



Lotus Blossoms World Bazaar 2016

Makobi

Teacher's Resource Guide

Lotus Education and Arts Foundation

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Cover Photo by Chelsea Sanders, Blueline Media Productions



National Flag of Kenya

Kenyan Arts & Culture

Kenya's modern culture was born out of a myriad of sources and influences, both modern and traditional. Despite the many and varied influences that have shaped Kenyan society, the culture in Kenya has become truly and purely Kenyan. If there is any one thing about Kenya that gives any indication of this unique character today, it is the melding of traditional societies and culture with modern norms and values.



Makobi & Mayabilo Performing

Photo by Chelsea Sanders, Blueline Media Productions

Music

Traditionally, Kenyan music originates from several sources. Nearly every tribe has its own musical culture. The use of drums became widespread and central to elaborate traditional dances. The word Ngoma (drum) is still used to describe most forms of traditional music and dance.

**Follow this link to Taifa Mziki
(co-founded by Makobi)
Performing a 'Kikuyu Folk Song'**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoMpCvfJm8E>

The 1960's saw the arrival of the electric guitar and the birth of modern Kenyan popular music. There were two definite influences: From the South, South African Jazz and Zimbabwean 'highlife' guitar work, and from the West, the rumba rhythm of Congolese pop.

The 90's and the 21st Century have seen a great deal more Western influence, and the adoption of reggae, rap, rhythm and blues and swing into Kenyan music. Additionally, a new wave of jazz, musical theater and operas emerged. Makobi sang the role of the elder during the first Kenyan Opera, "Ondieki the Fisherman."

For more information regarding Kenyan Music, please reference Appendix A.

Cuisine

Kenya's cuisine reflects the diversity of its varied cultural influences. However, eating out is not a regular occurrence. Only the Coast has developed a distinctive regional culinary style, thanks to its long association with Indian Ocean trade.



Photo by Chicamod

Ugali - staple of Kenyan cuisine

Traditional food tends to be simple and starchy with an emphasis on practical eating. Ugali, a maize meal cake, is the main staple, along with potatoes or rice. Chicken, beef, goat or vegetable stew, spinach, beans or fish usually accompanies ugali. A nyama choma (mutton, goat or beef, roasted over glowing charcoal) feast is a typical Kenyan experience.

Coast cuisine offers a nice variety. Seafood (sea-perch, parrot-fish, red snapper, king fish, giant crayfish, jumbo prawns, crabs, oysters and sailfish) is cooked with lime, coconut, peppers, and a myriad of exotic spices. Fresh fruit - in particular mangoes, pineapples, pawpaws and citrus - grow well in the coastal climate.

Kenyan cuisine has a strong Indian influence, dating back to the 19th Century when Indian labor was used to construct the Mombasa-Kisumu railway and most international tastes are catered for. Chapati, a style of flatbread, and Samosas, a deep fried meat or vegetable pastry, are examples of Indian influenced cuisine that was adopted by Kenyans.

Geography

FAST FACTS

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Kenya

FORM OF GOVERNMENT: Republic

CAPITAL: Nairobi

POPULATION: 45,010,056

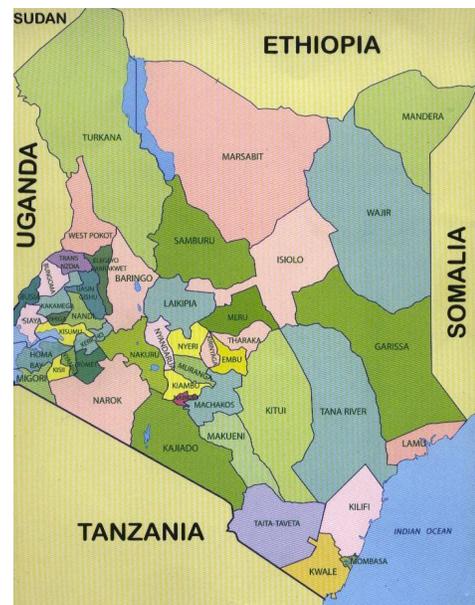
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: Swahili, English

