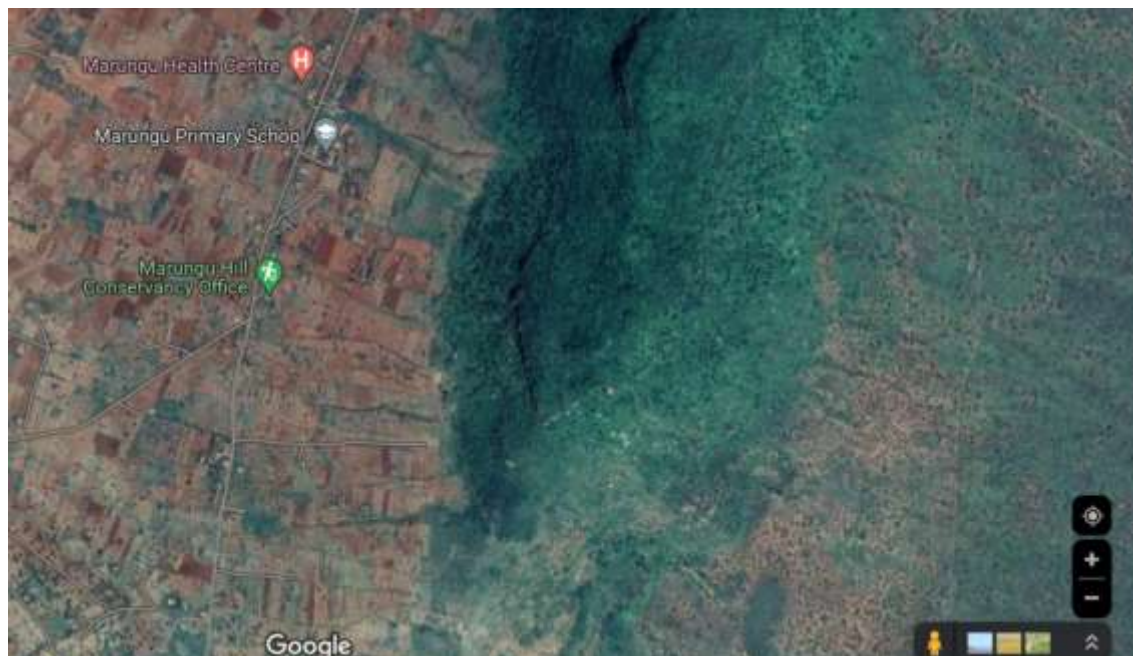


# Marungu Hill Conservancy- Caveman- Hiking Expedition



## About Marungu Hill Conservancy

Only 9 kms off the Nairobi-Mombasa Highway from Maungu, a famous long distance truck stop, Marungu Hill that sits on 2,536 acres of virgin land rises about 962 meters (3,156 feet) to meet the sky. It consists of a range of seven hills which are named as (Nyangala, Itinyi, Mlilonyi, Garawa, Marasi, Kale 1 and 2).



Aerial View of Marungu Hill Conservancy

The mountain is positioned at a latitude of approximately  $-3.60866^{\circ}$  or  $3^{\circ} 36' 31''$  south and a longitude of around  $38.74465^{\circ}$  or  $38^{\circ} 44' 41''$  east.

It provides habitats and migration corridors for wildlife in Tsavo East National Park and the surrounding ranches. From the top of the hill, it offers breathtaking panoramic views of Rukinga Ranch Sanctuary and Tsavo East National Park,



Panoramic view from the Madukenyi Hideout Caves

It is home to world war hideout caves, a vibrant indigenous bio-diversity ecosystem, and wild animals and a rich cultural heritage of the Sagalla people.

The Sagalla people, a subtribe of the Bantu Taita Tribe, found on the Southwestern part of Kenya 140 km north of the Mombasa, lived on this hill throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1951 due to increased population growth, demand for more reliable water, more land for crop cultivation, and pasture for domestic animals, people started voluntarily migrating to the lowlands.

Mzee Mtima is recorded as the last person to vacate the hill in 1972. Traces and evidence of human settlements on the hill are still evident to date.

The ballooning population on the lowlands where villagers mostly practise subsistence farming started putting pressure on the forest ecosystem.

Poverty and lack of food occasioned by crop failure due to effects of climate change and destruction of the crops by wild animals especially elephants, contributed to increased illegal logging and charcoal burning in the hill. These activities threatened the forest eco-system.

