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East Africa: Featuring Tanzania and Kenya

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Abstract
Suggested readings for the Penn Alumni travel trip to East Africa. See the Library Guide for this bibliography here.

Keywords
east, africa, tanzania, kenya, travel, alumni, penn, readings, recommended, nature, wildlife

Disciplines
African Languages and Societies

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Suggested Readings

Natural history in the East African nature parks


"Babar for adults" (New York Times) follows a family of elephants through their daily lives and their seasonal activities. This 2000 reprint of the 1988 edition includes an update on the family's recent life.


A longtime Serengeti naturalist shares stories, provides a historical review, and cautions about the future of the park in this semi-scholarly work.


Shetler writes a scholarly oral history of the region's "mythical time" and a more traditional history of the park's development. "She takes the reader walking with elders across the landscape as they recover their memories" (African Studies Review).
History, recent and long past, of Africa


"A magnificent contribution not just to contemporary African studies but also to the art of great historical writing. Anyone with an interest in either ought to read this book" (Historical Journal). A perennial required reading for Penn's African history courses.

Two other recent historical surveys might also appeal:


"A highly enjoyable little account of the key ideas within, and dynamics of, Africa's past."


Fiction and travel-writing

The In-Between World of Vikram Lall by M.G. Vassanji. 384 pages. Vintage, 2005. ISBN 97814000076567 (paperback). (Also Kindle, Nook)

There are many great East African fiction writers with Ngugi wa Thion’o being the most prominent, but Penn alumnus M. G. Vassanji brings a special perspective to Tanzanian life as an ethnic South Asian born in Kenya, raised in Tanzania, and now teaching in Canada.


An easier read (it's for Grade 7 up) and perhaps more easily obtained than the engaging The Worlds of a Maasai Warrior: An Autobiography by Tepilit Ole Saitoti. (144 pages. University of California Press, 1988. ISBN 9780520063259)

On safari


A compact volume identifying common bird, mammal, snake, lizard, insect, tree, and flower species found in the parks of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Princeton University Press publishes a wide range of good East African field guides, on mammals, amphibians, snakes, and birds, as well as selected parks and preserves.


A small brick, but if you want to watch birds in East Africa, this is a must-have. Birders hoping to range farther afield in East Africa might consider this highly-praised alternative: Birds of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi by Terry Stevenson and John Fanshawe. (Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press, 2002. 602 pages. ISBN 9780691126654 paperback)


An old standard, describing 86 species with an emphasis on observable behaviors.