

Kenya



About the Country

To walk the land of Kenya is like walking the history of humankind. Some of the earliest fossils of prehistoric humans have been discovered in Kenya in the Great Rift Valley. A former British colony, Kenya achieved independence in 1963. Some of Kenya's most well known people are the Maasai – a semi-nomadic warrior tribe that live in the southern portion of the country as well as in northern Tanzania. A Maasai shield is at the center of the Kenyan flag. Today, Kenya is known around the world for its technological innovations, especially in mobile finance.

Although many languages are spoken in Kenya, English and Kiswahili are the official languages. Employers in Kenya require a high level of English proficiency, and newspapers in Kenya are written primarily in English. But being literate in English is the key not only to getting a good job; it's also key to survival; medical records and medicine labels are also written in English.

Education

Primary school education is free in Kenya, but many schools charge fees for supplies or other expenses, which places a burden on families. All students have to pay for secondary (high) school, but it is subsidized by the government for very high-achieving students. All subjects are taught in English in secondary schools, and exams at the end of primary and secondary school determine students' future educational options. There are many colleges and universities in Kenya, and university education is subsidized for those who score high enough on their high school exams.

The African Library Project

In Kenya, the African Library Project works with Rongo University College and Project Humanity to establish primary school libraries that also serve the community. The partnership works in Homabay and Migori counties, in southwest Kenya, near Lake Victoria. The books for the first 31 libraries for Kenya arrived in 2017.

Quick Facts

- Kenya is a sizeable country -- comparable to France, slightly smaller than Texas – with a population of about 46 million.
- The population of Kenya is on average very young, with about 60% of people under age 24.
- Kenya's literacy rate is 81% for men and 75% for women.
- Kenya is home to the world's largest refugee camp, with over 300,000 refugees, mostly from Somalia.
- Kenya's HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is 5% nationwide; the rate in Homabay County is over 25% (the highest in the country), while the rate in Migori County is about 15%.
- Kenya is known for its abundant wildlife, and many tourists visit to see the animals. Kenya's government takes an active role in conservation and recently burned 105 tons of ivory in order to discourage poaching.
- Kenya has many different climates, from desert in the north, to hot and humid near Lake Victoria, to cool and dry in the highlands.
- Agriculture contributes 25% of Kenya's GDP. Kenya is especially famous for its tea and coffee exports.
- Kenya has extreme income inequality. 43% of the population lives below the poverty line.

