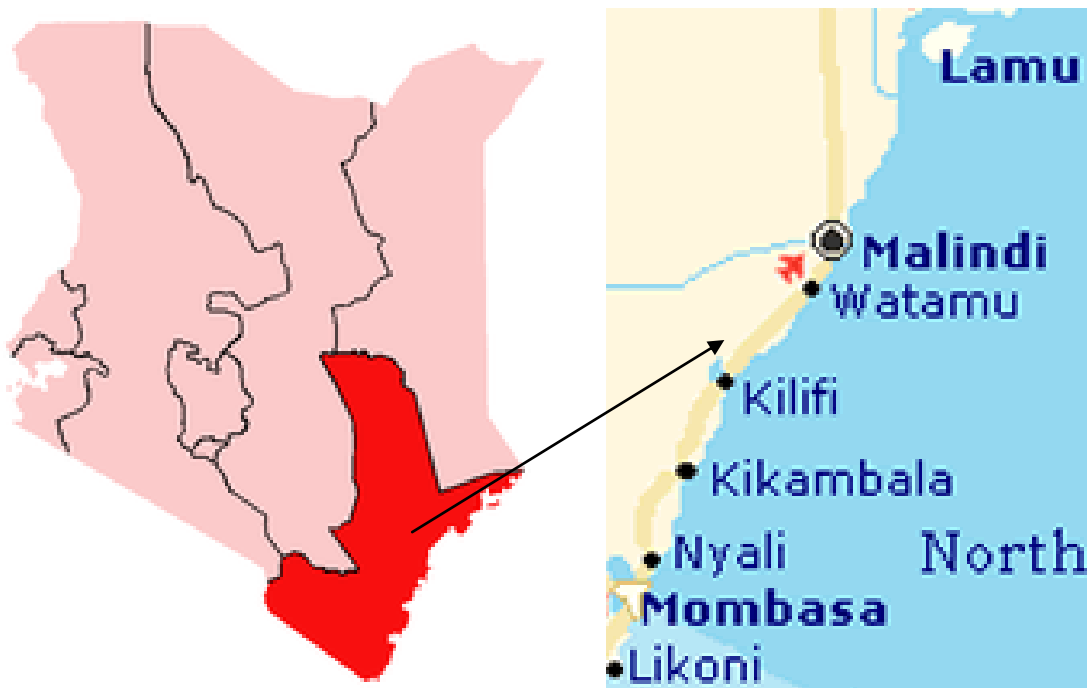


THE KENYAN COAST: MOMBASA, MALINDI & LAMU



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Coast Region

The Coast region consists of 6 administrative counties and a host to the second largest city in Kenya, Mombasa. It lies on the south eastern part of the country along the Indian Ocean. The region covers an area of 83,603 km² and has a population of more than 2.5 million inhabitants (1999 census). The region contributes more than 60% of Kenya's tourism income, mainly due to its beaches and wildlife parks.

The region is divided into administrative units called districts. There are 13 districts in the Coast namely: Kilindini, Mombasa, Lamu, Taita, Taveta, Voi, Kaloleni, Kilifi, Lamu, Tana River, Tana Delta, Kwale and Kinango.

The region is also divided up politically into constituencies. Constituencies are found within County borders. Each Constituency has a Member of Parliament who represents it in the Kenyan Parliament.

The counties are headed by a Governor and also county representatives elected by popular vote.

The Coast experiences hot and humid tropical climates ranging from a low of 20 and 32 degrees Celsius, being in close to the equator. It also experiences seasonal short rains at the beginning of the year and long rains in the middle of the year, which average 40 inches of rain annually. However as a result of global warming the rain pattern has been disrupted.

The indigenous residents of the Coast are made up of the Bantu people called the Mijikenda (nine villages) and the Swahili (twelve groups). The Mijikenda comprise of the Giriama, Rabai, Duruma and Digo while the Swahili comprise of the Jomvu, Mvita and Kilindini.

The Coast also comprises of the descendants of Arab, Persian and Indian traders some of whom intermarried with the locals. There are also smaller populations of expatriates from different parts of the world especially Europe and the Far East. The main languages spoken at the Coast are Kiswahili and English. Other widely spoken languages include the Mijikenda languages.

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The majority of residents in the Coast Region are Muslims, followed by Christians, Hindus and the followers of the traditional religion of Kaya.

MOMBASA

Geography and population

Mombasa is famous for its sandy beaches along the coast, strewn with coconut trees. A few coastlines are rocky with cliffs while others especially within lagoons are swampy and boast an abundance of Mangrove vegetation. The terrain in Mombasa is mostly low lying with no one point exceeding 200 metres above sea level. Mombasa also boasts some of the best-preserved coral reefs.

