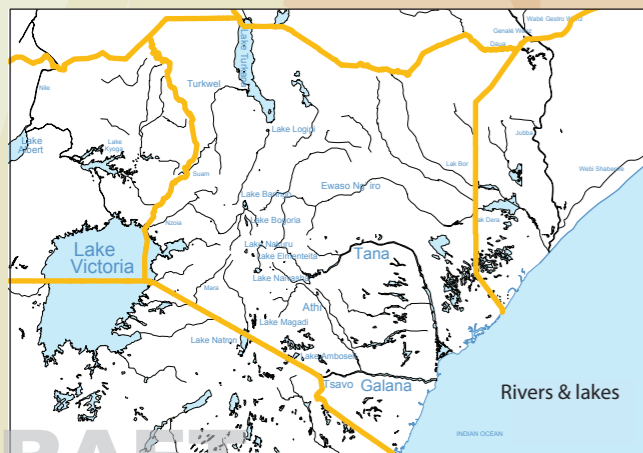
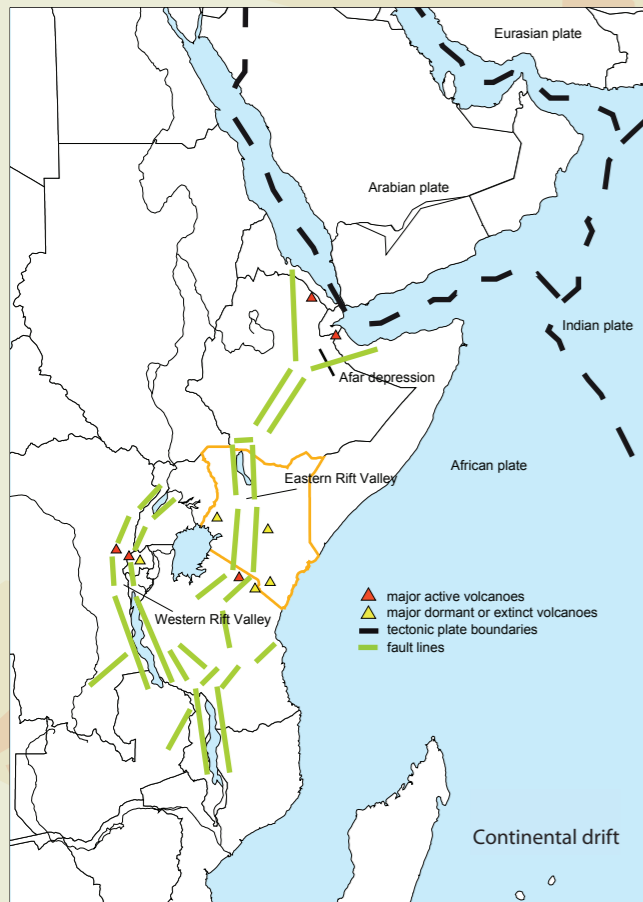


# GEOGRAPHY OF KENYA



## Location

Kenya, a republic in East Africa, is bounded on the North by Sudan and Ethiopia, on the East by Somalia and the Indian Ocean, on the South by Tanzania, and on the west by Lake Victoria and Uganda. Nairobi is the country's capital and largest city.

