

Southern Highlands



Green hills rolling to the horizon, lively markets overflowing with produce, jacaranda-lined streets and wildlife are among the attractions that await you in Tanzania's scenic and often overlooked Southern Highlands.

Officially, the Highlands begin at the Makambako Gap, about halfway between Iringa and Mbeya, and extend southwards into Malawi. In this guide, the term is used to designate the entire region along the mountainous chain running between Morogoro in the east and Lake Nyasa and the Zambian border in the west. In addition to being beautiful, the Highlands are also one of Tanzania's most important agricultural areas, producing a large proportion of the country's maize, as well as coffee, tea and other crops.

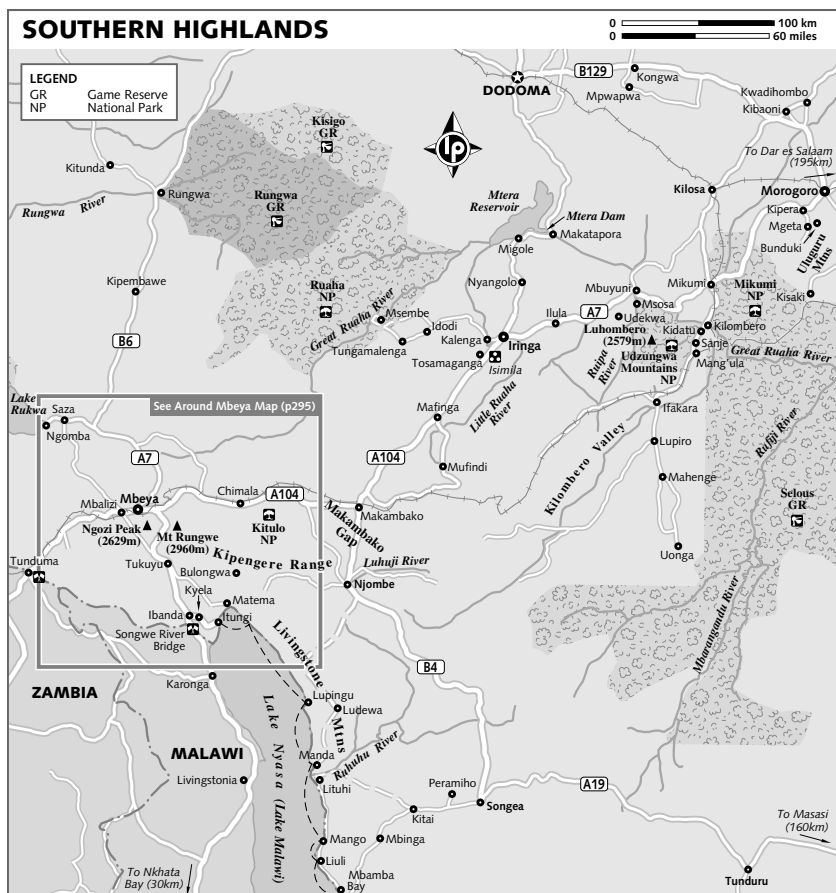
On the region's eastern edge, near Morogoro, are the Uluguru Mountains – home to the matrilineal Luguru people and many unique plant and bird species. Just southwest of here is the easily accessed Mikumi National Park, as well as Udzungwa Mountains National Park, an offbeat destination for hikers. Further west, past Iringa, is the sublime and unspoiled Ruaha National Park, with striking riverine scenery and one of Africa's largest elephant populations. The heart of the Southern Highlands is in the far southwest, with secluded valleys, rolling hills and verdant mountains that cascade down to the tranquil and seldom-trodden shores of Lake Nyasa, where there is almost no tourist infrastructure.

While many travellers pass through the Southern Highlands en route to or from Malawi or Zambia, few stop along the way, even though there is much of interest. Main roads are in generally good condition and there is a reasonable selection of accommodation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sitting by the river in **Ruaha National Park** (p286), taking in the magnificence of the wild
- Watching lions, wildebeest and buffaloes in **Mikumi National Park** (p278)
- Getting away from it all on the shores of **Lake Nyasa** (p298)
- Exploring off the beaten track around **Iringa** (p282), **Njombe** (p289) or **Songea** (p301)
- Enjoying the green, rolling panoramas around **Tukuyu** (p297) and **Mbeya** (p295)





National Parks & Reserves

The region's parks include Mikumi (p278) and Ruaha (p286) for wildlife-watching, Udzungwa Mountains (p280) for hiking and Kitulo (p290) for taking in the beautiful panoramas and wildflowers.

Getting There & Around

Scheduled and charter flights, operated primarily by Coastal Aviation and Safari Airlink (p356), serve Mikumi, Ruaha, Iringa, Mufindi and Mbeya during the dry season. An international airport is being built at Mbeya.

Road travel is straightforward, thanks to the good tarmac highway (the southwestern part of which is a section of the Great North Road on the Cape to Cairo route) from Dar

Salaam southwest into Zambia, with tarmac branch routes leading to Songea and to Kyela. Otherwise, everything is unsealed.

Several ferries run on Lake Nyasa, with sporadic connections between towns on the Tanzanian side and between Tanzania and Malawi; see p357.

MOROGORO

☎ 023 / pop 250,000

Bustling, sprawling Morogoro would be a fairly scruffy town were it not for its verdant setting at the foot of the Uluguru Mountains, which brood over the landscape from the southeast. The surrounding area is one of the country's breadbaskets, home to the prestigious Sokoine University (Tanzania's national

agricultural institute) and a major educational and mission station. While there are few tourist attractions in Morogoro itself, it's an unpretentious place, a good introduction to Tanzanian life outside Dar es Salaam and the best base for hiking in the Uluguru.

Information

IMMIGRATION OFFICE

The immigration office is signposted about 200m south of the main road, though visa extensions generally must be handled in Dar es Salaam.

INTERNET ACCESS

Daus Internet Café (off Lumumba St; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-10pm Sun-Fri, 7-10pm Sat) Around the corner from Pira's Supermarket, with a good connection.

Matanda Internet Café (Mahenge St; per hr Tsh500; ☎ 8am-8pm) Next to Princess Lodge.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Bede Pharmacy (Mahenge St)

Morogoro Medical Stores Pharmacy (Old Dar es Salaam Rd)

MONEY

Exim Bank (Lumumba St) Opposite Pira's Supermarket; ATM (MasterCard, Visa, Cirrus and Maestro).

NBC (Old Dar es Salaam Rd) Changes cash; ATM (Visa only).

POST & TELEPHONE

Main post office (Old Dar es Salaam Rd; ☎ 8am-5pm) With card phones nearby.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Chilunga Cultural Tourism (☎ 0754-477582, 0713-663993; YWCA Compound, Rwegasore Rd) Organises hikes in the Uluguru Mountains, village visits and other excursions – stop by the office for a sampling of the possibilities. Prices average about Tsh20,000 per day for a guide, plus village and administration fees (these vary, depending on the hike, but average Tsh3000 to Tsh7000 per person per hike).

Sights & Activities

The market has good deals on textiles. With your own clubs, you could try the **golf course** opposite Morogoro Hotel.

Morogoro is a logical base for excursions to Mikumi National Park (p278) and Selous Game Reserve (p311), although you'll need to have your own vehicle or rent one in Dar es Salaam, as they're difficult to find in Morogoro.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Princess Lodge (☎ 0754-319159; Mahenge St; r without bathroom Tsh7000) This lodge has clean, small no-frills rooms, all with double bed, fan and net, plus helpful management and a good, cheap restaurant downstairs. It's one block in from the main road in the town centre.

Mama Pierina's (☎ 0713-786913; Station St; d Tsh9000) The ageing Mama Pierina's is in an agreeable location off the main road, but rooms – all with nets and fan, and set around a tiny garden – are long past their prime, with decaying facilities and paper-thin walls. The attached restaurant serves up large portions of unexciting food.

Sofia Hotel (☎ 023-260 4848; Mahenge St; s/d Tsh15,000/24,000, d without bathroom Tsh9000) A long-standing place with small, dark rooms and a restaurant. It's diagonally opposite Princess Lodge.

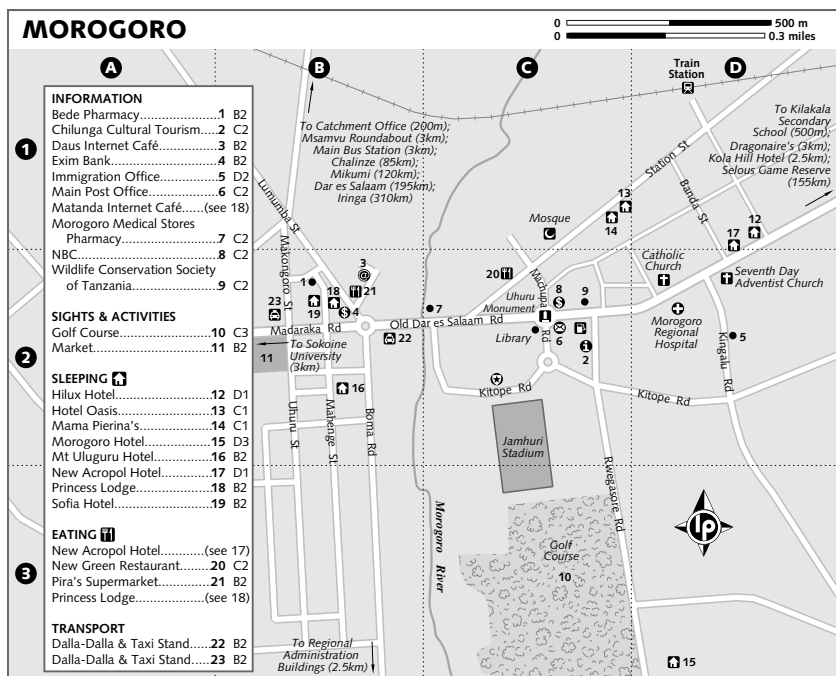
Mt Uluguru Hotel (☎ 023-260 3489; s/d Tsh15,000/20,000, d with air-con Tsh30,000; 📶) A nondescript multistorey hotel worth a look for its central location. Rooms are reasonable (ask for one with a view) and there's an inexpensive restaurant and a large outdoor bar. It's south of the main road, off Mahenge St.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Kola Hill Hotel (☎ 023-260 3707; r with fan/air-con from Tsh16,500/22,800; 📶) Rooms here – all doubles or twins, some with TV – are faded and nothing special, but the setting is tranquil, in a green and quiet area about 3km east of the centre. It's a reasonable choice if you have your own transport. Meals are available. It's about 300m off Old Dar es Salaam Rd along the Bigwa *dalla-dalla* (minibus) route (Tsh2000 from town), and signposted opposite the Teachers' College Morogoro. Taxis charge Tsh2000 to Tsh3000.

Morogoro Hotel (☎ 023-261 3270/1/2; morogorohtl@morogoro.net; Rwegasore Rd; s/d/tr from US\$30/45/65) Once a Morogoro institution, this is another place that has seen better days, although it's been spruced up recently. Accommodation is in detached bungalows set in green grounds about 1.5km off the main road and opposite the golf course. It's popular for weddings and other functions on weekends, which can mean loud music until late.

Hotel Oasis (☎ 023-261 4178, 0754-377602; hoteloasis2@morogoro.net; Station St; s/d/tr incl breakfast US\$35/40/50; 📶 📶) Faded but good-value



rooms – all with fan, air-con, TV and small fridge – plus grassy grounds and a popular restaurant serving good Indian cuisine, plus Chinese and continental dishes.

New Acropol Hotel (☎ 023-261 3403, 0754-309410; www.newacropolhotel.biz; Old Dar es Salaam Rd; s/d from Tsh45,000/55,000, ste Tsh80,000; 🍷 🍴 🚗) This B&B-style hotel has spacious, well-decorated rooms (all with TV, fridge and large double bed), a classy restaurant, a cosy bar and a porch overlooking the small gardens – ideal for sipping an afternoon drink.

Dragonaire's (☎ 0787-117368; r incl breakfast Tsh50,000; 🍷) This restaurant has four new, modern rooms overlooking an expansive lawn. Located upstairs is a family suite with two attached doubles and a kitchenette, while downstairs are two doubles. All come with TV. It's signposted about 2.5km east of town, about 700m off the Old Dar es Salaam Rd.

Also recommended:

Hilux Hotel (☎ 023-261 3946; Old Dar es Salaam Rd; r Tsh45,000) Small, albeit clean and well-equipped, rooms and a restaurant; next door to New Acropol Hotel.

Eating & Drinking

Princess Lodge (☎ 0754-319159; Mahenge St; meals from Tsh1500; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner) A good bet for inexpensive local dishes, with meals promised in '30 minutes or less'.

Dragonaire's (☎ 0787-117368; pizza Tsh3000-6000, meals from Tsh5000; 🍷 3-11pm Mon-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat & Sun) Expansive, green grounds, a small children's playground and tasty pizzas on weekends. The rest of the menu is mainly Chinese dishes, plus steak, lasagne and other continental fare – all good, though waits for food can be very long. Friday and Saturday are karaoke nights. It's signposted about 2.5km east of town, about 700m off the Old Dar es Salaam Rd.

New Green Restaurant (☎ 023-261 4021; Station St; meals Tsh5000-8000; 🍷 lunch & dinner, closed dinner Sun) A long-standing place with Indian dishes, including vegetarian meals, plus grilled chicken or fish and chips. The quality of cuisine and service tends to vary, but if you're lucky enough to stop by on an up day, it's a good choice.

New Acropol Hotel (☎ 023-261 3403, 0754-309410; www.newacropolhotel.biz; Old Dar es Salaam Rd; meals from Tsh10,000; 🍷 Tue-Sun) Morogoro's classiest

restaurant, the New Acropol has *nouvelle cuisine*-style meals, a well-stocked bar and excellent local coffee (you can also buy some to take home).

For self-catering try **Pira's Supermarket** (Lumumba Rd).

Getting There & Away

BUS

The main bus station is about 3km north of town on the main Dar es Salaam road, about 300m east of Msamvu roundabout (Tsh2000

in a taxi and Tsh200 in a *dalla-dalla*). It's chaotic, with no real order to things – you'll need to ask where to find buses to your destination. The Scandinavian Express office is on the other side of the roundabout in its own compound, and much quieter.