Mombasa currently is estimated at having more than 800 000 residents. The male population of Mombasa exceeds that of women by 25% due to the economic migration of men from other parts of the coast and from the hinterland.

Transport and Services

Locally and internationally the city of Mombasa can be is accessible via air travel. Mombasa has an international airport that can accommodate flights coming directly from abroad. There are also frequent flights between Mombasa and other cities and towns in Kenya like Nairobi, Kisumu and Malindi.

A railway line serves transport of people and cargo directly from Mombasa to Nairobi and beyond with stopovers along the way.

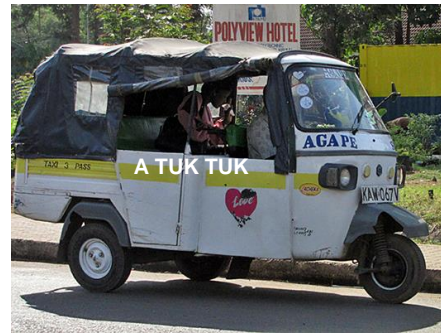
There are many private bus and minibus companies that offer direct transport to all the main towns and cities locally and internationally.

Within Mombasa the most popular means of transport are the *Matatus* or minibuses. In many places, from Old Town to Kisauni. Mombasa is filled with narrow streets and to

access houses or areas past these narrow streets, the now ubiquitous *Tuk Tuks* will come in handy. *Tuk Tuks* are motorised tricycles that can accommodate up to three

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people at a time. Bridges and ferries facilitate crossovers from the island to the mainland.



Mombasa has numerous hospitals and clinics both government and private to choose from to attend to one's health needs. There are also many banks and ATMs strewn around the city with Visa and MasterCard services.

Political Structure

Governance of Mombasa is run by the Governor and his deputy. It is also supported politically by a Senator who represents the county's interest at the Senate.

Mombasa has four constituencies namely: Changamwe, Kisauni, Mvita and Likoni.

Economy

The economy of the city of Mombasa is based on tourism, manufacturing, transport, trade and commerce. Mombasa has a well-established industrial sector with more than 400 manufacturing companies. The manufacturing industries deal largely with agro-processing, oil refining, cement and textile making.

Some of the major employers in Mombasa apart from the Government and the tourism industry are the Kenyan Ports Authority (KPA), Bamburi Portland Cement and Kenya Pipeline. KPA is responsible for processing import and export cargo from Kenya and several landlocked neighbouring countries like Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Locally KPA is sometimes referred to as the Kenya Pesa Authority, *pesa* meaning money.

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Bamburi Portland Cement mines coral rocks to produce cement while Kenya Pipeline is responsible for refining and transporting imported oil inland through a well-managed pipeline. 53% of the labour force in Mombasa is among those employed in the formal sector.

Social Issues

Most social problems in Mombasa stem out of and also feed into the issues of poverty with a third of the total population living below the poverty line. Local residents define poverty as a state of living from hand to mouth.

Mombasa has a high unemployment rate with more than half of the economically active population unemployed.

In regards to health malaria is in high prevalence due to hot humid conditions that encourage breeding of mosquitoes. The spread of HIV/AIDS is especially exacerbated by prostitution (mainly as a result of tourism) and the sharing of needles by intravenous drug users.

In Mombasa there are also big problems in regards to a reliable supply of piped water, sanitation and waste management.

Young people are generally marginalized from participating from mainstream activity since culturally young are to be seen and not heard. However in recent times with the formation of a Ministry of Youth Affairs and the establishment of more youth focused organisations, this has slowly begun to change.

The government and civil society are doing a lot of work to empower youth, though a lot still, needs to be done as the youth in Mombasa have become increasingly idle due to lack of economic opportunity and a feel of helplessness. This has led to many of them engaging in crime and drug abuse amongst other social ills.

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Places of interest

There are numerous places to visit while in Mombasa and numerous social and sports activities one can partake in. Below are some of the popular spots for locals and visitors alike.

Fort Jesus: This is one of the most famous buildings in Mombasa. The Fort Jesus was built by the Portuguese in the 16th century to protect themselves against the Shirazi Arabs during the struggles to control the East African coast. Local oral history however, says that the Fort was built by the indigenous people and was built in the shape of a turtle that are found along the coast. Currently the Fort Jesus has been converted into a Museum. Fort Jesus is situated at Old town which is well-known for its well preserved historical architecture and narrow streets.

