



# Southern Highlands

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## Why Go?

Tanzania's Southern Highlands officially begin at Makambako Gap, about halfway between Iringa and Mbeya, and extend southwards into Malawi. Here, the term encompasses the entire region along the mountainous chain running between Morogoro in the east and Lake Nyasa and the Zambian border in the west.

The Highlands are a major transit route for travellers to Malawi or Zambia, and are an important agricultural area. They are also wonderfully scenic and a delight to explore, with rolling hills, lively markets, jacaranda-lined streets, lovely lodges and plenty of wildlife. Hike in the Udzungwa Mountains, watch wildlife in Mikumi or Ruaha National Parks. Get to know the matrilineal Luguru people in the Uluguru Mountains. Or, head well off the beaten track to the heart of the Southern Highlands in Tanzania's southwesternmost corner. 'Here, wild orchids carpet sections of Kitulo park and verdant mountains cascade down to the tranquil shores of Lake Nyasa.

## Best of Nature

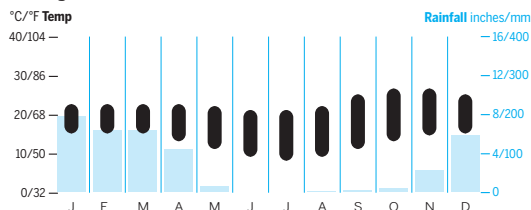
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## Best of Culture

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## When to Go

### Mbeya



**Jul-Sep** Ruaha is wonderful during the dry season, with its 'sand rivers' and elephants.

**Oct-Nov** Jacarandas are out in force; wildlife viewing at Mikumi and Ruaha remains rewarding.

**Dec-Apr** Kitulo National Park's flower display is in full bloom for well-prepared hikers.

## Morogoro

POP 250,000

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 attractions, Morogoro offers a good introduction to Tanzanian life outside Dar es Salaam. It's also the best base for hiking in the Ulugurus.

### Sleeping

#### Hotel Oasis

HOTEL \$

(☎023-261 4178, 0754-377602; hoteloasis2@morogoro.net; Station St; s/d/tr US\$45/50/70;   ) The Oasis has faded but good-value rooms with fan, air-con, TV and fridge, plus grassy grounds and a popular restaurant serving Indian, Chinese and continental cuisine (including many vegetarian options). It's frequently fully booked.

#### Princess Plaza

##### Lodge & Restaurant

GUESTHOUSE \$

(☎0754-319159; Mahenge St; r Tsh25,000; ) This friendly lodge has clean, small no-frills rooms, all with double bed and hot water (no nets), plus helpful management and a restaurant downstairs. Room prices include free wi-fi access. It's one block in from the main road in the town centre.

#### New Savoy Hotel

HOTEL \$

(Station St; r budget/standard Tsh18,000/25,000) The atmospheric old railway hotel, directly opposite the train station, has spacious twin-bedded 'standard' rooms upstairs overlooking the garden with views to the hills. They're well worth the few extra shillings over the lower-floor budget rooms. There's a restaurant.



#### Amabilis Centre

HOSTEL \$

(☎0719-348959; Old Dar es Salaam Rd; s Tsh20,000, d without bathroom Tsh20,000; ) Small, spartan, clean rooms with fan in this church-run multistorey conference centre 1km past New Acropol Hotel. Meals can be arranged.

#### Mama Pierina's

GUESTHOUSE \$

(☎0713-786913; Station St; tw old/new Tsh20,000/45,000;  ) The ageing Mama Pierina's is long past its prime, with lackadaisical plumbing, but the welcome is warm and the location just off the main road is convenient. The newer rooms to the back of the compound are worth the extra money and good value for a double. More renovations are planned. The restaurant serves hearty meals.


#### Dragonaire's

GUESTHOUSE \$

(☎0715-311311; drags643@yahoo.com; s/d Tsh95,000/105,000;  ) Four spacious, modern rooms overlooking an expansive lawn. Upstairs is a family suite with two attached doubles and a kitchenette, while downstairs are two doubles, all with TV. It's signposted about 2.5km east of town, about 700m off the Old Dar es Salaam Rd.

#### Hilux Hotel

HOTEL \$

(☎023-261 3946; hiluxhotel@gmail.com; Old Dar es Salaam Rd; r old/new Tsh50,000/60,000; ) Small, clean twin- and double-bedded rooms and a restaurant; next door to New Acropol Hotel.

#### Mbuyuni Farm Retreat

B&B \$\$

(☎023-260 1220; www.kimango.com; per person half board US\$85, 4-person self-catering cottage US\$120;  ) Three spacious cottages in the private gardens of a farm just outside Morogoro overlooking the Uluguru mountains. Meals can be arranged. Turn north off the main highway 12km east of Morogoro at the end of Kingolwira village onto a mango tree-lined lane and continue over a small bridge

### DON'T MISS

## CHILUNGA CULTURAL TOURISM PROGRAM

**Chilunga Cultural Tourism** (☎023-261 3323, 0754-477582; www.chilunga.or.tz; YWCA Compound, Rwegasore Rd) offers day and overnight excursions around Morogoro, including village visits, hikes and Mikumi safaris. Its programs are a good introduction to local life, and we've received lots of positive feedback from travellers. Prices average from Tsh25,000 per person per day plus village and admin fees (from about Tsh10,000 per person per day). Mikumi safaris cost from US\$250 for the vehicle, including guide and park entry fees.