Anyone can speak another language! It’s all about confidence. Don’t worry if you can’t remember your school language lessons or if you’ve never learnt a language before. Even if you learn the very basics (on the inside covers of this book), your travel experience will be the better for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort.

finding things in this book
For easy navigation, this book is in sections. The Basics chapters are the ones you’ll thumb through time and again. The Practical section covers basic travel situations like catching transport and finding a bed. The Social section gives you conversational phrases, pick-up lines, the ability to express opinions – so you can get to know people. Food has a section all of its own: gourmets and vegetarians are covered and local dishes feature. Safe Travel equips you with health and police phrases, just in case. Sustainable Travel, finally, completes this book. Remember the colours of each section and you’ll find everything easily; or use the comprehensive Index. Otherwise, check the two-way traveller’s Dictionary for the word you need.

being understood
Throughout this book you’ll see coloured phrases on each page. They’re phonetic guides to help you pronounce the language. Start with them to get a feel for how the language sounds. The pronunciation chapter in Basics will explain more, but you can be confident that if you read the coloured phrase, you’ll be understood. As you become familiar with the spoken language, move on to using the actual text in the language which will help you perfect your pronunciation.

communication tips
Body language, ways of doing things, sense of humour – all have a role to play in every culture. ‘Local talk’ boxes show you common ways of saying things, or everyday language to drop into conversation. ‘Listen for …’ boxes supply the phrases you may hear. They start with the phonetic guide (because you’ll hear it before you know what’s being said) and then lead in to the language and the English translation.
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ABOUT SWAHILI

- national language
- widely spoken

For more details, see the introduction.
getting around

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which … goes to (Mbeya)?</th>
<th>… <em>ipi huenda</em> (Mbeya)?</th>
<th>… <em>ee·pee hoo·ayn·da</em> (m·bay·a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is this the … to (Mombasa)?</td>
<td><em>Hii ni … kwenda</em> (Mombasa)?</td>
<td><em>hee nee … kwayn·da</em> (mohm·ba·sa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boat</td>
<td><em>Boti</em></td>
<td><em>boh·tee</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus</td>
<td><em>Basi</em></td>
<td><em>ba·see</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ferry</td>
<td><em>Kivuko</em></td>
<td><em>kee·voo·koh</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minibus</td>
<td><em>Daladala</em>/Matatu Tan/Ken</td>
<td><em>da·la·da·la</em>/ma·ta·too*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train</td>
<td><em>Treni</em></td>
<td><em>tray·nee</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When’s the … bus?</td>
<td><em>Basi … itaondoka lini?</em></td>
<td><em>ba·see … ee·ta·ohn·doh·ka lee·nee</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first</td>
<td><em>ya kwanza</em></td>
<td><em>ya kwan·za</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last</td>
<td><em>ya mwisho</em></td>
<td><em>ya mwee·shoh</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>next</td>
<td><em>ijayo</em></td>
<td><em>ee·ja·yoh</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the … going today/tomorrow? … *itaenda leo/kesho?* … *ee·ta·ayn·da lay·oh/kay·shoh*  
What time does it leave? *Itaondoka saa ngapi?* ee·ta·ohn·doh·ka sa n·ga·pee  
What time does it get to (Kisuma)? *Itafika (Kisumu) saa ngapi?* ee·ta·fee·ka (kee·soo·moo) sa n·ga·pee
How long will it be delayed?

Itachelewa kwa muda gani?

Is this seat free?

Kuna nafasi hapa?

That’s my seat.

Hiki ni kiti changu.

Please tell me when we get to (Moshi).

Niambie tukifika (Moshi).

Please stop here.

Simama hapa, tafadhali.

How long do we stop here?

Tutakaa hapa kwa muda gani?

I’m sorry, I’ve changed my mind.

Samahani, nimebadili nia.

hop on, hop off

The most common word people call out to get a bus to stop is *shusha shoo-sha* (drop off). It’s also considered slang. Pay attention to the way East Africans deliver the line. If you casually call *shusha* the same way when you want to get off, you can sometimes bring an entire bus to laughter.

On the other hand, if you’re standing by the side of the road and you want to get a local bus to stop, simply extend your arm fully and flap your hand like a whale’s tail.
## tickets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A … ticket to (Iringa).</th>
<th>Tiketi moja ya … kwenda (Iringa).</th>
<th>tee-kay-tee moh-ja ya … kwayn-da (ee-reen-ga)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st-class</td>
<td>daraja la kwanza</td>
<td>da-ra-ja la kwan-za</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd-class</td>
<td>daraja la pili</td>
<td>da-ra-ja la pee-lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child’s</td>
<td>mtoto</td>
<td>m-toh-toh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one-way</td>
<td>kwenda tu</td>
<td>kwayn-da too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>return</td>
<td>kwenda na</td>
<td>kwayn-da na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>mwanafunzi</td>
<td>mwa-na-foon-zee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d like a/an … seat.</td>
<td>Nataki kiti …</td>
<td>na-ta-ka kee-tee …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aisle</td>
<td>jirani ya njia</td>
<td>jee-ra-nee ya n-jea-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonsmoking</td>
<td>kutovuta</td>
<td>koo-toh-voa-ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smoking</td>
<td>sigara</td>
<td>see-ga-ra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>window</td>
<td>kuvuta sigara</td>
<td>koo-voo-ta see-ga-ra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jirani ya</td>
<td>jee-ra-nee ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dirisha</td>
<td>dee-ree-sha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there (a) …?</td>
<td>Kuna …?</td>
<td>koo-na …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>air conditioning</td>
<td>a/c</td>
<td>ay-see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blanket</td>
<td>blanketi</td>
<td>blan-kay-tee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sick bag</td>
<td>mfuko wa</td>
<td>m-foo-koh wa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kutapikia</td>
<td>koo-ta-pee-kee-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toilet</td>
<td>choo</td>
<td>choh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where do I buy a ticket?  
*Ninunue tiketi wapi?*  
nee-noo-noo-aay tee-kay-tee wa-pee

Do I need to book?  
*Ni lazima nifanye buking?*  
nee la-zee-ma nee-fa-nyay boo-keeng

How much is it?  
*Ni bei gani?*  
nee bay ga-nee