## Geographical figures

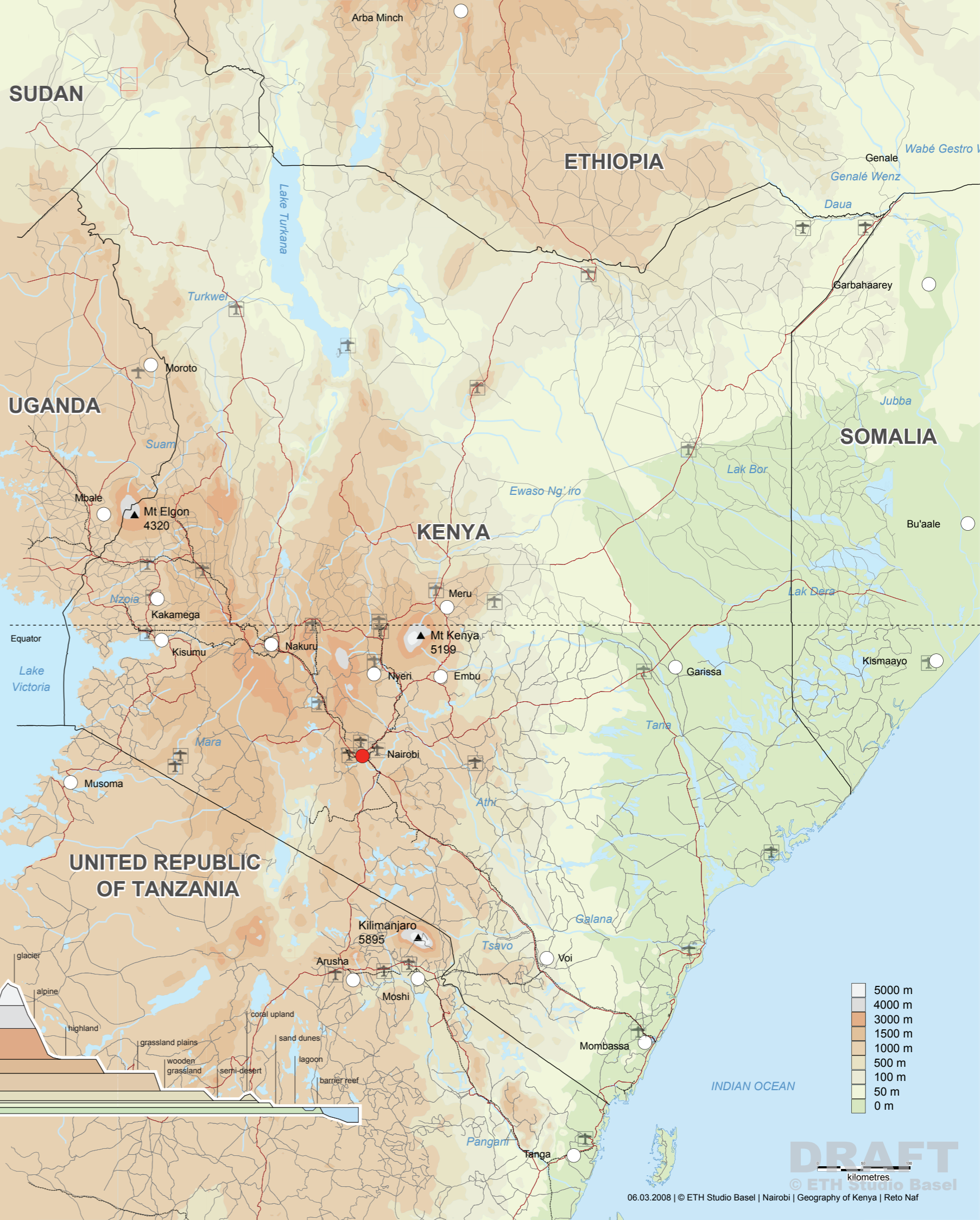
Kenya occupies a total area of 582'646 sq km. The equator passes through the middle of the country. Kenya's maximum length is about 890 km from east to west and about 1'030 km from north to south. The boundary of the country is 3477 km long, the coastline 536 km. Mount Kenya is the highest point in the country at 5199 m.