In 2007, to protect, conserve, preserve the environment, the ancestral lands and the sacred spiritual shrines, members of the community formed **Marungu Hill Conservancy Association** a broad-based community bio-diversity conservation and Eco-tourism project.



## What You will Experience Here

Visitors travel from far and wide to come here to sample the experiences on this hill That gave Marungu Location (ward) its name.



Hikers group on the hill

Some come to experience the gentle and moderate one hour hike to the peak, to enjoy the panoramic view of the dramatic landscape of the expansive Rukinga Ranch Sanctuary and Tsavo East National park on the horizon. With a binocular, you can spot some of the big five resting under a shade or grazing on the lowlands plains.



Camping on the hilltop

Others come to experience overnight camping on the hill, a favourite drink in hand watching the sunset on the horizon.

Or a barbecue dinner served over a bonfire as they catch up with family, friends and colleagues and also make new friends. You can rise up with the birds early in the morning to a spectacular sunrise as you enjoy a sumptuous breakfast in the bush overlooking the Tsavo East plains.

For some it is for the cultural adventure that takes you through the rich historical journey of the WaSagalla. Here you learn about the medicinal plants, the customs and traditions, myths and legends of the WaSagalla. An original traditional Sagalla dancing troupe is also available to entertain you with songs and dances that were done during significant cultural events.

For a visitor, Marungu Hills Conservancy offers all these wide range of attractions, facilities and activities mentioned above and more. Marungu Hill Conservancy, has KWS trained Wildlife Scouts on the ground to guide you through the forest hill at an affordable fee.

## Welcome to the Caveman-Hiking and Camping Expedition



Hikers on the ascending trail

The hill we are hiking is known as Garawa, part of the Marungu Hill range of hills. Camp Kenya is situated right below the imposing Garawa hill. The area just above Camp Kenya is known as *Kwa Mbogho* which in Sagalla language means a “place with Buffaloes”.



The hike to the top of the hill is a moderate ascent that a fit 10-year-old can tackle comfortably. To reach the peak, it takes about 120 minutes of moderate climbing



speed. You will have a minimum of three breaks at reasonable intervals, for you to rest, sip water, recharge and also learn about the history, endemic flora and fauna resident in the conservancy.

The hill features wild animals, forests, shrines, historical sites, rainwater harvesting, rock catchments, and earth pans for rainwater collection.

There also WaSagalla sacred Shrines, Mwambela and Mama Sidi, used by the elders to commune with the gods and perform traditional rituals led by a high priest. These are no-go zones, only a few authorised locals are allowed into the shrines.

### **The itinerary**

**Starting point:** Either Camp Kenya using Mama Mercy Route, or Marungu Hill Conservancy offices below Garawa Hill. Return back to Expected time of Arrival (ETA) 4.00 pm

#### **9.00. am. ☺**

- i. Sagalla traditional dancers, singing traditional songs, which we sung during various significant cultural events e.g. wedding, circumcision, war, naming children etc.



Sagalla Traditional Dancers

- ii. Traditional food preparation: pounding of maize corn, grinding the corn using

stones (isho), making sima, (ugali) and other traditional foods.



Pounding Maize corn

**10.00 a.m.** 🕒

### **Start hiking the hill**

#### **I. Mkame Tree**

Start your day by exploring the endangered hardwood trees, known as Mkame in Taita Taveta Sagalla language. Some of these trees are more than 400 years old.



Endangered hardwood Mkame Tree



Unfortunately, these trees are at risk of decimation because many local people face high levels of poverty. To meet their needs, they often resort to cutting down these trees for timber, firewood, or making charcoal for sale in town. To address this issue, the communities have come together to protect the area by employing rangers. Our neighboring organization, Wildlife Works, helps us by paying the rangers' salaries.

## **II. Traditional Man's Traditional Healing Methods**

### **1. Treating Wounds:**

The cave man was not exposed to modern medicine, so when he hurt he used, the Mtoe (Sagalla language name).

He would cut a piece of this tree, which produced a mucus-like liquid and then apply this liquid to his wound, and it healed in a few days.

### **2. Snake Bites:**

When the cave man was bitten by a snake, he used traditional methods to heal himself.



Mtoe Medicinal tree

3. **Malaria:** When he got malaria, he used tree leaves, roots, and honey to cure it.

### **4. Treating Injuries:**

When the cave man saw someone injured, they were taken to the cave or another place to be treated. They would be given boiled wild animal meat until they got better.

