


 Start / End

 Walking Route  
(ca. 2.2 km,  
ca. 28 – 40 min)

 landmarks

You will find sounding encounters along the way. Some might be more obvious than others. Some are planned some are not. Enjoy your time!

Jevanje Gardens

Khoja Jamatkhana Mosque

Koja

Moktar Daddah Street

Biashara Street

Bazaar Plaza

Revlon Plaza

Tubman Rd

McMillan Memorial Library

Jamia Mosque

Kigali Rd

Banda St

City Market

Stanbic Building/  
Former Torr's Hotel

Banda Street

Kimathi Street

New Sarova Stanley

Kenyatta Avenue

Kenya National Archives

Accra Rd

Luthuli Av

Koinange St

Muindi Mbingu St

Mama Ngina Street

Hilton Hotel

Watalii Ln

Tom Mboya St

GPO stage

Simba St

Aga-Khan Walk

Nairobi Cinema

Nkurumah Av

Holy Family Basilica

City Hall Way

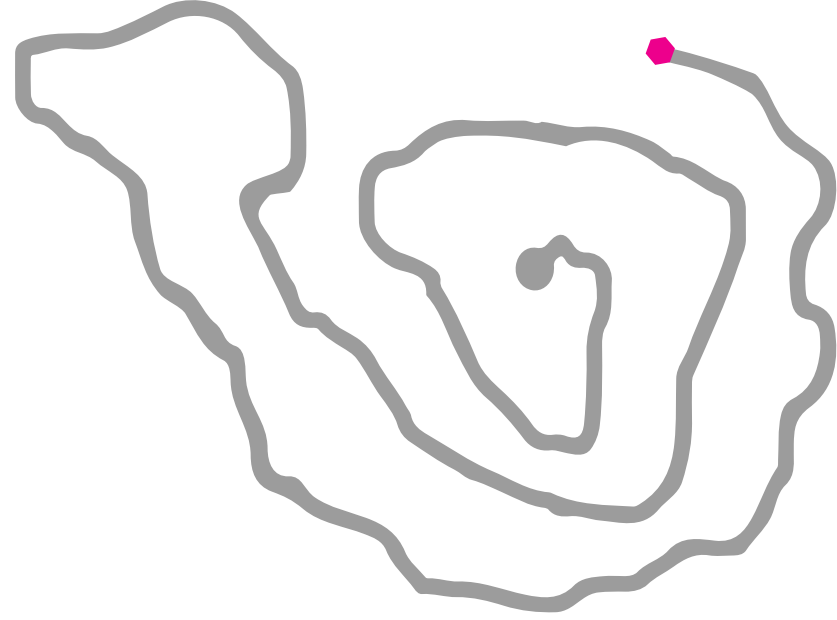
Moi Avenue

**Encare Nyarop and Byond**  
**by Junniah Wamaita**

# ear map

by Junniah Wamaita  
(Sound of Nairobi)

Development is the word to describe Nairobi after that. Highways built leading to areas like Ngong, Kikuyu and Thika. These roads all lead to the city and these roads are full of cars. To date nothing has changed. I actually think we have become so accustomed to the sounds of construction in Nairobi that we only notice when a new building pops up, we don't even notice while it's coming up. I find this a little funny.



The country continues steadily well until 1982 when there was an attempted coup. Sounds of vandalism, people breaking into shops to loot, screams in the streets and much more. Buses rushing out of town. I'm told one would enter any bus regardless of where it was headed, just to get out of the city. The scurry dies down in a day and the city goes back to normal on Monday.

1978, Mzee Kenyatta dies, and as I'm told, a deafening silence covers the city. People are speaking in whispers and worry fills the Kenyans as they wonder what will become of this young nation.

I hear vibrant and hopeful conversations in the streets of Nairobi, which at this time are quite well established. Traffic similar like today. Only the car mortors sounded different.

**Post – Independence**  
UHURUI! What does this mean for the sound of Nairobi?  
This is a time where the streets are domed with buildings with business establishments such as shops, the post office, and banks. This is a city with it's own soundscape. Insert screams from tortured innocent men accused of being conspirators of the Mau Mau. Then, after a few hours, the city returns to it's usual busy sound.

Commencing with a 1904 treaty and then another treaty in 1911, Maasai lands in Kenya were cut down by 60 percent when the British evicted them to allow space for settler ranches thus confining the Maasai people to present-day Narok and Kajiado districts.