Scandinavian Express buses go daily to Dodoma, Mikumi, Iringa, Mbeya and Dar es Salaam, but none originate in Morogoro, so you'll need to book in advance at the Scandinavian office. Smaller buses to Dar es Salaam leave throughout the day, from 5.45am

HIKING IN THE ULUGURU MOUNTAINS

The Uluguru Mountains rise up from the plains just southeast of Morogoro, dominating vistas from town. Part of the Eastern Arc chain, the mountains contain some of Africa's oldest original forest plus a wealth of birds, plants and insects. These include many unique species, such as the Uluguru bush shrike. The only comparable mountain-forest area in East Africa, as far as age and endemism are concerned, is the Usambara Mountains (p168).

The main tribal group in the Ulugurus are the matrilineal Luguru, who earn their living primarily through subsistence agriculture. Due to the high population density in the Ulugurus, most of the original forest cover has been depleted – you'll see this immediately on the hillsides – with only a few small protected patches remaining on the upper slopes. This deforestation has led to severe erosion.

The best contact for organising hiking guides is Chilunga Cultural Tourism (p275) in Morogoro. Come prepared with a jacket, as it can rain at any time of year. The shortest route from Morogoro is to **Morningside**, an old German mountain hut to the south of town at about 1000m. The path, which can easily be done in half a day return, starts at the regional administration buildings about 3km south of Morogoro at the end of Boma Rd. From here, a track leads uphill and then curves to the right through small farm plots and degraded forest before reaching the Morningside hut. It's possible to camp at Morningside with your own tent and supplies; there's a small waterfall nearby. Once at Morningside, it takes another 40 minutes or so to reach the border of the Uluguru North Forest Reserve. It's generally not permitted to continue beyond here because of sensitivities about the Bondwe Peak communications tower higher up the slopes. There has been a spate of muggings on this route recently, including attacks on hikers who were accompanied by guides. Don't bring any valuables, be wary of strangers who arrive wanting to join your group and think twice before you consider camping.

Another possibility from town is the hike to **Lupanga Peak** (2147m), the highest point in the immediate vicinity, although views from the top are obscured by the forest. The starting point is at Kilakala Secondary School, 1km east of town off Old Dar es Salaam Rd. The trek is detailed in the Uluguru tourist-information booklet mentioned below; it takes about five hours return. Since part of the hike is in the forest reserve, you'll need to first get a permit (Tsh5000) from the **Catchment Office** (☎ 7.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri) in Morogoro. It's 1.5km north of the town centre on the road to Msamvu junction, in an unmarked building on the left just after crossing the second set of railway tracks. There are also various cultural walks from **Bunduki**, about 2½ to three hours drive south of Morogoro, and best accessed with your own 4WD. Transport can also be arranged with Chilunga (about Tsh50,000 per vehicle).

The **Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania** (WCST; ☎ 023-261 3122; uluguru@morogoro.net; 1st fl, Bodi ya Pamba Bldg, Old Dar es Salaam Rd, Morogoro), in collaboration with the Uluguru Mountains Biodiversity Conservation Project, has published *Tourist Information for the Uluguru Mountains*, with detailed route descriptions and information on places to stay. It's for sale at the WCST office in Morogoro or can be downloaded for free at www.africanconservation.com/uluguru (click on Contents, then on Section 4).

until about 4pm (Tsh2500, 3½ hours). Buses from Dar es Salaam going southwest towards Mikumi and Iringa begin passing Morogoro about 9am.

To Arusha, several direct buses daily do the route (nine hours), including Shabiby, originating in Dodoma.

To Tanga, there is a direct bus daily (Tsh5000, five hours), departing by 8am.

The main *dalla-dalla* stand is in front of the market, where there is also a taxi rank. There's another *dalla-dalla* stop and taxi rank further east along Old Dar es Salaam Rd before the post office.

TRAIN

Morogoro is on the Central Line (p361), but this section of track is currently closed. Even when open, it's much faster to travel via bus.

MIKUMI NATIONAL PARK

Lovely, but often-underrated, Mikumi – part of the vast Selous ecosystem – is Tanzania's fourth-largest national park. It's also the most accessible from Dar es Salaam and, with almost guaranteed sightings of wildlife, makes an ideal destination for a safari for those who don't have much time. Within its 3230 sq km, set between the Uluguru Mountains to the northeast, the Rubeho Mountains to the northwest and the Lumango Mountains to the southeast, Mikumi hosts buffaloes, wildebeests, giraffes, elephants, lions, zebras, leopards, crocodiles and more, and chances are high that you'll see a respectable sampling of these within a short time of entering the park.

The best and most reliable viewing is around the Mkata floodplain, to the northwest of the main road, with the Millennium ('Little Serengeti') area particularly rewarding. Another attraction is the Hippo Pools area, just northwest of the main entry gate, where you can watch these lumbering behemoths at close range, plus do some fine birding.

To the south, Mikumi is contiguous with Selous Game Reserve, although there's currently no all-weather road linking the two (most operators go via Morogoro) and only minimal track development. More feasible is a combination of Mikumi with Udzungwa Mountains National Park, which is about a two-hour drive southwest.

Mikumi is an important educational and research centre. Among the various projects

being carried out is an ongoing field study of yellow baboons, which is one of just a handful of such long-term primate studies on the continent.

Information

Entry fees are US\$20/5 per adult/child aged five to 15 years. For camping fees see p77. Mikumi can be visited year-round, though it's best in the dry season – during the rainy season (from about December to May) some areas become inaccessible and the animals are more widely scattered. For booking camp sites and park *bandas* (thatched-roof huts or shelters), contact the **senior park warden** (☎ 023-262 0487). Hours for driving within the park (off the main highway) are 6.30am to 6.30pm. Foxes African Safaris, which runs two lodges in the park, has safari vehicles for its guests (US\$120 for half a day, unless you've booked an all-inclusive package). Otherwise, you'll need to either have your own vehicle to visit the park or arrange an organised tour. Two-hour guided walking safaris can be arranged at the park entrance, but these are currently being done almost exclusively in the more heavily vegetated area of the park, just south of the main highway, and may leave you disappointed.

Sleeping & Eating

The park has four ordinary camp sites, for which you'll need to be self-sufficient. The two closest to the park headquarters have toilet facilities and one has a shower. There is a special camp site near Choga Wale in the north of the park; permission to camp elsewhere can be requested from park headquarters and is charged at special camp-site rates. There is also a hostel for students, which must be reserved in advance through park headquarters; bring your own food and other supplies. Better are the new **park bandas** (s/d US\$30/50) just behind the main park office complex. The rooms – in attached brick bungalows with shared and clean hot-water bathrooms – are spare but spotless and have nets. Meals can be arranged and there's a shared kitchen for cooking your own meals.

Mikumi Wildlife Camp (Kikoboga; ☎ 022-260 0352/4; obh@bol.co.tz; s/d full board US\$160/280; 📶) Kikoboga, about 500m northeast of the park gate and within easy access of the main wildlife circuits, has attractive stone cottages spread along a grassy field frequented by grazing

zebras and gazelles and is good overall value. Given its proximity to the highway, it's not a wilderness experience, but the animals don't seem to mind and you'll probably see plenty from your front porch. A good family choice. Wildlife drives cost US\$130/200 per vehicle per half/full day.

Vuma Hills Tented Camp (☎ 0784-237422; www.tanzaniasafaris.info; s/d full board plus wildlife drives US\$305/490; 📍) This easily accessed and popular camp is set on a rise about 7km south of the main road, with views over the plains in the distance. The 16 tented en-suite cottages each have a double and a single bed, the mood is relaxed and the cuisine is good. A recommended family choice. The turn-off is diagonally opposite the park entry gate.

Foxes Safari Camp (☎ 0784-237422; www.tanzaniasafaris.info; s/d full board plus wildlife drives US\$305/490; 📍) Under the same management as Vuma Hills camp, this 12-tent upmarket camp is set on a rocky outcrop with good access to the rewarding wildlife-viewing circuits around Chamgore and Mwanambogo dam in Mikumi's northeastern section, with wide views over the surrounding Mkata plains. It's 6km off the tarmac road and accessed via a signposted turn-off about 29km northeast of the main park gate.

Also see the accommodation options in Mikumi town (right), 23km west.

Getting There & Around

BUS

Although getting to the gate of Mikumi is easy via public transport (take any of the buses running along the Morogoro–Iringa highway and ask the driver to drop you off there), there is no vehicle rental at the park, so you'll need to have your own car or arrange a rental in advance with one of the lodges. It's often possible to see animals along the roadside if you're passing through on a bus, especially if you travel in the early morning or evening, but the buses move too fast for decent viewing. Good budget options for visiting the park include one of the frequent special deals offered by Dar es Salaam–based tour operators (see p88), or alternatively, to take the bus to Mikumi town and organise transport to the park through Genesis Motel or Tan-Swiss Hotel (see the Mikumi town section, following). If you're planning to continue from the park by bus, purchase your onward ticket in advance with the bus company (Scandinavian is best for

this) and get their telephone number to confirm with them so they will remember to stop and pick you up at the park gate.

CAR

The park gate is about a four-hour drive from Dar es Salaam; speed limits on the section of main highway inside the park are controlled (70km per hour during the day and 50km per hour at night). A limited network of roads in Mikumi's northern section are accessible with a 2WD during most of the year; the south is strictly 4WD, except the road to Vuma Hills Tented Camp. For combining Mikumi with Selous, the best route is via Morogoro. The rough tracks that directly link the two areas are steep in part and passable only in the dry season with a well-equipped vehicle and a driver who knows the area.

MIKUMI

☎ 023

Mikumi is the last of the lowland towns along the Dar es Salaam–Mbeya highway before it starts its beautiful climb through the Ruaha River gorge up into the hills and mountains of the Southern Highlands. The town itself is stretched out along a few kilometres of highway and has an unmistakable truck-stop feel. It's of interest almost exclusively as a transit point for visits to the Mikumi or Udzungwa Mountains National Parks, although it's quite possible to visit both without staying overnight here.

Sleeping & Eating

Kilimanjaro Village Inn (☎ 023-262 0429; bill_willynm2003@yahoo.co.uk; Main Highway; s/d Tsh6000/8000, without bathroom Tsh3000/4000) A good shoestring choice, with clean, no-frills rooms with nets and most with fan, and meals for about Tsh3500. It's a bit away from the main truck park area, set back from the road about 1km east of the Ifakara junction and just west of the railway tracks.

Mikumi Health Centre Guest House St Kizito (☎ 023-262 0421, 0784-402765; mikumih@raha.com; camping per person Tsh4000, r per adult/child Tsh3500/7000) Several simple rooms in small guesthouses set on the quiet grounds of the Mikumi Health Centre. There is mosquito netting, hot water and a simple kitchen, and meals can be arranged if you bring your own food. Watch for the small signpost on the south side of the road, just east of the Ifakara junction.

Genesis Motel (☎ 023-262 0461; camping per person US\$5, r per person US\$20, with half board US\$35) This efficient hotel is located on the edge of Mikumi town, directly on the main highway and about 2.5km east of the Ifakara junction. Rooms are clean and fine for the price (ask for one of the newer ones, which are lined up in a closely spaced row along flower-fringed walkways), staff are helpful and there's a restaurant and an attached snake park (adult/child US\$5/2). For campers, there are hot-water showers and a kitchen. Genesis is also a good place to organise visits to Mikumi and Udzungwa Mountains National Parks (each US\$100 per vehicle per day), and can help with bus bookings for onward travel. The same management also runs a hotel near Katavi National Park and can arrange overland excursions there from Mikumi.

Tan-Swiss Hotel & Restaurant (☎ 0755-191827, 0784-246322; zillern@vtbmail.ch; Main Rd; camping per person Tsh3000, d/tr Tsh40,000/55,000) This newly reopened Swiss- and Tanzanian-run establishment has four comfortable en-suite rooms with nets, fans, small porches and wooden floors, and a good restaurant-bar with meals for about Tsh8000. Staff can help you organise visits to Mikumi and Udzungwa Mountains National Parks, car rentals and other excursions.

Getting There & Away

Minibuses heading towards Udzungwa Mountains National Park (Tsh5500, two hours) and on to Ifakara (Tsh7000, 3½ hours) leave throughout the day from the Ifakara junction just south of the highway. The Dar es Salaam to Ifakara bus passes the junction at about noon.

Going west, Scandinavian Express and other lines from Dar es Salaam begin passing Mikumi en route to Iringa (Tsh6000, three hours), Mbeya and Songea, beginning about 9.30am and stopping along the main highway just east of the Ifakara junction. Few buses originate in Mikumi, so you'll need to stand on the roadside and wait until one comes by with space. Smaller buses from Mikumi to Iringa go throughout the day from the stand at the Ifakara junction (Tsh6000, three to four hours), from about 9am. There is also a direct bus from Kilombero to Iringa, passing Mikumi about 5.30am. Going east, buses to Dar es Salaam (Tsh8000 to Tsh12,000, 4½ hours) start to pass Mikumi from 8.30am.

If you're staying at Genesis or Tan-Swiss, staff will help you arrange things so that the bus stops in front of the hotel and you don't need to go to the junction.

UDZUNGWA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Towering steeply over the Kilombero Plains about 350km southwest of Dar es Salaam are the wild, lushly forested slopes of the Udzungwa Mountains, portions of which are protected as part of Udzungwa Mountains National Park. In addition to an abundance of unique plants, the park is home to an important population of primates (10 species – more than in any of Tanzania's other parks) as well as the grey-faced sengi (*Rhynchocyon udzungwensts*) – a newly discovered species of elephant shrew, and makes an intriguing offbeat destination for anyone botanically inclined or interested in hiking well away from the crowds.

The going can be tough in parts: the trail network is limited and those trails that do exist are often muddy, steep, humid and densely overgrown. Infrastructure is rudimentary and you'll need to have your own tent and do your hiking accompanied by a guide. But the nighttime symphony of forest insects, the rushing of streams and waterfalls and the views down over the plains compensate. Plus, because the Udzungwas aren't on the way to anywhere, relatively few travellers come this way and you'll often have most trails to yourself.

The park was gazetted in 1992 with an area of 1900 sq km. Among its residents are the rare Iringa red colobus, the Sanje crested mangabey and the Udzungwa forest partridge, which has been sighted near the park's boundaries. While there are also elephants, buffaloes, leopards, hippos and crocodiles, these – particularly hippos and crocodiles – are primarily in the park's southwest and are seldom seen along the main hiking routes.