## The Great Rift Valley

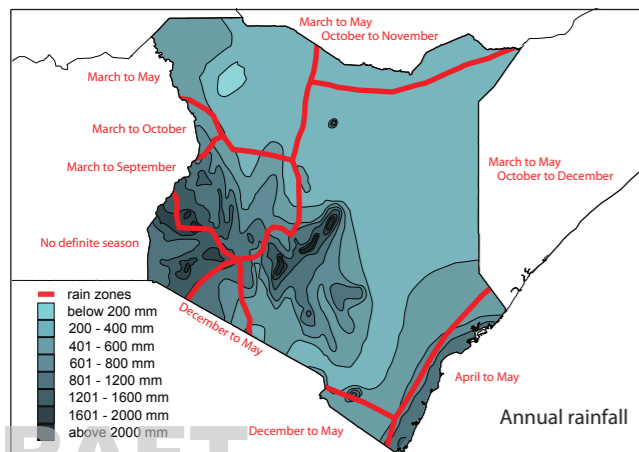
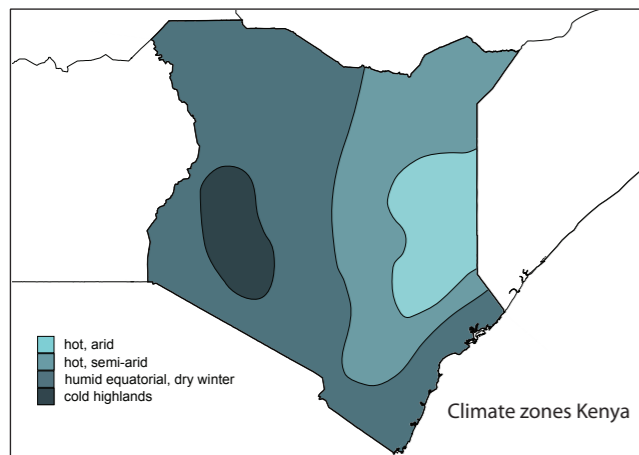
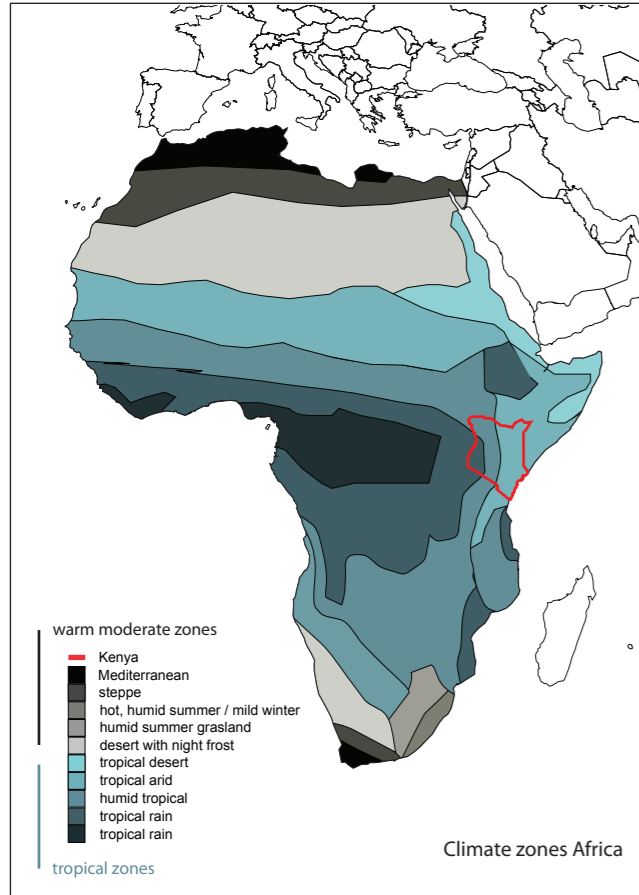
The geological fault system of SW-Asia and E-Africa extends 4'830 km from N-Syria to central Mozambique. The main section of the valley in Africa leads from the Red Sea across Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi to the lower Zambezi River valley in Mozambique. Many small lakes and several long narrow lakes, notably Lake Turkana, Baringo and Nakuru in Kenya, lie on its course. The Great Rift Valley ranges in elevation from 395 m below sea level to 1830 m above sea level in South Kenya with high sheer cliffs. Mount Kenya and Mount Elgon are dome-shaped volcanoes and are either dormant or extinct.

## Rivers & Lakes

The most important rivers, Tana and Galana, rise in the Highlands and flow into the Indian Ocean. Lake Turkana and (the Kenyan part of) Lake Victoria are the biggest lakes in the country.



# GEOGRAPHY OF KENYA



## Climate

Kenya's great climatic diversity is reflected in different geographic regions due to the winds and the altitude differences. Climatic conditions range from the tropical humidity of the coast through the dry heat of the hinterland and northern plains to the coolness of the plateau and snow-capped mountains.