After World War II, continuous expansion of the city angered both the indigenous Maasai and Agikuyu. This led to the Mau Mau Uprising in the 1950s, and the Lancaster House Conferences, which initiated a transition to Kenyan independence in 1963. In the early 50s, Mau Mau suspects would be brought to Nairobi City Market before they were separated to different detention camps.

## 1890-1920

It's around 1898 now, the railway has reached Nairobi. The Indian railroad workers start to build informal settlements. The Indians built the first bazaar closest to the rail supply depot, what we now see as Nairobi railways station. Their settlements were basically tents. But later authorities obtained this, they marked out plots and roads in the commercial area and sought government's permission to cut wood for scantlings to build the new shops to replace the scantily looking tent shops as well as to collect tax and revenue.

Can you hear the new sounds? Foreign accents? Indians selling, Agikuyu trading their crop. Maasai offering livestock. Kamba negotiating. The soundscape changes, the languages intermingle, hammering and building sounds emerge - but can you still hear the wind whistling?

Major construction is underway during this time. Major mosques, streets, hotels are all being built. In 1921, Nairobi had expanded immensely. It had 24,000 residents, of which half were native Africans. The next decade saw growth in native African communities in Nairobi, and they began to constitute a majority for the first time.

What does the city sound like now? Constructions everywhere, prayer calls in between, many footsteps. More hotels being built like the Old Torr's Hotel (1934) Khoja and Jamia Mosque (1922, 1925), and the Mcmillan library officially opened in 1931.

## 1920-1949

After World War II, continuous expansion of the city angered both the indigenous Maasai and Agikuyu. This led to the Mau Mau Uprising in the 1950s, and the Lancaster House Conferences, which initiated a transition to Kenyan independence in 1963.

Can you hear the new sounds? Foreign accents? Indians selling, Agikuyu trading their crop. Maasai offering livestock. Kamba negotiating. The soundscape changes, the languages intermingle, hammering and building sounds emerge - but can you still hear the wind whistling?

## 1950-1963

Can you hear the new sounds? Foreign accents? Indians selling, Agikuyu trading their crop. Maasai offering livestock. Kamba negotiating. The soundscape changes, the languages intermingle, hammering and building sounds emerge - but can you still hear the wind whistling?

The city of Nairobi was first established as a colonial settlement during the 1890s. The Maasai word for it is Enkare Nyarop, which means "place of cold waters" and alludes to the Nairobi River that runs through the city. Nairobi was established in 1899 as a rail supply depot on the Uganda-Kenya Railway by colonial administrators in British East Africa linking Mombasa to Uganda. It was chosen because its network of rivers could supply the camp with water. The town expanded quickly, and in 1905 it replaced Mombasa as the nation's capital.

Walking this route let's imagine together what the area sounded like over the years.

### Before 1890

Nairobi is a flat land, with just enough elevation to cool the temperatures. I'd like to think of Nairobi as once a shared land.

The Agikuyu believed that their land stretched to the outskirts of Ngong hills. The story goes that God escorted the first Gikuyu man to his home on top of Mount Kenya, Kiri-Nyaga, and showed him the entire landscape, pointing to the OI Donyo Sabuk (Kia Njahi) in the south-east, the Ngong Hills (Kia Mbiruiru) to the west, and the Aberdare Mountain ranges (Nyandarwa) to south.

Instead the Maasai believe that God sent them down from heaven on a bridge, and placed them and their cattle in North Turkana. Being the fierce warriors they are, the Maasai took over the Great Rift Valley region, stretching south towards Ngong hills, and later to Tanzania.

As you can imagine this must have been a contentious time, the Agikuyu have claim over this land and the Maasai are settling around the area for it's amenities. Over time, countless cattle raids and wars took place, but also intervals of peace then and there, as these two communities were known to intermarry, rarely though. For instance, my name is assumed to be derived from an ancestor who was once intermarried. But that's a conversation for another day.

Naming stories aside, what do you think this times sounded like? Take a minute and close your eyes. During a quiet time, can you hear the whistling of the wind and the sound of the river in the distance and the birds chirping freely? In a time of conflict, imagine the Maa war cries and the Agikuyu horns. Kamba snippets heard in the distance, for it is said that neighboring communities would work and fight together. Our own version of NATO.