There are no roads in Udzungwa; instead, there are about eight major and several lesser hiking trails winding through various sections of the park. Most trails are on the eastern side of the park, although development has started in the west and there are now several trails open there as well. The most popular route is a short (three to five hours), but steep, circuit from Sanje village through the forest to **Sanje Falls**, where swimming and camping are possible. More satisfying is the two-night, three-day (or two long days if you're fit) hike up to

THE UDZUNGWA MOUNTAINS

The Udzungwas' high degree of endemism and biodiversity is due, in large part, to the area's constant climate over millions of years, which has given species a chance to evolve. Another factor is the Udzungwas' altitudinal range. From the low-lying Kilombero Valley south of the park (at approximately 200m) to Luhombero Peak (the park's highest point at 2579m), there is continuous forest, making this one of the few places in Africa with continuous rainforest over such a great span.

Mwanihana Peak (2080m), the park's second-highest point. The challenging four- to five-day trail from Mang'ula to **Luhombero Peak** (2579m) is currently not cleared, although it's worth checking with park headquarters for an update on this, as well as about the six-day **Lumemo Trail** (about to reopen). There are also some shorter day trails in the baobab-studded northwestern corner of the park around Mbatwa Ranger Post and a multiday trail from Udekwa up to Luhombero Peak.

Information

Entry fees are US\$20/5 per adult/child aged five to 15 years. For camping fees, see p77. Porter fees range between Tsh5000 and Tsh9000 per day, depending on the trail.

The park is best visited between June and October. For all hikes, you'll need to be accompanied by a guide (US\$15 per day or US\$25 for an armed ranger, necessary for longer hikes). For birding, bring your own field guidebook along, as they are not generally available at the park. For overnight hikes, allow an extra day at Mang'ula to organise things and time to get from park headquarters to the trailheads.

The main entrance gate, the **park headquarters** (☎ 023-262 0224; www.udzungwa.org) and the senior park warden's office are located in Mang'ula, 60km south of Mikumi town along the Ifakara road. Entry posts are planned to open at Msosa, about 10km off the main highway just south of Mbuyuni, and at Udekwa, on the western side of the park and accessed via a turn-off from the main highway at Ilula (from where it's 60km further). Both will be useful if you are coming from Iringa or want to climb Luhombero Peak from the west.

There's a tiny market in Mang'ula near the train station, and another small one in town to the north of the station, both with only limited selections. It's a good idea to stock up on major items in Dar es Salaam or Morogoro and, if you'll be staying in the park for a while, to bring a supply of dried fruit and nuts to supplement the bland locally available offerings. You can usually find bottled water near the markets.

Sleeping & Eating

There are three rudimentary camp sites near park headquarters, one with a shower and the others near a stream, though visitors rarely stay at them as they cost US\$30/5 per adult/child for the most basic facilities, versus US\$5 per person for camping at Udzungwa Mountain View Hotel. Bring a tent and all supplies. The main site is signposted about 100m south of the park gate. There are also several camp sites along the longer trails.

Twiga Hotel (☎ 023-262 0239; r with/without bathroom Tsh12,000) Twiga has no-frills rooms that are quite reasonable shoestring value, and meals available on order. It's just outside the park gate, about 200m off the road and signposted.

Udzungwa Mountain View Hotel (☎ 023-262 0218; camping per person US\$5, r per person US\$20) This recently expanded hotel, under the same management as Genesis Motel in Mikumi, has simple but clean rooms in a forested setting and a restaurant (set menu Tsh7500). It's about 500m south of the park entrance, along the main road.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Minibuses and pick-ups run daily between Mikumi town (from the *dalla-dalla* stand on the Ifakara road just south of the main highway) and Kilombero, where you'll need to wait for onward transport towards Mang'ula. However, it's faster to wait for one of the larger direct buses coming from either Dar es Salaam or Morogoro to Ifakara and Mahenge via Mang'ula. These depart both Morogoro and Dar between 6.30am and 10am, and pass Mikumi any time from about 8.30am to 2pm. Going in the other direction, there are several departures each morning from Ifakara, passing Mang'ula between about 7am and noon; park staff can help you with the connections. The fare between Mang'ula and Mikumi (two hours) is Tsh3500; between Ifakara and Mang'ula (two hours) it's Tsh3000.

From Iringa to Kilombero (Tsh6000, five hours), there are one or two buses daily in each direction, departing by around mid-day from Iringa and between 5am and 7am from Kilombero.

Allow plenty of time to get from the park gate (where you pay your entry fee) to Sanje village, 10km to the north, which is the trailhead for a few of the hikes. There are sporadic minibuses between Mang'ula and Sanje (Tsh500) and the occasional lorry. With luck, you may be able to arrange a lift on a park vehicle (Tsh10,000 one way). If you decide to walk, the only route is along the main road. Allow a day to get from Mang'ula to the western side of the park by road; you'll need your own transport or else take your chances on being able to arrange something with park staff. Entering the park from the west, there's no reliable public transport to the Msosa or Udekwa entry gates, apart from very sporadic pick-ups, so you'll either need to walk (feasible for Msosa, as it's only 10km off the highway) or have your own transport. Riverside Campsite in Iringa (opposite) is the best contact for arranging excursions to the western part of the park.

TRAIN

Tazara ordinary trains stop at Mang'ula (Tsh10,000/6700/4900 for 1st/2nd/economy class from Dar es Salaam). The station is about a 30-minute walk from park headquarters; if you make advance arrangements, staff from the hotels will meet you. Express trains stop only at Ifakara, about 50km further south.

IRINGA

☎ 026 / pop 110,000

With its attractive bluff-top setting, streets lined with jacarandas, healthy climate and highland feel, Iringa is a likeable place – one of the nicest towns along the Dar es Salaam to Mbeya highway, a slow-paced introduction to local life and well worth a stop. Perched at a cool 1600m on a cliff overlooking the valley of the Little Ruaha River, Iringa was initially built up by the Germans at the turn of the century as a bastion against the local Hehe people. Now it's a district capital, an important agricultural centre and the gateway for visiting Ruaha National Park.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

MR Hotel (Mkwawa Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-9pm)

Skynet (Uhuru Ave; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-3pm Sat & Sun) Next to Iringa Info; also good for uploading digital photos.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Aga Khan Health Centre (☎ 026-270 2277; Jamat St;

☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat & Sun) Next to the Lutheran cathedral and near the market.

Myomboni Pharmacy (☎ 026-270 2277/2617;

☎ 7.30am-7.30pm) Just downhill from the Aga Khan Health Centre.

MONEY

CRDB (Uhuru Ave) ATM (Visa only).

NBC (Uhuru Ave) Opposite the Catholic cathedral at the western end of town. Changes cash and has an ATM (Visa only).

POST & TELEPHONE

Post office (☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat)

Just off Uhuru Ave.

Telecom Shop (☎ 8am-7.30pm) For calling booths, try this private shop diagonally opposite TTCL (look for the yellow sign), where calls cost Tsh2000 per minute to anywhere.

TTCL Next to the post office; sells phone cards.

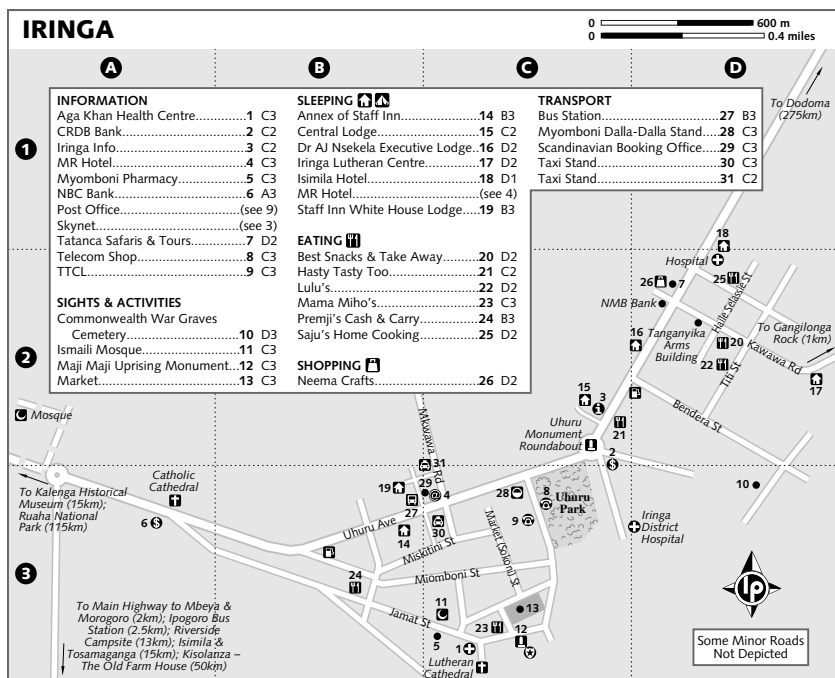
TOURIST INFORMATION

Iringa Info (☎ 026-270 1988; riversidecampstet@hotmail.com; Uhuru Ave; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) A recommended first stop and a good place to organise Ruaha safaris (sometimes including favourably priced walk-in rates at some of the lodges during the low season), as well as reliable car rentals and excursions. Opposite Hasty Tasty Too.

Tatanca Safaris & Tours (☎ 026-270 0601, 0787-338335; tatanca@safaris@iringanet.com; Uhuru Ave) An efficient operator offering Ruaha safaris, as well as excursions elsewhere in the country; around the corner from Neema Crafts.

Sights & Activities

Iringa's colourful **market** is piled high with fruits and vegetables, plus countless other wares, including large, locally made Iringa baskets, and is well worth a stroll. Nearby, in front of the police station, is a **monument** to the Africans who fell during the Maji Maji uprising between 1905 and 1907. West along this same street is Iringa's main trading area, dominated by the impressive German-built **Ismaili Mosque** with its distinctive clock tower.



Rising up to the northeast is **Gangilonga Rock** (*'gangilonga'* means 'talking stone' in Hehe), which is where Chief Mkwawa (p286) often meditated and where he learned that the Germans were after him. It's an easy climb to the top, and there are wide views over town.

Southeast of town is a **Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery** with graves of the deceased from both world wars.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Iringa Lutheran Centre (☎ 026-270 2489; Kawawa Rd; dm Tsh2500, s Tsh7000, s/d without bathroom Tsh3000,4000) This long-standing place has reasonably clean dorm-style rooms with nets, including one en-suite single, and hot-water buckets on request. Breakfast is available with advance order. It's on the northeastern edge of town, about 700m southeast of Neema Crafts and the main road.

Riverside Campsite (☎ 0755-033024, 0787-111663; www.riversidecampsite-tanzania.com; camping adult/child Tsh5000/2500, tented/stone bandas per person Tsh7500/15,000) Riverside Campsite, 13km

northeast of Iringa and signposted from the main road, has a lovely, tranquil setting on the banks of the Little Ruaha River and is a great stop for families and budget travellers. In addition to a shaded, green and expansive riverside camping area, it offers pleasant twin-bedded tented *bandas*, a rustic six-person stone *banda*, hot-water showers, good meals (breakfast/lunch/dinner Tsh3000/5000/5000) and a small campsite shop with charcoal and other basics. It's excellent overall value, with children's discounts of 50% for accommodation and meals. Tents are available to rent (Tsh5000 per day), including for Ruaha safaris, as are bicycles. The surrounding area is ideal for walking. There are also on-site Swahili language and culture courses ranging from one day up to four months and including full-board accommodation. To get here, take a *dalla-dalla* heading towards Ilula and ask the driver to drop you off at the turn-off (Tsh800), from where it's 1.5km further on foot. Taxis charge Tsh10,000 to Tsh15,000 from town. Staff can also help you arrange car rentals and Ruaha safaris.

Annex of Staff Inn (☎ 026-270 1344/0165; Uhuru Ave; r Tsh10,000-25,000) Small and crowded but reliable, with clean, no-frills rooms with hot water, nets and some with TV, plus a restaurant with inexpensive meals. It's along the main road, about five minutes' walk from the bus station.

Central Lodge (☎ 0786-126888; Uhuru Ave; d Tsh15,000-20,000, tr Tsh30,000) Simple, quiet rooms with bathrooms in a convenient central location around a small garden. The front rooms facing the garden are spacious; smaller rooms are in the row behind. It's just behind Iringa Info – look for the signpost.

There are many nondescript, noisy guesthouses in the small valley behind the bus station, including **Staff Inn White House Lodge** (☎ 026-270 0161; s Tsh7000-15,000), where rooms have nets and most have a small double bed. Hot buckets of water can be organised on request.

MIDRANGE

Isimila Hotel (☎ 026-270 1194; Uhuru Ave; s/d Tsh12,000/14,000) Some things never change and this hotel is one of them, looking almost the same as it did nearly a decade ago and offering about the same prices. Rooms – all en suite and with nets – are good value, and there's a restaurant. It's past the Bankers' Academy (see next listing) at the northern end of town.

Dr AJ Nsekela Executive Lodge (Bankers' Academy; ☎ 026-270 2407; Uhuru Ave; s/d Tsh12,000/14,000) Set in a former school, and as staid as its name would suggest, this place has clean but soulless rooms and an institutional ambience. It's on the main road at the northern end of town. There's no food.

MR Hotel (☎ 026-270 2006/2779; www.mrhotel.co.tz; Mkwawa Rd; s/d/ste US\$30/35/40; ☎ ☎) This multistorey business travellers' hotel in a convenient but noisy location next to the bus station has declined considerably since its opening, with faded rooms (no nets) and a restaurant (meals Tsh4000).

Eating

Hasty Tasty Too (☎ 026-270 2061; Uhuru Ave; snacks & meals from Tsh500; ☎; 7.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) Good breakfasts, yogurt, shakes and reasonably priced main dishes, plus an amenable mix of local and expat clientele. You can get toasted sandwiches packed to go and arrange food for Ruaha camping safaris.

COMMUNITY TOURISM SPOTLIGHT: NEEMA CRAFTS

Neema Crafts (neemacrafts@hotmail.com; off Uhuru Ave at Kawawa Rd; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4.30pm Sat) – a vocational training centre for Iringa's young deaf and disabled people – is operated by the Anglican church and sells beautiful crafts, hand-made paper and cards, jewellery, quilts and homemade cookies. Adjoining the craft shop is a weaving workshop, and upstairs is the Gallery Café, overlooking the weaving workshop and offering a selection of local coffee and teas, homemade cookies and pies and ice cream. Service is slow, but it's worth the wait. It's just past NMB bank on the corner.

Saju's Home Cooking (Haile Selassie St; snacks & meals from Tsh500; ☎ 7am-11pm) This family-run eatery makes an amenable stop for cheap local food. It's at the northern end of town, on a small lane running parallel to the main road.

Best Snacks & Take Away (☎ 0784-356894; meals Tsh3000-4500; ☎ 7am-10pm) Tasty snacks and meals, including pizza, stir-fry and the usual standards. It's on a side lane just around the corner from the Tanganyika Arms building.