MONEY: Kenyan shilling

AREA: 224,081 square miles

MAJOR MOUNTAIN RANGES: Aberdare Range, Mau Escarpment

MAJOR RIVERS: Athi/Galana, Tana



Map of Kenya's 47 Counties

Kenya is located in East Africa. Its terrain rises from a low coastal plain on the Indian Ocean to mountains and plateaus at its center. Most Kenyans live in the highlands, where Nairobi, the capital, sits at an altitude of 5,500 feet.

West of Nairobi the land descends to the Great Rift Valley. Within this valley in the deserts of northern Kenya are the jade-green waters of famous Lake Turkana.

Kenya shares borders with five other countries. The perimeter of Kenya's international land borders includes Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Kenya's eastern and northern neighbors are Somalia and Ethiopia. To the northwest lies the Sudan. Many inhabitants of the Sudan's border region are in fact ethnically related to Kenya's peoples. To the west lies Uganda and to the south, Tanzania, both nations that share with Kenya a history of British colonial rule.

For more information regarding Kenyan Geography, please reference Appendix B.

Meet the Artists:

Both from Kenya, Makobi and Mayabilo met at Kenyatta University Students Choir where they were soloists. They have performed in a number of fundraising events for charity in Bloomington amongst them, "The Taste of East Africa" and "Giving Back to Africa". The two have also appeared in "Uniquely East African: Singing, drumming, and Xylophone music from Uganda and Kenya" performance and in "Edible Lotus." On March 4th, they are scheduled to perform during the opening of a historic art exhibition at IU Art Museum "Arts of Kenya: Beauty in Traditional Forms." They are both studying voice performance at the Jacobs School of Music with Professor Marietta Simpson.



Photo by Chelsea Sanders, Blueline Media Productions

Makobi

Makobi has performed with the Kenyan Boys Choir for many years, and sang with them at President Obama's first inauguration. He recorded as a soloist in three of the choir's albums one with Universal Music Group, singing one of the most popular Swahili love songs Malaika and an arrangement of Kyra Sillo. He is the co-founder and former director of Taifa Mziki (which translates as Music Nation), an all male vocal ensemble whose repertoire includes arrangements of traditional Kenyan music. Makobi has toured with the two groups to different parts of the world including, the United Kingdom, France, China and the US to great acclaim. Makobi performs in a variety of genres. His recent credits include Second Priest in "The Magic Flute" with IU Opera and Gilbert in "Hairspray" with Cardinal Stage Company.

Mayabilo

Kisilili Wa Mayabilo is a tenor who has performed with many singing groups in Kenya. This included solo performances with Taifa Mziki. As a member of Taifa Mziki, the group toured the USA and performed in various locations at universities and concert halls. He was also lead vocalist in the Kenyatta University Students Choir. Currently, Kisilili is a student of voice at IU Jacobs School of Music.

Instruments

Music in Kenya is constantly undergoing modifications through rearrangements of musical forms. This fusion with other genres and the use of various instruments and influences from other parts of Kenya creates a unique sound to Kenyan music. Two instruments that contribute to this unique sound are the Bul and Kigamba.

Bul (bo-ol)

The bul drums are from the Luo community. They are made from cowhide and are originally played in a set called Ohangla. They are typically played in a set of four to eight bul drums and a long cylindrical drum also known as Ohangla or Kalapapla. It is made from monitor lizard skin, which is usually the lead drum played with a number of bul drums. The bul drums are now used in playing various types of music in Kenya.

Kigamba (ki-gam-ba)

Kigamba (plural: Ciigamba) originates from the Agikuyu community and is used to accompany songs and dances. It is made from cast iron, dry seeds or iron balls and an elastic band that was traditionally a skin strap. The Kigamba assists in keeping the beat of the song, playing the rhythm of the song. Most players use one to six Ciigamba depending on the performance and the size of the Ciigamba.

