike** in Mt Kilimanjaro National Park from Marangu Gate as far as Mandara Hut (about two hours up, one hour down; US\$60 per person for park fees, plus US\$10 per guide, arranged at the park gate).

**Sleeping & Eating****BUDGET**

**Coffee Tree Campsite** (☎ 027-275 6513/6604; [kilimanjaro@iwayafrica.com](mailto:kilimanjaro@iwayafrica.com); camping US\$8, rondavel/chalet per person US\$12/15) On the pricey side, but reliable and well-maintained, with expansive, trim grounds, hot-water showers, tents for hire (Tsh10,000 per day) and several four- to six-person rondavels and chalets. It's about 700m

east of the main road, and signposted near Nakara Hotel.

Otherwise, budget options are limited to several places listed under Midrange that also offer camping, and a handful of places with very basic rooms sharing facilities and food on order. These include the no-frills **Bismarck Hut Lodge** (camping per person US\$5, r per person without bathroom US\$10), along the road to the park gate, shortly before the turn-off to Capricorn Hotel; and the marginally better **Kilimanjaro Parklands Hotel** (r per person US\$10), just up from and opposite Marangu Hotel at the entrance to town, which has the advantage of warm-ish showers.

### MIDRANGE

**Kibo Hotel** (☎ 027-275 1308; [www.kibohotel.com](http://www.kibohotel.com); camping per person US\$5, s/d US\$42/66) The Kibo, well over 100 years old, is where Hans Meyer stayed overnight before starting his famous first ascent of Kilimanjaro. (Another prominent guest in more recent times was Jimmy Carter.) Now the hotel is well past its prime, but the wooden flooring, large paned windows and surrounding gardens make it an atmospheric choice, and the rooms – albeit rustic – are quite spacious. It's about 1.5km west of the main junction, and there's a restaurant.

**Banana Jungle Lodge** (☎ 027-275 6565, 0754-270947; [www.yellowpages.co.tz/jungle/index.htm](http://www.yellowpages.co.tz/jungle/index.htm); camping per student/nonstudent US\$5/10, s/d/tr US\$50/60/75; meals US\$4-6) Accommodation at this large family homestead is in standard bungalow-style rooms or modernised Chagga huts, all surrounded by dense plantings of banana and other vegetation on the expansive grounds of the owners' house. It's not luxurious at all, although all the basics are there, but it's a refreshingly genuine and low-key place to learn about Chagga life and culture

and arrange cultural walks. There's also an authentic reproduction of a traditional Chagga house, a small working farm and an English-speaking guide. It's about 5km east of Marangu in Mamba, off the road leading to the Rongai Route trailhead. Head right (east) at Marangu's main junction, go 2km to the Mamba Lutheran church, turn left at the signboard, and then follow the signboards further for another 2.5km.

**Marangu Hotel** (☎ 027-275 6594; [www.maranguhotel.com](http://www.maranguhotel.com); camping per person with hot showers US\$5, s/d half board US\$70/100; ☎) This long-standing place is the first hotel you reach coming from Moshi, with a clipped British ambience, rooms set around expansive grounds and a camp site. Room discounts are available if you join one of the hotel's fully equipped climbs.

**Babylon Lodge** ([www.babylonlodge.net](http://www.babylonlodge.net); camping per person US\$7, s/d US\$25/45) A budget hotel at heart, masquerading behind midrange prices, the efficient Babylon has a row of small, clean twin and double-bedded rooms clustered around a tiny lawn, and is often somewhat more flexible than the other places on negotiating packages for Kili treks. It's about 700m east of the main junction.

**Kilimanjaro Mountain Resort** (☎ 027-275 8950; [www.kilimanjaroresort.com](http://www.kilimanjaroresort.com); camping per person US\$12, s/d from US\$50/90) This stately old-style building is surrounded by gardens and forest 3km west of the main junction, with spacious, well-appointed rooms – some with enormous beds – a restaurant (lunch/dinner US\$12/15) and the adjoining Chagga Live Museum.

**Nakara Hotel** (☎ 027-275 6571; r per person US\$50) A reliable if somewhat bland midrange establishment with reasonable twin or double-bedded rooms and a restaurant. It's just off the main road towards the park gate and signposted.

### YOHANI KINYALA LAUWO

The first Tanzanian to scale Kilimanjaro was Yohani Kinyala Lauwo, whose memory is still revered in his home town of Marangu. Lauwo was only 18 in 1889 when he was appointed by Chief Marealle I to be the guide for Hans Meyer (the first Westerner to reach Uhuru Peak). In those days the route was not defined, climbing equipment was rudimentary and wages were much lower. During his trek, Lauwo earned just Tsh1 per day.

Following this successful ascent, Lauwo remained in Marangu, where he spent much of the remainder of his life leading foreign trekkers up the mountain and training new guides. In 1989 at the 100th anniversary celebration of the first ascent of Kilimanjaro, Lauwo was the only person present who had been around a century earlier. Lauwo died in 1996, aged 125. His family still lives in Marangu.

## THE CHAGGA

Traditional Chagga-style houses are windowless, built in a round beehive form and covered with thick thatching that needs to be changed every few years. Inside, one half of the house is used for cattle, and the other side for parents' and childrens' sleeping areas, with a cooking area in the middle. Unlike in Sukumaland by Lake Victoria, where traditional-style houses are still widely used, Chagga houses these days are all more modern constructions.

The Chagga, who are widely spread around the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro, have absorbed numerous influences over the past two centuries, including blacksmithing skills from the neighbouring Pares. Traditionally, most Chagga have been farmers and also owned cattle, which historically led to conflict with the Maasai, who were notorious for entering Chagga lands and raiding their cattle and, according to the Chagga, their women. The period – dating to about 200 years ago – is referred to by many Chagga as the Chagga-Maasai war.

## Getting There & Away

Minibuses run throughout the day between Marangu and Moshi (Tsh1000). In Marangu they'll drop you at the main junction from where there are sporadic pick-ups to the park gate (Tsh500), 5km further. For the Holili border, you'll need to change at Himo junction.

## MT KILIMANJARO NATIONAL PARK

Since its official opening in 1977, Kilimanjaro National Park has become one of Tanzania's most visited parks. Unlike the other northern parks, this isn't for the wildlife – although wildlife is there. Rather, it's to gaze in awe at a mountain on the equator capped with snow, and to take advantage of the chance to climb to the top of Africa.

At the heart of the park is the 5896m Mt Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak and one of the continent's magnificent sights. It's also one of the highest volcanoes and among the highest freestanding mountains in the world, rising from cultivated farmlands on the lower levels, through lush rainforest to alpine meadows, and finally across a barren lunar landscape to the twin summits of Kibo and Mawenzi. The lower rainforest is home to many animals, including buffaloes, leopards and monkeys, and elands are occasionally seen in the saddle area between Kibo and Mawenzi peaks.

A trek up Kili lures hundreds of trekkers each year, in part because it's possible to walk to the summit without ropes or technical climbing experience. Yet, the climb is a serious (and expensive) undertaking, and only worth doing with the right preparation. There are also plenty of excellent options for exploring the mountain's lower slopes and learning about the Maasai and the Chagga, the

main tribes in the area. For some ideas, see the sections on Machame (p187), Marangu (p189) and West Kilimanjaro (p194).

For information on park fees – payable for all activities within the park area – see p192. There are entry gates at Machame: Marangu, which is also the site of park headquarters, Londorosi and several other points. Trekkers using the Rongai Route should pay their fees at Marangu Gate.

## TREKKING MT KILIMANJARO

Mt Kilimanjaro can be climbed at any time of year, though weather patterns are notoriously erratic and difficult to predict. During November and March/April, it's more likely that paths through the forest will be slippery, and that routes up to the summit, especially the Western Breach, will be covered by snow. That said, you can also have a streak of beautiful, sunny days during these times, and should come prepared for rain and bitter cold at any time of year. Overall, the best time for climbing the mountain is in the dry season, from late June to October, and from late December to February or early March, just after the short rains and before the long rains.

Don't underestimate the weather on Kilimanjaro. Conditions on the mountain are frequently very cold and wet, and you'll need a full range of waterproof cold-weather clothing and gear, including a good-quality sleeping bag. It's also worth carrying some additional sturdy water bottles. No matter what the time of year, waterproof everything, especially your sleeping bag, as things rarely dry on the mountain. It's often possible to rent sleeping bags and gear from trekking operators, or – for the Marangu Route – from the Kilimanjaro Guides Cooperative Society

## THE (MELTING) SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO

Since 1912, when they were first measured, Kilimanjaro's glaciers have lost over 80% of their ice, which means that they will have disappeared completely by 2020 if things continue at the present rate. Many factors are blamed, one of which is loss of forest cover on the mountain's lower slopes. (Fewer trees means there is less moisture in the air, which in turn means less precipitation, more solar rays getting through to the ice and faster evaporation.)

Various schemes have been dreamed up to halt further disappearance of the glaciers, including spreading huge white sheets over the remaining ice fields, although no one has yet come up with a sure remedy. Meanwhile, speculation is rife about what the disappearance of one of Tanzania's national symbols will mean for the country's tourist industry. For now, perhaps the only certain thing is that if you want to see the top of Kilimanjaro as Ernest Hemingway described it in his classic *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* – 'wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun' – you shouldn't wait long to book your trek.

stand just inside Marangu Gate. However, especially at the budget level, quality and availability can't be counted on, and it's best to bring your own.

Apart from a small shop at Marangu Gate selling a limited range of chocolate bars and tinned items, there are no shops inside the park. You can buy beer and sodas at high prices at huts on the Marangu Route.

### Costs

Kilimanjaro can only be climbed with a licenced guide. Unless you are a Tanzania resident and well-versed in the logistics of Kili climbs, the only realistic way to organise things is through a tour company. For operator listings and some tips see p54. No-frills five-day/four-night treks up the Marangu Route start at about US\$850, including park fees, and no-frills budget treks of six to seven days on the Machame Route start at around US\$900 to US\$1000, although it's highly recommended to budget at least one additional night for the ascent. Better-quality six-day trips on the Marangu and Machame routes start at about US\$1000. The Umbwe Route is often sold by budget operators for about the same price as Marangu, and billed as a quick and comparatively inexpensive way to reach the top. Don't fall for this – the route should only be done by experienced trekkers, and should have an extra acclimatisation day built in. For more information, see p194. Prices start at about US\$750 on the Rongai Route, and about US\$1100 for a seven-day trek on the Shira Plateau Route. As the starting points for these latter routes, particularly Rongai, are much further from Moshi than those for the other routes, transport costs can be sig-

nificant, so clarify whether they are included in the price.

Whatever you pay for your trek, remember that at least US\$525 of this goes to park fees for a five-day Marangu Route climb, and more for longer treks (US\$750 for a seven-day Machame-route climb). The rest of the money covers food, tents (if required), guides, porters and transport to and from the start of the trek. Most of the better companies provide dining tents, decent to good cuisine and various other extras to make the experience more enjoyable (as well as to maximise your chances of getting to the top). If you choose a really cheap trip you risk having inadequate meals, mediocre guides, few comforts and problems with hut bookings and park fees. Also remember that an environmentally responsible trek usually costs more. Bringing a stove and fuel, for example, requires additional porters because of the greater weight. (It's not permitted to use firewood on the mountain.)

### PARK FEES

Park entry fees – calculated per day, and not per 24-hour period – are US\$60/10 per adult/child aged five to 15 years, and must be paid in US dollars, cash or travellers cheques. Huts (Marangu Route) cost US\$50 per person per night, and there is a US\$20 rescue fee per person per trip for treks on the mountain. Camping costs US\$50 per person per night on all routes. Park fees are generally included in price quotes, and paid on your behalf by the trekking operator, but you'll need to confirm this before making any bookings. Guide and porter fees (but not tips) are handled directly by the trekking companies.

**Kilimanjaro National Park Headquarters** (☎ 027-275 6602/5; kinapa@iwayafrica.com) is at the park gate (open 8am-6pm) in Marangu.

### TIPPING

Most guides and porters receive only minimal wages from the trekking companies and depend on tips as their major source of income. As a guideline, plan on tipping about 10% of the total amount you've paid for the trek, divided up among the guides and porters. For the Marangu Route, tips are commonly from US\$40 to US\$60 for the guide, and from US\$15 each for the porters. Plan on more for the longer routes, or if the guide and porters have been particularly good.

### Guides & Porters

Guides, and at least one porter (for the guide), are obligatory and are provided by your trekking company. You can carry your own gear on the Marangu Route, although porters are generally used, but one or two porters per trekker are essential on all other routes.

All guides must be registered with the national park authorities. If in doubt, check that your guide's permit is up to date. On Kili, the guide's job is to show you the way and that's it. Only the best guides, working for reputable companies, will be able to tell you

about wildlife, flowers or other features on the mountain.

Porters will carry bags weighing up to 15kg (not including their own food and clothing, which they strap to the outside of your bag), and your bags will be weighed before you set off.

The guides and porters provided by some of the cheaper trekking outfits leave a lot to be desired. If you're a hardy traveller you might not worry about basic meals and substandard tents, but you might be more concerned about incompetent guides or dishonest porters. We've heard stories about guides who leave the last hut deliberately late on the summit day, to avoid going all the way to the top. The best way to avoid scenarios like this is by going with a reputable company, familiarising yourself with all aspects of the route, and – should problems arise – being polite but firm with your guide.

### Maps

Topographical maps include *Map & Guide to Kilimanjaro* by Andrew Wielochowski and *Kilimanjaro Map & Guide* by Mark Savage. MaCo's *New Map of the Kilimanjaro National Park* has useful gradient profiles, though you'll need to complement it with a topographical map for serious trekking.

### SERIOUS BUSINESS

Whatever route you choose, remember that ascending Kilimanjaro is a serious undertaking. While many hundreds of trekkers reach Uhuru Peak without major difficulty, many more don't make it because they ascend too quickly and suffer from altitude sickness. And, every year a few trekkers die on the mountain. Come prepared with appropriate footwear and clothing, and most importantly, allow yourself enough time. If you're interested in reaching the top, seriously consider adding at least one extra day onto the 'standard' climb itinerary, no matter which route you do. Although paying an additional US\$150 to US\$250 per extra day may seem a lot when you're planning your trip, it will appear as relatively insignificant savings later on if you've gone to the expense and effort to start a trek and then need to come down without having reached the top. Don't feel badly about insisting on an extra day with the trekking companies: standard medical advice is to increase sleeping altitude by only 300m per day once above 3000m – which is about one-third of the daily altitude gains above 3000m on the standard Kili climb routes offered by most operators. Another perspective on it all: Uhuru Peak is several hundred metres higher than Everest Base Camp in the Nepal Himalaya, which trekkers often take at least two weeks to reach from Kathmandu.

It's also worth remembering that it is not essential to reach Uhuru Peak, and you haven't 'failed' if you don't. If time (or money) is limited, you'd be far better off choosing other treks – you could experience several different mountain areas for the price of a single Kili climb. If you really want to sample Kili, instead of just pushing on for the summit, consider trekking up to an area such as the Saddle, the top of the Barranco Wall or the Shira Plateau to appreciate the splendour and magnificence of the mountain before descending.



## Trekking Routes

There are at least 10 trekking routes that begin on the lower slopes but only three continue to the summit. Of these, the **Marangu Route** is the easiest and the most popular. A trek on this route is typically sold as a five-day, four-night return package, although at least one extra night is highly recommended to help acclimatisation, especially if you've just flown in to Tanzania or just arrived from the lowlands. Lonely Planet's *Trekking in East Africa* has detailed description of the standard stages of this and other main routes.

Other routes on Kili usually take six days (which costs more, but helps acclimatisation) and pass through a wider range of scenic areas than the Marangu Route, although trekkers must use tents. The increasingly popular **Machame Route** has a gradual ascent, including a spectacular day contouring the southern slopes before approaching the summit via the top section of the Mweka Route. The **Umbwe Route** is much steeper, with a more direct way to the summit – very enjoyable if you can resist the temptation to gain altitude too quickly. Unfortunately, some trekking companies now push attractively priced five-day four-night options on the Umbwe Route in an effort to attract business. Although the route is direct, the top, very steep section up the Western Breach is often covered in ice or snow, which makes it impassable or extremely dangerous. Many trekkers who attempt it without proper acclimatisation are forced to turn back. An indication of its seriousness is that until fairly recently, the Western Breach was considered a technical mountaineering route. It has only gained in popularity recently because of intense competition for business and crowding on other routes. The bottom line is that you should only consider this route if you are experienced and properly equipped, and travelling with a reputable operator. Reliable operators will suggest an extra night for acclimatisation.

Another thing to watch out for is operators who try to sell a 'short' version of the Machame Route, which ascends the Machame Route for the first few stages, but then switches near the top to the final section of the Umbwe Route and summits via the Western Breach. This version is a day shorter (and thus less expensive) than the standard Machame Route, but the same considerations outlined

in the preceding paragraph apply here, and you should only consider this combination if you are experienced, acclimatised and properly equipped.

The **Rongai Route**, which has also become increasingly popular in recent years, starts near the Kenyan border and goes up the northern side of the mountain. It's possible to do this in five days, but it's better done in six. The attractive **Shira Plateau Route** (also called the Londerosi Route) is somewhat longer than the others, but good for acclimatisation if you start trekking from Londerosi Gate (rather than driving all the way to the Shira Track road head), or if you take an extra day at Shira Hut.

Trekkers on the Machame and Umbwe routes descend via the Marangu Route or the **Mweka Route**, which is for descent only. Some Marangu treks also descend on the Mweka Route.

Officially a limit of 60 climbers per route per day is in effect on Kilimanjaro. It is currently not being enforced, except on the Marangu Route, which is self-limiting because of maximum hut capacities. If and when this limit is enforced, expect the advance time necessary for booking a climb to increase, with less flexibility for last-minute arrangements.

## WEST KILIMANJARO

The West Kilimanjaro area – encompassing the Maasai lands running north of Sanya Juu village up to the Kenyan border and Amboseli National Park and around to Loitokitok – gained attention in recent times when eight local villages were granted permission to form the **Enduimet Wildlife Management Area**, one of just a handful of such community-managed wildlife areas in the country. For visitors, West Kilimanjaro is of interest for its relatively untouched savannah bush lands and its impressive wildlife populations, including, most notably, its elephants, lying as it does along an elephant corridor linking Amboseli with Mt Kilimanjaro National Park. The elephants have regained confidence over the past decade, as wildlife has increasingly become viewed as a local resource and poaching in the area has correspondingly decreased, and can be seen year-round. Among them is an unusually high number of large tuskers who are frequently spotted silhouetted against the backdrop of Mt Kilimanjaro. Other draws include the possibility of arranging visits to Maasai bomas, walks

and other cultural activities. West Kilimanjaro also offers easy access to the western/Lemoshu routes for mountain treks.

