

## **What changes did I observe in Tanzania between residence there from 1967- 1969 and my short visit in 2013?**

**Why write these notes:** We lived in Tanzania from early 1967 to mid 1969 and I want to record the changes I noticed. (I also got George and Paul Psychas to review my draft and add their impressions). We were in Tanzania for only three weeks this time but saw enough to make some comparisons.

**Arrival impressions and travel:** At Kilimanjaro International Airport (and later on arriving in Zanzibar from Kilimanjaro and in Dar from Zanzibar) formalities were easy and fast (faster than passing through the understaffed US entry to Boston Airport three weeks later!). There were no crowds at the airport waiting to pounce on arriving tourists. There was minimal hassle during transfers and taxi fares were posted and, on our first arrival at Kilimanjaro, our Shah Tours vehicle was waiting. It was a more civilized arrival than I had expected. George commented that the “Hotels and lodges were disgustingly first class. The young staff was so efficient I was afraid to put down my fork for fear someone would take it away.” In fact we joked that there must be a waiter training school that tells trainees they must not allow an empty plate or used fork on a table for more than five seconds!

Cities have grown a lot. There are many new hotels; people are better dressed than I remember. There were many more new cars with more variety. Not a torn shirt in sight! Most major towns are linked by paved roads. Last time we drove from Dar to Arusha it was on dirt roads and we had to be pulled from the mud by a road grader.

I was disappointed by the Dar es Salaam waterfront. It used to be nicely landscaped with paths for a pleasant evening stroll. But now it is overgrown, fenced off with barbed wire and bounded by little shanty shops. Let’s hope they get that fixed soon and restore the waterfront to the beautiful area it used to be.

**Phones:** In the cities and game parks many people have cell phones and used them a lot. When I worked in Dar, making phone calls to the offices around the country was difficult; I spent a lot of time shouting into phones as the connections were so poor. We never once called home to Britain and George remembers having to book phone calls to the USA. This time, I was able to call home and read emails. The better hotels we stayed at had internet connections. So while this may not mean much to a Masai villager, that much of the country has internet access is significant. I should add though that I made an arrangement with Verizon to get phone and internet access at what I thought would be a reasonable price. But my phone bill for the month was still several times more than normal.

**Tourism, Game Parks and Masai:** When we were in Tanzania in the sixties you could just drive into a game park with your own car. I don’t remember paying fees. Now entrance is tightly controlled. Drivers must pay substantial fees and vehicles must be out of the park or in a lodge or camp site by nightfall. We saw few if any private vehicles in the game parks. I saw more elephants but fewer lions than on my last visit. Paul Psychas said; “When I think about TZ in the late 1950s/early 1960s as compared to the present time, one statistic that really gets my attention is the increase in the size of the great Serengeti/Ngorongoro herds from around 500,000 at independence to 1.3m+ animals now. Amazing! They were protected enough to bounce back from Rinderpest and overhunting. Given the pressures of population growth, farming, international markets for wildlife products, etc, the Tanzanians deserves the world's gratitude and respect for protecting that amazing ecosystem. Nyerere had a conservation ethic, and others figured out there was money to be made in ecotourism. Good for them.”

Game parks seemed better organized but that may be because on this trip we were staying in the lodges. Last time we were camping with our own tent. In the past I saw Masai in the Serengeti and Kilimanjaro areas whereas this time I also saw them in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. They often work as guards and they also sell tourist items on the street. “George added: The Masai were everywhere. I did notice that many didn't understand Kiswahili and some were weak in English. This means they are still Masai; but now urban hustlers. This is a change from the old Masai.”

In the 60's, Tanzanian tourism was dominated by Kenyan safari operators. Tanzania now controls the safaris in Tanzania. It seems an efficient operation although I would have preferred more roads to be paved in and between the game parks. Construction of a new road down into and out of Ngorongoro delayed us. The Olduvai site used to be open for visitors to drive down into the main excavation areas. Now visitors are directed to an observation / picnic spot and a not very good museum. However, guides at the observation point did make presentations about what was found in Olduvai and nearby. If you want to go down to the excavation area you have to walk and, since it is a long hot walk, few do. This restriction is protective of the resource, but I think the museum could be a lot better and in the old days going down to the site where Zinjanthropus was actually excavated was more fun. The exhibition on early man at the National Museum in Dar was really good and could usefully be copied at Olduvai.

**Money:** In the sixties the Tanzanian shilling was about seven to the dollar. It was also exchanged on the black market, but not used in day to day commerce. In Feb 2013, the exchange rate was 1500 - 1600 to the dollar and people were ready to accept it as a tip, taxi fare or in normal purchases. The only time I was not able to use dollars was in a bank near the end of the day where they did not want to give me dollars in exchange for a \$100 bill. I was told (by Shah Tours) not to bring dollars printed earlier than 2008 as they are not generally accepted in Tanzania. I had brought sufficient cash for my hotel bills. But found I could pay at major hotels with a credit card and get cash with the same ATM card I use here in the US. I had seen cautions on this subject but we did not have a problem.

