



Tanzania

Lesson 3: Family Life in Tanzania

Family Life in Tanzania

What do you think life in Tanzania would be like? Do you think it would be like your life in the United States? Let's take a look at life in Tanzania. We will look at their schools, family life, and food.

School:

- students remain in one classroom/teachers rotate
- Muslim schools separate girls and boys
- Christian schools are co-ed
- students address teacher using a title and last name
- students wear uniforms to school
- “no cell phone” policy, but not enforced
- fighting is prohibited
- boys are more likely to go to school than girls
- high school is called secondary school
- few girls attend secondary school
- require secondary students to learn in English

See: <http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Send-My-Friend-to-School-Baby-s-Day-6204554/> for a video and lesson on comparing a typical school day of a girl in rural Tanzania to a child's day in school in the United States.

Family Life:

- father has authority in the family
- families eat together, but often the father is fed the best food
- both nuclear and extended family live in same house
- few family pets (dogs or cats) –not allowed in the house
- eye contact is considered rude and disrespectful
- average family has 3-4 children
- marriages are often arranged by parents
- dowry is presented by the bride's family
- elders are honored and respected

Food:

- diet is largely starches (millet, sorghum, beans, rice, and cornmeal)

- national dish – ugali (see recipe below)
- meat is not widely consumed – mostly for special occasions
- fruit eaten in Tanzania – plantains, bananas, papaya
- vegetables eaten in Tanzania – eggplant, tomatoes, beans, spinach,
- chai (tea) – most widely consumed beverage
- vitumbua (small rice cakes) served with chai in the morning
- chapatti (fried flat bread) served with tea
- eat with the right hand only...although eating utensils are now used

Ugali

2-3 cups white cornmeal (cornmeal grits, farina, or cream of wheat may be substituted)

2 cups water

Heat water in a saucepan until boiling. Slowly pour in cornmeal, stirring and mashing the lumps. Add more cornmeal until it is thicker than mashed potatoes. (It may resemble Play Dough) Cook for 3-4 minutes and continue to stir. Serve immediately with any meat or vegetable stew, or any dish with a sauce or gravy.

To eat the ugali, a small amount of dough is torn off, shaped into a ball with a dent in it, and then used to scoop up meat, vegetables, or sauce.

Language:

One of the most common languages spoken in Tanzania is Swahili (or Kiswahili – the proper way to identify the language. Swahili is an Arabic word meaning “of the coast” or “people of the coast”. There are approximately 80 languages spoken in Tanzania. (800 in all of Africa)

Swahili was not a written language until the arrival of the British colonists. This may explain why the vowels and consonants pronunciations are similar to the English language. The Swahili alphabet has 24 letters – they omit the Q and X.

English/Swahili Words

Airplane – Ndege

Cat – Paka

Dog – Mbwa

Family – Umbari

Mountain – Mlima

Tree – Jiti

Jambo – Hello

Karibu – Hello/Welcome

Asante sana – Many thanks