Hoopoe Safaris has a long-standing partnership with the local Maasai, and runs the excellent **Hemingway's Camp** ([www.hemingways-camp.com](http://www.hemingways-camp.com); s/d full board US\$540/680), an intimate place with just seven tents and a superb wilderness ambience, plus the chance for wildlife walks and drives and Maasai cultural activities.

Other possible bases include **Kambi ya Tembo** ([www.africawilderness.com](http://www.africawilderness.com); s/d full board US\$450/636), at Sinya on the Kenyan border, and the 12-tent **Ndarakwai Ranch** ([www.ndarakwai.com](http://www.ndarakwai.com)), just outside the conservation area, plus various small village camp sites.

## ARUSHA

☎ 027 / pop 300,000

Cool, lush and green, Arusha is one of Tanzania's most developed and fastest-growing towns. It sprawls near the foot of Mt Meru at about 1300m altitude, and enjoys a cool, temperate climate throughout the year. Arusha is also the gateway to the Serengeti and the other northern parks. As such, it is the safari capital of Tanzania and a major tourism centre. Although further from Kilimanjaro than Moshi and the trailhead towns, it's also the main base for organising Kilimanjaro treks.

Arusha is fringed by coffee, wheat and maize estates tended by the Arusha and Meru people, whom you may see in and around the central market, and who have occupied this area since about the 18th century. Beyond the farmland begin some of East Africa's most alluring landscapes, dominated by the Rift Valley escarpment and the volcanoes of the Crater Highlands.

Present-day Arusha traces its roots to the waning days of the 19th century, when the German boma was constructed. In 1967 Arusha became headquarters of the now defunct original East African Community. Today it is the seat of the new East African Community – a revived attempt at regional collaboration – and the site of the Rwanda genocide tribunal.

## Orientation

Arusha is divided by the small Naura River valley. To the west are the bus stations, the market and many budget hotels. To the east are most of the upmarket hotels, the post office, immigration, government buildings, sa-

fari companies, airline offices, craft shops and the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC). In the centre, and about a 10- to 15-minute walk from the bus stand, is the Clock Tower roundabout where the two main roads – Sokoine Rd to the west and Old Moshi Rd to the east – meet.

## MAPS

**MaCo** ([www.gtmaps.com](http://www.gtmaps.com)) puts out a good map of Arusha, widely available around town. There are small, free photocopied town maps at the tourist information centre.

## Information

### BOOKSHOPS

**Bookmark** (☎ 027-250 4053; Jacaranda St) Reasonably well-stocked, including various Africa titles.

### IMMIGRATION OFFICE

**Immigration office** (Simeon Rd; ☎ 7.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri) Near the Makongoro Rd junction; visa extensions are usually processed while you wait.

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Cybernet Café** (India St; per hr Tsh1500; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat)

**New Safari Hotel** (Boma Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 24hr)

**Patisserie** (Sokoine Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 7.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 8.30am-2pm Sun)

### MEDICAL SERVICES & EMERGENCIES

**Accident Air Rescue (AAR)**; (☎ 027-50 8020; [www.aarhealth.com](http://www.aarhealth.com); Plot 54, Haile Selassie Rd) Off Old Moshi Rd; lab tests and a doctor on call 24 hours.

**Moona's Pharmacy** (☎ 027-250 9800, 0713-510590; [moonas\\_pharmacy@cybernet.co.tz](mailto:moonas_pharmacy@cybernet.co.tz); Sokoine Rd; ☎ 8.45am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Well-stocked pharmacy, west of NBC bank.

**Selian Lutheran Hospital** (☎ 027-250 9974/5; <http://selianlh.habari.co.tz>) About 12km north of town in Ngaramtoni and signposted 3km off the main road.

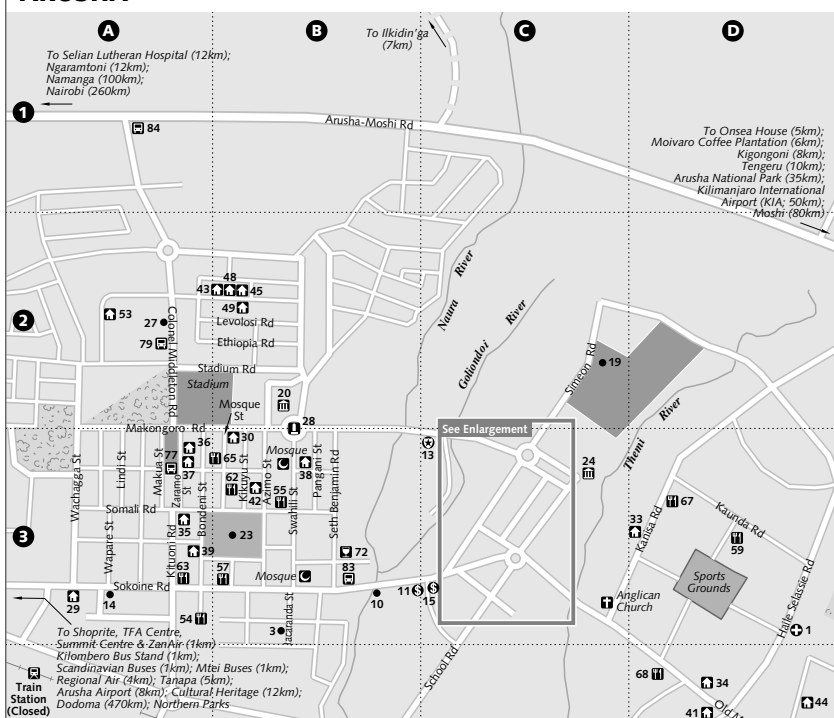
### MONEY

In addition to the forex bureaux located at Impala Hotel and other large hotels around town (most open on Sundays and until late on weekdays), there are many forex bureaux clustered around the northern end of Boma Rd, and along Joel Maeda St, near the Clock Tower.

**Barclays** (Sopa Lodges Bldg, Serengeti Rd) ATM (Visa and MasterCard).

**Exim Bank** (cnr Sokoine & Goliondoi Rds) ATM (Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro).

## ARUSHA



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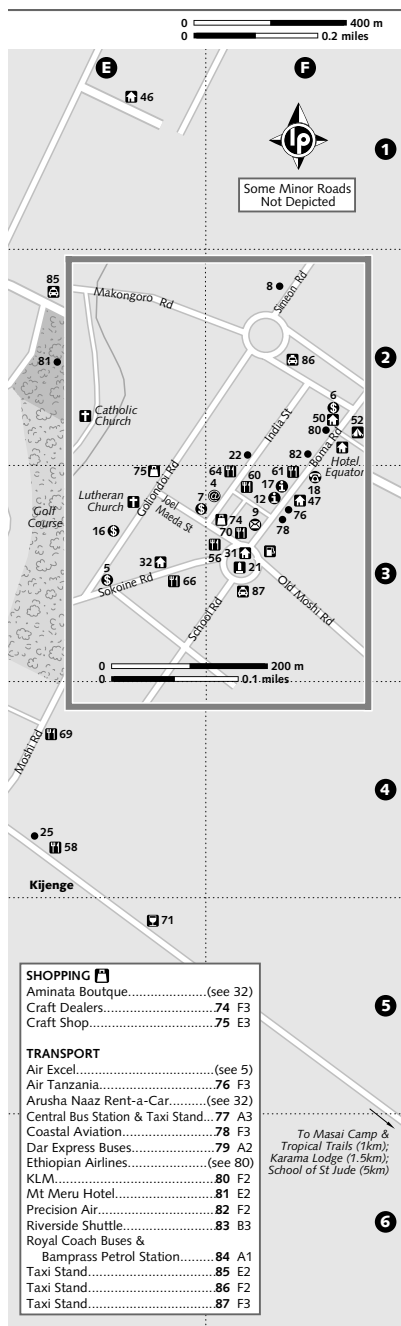
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Via Via.....	(see 24)	



**NBC** (Sokoine Rd) ATM (Visa); also changes travellers cheques.

**Stanbic Bank** (Sokoine Rd) ATM (Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro).

**Standard Chartered** (Goliondoi Rd) ATM (Visa).

## POST

**Main post office** (Boma Rd)

**Meru branch post office** (Sokoine Rd)

## TELEPHONE

**TTCL** (Boma Rd; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun & public holidays) International (from Tsh1000 per minute) and domestic calls; card phones.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

The travellers' bulletin board at the Tourist Information Centre is a good spot to find safari mates.

**Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) Information Office** (☎ 027-254 4625; www.ngorongoro-crater-africa.org; Boma Rd; ☎ 8am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) Booklets on Ngorongoro and a relief map of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

**Tanzania National Parks Headquarters** (Tanapa; ☎ 027-250 3471/4082/8216; www.tanzaniaparks.com; Dodoma road) About 5km west of town.

**Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) Tourist Information Centre** (☎ 027-250 3842/3; ttb-info@habari.co.tz; Boma Rd; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat) Just up from the post office and the Clock Tower roundabout, with helpful staff, information on Arusha, the nearby parks and other attractions, and booking help for Cultural Tourism Program tours. Also has a 'blacklist' of tour operators and a list of registered tour companies.

## TRAVEL AGENCIES

For listings of Arusha-based safari and trekking operators – most of which can also arrange itineraries elsewhere in the country – see p44.

**Coastal Aviation** (☎ 027-250 0087; arusha@coastal.co; Boma Rd) Northern and southern circuit itineraries, Zanzibar and flight charters.

**Rickshaw Travels** (☎ 027-250 6655; www.rickshawtz.com; Sokoine Rd) Domestic and international flight bookings.

## Dangers & Annoyances

Arusha is the worst place in Tanzania for street touts and slick tour operators who prey on the gullibility of newly arrived travellers by offering them safaris and treks at ridiculously low prices. Their main haunts include Boma Rd and Goliondoi Rd, at the central bus station

**COMMUNITY TOURISM SPOTLIGHT: SCHOOL OF ST JUDE** *Tony Wheeler*

He's the patron saint of hopeless cases, but St Jude would definitely be smiling at what has been achieved in his name in a school just outside Arusha. To score a place in Australian Gemma Sisia's pioneering establishment you have to meet two very different requirements. First you've got to be extremely bright: only the smartest kids get to even sit the entrance exam and only the best results get a place. Second you've got to be very poor: if you come from a home with more than two rooms or with electricity you're ineligible.

The School of St Jude kicked off in 2002 with a handful of kids and one teacher. By 2007 the school had expanded to 850 children, 60 teachers and 200 staff. A second primary school opens in 2008 and when those first students reach high school graduation age in 2014 the school population will have reached more than 2000. Has Gemma's plan worked, to provide a terrific education opportunity to dirt-poor kids? It's hard to argue with the results: St Jude students' exam scores are outranked only by the most expensive Tanzanian private schools. The huge pride that St Jude parents have in their kids and the fierce competition to get a place underline the school's impact even more effectively.

The school welcomes visitors Monday to Friday during term time, but you will need to email first – [schoolofstjude@habari.co.tz](mailto:schoolofstjude@habari.co.tz) – to make an appointment. See the 'Visit Us' page of the school website – [www.schoolofstjude.co.tz](http://www.schoolofstjude.co.tz) – for more information. Of course donations are appreciated, US\$10 to US\$20 is suggested, but lots of visitors are inspired to form a longer term relationship with the project. When you're there ask how they check and double-check to make certain students really do qualify as 'poor'.

and near the budget hotels at the northern and western ends of town. Ensure that any tour company you sign up with is properly registered; get recommendations from other travellers and check the current 'blacklist' at the TTB Tourist Information Centre on Boma Rd. Also see the Choosing an Operator and Safari Scams & Schemes boxed texts in the Safaris chapter (p45).

At night, take a taxi if you go out. It's not safe to walk after dusk, especially over the bridge on Old Moshi Rd near the Clock Tower.

**Sights & Activities**

The small **Arusha Declaration Museum** (☎ 027-250 7800; [www.museum.or.tz](http://www.museum.or.tz); Makongoro Rd; adult/student US\$5/2; ☎ 9am-5.30pm) near the Uhuru monument has an interesting display on post-colonial Tanzanian history, while the even smaller **Natural History Museum** (☎ 027-250 7540; [www.museum.or.tz](http://www.museum.or.tz); Boma Rd; adult/student US\$5/2; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5.30pm Sat & Sun), in the old German boma, has a few fossils and old photos, and is worth a stop if you are in the area. Other diversions include the colourful **market**, which is a good place to buy the tire-tread sandals worn by many Maasai as protection against thorns in the bush, and the many **Cultural Tourism Programs** (p204) in the surrounding countryside.

It's still possible to observe the proceedings of the **UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda** at the AICC building on Simeon Rd, which take place Monday to Thursday; admission is free but you'll need your passport.

**Sleeping BUDGET****Camping**

**Vision Campsite** (off Boma Rd; camping per person Tsh3000) Small, shaded and very basic, this is the only place to pitch a tent in the town centre. Hot water buckets can be arranged. It's next to Equator Hotel.

**Masai Camp** (☎ 027-250 0358, 0754-829514; [masai\\_camp@africamail.com](mailto:masai_camp@africamail.com); camping per person US\$5, bandas per person without bathroom US\$7, r per person without bathroom US\$10; ☎) A long-time favourite, popular with overlanders and on the noisy side, with expansive grounds, hot showers, pool tables, satellite TV, a restaurant with pizzas, burgers and other meals and a happening bar. Tents and sleeping bags are available to be hired, and there are a few no-frills rooms. It's 3km southeast of town off Old Moshi Rd (Tsh2500 in a taxi), and also the base for Tropical Trails (p54).

**Meserani Snake Park** (☎ 027-253 8282; [www.meseranisnakepark.com](http://www.meseranisnakepark.com); camping per person incl admission to snake park US\$10) This overlander-ori-

ented place has good facilities, including hot showers, a restaurant (meals US\$6) a vehicle repair shop and emergency rooms if you're ill. Short walks and camel rides in the surrounding Maasai area can be organised (per person US\$5), and there's a snake park and a small Maasai cultural museum. It's 25km west of Arusha, just off the Dodoma road.

### Guesthouses & Hotels – Colonel Middleton Road Area

In the small dusty streets just east of Colonel Middleton Rd and north of the stadium (a 10-minute walk from the bus station) is a clutch of cheap places offering no-frills rooms – most twin-bedded with nets and shared bathrooms (hot water available on request), and most without food. The area isn't great, but many travellers stay here because it's reasonably close to the bus stand, and prices are among the lowest in town. While some of the accommodations are decent value, others let flycatchers onto their premises and should be avoided. Watch out for smooth talkers wanting to sell you safaris or trying to steer you to a hotel other than the one you've picked out.

**Levolosi Guest House** (s/d without bathroom Tsh4000/5000) Diagonally opposite the main Monjes Guesthouse building, with undistinguished although adequate rooms around an enclosed cement courtyard.

**Kitundu Guesthouse** (d Tsh12,000, s/d without bathroom Tsh5000/10,000) Another decent, reliable choice, with clean but basic rooms, including a few with bathroom.

**Monjes Guesthouse** (d Tsh12,000, s without bathroom Tsh9000) This friendly establishment is one of the better ones of the bunch, with clean, no-frills rooms with hot water. It's split between a main building and an annex diagonally opposite.

**William's Inn** (☎ 027-250 3578; s/d US\$20/25) This reliable place is short on ambience, but the rooms (the doubles have one large bed) are clean and good value. It's on the other side of Colonel Middleton Rd from the previous listings, and somewhat quieter.

**Golden Rose** (☎ 027-250 7959; Middleton Rd; s/d Tsh25,000/35,000) Functional twin and double-bedded rooms – all with bathroom and hot-water showers – in a convenient location near the Dar Express bus office.

### Guesthouses & Hotels – Market Area

These places are all in the busy central market area in the western part of town, marginally closer to the bus stand than the Colonel Middleton Rd area hotels, and generally a few steps up in both price and quality.

**Arusha Backpackers** (☎ 027-250 4474; www.arusha-backpackers.co.tz; Sokoine Rd; s/d/q US\$6/12/20) Newish, but already popular, with cheap, clean rooms and clean shared facilities. However, most of the doubles have only interior windows, and a few have no windows at all. Several rooms have fans. There's also a two-bunk quad. It's managed by Kindoroko Hotel in Moshi.

**Kilimanjaro Villa Guest House** (☎ 027-250 8109; Azimo St; s/d without bathroom Tsh7000/10,000) This low-key place is well past its prime, with tatty but acceptable rooms and warm-ish water in the shared bathrooms. It's on a small side street a few blocks east of the bus stand. There's no food.

**Hotel Fort de Moines** (☎ 027-250 7406; 027-254 8523; s/d US\$20/25) The incongruously named Fort de Moines is a few steps up from the others in this listing in both price and standard, with bland straightforward rooms with fans but no nets. It's good value if you're looking for a 'proper' hotel at budget prices.

**Arusha Centre Inn** (☎ 027-250 0421; s/d US\$20/25) Next door to Hotel Fort de Moines, and nicer, with spotless rooms that are good value for the price, a restaurant and a location within easy walking distance of the bus stand.

**Hotel 7-11** (☎ 027-250 1261; s/d/tw US\$25/30/35) Directly opposite the central bus station (look for the white multistorey building), with clean, albeit noisy rooms that are decent value for the doubles. The street outside is chaotic enough that it's only worth considering if you have an early morning departure.

**Hotel Pallsons** (☎ 027-254 8483; hotel\_pallsons@yahoo.com; Market St; s/d US\$30/37) This old-timer has faded but functional and relatively spacious rooms in a noisy, central location opposite the market.

### Guesthouses & Hotels – Clock Tower Roundabout & Beyond

All of the following places are in the green and leafy and overall quieter eastern part of town. There are also budget rooms at L'Oasis Lodge (see Midrange listings).

