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Maasai



The Maasai people live in the heart of Africa and have been there for thousands of years living a very simple existence like nomads. Even today with all the modern amenities the Maasai only have and use the basics not even having access to electricity.

The men are the rulers in this kingdom and will trade cows for wives sometime having more than 10. They live in mud huts with thatched roofs and when you drive by you know the number of wife's by the number of huts. They are a very tall race and also skinny but that can be due to poor nutrition. Everyone including the women have no hair or very short hair and all dress in the typical

colorful wraps or blankets.

The women make all different kinds of jewelry out of thousands of small colorful beads and will sale them to make money to by corn or milk.

The children live a very basic existence and the young boys spend their days watching the herds of cattle and goats which is a very big responsibility as that is the entire revenue of the family. When something is needed they will trade livestock in order to get what they need which is not much.

The photos in this story are of the young boys that watch the livestock. Because they only rely on rain water for irrigation the

sides of the road seem to be very popular. This is most likely as the water that falls on the road rolls off to the sides and makes for nice tall green grass. We have tried to stop and talk with these little farmers but they really have no education and only speak a local dialect that even our driver had a hard time understanding.

From time to time you will find the entrepreneurial Maasai who is looking to charge you money to take their picture. As Lisa found out getting a photo with some local ladies they seem to attract flies and are kind enough to share them with you to take home.



Bus-Ted



Nothing like getting off the 6 hour bus ride.

We decided to make our journey from Kenya to Tanzania via the local bus system. It started the previous day in Nairobi with us negotiating a fare to make the 6 hour journey south to Arusha. In the morning we boarded the bus as they loaded the entire luggage on top and strapped it down. Immediately we were caught up in a traffic jam trying to exit the city as commuters and truckers were making the daily drive.

Once out of the city we were cruising fast on smooth pavement when about 10 miles into our journey we turned right onto a torn up, bumpy dirt road. Right away we all looked at each other and said this is going to be a long day.

To make matters worse they were working on the road for most of the journey and we had to take detours on what seemed like trails more than roads.

So after 4 hours of punishment we came to the border of Tanzania and started then immigration process at the Kenya office by turning in our decoration papers. We

left and started walking to the Tanzania office about 100 yards away when 3 men walked up to us and said they were with immigration and needed our passports. I immediately got defensive and refused when our bus driver ran up and started yelling at them in Swahili. Good thing because they were just bandits trying to get our US passports which are worth a fortune.



Tractor Pull

The tractor in Africa is much more than just a



tractor, it is a vital piece of transportation. Most of the agricultural work is done by hand and you will even see oxen pulling plows in the fields so the tractors that exist are far and few between mostly because of costs and the difficulty to acquire fuel.

When you do come across a tractor it is being used to the fullest extent

pulling large loads of crops to the market or plowing fields and almost every time you come across one driving down the road there will be people catching rides.

It would not be a bad business model to start a Taxi service in Africa using John Deere tractors, you can give them a ride home and plow the corn.

Giving



The best experience you can have in Africa is to witness a child's face when you give them something they really need. You can give all the gifts you want to for Christmas and birthdays but it is just not the same.

After meeting and giving away all the pens in Egypt to the local Nubian children we decide we would be more prepared this time so I went to a school supply wholesaler in Nairobi and bought a big bag of pens and notebooks. It was obvious that people normally do not do this as the lady at the counter seemed confused as to why I needed all this.

Now we were ready to give the needy children some school supplies but

because we were in a high tourist area it seemed that everyone just was looking for a handout of money so we backed away the supplies. I guess they just become a product of there environment seeing all the rich foreigners driving by in overpriced safari outfits while typing on their latest greatest laptops. So we



started to get a bad taste and really did not hand out much for the next few days.

We were out away from the tourist areas and we ran across some children so I go out the bag of supplies and handed a local boy on a bicycle a pen and pad. He was so excited to get it he followed our vehicle for the next 5 miles with a smile on his face the whole time. At that point we knew we needed to start handing out the paper and Lisa decided she would slip in a 1000 Shilling Note which is about .60 cents. The look on their faces when they discovered the money was just amazing and I can imagine that for most of them it was the first time they have had money. My only issue is that we are converting them like the others were.



"Being stalked by friendly children."

Going Postal



"Some before and after photos of the box."

I made a trip to the post office several times to mail back some souvenirs we had purchased along the way. We originally thought we would be shipping by freight but after visiting DHL to find it would cost \$400 to ship a box back home I opted for the expedient local postal service, yeah right.

So the first step was to acquire a sturdy box and in Africa where they have not much a box is not garbage but an asset so finding one can be difficult in itself. Next I needed to back in all of my wife's high valued trinkets she had been collecting along the trip and stuff them in carefully.

Now normally you would

just stick a label on and ship but for some reason I had to rewrap the outside of the box in some brown paper the post office supplied to me for a undisclosed amount. After filling out several customs forms and writing the affix on the front we were

ready to pay the \$50 to ship the box.

Once we returned home from Africa we were surprised to find that they placed 370 stamps on the box but even more surprised that only one box made the trip.



"School teacher in Usa River, Tanzania."

People

One thing that I learned and experienced in Africa is that no matter how someone looks if you take the time to talk with them you will 9 times out of 10

find that they are very nice and friendly. One day while the girls were resting I decided to take a walk down the road and spent the entire time just talking

to people. Most of them just want to learn about how we live and what it is like in America. Others want to practice speaking English with someone and others such as children are just plain curious to talk to you.

I guess I have just seen too much television and went there with a completely different perception of how people are over there.

