



# Understand Kenya

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The 2008 post-election crisis sent shockwaves through Africa, but Kenya is once again facing the future with confidence. Find out why.

## **HISTORY.....290**

Join us on a journey that begins with prehistoric humans, detours via colonial struggles and traces the complicated independence years.

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We take you behind the stereotypes and into the traditions of Kenya's major ethnic groups, including the Maasai, Kikuyu and Samburu.

## **DAILY LIFE.....309**

What holds Kenya together amid such diversity? What's it like to be a Kenyan woman? We show you what makes Kenyans tick.

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Kenyans love their music and are justly proud of their literary and cinematic output. We give you the low-down.

## **KENYAN CUISINE.....316**

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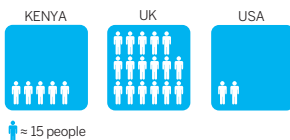
National parks are the centrepiece for Kenya's main attractions and we help you to explore them all.

## **WILDLIFE & HABITAT.....335**

Read the definitive full-colour guide to Kenya's wildlife by renowned expert David Lukas.



## population per sq km



# Kenya Today

## Cementing Democracy

Depending on how you look at it, Kenya's democracy is either extremely robust or in a permanent state of peril. After the horrendous violence that followed the disputed elections of 2007 – violence that resulted in 1000 deaths, 600,000 Kenyans displaced from their homes and six senior Kenyan public figures forced to appear before the International Criminal Court – the country is holding its breath in advance of the 2012 poll. The surprising stability with which the government of erstwhile foes President Mwai Kibaki (who will be standing down after two terms) and Prime Minister Raila Odinga (a leading candidate for the presidency) has ruled Kenya (since being forced into a marriage of convenience) has restored considerable faith in the country's democratic institutions. Cynicism, however, remains high among ordinary Kenyans when it comes to their political class. More than that, the underlying suspicions between various tribal groupings, poverty, and the increasing competition for scarce resources, which lay behind the violence, remain unresolved.

## Climbing Out of Poverty

Kenya's economy is booming, and neither natural disasters, post-election violence or war with Somalia can shake the country's confidence that Kenya is on the up. There's just one problem: only a small percentage of Kenyans see the benefits of the growing prosperity. Unemployment sits at around 40%, a staggering 50% of Kenyans live below the poverty line and the prices of basic foodstuffs are soaring. By one estimate, Kenya would require an annual growth rate of 11% for the prosperity gains to even begin to trickle down to poorer sectors of Kenyan society. Although Kenya has shown some gains in recent years, the Human Development

- ▶ Population: 41.07 million
- ▶ Total fertility rate: 4.19 children per woman
- ▶ Population growth rate: 2.46%
- ▶ Average age: 18.9
- ▶ Life expectancy: 59.48 years
- ▶ Urban population as % of total: 75%

## Top Books

**A Primate's Memoir: Love, Death and Baboons in East Africa** (Robert M Sapolsky)

Funny, poignant account by a young primatologist in Kenya.

**No Man's Land: An Investigative Journey Through Kenya and Tanzania** (George Monbiot)

The modern struggle of the region's nomadic tribes.

**Out of Africa** (Karen Blixen, aka Isak Dinesen) The definitive account of colonial Kenya.

**The Flame Trees of Thika** (Elspheth Huxley) A marvellously told colonial memoir.

**The Tree Where Man Was Born** (Peter Matthiessen) Classic of African nature writing.

**Dreams in a Time of War** (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o) Kenya's premier writer looks back at his early life.

**Petals of Blood** (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o) Perhaps Kenya's finest novel.