**Lutheran Centre** (☎ 027-50 8856/7; elcthq@elct.or.tz; Boma Rd; s/d without bathroom Tsh8000/15,000) If the drab, institutional atmosphere doesn't put you



off, rooms here – all with shared facilities – are quite decent value. There's no food, and unless you've made prior arrangements, check-in and check-out are during regular business hours Monday to Friday only. It's diagonally opposite the post office in a poorly signposted multistorey building above Café Bamboo.

**Centre House Hostel** (☎ 027-250 2313; Kanisa Rd; r per person without bathroom Tsh10,000) Run by the Catholic diocese, this no-frills place has spacious rooms with shared facilities, and meals (from Tsh3000) on order. Most rooms are doubles, but there's a quad and a triple. The gates shut at 10pm unless you've made previous arrangements. It's about 300m in from Old Moshi Rd.

**Outpost Lodge** (☎ 027-254 8405; www.outposttanzania.com; Serengeti Rd; 6-bed dm US\$25, s/d/tr US\$45/58/75; 🏠 🚿) The Outpost, in a leafy residential area 500m off Old Moshi Rd and about 1km southeast of the Clock Tower roundabout, has a few dorm-style rooms in an old two-storey house, plus small and pleasant detached garden bungalows scattered around the lawns. All have mosquito nets and TV, and there's a restaurant and a tiny gym.

**Everest Inn** (☎ 027-250 8419; everesttzu@yahoo.com; Old Moshi Rd; s/d/tr US\$30/40/55) Clean, homy rooms behind the Everest Chinese restaurant. There's a triple in the main house, and better, quiet twins and doubles in a small building in the garden behind. All come with mosquito nets and bathroom, and a choice of Western or Chinese breakfast. It's 500m southeast of the Clock Tower roundabout, and signposted along Old Moshi Rd.

**Arusha Naaz Hotel** (☎ 027-257 2087; www.arushanaaz.net; Sokoine Rd; s/d/tr US\$30/45/60; 🏠) Naaz' atmosphere is uninspiring, but the location is convenient and the rooms are decent and spotless, all with TV, fan and hot water. Size and standards vary, so check out a few. Downstairs is a restaurant with inexpensive breakfasts, a lunch buffet (daily except Sunday) and a car rental office.

## MIDRANGE

**Le Jacaranda** (☎ 027-254 4624; jacaranda@tz2000.com; s/d/tr US\$40/45/65) Spacious, pleasantly faded rooms in a large house set in pretty gardens, and a restaurant (meals from Tsh5000). It's on a quiet side street about 100m north of Old Moshi Rd at the eastern end of town.

**Arusha Crown Hotel** (☎ 027-250 8523; www.arushacrownhotel.com; cnr Makongoro Rd & Mosque St; s/d

US\$60/80) Well-equipped local business travellers' hotel in a rather scruffy area overlooking the stadium just a few blocks from the bus stand.

**L'Oasis Lodge & Restaurant** (☎ 027-250 7089; www.loasislodge.com; s/d/tr US\$69/85/111, backpackers r per person without bathroom US\$18; 🏠 🚿) This popular and clued-in place has a mix of African-style rondavels and airy stilt houses set around pleasant gardens, including several rooms with telephone/internet connection and power-surge protection. Near the main lodge are a dozen clean, twin-bedded backpacker rooms sharing hot-water bathrooms. There's also a restaurant (see Lounge, p201), a sports bar, a tree-house dining/drinking area and a pool. Accommodation prices include full breakfast, and discounts for Peace Corps, VSOs and other volunteers are available for the non-backpacker rooms. Overall, a good balance between proximity to town and relaxing surroundings. It's 2km northwest of the Clock Tower, about 1km off the Moshi–Nairobi road and signposted diagonally opposite the old Mt Meru Hotel.

**New Safari Hotel** (☎ 027-250 3261; Boma Rd; s/d/tr US\$85/105/135; 🏠 🚿) Good-value rooms catering to business travellers in a centrally located high-rise, plus a restaurant, secure parking and 24-hour internet access.

## TOP END

### City Centre

**Impala Hotel** (☎ 027-250 8448/51, 027-250 2362; www.impalahotel.com; cnr Moshi & Old Moshi Rds; s/d US\$75/95; 🏠 🚿) Large, reliable and centrally located, this establishment is good value, with a forex bureau, several restaurants, a small garden area and good, hot showers in the rooms in the new wing. The same management is building the soon-to-open high-rise Naura Springs Hotel off the Nairobi–Moshi road.

**Kibo Palace Hotel** (☎ 027-254 4472; www.kibopalacehotel.com; Old Moshi Rd; s/d from US\$145/165; 🏠 🚿) The new Kibo Palace has lovely, well-appointed rooms, a restaurant, and a pool in small, green grounds.

**Arusha Hotel** (☎ 027-250 7777/8870; Clock Tower roundabout; r from US\$200; 🏠 🚿) The Arusha Hotel (formerly the New Arusha Hotel) has been completely renovated and is a recommended central choice in this category. Rooms are of a high standard, there's a restaurant with a daily lunch buffet (US\$12), and expansive gardens behind.

## Outside the City Centre

**Karama Lodge** (☎ 0754-475188; www.karama-lodge.com; s/d US\$79/107; 📍) Karama, on a forested hillside in the Suye Hill area just south of town, offers proximity to both nature and the town centre. Accommodation is in about two dozen rustic and very lovely stilt bungalows, each with a veranda with views to both Kilimanjaro and Meru on clear days. There are short walking trails nearby, and a restaurant, which also caters to vegetarians. Follow Old Moshi Rd south about 2km from the edge of town to the signpost; turn left and continue 1.5km further.

**Moivaro Coffee Plantation** (☎ 027-255 3242/3; www.moivaro.com; s/d US\$100/136; 📍 📺) Set amid the coffee plantations east of Arusha, with cosy cottages, each with its own fireplace, and extensive gardens, this place is justifiably popular as a pre- and post-safari overnight respite for upper-midrange safaris. It's 5km outside town along the road to Moshi, then about 2km off the highway along a signposted, unpaved road. Day rooms are also available.

**Onsea House** (www.onseahouse.com; s/d US\$145/175; 📍) A new, lovely place self-described with some accuracy as the 'best luxury bed and breakfast in Arusha'. Each room has its own theme, there's a bar and small restaurant, and gardens. Very tranquil and very classy. The turn-off is signposted along the Moshi road about 4km from town, from where it's another 1km or so further.

**Kigongoni** (☎ 027-255 3087; www.kigongoni.net; s/d/tr US\$155/210; 📍) Kigongoni has a tranquil hilltop perch about 8km outside Arusha, a cosy common area with fireplaces and reading nooks, a restaurant and spacious cottages, all with porches, large bathtubs and wide views. Birding and village walks are possible in the surrounding area, and a portion of the lodge's profits go to support a nearby clinic for children with mental disabilities. Follow the Moshi road east for 8km to the signposted turn-off, from where it's another 1km.

## Eating

**Spices & Herbs** (☎ 027-250 2279; Moshi Rd; meals from Tsh3500; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) If you've had your fill of Tanzanian fare, this is the best spot in town for Ethiopian cuisine.

**Amar Cuisine** (☎ 027-250 6911; meals about Tsh4000; 🍽️ 11am-3pm & 6pm-midnight) Just off Sokoine Rd at the end of Bondeni St, with tandoori and other Indian dishes, including some vegetar-

ian selections. Allow 30 to 45 minutes' preparation time for meals.

**Via Via** (meals Tsh4000-6000; 🍽️ 9.30am-10pm Fri-Wed, to midnight Thu, closed Sun) Set in quiet gardens behind the Natural History Museum, this laid-back place is a popular meeting spot, with salads, sandwiches, fresh bread, cakes, yogurt and light meals (a mixture of local and European fare), plus a bar and live music on Thursdays from 9pm.

**Dragon Pearl** (☎ 027-254 4107; Old Moshi Rd; meals Tsh4000-8000; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) A good bet for delicious Chinese food, with a garden setting, fast service and an attentive host. It's around the corner from Impala Hotel.

**Jambo's Makuti Bar & Restaurant** (Boma Rd; meals from Tsh5000; 🍽️ to 10pm) European café vibes in a Tanzanian setting. There's an à la carte menu with a mix of Tanzanian and local dishes, and a plate of the day for about Tsh5500. Jambo's Coffee House (Boma Rd) next door has cakes, snacks and good coffee.

**Sazan** (Old Moshi Rd; meals Tsh5000-6000) This tiny, incongruous place – directly on the roadside adjoining a used car lot – has inexpensive Japanese fast food-style meals.

**Khan's Barbecue** (Mosque St; mixed grill from Tsh6000; 🍽️ from 6.30pm) This Arusha institution – 'Chicken on the Bonnet' – is an auto-spares store by day and a popular and very earthy barbecue by night, with a heaping spread of grilled, skewered meat and salads. Look for the Zubeda Auto Spares sign.

**Everest Inn** (☎ 027-250 8419; everestz@yahoo.com; Old Moshi Rd; meals from Tsh6000; 🍽️ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Tasty Chinese food served in an outdoor garden, or indoors in an old, atmospheric house. The restaurant also runs a small guest-house (see p200).

**Big Bite** (cnr Somali Rd & Swahili St; meals from Tsh6500; 🍽️ closed Tue) Delicious Indian food, including numerous vegetarian dishes, in a no-frills setting.

**Impala Hotel** (☎ 027-250 8448/51; www.impalahotel.com; cnr Moshi & Old Moshi Rds; meals from Tsh6500) There are several eateries here, with the open-air Indian restaurant the best of the bunch, with delicious tandoori and various veg choices.

**Pepe's** (Kanisa Rd; pizza from Tsh6000; mains Tsh7000-15,000; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) Outdoor garden seating or indoors under a large, covered pavilion, well-prepared Italian and continental food, and (evenings) good Indian cuisine. It's 500m off Old Moshi Rd and signposted.

**Lounge** (☎ 027-250 7089; meals from Tsh8000; ☹ 10am-late) A low-key place with delicious, great-value cuisine, featuring homemade tagliatelle, gourmet wraps, crispy salads, meat and seafood grills, pizzas and 'Kilimanjaro nachos'. Everything is freshly made and served in generously large portions against a relaxed backdrop of lounge seating and music. It's at L'Oasis Lodge (see p200), on the northern edge of town.

**Flame Tree** (☎ 0754-370474; trw@cybernet.co.tz; just off Kaunda Rd; set menu about Tsh20,000, mains Tsh8000-17,000; ☹ noon-2pm & 7-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-2pm Sun) This popular place, now in a new location several blocks in from Old Moshi Rd, has cosy seating that's ideal for an intimate dinner or quiet lunch, and well-prepared and well-presented continental cuisine featuring all fresh ingredients.

For inexpensive burgers, pizza, sandwiches and other Western-style fast food try the ever-popular **Patisserie** (Sokoine Rd; snacks & meals from Tsh1500; ☹ 7.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 8.30am-2pm Sun), which also has soup, light meals and an internet café; **McMoody's** (Sokoine Rd; ☹ 11am-10pm Tue-Sun), with mostly burgers; and a branch of the South African chain, **Steers** (Joel Maeda St).

For more local flavour, try **Geekay's Take-Away** (India St; meals from Tsh1000; ☹ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Sat), and **Mirapot** (India St; meals from Tsh1000), diagonally opposite, both with inexpensive plates of rice, *ugali* (a staple made from maize or cassava flour, or both) and sauce. There's a good-value lunch buffet at **Arusha Naaz Hotel** (☎ 027-257 2087; www.arushanaaz.net; Sokoine Rd; lunch buffet US\$5; ☹ lunch Mon-Sat), with mostly Indian cuisine, and the clean, no-frills **Old Rock Restaurant** (Mosque St; meals Tsh2000-5000) has burgers and local-style meals near the main market.

Just out of town adjoining Shoprite is the TFA Centre, with gelato and gourmet coffee shops. Most shops at the mall are open from about 9am to 6pm Monday to Saturday, and between around 10am and 2pm on Sunday.

For self-caterers:

**Clocktower Supermarket** (Clock Tower roundabout)  
**Shoprite** (Dodoma Rd; ☹ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat, 9am-1pm Sun) About 2km west of the town centre, with a large selection.

## Drinking & Entertainment

**Via Via** (Boma Rd) A good spot for a drink and one of the best places to find out about upcoming music and traditional dance events; it's in the grounds of the Natural History Museum.

**Greek Club** (cnr Old Moshi & Serengeti Rds; ☹ closed Mon & Thu) A popular expat hang-out, especially on weekend evenings; it has free movies on Sunday afternoon, good pizza and a lively sports bar.

**Colobus Club** (Old Moshi Rd; admission Tsh5000; ☹ 9pm-dawn Fri & Sat) Arusha's loudest and brashest nightclub.

**Crystal Club** (Seth Benjamin Rd; ☹ from 11pm Fri & Sat) Come here for dancing till late.

## Shopping

The small alley just off Joel Maeda St is lined with vendors selling woodcarvings, batiks, Maasai jewellery and other crafts. Quality is generally good, but hard bargaining is required. Other places to try include the nearby **Craft Shop** (☎ 027-254 8565; Golioidoi Rd), with mostly carvings, and the large and unmissable **Cultural Heritage** (Dodoma Rd), 12km west of town. Quality and selection here are good, although intermediaries get a fairly large cut of the (high) purchase prices. **Aminata Boutique** (Sokoine Rd), in the covered entry passage to Arusha Naaz Hotel, has textiles.

Colourful local-produce markets in the region include the **Ngarantoni market**, on Thursday and Sunday, 12km north of town on the Nairobi road, which draws Maasai from miles around; and the **Tengeru market**, on Saturday, with a smaller market on Wednesday. It's 10km east of town along the Moshi road.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

There are daily flights to Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar (ZanAir, Coastal Aviation, Precision Air and Air Tanzania), Nairobi (Precision Air), Seronera and other airstrips in Serengeti National Park (Coastal Aviation, Air Excel, Regional Air), Mwanza (Precision Air, via Shinyanga), and Lake Manyara and Tarangire National Parks (Coastal Aviation, Air Excel, Regional Air). Some flights use Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA), about halfway between Moshi and Arusha off the main highway, while others leave from Arusha airport, 8km west of town along the Dodoma road; verify the departure point when buying your ticket. International airlines flying into KIA include KLM and Ethiopian Air. Some sample prices: Arusha-Dar (Tsh160,000), Arusha-Mwanza (Tsh165,000) and Arusha-Seronera (US\$150).

Airline offices include:

**Air Excel** (☎ 027-254 8429, 027-250 1597; reservations@airexcelonline.com; 2nd fl, Subzali (Exim Bank) Bldg, Goliondoi Rd) Diagonally opposite Standard Chartered Bank.

**Air Tanzania** (☎ 027-250 3201, 027-250 3203; www.airtanzania.com; Boma Rd)

**Coastal Aviation** (☎ 027-250 0087; 0754-317808; arusha@coastal.cc; Boma Rd)

**Ethiopian Airlines** (☎ 027-250 6167, 027-250 4231; www.ethiopianairlines.com; Boma Rd)

**KLM** (☎ 027-250 8062/3; reservations.arusha@klm.com; Boma Rd)

**Precision Air** (☎ 027-250 2818/36; www.precisionairtz.com; Boma Rd; ✉ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat & Sun)

**Regional Air** (☎ 027-250 4477, 027-250 2541; www.airkenya.com; Nairobi Rd)

**ZanAir** (☎ 024-223 3670, 024-223 3768; Summit Centre, Sokoine Rd)

## BUS

Arusha has two main bus stations: the central bus station near the market, for buses to Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Mwanza, Nairobi, Mombasa and other points north and east; and the Kilombero bus station, 2km west of town along the Dodoma road, opposite Shoprite, for buses to Babati, Kondo and points south. Buses to Singida (via Babati) and other destinations towards Lake Victoria also leave from the central bus station. Both, but especially the central bus station, are chaotic and popular haunts for flycatchers and touts. Watch your luggage, and don't negotiate any safari deals at the stations. If you're arriving for the first time, head straight for a taxi, or – if arriving at the central station – duck into the lobbies of Hotel 7-11 or Hotel Aquiline, both across the street, to get your bearings.

If you're arriving at the central bus station (and unless you're staying in the budget-hotel area downtown, in which case it makes sense to stay on the bus), you can avoid the bus station altogether by asking the driver to drop you off in front of the (currently closed) Mt Meru Hotel. All buses coming from Dar es Salaam and Moshi pass by here. There are taxis just opposite, and the scene is less hectic than at the central station. Fares from here to central hotels shouldn't be more than Tsh2000. When leaving Arusha, the best thing to do is book your ticket the day before, so that in the morning when you arrive with your luggage you can get straight on your bus. For

pre-dawn buses, take a taxi to the station and ask the driver to drop you directly at your bus. Despite what you may hear, there are no luggage fees (unless you have an extraordinarily large pack).

## To/From Dar es Salaam

The main lines to/from Dar es Salaam (all about nine hours) include the following. All depart from and arrive at their own offices away from the main bus stations.

**Dar Express** (Colonel Middleton Rd, just down from Sunny Safaris; tickets Tsh17,000) Buses depart Arusha at 5.15am and 6am sharp and, with luck, arrive in Dar es Salaam in time to catch the 4.15pm ferry to Zanzibar (the 5.15am bus is the best bet for this). If you're trying to do this, don't get off at Ubungu bus station in Dar es Salaam, but stay on the bus until it terminates at its offices in the city centre near Kisutu, from where it's Tsh2500 and about 10 minutes in a taxi to the ferry docks. If the bus is running behind schedule from Arusha, it's occasionally faster to get off at Ubungu and get a taxi from there straight to the ferry dock, but only marginally so, and the taxi from Ubungu will cost you several times as much. Other departures from Arusha are at 7am, 8am, 9.15am and 10.30am.

**Royal Coach** (☎ 0784-851831; royalty2000@hotmail.com; cnr Nairobi & Colonel Middleton Rds; tickets Tsh22,000) Departures at 8.30am from Bamprass petrol station on the Nairobi Rd in Mianzini (Tsh2500 in a taxi from the Clock Tower).

**Scandinavian Express** (small side street next to Kilombero Bus Stand, & opposite Shoprite; tickets Tsh18,000/24,000 ordinary/luxury) Ordinary and luxury departures at 8.30am and a second luxury bus at 11.30am.

## To/From Moshi

Buses and minibuses run throughout the day between Arusha and Moshi (about Tsh1200, one hour). It's pricier but safer and more comfortable to take one of the Arusha-Nairobi shuttles (p350; Tsh5000 between Moshi and Arusha).

