

**Diet of people in Babati district, Tanzania: What they eat,
why they eat it, and how that's changing**

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ABSTRACT

In an effort to better understand the influence of globalization and culture on diet, this ethnographic study investigated the extent, nature, and motivation for change in the diets and traditions of a diversity of people living in the Babati district of northern Tanzania, a region historically occupied by pastoralist Maasai. The study was based on short and long interviews with 43 people from a diversity of livelihoods, tribes, localities, genders, and ages. Informants were asked questions that sought to answer three questions: what do they eat? What factors motivate them to eat these foods? And how have their diets changed over time? I found that the foods people eat could be organized into three categories, that money and regional availability were the strongest factors driving food decisions, that many factors are influencing the Maasai and non-Maasai immigrants in different ways. Though the people of Babati district expressed a great degree of adaptability in their lifestyle and diet, traditional foods remain an important expression of identity.