Lulu's (☎ 027-270 2122; Titi St; meals Tsh3500-8000; ☎ 8.30am-3pm & 6.30-9pm Mon-Sat) A quiet place with mostly Chinese and Asian dishes, plus soft-serve ice cream, milkshakes and an umbrella-shaded outdoor seating area. It's one block southeast of the main road, just off Kawawa Rd. Next door is Iringa Bakery, with a limited supply of fresh rolls and bread.

For self-catering try the small but well-stocked **Mama Miho's** (Jamati St), opposite the police and fire stations, or the pricier **Premji's Cash & Carry** (Jamati St).

Getting There & Away

To catch any bus not originating in Iringa, you'll need to go to the main bus station at Ipogoro, about 3km southeast of town below the escarpment (Tsh2000 in a taxi from town), where the Morogoro-Mbeya highway bypasses Iringa. This is also where you'll get dropped off if you're arriving on a bus continuing towards Morogoro or Mbeya. *Dalla-dallas* to Ipogoro leave from the Myomboni *dalla-dalla* stand at the edge of Uhuru Park in town. All buses originating in Iringa start

at the bus station in town and stop also at Ipogoro to pick up additional passengers.

Scandinavian Express (☎ 026-270 2308) goes daily to Dar es Salaam, leaving at 10.30am (Tsh15,000, 7½ hours); book in advance at the Scandinavian booking office, opposite the bus station in town.

To Mbeya, there's a bus departing daily at 8am (Tsh9000, four to five hours). Otherwise, you can book a seat on the Scandinavian bus from Dar es Salaam that passes Iringa (Ipogoro bus station) about 1pm, or just show up at the station and take your chances that there will be space.

To Njombe (Tsh7000, 3½ hours) and Songea (Tsh12,000, eight hours), Super Feo departs at 6am from the town bus station, with a second bus to Njombe only departing at 10am. Alternatively, you can wait for the Scandinavian bus from Dar es Salaam (best booked in advance).

To Dodoma, Kings Cross – an old relic of a vehicle stuffed with chickens, baskets and produce – and Urafiki depart on alternate days at 8am (Tsh10,000, nine to 10 hours), going via Nyangolo and Makatapura. Otherwise, all transport is via Morogoro, which is the route most travellers take; if you leave Iringa early, you can reach Dodoma in one day. If you're driving to Dodoma via Makatapura in a private car, allow five to six hours.

Getting Around

The main *dalla-dalla* stand ('Myomboni') is just down from the market and near the bus station. *Dalla-dallas* also stop along the edge of Uhuru Park. Taxi ranks are along the small road between the bus station and the market, in front of MR Hotel, and at the Ipogoro bus station.

AROUND IRINGA

Isimila Stone Age Site

About 20km from Iringa, off the Mbeya road, is **Isimila** (admission Tsh3000; ☎ 8am-5.30pm), where, in the late 1950s, archaeologists unearthed one of the most significant Stone Age finds ever identified. The tools found at the site are estimated to be between 60,000 and 100,000 years old. Although the display itself is not particularly exciting, the surrounding area is intriguing, with small canyons and eroded sandstone pillars. The main pillar area is accessed via a walk down into a steep valley (about one hour round-trip), for which you'll

need a guide (small tip expected). Visits are best in the morning or late afternoon, before the sun gets too high. A small museum in which all the Stone Age finds are to be gathered is being built (entry is included in the admission price). There's also a covered picnic area (bring your own food and drink).

Isimila is signposted off the main road to the left, and with a bit of endurance for heat and traffic, is straightforward to reach via bicycle from Iringa. Via public transport, take an Ifunda *dalla-dalla* from the bus station and ask the driver to drop you at the Isimila junction, from where it's a 20-minute walk to the site. Alternatively, if you're in a group, you can catch a 'Njia Panda ya Tosa' *dalla-dalla* from the Myomboni *dalla-dalla* stand and ask the driver to take you all the way in to Isimila. The charge is about Tsh1000 per person, but most drivers are only willing to do this if there are enough people wanting to go. Taxis charge about Tsh10,000 for the return trip.

A possible detour on bicycle is to nearby **Tosamaganga**, a pretty hilltop town about 7km southwest with a hospital and a mission station.

Kalenga

About 15km from Iringa on the road to Ruaha National Park is the famed former Hehe capital of Kalenga. It was here that Chief Mkwawa (p286) had his headquarters until Kalenga fell to the Germans in the 1890s, and it was here that he committed suicide rather than succumb to the German forces. The small **Kalenga Historical Museum** (admission Tsh2000) contains Mkwawa's skull and a few other relics from the era. It's just off the park road and signposted.

Mtera Dam

This dam, about 120km north of Iringa off the Dodoma road, forms a huge reservoir for the waters of the Great Ruaha River as it flows out of the Southern Highlands and through Ruaha National Park on its way to join the Rufiji in Selous Game Reserve. Nearby is one of Tanzania's major hydroelectric power stations. There's also fine angling at the dam, notably for tiger fish, though you'll need your own gear. It's beautiful in the rains, and the brush and reed landscapes along the shoreline attract many water birds. There's currently no accommodation.

CHIEF MKWAWA

Mtwa (Chief) Mkwawa, chief of the Hehe and one of German colonialism's most vociferous resistors, is a legendary figure in Tanzanian history. He is particularly revered in Iringa, near which he had his headquarters. Under Mkwawa's leadership during the second half of the 19th century, the Hehe became one of the most powerful tribes in central Tanzania. They overpowered one group after another until, by the late 1880s, they were threatening trade traffic along the caravan route from western Tanzania to Bagamoyo. In 1891, after several attempts by Mkwawa to negotiate with the Germans were rejected, his men trounced the colonial troops in the infamous battle of Lugalo, just outside Iringa on the Mikumi road. The next year, Mkwawa's troops launched a damaging attack on a German fort at Kilosa, further to the east.

The Germans placed a bounty on Mkwawa's head and, once they had regrouped, initiated a counterattack in which Mkwawa's headquarters at Kalenga were taken. Mkwawa escaped, but later, in 1898, committed suicide rather than surrender to a contingent that had been sent after him. His head was cut off and the skull sent to Germany, where it sat almost forgotten (though not by the Hehe) until it was returned to Kalenga in 1954. The return of Mkwawa's remains was due, in large part, to the efforts of Sir Edward Twining, then the British governor of Tanganyika. Today, the skull of Mkwawa and some old weapons are on display at the Kalenga Historical Museum (p285).

The grave of Chief Mkwawa is about 40km outside Iringa and signposted about 11km off the main road to Ruaha National Park.

RUAHA NATIONAL PARK

Ruaha National Park, together with neighbouring Rungwa and Kisigo Game Reserves and several smaller conservation areas, forms the core of a wild and extended ecosystem covering about 40,000 sq km and providing home to one of Tanzania's largest elephant populations. In addition to the elephants, which are estimated to number about 12,000, the park (Tanzania's second-largest and soon to be extended) hosts large herds of buffaloes, as well as greater and lesser kudus, Grant's gazelles, wild dogs, ostriches, cheetahs, roan and sable antelopes, and more than 400 different types of birds. Bird life is especially prolific along the Great Ruaha River, which winds through the eastern side of the park, as are hippos and crocodiles.

Ruaha is notable for its wild and – around the Great Ruaha River – striking topography. Much of it is undulating plateau averaging about 900m in height with occasional rocky outcrops and stands of baobabs, and mountains in the south and west reaching to about 1600m and 1900m, respectively. Running through the park are several 'sand' rivers, most of which dry up during the dry season, when they are used by wildlife as corridors to reach areas where water remains. The overall combination of rugged riverine scenery, large numbers of readily sighted wildlife (during

the dry season) and good selection of camps is unbeatable.

Although the area around the camps on the eastern side of the park fills up during the high season, Ruaha receives relatively few visitors in comparison with the northern parks. Large sections are unexplored, and, apart from the August to October high season, you'll likely have things to yourself. Whenever you visit, set aside as much time as you can spare; it's not a place to be discovered on a quick in-and-out trip.

Information

Entry fees are US\$20/5 per adult/child aged five to 15 per 24-hour period; multiple entries are permitted. For accommodation fees, see p77.

There are two official entry points to the park, one at the main gate about 8km inside the park boundary on its eastern side, and the other at Msembe airstrip, about 6km north-east of the main gate, where visitors arriving by plane can pay their entry fees. Park headquarters are at Msembe. The main entry gate is open from 7am to 6pm. Driving is permitted within the park from 6am to 6.30pm.

The road network in Ruaha is reasonably good and the park can be visited at any time of year. The driest season is between June and November, and this is when it's easiest to spot wildlife along the river beds. During the rainy

season, some areas become impassable and wildlife is widely dispersed and difficult to locate in the impressive numbers possible during the dry months (August through October are peak). However, especially for repeat visitors, the green panoramas, lavender-coloured fields and rewarding birding compensate.

From June to January, it's possible to organise short (two- to three-hour walks) with park staff (or through your lodge). Park rates are US\$25 per group (up to six people); book in advance.

Sleeping & Eating

INSIDE THE PARK

There are two ordinary camp sites about 9km northwest of park headquarters, and about 1.5km apart. Neither has water; the only facilities are pit toilets. There are also about five special camp sites, all well away from the Msembe area. Near the river and close to park headquarters are several park *bandas*, including some doubles and two larger family *bandas*, accommodating four to five people each. Water is available for showers and the park sells soft drinks and a few basics, but otherwise you'll need your own supplies. There is also a hostel for students and a rest-house, which is usually reserved for staff, but is open to the public space permitting. All park accommodation should be booked either through Iringa Info (p282) or directly with park headquarters.

Ruaha River Lodge (☎ 0784-237422; www.tanzania.safaris.info; s/d full board incl wildlife drives US\$330/540) This unpretentious 28-room lodge about 15km inside the gate was the first in the park and is the only place on the river. Run by the Fox family, who have several decades of experience in Ruaha, it's centred on two separate sections, each with its own dining area, giving the feel of a smaller lodge. The recently remodelled stone cottages – all with one double and one single bed – are directly on the river, and there's a treetop-level bar-terrace with stunning riverine panoramas. Vehicle safaris cost from US\$120 per vehicle unless you've booked a fly-in package. Discounted drive-in accommodation rates are offered.

Mdonya Old River Camp (☎ 022-245 2005; www.adventurecamps.co.tz; s/d all-inclusive US\$345/580; ☞ Jun-Mar) The rustic and relaxed Mdonya Old River Camp, about 1½ hours drive from Msembe, has eight tents set in the shade on the bank of the Mdonya Sand River, with the occasional

elephant or other animal wandering through camp. It's run by Coastal Travels in Dar es Salaam (p127). While not as luxurious as the other Ruaha camps, it's quite comfortable and very natural in ambience, and if you take advantage of Coastal's specials – including a 'last minute' deal that offers a 50% discount on combined accommodation-flight packages for bookings less than 72 hours before departure – Mdonya Old River offers fine value for a Ruaha safari.

Mwagusi Safari Camp (☎ in the UK 020-8846 9363; www.ruaha.org; s/d all-inclusive from US\$530/940; ☞ Jun-Mar; ☞ Jun-Mar) This highly regarded 16-bed luxury tented camp is set in a prime location for wildlife-viewing – favoured by elephants, among other visitors – on the Mwagusi Sand River about 20km inside the park gate. The atmosphere is intimate, there are superb views from the tents and the quality of guiding is top-notch. Walks and other excursions can be arranged.

Jongomero Camp (www.jongomero.com; per person full board, airstrip transfers & activities US\$550; ☞ Jun-Mar; ☞) This exclusive camp is set off on its own in the remote southwestern part of the park, about 60km from Msembe on the banks of the Jongomero Sand River. Its eight spacious tents have large verandas and furnishings made from recycled wood. Wildlife-watching from the camp itself is arguably not as good as at some of the other Ruaha camps, however, the wilderness ambience is excellent. One of the nicest aspects of this camp is the privacy of each tent and the fact that you're unlikely to see other visitors. Almost all visits are part of fly-in safaris to the nearby airstrip.

OUTSIDE THE PARK

There are several good places just outside the park boundaries along the Tungamalenga village road (take the left fork at the junction when coming from Iringa).

Chogela Camp (camping per person US\$5) A simple place with well-maintained, spacious, shaded grounds, a large, clean cooking-dining area and spotless hot-water showers. Come with your own transport and bring your own tent or hire one through Riverside Campsite in Iringa. Also bring your own food and drink. Book through Iringa Info (p282).

Tungamalenga Camp (☎ 026-278 2196, 0754-983519; www.ruahatungacamp.com; camping per person US\$10, r per person with breakfast/full board US\$20/40) This long-standing place in Tungamalenga village, about

35km from the park gate and close to the bus stand, was the first of the Tungamalenga road options to open. In addition to a small garden for camping, there are small, clean en-suite rooms and a restaurant (meals Tsh7000). Cultural tours in the area can be arranged, and (soon – check with them first) also Ruaha safaris (US\$150 per vehicle per day).

Ruaha Hilltop Lodge (☎ 026-270 1806, 0784-726709; www.ruahahilltoplodge.com; s/d US\$80/160) This new-ish lodge has a hilltop perch about 1.5km off the Tungamalenga road, with wide views over the plains below from the raised restaurant-bar area. Behind this are simple two-person cement *bandas* with nets. Water can be a problem sometimes, but overall the lodge is an amenable choice, especially during the dry season when it's common to see elephants and other wildlife passing by down below. Cultural walks in the surrounding area can also be arranged. If you don't have your own vehicle, you'll need to organise one in Iringa town for Ruaha safaris.

Tandala Tented Camp (www.tandalatentedcamp.com; per person full board US\$120; ☎ Jun-Mar) A lovely place just outside the park boundary about 12km from the park gate and shortly before the Tungamalenga road rejoins the main park access road. Accommodation is in raised tents scattered around shaded grounds with a bush feel (elephants and other animals are frequent visitors). The camp can help you arrange vehicle rental to Ruaha (US\$60 per person), as well as guided walks in park border areas.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are airstrips at Msembe and Jongomero.

Coastal Aviation flies from Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar to Ruaha via Selous Game Reserve (US\$300 one way from Dar es Salaam or Zanzibar, US\$270 from Selous Game Reserve), and between Ruaha and Arusha (US\$300). Foxes African Safaris (p47) has a plane based in Ruaha for flights to Katavi (US\$450), Dar es Salaam (US\$300), Selous (US\$270), Mikumi (US\$240) and other destinations on request.