## To/From Nairobi (Kenya)

For information on this route see p350. Akamba buses to Nairobi en route from Dar es Salaam depart Arusha about 2.30pm from next to Eland Hotel in Mianzini, along the Nairobi road.

**To/From Babati, Kolo, Kondo & Dodoma** Mtei line buses run three to four times daily (from the Mtei booking office next to the Scandinavian Express booking office

near Shoprite) between Arusha and Babati (Tsh5000, four hours), departing between 6am and 2pm. The 6am bus continues on to Kondo (Tsh10,000, seven hours). Otherwise, for Kondo and Dodoma (about 12 hours), you'll need to change vehicles at Babati, as most transport to Dodoma uses the longer tarmac route via Chalinze. This generally involves an overnight in Babati, as most southward transport from Babati departs early in the morning.

### To/From Musoma & Mwanza

Falcon and Spider lines go from the central bus stand to Mwanza via Nairobi and Musoma (Tsh38,000 plus US\$20 for a Kenyan transit visa, 20 hours), departing Arusha at about 3.30pm.

The other option is to go via Singida and Shinyanga in a rugged southwestern loop (about Tsh30,000), where the road is much better than it was. Check with Coast and Jordan lines at the central bus stand.

### To/From Kampala (Uganda)

Scandinavian Express goes daily between Arusha and Kampala (Tsh30,000, 17 hours), departing in each direction about 3pm. For more information on connections to Kampala see p353.

### To/From Lushoto

Fasaha and Chikito line buses depart daily at about 6.30am (Tsh9000, six hours). However it often works out just as fast (although more expensively) to take an express bus heading for Dar as far as Mombo, and then get local transport from there to Lushoto.

### To/From Tanga

Tashriff departs Arusha daily for Tanga at 8.30am and 11.30am (seven hours). Otherwise, take any Dar es Salaam bus and transfer at Segera junction, though this can entail a rather lengthy wait.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM KILIMANJARO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Both Air Tanzania and Precision Air have free shuttles to KIA for their passengers, departing from their offices about two hours before the scheduled flight departure. In the other direction, look for the airlines' buses in the airport arrivals area.

Riverside Shuttle has a daily bus to Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) coordinated with KLM departures and arrivals. It costs US\$10 and departs at 6pm sharp from its office. It also waits for arriving passengers; look out for the bus in the airport arrivals area.

The starting price for taxis from town to KIA is Tsh50,000, though it's usually possible to almost halve this.

### TO/FROM ARUSHA AIRPORT

Any *dalla-dalla* heading out along the Dodoma road can drop you at the junction, from where you'll have to walk about 1.5km to the airstrip. Taxis from town charge from Tsh8000.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

**Arusha Naaz Rent-a-Car** (☎ 027-250 2087; www.arushanaaz.net) An efficient, reliable outfit based at Arusha Naaz Hotel (see p200), with a selection of 2WD and 4WD vehicles. Self-drive rentals can sometimes be arranged for Arusha town rentals only. Rates (from US\$80 to US\$100 per day for 4WD) include 120 free kilometres per day.

### TAXI

There are taxi stands around the central bus station, opposite the old Mt Meru Hotel, on the southern side of the Clock Tower roundabout near the Arusha Hotel, and at the eastern end of Makongoro Rd. Town rides cost from Tsh2000.

## AROUND ARUSHA

### Cultural Tourism Programs

There are many Cultural Tourism Programs in the Arusha area, with the following just a sampling. The TTB information office (p197) is the best place for details. For booking information, see the boxed text, above.

### NG'IRESI

This popular tour to Ng'iresi village, about 7km northeast of Arusha on the slopes of Mt Meru, includes visits to local irrigation projects and Maasai homes, plus some walking and a visit to a local farm. There's an overnight option with a hike up a small volcano.

### LONGIDO

The 2629m-high Longido lies just to the east of the main road between Arusha and Namanga (the Tanzania-Kenya border), and

### COMMUNITY TOURISM SPOTLIGHT: CULTURAL TOURISM PROGRAMS

Numerous villages outside Arusha (several of which are described in the text accompanying this box) as well as elsewhere in the country (including Machame, Engaruka, Mto wa Mbu, Kondo, the Usambara Mountains near Lushoto and Pangani) have organised 'cultural tourism programs' that offer an alternative to the safari scene and an opportunity to experience local culture. They range in length from a few hours to a few days, and usually centre on light hikes and cultural activities.

Although some have now deviated from their initial founding purpose of serving as income generators for community projects – often revolving instead these days around the enterprising individuals who run them – they nevertheless offer an excellent chance to get to know Tanzania at the local level. Most have various 'modules' available, from half a day to several nights, and fees are generally reasonable, starting from Tsh20,000/30,000 per person for a half-/full-day programme with lunch (less for two or more people). Payments should be made on site; always ask for a receipt. For overnight tours, camping or home stays can be arranged, though expect conditions to be very basic and rustic.

All tours in the Arusha area can be booked through the Arusha TTB Tourist Information Centre (p197), which can also tell you the best transport connections. Tours elsewhere should be arranged directly with the local coordinator, although the Arusha TTB may also be able to help. Book a day in advance for the more distant ones; for Ng'iresi and other programmes close to town, guides usually wait at the TTB office on stand-by each morning. Check with the TTB to ensure the one you go with is authorised.

80km north of Arusha. It's not volcanic in origin, but a remnant of much older rock. The lower slopes are covered in dense bush, but Longido's summit is a peak of bare rock, giving views west to the Rift Valley, north into Kenya, south to Mt Meru and east to Kilimanjaro. In addition to the climb itself (eight to 10 hours return from the main road), the area makes an interesting excursion to get an introduction to Maasai life, including a visit to some bomas and to a local cattle market.

#### OL DOINYO SAMBU

This tour involves short walks in Maasai country, about 35km north of Arusha off the Nairobi road, visits to a Maasai boma and market, and an introduction to Maasai traditions.

#### ILKIDIN'GA

Walks (ranging from half-day strolls to a three-day 'cultural hike') and the chance to experience the traditional culture of the Arusha people are the main attractions in this well-organised program around Ilkidin'ga, 7km north of Arusha.

#### MULALA

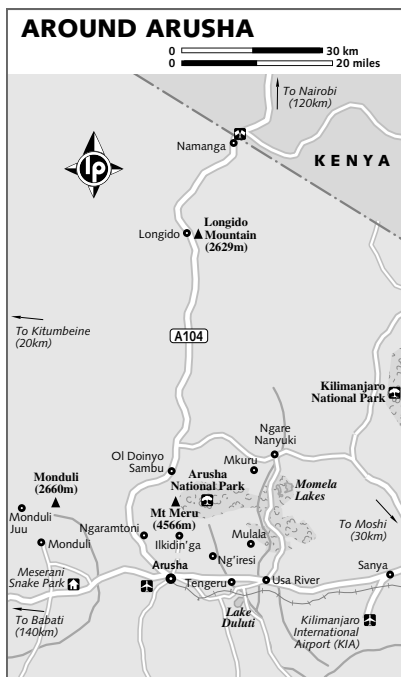
Set in a region about 30km northeast of Arusha; this is the only tour completely

implemented by women. It involves visits to a local women's cooperative and some short walks; an overnight stay is possible if you have camping gear. With an early start, it's no problem to do this tour as a day trip from Arusha.

#### MKURU

Mkuru, near Arusha National Park's Momela Gate, is the site of a camel camp where you can take camel safaris ranging from a half-day to several days, or climb nearby Ol Doinyo Landaree mountain (about two hours to the summit). This tour is more time-consuming to organise than the others, but you'll have the chance to experience life in a small and relatively isolated Maasai community and you're unlikely to see many other tourists. Bring everything with you, including all food and drinking water, especially for overnight tours. Riding camels entails at least one night in Mkuru or at the nearby Momella Wildlife Lodge (p208) to organise things; there's also a 5km walk from Ngare Nanyuki village (p209) to reach the camel camp. With several days, it's possible to combine the Mkuru programme with the Longido programme on a three-day/two-night camel safari from Mkuru to Longido Mountain, with the final night spent in Longido before returning to Arusha.





## TENGERU

About 12km east of Arusha and just off the main highway, the Tengeru programme includes visits to a coffee farm, a local school and the Tengeru market, and an introduction to the life of the Meru people. Home stays can also be arranged.

## Lake Duluti

This small and tranquil crater lake – part of the Duluti Forest Reserve – lies about 11km east of Arusha, just off the main road near the village of Tengeru. It's a pleasant getaway, although walks around the lake were being discouraged at the time of writing due to a spate of robberies.

The **Lake Duluti Club** (day admission Tsh1000) has a small lawn, a restaurant serving a limited selection of drinks and meals with advance order only and a couple of rowboats (per hour without/with guide Tsh6000/7000). If the security situation improves – ask at the club or in Arusha – walking around the lake is also possible, though you'll need to pay the forest reserve fee (per person US\$7) at the reserve office just up from the club.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Serena Mountain Village** (☎ 027-255 3313, 027-250 8175; [www.serenahotels.com](http://www.serenahotels.com); s/d US\$180/225) An old British-style manor with a genteel ambience, views over the lake's green waters from the terrace and well-appointed small stone-and-thatch cottages covered with ivy.

It's possible to **camp** (per person US\$7) on the lawn behind the forest reserve office, although there's nowhere for bathing or cooking and the site isn't secure. Better is the Lake Duluti Club, with **camping** (per person Tsh5000) inside its small compound, including a small cooking area and meals on order.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Have any bus or *dalla-dalla* along the Arusha–Moshi Rd drop you at the Tengeru junction, from where it's about a 2km walk in to the lake (signposted for Serena Mountain Village), and go about 2km to the hotel. To reach the forestry office and Lake Duluti Club: continue for about 300m past the hotel entrance to the Institute of Livestock Training. Turn right, follow the road down and then up for about 200m, and go right at the Duluti Forest Reserve sign. The reserve office is ahead to the left, and Lake Duluti Club is about 200m further on to the right.

## Usa River

This tiny, nondescript town on the Arusha–Moshi Rd about 20km east of Arusha, is of interest for its proximity to Arusha National Park, and for the handful of atmospheric, upmarket lodges based nearby. All are signposted from the main road.

The **Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge** (☎ 027-255 3638; [www.ngare-sero-lodge.com](http://www.ngare-sero-lodge.com); per person full board garden cottages/main house US\$130/170) is a lovely colonial-era lodge with small, attached cottages set around lush gardens or better suites in the main house – itself reminiscent of an old hunting-lodge estate. There are also two family-style cottages, and fishing, walking, canoeing, cultural tours and yoga can be arranged.

**Mount Meru Game Lodge & Sanctuary** ([www.intimate-places.com](http://www.intimate-places.com); s/d from US\$140/190) is a cosy place set in its own private wildlife reserve. There are 15 rooms and two suites, and the attractive gardens and adjoining wildlife sanctuary make an amenable backdrop.

**Rivertrees Country Inn** (☎ 027-255 3894; [www.rivertrees.com](http://www.rivertrees.com); s/d from US\$145/175; 📍) has a genteel old-world ambience and excellent cuisine

served family-style around a large wooden dining table. Accommodation is in the main building – a renovated colonial-era farmhouse – or in garden rooms, or two private ‘river cottages’ with fireplaces and one with wheelchair access.

The newer **Arumeru River Lodge** (☎ 027-255 3573; www.arumerulodge.com; s/d US\$117/174; 📶 🚽) lacks the old-style atmosphere of the other places, but is nevertheless attractive, with 10 attached two-room chalets in expansive gardens and a heated swimming pool.

## Monduli Mountains

The Monduli range, northwest of Arusha and west of Mt Meru, offers offbeat walking from its northern side, with views over the Rift Valley plains and to the distant cone of Ol Doiyo Lengai. There are no set routes. All walks follow old cattle trails that become overgrown during the rains, and a local guide is essential. The base for trekking is the area of Monduli Juu, near Emairete village (9km from Monduli town), where you can arrange a guide and pay the fees. All walks (about Tsh20,000 per day including guide and lunch, plus Tsh4000 for any walks that enter the forest) need to be arranged either through the cultural tourism representative, who lives along the main road in Emairete, through the village chief or with the TTB in Arusha. They can also help you find a spot to camp (bring everything with you from Arusha) or arrange an overnight stay in a Maasai boma. Tropical Trails (p46) also organises hikes here. Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, a hat and long pants, as many of the trails are overgrown with thick, thorny brush.

## ARUSHA NATIONAL PARK

☎ 027

Arusha National Park, although one of Tanzania’s smallest parks, is one of its most beautiful and most topographically varied. Its main features include Ngurdoto Crater (often dubbed Little Ngorongoro) and the Momela Lakes to the east. To the west is beautiful Mt Meru. The two areas are joined by a narrow strip, with Momela Gate at its centre. The park’s altitude, which varies from 1500m to more than 4500m, has a variety of vegetation zones supporting numerous animal species.

**Ngurdoto Crater** is surrounded by forest, while the crater floor is a swamp. West of the

crater is Serengeti Ndogo (Little Serengeti), an extensive area of open grassland and the only place in the park where herds of Burchell’s zebras can be found.

The **Momela Lakes**, like many in the Rift Valley, are shallow and alkaline and attract a wide variety of wader birds, particularly flamingos. The lakes are fed by underground streams; due to their varying mineral content, each lake supports a different type of algal growth, which gives them different colours. Bird life also varies quite distinctly from one lake to another, even where they are only separated by a narrow strip of land. **Mt Meru** (see Trekking Mt Meru, p209) is a mixture of lush forest and bare rock with a spectacular crater.

Animal life in the park is abundant. You can be fairly certain of sighting zebras, giraffes, waterbucks, reedbucks, klipspringers, hippos, buffaloes, elephants, hyenas, mongooses, dik-diks, warthogs, baboons and vervet and colobus monkeys, despite dense vegetation in some areas. You may even catch sight of the occasional leopard. There are no lions, and no rhinos due to poaching.

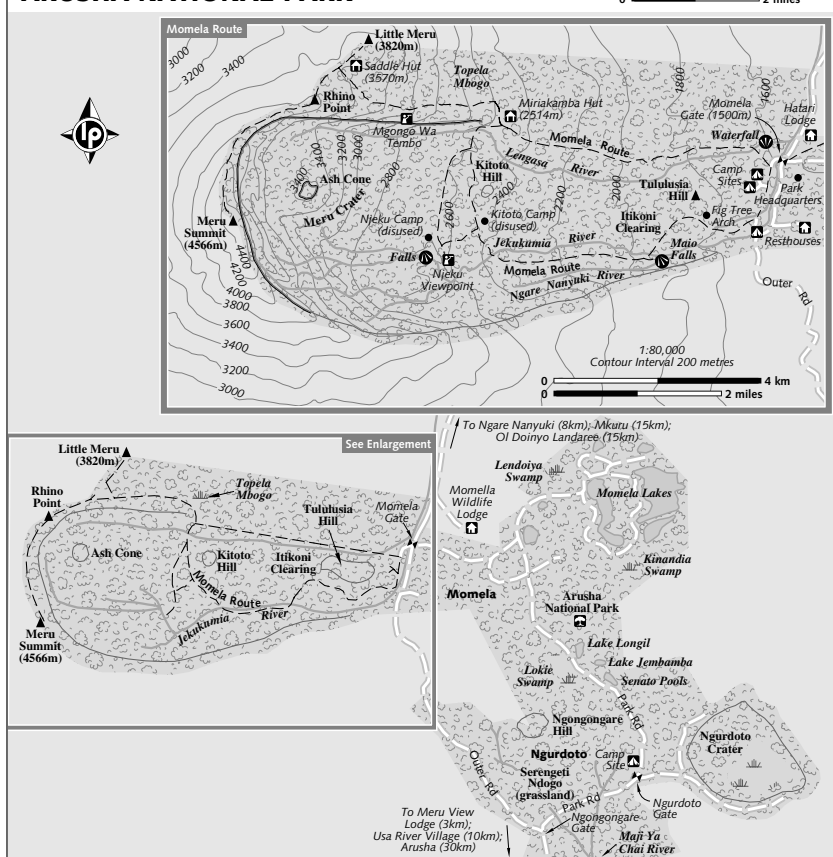
While tour companies often relegate the park to a day trip, it’s better to allow at least a night or two to appreciate the wildlife and do a walking or canoe safari.

## Information

Entry fees are US\$35/10 per adult/child aged five to 15 years per 24-hour period. For camping fees see p77. There is a US\$20 rescue fee per person per trip for treks on Mt Meru. Guides cost US\$15 per day (US\$20 for walking), and the huts on Mt Meru cost US\$20.

The main park entrance is at Ngongongare Gate, about 10km from the main road, while **park headquarters** (☎ 027-255 3995, 0732-971303; 🕒 6.30am-6.30pm) – the main contact for making camp site or resthouse reservations and for arranging guides and porters to climb Mt Meru – are about 14km further in near Momela Gate. There is another entrance at Ngurdoto Gate, on the southeastern edge of the park. All gates are open from 6am to 6pm. Walking is permitted on the Mt Meru side of the park, and there is also a walking trail along part of the Ngurdoto Crater rim (though it’s not permitted to descend either on foot or in a vehicle to the crater floor). **Green Footprint Adventures** (www.greenfootprint.co.tz) does canoe safaris on the Momela Lakes.

## ARUSHA NATIONAL PARK



The best map of the park is the MaCo *Arusha National Park* map, widely available in Arusha.

## Sleeping & Eating

The park has four public camp sites, three near Momela Gate (including one with a shower), and one near Ngurdoto Gate. There are also two resthouses with kitchen facilities near the park headquarters.

**Momella Wildlife Lodge** (☎ 027-250 6423/6; [www.lions-safari-intl.com/momella.html](http://www.lions-safari-intl.com/momella.html); s/d/tr half board US\$70/93/115) This long-standing establishment, 1.5km off the road from Momela Gate, has small, serviceable cottages set around modest gardens. Vehicle rental with driver costs US\$75/100 per half/full day.

**Meru View Lodge** (☎ 0784-419232; [www.meru-view-lodge.de](http://www.meru-view-lodge.de); s/d US\$75/90; ☑) An unassuming, good-value place with a mix of large and small cottages (all priced the same) set in pleasant grounds on the main park road. A vehicle safari costs from US\$90 per day including park fees.

