

Swahili Coast



Further Links

- Fascinating ruins and old buildings
- Museums and guided cultural tours
- Wild beaches and remote lodges
- Visit fishing villages and local settlements
- Links well with southern parks and the islands

Situation

Coastline of Tanzania (and Kenya).

Activities

Swimming, sailing, cultural and historical guided tours, turtle watching (seasonal), water sports.

The coast of Tanzania has a fascinating array of old settlements and historical trading posts with links to the off shore islands and great beaches.

The main port is of course the bustling city of **Dar es Salaam** and to the north is the old German settlement of **Bagamoyo** and further north the only national park bordering the beach, **Saadani**. North of there is the fishing town of **Pangani** and a larger settlement at **Tanga** from where there are flights to Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam and access to the Usumbara Mountains.

To the south of the city is 600km of mostly untouched coastline, little affected by tourism. The region is remote and full of history, there are not many towns and most are now fishing communities with old buildings dotted around hinting at the prosperous past of the trade routes. The old towns are full of Swahili character with dusty roads surrounded by crumbling ruins and a very laid back feel to the way of life. You can easily spend a long time in a place where you just go to 'quickly' visit as you slip into African time and enjoy watching the world go by!

There are a mixture of remote palm fringed beaches, mangrove swamps and scrub lands. The **Rufiji River Delta** is an important natural formation on the south coast, waters from inland through the Selous Game Reserve meeting the Indian Ocean.

The main settlements are Kilwa, Lindi, Mikindani and Mtwara. Inland is the Makonde Plateau, famous for

it's wonderful wood carvings which can be found for sale along the coast.

Kilwa (meaning place of fish) is now three different small towns, the main settlement on a small island, home to only a few hundred people. It used to be one of the most important and wealthy settlements along the East African coast in medieval times and had a thriving trade mostly in gold that was found in Zimbabwe. Some of the old abandoned city (with derelict palaces and ruins) is a great place to start exploring this fascinating stretch of coast.

Mikindani was a very important port and known as where Livingstone started his last expedition to the African interior. It was a late 19th century settlement and a major exporter of agricultural produce.

Mtwara (10km from Mikindani) is the largest town in the region. There is an interesting market and church and a good selection of Makonde carvings.

