

Summary: Kenya Today

Kenya

Kenya is on Africa's east coast. Most Kenyans live in the highlands of the southwest, where there is plenty of rain and rich soil. Kenya's coast has tropical beaches and rain forests. The remaining three-quarters of the country is a plain that is too dry for farming. Kenyans there are herders.

About 3,000 years ago, people came to Kenya from other parts of Africa. About 1,200 years ago, Arabs set up trading posts along Kenya's coast. Portuguese sailors arrived in the early 1500s. In the late 1800s, Kenya became a British colony. It gained independence in 1963.

In 1963 Jomo Kenyatta became Kenya's first prime minister. When Kenyatta died in 1978, Daniel arap Moi became prime minister. Moi's party was the only political party. By the early 1900s, many Kenyans became dissatisfied. One problem was that Moi gave special favors to people of his ethnic group. In 1991, after violent protests, Moi agreed to a multiparty system. But he remained in power.

The People of Kenya

Between 30 and 40 ethnic groups live in Kenya. Most have their own language. Many people also know Swahili. Swahili and English are Kenya's official languages.

Education is very important in Kenya. Most parts of Kenya have free, government-run elementary schools. About 80 percent of Kenyans work in agriculture, but tourism brings the most money to the country. More than 500,000 people visit Kenya each year. They go to national parks to see Kenya's native animals. Kenya protects these animals as an important natural resource.

Nairobi is Kenya's capital. With two million people, it is the biggest city in Eastern Africa. Every year, many Kenyans leave their rural villages to move to Nairobi. Not all of them find life in the city as easy as they had hoped. Often they cannot find work. Nairobi also has water shortages and power outages.

Before You Read

Find and underline the vocabulary word.

multiparty system *noun*, a system in which there are more than two political parties

After You Read

REVIEW Why would Prime Minister Moi agree to a multiparty system?

Highlight the sentence that answers the question.

REVIEW What are the main problems Kenyans face after they move to Nairobi? Underline the sentences that describe challenges people face upon moving to Nairobi.