**Hatari Lodge** (☎ 027-255 3456/7; [www.hatarilodge.com](http://www.hatarilodge.com); r per person full board US\$250) The most atmospheric and upmarket of the park lodges – the property was originally owned by Hardy Kruger, of *Hatari!* film fame – with ‘modern retro’ room décor, a prime location on large lawns frequented by giraffes, and views of Meru and Kilimanjaro on clear days. Rooms are spacious, with large windows, and there’s a fireplace and top-notch cuisine. It’s on

the edge of the park, about 2km north of Momela Gate.

### Getting There & Away

Arusha National Park gate is 35km from Arusha. Take the main road between Arusha and Moshi until you reach the signboard, where you turn left. From here, it's about 10km to Ngongongare Gate, where you pay your fees. This is also where the road divides, with both forks joining up again at Momela Gate.

Transport from Arusha can be arranged with all of the lodges (about US\$100 per vehicle for a drop, and up to double this for an all-inclusive one-day safari). If you arrive at the park without your own vehicle, most of the lodges can arrange wildlife-viewing drives for guests from about US\$70 per day, transport only. If you arrive with your own vehicle and want to climb Mt Meru, you can leave it at Momela Gate (where you will have to pay standard park fees) or, less expensively, at Momella Wildlife Lodge.

Once in the park, there's a good series of gravel roads and tracks leading to all the main features and viewing points. Most are suitable for all vehicles, though some of the tracks get slippery in the rainy season, and a few areas are accessible only with 4WD. From Hatari Lodge, it's possible to continue via a rough track that joins the main Nairobi highway near Longido.

Via public transport, there's a daily bus between Arusha and Ngare Nanyuki village (10km north of Momela Gate) that departs Arusha at about 1pm and Ngare Nanyuki at 7am, and can drop you at the park gate (Tsh2000, 1½ hours). Otherwise, you could take any bus between Arusha and Moshi, and get off at Usa River village, 1km east of the park junction. From Usa River there are sporadic pick-ups that run most days through the park en route to Ngare Nanyuki. However, unless you've arranged with one of the lodges for pick-up, these options won't do you much good as the park doesn't rent vehicles. If you're planning on trekking Mt Meru, there is no onward park transport from Ngongongare Gate, where you need to pay entry fees, to Momela Gate, 14km further on, where you need to arrange your guide and pay your mountain-climbing fees. Walking along this road isn't permitted, and hitching is normally very slow. For more information on hitching, see p360.

## TREKKING MT MERU

At 4566m, Mt Meru is the second-highest mountain found in Tanzania. Although completely overshadowed by Kilimanjaro and frequently overlooked by trekkers, it is a spectacular volcanic cone with one of East Africa's most scenic and rewarding climbs. A trek to the summit takes you through grassland and lush forest on the mountain's lower slopes, followed by a dramatic and exhilarating walk along the knife edge of the crater rim.

Mt Meru has a circular base some 20km across at 2000m, where it rises steeply above the plains as an almost perfect cone with an internal crater surrounded by a steep wall of cliffs. At about 2500m the wall has broken away so the top half of the mountain is shaped like a giant horseshoe. The cliffs of the inner wall below the summit are more than 1500m high – among the tallest in Africa. Inside the crater, more recent volcanic eruptions have created a subsidiary peak called the Ash Cone.

## Information

### COSTS

Most of the companies listed in the Trekking chapter also organise treks on Mt Meru. Rates for a four-day trip range from about US\$400 to US\$600.

That said, organised treks are not obligatory, and you can do things quite easily on your own. Costs for an independent trek are mostly park entrance, hut and guide fees. Porters are optional. You'll also need to add in the costs of food (which you should get in Arusha, as there's nowhere to stock up near the park), and of transport to the park (minimal, if you take a *dalla-dalla*).

### Park Fees

See p207 for park entry fees, all of which are payable at Ngongongare Gate. After paying your entry fees, continue to Momela Gate to arrange a guide and pay mountain fees. All this can take a couple of hours, so it's worth getting an early start or making arrangements the afternoon before. If you enter the park at Ngurdoto Gate, you can pay your entry fees there.

### Tippling

Generally the guides and porters on Mt Meru are hard-working and reliable, and do not expect the huge tips sometimes demanded by

their counterparts on Kilimanjaro. However, the guides receive a fixed monthly salary for their work as rangers, and get no additional payment from the park for guiding, which means that tips are much appreciated, particularly for going to the summit. In fact, without tips a guide has little extra incentive to take you to the top, so you should calculate this in as part of your fixed costs. Make it clear to the guide that you will tip, but that payment is conditional on them guiding you at an appropriate pace over the full route. We've heard all-too-frequent reports of poorly motivated guides doing everything possible to avoid going to the summit. One of the most common ploys is to rush clients on the early stages of the climb, with the result that the trekkers themselves are forced to bail out early. As a guideline, for a good guide who has completed the full trek with you, plan on a tip of about Tsh10,000 per day per group. Tips for porters average about Tsh5000 per porter per group per trip.

### GUIDES & PORTERS

A guide is mandatory and can be arranged at Momela Gate. The fee of US\$20 per day is paid to the national park rather than to the guide himself. Unlike on Kilimanjaro, guides on Meru are armed rangers whose purpose is to assist you in case you meet some of the park's buffaloes or elephants, rather than to show you the way (although they do know the route). It's unlikely that an animal will have to be shot, but you should not underestimate the danger and walk too far away from your guide.

Most trekkers go up Mt Meru with only a guide, but if you want porters they are also available at Momela Gate. They come from one of the nearby villages and are not park employees. The charge is Tsh6000 or US\$5 per porter per day. This is paid at Momela Gate and given to the porters by park staff after the trip. You will also need to pay park entrance and hut fees for porters (Tsh1500 per day park fee plus Tsh800 per night hut fee). Porters will carry rucksacks weighing up to 15kg (excluding their own food and clothing). Heavier bags will be carried for a negotiable extra fee.

### MAPS

The only map is on the reverse of MaCo's *Arusha National Park* map.

### Momela Route

The Momela Route is the only route up Meru. It starts at Momela Gate on the eastern side of the mountain and goes to the summit along the northern arm of the horseshoe crater. The route is steep but can be done comfortably in four days (three nights), although trekkers often do it in three days by combining Stages 3 and 4 of the trek. While Meru appears small compared with Kilimanjaro, don't underestimate it. It's still high enough to make the effects of altitude felt, so don't try to rush up if you are not properly acclimatised.

For information on getting to the Momela Gate trailhead, see p209.

### SLEEPING

On Mt Meru, the Momela Route has two blocks of bunkhouses ('huts'), conveniently spaced for a three- or four-day trek. Especially during the July-August and December-January high seasons, they are often full, so it's a good idea to carry a tent (though if you camp, you'll still need to pay hut fees). It's currently not possible for independent trekkers to make bookings for the bunkhouses, which operate on a first-come, first-served basis. Each bunkhouse has a cooking and eating area; bring your own stove and fuel. There's also a separate dorm for guides and porters.

### STAGE 1: MOMELA GATE TO MIRIAKAMBA HUT

(10km, 4-5hr, 1000m ascent)

Two routes are available from Momela Gate. The first is a track that goes through the forest towards the crater floor, and then steeply up to Miriakamba Hut (2514m). The second is a path that climbs gradually through the grassland direct to Miriakamba. The first option is more interesting and is described here. The second option is shorter and makes a suitable descent route. Some guides prefer to go up and down the short route, and it may require some persuading to take the forest route.

From Momela Gate, cross the Ngare Nanyuki River and follow the track into the forest. The track winds uphill, to reach **Fig Tree Arch** about one hour from the gate. This parasitic wild fig originally grew around two other trees, eventually strangling them. Now only the fig tree remains, with its distinctive arch big enough to drive a car through.

The track continues to climb, reaching Itikoni clearing on the left side of the track



after another 15 minutes. From a small hill on the right, you can often see buffaloes grazing. Half an hour further, the track crosses a large stream, just above Maio Falls. Continue for another hour to reach **Kitoto Camp**, with excellent views over the Momela Lakes and out to Kilimanjaro in the distance.

Continue following the track and you will reach a junction after 30 minutes. Take the right track – the left track leads to the floor of Meru Crater – over flat ground, to cross a rocky stream bed (usually dry) and descend slightly through trees, ignoring the path that comes in from the left, to reach **Miriakamba Hut**, one hour from Kitoto Camp.

From **Miriakamba** you can walk to **Meru Crater floor** (a two- to three-hour return trip) either in the afternoon of Stage 1 or before Stage 2. The path across the floor leads to **Njeku Camp** (an old forest station) and **Njeku Viewpoint**, on a high cliff overlooking a waterfall, with excellent views of the Ash Cone and the entire extent of the crater.

### STAGE 2: MIRIAKAMBA HUT TO SADDLE HUT

(4km, 2-3hr, 1050m ascent)

From **Miriakamba** the path climbs steeply up through pleasant glades between the trees to reach **Topela Mbogo** (Buffalo Swamp) after 45 minutes and **Mgongo Wa Tembo** (Elephant Ridge) after another 30 minutes. From the top of **Mgongo Wa Tembo** there are great views down into the crater and up to the main cliffs below the summit. Continue through some open grassy clearings and over several stream beds (usually dry) to **Saddle Hut** (3570m).

From **Saddle Hut** you can walk up to the summit of **Little Meru** (3820m) in about an hour on a clear path. From the top you'll get impressive views of Meru's summit, the horse-shoe crater, the top of the Ash Cone, and the sheer cliffs of the crater's inner wall. In the other direction, across the top of the clouds, you can see the great dome of Kilimanjaro. As the sun sets behind Meru, casting huge jagged shadows across the clouds, the snows on Kili turn orange and then pink, as the light fades. Allow 45 minutes to get back to **Saddle Hut**.

Alternatively, you can go to **Rhino Point** (about two hours return from **Saddle Hut**), from where the views of Kili are similarly stunning and you can also see down to the base of the Ash Cone and across the crater floor. You'll pass this point on your way both

to and from the summit, but the views are so impressive it's worth going at least twice.

### STAGE 3: SADDLE HUT TO MERU SUMMIT & RETURN

(5km, 4-5hr, 1000m ascent, plus 5km, 2-3hr, 1000m descent)  
This stage, along a very narrow ridge between the outer slopes of the mountain and the sheer cliffs of the inner crater, is one of the most dramatic and exhilarating sections of trekking anywhere in East Africa. Some trekkers leave **Saddle Hut** early in the morning (2am to 3am) to reach the summit in time to see the sun rising from behind Kilimanjaro, and to stand a chance of avoiding the late morning mist, although others find this section too exposed for comfort, especially when done in the dark, or find the altitude makes the going beyond **Saddle Hut** a bit tough. If the sunrise is your main point of interest, there's no need to go to the top. It's just as impressive from **Rhino Point** (about an hour from **Saddle Hut**), and perhaps even more so because you also see the main cliffs of the inner wall of the crater being illuminated by the rising sun. The ideal combination is sunrise at **Rhino Point**, then up to the summit for the views (depending on the mist). If you spend two nights at **Saddle Hut** you can still see the sunrise at **Rhino Point**, then trek up to the summit and back in daylight. Many trekkers combine Stages 3 and 4, but this doesn't leave a margin for delays.

If you decide to go for the summit, take plenty of water. Even though it can be below freezing just before dawn, as soon as the sun rises the going becomes hot and hard. During the rainy season, ice and snow can occur on this section of the route, so take care.

For the ascent take the path from behind **Saddle Hut**, across a flat area, then steeply up through bushes. After an hour the vegetation gives way to bare rock and ash. **Rhino Point** is marked by a cairn and a pile of bones (presumably a rhino, but what was it doing up here?).

From **Rhino Point** the path drops slightly then rises again to climb steeply around the edge of the rim over ash scree and bare rock patches. Continue for three to four hours to reach **Mt Meru** summit (4566m). The views are spectacular. To the west, if it's clear, you can see towards the Rift Valley and the volcanoes of **Kitumbeini** and **Lengai**, while down below you can see the town of **Arusha**, and the plains of the **Maasai Steppe** beyond.



To descend from the summit, simply retrace the route around the rim back to Saddle Hut (two to three hours).

#### STAGE 4: SADDLE HUT TO MOMELA GATE

(9km, 3-5½hr, 2000m descent)

From Saddle Hut, retrace the Stage 2 route to Miriakamba (1½ to 2½ hours). From Miriakamba, you can either return through the forest (2½ to three hours), or take a shorter route down the ridge that leads directly to Momela Gate (1½ to 2½ hours). This direct route goes through forest for some of the way, then through open grassland, where giraffes and zebras are often seen.

### LAKE MANYARA NATIONAL PARK

Lake Manyara National Park is one of Tanzania's more underrated parks, and often allocated only a quick stop on a loop including Tarangire National Park and Ngorongoro Crater. Yet, while Manyara doesn't have the raw drama and variety of animals of other northern circuit destinations, it has much to offer and many visitors are surprised by how nice it really is. In addition to a stunning setting spanning the Rift Valley escarpment, Manyara's main attractions are its superb birdlife, its tree-climbing lions (though these aren't often seen) and its hippos, which you can observe at closer range here than at most other places. There are also elephants, although the population has been declining in recent years. The park, which is between 900m and 1800m above sea level, is bordered to the west by the dramatic western escarpment of the Rift Valley. To the east is the alkaline Lake Manyara, which at certain times of year hosts tens of thousands of flamingos, as well as a diversity of other birdlife. Depending on the season, about two-thirds of the park's total 330 sq km area is covered by the lake. Despite the park's small size, its vegetation is diverse, ranging from savanna to marshes and acacia woodland, enabling it to support a remarkable variety of habitats.

#### Information

Entry fees are US\$35/10 per adult/child aged five to 15 years, valid for multiple entries within 24 hours. For camping fees see p77. For booking camp sites contact the **senior park warden** (☎ 027-253 9112/45; [manyarapark@africaonline.co.tz](mailto:manyarapark@africaonline.co.tz)). The park gate and park headquarters are at the northern tip of the park near Mto

wa Mbu village, where there is also a helpful tourist information office and a worthwhile visitors centre. MaCo and Harms-ic put out good park maps, available at the park gate, together with a bird checklist.

Hoopoe Safaris (p44) is a recommended contact for upmarket cycling and cycling-safari combination trips in the Lake Manyara area. Green Footprint Adventures (see p207), based at Lake Manyara Serena Lodge, organises village walks, mountain biking and forest hikes around Lake Manyara, as well as full-day 'Manyara active excursions', all upmarket. It also does night drives in the park (Manyara is the only northern park where you can do this). Budget cultural walks and cycling outside the park can be organised through the Mto wa Mbu Cultural Tourism Program.

Binoculars are especially useful for wildlife viewing at Manyara.

### Sleeping & Eating

#### CAMPING

There are two **public camp sites** (per adult/child US\$30/5) – Campsite 1, close to park headquarters and the park gate, with toilet and shower, and the shaded Campsite 2 ('Riverside' or 'Endabash' camp site), set amid sausage trees and other vegetation near the Endabash river about an hour's drive from the gate, with new toilet and shower facilities, and tank water for cooking (and – if treated – for drinking). There are also three **special camp sites** (per adult/child US\$50/10) – Bagayo A & B, both set in acacia woodland somewhat in from the lake about 15km from the main gate, and Endabash Lake Shore, somewhat further south and with lake views, but with the nuisance of tsetse flies.

The park also has about 10 double en suite **bandas** (per adult/child US\$20/10) with hot water, bedding and a cooking area. For park-run accommodation prices, see p77.

Basic foodstuffs are available in Mto wa Mbu. For saving money, it's cheaper to stay in Mto wa Mbu village, 3km east of the park gate on the Arusha road.

#### LODGES & TENTED CAMPS

**Oi Mesera Tented Camp** (☎ 0784-428332; [www.ol-mesera.com](http://www.ol-mesera.com); s/d US\$60/120) This small, personalised and good-value place – in a placid setting amid baobab and euphorbia trees – has five straightforward tented **bandas** (thatched-roof huts or shelters) and is an ideal spot to relax for a few days and get a glimpse into local

culture. There are local cultural walks in the area, and staff can also help you organise excursions to Lake Manyara and Ngorongoro Crater. It's in Selea village, 14km north of Mto wa Mbu and signposted off the Engaruka road. Public transport towards Engaruka can drop you at the turn-off, from where it's an easy 1.5km walk.

**Kirurumu Luxury Tented Camp** (☎ 027-250 7011, 027-250 7541; [www.kirurumu.com](http://www.kirurumu.com); s/d half board US\$160/250) A genteel, low-key ambience, closeness to the natural surroundings and memorable cuisine are the hallmarks of this highly regarded camp. It's set on the escarpment about 12km from the park gate and 6km from the main road, with views of Lake Manyara in the distance. The 20 well-spaced double tents are hidden away in the vegetation, and there are several larger 'family suite' tents. Maasai-guided ethno-botanical walks, hikes and fly-camping can be organised. Overall excellent value.

**E Unoto Retreat** ([www.maasai-village.com](http://www.maasai-village.com); s/d half board US\$250/400; 📍) This classy lodge with Maasai overtones and spacious luxury bungalows nestles at the base of the Rift Valley escarpment near Lake Miwaleni about 10km north of Mto wa Mbu. There's rewarding birding in the area, as well as the chance for cycling and cultural walks, including one focusing on traditional medicinal plants. E Unoto is about 10km north of Mto wa Mbu, just off the road to Lake Natron.

**Lake Manyara Serena Lodge** (☎ 027-253 9160/1; [www.serenahotels.com](http://www.serenahotels.com); s/d full board US\$375/550; 📍) The large Serena complex – in a beautiful location on the escarpment overlooking the Rift Valley – offers comfortable accommodation with all the amenities in appealing two-storey conical thatched bungalows, buffet-style dining and wonderful views from its pool-bar area. It lacks the intimacy and naturalness of Kirurumu, but is nevertheless a justifiably popular choice. It's about 2km from the main road and signposted.

Other recommendations:

**Wild Africa Manyara Lodge** (☎ 022-211 5104; [www.kiutadventures.com/wildafrika.htm](http://www.kiutadventures.com/wildafrika.htm); per person from US\$150) Straightforward raised makuti-shaded double tents around a central dining and pool area and a raised sunlounger deck with fine views towards the lake. Cultural walks can be arranged.

