

Daasanach of Ethiopia

Alternate Names: Dassanech, Dasenech, Guleb, Galeba, Marill, Reshait

Population: 66,200 in Ethiopia

Language: Daasanach

Location: Lower Omo River, along Lake Turkana (the largest desert lake in the world); also in Kenya and Sudan

Religion: Ethnic Religions (89%); Muslim (10%)

% Christian: 1.0% (70%

Orthodox, 20% Protestant, 10% Independent

% Evangelical: 0.5%

Christian resources available: audio recordings; Gospels of John & Mark, Genesis, Exodus and Acts

The identity of the Daasanach, "the people of the Delta" comes from their place of residence, not from ethnicity. They have developed a unique culture. Exiles from groups around Lake Turkana united in support in this hostile, arid environment. They are open to the inclusion of those willing to abide by their customs and values, including circumcision for men & women.

There are eight main clans; each clan has its own customs and responsibilities to the rest of the tribe. Rules and elders govern their lives. The biggest ceremony for a man, Dimi, celebrates and blesses his daughter for fertility and future marriage with feasting and dancing. He then becomes an elder. Women usually marry at 17 and men at 20. Men pay a dowry.



The hairstyle of the Daasanach men is one of the most sophisticated in the Omo valley. An interesting fashion trend is headgear they make out of unique materials such as bottle caps, feathers & decorated bowls. Men wear a checkered cloth around their waist; women wear a pleated cowskin skirt & multicolored bead necklaces and bracelets.

Daasanach dome-shaped homes are made from a frame of branches, covered with hides & woven boxes. Cows are central to the life of a Daasanach as they provide meat, milk, hide for clothing & materials for houses and mattresses and are status symbols. If a man loses his herds due to disease or drought, he becomes a Die, a poor person of a lower class; he must turn to fishing, hunting crocodile or tilling the land. Crop cultivation on the flooded banks of the Omo river and its delta are essential to their subsistence. They grow sorghum, maize, pumpkins and beans.

The Daasanach are reluctant to adopt outside technology. Irrigation systems were introduced to this area by American missionaries in the 1960's, but these have not

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Since the turn of the century, these semi-nomadic people have moved freely across the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan, but this is now more restricted by border posts and entry formalities.

The Daasanach are surrounded by four ethnic groups, two of which are in Ethiopia (the Nyandatom and the Hamar) and are considered enemies. They are known for their fighting prowess. Cattle raids are celebrated, and



Prayer Points

- Pray for the Ethiopian churches in the diaspora & in Ethiopia to mobilize their people and resources to reach the Daasanach for Christ.
- Pray for the few Daasanach believers who have been trained to use evangelistic audiotapes.
- Ask God to break the strongholds keeping the Daasanach from following Jesus.
- Pray for God to meet their needs for healthcare, education & sustained livelihood through Community Health Evangelism; fewer than 5 % of adults are literate.
- Pray for the new church to grow in numbers and depth.

Information from The Joshua Project at www.joshuaproject.net; <http://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php/Daasanach>; <http://www.touristwall.com/the-daasanach-people-of-the-delta/>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daasanach_people; <http://afritorial.com/the-daasanach/>; <http://www.sim.org/index.php/content/daasanach>

"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
As it is written 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"

Romans 10: 14 - 15



For information on adopting the Daasanach

www.hornofafrica.org

www.engagers.org



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