As an equatorial country, the variations are distinguished by the duration of rainfall rather than by changes of temperature. Kenya's climate is best described as monsoonal, affected by both the northeast and southeast monsoons. Most regions of the country have four distinct seasons: The warm dry season (January to late March), the long rainy season (late March to early June), the cool dry season (mid June to early October) and the short rainy season (mid October to mid December).

## 4 different climate zones

### Lake Victoria basin

Climate at the shores of Lake Victoria is modulated by altitude, around 1200 m, and by the moist winds coming from the Great Lakes. Temperatures are high during the day and moderate at night, with annual highs of 31°C and lows of 17°C.

### Rift Valley and Highlands

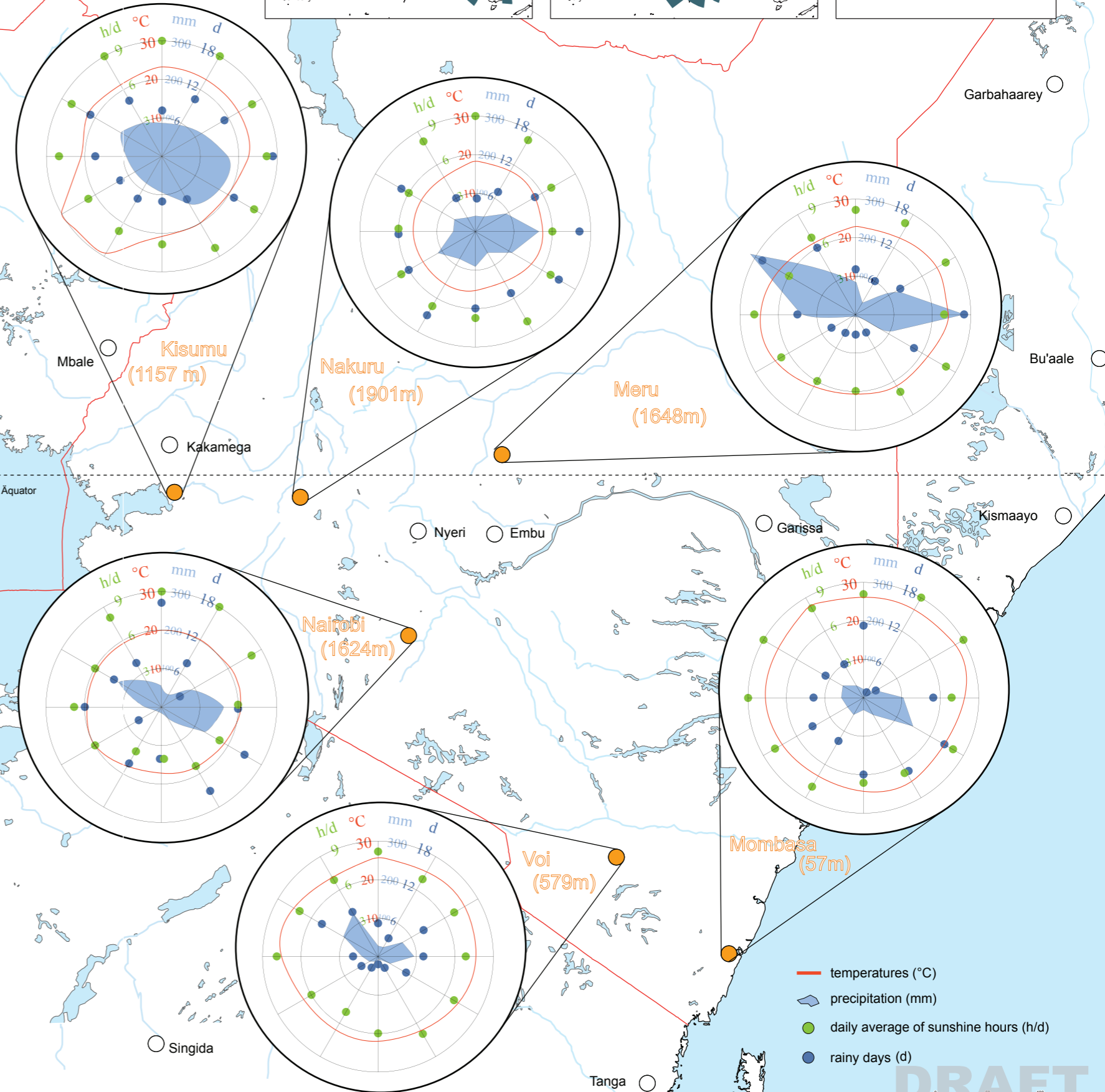
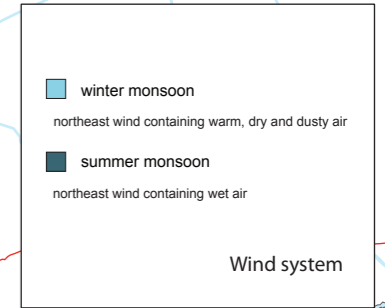
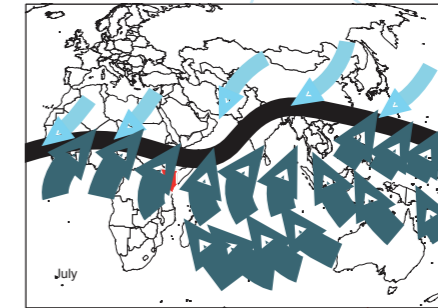
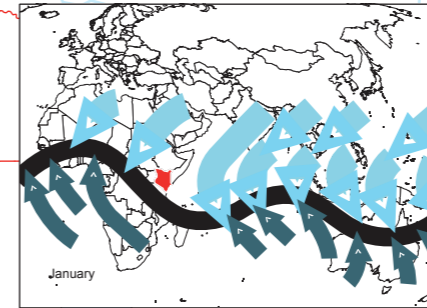
Altitude and winds are the cause of a moderate and mild climate. In Nairobi, 1700 m high, highest temperatures are 27°C (winter) to 23°C (summer) and lowest temperatures are in the range of 12-15°C. Temperatures drop at higher altitudes. In the Mount Kenya region, mean temperatures are between 12 and 18°C, with night temperatures below 10°C. The night lows are equally cold in the Aberdare region. Rainfall is usually plentiful in the rainy season, with higher levels in the long rain period.

