

The Maasai Tribe

The **Maasai** are an ethnic group of people that live in Kenya and in the north of Tanzania. They are well known for the way that they dress and because they live near some national parks in Africa that a lot of tourists go to. They speak a language called *Maa*.



The Maasai are an old nomad African tribe in the group of Nilotes who have always lived in Africa principally in the north of Tanzania and southern Kenya. They were discovered by settlers around the 19th century. They live near the African savannah in animal reserves, for example the Masaai Mara reserve and the Serengeti.

The women build houses called *Manyatta*; the men build a fence around the village to protect them from lions.



The Masaai people live with animals because they are pastoralists. The more cattle a Maasai man has, the richer he is. They can't live without animals because their wealth comes from them. The Masaai drink cow's blood because they believe they will be stronger.

The Maasai speak *Maa*, very similar in pronunciation to their Nilotic counterparts, the Luo and Kalenjin.

They are Christians, animists (their own religion) and some Maasai are Muslim.

Physically, they are very tall and slim. They wear bandannas and beaded jewellery and apply dye made from dried up cow's blood.

Men pay the brides father with cattle in order to marry their daughters.

Teenage boys must jump over fire and kill a lion before they can become a man. From then on they can get married.