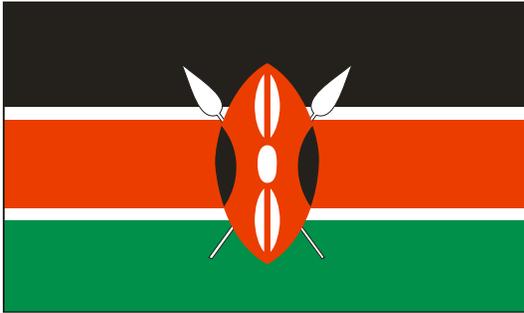


Kenyan Flag



You have probably seen the Kenya flag before as it is famously adorned by the country's athletes on laps of honor in athletics stadiums the world over. It consists of black, red and green horizontal bands each separated by a white stripe. A Maasai shield and 2 spears sit in the center of these bands.

Symbolism

The flag of Kenya was adopted at independence on December 12, 1963. Black symbolizes the race of the majority of the Kenya's citizenry. Red represents the blood shed in the struggle for independence. The resistance to colonial rule was epitomized by the protracted Mau Mau struggle. Green denotes the fertility of the land and perhaps emphasizes the predominance of agriculture in the economy of Kenya. White symbolizes peace while the shield and spears signify Kenyans' determination to defend their cherished freedom and peace.

Inspiration

The Kenya flag was inspired by and adapted from that of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party.

KANU negotiated for the country's independence at Lancaster and also took over the reigns of power from the British colonial government. It ruled uninterrupted until 2002 when former President Moi retired from politics and handed over power to the current President Mwai Kibaki.

Use of Kenya Flag

The national flag is a symbol of authority and it is hoisted during the singing of the national anthem in schools and on national holidays. It also adorns public and private buildings as well as roundabouts in urban areas during national holidays. In addition, it is a standard feature on the President's and ministers' vehicles. So, as well as power, it is recognized as a symbol of achievement countrywide. And as a gesture of national pride, Kenyan athletes who win international races often drape themselves in their country's flag during laps of honor.

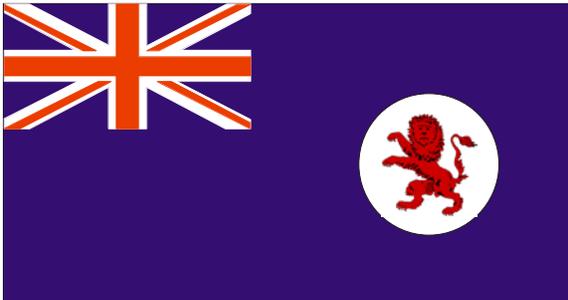
Coat of Arms

Another symbol of authority that is often used in conjunction with the flag is the country's coat of arms. Kenya's coat of arms features a shield, 2 lions and 2 spears. As is the case with the flag, the shield symbolizes the citizens' resolve to defend the country's freedom. Each of the lions brandishes a spear on either side of the shield. And just like the flag of Kenya, this shield is black, green, red and white.

Symbolism of the Coat of Arms

On the red belt of the shield is an axe-wielding rooster. Interestingly, the rooster is the KANU party's symbol. This party ruled the country from independence in 1963 until 2002. A mold of Mount Kenya, the country's highest mountain and coffee, tea and other cash crops are positioned at the bottom of the shield. And, the word "Harambee," frequently used as a rallying calling for self-reliance in Kenya, is inscribed at the base of the coat of arms.

Colonial Flag



The flag of Kenya in the colonial era comprised 2 symbols imposed on a royal blue background. These symbols were the Union Jack in the upper left corner and a white ball containing a red lion standing on its hind legs in the right half of the flag.