### N, NE and Eastern Highlands

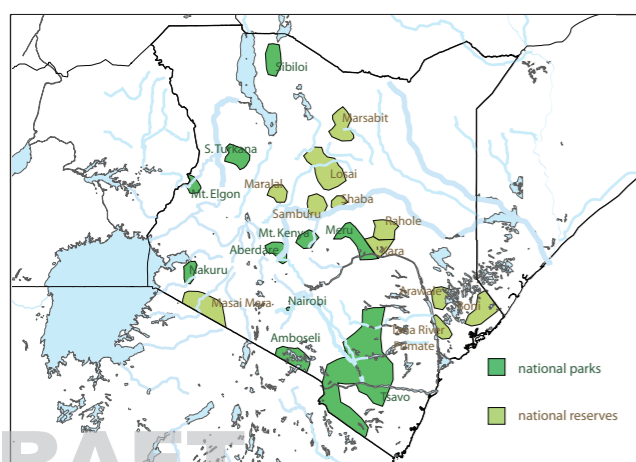
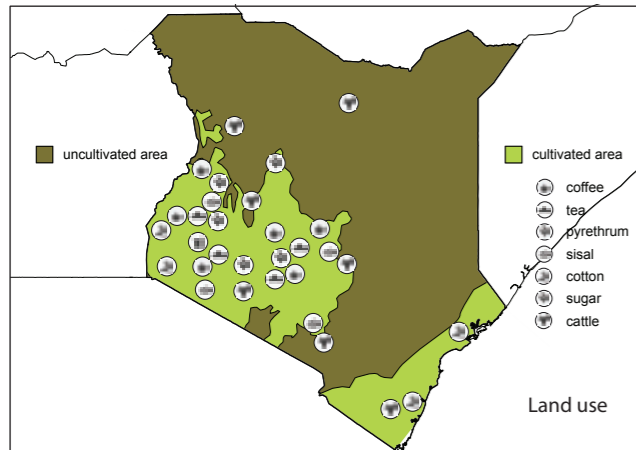
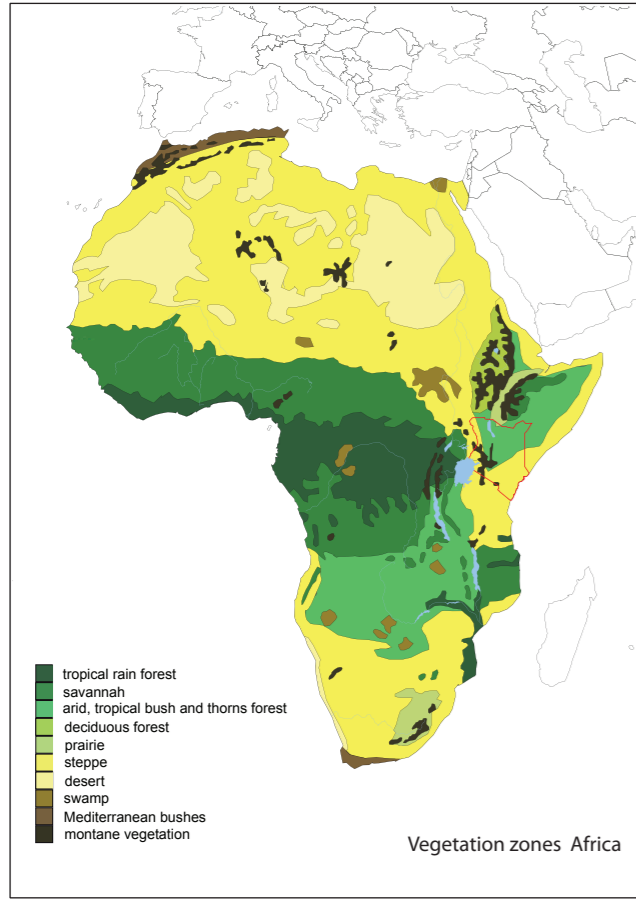
The northern and north-eastern regions have the roughest climate, which is reflected in the arid landscape. Rainfall is scarce, with annual levels around 350 mm. Temperatures are high all the year round, rising up to 37°C. Night temperatures usually do not fall below 21°C. In the Eastern Highlands, temperatures are also warm but lower, around 30°C during the day and 20°C at night, with higher average rainfalls, especially in the areas surrounding Kilimanjaro.

### Kenya's coast

The average annual temperatures on the coast are around 28°C. The weather is warm and humid, corresponding to the latitude. Storms are frequent and temperatures rarely drop below 21°C, with the highest around 32°C (winter). Winters are generally drier and warmer. Total annual rainfall rises to 1100 mm.



# GEOGRAPHY OF KENYA



## Flora

The vegetation and animal life of Kenya reflect the diversity of its topography and climate. During the dry season Kenya's savannahs and deserts are devoid of any variety of flora. The plants appear dry and the grass is dull and yellow. But only a few months later after the rains, the landscape explodes with color. The grass turns into a bright green and flowers appear everywhere. Along rivers the vegetation is lush, and dense forests cover the mountains. In the coastal region coconut trees flourish, with occasional mangrove swamps and rain forest. The vast plains of the hinterland and the northern regions are covered with grass, low bush, and scrub, giving way in the high-lying plains to typical savanna country of open grass dotted with thorn trees, and in the more arid regions to bare earth and stunted scrub. The highland areas are in parts densely forested with bamboo and valuable timber, the predominant trees being African camphor, African olive, podo, and pencil cedar.

## Agriculture

Agriculture in the countryside is diverse due to the moderate climate and has introduced a wide range of crops to Kenya, including cotton, coffee and tea.

## Fauna

Wildlife of great variety is to be found in Kenya, both in the sparsely populated areas and in the national parks and reserves that have been created for its protection. The country boasts more than 80 major species of animals and over 1000 species of birds. Elephant, rhinoceros, lion, zebra, giraffe, buffalo, hippopotamus, wildebeest, and many kinds of buck are among the large mammals that abound on the plains and along the rivers. Kenya's diverse bird species include cranes, flamingos, ostriches, and vultures.