BUS

A bus (Upendo and Shanila lines alternate on the route) goes daily between Iringa and Tungamalenga village, departing Iringa at 1pm and Tungamalenga (from the village

bus stand, just before Tungamalenga Camp) at 5am (Tsh3000, five to six hours). From Tungamalenga, there is no onward transport to the park, other than rental vehicles arranged in advance through the camps along the Tungamalenga road, and there is no vehicle rental once at Ruaha, unless you've arranged for a vehicle safari in advance with one of the lodges.

Iringa Info (p282) offers day safaris for US\$200 per vehicle per day plus park fees and overnight safaris for US\$180 per day, and is a good contact for finding other travellers interested in joining a group. Tatanca Safaris & Tours (p282) in Iringa also arranges Ruaha safaris that are pricey for day trips (US\$300), but work out at roughly the same price for multi-night stays in the park (US\$100 for each additional day).

CAR

Ruaha is 115km from Iringa along an unsealed road, which is decent except during the rains when it can be rough. About 58km before the park, the road forks; both sides go to Ruaha and the distance is about the same each way. To access Tungamalenga and accommodation outside the park, take the left fork. The right fork ('never-ending road') is maintained by the park and is generally in marginally better condition.

Roads within the park are in reasonable condition, though 4WD is necessary. The closest petrol station is in Iringa.

IRINGA TO MAKAMBAKO

From Iringa, the Tanzam highway continues southwest, winding its way gradually up, past dense stands of pine, before reaching the junction town of Makambako.

Kisolanza – The Old Farm House (www.kisolanza.com; camping per person with hot showers US\$4, tw stables/chalets US\$20/25, d/f cottages US\$45/55, luxury cottage per person with half board US\$75) is a gracious 1930s farm home-stead fringed by stands of pine and rolling hill country about 50km southwest of Iringa and just off the highway. It comes highly recommended, both for its accommodation and for its cuisine. There are two camping grounds, one for overlanders and one for private vehicles, plus spotless twin-bedded rooms with common bathroom in the nearby 'stables'; wooden two-person chalets; lovely en-suite camp-site cottages with a double bed below and a sleeper loft above; and two new luxury

cottages built entirely with locally sourced materials and set amid beautiful gardens. One of the luxury cottages – the honeymoon farm cottage suite – is set off on its own with a private breakfast area in the surrounding gardens and a fireplace. There is also a bar and a shop selling home-grown vegetables and fruit, meat, fish, eggs and bread. The entire set-up is lovely, with fresh flowers in the rooms and no detail overlooked, and the cuisine is excellent. In addition to being a convenient stopover, Kisolanza also makes a good base for exploring the area, with fine walking and birding in the surrounding countryside. Buses will drop you at the Kisolanza turn-off, from where it's about a 1.5km walk in to the lodge. Advance bookings are advisable for accommodation, but there is always room for campers.

Continuing southwestwards, about 45km further on is **Mafinga**, the turn-off point to reach the forested highlands around **Mufindi**, which are laced with small streams and known for their tea estates and trout-fishing. The family-run **Southern Highlands Lodge** (☎ 0784-237422; www.tanzaniasafaris.info; s/d full board US\$200/280) – set amid the hills and tea plantations around Mufindi – is another highly recommended place for anyone looking for cool highland air and the chance to hike or recharge. Accommodation is in cosy wooden cabins with large pane-glass windows and sunset views over the hills, and the cuisine – all prepared fresh with produce from the farm – is delicious. There's also a larger two-family chalet with an upper balcony and a private honeymooners cabin with a stone fireplace. Surrounding these are beautifully landscaped gardens, expansive grounds with walking trails, small lakes for fishing, cycling (bikes are available) and horse riding. Fantastic! The same family also runs safari camps in Ruaha, Mikumi and Katavi parks, and the lodge makes a fine mid-safari break. The lodge is about 45km inland from Mafinga. Pick-ups can be arranged, and there are scheduled flights during the dry season from Ruaha, Dar es Salaam and other points to a nearby airstrip.

In Mafinga itself, try **Hilton Guest House** (r Tsh10,000-12,000), within walking distance of the Mafinga town bus stand just off the main highway and signposted.

For reliable vehicle hire with driver in the Iringa-Mafinga area and beyond, contact **Conrad Msekwa** (☎ 0753-026744, 0754-559230; msekwaconrad@yahoo.com).

MAKAMBAKO

☎ 026

Makambako is a dry, windy highland town at the junction where the road from Songea and Njombe meets the Dar es Salaam–Mbeya highway, and a stop on the Tazara railway line. Geographically, the area marks the end of the Eastern Arc mountain range and the start of the Southern Highlands. Makambako is also notable for its large market, which includes an extensive used-clothes section.

There's an **internet café** (per hr Tsh1500) adjoining Midtown Lodge.

Sleeping & Eating

Makambako Lutheran Centre (☎ 026-273 0047; Tanzania Highway; r Tsh3000-4000) Basic and rather faded rooms, including one with bathroom and some with a large bed. It's just east of the junction and opposite the train station. Food can be arranged with lots of advance notice.

Midtown Lodge (r Tsh7000-10,000) Clean en-suite rooms in varying sizes and a restaurant. The rooms for Tsh10,000 have beds big enough for two people. It's about 1½ blocks in from both the Mbeya and Songea roads, and signposted from both.

Jay Jay Highlands Hotel (☎ 026-273 0475, 0784-310177; s/d Tsh15,000/20,000) Another good place, with small, clean and somewhat overly furnished rooms and a restaurant serving great-value four-course meals for about Tsh4500. It's about 1km south of the main junction along the Njombe road, and signposted.

Getting There & Away

The bus stand is about 1.5km south of the main junction along the Njombe road. The first bus to Mbeya (Tsh5000, three hours) leaves at 6am, with another bus at 7am. Otherwise, you can wait at the main junction for passing transport (Tsh4000). The first buses (all smaller Coastals) to Njombe (Tsh2000, one hour) and Songea (Tsh7000, five hours) depart about 6.30am, and there's a larger bus departing at 6.30am for Iringa and Dar es Salaam.

NJOMBE

☎ 026

The peppy town of Njombe, about 60km south of Makambako and 235km north of Songea, is a district capital, regional agricultural centre and home of the Bena people. It would be unmemorable but for its highly scenic setting

on the eastern edge of the Kipengere mountain range at almost 2000m. In addition to giving it the reputation of being Tanzania's coldest town, this perch provides wide vistas over hills that seem to roll endlessly into the horizon. The surrounding area – dotted with tea plantations and fields of wildflowers – is ideal for walking and cycling, although there is no tourism infrastructure so anything you undertake will need to be under your own steam and with a GPS. At the northern edge of town – visible from the main road and an easy walk – are the **Luhuji Falls**. It's also possible to go from Njombe along beautiful highland backroads to the Kitulo Plateau area, and down to the shores of Lake Nyasa. For more details, and other suggestions for walking and driving routes, see p298 and the excellent *A Guide to the Southern Highlands of Tanzania* (see the boxed text, p293).

There's a good internet connection and you can upload photos at **Altek Computing Centre** (per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-8pm), behind the TFA building along the main road. There are no ATMs yet.

Sleeping & Eating

Lutheran Centre Guest House (☎ 026-278 2118; r with-out bathroom Tsh3000, s Tsh5000) No-frills rooms in a small compound one block off the main street and diagonally behind (and south of) the Lutheran church. It's about a 10-minute walk from the bus stand. Meals can be arranged with advance order.

Milimani Hotel (Songea Rd; s/d Tsh6000/8000) Bare and drab, but things are reasonably clean and the price isn't bad. It's at the southern end of town, near the Lutheran church.

Chani Motel (☎ 026-278 2357, 0748-324644; s/d Tsh8500/10,500) This cosy place has modest but clean good-value rooms with hot running water, small gardens and a restaurant with TV and what are arguably Njombe's best meals (Tsh2000 to Tsh4000). Just down a few steps is the Cliff Look bar. It's signposted at the northern end of town and about 600m west off the main road.

Mwambasa Lodge (☎ 026-278 2301; Main Rd; r Tsh10,000-12,000) Clean en-suite rooms with hot water, TV, small double beds and continental breakfast. It's centrally located, about 500m north of the bus stand and on the opposite side of the street.

Mexons Cliff Hotel (☎ 026-278 2282, 0787-282725; mexonscliffhotelltd@yahoo.com; s/d/ste Tsh20,000/25,000

/35,000) Njombe's newest hotel has a prime setting on the escarpment overlooking the surrounding countryside, although most of the rooms are rather small and somewhat cramped, with windows looking out on the back parking lot. There's a restaurant and parking. It's at the northern end of town and signposted just off the main road.

Duka la Maziwa (Cefa Njombe Milk Factory; ☎ 026-278 2851; ☎ noon-6pm Mon, 8.30am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue-Fri, 8.30am-6pm Sat) This little place sells fresh milk and yogurt and excellent cheeses. It's two blocks off the main road – turn in by the TFA building.

Getting There & Away

The bus stand is on the west side of the main road, about 600m south of the large grey-water tank.

Super Feo goes daily to Songea (Tsh7000, four hours), Makambako (Tsh2000, one hour) and Mbeya (Tsh7000, four hours), with the first departures at 6.30am.

For hikers, there are daily pick-ups to both Bulongwa (departing Njombe about 10am) and Ludewa (departing by 8am), from where you can walk down to Matema and Lupingu, respectively, both on the Lake Nyasa shoreline.

KITULO NATIONAL PARK

Tanzania's newest national park protects the flower-clad Kitulo Plateau, together with sections of the former Livingstone Forest Reserve, which runs south from the plateau paralleling the Lake Nyasa shoreline. The area (see Map p295) – much of which lies between 2600m and 3000m in the highlands northeast of Tukuyu – is stunningly beautiful and a paradise for hikers. The park reaches its prime during the rainy season from about December until April, when it explodes in a profusion of colour, with orchids (over 40 species have been identified so far), irises, aloes, geraniums and many more flowers carpeting its grassy expanses. Rising up from the plateau, the park's other attraction is Mt Mtorwi (2961m), one metre higher than Mt Rungwe and southern Tanzania's highest peak. The park is the centrepiece of one of Tanzania's most scenic and undiscovered corners, and is an essential place to visit if you are in the area and enjoy walking or things botanical. The best months for seeing the flowers are December to March, which is also when hiking is at its muddiest. Orchids

– the plateau’s most renowned residents – are at their peak in February.

Information

Park infrastructure is still in the early stages. Entry fees (US\$20/5 per adult/child) should be paid at Tanapa’s temporary headquarters at Matamba village, where guides can also be arranged, if desired. For any hiking, you’ll need to be self-sufficient with food and water (there are plenty of sources within the park area), and carry a GPS. The best source of route descriptions is *A Guide to the Southern Highlands of Tanzania* (see the boxed text, p293).

Sleeping & Eating

Apart from very basic rooms (Tsh2000) at Kitulo Farm (ask at Tanapa’s temporary headquarters for directions), the only accommodation option inside the park is camping. Sites are currently being established, so you’ll need to enquire at park headquarters.

Otherwise, there are several inexpensive guesthouses in Matamba village:

Zebra Park Guest House (s Tsh3000, without bathroom Tsh2000) One block in from the main road and signposted just beyond the turn-off for Edeni Guest House, this place has clean, basic rooms and bucket baths.

Fema (r per person Tsh5000) No-frills, clean rooms sharing a bathroom in a large house behind the Tanapa office (just a few minutes on foot across the field). It has hot water (usually) and good meals (breakfast/lunch/dinner about Tsh2500/4000/4000), including packed picnic lunches.

For meals, try **Green Garden Restaurant** (meals Tsh1000) at the junction of the roads from Mfumbi and Chimala, near the Tanapa office.

At the southern edge of town, and just off the Kitulo road, is the soon-to-be-opened Kipunji Hotel. En-suite rooms in detached cement *bandas*, camping and a restaurant are planned.

Getting There & Away

The best access to Kitulo is via Mfumbi village, about 90km east of Mbeya along the main highway, from where a small, currently unsignposted and unpaved but good (all-weather) road winds its way 32km up to Matamba village and the park’s temporary base. From Matamba, it’s about an hour further via 4WD with high clearance (or a

couple of hours on foot) along a rough road (sometimes impassable in the rains) up onto the plateau itself and the official park area, marked by a sign board and the yet-to-be-built Mwakipembo Gate.

It’s also possible to reach Kitulo via the signposted park turn-off 2km west of Chimala town, about 80km east of Mbeya along the main highway. From here, a rough (4WD essential) and rocky but beautiful road (slated for rehabilitation) winds its way for 9km up the escarpment via a series of 50-plus hairpin turns, offering wide vistas over the Usangi plains below. From the top, it’s a further 12km or so to Matamba, along a wonderfully scenic route across the Chimala River, past fields of sunflowers and the occasional small house.

In the dry season, in a good vehicle with high clearance, it’s also possible to reach Kitulo via Isonje village, along the Tukuyu road. Once on the plateau, a reasonable road leads to Kitulo Farm, which is the planned site for park headquarters.

The only public transport to Kitulo is via Mfumbi village, from where one or two pickups daily go as far as Matamba (Tsh3000, one hour) from Mfumbi’s Standi ya Uwanje. Once at Matamba, it’s sometimes possible to hire a park vehicle to take you on up to the plateau. Otherwise, it’s about two to three hours on foot up to the plateau, and about seven hours to Kitulo Farm.

In Mbeya, Gazelle Safaris (p292) and Utengule Country Hotel (p293) can both help organise transport up to the park.

MBEYA

☎ 025 / pop 270,000

The thriving town of Mbeya sprawls at about 1700m in the shadow of Loleza Peak (2656m), in a gap between the verdant Mbeya mountain range to the north and the Poroto mountains to the southeast. It was founded in 1927 as a supply centre for the gold rush at Lupa, to the north, but today owes its existence to its position on the Tazara railway line and the Tanzam highway, and its status as a major trade and transit junction between Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi. The surrounding area, in addition to being lush, mountainous and highly scenic, is also a major farming region, with coffee, tea, bananas and cocoa all grown here. While the town centre is on the scruffy side (especially around the bus station), the

cool climate, jacaranda trees and views of the hills compensate, and there are dozens of excursions nearby.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

BIC Internet Café (per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-6pm Sat) At the back of the Maktaba Complex and near the post office.

Gazelle Safaris Internet Café (Jacaranda Rd; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm, sometimes later) At Gazelle Safaris.

Nane Information Centre (Market Sq; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Aga Khan Medical Centre (☎ 025-250 2043; cnr North & Post Sts; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-2pm Sun) Just north of the market.

MONEY

CRDB (Karume Ave) ATM (Visa only).