**Lake Manyara Wildlife Lodge** (☎ 027-254 4595/4795; [www.hotelsandlodges-tanzania.com](http://www.hotelsandlodges-tanzania.com); r per person full board US\$380; 📍) Formerly the government hotel, this place has a prime location on the edge of the

escarpment, which goes quite a ways to compensating for its merely adequate rooms and cuisine.

**Lake Manyara Tree Lodge** ([www.ccafrica.com](http://www.ccafrica.com); per person all-inclusive US\$855; ☎ Jun-Mar; 📍) Lake Manyara's most exclusive lodge, and the only one inside the park, with 10 stilted tree-houses with private decks and views, set in a mahogany forest at the southern end of the park.

## Mto Wa Mbu

☎ 027

Mto wa Mbu (River of Mosquitoes) is a small village with a hard edge and a large number of aggressive touts, although it's somewhat redeemed by its lively market and its beautiful vegetation – a profusion of palms, baobabs and acacia trees framed by the backdrop of the Rift Valley escarpment. It's just north of Lake Manyara, which is fed by the town's eponymous river, and makes a convenient base for visiting the park.

There are cultural walks in the surrounding area, organised through the **Cultural Tourism Program office** (☎ 027-253 9393; [mtoculturalprogramme@hotmail.com](mailto:mtoculturalprogramme@hotmail.com)) at the Red Banana Café on the main road, opposite the post office. While most of the guides are quite good and helpful, and the tours overall are generally well-organised, there is a handful of aggressive guides affiliated with this office that resorts to heavy, tout-style harassment of travellers, so that it is difficult at present to give an unqualified recommendation for this programme. Rates average about Tsh22,000 to Tsh33,000 per person per day (less if you're in a group); bike rental can also be arranged.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Twiga Campsite & Lodge** (☎ 027-253 9101; [twigacampsite@hotmail.com](mailto:twigacampsite@hotmail.com); camping per person US\$5, new d/tr US\$60/63, old d/tr without bathroom US\$30/45; 📍) A popular place set in a large compound along the main road, with cooking facilities, restaurant, ablution blocks with hot and cold water and newer rooms in attached blocks. Car hire to visit Lake Manyara and Ngorongoro Conservation Area costs US\$140 per day, including petrol and driver, and bike rental can be arranged.

**Jambo Lodge & Campsite** (☎ 027-253 9170; [www.njake.com](http://www.njake.com); camping per person US\$7, camping per person with tent & bedding rental US\$20, s/d US\$75/90; 📍) Signposted along the main road about 200m east of Twiga, this place has undergone a complete overhaul and now gives stiff competition

to its neighbour, with a lovely, shaded and well-maintained grassy camping area, plus a dozen or so comfortable, en suite rooms in double-storey chalet blocks and helpful staff. Car hire can be arranged from US\$130 per day, including petrol and driver.

**Marowiwi Green House** (☎ 027-253 9273; [marowiwi@yahoo.com](mailto:marowiwi@yahoo.com); s/d/tr US\$30/60/90) On the north side of the road, and just before the park gate, with no-frills but clean and quiet rooms in a dark green house. It's just after the Lutheran Hospital and signposted. Meals can be arranged.

**Lake Manyara Tented Camp** (☎ 027-255 3242; [www.moivaro.com](http://www.moivaro.com); s/d full board US\$120/160) The main attraction of this place – formerly Migunga Forest Camp – is its setting, in a grove of fever trees (*migunga* in Swahili) that echoes with bird calls. The 13 tents – set around large, grassy grounds – are small but quite adequate, and there's a camp site with hot water and a mess tent. It's 2km south of the main road and signposted.

There are several inexpensive guesthouses in town within a few minutes' walk of each other, and most about two blocks back from (south of) the main road. These include **Sayari Lodge** (d without bathroom Tsh5000), behind the market, with no-frills rooms named after the planets (*sayari* means planet in Swahili), and the slightly more upmarket **New Continental Luxury Lodge** (s/d Tsh15,000/20,000), a block away and following the theme, with en suite rooms named after the continents, complete with mosquito net, fan and hot water. The Lutheran Hospital **hostel** (dm Tsh3000) – along the main road towards the park gate – has no-frills twin-bedded rooms that are open to visitors, space permitting.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Coastal Aviation, Air Excel and Regional Air offer scheduled daily, or near-daily, services between Arusha and Lake Manyara for about US\$65 one way. The airstrip is at the north-western edge of the park.

### BUS

There are several buses daily to Arusha (Tsh3000) and Karatu (Tsh1000), and at least one bus daily direct to Dar es Salaam (Tsh27,000). Departures are from the transport stand along the main road in the town centre near Red Banana Café.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The only road access into the park is from Arusha via Makuyuni and Mto wa Mbu (where petrol is available). There's no vehicle rental at the park, although vehicles can be rented with Jambo and Twiga camp sites and some of the other listings in Mto wa Mbu. Quoted prices usually include Manyara and Ngorongoro Crater, but you should be able to negotiate something better if you will only be visiting Lake Manyara, as much less driving is involved.

## TARANGIRE NATIONAL PARK

Beautiful, baobab-studded Tarangire stretches southeast of Lake Manyara around the Tarangire River. Like nearby Lake Manyara National Park, it's often assigned no more than a day visit as part of a larger northern circuit safari, although it is well worth longer exploration. Tarangire is a classic dry-season destination, particularly between August and October, when it has one of the highest concentrations of wildlife of any of the country's parks. Large herds of zebras, wildebeests, hartebeests and – in particular – elephants can be found here until October when the short wet season allows them to move on to new grasslands. Elands, lesser kudus, gazelles, giraffes, waterbucks, impalas and the occasional leopard or rhino can be seen at Tarangire year-round. The park is also good for bird-watching, especially between October and May, with more than 300 different species recorded.

Tarangire is part of an extended ecosystem where animals roam freely. It includes the large Mkungunero Game Controlled Area to the south, and the Lolkisale Game Controlled Area to the northeast. It's possible to do walks and night drives in several of these bordering areas, with local villagers benefiting from tourist revenues.

## Information

Entry fees are US\$35/10 per adult/child aged five to 15 years, valid for multiple entries within 24 hours. For bookings, contact the **senior park warden** (☎ 027-253 1280/1, 027-250 8642). The entry gate and park headquarters are at the northwestern tip of the park, together with an excellent visitors centre. Within the park, walking accompanied by rangers is only permitted in the Silale area near Oliver's Camp. Otherwise, most of the camps and lodges lo-



## THE MAASAI

Travelling in northern Tanzania, you are almost certain to meet some Maasai, one of the region's most colourful tribes. The Maasai are pastoral nomads who have actively resisted change, and still follow the same lifestyle that they have for centuries. Their culture centres on their cattle, which provide many of their needs – milk, blood and meat for their diet, and hides and skins for clothing – although sheep and goats also play an important dietary role, especially during the dry season. The land, cattle and all elements related to cattle are considered sacred.

Maasai society is patriarchal and highly decentralised. Elders meet to decide on general issues but ultimately it is the well-being of the cattle that determines a course of action. Maasai boys pass through a number of transitions throughout life, the first of which is marked by the circumcision rite. Successive stages include junior warriors, senior warriors, junior elders and senior elders; each level is distinguished by its own unique rights, responsibilities and dress. Junior elders, for example, are expected to marry and settle down – somewhere between the ages of 30 and 40. Senior elders assume the responsibility of making wise and moderate decisions for the community. The most important group is that of the newly initiated warriors, *moran*, who are charged with defending the cattle herds.

Maasai women play a markedly subservient role and have no inheritance rights. Polygyny is widespread and marriages are arranged by the elders, without consulting the bride or her mother. Since most women are significantly younger than men at the time of marriage, they often become widows; remarriage is rare.

In an effort to cope with vastly increased tourist attention in recent years, specially designated cultural villages have been established where you can see Maasai dancing, photograph as much as you want and buy crafts, albeit for a steep \$50 fee per vehicle; generally, of course, this is a rather disappointing and contrived experience. For more authentic encounters with the Maasai, visit Maasai areas within the framework of a Cultural Tourism Program (the Longido, Ol Doinyo Sambu and Osotwa programmes – see p204 – are all in Maasai areas), take the chance for guided walks (many camps offer these), or arrange a longer stay or hike at Loliondo, West Kilimanjaro and other areas where partnerships with the Maasai have been established.

**Tarangire Swala** (☎ 027-250 9816; www.sanctuarylodges.com; s/d full board US\$445/640) A premiere-class nine-tent camp, nestled in a grove of acacia trees and overlooking the Gurusu wetlands in the southwestern part of the park.

**Oliver's Camp** (www.asilialodges.com; per person plus wildlife drives US\$480) A 16-bed upmarket camp notable for its fine location near Silale – the only area in the park where walking safaris are permitted – its personalised ambience and its guides.

**Nomad Tanzania** (www.nomadtarangire.com; s/d all-inclusive US\$650/1050; ☎ Jun-Dec) An exclusive four-tent mobile camp in the central and southern part of the park with wonderful bedouin-style tents, and the chance for walking safaris.

## Getting There & Around

### AIR

Coastal Aviation, Air Excel and Regional Air all stop at Tarangire on request on their flights between Arusha and Lake Manyara (per seat US\$80). The airstrip is in the northern section of the park near Tarangire Safari Lodge.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

To visit Tarangire you will need to join an organised tour or use your own vehicle, as the park doesn't rent vehicles. The closest petrol is in Makuyuni, 32km from the park gate.

The park is reached via the Makuyuni road from Arusha. At Kwa Kuchinja village, there's a signposted turn-off to the park gate, which is 7km further down a good dirt access road.

## SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

The Serengeti is where Africa's mystery, rawness and power surround you, and where the beauty and synchrony of nature can be experienced as in few other places. On its vast, treeless plains, one of earth's most impressive natural cycles plays itself out again and again, as tens of thousands of hooved animals, driven by primeval rhythms of survival, move constantly in search of fresh grasslands. The most famous, and the most numerous, are the wildebeests – of which there are more than one million – and their annual migration is the Serengeti's biggest drawcard. During the







(between about July and October). However, the Serengeti is rewarding to visit at any time. For the wildebeests, the best base from about December to April is at one of the camps near Seronera or in the southeastern part of the park. The famous crossing of the Grumeti River, which runs through the park's Western Corridor, usually takes place somewhere between May and July, although the viewing window can be quite short. In particularly dry years, the herds tend to move northwards sooner, avoiding or only skirting the Western Corridor. There are several camps in or near the Western Corridor, and it's also easily accessed from Seronera. The northern Serengeti, around Lobo and Klein's Gate, is a good base during the dry season, between about August and October. As well as the migrating wildebeests, there are also small resident populations of wildebeests in the park, which you'll see at any time of year.

Almost all shorter safaris, and those done as part of a quick northern circuit loop, use Seronera as a base, although other sections of the park are just as rewarding, if not more so. In the low season, you will see few other vehicles outside of Seronera, although even in the high season the park is large enough that it doesn't feel overrun.

Overall, the opportunities for wildlife viewing are unparalleled and, if you are able to visit, it's a chance not to be missed. Try to schedule as much time here as possible in order to explore the park's varied zones and to appreciate its vastness.

## Information

Entry fees are US\$50/10 per adult/child aged five to 15 years per 24-hour period, and valid for only one entry. Bookings for camp sites, resthouses and the hostel should be made through the Chief Park Warden or the **Tourism Warden** (☎ 028-262 0091, 028-262 1515, 028-262 1504; [www.serengeti.org](http://www.serengeti.org)). Park headquarters are at Fort Ikoma, just outside the park, while the tourism division is at Seronera. It's not mandatory to hire a guide, although having one along is likely to greatly enhance both your wildlife watching and your navigation through the park. Vehicle rentals from both Arusha and Mwanza almost always include a driver-guide.

There is an excellent Visitors Information Centre at Seronera with a self-guided walk through the Serengeti's history and ecosys-

tems. Explanations are in English and Swahili, and it's well worth spending time here before exploring the park.

The gift shop at the Seronera Visitors Information Centre sells various booklets and maps, including the excellent *MaCo Serengeti* map.

## Activities

Balloon trips – about an hour floating over the plains at dawn, followed by a champagne breakfast in the bush under the acacia trees, complete with linen tablecloths – are offered by **Serengeti Balloon Safaris** (☎ 027-250 8578, 027-254 8967; [www.balloonsafaris.com](http://www.balloonsafaris.com)) for US\$479 per person. The flight route varies depending on the winds, but often follows a stretch of the Grumeti River. The captains try to stay between 500m and 1000m above ground, weather and wind permitting, which means that if animals are there, you'll be able to see them. Bookings can be made directly, or through any of the central Serengeti lodges.

Short (two- to three-hour) walks outside the park and Maasai cultural activities can be arranged through lodges based in border areas.

## Sleeping CAMPING

There are about nine public camp sites in the Serengeti, including six around Seronera, one at Lobo, one at Kirawira in the Western Corridor and one near Ndabaka Gate in the far west along the Mwanza–Musoma road. There are at least two dozen special camp sites including in the areas around Lake Ndutu, Kirawira Research Station, Seronera, Lobo, Naabi Hill Gate and elsewhere. These should be booked well in advance, especially for groups; a 30% nonrefundable deposit is required one month before your arrival date.

There are also several resthouses at Seronera with running water, blankets and cooking facilities. You'll need to bring your own food, although there's a small shop at Seronera selling soft drinks, water and a few basics.

## LODGES & TENTED CAMPS

### Central & Southern Serengeti

Central Serengeti is the most visited area of the park, and readily accessed from both Arusha and from Mwanza via the Western Corridor. The main lodge area is at Seronera. Southeast of here near the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) boundary and Lake Ndutu is a

prime base for wildlife watching during the December to April wet season, when it's full of wildebeests. The more rugged southwest, in addition to being well-placed for the wildebeest during the wet season, is also notable for its lion and leopard sightings, especially around the Moru Kopjes area, which has a substantial resident wildlife population year round.

**Serengeti Sopa Lodge** (☎ 027-250 0630/9; [info@sopalodges.com](mailto:info@sopalodges.com); s/d full board US\$210/350; 🏠) Though ponderous and architecturally unappealing, the rooms here – spacious, with small sitting rooms and two double beds – have all the comforts, plus views. It's about 20km south of Seronera as the bird flies, on the edge of the Niaroboro Hills, and well-located for wildlife watching.

**Ndutu Safari Lodge** (☎ 027-250 6702/2829; [www.ndutu.com](http://www.ndutu.com); s/d full board US\$215/326) This good-value place is in a lovely setting just outside the southeastern Serengeti in the far western part of NCA. It's well-placed for wildlife viewing, especially for observing the enormous herds of wildebeests during the wet season, and walking safaris are possible in the surrounding NCA. In addition to NCA fees, you'll need to pay Serengeti fees any time that you cross into the park. Accommodation is in unpretentious but comfortable en suite cottages, and the atmosphere is relaxed and rustic – an overall fine choice, and one of our favourite camps in the Serengeti.

**Seronera Wildlife Lodge** (☎ 027-254 4595/4795; [www.hotelsandlodges-tanzania.com](http://www.hotelsandlodges-tanzania.com); r per person full board US\$400) Good overall value, with a prime location in the heart of the Serengeti and well-situated for wildlife drives, plus modest but pleasant rooms and a lively end-of-the-day safari atmosphere at the evening buffet.

**Serengeti Serena Lodge** (☎ 027-250 4153/8; [www.serenahotels.com](http://www.serenahotels.com); s/d full board US\$375/550; 🏠) About 20km northwest of Seronera airstrip, this place is not as favourably located as Seronera Wildlife Lodge but is otherwise a good choice and very comfortable. Accommodation is in well-appointed two-storey Maasai-style bungalows.

**Kusini Camp** (☎ 027-250 9816; [www.sanctuarylodges.com](http://www.sanctuarylodges.com); s/d full board US\$765/1030) Laid-back luxury in a prime wet-season setting amid rocky outcrops in the remote southwestern Serengeti, with 12 well-spaced and well-appointed tents. Somewhat unusually for camps of this standard, there are no age restrictions on children.

## Northern Serengeti

The hillier and more heavily vegetated northern Serengeti receives relatively few visitors, but makes a fine off the beaten track base, especially between August and October, when the migration passes through. During the rest of the year, things are kept interesting by a substantial permanent wildlife presence, including, most notably, elephants. The Loliondo area, just outside the Serengeti's northeastern boundary, offers the chance for Maasai cultural activities and walking safaris, although almost all accommodation here is upmarket.

**Lobo Wildlife Lodge** (☎ 027-254 4595/4795; [www.hotelsandlodges-tanzania.com](http://www.hotelsandlodges-tanzania.com); r per person full board US\$440) Well located and similar in standard to the Seronera Wildlife Lodge. If your budget is limited, it's the best value in this part of the park.

**Klein's Camp** ([www.ccafrica.com](http://www.ccafrica.com); per person all-inclusive US\$855; 🏠) Exclusive and strikingly situated just outside the northeasternmost park boundary, with 10 luxurious stone-and-thatch cottages, and the chance for walks and night wildlife drives.

Watch also for the new 60-bed Kempinski lodge being built near Mbuji Mawe, and scheduled to open in the near future.

Other recommendations:

**Mbuji Mawe** (☎ 027-250 4158, 028-262 2040/2; [www.serenahotels.com](http://www.serenahotels.com); s/d full board US\$375/550) A 16-tent camp – each tent with two double beds and views – and an excellent location about 45km north of Seronera, convenient also to the central Serengeti wildlife circuits.

**Suyan Camp** ([www.asilialodges.com](http://www.asilialodges.com); per person full board plus wildlife drives US\$480) A 10-bed camp under the same management as Sayari that moves between northern and southern Loliondo, and offers walking safaris, night drives and cultural activities.

**Sayari Camp** ([www.asilialodges.com](http://www.asilialodges.com); per person full board plus wildlife drives US\$600; ☽ Jun-Apr) This 16-bed previously mobile camp is now permanently based on the south side of the Mara River – well placed for the migration from about July to November.

## Western Serengeti

Apart from the park camp sites, the western Serengeti is the only area that has options for budget travellers (all outside the park). In addition to seasonal proximity to the migration (which generally passes through the area from around May/June), it offers the forest-fringed Grumeti River and relatively reliable year-round wildlife watching.

