

Dar Es Salaam: Many tourist attractions in the city of peace

ITM London



A selection of delicious food

Tanzania's largest city Dar Es Salaam does its name proud. It is indeed a city of peace where tourists can stroll through the quiet streets and enjoy a variety of attractions. A walking tour is probably the best way to see the city. In the heart of Dar Es Salaam is the national museum, the botanical gardens and the Nyerere Cultural Centre.

Village museum



Jangwani resort



Even though it is no longer the capital, most of the official buildings can be found in Dar Es Salaam, including State House and the former House of Tanzania's National Parliament. It is also the place where most diplomatic missions are located along with international hotels, such as Royal Palm Hotel, Holiday Inn, Golden Tulip, Embassy, New Africa, Ras Kutani, White Sand, Sea Cliff, Jangwani Sea Breeze and Peacock.

The city was founded in 1862 by Sultan Seyyid Majid of Zanzibar on the site of the village of Mzizima. Mzizima's history dates back to the time when the Barawa people started to settle and cultivate the area around Mbwa Maji, Magogoni, Mjimwema, Gezaulole and Kibonde Maji Mbagara.

Present day Dar Es Salaam's origins have been influenced by a myriad of Sultans, the Germans and the British. The

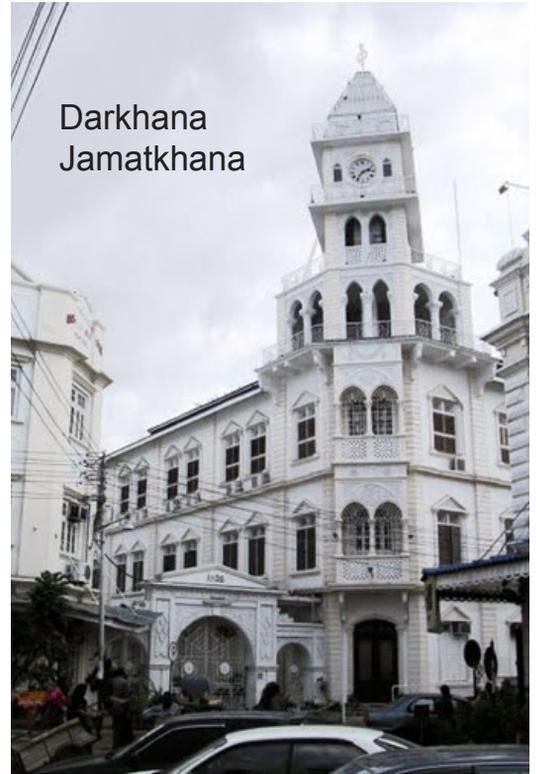
Traditional house



city which started as a fishing village in the mid 19th century, is now Tanzania's largest city, and has become one of East Africa's most important ports and trading centers.

With its great atmosphere, mix of African, Muslim, and South Asian influences, picturesque harbour, beaches, chaotic markets, and historical buildings it is certainly well worth spending a few days in the city before going on safari in the Serengeti or climbing Mt Kilimanjaro.

New buildings are springing up in Dar Es Salaam and sadly some



Darkhana
Jamatkhana



Waterfront in Dar Es Salaam

magnificent traditional buildings have been sacrificed on the altar of modernity.

The National Museum downtown breathes an air of genteel neglect, with few visitors. The welcome from the staff on reception is genuine and the friendly souvenir sellers in the museum's grounds drive a hard bargain. The fossil discoveries from Olduvai Gorge are impressively displayed downstairs. Upstairs, the years of

colonialism and the anti-colonial struggle are presented through a historically fascinating mishmash of objects, photos and yellowing documents. Visitors are invited to leave their own comments about the liberation struggle. A poignant sculpture tribute to the twelve Tanzanians who died in the attack on the US Embassy is in the garden near a garage with endearing vintage cars.

The botanical gardens which

Kigamboni





St Paul's Cathedral



Magical beach



Sculptures outside the National Museum

resemble an inner city park are not far away. Despite the total lack of refreshments and seating in the shade, it is pleasant to stroll among the trees, shrubs and peacocks.

Next to the Royal Palm Hotel is the Nyerere Cultural Centre. In this tranquil setting built around an open-air pond you can browse undisturbed among samples of local arts and crafts - handmade paper, batik, paintings, jewellery, even shoes - all for sale, or just sit

over a soda or lunch. The items on sale include a fishskin suit, and a beautifully blue-dyed skin of a three-foot Nile Perch which could be ideal for a book binder.

The city revolves around the huge harbour, where you can sit in one of the many cafés or restaurants and a cool drink at the water's edge while watching the dhows arriving and departing.

There are many fascinating

restaurants offering Chinese, Indian, Italian and other international cuisine. Steers offers a variety of takeaways and the Kilimanjaro Kempinski. Hotel has a lavish Sunday buffet. The international hotels have stylish coffee bars and elegant restaurants.

St. Joseph's Cathedral, the White Father's Mission House and the mosques are definitely worth a visit. The spired cathedral is still in

use. On Sunday mornings its standing room only. The cathedral was built at the same time as the Lutheran church, also by German missionaries. In addition to the striking stained-glass windows behind the main altar (best viewed late in the afternoon), it still contains many of the original German inscriptions and artwork, including the carved relief above the main altar.

Among the mosques is Darkhana



Entrance to the National Museum

Botanical Garden



Jama'at-Khana, on Mosque Street, that stands three stories high with a six-story tower topped with a clock. Ibaddhi Mosque and Memon Mosque are also located on Mosque Street and are covered with stringed lights.

Dar Es Salaam is an ideal base for exciting day trips. Mwenge Village, a 15cents bus ride from the main post office is the site of a small craft village with numerous small shops selling carvings, jewellery,

exotic cloth and trinkets of all kinds at bargain prices but be sure to haggle. This is where dealers from Nairobi come to buy. There are striking Nyakusa wall-hanging of tightly woven raffia in a geometric pattern of contrasting browns, the smell of wood smoke still clinging to it. Wood carvers sit in the shade of trees, chipping, gouging, filing and sanding.

Also in the Mwenge direction, right off the busy New Bagamoyo Road,



Kilimanjaro Kempinski Hotel



Darkhana Jama'at

is the Village Museum. It is the place for very energetic tribal dancing. People from all parts of the country came to build houses typical of their tribe in a park setting. It is a good idea to bring your own flashlight as you wander in and out of the houses displaying the details of daily life and the intricacies of construction. A garden has been planted of indigenous crops and, in one corner, artists painting in the colorful tinga-tinga style have set

up shop.

Oyster Bay is where the expats live. There is even a shop for pampered pets. The beach is pleasant and there are plates of changu (a tasty local fish) and chips (French fries). Watching the moon rise over the Indian Ocean is a peaceful, magical experience. Kigamboni is also the place for a wonderful time at the seaside. It is a five minute ferry-ride from Kivukoni Front (near the new





Artists at work

Japanese-built fish market).

Seven kilometres north of the city, Bongoyo Island Marine Reserve offers good snorkelling and diving sites for those who want to explore the water. The reserve boasts beautiful beaches, secluded islands, and many varieties of marine species. Although the variety and population of coral and

fish species are not as numerous as other sites on Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mafia Island, the Bongoyo Island Marine Reserve is well worth a visit and is a great way to spend a day out on the coast.

Dar Es Salaam is a welcoming city, peaceful, pleasant – an ideal place to be at the beginning, or end of a visit to Tanzania.