

# WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE IN HOSTFAMILY IN THE COAST REGION...

## **What is it like?**

- It is hard to make generalisations about the 40 million people that live in Kenya but here are a few tips that might help you get on with your host homes...
- Ask if there is anything you should know about the house before you settle in, for example, taking your shoes off before you come in.
- Let them know what kind of food you prefer and what kind you don't like early on.
- Tell them what time you will be coming home. It is also good practice to ask them for permission if you want to go out one evening. Clarify who you will be going with and what time you expect to come back.
- If your host home cooks for you. Make sure you are home in good time for the meal. *Generally people like to sit and eat together* – although there are exceptions.
- *Usually, house hold chores are left to the women of the house.* This does not mean that you leave everything to your host to do. Ask them if you can help out with clearing the table etc
- Pets are common in many families. However pets such as dogs usually stay outside and may never be allowed in the house. The way pets are treated in Kenya could be very different from the way people treat their pets in the Europe!
- Tell your hosts as much about your home area and this is usually the main reason why they hosted so tell them as much as you can, show them photos, cook them food from home etc etc!
- It may be considered quite rude to call your host parents or elders by their first names. You can refer to them as “Mzee”- for older men, “mama”- for older women or mama x or baba x.
- Do not be surprised if the family consists of many other people living together such as cousins, uncles, grandparent's etc.

### Food...

- Breakfast is common in most families and would usually be tea and bread.
- You might find you get a little tired of rice, 'ugali' and 'sukumawiki'! We eat these lots! We also eat rice so if you prefer rice let your host know.
- Kenyans especially Swahili families would take a lot of time cooking food. It's a delicacy! It should come out well!
- Many families at the Coast will eat together, from the same large bowl, sitting on the floor and without spoons or forks! This is the culture and if you are not comfortable, please let your hosts know.
- Many families will say a prayer before they start eating. Observe first before you dig into the meal!
- Like anywhere else in the world, families in the Kenya vary. However, in more and more Kenyan homes women are responsible for the kitchen tasks.

### Families...

- You might find that what a Kenyan person refers to family is totally different from family could mean to other people. A family in Kenyan settings could very easily include the extended family (grandparents, cousins etc)
- Many Kenyan families own pets. However, it may seem odd to refer to pets as 'part of the family' and are usually kept outside of the house.

### Gender in Kenya...

- Again, many women in Kenya still take on traditional household roles
- In some areas in Kenya, women are not given as many opportunities e.g. jobs, education, inheritance etc as men

### Religion...

- Kenyan population is represented by diverse religious groups as follows: Protestant 40%; Roman Catholic 36%; traditional 6%; Islam 6%; others 2%. There is a good mix of various religions at the Coastal region specifically in Mombasa; however Islamic culture is very visible.