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Afk Amh Arb Fre Hsa Mgy Por Sho Swa Wol Xho Yor Zul

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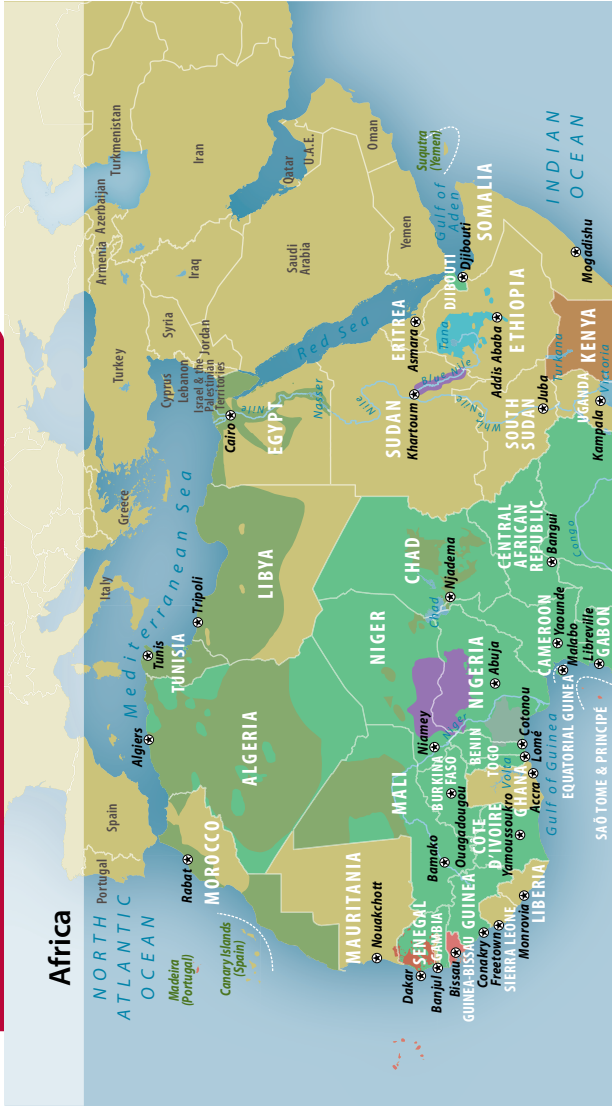
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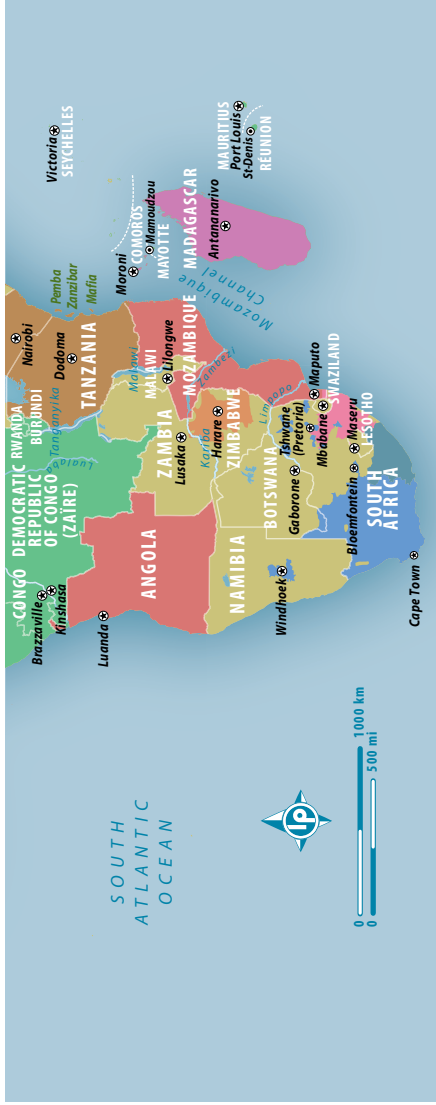
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LANGUAGE MAP

Africa





africa – at a glance

In addition to its many other attractions, Africa offers incredible linguistic diversity. Most African languages belong to one of the following four language families: Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo (with the Bantu languages as the major branch) and Khoisan. In addition, the languages of Madagascar belong to the Austronesian language family. Even though the number of languages spoken in Africa is huge (around 1000), most of them have less than a million speakers. On the other hand, more prominent languages usually also serve as regional lingua francas – such as Swahili in East Africa. Luckily for English speakers, most African languages use Roman script and there's a general correspondence between the pronunciation and the written form of words.

Arabic has a particularly important status in the north and northeast of the continent, due to its proximity to the Middle East and the Arab conquests of North Africa from the 7th century. Among the African languages, Amharic is linguistically closest to Arabic, as they both belong to the Semitic group of the Afro-Asiatic family. In addition, they're both script languages, but the two scripts are quite different.

Due to the 19th-century European colonisation of Africa, a few European languages (particularly English, French and Portuguese) are still influential in various African countries and even share official status with native African languages. English is predominantly represented in the east and the south, French in the north and the west, and Portuguese in the east and the west of the continent.

A unique linguistic feature of Africa is Afrikaans, which belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. It was created as a result of the 17th-century Dutch colonisation of the south of the continent. Although still very similar to Dutch, Afrikaans is now considered a language in its own right.

did you know?

- The African Union (AU) was established in 2000 by the adoption of the Constitutive Act at the Lome Summit (Togo). It developed from the African Economic Community and the Organisation of African Unity. It has 55 member states, covering the entire continent. The AU is governed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the Pan-African Parliament.
- The home of the AU is Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The AU anthem is the song 'Let Us All Unite and Celebrate Together'. The AU flag combines green, white and gold colours, with the emblem showing the African continent in the middle.
- The official languages of the AU are all African languages, as well as Arabic, English, French and Portuguese. The African Academy of Languages (founded in 2001) strives to preserve African languages and promote their use among the African people.

Afrikaans

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AFRIKAANS

afrikaans

introduction

You don't need to look hard for evidence of Afrikaans in English: *aardvark*, the name of a termite-eating mammal native to Africa, is one of the first words in any English dictionary. English has also borrowed the Afrikaans words *commando* and *trek*, among others. Afrikaans (*Afrikaans a-free-kans*) belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family – just like English. It's closely related to the 17th-century Dutch brought to South Africa from 1652 onward, when The Dutch East India Company established the first European settlement at the Cape of Good Hope. Afrikaans derives from the dialect that developed among these settlers, most of whom were from the Netherlands. Until the late 19th century, Afrikaans was considered a Dutch dialect and was known as 'Cape Dutch' – in fact, it wasn't until 1925 that it became one of the official languages of South Africa. Today, it's the first language of some six million people, and is spoken in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia as well as South Africa.