**Serengeti Stop-Over Point** (☎ 028-262 2273; www.serengetistopover.com; camping per person US\$10, s/d US\$30/60) This enthusiastic place is directly on the Mwanza–Musoma road about 1km from Ndabaka Gate. There's camping with hot showers and a cooking area, plus 10 simple rondavels, and a restaurant-bar. Local boat trips on Lake Victoria, visits to a traditional healer and other Sukuma cultural excursions can be arranged. Any bus along the Mwanza–Musoma road will drop you nearby. Safari vehicle rental is possible with advance notice.

**Kijeshi Tented Camp** (☎ 028-262 1231; www.kijeshi.com; s/d tented r half board US\$85/125, d bungalows half board US\$150; 📍) A budget place just outside park boundaries, 18km east of the Mwanza–Musoma road and signposted, and about 2km from the Serengeti's Handajega Gate. It's a popular base for overlanders, with functional tented accommodation (you can also pitch your own for US\$15) plus a few rooms, a restaurant and cooking facilities.

**Serengeti Tented Camp** (☎ 027-255 3242; www.moivaro.com; s/d full board US\$160/213) A small camp 3km from Ikoma Gate and just outside the park boundary, with 12 no-frills tents with bathrooms and hot water, plus the chance for night drives and guided walks in the border area.

**Mbalageti** (☎ 028-262 2387, 027-254 8632; www.mbalageti.com; lodge s/d full board US\$305/385, tented chalets s/d full board US\$315/610; 📍) One of the newer lodges in this part of the park, although it has already garnered a string of good reviews from guests, with rooms in the main lodge, or spacious tented and stone cottages with large verandas and wonderful views, including from the bathtubs.

**Grumeti River Camp** (www.ccafrica.com; per person all-inclusive US\$855; 📍) One of the most exclusive camps in the Serengeti. It's in a wild bush location near the Grumeti River that's especially prime around June and July when the wildebeests are often around. Accommodation is in 10 spacious luxury tents with all the amenities.

**Kirawira Camp** (☎ 027-250 4153/8, 028-262 1518; www.serenahotels.com; s/d all-inclusive US\$950/1450; 📍) Kirawira, set on a small rise about 90km west of Seronera, is more open and somewhat tamer in feel than Grumeti, with luxurious tents done up in what its advertising describes as the epitome of 'colonially styled safari luxury'.

Other recommendations:

**Speke Bay Lodge** (☎ 028-262 1236; www.spekebay.com; s/d tents without bathroom US\$54/90, s/d bungalows US\$102/145) On Lake Victoria about 15km southwest of Ndabaka Gate and 125km north of Mwanza, and a good choice if you want to combine the Serengeti with Lake Victoria. There are simple tents with shared facilities, and spotless, if rather soulless, en suite four-person bungalows. The staff can help you organise boat, fishing or birding excursions on the lake, and mountain biking. There's no vehicle hire.

**Robanda Safari Camp** (☎ 0754-282251; www.robanda-safari-camp.com; s/d full board US\$110/150) This 16-tent semipermanent camp near Robanda village just outside Ikoma Gate was about to open when we passed through. Accommodation is in en suite domed tents under thatching, and there's a restaurant. We welcome reports from anyone who stays here once it opens. There's no vehicle rental.

**Sasakwa Lodge** (www.singita.com; per person all-inclusive US\$1500) In the Grumeti Game Reserve north of the Serengeti's Western Corridor with seven stone cottages vaguely reminiscent of a transplanted English country estate. It's one of a trio of exclusive lodges in the area run by Singita. (The other two are Faru Faru Lodge and Sabora Tented Camp.) Wildlife walks and night drives are possible at all three, and horseriding is possible at Sasakwa.

## Mobile Camps

There is an increasing number of semipermanent, mostly upmarket camps that move seasonally with the wildlife, with the goal of always being optimally positioned for the migration.

**Olakira Camp** (www.asiallodges.com; per person full board US\$445) This comfortable six-tent camp is based in the Ndutu area with the wildebeests from December until March, and in central Serengeti from June to November.

**Simiyu Camp** (www.africawilderness.com; s/d full board US\$575/860) In the southern Serengeti from December to March, in the Seronera area from May to August and in the north from September to November.

**Serengeti Safari Camp** (www.nomad-tanzania.com; per person all-inclusive US\$590/930) A highly exclusive mobile camp that follows the wildebeest migration, with some of the best guides in the Serengeti.

## Getting There & Around

### AIR

Coastal Aviation, Air Excel and Regional Air have daily flights from Arusha to various Serengeti airstrips, including Seronera (US\$150 per person one way) and Grumeti (US\$180). There are also airstrips at Serengeti South, Lobo and most other ranger posts.

Some of Coastal's flights continue on to Mwanza and Rubondo Island National Park on demand.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Most travellers visit the Serengeti with an organised safari or in their own vehicle. For shoestring travellers the only other option to try to get a glimpse of the animals is to take a bus travelling between Arusha and Mwanza or Musoma via the Western Corridor route – check with Coastal line at the Arusha central bus station – although you won't be able to stop to observe the wildlife. You will need to pay park fees and, if you disembark at Seronera, you'll have the problem of getting onward transport, as hitching is not permitted in the park.

Access from Arusha is via the heavily used **Naabi Hill Gate** (🚗 6am-6pm) at the southeastern edge of the park. From here, it's 75km further to Seronera. **Ndabaka Gate** (🚗 6am-4pm) is about 140km northeast of Mwanza along the Mwanza–Musoma road, and gives you direct access to the Western Corridor. The road from Ndabaka to Seronera is in decent to good condition; allow two to three hours. Ikoma Gate is also accessed from the Mwanza–Musoma road, from an unpaved track running east from Bunda. Bologonya Gate, 5km from the Kenyan border, is the route to/from Kenya's Masai Mara National Reserve, but the border is open only to East African residents or citizens. There are other entry points at Handajega (Western Corridor) and in the north near Klein's Camp. Driving is not permitted in the park after 7pm.

Petrol points en route from Arusha include Makuyuni, Mto wa Mbu and Karatu. Petrol is also usually available at Ngorongoro Crater (Park Village) and at the Seronera Wildlife Lodge, although it's expensive. It is not available anywhere else in the park, so if you have your own vehicle come prepared with sufficient supplies. From the west, the most reliable petrol points are Mwanza and Musoma.

## NGORONGORO CONSERVATION AREA

The world-renowned Ngorongoro Crater is just one part of a much larger area of interrelated ecosystems consisting of the Crater Highlands (to which the Ngorongoro Crater belongs) together with vast stretches of plains, grasslands, bush and woodland. The entire Ngorongoro Conservation Area

(NCA) – a Unesco World Heritage Site – covers about 8300 sq km. Near its centre is Olduvai Gorge, where many famous fossils have been unearthed. To the west are the alkaline Lakes Ndutu and Masek, although Ndutu is just over the border in the Serengeti. Both lakes are particularly good areas for wildlife viewing between December and April, when they are overrun with wildebeests. In the east of the conservation area is a string of volcanoes and craters (collapsed volcanoes, often referred to as calderas); most, but not all, are inactive. Further east, just outside the NCA's boundaries, is the mysterious archaeological site of Engaruka. Nestled in the barren landscape along the NCA's southern border is Lake Eyasi, while to the northeast of the NCA in the arid expanses near the Kenyan border is the alkaline Lake Natron.

### Information

The NCA is under the jurisdiction of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), which has its **headquarters** (☎ 027-253 7006, 027-253 9108, 027-253 7019; www.ngorongorocrater.org) at Park Village at Ngorongoro Crater.

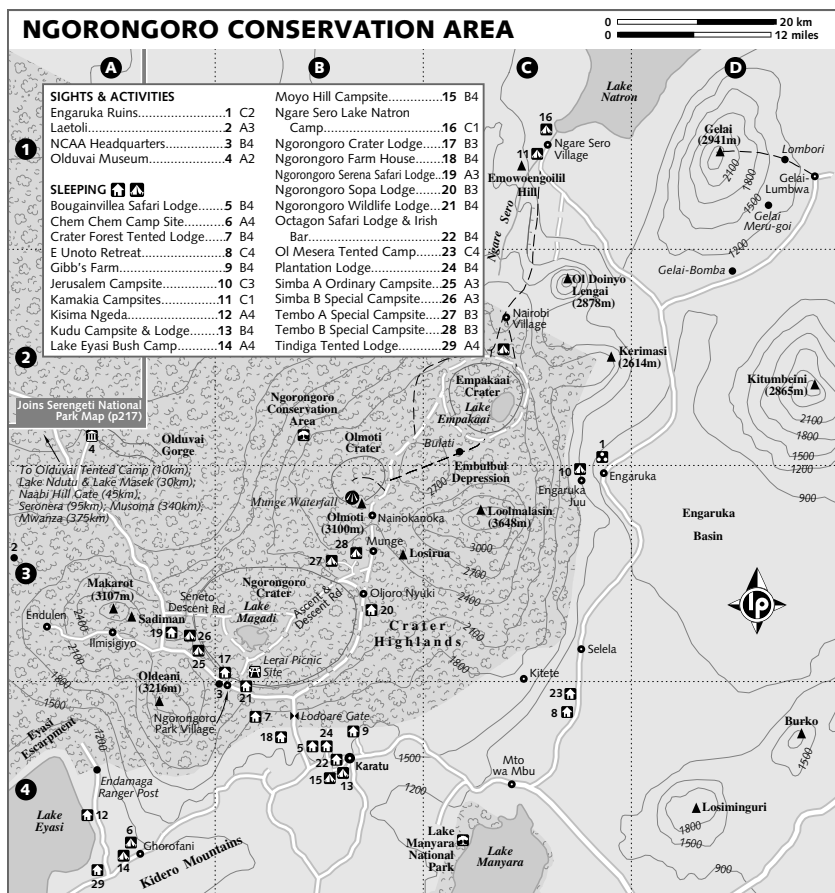
Entry fees – which you'll need to pay for all activities within the NCA – are US\$50 per person per 24-hour period (US\$10 for children five to 16 years old, and free for children under five). Guides, including for walking safaris, cost US\$20 per day per group. There is a vehicle fee of US\$40 /Tsh10,000 per foreign-/Tanzanian-registered vehicle per entry and an additional, steep crater-service fee of US\$200 per vehicle per entry to drive down into Ngorongoro Crater. Camping costs US\$30/10 per adult /child in public camp sites (US\$50/20 in special camp sites).

The two official entry points to the NCA are **Lodoare Gate** (☎ 027-253 7031; 🚗 6am-6pm), just south of Ngorongoro Crater, and **Naabi Hill Gate** (☎ 027-253 7030; 🚗 6am-6pm), on the border with Serengeti National Park.

Both MaCo and Harms-ic put out maps of the NCA, available at the NCA tourist information office in Arusha and at Lodoare Gate.

### The Crater Highlands

The ruggedly beautiful Crater Highlands consist of an elevated range of volcanoes and collapsed volcanoes rising up from the side of



the Great Rift Valley and running in a chain along the NCA's eastern edge. The peaks include Oldeani (3216m), Makarot (Lemagurut; 3107m), Olmoti (3100m), Loolmalasin (3648m), Empakaai (also spelled Embagai; 3262m), the still-active Ol Doinyo Lengai ('Mountain of God' in Maasai; 2878m) and Ngorongoro (2200m). The different peaks were created over many millions of years by a series of eruptions connected with the birth of the Great Rift Valley, and the older volcanoes have since collapsed to form the craters that give the range its name. The main residents of the area are the Maasai, who have grazed cattle here for hundreds of years.

Apart from Ngorongoro Crater, much of the Crater Highlands area is remote and

seldom visited, although it offers some of Tanzania's most unusual scenery, as well as good trekking. It can also be visited on a vehicle safari arranged through one of the Arusha-based tour operators. Self-drive visitors will need to be self-sufficient with petrol and water, and to arrange permission and a guide from the NCAA.

### TREKKING THE CRATER HIGHLANDS

The best way to explore the Crater Highlands is on foot, although because of the logistics involved, trekking here is expensive. Treks range from short day jaunts to excursions of up to two weeks or more. For all routes, you'll need to be accompanied by a guide, and for anything except day hikes, you will need



donkeys or vehicle support to carry water and supplies.

Nearly all visitors arrange treks through a tour company. A number of Arusha-based companies do treks to Empakaai and to Ol Doinyo Lengai (just outside the NCA boundaries), but for most trekking in this region you'll need to contact a specialist operator. For some recommendations, see p54, and Lonely Planet's *Trekking in East Africa*. Costs vary widely, but expect to pay from about US\$200 per person per day in a group of four, including NCA entry fees.

Alternatively, you can contact the NCAA directly and arrange your trek through them. However, this requires at least one month's notice, and usually winds up costing about the same as going through a tour company. You'll need to provide all camping equipment and supplies yourself, including water; you'll also need to hire a vehicle (essential for accessing all treks) and arrange for someone to drive the car to the end of the trek to collect you, as most routes are not circuits. The NCAA will then take care of arranging the camp sites, guides and donkeys. The hikes are usually based at designated Maasai 'cultural bomas', each of which has a Tsh10,000 entry fee.

There are no set routes, and the possibilities are numerous. A popular multiday trek starts just north of Ngorongoro Crater and crosses the highlands to finish at Ngare Sero village near Lake Natron. This normally takes four days, but can be cut to three by starting at Nainokanoka or extended by one day to climb Ol Doinyo Lengai.

To experience the area but still stay within a reasonable budget, there are several good short hikes, including up Makarot or Oldeani, or at Empakaai or Olmoti Craters. All of these can easily be done in a day or less from a base at Ngorongoro Crater, and apart from transport costs, involve only the US\$50 NCA entry fee and US\$20 guide fee. If you're trying to do things on your own through the NCA, rather than through a tour operator, the least complicated option would probably be Oldeani, which is accessed from Park Village, where you can also arrange a ranger/guide. From Oldeani, it's then possible to continue on down to Lake Eyasi, though for this you'll need an overnight stay or two.

There are no camps or lodges apart from the facilities at Ngorongoro Crater.

## Ngorongoro Crater

With its stunning ethereal blue-green vistas, close-range viewing opportunities and unparalleled concentrations of wildlife, the Ngorongoro Crater is one of Tanzania's most visited destinations, and one of Africa's best-known wildlife-viewing areas. At about 20km wide it is also one of the largest calderas in the world. Its steep, unbroken walls provide the setting for an incredible natural drama, as lions, elephants, buffaloes and plains herbivores such as wildebeests, Thomson's gazelles, zebras and reedbucks graze, stalk and otherwise make their way around the grasslands, swamps and forests on the crater floor. Chances are good that you'll also see a black rhino or two, and for many people this is one of the crater's main draws. The birding is also excellent here, including around Lake Magadi, the soda lake at the crater's base, which attracts hundreds of flamingos to its shallows.

Despite the crater's steepness, there is considerable movement of animals in and out, thanks to the permanent water and grassland on the crater floor. Animals and birds share the crater with the local Maasai people, who have grazing rights, and you may come across them tending their cattle. During the German colonial era there were two settlers' farms in the crater; you can still see one of the huts.

Because of the crater's popularity (close to 400,000 visitors in 2007), it can be easy to get sidetracked from the natural magnificence, especially when there are several vehicles crowded around one or two animals, all to a backdrop of clicking cameras and radio static. The NCAA has recently limited the number of vehicles permitted around any particular animal to five, and it's likely that further controls on vehicle access to the crater will be introduced in the near future. Meanwhile, one of the best ways to minimise these distractions is by getting into the crater early (there are relatively few vehicles before about 9am). It also helps to pick one or several strategic spots and then to stay put for a while, letting the nuances and subtleties of the crater's environment gradually come to you rather than joining the dashes across the crater floor when drivers radio each other about particularly good sightings.



**INFORMATION**

For fee information, see p221. Ngorongoro can be visited at any time of the year, but during April and May it can be wet and difficult to negotiate.

The gates down to the crater floor open at 7am and close (for descent) at 4pm; all vehicles must be out of the crater area before 6pm.

It can get very cold and raw on the crater rim, so bring a jacket and come prepared, especially if you're camping.

**SLEEPING  
Camping**

The only public camp site is Simba A, which has basic but generally clean facilities (latrines and cold showers) and great views over the crater if you're lucky enough to be there when there is no cloud cover. It's along the road from Lodoare Gate, not far from NCAA headquarters.

There are numerous special camp sites (none of which have any facilities), including Simba B, just up the road from Simba A, Tembo A and B north of the Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge; a cluster of sites near Lakes Ndutu and Masek; and one on the southern rim of Lake Empakaai.

**Lodges**

There are currently four lodges on, or near, the rim of the crater, although new developments are planned.

**Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge** (☎ 027-250 0630/9; info@sopalodges.com; s/d full board US\$210/350) Well located, off on its own on the eastern crater rim, just before the track leading up to Olmoti Crater, and near a crater descent/ascent road. Accommodation is in spacious rooms, each with two double beds, and standards and service are commendable.

**Ngorongoro Serena Safari Lodge** (☎ 027-250 4153/8; www.serenahotels.com; s/d full board US\$375/550) The popular Serena is in a fine location on the southwestern crater rim near the main crater descent route. It's a comfortable, attractive place with standards and facilities at least as good as those at the other Serena hotels, if not better, although during high season its popularity, especially with groups, can detract somewhat from the ambience. Green Footprint Adventures (www.greenfootprint.co.tz) has a base here and organises short hikes from the lodge, including to Olmoti.

**Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge** (☎ 027-254 4595/4795, direct 027-253 7058/73; www.hotelsandlodges-tanzania.com; r per person full board US\$420) The former government hotel, this old and architecturally unappealing lodge has a prime setting on the southern crater rim. While standards can't compare with those at the other crater rim lodges, they've come up a bit in recent times, and the views go a long way to compensating.

**Ngorongoro Crater Lodge** (www.ccafrica.com; per person all-inclusive US\$1115) This lodge – actually three separate camps – is the most interesting in terms of design, with an eclectic collection of styles and décor. Service and amenities are ultra top end, and prices include your own butler. It's on the southwestern crater rim.

**KARATU****☎ 027**

This small, scruffy town 20km southeast of Lodoare Gate is surrounded by some beautiful countryside, and makes a convenient base for visiting Ngorongoro. Many camping safaris out of Arusha use Karatu as an overnight stop to economise on entry fees for the crater, but it's also worth considering the town as a base in itself, especially if you're interested in walking in the nearby rolling hills. The seventh day of each month is Karatu's market day (*mnada*) – worth stopping if you happen to be passing through.