Teaching Questions and Activities

1) Color and discuss the significance behind the Kenyan Flag (Attached). The Kenyan flag became official when Kenya gained independence from Britain on the 12th of December 1963. It was based on the flag of the Kenya African National Union. Black is for the people, red for humanity and the struggle for freedom, green for the fertile land, and white for unity and peace. The shield and spears are traditional weapons of the Masai people. (Blank map is included at end of packet)

2) Learn to speak Swahili. Follow the link to an interactive display to learn short phrases and words in Swahili, the national language of Kenya.

<http://www.timeforkids.com/destination/kenya/native-lingo>

3) A day in the life of a Kenyan child. Follow along as a young boy provides a detailed account of his day as he prepares and goes to school.

<http://www.timeforkids.com/destination/kenya/day-in-life>

4) Explore the geography and sights across Kenya's diverse land through this link. It provides a snapshot of various locations across Kenya including the metropolis of Nairobi and wildlife in the Tsavo National Park

<http://www.timeforkids.com/destination/kenya/sightseeing>

Helpful Links

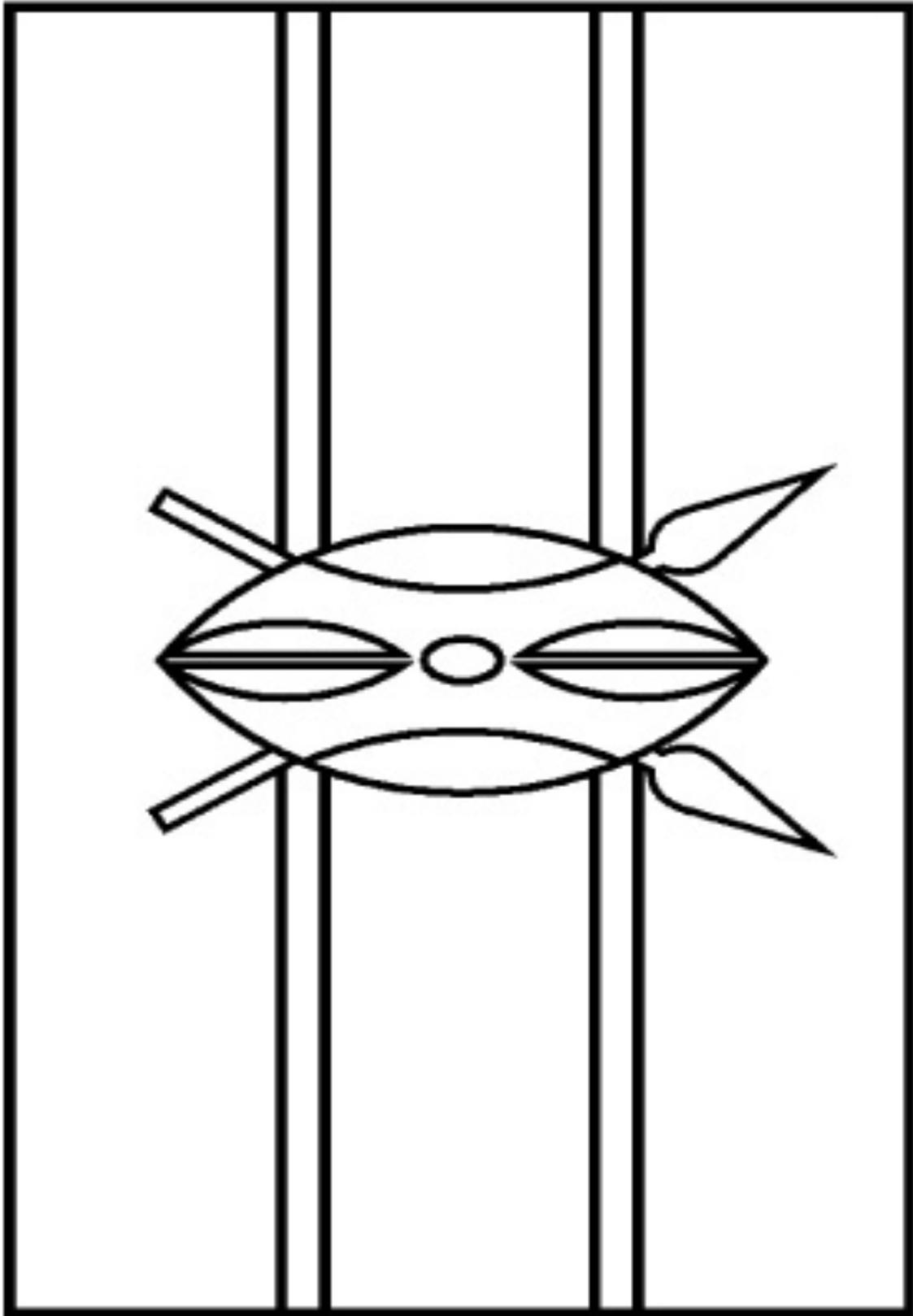
1) Provides additional resources, worksheets and information you may find useful for the classroom: <http://www.3dgeography.co.uk/#!/kenya-language/c1e0k>

