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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

### Comments

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Alumni Travel Bibliography  
**East Africa: Featuring Tanzania and Kenya**

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**Suggested Readings**

*Natural history in the East African nature parks*

*Elephant Memories: Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family* by Cynthia J Moss. University of Chicago Press, 2000. 364 pages. ISBN 9780226542379 (paperback)

"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.

*Serengeti Story: Life and Science in the World's Greatest Wildlife Region* by Anthony R.E. Sinclair. Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780199645527 (hardcover). (Also Kindle, Nook)

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

*Imagining Serengeti: a History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present.* Jan Bender Shetler. Ohio University Press, 2007. 392 pages. ISBN 9780821417508 (paperback). (Also Kindle, Nook)

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*

*Africans: The History of a Continent* by John Iliffe. 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press, 2007. 365 pages. ISBN 9780521682978 (paperback). (Also Kindle)

"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:

*African History: a Very Short Introduction* by John Parker and Richard Rathbone. Oxford University Press, 2007. 165 pages. ISBN 9780192802484. (Also Kindle, Nook, audiobook)

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

*A History of Modern Africa: 1800 to the Present* by Richard J. Reid. 2nd edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 408 pages. ISBN 9780470658987 (paperback) (Also Kindle, Nook)

*Fiction and travel-writing*

*The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* by M.G. Vassanji. 384 pages. Vintage, 2005. ISBN 9781400076567 (paperback). (Also Kindle, Nook)

There are many great East African fiction writers with Ngugi wa Thiong'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.

*The Tree Where Man Was Born* by Peter Matthiessen. (Penguin Classics revised edition, 2010. 304 pages. ISBN 9780143106241 (paperback). (Also audiobook)

Originally published in 1972, so very dated in many ways, but still a great East African travel journal. The Penn Libraries' copy is the old 1972 Dutton edition bound with Eliot Porter's photo essay, "The African experience."

*Facing the Lion : Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna* by Joseph Lemasolai Lekuton. National Geographic Children's Books, 2005. 128 pages. ISBN 9780792272977 (paperback). (Also Kindle, Nook, audiobook)

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*

*Wildlife of East Africa* by Martin B Withers and David Hosking. (Princeton Pocket Guides) Princeton University Press, 2002. 256 pages. ISBN 9780691007373 (paperback)

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.

*Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* by Dale A Zimmerman et al. (Princeton Field Guides) Princeton University Press, 1999. 576 pages. ISBN 9780691010229 (paperback)

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)

*The Safari Companion: A Guide to Watching African Mammals* by Richard D Estes. Revised and expanded edition. Chelsea Green Publishing, 1999. 459 pages. ISBN 9781890132446 (paperback). (Also Kindle, Nook)

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