**Zanzibar, tensions and concerns:** In the 60's I was unable to visit Zanzibar due to the recent bloody revolution. The only internal airline was East African Airways. Now there are several low cost privately owned airlines and frequent flights to Zanzibar and a ferry to and from Dar es Salaam. Tourism is big and many fine hotels have been constructed in the cities and on the beaches to cater to the demand. I don't remember meeting tourists in the 60's, except in the game parks. George commented that away from the beaches the buildings and schools looked poor. The wealth generated by the tourists did not seem to be doing much to raise the local standard of living.

Reading English language newspapers and talking to local people while in Zanzibar we learned of the tensions between Muslims and Christians. There is a risk of ethnic conflict, although on Zanzibar the Christian minority is so small (3%) that it is not likely to challenge the Muslims. We heard complaints from local Muslims that Christians were coming into Zanzibar from the mainland to work in hotels etc. and complaints from Christians that the local politicians did not represent their concerns. One big item of news was the results of national examinations in which an unprecedentedly large proportion of young people failed. The government was accused of not providing sufficient support for schools and teachers. I was told that most electric power in Zanzibar is by undersea cables from the mainland. This might be significant if Zanzibaris ever move towards a break with the mainland.

I did not hear complaints about the former colonialists (as I often did in the 60's), I was also impressed when asked by Tanzanians where I was from and after answering, "The USA", I got a big smile and "Oh, Obamaland". Impressive that they knew the US president and were pleased to meet Americans for that reason!

**Safety and the local people:** There was quite a bit of information provided by the US Embassy and others about the risk of muggings, pick pockets, ATM card forced use etc. We had no problems. We stayed close to our hotel at night in Dar; but we did not feel uncomfortable anywhere at any time in Zanzibar. We were approached by people wanting to sell us things or just show us around more than in the past. But then again perhaps we looked more like tourists than we did when we lived here. Paul Theroux (in the 2003 book, Dark Star Safari) mentioned people saying to him "We We mzungu", a rude form of address; but we were more likely to hear; jambo bwana (hello sir) or even Shikamoo, a very polite form usually used by young people to respected elders. Perhaps our age and George's friendly attitude and ability with Swahili helped but Paul Theroux was also fluent in Swahili. So I think it was that in Tanzania we looked like reasonably prosperous tourists whereas Paul Theroux by his own account, at

times, looked like a poor backpacker. George also commented that he was “a bit surprised that the young people didn't seem to know much about their history since 1964; but said, “Of course I bet our students don't know much about JFK etc.” George also added: “People were friendly and actually didn't pay much attention to expatriates walking the streets. Citizens were better dressed and look more affluent than I expected. Shops were full of things to buy. Of course last time I lived there, it was the worst economic time ever.”

**Expatriates:** We met a number of young expatriates from Europe or America working in Tanzania or visiting from Kenya. George observed that they had less support from their parent organizations than we did when we worked in Tanzania. For example, one young woman we met in Zanzibar at the Zenji hotel was visiting from Dar es Salaam where she worked as a primary school teacher and it sounded as if she lived a very constrained life and had very little information and ability to move around the city. She had not heard of the British Council Library (which does still exist) and which was our main source of reading material when we were in Dar. Some Kenyan expatriates were in Tanzania to be away during the Kenyan Presidential Elections which resulted in violence last time around; but not this time, so far!

I did not see “Europeans” (any white folks) working at high levels for the Government, a big change from our years in Tanzania. However, some “Asians” (past immigrants from India and Pakistan) are still there working in commercial enterprises despite the problems they had in other East and Central African countries. (E.g. in Uganda under Idi Amin). They seem more integrated with the black population than in the past. Harshit Shah for example had black friends he introduced us to at the Moshi Club and at a bar he likes to go to some evenings.

**Political and economic changes:** When we were in Tanzania in the 60's, Julius Nyerere (Mwalimu) was President and was adored by his countrymen and was widely respected internationally. He was leading his country towards African Socialism and had made a strong stance against corruption. Ultimately his socialist policies failed and Tanzania went through a very bad period economically. It seems this is now a thing of the past and capitalism is thriving; but we did not get asked for bribes or see other petty corruption in our travels; but we did hear people suggest there is corruption at the high levels of Government. (Whereas,... in the US?) What I saw was a country doing quite well; lots of construction, including new roads and some fine buildings.

One surprise was meeting white South Africans. Contact with South Africa was unthinkable in the 60's. But as the dominant economy in sub Saharan Africa it makes sense, now that apartheid has gone and South Africa is an independent multi racial state, for South Africans to bring their capital and expertise to other sub Saharan countries. One South African couple we met in Moshi was working with breweries and barley production near Kilimanjaro. Near the end of our trip we British drillers from the oil and gas rigs working off the southern coast of Tanzania and heard of the gas finds they have made. This seemed like a hopeful development for Tanzania.

**Summary:** Before going, I worried that I would find Tanzania a much worse place than when we were there in the 60's. But for the most part it has moved forward. Not as much as it might have done and some local people feel that they have not fully benefitted from independence and there is impatience. But Tanzanians seem cheerful and friendly and they should feel good about the progress made since independence and particularly rapid progress in recent years. It would have been fun to visit the water systems I worked on to compare them then versus now. But that safari will have to wait for another time and funding. (If anyone from the Tanzanian Government reads this and would like to pay me to study how the water system has changed 1969 to 2013; please let me know!)

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With contributions from George and Paul Psychas