2) A follow-up resource aid for the geography of the country:

<http://easyscienceforkids.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Kenya-Worksheet-Free-Printable-Geography-Word-Finder-Activity-Sheet-for-Kids.pdf>

3) A look into the town of Nyeri as they highlight features of the city and the people that make up the community:

<http://kidworldcitizen.org/2014/04/10/kids-share-corner-world-learn-kenya/>



National flag of Kenya

Appendix A: Additional Musical Information

Maa song has always played a large role in ceremonial life, and continues to. One of the best-known Maasai ceremonial songs is the Engilakinoto, sung after a victorious lion hunt. Structured around a deep rhythmic chant it is accompanied by a spectacular dance in which warriors display their strength and prowess by leaping directly and vertically into the air.

A variety of drums were used throughout the country. The Luhya of Western Kenya developed a very distinctive dance style called Sikuti after the local name for a drum. This extremely energetic dance is usually performed by paired male and female dancers, and accompanied by several drums, bells, long horns and whistles.

Other instruments are also frequently played, including reed flutes and basic stringed instruments. One of the finer of these was the Nyatiti, similar to the medieval lyre. The Nyatiti is commonly played throughout Kenya's West. It has a gentle, relaxing sound, and is usually played solo with a single singer, and sometimes accompanied by light percussion or bells.

Throughout the 1970's and 80's Nairobi became a popular crossroads for African musicians, and many Zairean rumba bands either made Kenya their home or a frequent stopover concert venue. Their influence on Kenyan music was considerable, and much of popular Kenyan music derives its central rhythms and guitar lines from Congolese pop. Even today Lingala and Congolese music is extremely popular throughout Kenya. There was some influence from the coast, using more Swahili and Asian based styles, resulting in a short lived wave of Kenyan pop, spearheaded by Them Mushrooms from Mombasa.

Appendix B: Kenya's Geographic Layout

The country was formerly divided into seven major geographic regions. Primarily divided by geographic configurations, the regions were as follows; the Coastal Region, Southern Coastal Hinterland, Eastern Plateau Region, Highlands, Northern Plain-lands, Rift Valley Region and the Western Plateau Region. Presently, the Kenya Constitution defines the country into forty-seven smaller counties that are headed by governors. This division of national and local government ensures reasonable access to its services in all parts of the country. The two levels, national and local, conduct their affairs mutually on the basis of consultation and cooperation between officials.

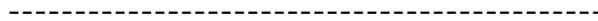


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Photo Credit – Blueline Media Productions



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