

My African Dream



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Guest contributor

EXCLUSIVE

Africa, living in a part of the beautiful, unexplored and surprise-filled continent may be among the last choices of immigration destination for Iranians, or it may not have a place in their migration list at all.

I am not an exception; even when I went on a two-week tourist trip to Kenya, a beautiful country in East Africa, and visited the cities of Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru Wildlife Park in 2005, I still had no idea of immigrating to this continent.

But everything changed when I went to Africa again as a tourist, this time to Tanzania, and I was impressed by the beauty of nature and the peaceful spirit of the people of East Africa. Tanzania became the destination of my migration and at the same time, in 2011, "my African dream" was formed.

Why the African dream?

The idea was formed in my mind mostly in a kind of confrontation with the dominant mentality of the people of Iran and the people of the world. When everyone is talking about the "American dream," I thought why shouldn't Africa be a destination for me or many immigrants to realize their dreams?

A place that has the potential to refresh people's souls away from the hustle and bustle of the modern world, to challenge their capabil-

ities to accept a simple life alongside nature as well as an indigenous and largely unknown culture.

A place that can reduce desires based on capital and money in today's world, leading people to peace and tranquility.

This is a common point of view among many foreign people living in Tanzania, who say that they have found a deep and beautiful peace with themselves there.

Swahili language

Swahili is the language of more than five countries in East Africa, including Tanzania. A language based on native words and sounds; many Persian words are also used in it. Persian words that are still interesting and exciting to me after hearing them from a Tanzanian, such as *Kaka*, *Dada*, *Bas*, *Rangi* (*Rang*), *Babu* (*grandpa*), *Bibi* (*grandma*), *Daftar* (*daftar*), *Bozi* (*Boz*), *Qalamou*, *Barfou*, *Dabbeh*, *Zama* (*Zaman*), *Omri* (*Omr*) and *Nafasi* (*Nafas*).

About the influence of Persian words in the Swahili language, it is said that people from Shiraz and merchants from the south of Iran traveled to this continent, especially to Zanzibar Island in Tanzania.

Courageous people from Iran who, hundreds of years ago, went to explore this beautiful continent by ship and spread the culture, language and art of Iranians in a part of the continent.



Mumbo Jumbo

Saying a simple "Mumbo Jumbo" is the key to your way into a Tanzanian's heart, which is like "Hello, how are you?"

Tanzanian people are kind and friendly, so you will never feel uneasy with them.

In all the years I lived in Tanzania, I never felt homesick, I missed my homeland and visiting my loved ones, but I never felt homesick, because people everywhere welcome you with open arms, they outshine you with a smile.

Interwoven with Persian ancestry along East Africa

A study has revealed the existence of interwoven African and Persian ancestry along the Swahili coast in Eastern Africa.

Published in the journal *Science Advances* in April 2023, the research analyzed ancient DNA samples from individuals who lived in the region over the past 1,400 years.

According to lead author Ondrej Hlinka, a post-doctoral researcher in anthropology at Rice University, "The East African coast has a long and complex history of population movement and cultural exchange. Our findings provide a glimpse into the genetic diversity and interconnectedness of the region."

The study found evidence of individuals with Persian ancestry living in the region dating back to the 7th century. The researchers also discovered that the mixing of African and Persian ancestry occurred more frequently than previously thought, with some individuals having up to 50% Persian ancestry.

"Entwined African and Asian genetic roots of medieval peoples of the Swahili coast" was published in *Nature* magazine. It examines genetic ancestry and cultural influences in eastern Africa by using DNA from the skeletal remains of 80 individuals who were buried in six medieval and early modern coastal towns in Kenya and Tanzania, dating to the years 1250-1800, and an inland town in Kenya, dating to after 1650.