NBC (cnr Karume & Kaunda Aves) Changes cash; ATM (Visa only).

Stanbic (Karume Ave) ATM (Visa, MasterCard, Maestro Cirrus); just up from CRDB.

POST & TELEPHONE

Post Office (Post St; ☎ 8am-6pm)

Telephone office (☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, Sat 8am-3pm) At the post office; Tsh2000 per minute to anywhere.

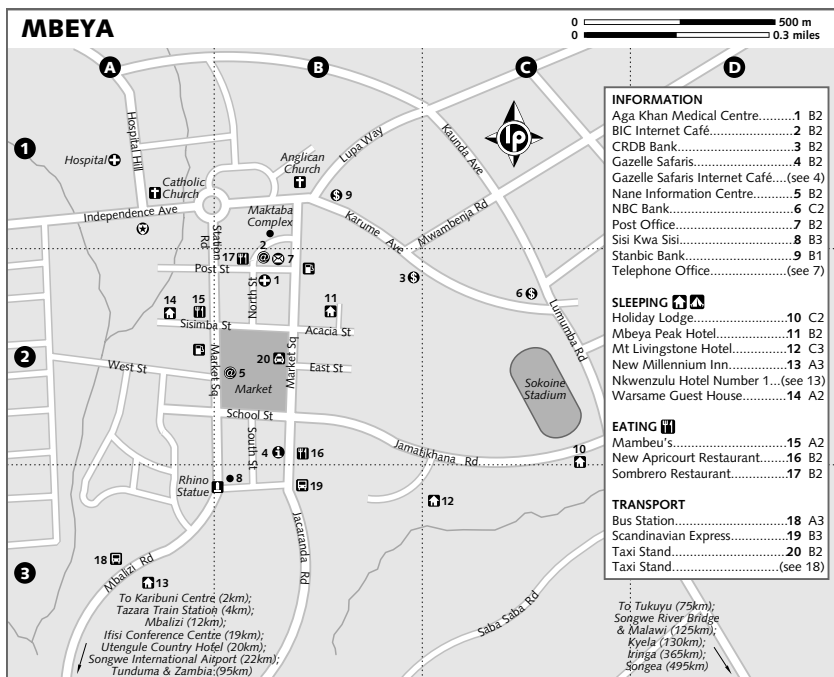
TOURIST INFORMATION

Gazelle Safaris (☎ 025-250 2482, 0713-069179; www.gazellesafaris.com; Jacaranda Rd) A new and helpful operator that can help you arrange guides and transport for excursions around Mbeya, excursions to Kitulo National Park, reliable car rental and safaris further afield, especially in the southern circuit.

Sisi Kwa Sisi (Station Rd) Near the rhino statue between the market and the bus station, this sometimes-on, sometimes-off place can occasionally be useful for arranging guides to local attractions.

Dangers & Annoyances

As a major transport junction, Mbeya attracts many transients, particularly in the area around the bus station. Watch your luggage here, don't change money with anyone, only buy bus tickets in the bus company offices and avoid walking alone through the small valley behind the station. Also be very wary of anyone presenting themselves as a tourist



THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

For more about the Southern Highlands region, see www.southernhighlandstz.org or get a copy of Liz de Leyser's excellent *A Guide to the Southern Highlands of Tanzania*, available at many bookstores and hotels in the region for Tsh5000. The booklet is an essential companion if you'll be visiting Kitulo National Park (p290).

guide and don't make tourist arrangements with anyone outside of an office.

Sleeping BUDGET

Karibuni Centre (☎ 025-250 3035/4178; mec@maf.or.tz; camping per person Tsh3000, d/tr Tsh15,000/19,000) This clean and quiet mission-run place is in an enclosed compound where you can also pitch a tent, and has long been popular with campers and budget travellers. Rooms, most of which are en suite, are solid value, and there's a good restaurant (meals cost about Tsh4000 and it's open from 7.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 3pm Saturday; on Sunday it's open for breakfast only). Karibuni is 3km southwest of the town centre and about 10 minutes on foot from the *dalla-dalla* stop for transport into town. Watch for the signpost along the north side of the main highway and about 500m west of the first junction coming from Dar es Salaam. From the turn-off, head through what looks like an empty lot for about 300m to reach the gate.

Warsame Guest House (Sisimba St; s/d without bathroom Tsh3000/4000) This is one of Mbeya's cheapest options, with surprisingly decent rooms (no mosquito nets), grubby shared facilities and a central location just northwest of the market.

Holiday Lodge (☎ 025-250 2821; Jamatikhana Rd; d Tsh10,000-12,000, without bathroom Tsh3500) A somewhat faded, whitewashed local guesthouse with clean-ish rooms – some with bathroom – and meals with advance order. It's just off the main road behind the large Rift Valley Hotel, about 10 minutes' walk from the market area and about 15 minutes on foot from the bus stand.

Other recommendations:

New Millennium Inn (☎ 025-250 0599; Mbalizi Rd; s Tsh 7000-10,000, without bathroom Tsh6000) Located directly opposite the bus station and convenient if you have an early bus. Rooms are small, noisy and reasonably clean;

there's no food. The more expensive rooms have beds big enough for two, but there's no same-gender sharing.

Nkwenzulu Hotel Number 1 (☎ 025-250 2225; Mbalizi Rd; s/d Tsh15,000/20,000) Next to New Millennium Inn and of a similar standard, this hotel is not to be confused with the grubbier Nkwenzulu Hotel Number 3, which is at the base of the small hill and is the closest place to get a meal.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Utengule Country Hotel (☎ 025-256 0100, 0753-020901; www.riftvalley-zanzibar.com; camping per site US\$10, cottages per person US\$30, s/tw/ste/f from US\$55/80/135/120; ☎) This lovely lodge is set on a working coffee plantation in the hills about 20km west of Mbeya with beautiful sunset views over the surrounding hills. There's a range of accommodation for all budgets, including spacious standard rooms and two-storey king-size suites with an upper balcony. There's also a family room set off on its own, plus large, self-catering cottages in separate grounds well away from the main hotel. Surrounding are expansive grounds with squash and tennis courts and a pool. The hotel makes a comfortable base for exploring the surrounding region, and guides, including for climbs up Mbeya Peak, and pricey car rentals can be arranged. Take the Tunduma road west from Mbeya for about 12km to Mbalizi, where there's a signposted turn-off to the right. Follow this road for 8.5km, keeping left at the first fork. The lodge is signposted to the right. Via public transport, take any Tunduma-bound *dalla-dalla* to Mbalizi, from where sporadic pick-ups en route to Chunya will take you within about 2km of the lodge. Credit cards are accepted up to US\$450 maximum. Free pick-ups from Mbeya can be arranged if you're staying more than one night.

Mbeya Peak Hotel (☎ 025-250 3473; Acacia St; s/d/ste Tsh17,500/20,000/50,000) With a central, sunny setting and decent rooms, some with views over the hills, this is one of the better-value choices. It's on a small side street about 300m east of the market. There's also a restaurant with garden seating (meals from Tsh4000).

Mt Livingstone Hotel (☎ 025-250 3334, 0713-350484; Jamatikhana Rd; s/d from Tsh35,000/55,000) Once the *grande dame* of Mbeya's hotels, this place is past its prime, although after recent renovations it once again offers quite decent value. There are a variety of rooms, including the nicer deluxe ones on the ground floor, and a restaurant. It's in a quiet area about 200m off Jamatikhana Rd.

Another recommendation:

Ifisi Conference Centre (☎ 025-250 4178, 0753-011622; mec@maf.or.tz; Tanzam Hwy; r Tsh30,000-40,000) A church-run centre about 20km from Mbeya and 7km past Mbalizi junction, with spacious rooms and a restaurant. There's also a guesthouse (r Tsh15,000) in the compound, with no-frills, good-value rooms with bathrooms.

Eating & Drinking

Mambeu (cnr Sisimba St & Market Sq; meals Tsh1000; ☎ lunch & dinner) A local favourite, with inexpensive *ugali* (a staple made from maize or cassava flour, or both), chips, chicken and the like.

New Apricourt Restaurant (Jacaranda Rd; meals from Tsh2000; ☎ lunch & dinner) Good, inexpensive meals, just opposite Gazelle Safaris.

Sombrero Restaurant (Post St; meals Tsh5000-7500; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) A limited menu, including vegetarian curry, spaghetti bolognaise and a few other standards.

Utengule Country Hotel (☎ 025-256 0100, 0753-020901; www.riftvalley-zanzibar.com; meals about Tsh12,500; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) The place to go for fine dining, with a daily set menu and à la carte, and a bar. On Sunday afternoons there's a pizza and barbecue lunch on the lawn. Speciality coffees (including to take home) are a feature. See p293 for details on how to get there.

For self-catering, try the small shops around the market area, most of which have reasonable selections of boxed juices, tinned cheese and the like.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Songwe international airport is being constructed about 22km outside Mbeya near Mbalizi, but its opening has been indefinitely postponed. Meanwhile, the Mbeya airfield, about 5km south of town, handles occasional charter flights.

BUS

Scandinavian Express departs daily to Dar es Salaam at 7am (Tsh25,000, 12 hours), going via Iringa (Tsh13,000) and Morogoro. Departures are currently from the bus station, but are scheduled to be moved to the Scandinavian office on Jacaranda St, just down from Gazelle Safaris. It's also possible to take Scandinavian's Lusaka-Dar 'luxury' line from Mbeya to Dar (Tsh31,000, 12 hours), departing Mbeya about 11am. Sumry line is the next best bet, with a daily departure at 6.30am (Tsh22,000).

To Njombe (Tsh7000, four hours) and Songea (Tsh12,000, eight hours), Super Feo departs daily at 6am, sometimes with a later departure as well.

To Tukuyu (Tsh1500, one to 1½ hours), Kyela (Tsh3000, two to 2½ hours) and the Malawi border (Tsh3000, two to 2½ hours; take the Kyela bus – see p351), there are two or three smaller Coastal buses daily. It's also possible to get to the Malawi border via *dalla-dallas* that run throughout the day, but you'll probably need to change vehicles in Tukuyu. For Itungi port, you'll need to change vehicles in Kyela.

To Lilongwe (Malawi), there's a bus several times weekly departing Dar es Salaam at 5am, reaching Mbeya between 3pm and 4pm, and then continuing to Lilongwe. Coming from the other direction, expect long delays. For more on connections between Mbeya and Malawi, see p351.

To Tunduma, on the Zambian border, there are daily minibuses (Tsh2500, two hours). Once over the border, you can change to Zambian transport. Scandinavian Express has a Dar es Salaam-Mbeya-Tunduma-Lusaka service (Tsh46,000 between Mbeya and Lusaka, departing Mbeya four times weekly at 5pm and Lusaka at about the same time); also see p353.

To Sumbawanga, the best bet is Sumry, which goes daily at 6am and 8am (Tsh10,000 to Tsh12,000, seven hours). For Mpanda, you'll need to change vehicles in Sumbawanga. Plan on spending the night there, since most vehicles to Mpanda depart Sumbawanga in the morning, although sometimes in the dry season it's possible to get a direct connection without staying overnight in Sumbawanga.

To Tabora, there are a few vehicles weekly during the dry season, going via Rungwa. Some, which you can pick up at Mbalizi junction, take the western route via Saza and Makongolosi, while others – catch them along the main Tanzam highway just east of central Mbeya – go via Chunya.

TRAIN

Tickets for all classes should be booked at least several days in advance at the **Tazara train station** (☎ 8am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat). See p361 for schedules and fares between Mbeya and Dar es Salaam, and p353 for information about connections with Zambia.

Getting Around

Taxis park at the bus station and near the market. The Tazara train station is 4km out of town on the Tanzania–Zambia highway (Tsh2000 in a taxi). *Dalla-dallas* from the road in front of Nkwenzulu Hotel Number 1 run to the station and to Mbalizi, but the ones to the station often don't have room for luggage.

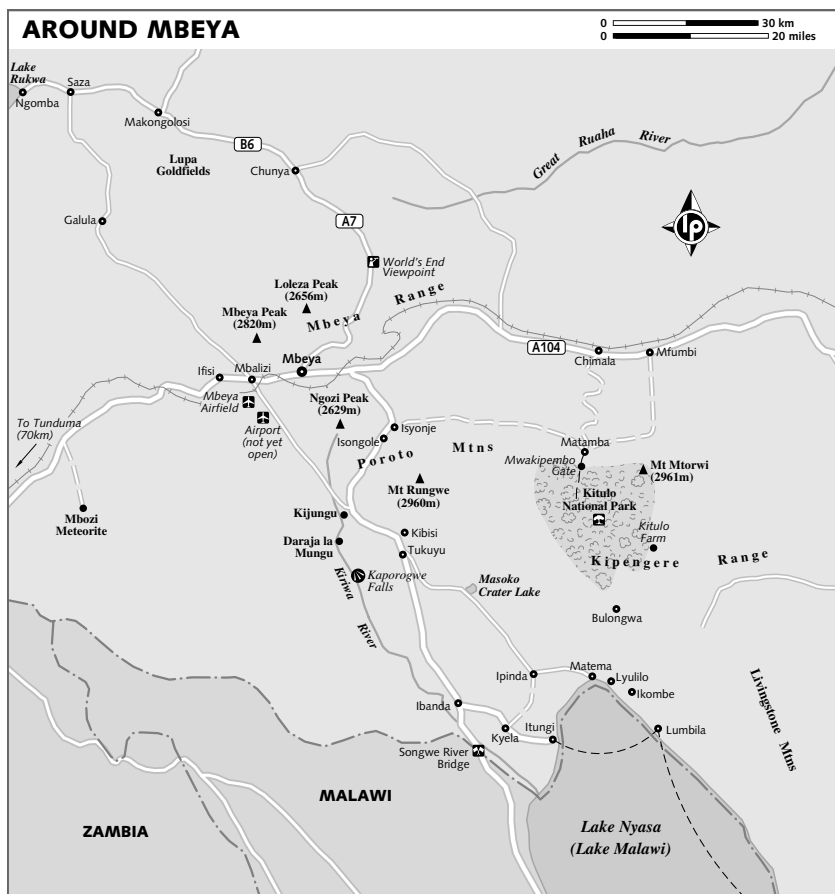
AROUND MBEYA

Loleza & Mbeya Peaks

Rising up over Mbeya from the north is **Loleza Peak** (2656m; also known as Mt Kaluwe), which can be climbed as an easy half-day hike. There's an antenna at the top, so you can't go to the summit, but you can still get high enough for views. The walk begins

on the road running north from town past the hospital.

