

Paradise on earth at Ras Kisimani, Mafia Island, Tanzania

By Jan Schnitzler, WWOOFer from Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Permaculture on a tropical island, a real challenge! At first only bushes and palm trees were present but after 6 months real permacultural fields has risen. Since my arrival we have been planting a lot of crops like pumpkins, all sorts of peas, melons, paw paws etc. Together with Tichafa, the permaculture fundi (Swahili for expert), Hussein, Ali and Shaa I'm working in the fields to give the crops a proper treatment. The best part is that we are already harvesting and preparing the crops for some real culinary dishes! During our breaks I often ask Hussein (he is a tremendous coconut palm climber) to get me a fresh coconut, it's really a treat to me!

Besides assisting Mr. T, I make sure the beach is cleared from plastic bottles and flipflops that come ashore from the mainland. Walking these beaches is truly a magnificent experience during the sunset. After half a day work I often go to the beach to read and fish. There is a boat available as well with a window in the bottom so you can see the beautiful coral reefs that Mafia is known for. We use the boat for snorkeling as well. Every week a visit to Mafia's capital, Kilindoni is planned and we always go by boat and subsequently do our groceries. This is a good opportunity to get to know the real Swahili culture.

Besides the astonishing nature that Ras Kisimani and Mafia provide, many interesting animals are present. Beautiful tropical birds are nesting in April and May and we are accompanied by various families of monkeys. Although they try to steal our newly grown crops, to me it is still amazing and funny to see these little human alike creatures!

In short, Ras Kisimani provides a tremendous environment for everyone who is interested in permaculture, white sand beaches, marine park snorkeling, Swahili culture, kind people and so much more! For me it's already an unforgettable adventure and I hope I'm still around (end of July) to meet more WWOOFers!

With kind regards,

Jan Schnitzler