

Tanzanian Southern Highlands: wonderfully exquisite location

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“Visit Africa’s largest and oldest game reserve”

By H.E. Ms. Irene Florence Mkwawa Kasyanju, Ambassador of Tanzania to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Tanzania has a vast beautiful landscape that can be used for various economic both agriculture as well as tourism.

Tanzania is abundantly blessed with natural resources like minerals such as gold, diamonds, tanzanite and natural gas, to mention but a few, also and much to our delight and appreciation, water ways such as rivers, lakes and a boarder with the Indian Ocean. It has wealth in wildlife, forestry and agriculture, which have a wonderful potential for growth and development.

Tanzania is known as the land of the Kilimanjaro- Africa’s rooftop mountain peak, the land of the Serengeti- home to the greatest wildlife display of the great migration of

wildebeest and zebra and of course, the land of Zanzibar. Mind you, Mount Kilimajaro is the highest peak on the African continent that Tanzania prides herself with.

Despite these popular and flag bearing locations defining Tanzania’s tourism on the international arena, there are other less known but equally amazing tourist attractions in the Southern Highlands.

The Southern Highlands refer to the region surrounding the provinces of Iringa, Njombe, Mpanda, Mbeya, Rukwa and Ruvuma. It is bordered internally by Kigoma, Tabora, Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Lindi and Mtwara and externally by the countries of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.





Photography Naldo Peverelli for diplomatmagazine.nl

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Southern Tanzania is vast and has two large parks and smaller parks that together make up a beautiful ecosystem that makes for a wonderful tourist destination.

The large parks; *Selous Game Reserve* and *Ruaha National Park* attract thousands of visitors each year.

The Selous Game Reserve is Africa's largest and oldest game reserve and one of favourite game viewing areas in Africa. The reserve covers over 50,000 square kilometres and is relatively undisturbed by human impact making it absolutely a picturesque wildlife destination. Due to having both dry and wetlands, it is inhabited by both hippos, crocodiles, as well as lions, elephants, giraffes and leopards. Whether you opt to discover the land by walking, using a boat or by flying, you will not be disappointed by the discovery of nature at its best.

The Ruaha National Park is another fantastic tourism option. Located in the west of Iringa region, the Ruaha National Park, with its size of 20,226 square kilometres, is the largest national park in Tanzania and East Africa. This vastness means that there is plenty to see with large predators, antelopes and elephants all as plentiful options. It has two smaller parks as well, the *Udzungwa Mountains* and *Mikumi National Park*, but these receive a fraction of the visitors that their counterparts in the North do and offer untouched wilderness and an exciting safari experience.

As if that was not enough, the Southern Highlands also host other smaller yet equally as beautiful parks.

What the Mikumi National Park and Udzungwa Mountains lack in size, they make up with in what they have to offer. The Mikumi National park is a serene environment which makes for an ideal private escape option away from the hustle and bustle of city life. While the Udzungwa Mountains are a perfect place for those who like to hike and discover the land at a personal level.

The Southern Highlands are also home to the *Mount Rungwe Nature Forest Reserve*, which is a tropical forest with exceptional species composition, structure and biodiversity.

Mount Rungwe Nature Forest Reserve is located in the Rungwe district, Mbeya region, Southwest Tanzania which is approximately 80kms from the Songwe International Airport. The airport is yet to receive international flights so passengers have to fly in from Dar es Salaam which offers frequent flights to and from as well as being easily accessible by road.

The area holds Mount Rungwe, which offers exceptional scenery of *Rungwe Peak* where *Poroto Ridge, Mbeya Peak, Loleza Peak* and areas stretching down into Malawi, can all be viewed.

This makes for a wonderfully exquisite location for those who like to hike and explore the land.

The *Rift Valley Meeting point, God's Bridge, Kitulo National Park* and *Kapologwe waterfalls* are equally of much interest.

All these options display the fact that Tanzania and particularly in the Southern Highlands, is truly blessed with a host of wonderful destinations to host a wide array of tourists seeking anything from a safari adventure to a hike in the forest to a quiet ultimate getaway.



Whatever you are looking for, I welcome you to Tanzania for an unforgettable experience.

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