Just west of Loleza is **Mbeya Peak** (2820m), the highest point in the Mbeya range and an enjoyable day hike. There are several possible routes. One goes from Mbalizi junction, about 12km west of town on the Tunduma road. Take a *dalla-dalla* to Mbalizi, get out at the sign for Utengule Country Hotel, head right and follow the dirt road for about 1km to a sign for St Mary's Seminary. Turn right here and follow the road up past the seminary to Lunji Farm and then up to the peak. With a vehicle, you can park at Lunji Farm and go the remaining way on foot. For an alternative route, proceed as above, but ignore the turn-off to the seminary and keep walking along the road from Mbalizi



towards Utengule Country Hotel. Just after the seminary turn-off you'll see a tiny bridge. Continue past two more small bridges to an unmarked dirt path heading off to the right, 2.7km from Mbalizi junction. This path winds its way towards the peak, though you'll probably need to ask locals to point out the way as it forks several times. Allow five to six hours for the return trip, a bit less for the slightly shorter Lunji Farm route. There's also another, longer route from Mbeya, beginning near Lolozi Secondary School to the west of town.

Both Loleza and Mbeya Peak should only be climbed accompanied by a guide, which you can arrange at Gazelle Safaris (p292) or Sisi Kwa Sisi (p292) in Mbeya.

Chunya

This old gold-mining town came to life during the height of the 1920s gold rush, after which it declined to its present status as something of a ghost town. Although Chunya itself has few draws, it's part of an interesting and adventurous loop to Lake Rukwa for anyone with their own transport. From Mbeya, head northeast along the edge of the Mbeya escarpment, passing the impressive **World's End Viewpoint**, with views over the Usangu catchment area (source of the Great Ruaha River). Once in Chunya, where there is a basic guesthouse, it's possible to continue via Saza and Ngomba to the shores of Lake Rukwa, although there are no

facilities en route. You can return the same way, or alternatively, at Saza, head south via Galula and Utengule Country Hotel towards Mbeya on a somewhat rougher road.

Pick-ups go daily between Mbeya and Chunya (three hours), but you'll probably need to stay overnight in Chunya as return transport departs in the mornings. Departures are from just outside of Mbeya before the Sae area for the northern loop, and from Mbalizi junction for the road going via Galula. The rough route from Chunya north to Rungwa and on to Tabora is traversed by several buses weekly during the dry season.

Lake Rukwa

Remote Lake Rukwa is a large salt lake notable for its many water birds and its enormous crocodile population. The northern section is part of Rukwa Game Reserve, which is contiguous with Katavi National Park. As the lake has no outlet, its water level varies greatly between the wet and dry seasons. It rarely exceeds about 3m in depth, and sometimes splits into two lakes separated by swamplands. From Mbeya, the main approaches are via Chunya or alternatively via Galula, and then on to Saza and the lake shore. For either route, 4WD is the only realistic way to visit, and even then, access to the shoreline is difficult. There are no facilities. It's also possible (and easier via public transport) to access the lake from Sumbawanga; see p271.

THE MBOZI METEORITE

About 65km southwest of Mbeya is the Mbozi (also known as Mboisi) meteorite – the fourth-largest meteorite in the world, with an estimated weight of about 25 metric tons, a length of about 3m and a height of about 1m. Scientists are unsure of when it hit the earth, but it is assumed to have been many thousands of years ago, since there are no traces of the crater that it must have made when it fell, nor any local legends regarding its origins. Although the site was only discovered by outsiders in 1930, it had been known to locals for centuries, but not reported because of various associated taboos.

Like most meteorites, the one at Mbozi is composed primarily of iron (90%), with about 8% nickel and traces of phosphorous and other elements. It was declared a protected monument by the Tanzanian government in 1967 and is now mounted on a small pedestal and under the jurisdiction of the Department of Antiquities. The meteorite's dark colour is due to its high iron content, while its burnished look comes from the melting and other heating that occurred as the meteorite hurtled through the atmosphere towards Earth.

To reach the site you will need your own vehicle. From Mbeya, follow the main road towards Tunduma. About 50km from Mbeya there is a signposted turn-off to the left. From here, it's 13km further down a dirt road (no public transport). During the wet season, you'll need a 4WD. Otherwise, a 2WD can get through without difficulty, except perhaps for a tiny stream about 2km before the meteorite. There is a caretaker. There is no charge for visiting, but you can buy an informative leaflet with details on the meteorite.

TUKUYU

☎ 025

The small town of Tukuyu is set in the heart of a beautiful area of hills and orchards near Lake Nyasa. There are many hikes and natural attractions nearby, but only a basic tourist infrastructure (though this is slowly changing), so be prepared to rough things.

NBC in the centre of town changes cash and travellers cheques and has an ATM (Visa only), and you can get online at **Syaka Internet Café** (per hr Tsh1000), diagonally opposite the bank, and **Hope Internet Café** (per hr Tsh1000), in the Lutheran compound next to the bank.

Rungwe Tea & Tours (www.rungweteatours.com), a small, locally run place next to the post office and just off the main road leading up to Landmark Hotel, can help you organise guides for hikes and excursions in the surrounding area. Prices start about Tsh15,000 per day including a guide and local community fee. Another contact for arranging guides is Bongo Camping (p298).

Hiking

Hiking is possible throughout most of the year, although during the wet season paths get very muddy. The best months are from July to October. Below are brief descriptions of a few routes. Topographical maps of the area are available from the Surveys & Mapping Division in Dar es Salaam (p85); the booklet *A Guide to the Southern Highlands of Tanzania* has detailed descriptions (see the boxed text, p293).

MT RUNGWE

This 2960m dormant volcano, much of which is protected as the Rungwe Forest Reserve, rises up to the east of the main road north of Tukuyu, adjoining Kitulo National Park. It marks the point where the eastern and western arms of the Rift Valley meet, and is an important centre of endemism. If you start early, you can hike up and down in a day – passing through lovely patches of tropical forest; you'll need to allow about 10 hours. There are several routes, including one starting from near Rungwe Secondary School, signposted off the Mbeya road about 15km north of Tukuyu. A guide can be arranged at Rungwe or in Tukuyu. Mt Rungwe can also be reached as a day hike from Isongole village between Tukuyu and Mbeya.

NGOZI PEAK & CRATER LAKE

This lushly vegetated 2629m-high volcanic peak, with its beautiful, deep-blue lake – the subject of local legends – lying 200m below the crater rim, is about 7km west of the main road north of Tukuyu. To get here via public transport, take any *dalla-dalla* travelling between Mbeya and Tukuyu and ask to be dropped off; there's a small sign for Ngozi at the turn-off. Once at the turn-off, if you haven't come with a guide you'll be approached by locals offering their services; the going rate is about Tsh2000. If you're short on time, you can go about half the distance from the main road to Ngozi by vehicle and then walk the remainder of the way. Once at the base, it's about another steep hour or so on foot up to the crater rim.

DARAJA LA MUNGU

This 'Bridge of God', south of Ngozi Peak and west of the main road, is a natural bridge estimated to have been formed around 1800 million years ago by water flowing through cooling lava that spewed out from the nearby Rungwe volcano. The bridge spans a small waterfall. Further south along the Kiriwa River are the pretty **Kaporogwe Falls**. Also nearby is **Kijungu** (Cooking Pot), where the river tumbles through a rocky gorge.

Sleeping & Eating

Lutengano Moravian Centre (☎ 0784-592633; camping Tsh5000, s without bathroom Tsh4000, tr Tsh6000) This no-frills place has a handful of simple rooms with nets, plus large grounds where you can pitch a tent, and is sometimes used by overland trucks. Meals can be arranged or you can use the kitchen. Head north from Tukuyu for about 3km to the signposted turn-off on the western side of the road, from where it's 7km down a dirt road. There's a pick-up from Tukuyu (Tsh1000) daily except Sunday, departing from the minibus station near the market about 2pm and returning the next morning.

Langiboss Lodge (☎ 025-255 2080; r without bathroom Tsh4000, d Tsh8000) The Langiboss was long Tukuyu's only accommodation, and is still one of the better shoestring options, with no-frills clean rooms around a tiny courtyard and meals with lots of advance notice. Hot-water buckets can be arranged. It's about 1km east of the town centre; from the small roundabout at the top of town, head straight and then right. If you have trouble contacting them, book through Rungwe Tea & Tours (left).

COMMUNITY TOURISM SPOTLIGHT: BONGO CAMPING

Bongo Camping (www.bongocamping.com; camping per person Tsh5000) This community-integrated place has a pleasant camping area with clean showers and toilets, cooking facilities for campers, plus a simple restaurant and secure parking. Profits go to support local educational initiatives, and there's also a small local theatre group that gives performances on Sunday afternoons. It's at Kibisi village just off the main road – coming from Mbeya, it's signposted to the left shortly before reaching Tukuyu.

DM Motel (☎ 025-255 2332; r Tsh10,000) Clean ensuite rooms with a large bed (no same-gender sharing permitted) and meals on request. It's just off the main road at the turn-off into Tukuyu town, and signposted.

Landmark Hotel (☎ 025-255 2400, 022-245 0510; landmahotel@yahoo.co.uk; camping per site Tsh8000, s/d/tw from Tsh20,000/25,000/30,000) This hotel has modern rooms, all with TV and hot water, green grounds where you can pitch a tent (showers can be arranged) and a restaurant. It's the large multistorey building at the main junction just up from NBC bank.

Ima's Kitchen (Main Rd; meals from Tsh1000) Just downhill from NBC bank, with inexpensive meals and snacks.

Getting There & Away

Minibuses run several times daily between Tukuyu and both Mbeya (Tsh1000, one to 1½ hours along a scenic, tarmac road) and Kyela (Tsh1500, one hour).

Two roads connect Tukuyu with the northern end of Lake Nyasa. The main tarmac road heads southwest and splits at Ibanda, with the western fork going to Songwe River Bridge and into Malawi, and the eastern fork to Kyela and Itungi port. A secondary dirt road, which was being rehabilitated as we passed through, heads southeast from Tukuyu to Ipinda and then east towards Matema.

LAKE NYASA

Lake Nyasa (also known as Lake Malawi) is Africa's third-largest lake after Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. It's more than 550km long, up to 75km wide and as deep as 700m in parts. It also has a high level of biodiversity,

containing close to one-third of the world's known cichlid species. The lake is bordered by Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique. The Tanzanian side is rimmed to the east by the Livingstone Mountains, whose green, misty slopes form a stunning backdrop that cascades down to the sandy shoreline. Few roads reach the towns strung out between the mountains and the shore along the lake's eastern side. To the north and east, the mountains lead on to the Kitulo Plateau.

While the mountains are beckoning to hikers, you'll need to be completely self-sufficient (including with tent and water filter) and carry a GPS. One possible for a route is from the mission station of Bulongwa (reached via *dalla-dalla* from Njombe) to Matema, which offers some superb views as you make your way down to the lake shore. Allow about 14 hours for the trip and start out at daybreak. There are inexpensive guesthouses in Bulongwa where you can spend the night before. A longer version of this hike is also possible, starting near the Kitulo Park gate. Another possibility is to take a *dalla-dalla* from Njombe to Ludewa, from where you could make your way down to Lupingu and wait for the MV *Iringa*. Once at the shoreline, note that both crocodiles and malaria-carrying *falciparum* mosquitoes are real hazards, so take the appropriate precautions by the water.

Other places of interest around the Tanzanian side of the lake include the following (from north to south).

Kyela

☎ 025

There's no reason to linger in this scruffy, nondescript transit town unless your boat arrives late at Itungi and you need somewhere to spend the night. Photography is prohibited in most areas. The surrounding area – much of which is wetlands dotted with rice paddies – is more appealing, and if you do find yourself here with some extra time, it's possible to organise cultural visits with the enterprising Newton Mwakabambo; contact **Kyela Envirocare** (☎ 025-254 0280, 0787-630814; kyelaenvirocare@yahoo.com), based at the CCM building in Kyela.

There's **internet access** (per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 7am-9pm) in the large container shop just next to the entrance to Matema Beach Hotel. For updated information on the sailing schedules for MV *Iringa* and MV *Songea*, ask at

Kyela Commercial, situated just around the corner from Steak Inn Restaurant. There are no ATMs; the best bet for changing money is with one of the hotel proprietors or shop owners.

SLEEPING & EATING

Makete Half London Guest House (☎ 025-254 0459; s Tsh6500) Rooms here are basic but clean, with mosquito nets, one small-ish bed and bathrooms. There are no doubles. It's in the centre of town, opposite the former Scandinavian Express bus office.

Pattaya Hotel (☎ 025-254 0015; s/d from Tsh7000/15,000) A step up from the Makete, with rooms with either one or two large beds, nets and bathrooms. It's on the same road as the Makete and the old Scandinavian bus office, and about 300m in from the corner (heading northwest).

Matema Beach Hotel (☎ 025-254 0158, 0786-565117; matemabeach2002@yahoo.com; Tukuyu Rd; s/d from Tsh12,000/20,000; 🍷) This incongruous place, with its massive entrance area about 500m before town, seems rather out of place in sleepy Kyela. Rooms are fine for the price – all with TV – and most have computers (though no internet facilities yet), and there's a restaurant. Staff can help arrange guides if you're interested in exploring the surrounding area. A pool is in the works.

Kyela Resort (☎ 025-2540152, 0784-232650; kyelaresort@yahoo.com; s/d Tsh25,000/35,000; 🍷) If you have your own transport, this is a good bet, with simple but pleasant, well-ventilated rooms (windows on both walls) and a restaurant. It's about 1.5km from town, just off the Tukuyu road.

Steak Inn Restaurant (meals Tsh1500) One block north from the Pattaya Hotel, this restaurant has inexpensive meals (though no steaks).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Minibuses go several times daily from Kyela to Tukuyu (Tsh1500, one hour) and Mbeya (Tsh3000, two to 2½ hours) from the minibus stand about two blocks north of Pattaya Hotel. Pick-ups run daily between Kyela and Itungi port (Tsh200), in rough coordination with boat arrivals and departures.

Itungi

Itungi, about 11km southeast of Kyela, is the main port for the Tanzanian Lake Nyasa ferry service. There is no accommodation,

and photography is forbidden. Pick-ups run sporadically, in rough coordination with boat arrivals and departures, to and from Kyela (Tsh200). For ferry schedules and fares, see p358.