Haller Park: Haller Park is situated a few kilometres off the island of Mombasa at the north coast. Haller park is an animal and plant sanctuary resident to giraffes, buffaloes, antelopes, crocodiles, hippos and snakes amongst others. It began 30 years ago as an environmental rehabilitation project around the mine scars left by the Bamburi Portland Cement.

Mamba Village: This is East Africa's largest crocodile farm, home to over ten thousand crocodiles. Apart from crocodile watching, visitors can ride horses and dine there. Mamba village is also located in the North Coast.

Nyali Cinemax: Nyali cinemax is a mall situated in the suburb of Nyali. It is home to the best equipped cinema in Mombasa.

MALINDI

Geography and population

Malindi borders Kilifi to the South, Tana River to the North and Northwest and the Indian Ocean to the East. Its total area of 7605 square Kilometres and has a population of 305,143. The tow of Malindi is sometimes referred to as *small Italy* because of the large number of Italians settled there.

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Transport and services

Malindi is a two hour drive from Mombasa. It can be reached by sea, road and air (there is a small airstrip that can accommodate local flights). *Matatus* in Malindi do not run within the town centre, to move around the town one needs to use tuk tuks.

Economy

Malindi relies a lot on the tourism industry for its income. A lot of the industries there are support industries for the tourism industry. There are also few companies processing cottonseeds, cotton and copra and furniture making. On the way to Lamu one can see salt being harvested from solar evaporation pans by table salt making industries.

Farming is mostly subsistence farming though there are agricultural activities include fishing, planting and harvesting of coconut tree products, tropical fruit trees and cassava, that supply other parts of the region.

Social Issues

The poverty level in Malindi is relatively higher than the national poverty level of 56%. The Malindi poverty assessment report 2000, shows that 66% of the population lives in absolute poverty i.e. they are unable to meet their basic food and non food requirements. Out of the 210 constituencies countrywide Magarini and Malindi are ranked 189 and 139 respectively by poverty estimates.

Places of interest

Malindi is a famous tourist destination. It is a home for palm fringed silvery white sand beaches, Malindi and Watamu national parks, Gede ruins, Vasco Da Gama's pillar, the Portuguese chapel and pillar tombs, Kipepeo butterfly farm, snake and crocodile farms, Mida creek and the canyons of Hell's Kitchen.

LAMU

Geography and population

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Lamu County is situated at the north of the Coast Region. The main town there is Lamu town which is found on Lamu Island. The County covers a strip of north-eastern coastal mainland and the Lamu Archipelago (a series of islands). Lamu County has a population of 72,686 (1999 census) and its land area is 6,167 km².

Transport and services

Lamu is a seven hour drive from Mombasa by bus. Lamu Island can only be reached by sea and if one is travelling by road or air, they need to transfer to the numerous boats available at a small place called Mokowe on the mainland.

To travel within the island the locals do so by walking. This makes working there quite tiresome if you have field work to do. Should one get tired of walking a donkey can always be hired from Ksh 50 depending on the distance travelled. In the town centre of Lamu are very narrow and one always has to look out and move out of the way for donkeys and hand carts. There are estimated to be 2000 to 3000 donkeys on the Island.

Political Structure

Lamu County is divided into seven divisions namely: Amu, Faza, Hindi, Kiunga, Kizingitini, Mpeketoni and Witu. The County has two constituencies namely, Lamu West and Lamu East.

Economy

Lamu's main income earner is tourism. Lamu also has extensive Mangrove forests and Mahogany wood that locals use for building materials and furniture making and exporting. In recent times China, together with the Government of Kenya, are developing plans to transform Lamu into the second largest port in East Africa, as part of their *String of Pearls* strategy, but it is not expected to help the local communities much.

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The fact that Lamu is to a larger extent isolated from other parts of the country, its economy is not very vibrant. Food prices are generally higher than in other parts of the Coast Region since it relies on other areas of the country to supply it with food.

Social Issues

Lamu has a lot of poverty and recently property prices have sky rocketed forcing locals to sell their land cheaply to mostly foreigners to develop for tourism, as they are unable to maintain their houses. Drug abuse has since increased and contributed to the spread of HIV. The standard of education is very low and Lamu rates one of the lowest results in the nation wide high school results.

Places of interest

These include the Lamu fort which has been turned into a Museum. The Mnarai mosque, the Riyadhha Mosque which is the centre of the annual *Maulid* celebrations in Lamu and the Donkey Sanctuary are also interesting places to visit apart from the beaches and other islands next to Lamu. It is also nice to try out sailing on the traditional dhows and going fishing.