There is a post office, and an NBC branch that exchanges cash and travellers cheques and has an ATM. Several hotels have internet access, and there's an internet café at Ngorongoro Safari Resort.

**Sleeping & Eating****BUDGET**

In addition to the following listings, there are several basic guesthouses in the centre of town, all of about the same standard and all with no-frills rooms for about Tsh3000. A modest selection of supplies is available in Karatu, but if you're on a tight budget, it's cheaper to stock up in Arusha.

**ELCT Karatu Lutheran Hostel** (☎ 027-253 4230; s/d/tr Tsh22,000/30,000/40,000) The Lutheran Hostel has simple, clean rooms with hot water, and good meals (Tsh6000). It's on the main road at the western end of town.

**Moyo Hill Campsite** (www.moyohillcamp.com; camping per person US\$3, s/d bandas US\$30/45) A quiet, no-frills place with a large enclosed lawn for camping, and three basic and somewhat chilly twin-

bedded *bandas* with warm-water showers. Meals can be arranged. It's about 1km off the main road, and signposted.

**Ngorongoro Camp & Lodge** (☎ 027-253 4287; [www.ngorongorocampandlodge.com](http://www.ngorongorocampandlodge.com); camping per person US\$7, s/d US\$79/128; 📍) Good, though crowded, camping with hot showers, a covered dining area and meals from Tsh2000. There are also rooms, which are fine, but pricey for what you get. It's on the main road in the town centre. Car hire to Ngorongoro costs US\$120 plus entry and crater fees.

**Kudu Campsite & Lodge** (☎ 027-253 4055; [www.kuducamp.com](http://www.kuducamp.com); camping per person US\$10, s/d/tr bungalows US\$105/110/132, d/tr rondavels from US\$132/176; 📍) Kudu, at Karatu's western end and signposted south of the main road, has quiet gardens, a large lawn to pitch your tent, hot-water showers, clean, comfortable bungalows and a bar-restaurant (meals US\$5 to US\$8). Vehicle rental can be arranged.

**Bytes Pub & Café** (☎ 027-253 4488; meals from Tsh6000) Western-style meals with a gourmet touch in the centre of Karatu along the main road behind the Crater Highlands petrol station. A fire greatly reduced operations from what they once were, but the owners are slowly rebuilding.

For self-catering, there are several small supermarkets along the main road, including Olduvai Supermarket and Karatu Mini-Market.

## MIDRANGE & TOP END

**Bougainvillea Safari Lodge** (☎ 027-253 4083; [www.bougainvillealodge.net](http://www.bougainvillealodge.net); s/d/tr US\$70/125/150) A low-key place signposted off the main road west of Karatu with two dozen spacious attached stone bungalows – all with fireplaces and small verandas – plus a restaurant. Cultural activities can be arranged.

**Octagon Safari Lodge & Irish Bar** (☎ 027-253 4525; [www.octagonlodge.com](http://www.octagonlodge.com); s/d half board US\$124/208) Cosy, comfortable rooms set amidst beautifully green and lush gardens, good food and an Irish bar. Cultural walks can be arranged, as can Ngorongoro safaris.

**Gibb's Farm** (☎ 027-253 4397; [www.gibbsfarm.net](http://www.gibbsfarm.net); per person half board US\$136-290; 📅 mid-May–mid-Apr) The long-standing Gibb's Farm has a rustic highland ambience, a wonderful setting with wide views over the nearby coffee plantations, good walking and beautiful, well-appointed cottages – all recently completely refurbished and upgraded – set around the gardens. There's

also a spa and an in-house safari operator ([www.amazingtanzania.com](http://www.amazingtanzania.com)). The lodge gets consistently good reviews, as does the cuisine, which is made with home-grown organic produce. It's about 5km north of the main road and signposted.

**Crater Forest Tented Lodge** ([www.craterforesttentedlodge.com](http://www.craterforesttentedlodge.com); s/d full-board US\$160/250) A cosy place with 15 safari-style thatch-and-tent *bandas* in a lovely setting on a coffee farm about 12km off the main road, amenable to walking and relaxing. The turn-off is just before Lodoare Gate – watch for the tiny signpost. Hiking, cultural walks and tours of the coffee plantation can be arranged.

**Plantation Lodge** (☎ 027-253 4364/5, 027-253 4405; [www.plantation-lodge.com](http://www.plantation-lodge.com); s/d full board from US\$193/295; 📍) A genteel place with spacious, well-appointed cottages set in expansive green grounds, large verandas with views over the hills, a crackling fireplace and a cosy, highland ambience. It's west of Karatu and about 2km north of the main road.

**Ngorongoro Farm House** (☎ 027-250 4093, 0784-207727; [www.africawilderness.com](http://www.africawilderness.com); s/d half board US\$198/276; 📍) This lovely, atmospheric place is set in the grounds of a 500-acre coffee plantation about 5km from Lodoare Gate. The rooms are exceptionally spacious, and are well-appointed albeit in a rather minimalist style, and the suites have large bathtubs. There's also a large terrace dining area, a pool backed by flame trees and views towards Oldeani. It's a fine base for walking, and guides can be arranged for cultural or farm walks. Other possibilities include croquet, volleyball and coffee demonstrations.

## Getting There & Away

There are several buses daily between Arusha and Karatu (Tsh5000, three hours), departing Arusha from the main bus station, with at least one daily (look for Ditto KK and Kulinge lines – both departing about 10am) continuing on to Lodoare Gate (about four hours). Coastal line between Arusha and Mwanza via the Serengeti also stops at Lodoare Gate, departing Arusha by 4am.

## Getting Around

Vehicle hire and guides can be arranged at Lodoare Gate. Car hire – which is done informally with private cars belonging to staff, as the NCAA no longer rents vehicles – costs about US\$120 per day and is best arranged in

advance. You can also, and more reliably, rent vehicles in Karatu for about the same price (US\$120 to US\$150 per day). The only petrol between Karatu and Seronera in the Serengeti is at NCAA headquarters.

If self-driving, only 4WDs are allowed down into the crater. All roads into the crater have been recently graded and are in good shape, though all are steep, so be sure your vehicle can handle the conditions. The main route in is the Seneto descent road, which enters the crater on its western side, just west of Lake Magadi. To come out, use the Lerai ascent road, which starts near the Lerai picnic site to the south of Lake Magadi and leads to the rim near Ngorongoro Crater Lodge. There is a third access route on the northeastern edge of the crater near the Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, which can be used for ascents and descents.

## OLDUVAI GORGE

Slicing its way close to 100m down into the plains northwest of Ngorongoro Crater, and through millennia of history, is Olduvai (Oldupai) Gorge – a dusty, 50km-long ravine that has become one of the African continent's best-known archaeological sites. Thanks to its unique geological history, in which layer upon layer of volcanic deposits were laid down in an orderly sequence over a period of almost two million years, it provides remarkable documentation of ancient life, allowing us to begin turning the pages of history back to the days of our earliest ancestors.

The most famous of the fossils yielded by Olduvai has been the 1.8 million-year-old ape-like skull known as *Australopithecus boisei*, which was discovered by Mary Leakey in 1959 and gave rise to a heated debate about human evolution. The skull is also often referred to as 'zinjanthropus', which means 'nutcracker man', referring to its large molars. In 1972, 3.75-million-year-old hominid (human-like) footprints – the oldest known – were discovered at Laetoli, about 45km south of the Olduvai Gorge. Based on these findings as well as other ancient fossils excavated in Kenya and Ethiopia, it has been posited that there were at least three hominid species in the region about two million years ago, including *Australopithecus boisei*, *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*. While *Australopithecus*

*boisei* and *Homo habilis* appear to have died out (or in the case of *Homo habilis*, been absorbed by or evolved into *Homo erectus*), it is theorised that *Homo erectus* continued and evolved into *Homo sapiens*, or modern man. Other lesser-known but significant fossils excavated from the upper layers of Olduvai provide some of the oldest evidence of *Homo sapiens* in the area.

There is a small and interesting **museum** (☎ 027-253 7037; [www.ngorongorocrater.org/oldupai.html](http://www.ngorongorocrater.org/oldupai.html); ☎ 8am-4.30pm) here, several kilometres off the road to Serengeti, and an adjoining picnic area. It's also possible at certain times to go down into the gorge, accompanied by a guide, who can be arranged at the museum. As well as the standard fees applying to the NCA, there's an additional US\$3 per person per day fee for visiting the museum. Guides into the gorge cost Tsh10,000/20,000 for driving/walking.

The rustic **Olduvai Tented Camp** ([www.tanganika.com](http://www.tanganika.com); s/d half board US\$160/220) is nestled among some kopjes with views over the surrounding area. Standards are quite rudimentary in comparison with other places in this price range, but the setting is good, and if you're into the offbeat, it makes a fine spot to watch wildebeests during the wet season. Maasai cultural walks can be arranged. Advance bookings are essential.

## ENGARUKA

Engaruka, on the eastern edge of the NCA near the foot of Empakaai, is a small village known for its extensive ruins of a complex irrigation system with terraced stone housing sites estimated to be at least 500 years old. Scientists are unsure of the ruins' origin; some speculate they were built by ancestors of the Iraqw (Mbulu) people, who populate the area today, while others suggest that the site was built by the Sonjo, a Bantu-speaking people. Those interested in Engaruka can read more about the site in the first chapter of Henry Forsbroke's *The Eighth Wonder*. The ruins are best viewed from the air, although archaeology buffs will probably find a ground visit more interesting.

There's a Cultural Tourism Programme of sorts here, which, in addition to tours of the ruins and Maasai cultural tours, offers a two-day hike to Ol Doinyo Lengai or a day climb of nearby Kerimasi (2614m), which is just off the road about halfway between Engaruka

## OL DOINYO LENGAI

The northernmost mountain in the Crater Highlands, Ol Doinyo Lengai (2878m) – ‘Mountain of God’ in the Maasai language – is an almost perfect volcanic cone with steep sides rising to a small flat-topped peak. It’s the youngest volcano in the Crater Highlands, and still active, although many aspects of its geological activity remain a mystery. There were major eruptions in 1966 and 1993, with the most recent eruptions and major activity in late 2007. At the peak, you can clearly see hot steam vents and growing ash cones in the still-active north crater. A trek from the base village of Ngare Sero is possible in one long day, with a pre-dawn start essential in order to gain as much height as possible in the cool of the morning. Although the number of climbers scaling Ol Doinyo Lengai has exploded in recent years, the north crater poses significant danger to trekkers who approach at too close a range. Before setting off, read the safety overview at [www.mtsu.edu/~fbelton/safety.html](http://www.mtsu.edu/~fbelton/safety.html). For an overview of the mountain, including updated information on eruptions and other activity, see [www.mtsu.edu/~fbelton/lengai.html](http://www.mtsu.edu/~fbelton/lengai.html).

and Lake Natron. Arrange things through the tourist information office in Arusha, or at Jerusalem Campsite in Engaruka.

There are several camp sites, including one in Engaruka village, and the simple but shaded **Jerusalem Campsite** (camping per person Tsh10,000), about 5km west of the main road in the Engaruka Juu area. It’s just after the river and near the Engaruka Juu primary school, and an easy walk from the ruins.

Engaruka is located about 60km north of Mto wa Mbu along an unsealed road, which is in reasonable shape for the first 10km or so, but becomes rough thereafter. There’s a daily bus between Arusha and Engaruka via Mto wa Mbu (Tsh6000, four to five hours from Arusha, and Tsh3000 from Mto wa Mbu), departing Arusha by about 10am. At the entry post shortly before reaching Engaruka, you’ll need to pay a Tsh5000 per person village fee. Departures from Engaruka are by about 6am. It’s also possible to hike in to Engaruka from the Empakaai Crater, but you will need to have a guide from the NCAA.

## LAKE NATRON

Shimmering amid the parched, sun-scorched landscapes along the Kenyan border north-east of the NCA is Lake Natron, a 60km-long alkaline lake known for the huge flocks of flamingos that gather here at the end of the rainy season. The surrounding country is remote, with a desolate, otherworldly beauty and an incomparable feeling of space and ancientness, and can be a rewarding – albeit very hot – off the beaten track excursion. The lake also makes a good base for climbing Ol

Doinyo Lengai, 25km to the south. Because the lake has no outlet, its size varies dramatically depending on the time of year.

## Sleeping & Eating

There are various camp sites – most budget, and a few more upmarket – all clustered around the southwestern end of the lake.

**Kamakia Campsites** (camping per person Tsh10,000) These long-standing places – there are actually two camp sites, one near the waterfall and one somewhat downriver near the village – have been spruced up recently and are the best budget places, though facilities are still quite basic. Swimming is possible, and meals are available, as are guides for walks and mountain climbs.

**Ngare Sero Lake Natron Camp** (☎ 027-255 3638; [www.ngare-sero-lodge.com](http://www.ngare-sero-lodge.com); per person full board per single night US\$220, per person full board per night for multi-night stays US\$170) This upmarket place is the newest and nicest of the various camp sites around Lake Natron, with eight comfortable and well-designed tents situated near a small stream, and comes complete with full meal and bar service. Guides are available for walks, hikes to the nearby waterfalls and climbing Ol Doinyo Lengai.

## Getting There & Away

Lake Natron is accessed via the small outpost of Ngare Sero, on the southwestern lake shore and about 60km north of Engaruka. There’s no public transport north of Engaruka, but vehicle hire can be arranged in Engaruka through Jerusalem Campsite (about US\$120), or in Arusha. The Ngare Sero Lake Natron Camp provides transfers

for its guests. There's a US\$15 per person district council fee to enter the area, payable at the entrance to Ngare Sero. Self-drivers should carry extra supplies of petrol and water, as there's nothing en route, and no petrol after Engaruka. For upmarket bike safaris to the lake, contact Summits Africa (p55). Once at Natron, the rough road continues northwest to Loliondo and into the Serengeti.

## LAKE EYASI

Starkly beautiful Lake Eyasi lies at about 1000m between the Eyasi Escarpment in the north and the Kidero Mountains in the south. It's a hot, dry area, around which live the Hadzabe (also known as Hadzapi or Tindiga) people who are believed to have lived here for nearly 10,000 years and still follow hunting and gathering traditions. Their language is characterised by clicks and may be distantly related to that of Southern Africa's San, although it shows only a few connections to Sandawe, the other click language spoken in Tanzania. Also in the area are the Iraqw (Mbulu), a people of Cushitic origin who arrived about 2000 years ago, as well as Maasai and various Bantu groups. The area is Tanzania's main onion-growing centre, and there are impressive irrigation systems along the Chemchem River near the camp sites. The main village is **Ghorofani**, at the lake's northeastern end, with a weekly *mnada* (auction/market) every Thursday that attracts traders from Arusha and neighbouring villages.

The lake itself varies considerably in size depending on the rains, and in the dry season it is often little more than a parched bed – lending to the rather otherworldly, primeval ambience of the area. However usually a large enough patch of water remains to support a mix of water birds, including populations of flamingos and pelicans.

Eyasi makes a rewarding detour on a Ngorongoro trip for anyone looking for something remote and different, and prepared for the rough road trip from Karatu. English-speaking guides to visit nearby Hadzabe communities can be arranged through Momoya at Lake Eyasi Bush Camp for Tsh40,000 per person (Tsh50,000 including camping at his camp site). Prices decrease if you're in a group (Tsh60,000 for two persons). Staff at Kisima Ngeda can

help those staying at their budget camp site find a non-English-speaking guide for about Tsh5000 per person. Kisima Ngeda also arranges English-speaking guides for guests in its upmarket camp, as does Tindiga Tented Lodge.

## Sleeping & Eating

Full board is included in the prices of both upmarket lodges. For campers, you can get basics in Ghorofani, but it's worth stocking up in Karatu before heading to the lake.

**Chem Chem Camp Site** (camping per person Tsh5000) This village-run camp site – previously located near a spring just outside Ghorofani – recently moved to another not quite as nice site nearby, although there was some discussion of returning to the original site. Ask when you get to the main Ghorofani junction, and follow the signs (it's currently located about 3km from the central area). Facilities are basic, so you will need to bring all that you'll need.

**Lake Eyasi Bush Camp** (Momoya's Camp; eyasi bush@yahoo.com; camping per person Tsh6000, camping per person plus Hadzabe visit Tsh50,000) This no-frills place is run by the enterprising Momoya. There's a booking office in Karatu at David's Restaurant, behind the petrol station where you catch 4WDs to Ghorofani, and another well-signposted office in Ghorofani itself. Facilities are minimal (cold water only); tents are sometimes available for rent, and meals can be arranged with advance notice.

**Tindiga Tented Lodge** ([www.tindigatentedlodge.com](http://www.tindigatentedlodge.com); s/d full board US\$160/230) This new and pleasant place is about 4km from Ghorofani, and situated about 2km from the lake in a rustic bush setting. Accommodation is in eight tented bungalows, and a range of excursions is on offer, including birding and cultural walks, and visits to the Hadzabe and Datoga (Tsh60,000 for both, which includes Tsh20,000 to each tribe plus Tsh20,000 for the guide).

**Kisima Ngeda** (☎ 027-253 4128, 027-254 8715; kisima@habari.co.tz; s/d luxury tented bungalows half board US\$205/310) The recommended Kisima Ngeda – in a sublime setting on the lake shore with doum palms in the background – has six tented bungalows along the lake. The emphasis is on bush comfort in a natural environment, rather than luxury, and the cuisine – served by candlelight with the lake bed as

a backdrop – is excellent. Nearby is a large hill to climb for sunset views. Away from the main lodge area, the same management also runs three budget camp sites (camping per person US\$5) – the only camping on the lake shore – where you can pitch a tent. All have toilet and shower, and for a modest tip the guard can arrange hot water. Kisima Ngeda roughly translates as ‘spring surrounded by trees’, and there’s a natural spring on the property, surrounded by acacia thorns, fever trees and palms. It’s about 7km from Ghorofani and signposted.

### Getting There & Away

There’s public transport several times daily between Karatu and Ghorofani (Tsh4000, two hours), from where you’ll need to walk to the camp sites or pay extra to have the driver drop you off. Alternatively, you can hitch a lift with one of the onion trucks. Transport in Karatu leaves around late morning from the 4WD stand behind the petrol station at the western end of town. Returning, transport leaves from the main Ghorofani junction about 3am or 4am, although it’s often possible to find something later in the day.

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