Matema

☎ 025

This quiet lakeside settlement is the only spot on northern Lake Nyasa that has any sort of tourist infrastructure, and with its stunning beachside setting backed by lush mountains it makes an ideal spot to relax for a few days. You can arrange walks and dugout canoe rides or lounge on the beach. On Saturdays, there's a **pottery market** at Lyulilo village, about 1.5km east of the Lutheran Guest House along the lake shore, where Kisi pots from Ikombe are sold. There's nowhere in Matema to change money, so bring enough shillings with you.

SLEEPING & EATING

On the beach about 300m past the Lutheran Guest House, the Swiss-built **Matema Lake Shore Resort** (☎ 025-250 4178, 0754-487267; mec@maf.or.tz; camping per person with shower Tsh3000, d without bathroom Tsh10,000, 3-, 4- & 5-bed r Tsh20,000-30,000) has two en-suite chalets, each of which can accommodate up to five people, plus two smaller en-suite cottages, with some triples and a quad, and a simple meals available. There's also a grill, with a nominal charge for charcoal use. Bookings can also be arranged through the Karibuni Centre in Mbeya (p293).

Rooms at the no-frills beachside **Lutheran Guest House** (☎ 0787-275164; d/q without bathroom Tsh15,000/25,000) are rather dilapidated these days, although the local ambience and cuisine are amenable. Before heading down, check in with the **Lutheran mission** (☎ 025-255 2597/8) in Tukuyu, just downhill from the NBC bank, who will radio to be sure space is available.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Boat

The MV *Iringa* (p358) stops at Matema on its way from Itungi port down the eastern lake shore. Note that the MV *Songea* (p354) doesn't stop here, which means you'll need to head back to Itungi port if you're going to Malawi.

Bus

From Tukuyu, pick-ups to Ipinda leave around 8am most mornings from the roundabout by NBC bank (Tsh1500, two hours). Although drivers sometimes say they are going all the way to Matema, generally they go only as far as Ipinda. About 20km out of Tukuyu en route to Ipinda is the scenic Masoko Crater Lake, into which fleeing Germans allegedly dumped a small fortune of gold pieces and coins during WWI. From Ipinda, pick-ups run sporadically to Matema (Tsh1500, 35km), departing around 2pm, which means you'll need to wait around in Ipinda for a while. Departures from Matema back to Ipinda are in the morning. Chances are better on weekends for finding a lift between Matema and Ipinda with a private vehicle. If you get stuck in Ipinda, there are several basic guesthouses.

There's also at least one pick-up daily from Kyela to Ipinda (Tsh1500), a few of which then continue on to Matema. From Kyela, it's also fairly easy to hire a vehicle to drop you off.

Car & Motorcycle

If you are heading to Matema in your own vehicle, the usual route from Tukuyu is via Ipinda (not via Kyela). During the dry season and with a 4WD, it's also possible to take the main road from Tukuyu to Kyela and then head east along a signposted, bad road to Ipinda and on to Matema. The Lutheran Mission in Tukuyu can sometimes arrange transport between Tukuyu and Matema from about US\$70 per vehicle one way (about US\$120 return, including waiting time).

Ikombe

The tiny village of Ikombe is notable for its clay pots, which are made by the local Kisi women and sold at markets in Mbeya and elsewhere in the region. It's reached via dugout canoe from Matema. There are no tourist facilities.

Liuli

Liuli is the site of an old and still-active Anglican mission and the small St Anne's mission hospital, the major health facility on the eastern lake shore. It's also notable for a (with some imagination) sphinxlike rock lying just offshore, which earned the settlement the name of Sphinxhafen during the German era. There's no accommodation.

Mbamba Bay

The relaxing outpost of Mbamba Bay is the southernmost Tanzanian port on Lake Nyasa. With its low-key ambience and attractive beach fringed by palm, banana and mango trees, it makes a good spot to spend a few days waiting for the ferry or as a change of pace if you have been travelling inland around Songea or Tunduma.

SLEEPING & EATING

Neema Lodge (Mama Simba's; r without bathroom Tsh7000)

Decent value, with very basic but adequate rooms, meals and a pleasant waterside setting. To get here, turn left just before the bridge as you enter town.

Nyasa View (d without bathroom Tsh7500) Also not bad, though the rooms aren't really worth the marginal price difference compared with those at the Neema. Meals can be arranged. To get here, continue straight through town after the bridge, towards the beach.

Both places can help organise boat hire for exploring the nearby shoreline.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There's one direct vehicle daily from Songea (see p303), but otherwise you will need to change vehicles at Mbanga.

For details of ferry services between Mbamba Bay and Ifungi port, see p358. For ferry connections with Nkhata Bay, see p354.

From Mbamba Bay northbound, there are occasional 4WDs to Liuli mission station. Between Liuli and Lituhi there is no public transport and little traffic, and from Lituhi northwards, there is no road along the lake, only a footpath. There's also a rough track leading from Lituhi southeast towards Kitai and Songea, which opens the possibility for an interesting loop.

Entering or leaving Tanzania via Mbamba Bay, you will need to stop at the immigration postoffice/police station near the boat landing to take care of passport formalities.

MBINGA

☎ 026

This small but prosperous town lies en route between Songea and Mbamba Bay in the heart of one of Tanzania's major coffee-producing areas. If you're travelling via public transport, you'll probably need to change vehicles here. The main points of interest are

the large Catholic cathedral and the panoramic road leading down to Mbamba Bay and Lake Nyasa.

For accommodation and meals, try **Mbicu Hotel** (☎ 026-264 0168; r Tsh12,000), which also has a restaurant. It's on the edge of town along the Songea road.

SONGEA

☎ 025

The sprawling town of Songea, just over 1000m in altitude, is capital of the surrounding Ruvuma region and will probably seem like a major metropolis if you've just come from Tunduru or Mbamba Bay. Away from the scruffy and crowded central market and bus station area, it's a pleasant, attractive place, with shaded leafy streets, surrounded by beautiful rolling hill-country dotted with yellow sunflowers and grazing cattle. The main ethnic group here is the Ngoni, who migrated into the area from South Africa during the 19th century, subduing many smaller tribes along the way. Songea takes its name from one of their greatest chiefs, who was killed following the Maji Maji rebellion (see p302) and is buried about 1km from town near the Maji Maji museum.

Information

NBC, on the street behind the market, changes cash, and both NBC and CRDB (at the beginning of the Njombe road) have ATMs (Visa cards only). There's an internet connection at **Valongo Computer Centre** (Songea Network Centre; per hr Tsh1000; ☎ 7.30am-9pm), on a side street directly opposite the main market entrance. The immigration office (where you'll need to get your passport stamped if you are travelling to or from Mozambique), is at the beginning of the Tunduru Rd, about 400m up and opposite Angoni Arms Hotel.

Sights & Activities

Songea's colourful **market** (Soko Kuu) along the main road is worth a visit. The impressive carved wooden doors on the **cathedral** diagonally opposite the bus stand are also worth a look, as are the beautiful wall paintings inside.

About 1km from the centre of town, off the Njombe road, is the small **Maji Maji museum** (admission free but donation appreciated; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri), which is quite run down but nevertheless interesting. Behind the museum is the tomb of Chief Songea. The museum is

kept locked; ask for the caretaker, who lives nearby. To get to the museum from town, take the first tarmac road to the right after passing CRDB bank and continue about 200m. The museum entrance is on the left; look for the large, pale-blue archway.

About 30km west of town, in Peramiho, is a large Benedictine **monastery**.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Anglican Church Hostel (☎ 026-260 0693; s/d Tsh3000/3500, without bathroom Tsh2000/2500) This long-standing place has no-frills rooms with mosquito nets, set around a courtyard in a quiet area just northwest of the main road. Food is available with advance order. Nearby, on the road leading into the hostel grounds, are ovens where you can buy fresh bread on weekday afternoons. To get to the hostel, head uphill from the bus stand, past the market to the Tanesco building. Go left and wind your way back about 400m to the Anglican church compound. The hostel is also signposted from the Njombe road.

Don Bosco Hostel (dm Tsh3000, s Tsh5000) Reasonably clean basic rooms and a central location are the attractions at this church-run hostel. Food can be arranged. It's two blocks off the main road, diagonally behind the Catholic church and a five-minute walk from the bus stand.

Annex of Yapender Lodge (☎ 026-260 2855, 0787-126414; s/d Tsh7000/8000) The slickest budget option in the town centre, with small, clean, no-frills rooms with bathroom, and buckets of hot water on request. From the bus stand, head uphill 400m past the market, take the first right (watch for the sign for the Lutheran church) and continue about 300m to the end of the dirt lane. It's diagonally opposite and just past the Lutheran church.

White House Inn (☎ 025-260 0892; r Tsh15,000) If you have your own transport, this is one of the better-value budget choices. Rooms are small and clean, and there's a restaurant with terrace seating serving tasty chicken and chips and other meals (from Tsh1500). It's about 2.5km north of the centre of town in the Bomba Mbili neighbourhood, set back about 200m from the Njombe road and signposted.

Angoni Arms Hotel (r Tsh22,000) This once-nice place has seen better days, but is still worth a look. Accommodation is in quiet

THE MAJI MAJI REBELLION

The Maji Maji rebellion, which was the strongest local revolt against the colonial government in German East Africa, is considered to contain some of the earliest seeds of Tanzanian nationalism. It began around the turn of the 20th century when colonial administrators set about establishing enormous cotton plantations in the southeast and along the railway line running from Dar es Salaam towards Morogoro. These plantations required large numbers of workers, most of whom were recruited as forced labour and required to work under miserable salary and living conditions. Anger at this harsh treatment and long-simmering resentment of the colonial government combined to ignite a powerful rebellion. The first outbreak was in 1905 in the area around Kilwa, on the coast. Soon all of southern Tanzania was involved, from Kilwa and Lindi in the southeast to Songea in the southwest. In addition to deaths on the battlefield, thousands died of hunger brought about by the Germans' scorched-earth policy, in which fields and grain silos in many villages were set on fire. Fatalities were undoubtedly exacerbated by a widespread belief among the Africans that enemy bullets would turn to water before reaching them, and so their warriors would not be harmed – hence the name Maji Maji (*maji* means 'water' in Swahili).

By 1907, when the rebellion was finally suppressed, close to 100,000 people had lost their lives. In addition, large areas of the south were left devastated and barren, and malnutrition was widespread. The Ngoni, a tribe of warriors much feared by their neighbours, put up the strongest resistance to the Germans. Following the end of the rebellion, they continued to wage guerrilla-style war until 1908, when the last shreds of their military-based society were destroyed. In order to quell Ngoni resistance once and for all, German troops hanged about 100 of their leaders and beheaded their most famous chief, Songea.

Among the effects of the Maji Maji uprising were a temporary liberalisation of colonial rule and replacement of the military administration with a civilian government. More significantly, the uprising promoted development of a national identity among many ethnic groups and intensified anti-colonial sentiment, kindling the movement for independence.

doubles in detached bungalows set in green grounds (there are a few larger, regular rooms as well for the same price). The water supply has long since been cut off, but staff bring you hot-water buckets for washing, and there's a restaurant with garden seating. It's about 1.5km from the market area, along the Tunduru road.

Also recommended:

Lika Guest House (Mwasiti St; s/d Tsh10,000/15,000) Small, clean rooms with TV, fan and parking. It's a six-minute walk downhill from the bus stand in the Mfaranki area, and signposted just off the main road.

MIDRANGE

Heritage Cottage (☎ 025-260 0888; Njombe Rd; r/ste Tsh30,000/40,000) This large, busy place has modern, clean rooms with TV, a popular and large bar-restaurant (rooms near the bar can get noisy on weekends), a lawn area behind and a small playground for children. It's about 3km north of town along the Njombe Rd.

Seed Farm Villa (☎ 025-260 2500, 0752-842086; seedfarmvilla@yahoo.co.uk; s/d from Tsh40,000/45,000) Just opened, this eight-room place is argu-

ably the most comfortable hotel in Songea, with modern, spacious and quiet rooms with TV and nets, set in tranquil garden surroundings away from the town centre in the Seed Farm area. There's a sitting room with TV and a restaurant (with advance order), and an internet connection is planned. Head out of town along the Tundumu Rd for 2.5km to the signposted turn-off, from where it's 200m further. Sometimes camping can be arranged in the grounds.

Eating

Agape Café (Main Rd; snacks & meals from Tsh1000, ☎ 8am-5.30pm) Just uphill from the Catholic church, with pastries and inexpensive meals.

Heritage Annex (Main Rd; meals about Tsh4000; ☎ lunch & dinner) At the upper end of the main road near the Tundumu-Njombe road junction and the post office, with snacks, chicken and chips and other standards, and slow service.

Of the hotel restaurants, those at White House Inn and Angoni Arms Hotel (allow plenty of time at the latter) are both worth a try.

Getting There & Away

To Dar es Salaam, Scandinavian Express departs daily at 6am (Tsh27,000, 12 to 13 hours). Super Feo also does this route (Tsh26,000); going with them as far as Iringa costs Tsh12,000.

To Mbeya, Super Feo departs daily at 6am in each direction (Tsh12,000, eight hours) via Njombe (Tsh7000, four hours). There are also departures to Njombe at 9.30am and 3pm.

For Mbamba Bay, there's one direct vehicle departing daily at 7am (Tsh8000, six to eight hours). Otherwise, you'll need to get transport to Mbinga (Tsh3500, four hours) and from there on to Mbamba Bay (Tsh5000). During the wet season, when the trip often needs to be done with 4WDs, prices rise.

Transport to Mozambique departs from the Majengo C area, southwest of the bus stand and about 600m in from the main road – ask locals to point out the way through the back streets. See p351 for more information.

TUNDURU

Dusty, remote Tunduru, halfway between Masasi and Songea, is in the centre of an important gemstone-mining region, with a bit of a Wild West feel. The town is also a truck

and transit stop, and you'll need to spend at least one night here if travelling between Masasi and Songea. The better guesthouses are at the western end of town. There are plenty to choose from with rooms from about Tsh3000 to Tsh10,000; all are around the same standard.

Four-wheel drives to Songea also congregate at the western end of town. Reserve a seat for onward travel when you arrive in Tunduru, as the vehicles fill up quickly.

The road from Tunduru in either direction is in rough condition, especially during the rains, although thanks to recent rehabilitation work it's better than it was. There's at least one bus (and sometimes also a 4WD) daily between Tunduru and Masasi, departing by 6am (Tsh8000, five hours). Between Tunduru and Songea, the main options are 4WDs, which go daily (Tsh17,000, seven to eight hours, departing Tunduru between 3am and 7am and Songea by 6am), as well as usually one bus in the dry season. If you are staying at a guesthouse near the 4WD 'station' you can arrange for the driver to come and wake you before departure. There is little en route, so bring food and water with you.

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