## **III. Kiparapara Cactus:**

See the Kiparapara cactus, crucial for preventing soil erosion and producing nutritious juice and wine. The cactus is a primary food source for baboons and plays a vital role in the ecosystem. Learn how its fruit has been used for making beverages and its importance in maintaining the area's environmental health.





Cactus Tree (Kiparapara)

#### **IV. Garawa Rain Water Rock Catchment:**

The Garawa rainwater rock catchment area was established in the 18th century during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railway. The local communities unknowingly created these catchments by burning hardwood trees on rocks and hammering them until holes formed. These holes retained rainwater, which they used for both domestic and wild animals. To this day, these areas are still reserved for wild animals to drink water.



Garawa water rock catchment

The flat area on the hill was inhabited by the Taita Taveta communities for security reasons. This was due to Maasai cattle rustling in the region and significant activities during the First and Second World Wars.

## V. Traditional Brewing:

The caveman never bough beer any type of liquor. Instead, he brewed his own using sugar cane juice, honey, and the fruit of the Muratina, Sausage tree - *Kigelia africana* - Muratina (**Mwasina**-Kisagalla) fruit tree.

The fruits are processed by traditional experts to form a catalyst for making traditional beer called **m'bangara** or **chofi ya mwasina**. It was consumed during traditional ceremonies, namely *ngasu*, *kiringi* etc.



Sausage Tree- Mwasina

## VI. Historical Migration:

Due to increase in population, deforestation and land becoming infertile due to over use, people decided to migrate to the lowlands after Kenya gained independence in 1963. This was to allow the hilltops to recover and also for better agricultural opportunities in the lowlands.



Marungu Lowlands



Only one person, Josam Mtima, stayed behind until 1972/73, eleven years after independence, when he finally joined his community in the lower area known as Marere. Today, this place is called Marungu or Maungu sub-location.

### **VII. Cave Man Lifestyle:**

The caveman didn't build permanent structures; instead, he moved from place to place, often relying on big trees with thick bushes to make a family home or finding a good cave for the same purpose.

This area is known for having hiding caves from the First and Second World Wars. The caveman used these caves to secure their families when they went away for war or during Maasai (*Wakwavi*) cattle raid and Arab slave traders. This place was also used as barter trade market hence the name *Madukenyi* (shopping centre).



World War Madukenyi Hideout Caves

### **VIII. Activities:**

1. Enjoy panoramic views of Tsavo East National and Rukinga Sanctuary Conservancy.



Enjoy Breath-taking Views from the sentry point

2. **Caveman Fire Making**



Experience traditional fire making with hardwood, softwood sticks dry elephant dung, just like the cave men.

3. **Archery- Bow and Arrow target shooting**

Practice your sharp shooting skills with a bow and arrow, learning ancient hunting techniques. Let get the best sharpest shooter.





On your Marks, Get Set... Shoot!



The Target is on the tree

#### 4. **Bush shelter making**

Let's be a digital cave man, instead of living in the cave let's build our own structure and get the best contractor.



Caveman Bush Shelter

### **IX. End of Day:**

Hello everyone, can we gather together? Thank you. I want to take this moment to express gratitude to God for guiding us through this day. Also, a big thank you to each of you for your cooperation throughout the day.

Before we conclude, if anyone has comments, suggestions, or questions, check our website [www.marunguhillconservancyassociation.org](http://www.marunguhillconservancyassociation.org) and email us using the addresses provided in the documents distributed this morning. For those who want spend a night out here we have camping secure camping facilities.

Thank you to and our guests. Students, welcome again. KARIBUNI TENA

Let's have someone lead us in a closing prayer for the day, and remember, we know descend to the r Lower Zone

### **Hiking Packages:**

- Non-resident students: Ksh 1,000 per student
- Non-resident adults: Ksh 1,200 per person

### **Camping Fees:**

Own tent

- Non-resident students (1-4): @ Ksh 1,000 (ground)
- Non-resident Adults ( 1-4): Ksh 2,000 (ground)

Our Tent

- Non-resident Students: @ Ksh 1,000 per person
- Non-resident Adults: @ Ksh 2,000 per person

\*Catering available upon arrangement





### Our Responsibility to You:

- Water and firewood provided
- Security ensured by wildlife rangers



**Join us for an enriching experience in nature. Book your adventure today!**

 <https://marunguhillconservancyassociation.org/visit-us/>

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