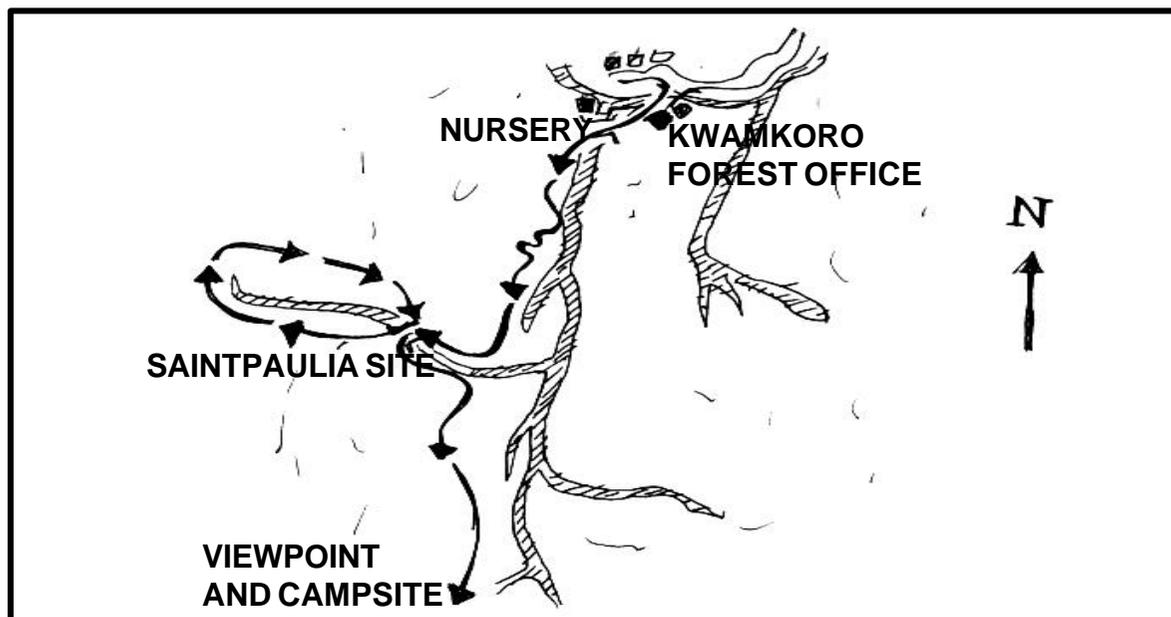


KWAMKORO FOREST TRAIL MAP



Amani Nature Reserve:

Reserve:

Kwamkoro Forest Trail

...IN A NUTSHELL

Kwamkoro Forest Trail composes of a 9 km drive on an all-weather road through beautiful agricultural landscapes of the East Usambaras. In addition, an easy six kilometer round-trip walk takes the visitor to one of the genetic birthplaces of the African violet - now a common houseplant across the world - and to a hilltop with fabulous views over the Lwengera Valley.

Total time required is about 3 - 4 hours (with a car). If walked camping at the far end of trail is recommended, where an opening with spectacular views can be found. If one chooses to spend a night in the forest, they are likely to hear the rainforest life in its full bloom, most active at night, dusk and dawn. An experience surely to remember!

FURTHER INFORMATION

The East Usambara Area Conservation Management Programme (EUCAMP) aims at protecting biodiversity and water sources while sustaining villager's benefits from the forest. The project is implemented by the Forestry and Beekeeping Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism with financial support from the Government of Finland and European Union.

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TRAIL GUIDE

The drive begins from Amani Nature Reserve headquarters. Turn right and take the main road towards Kwamkoro Tea Estate and Forest. There is a sign for Kwamkoro Forest Station (9 km) pointing the direction.

1.0 km: Note the clove trees sidelining the road on the left side.

2.3 km: As the road winds its way to the top of the ridge at the village of Shebo Meza, there is a fine view of Mt. Mlinga (1069m) behind you to the left (east) and the first glimpse of Kwamkoro Tea Plantations ahead.

3.7 km: Notice the cardamom, black pepper and clove plantations on both sides of the road.

5.1 km: The sprawling village of Mlesa is to the left and the site of the old Kwamkoro sawmill.

5.9 km: Cross a wooden bridge and stop at the barrier to Kwamkoro Tea Estate. You will have to sign the gatekeeper's book before you continue to drive along the valley with Lukungwi River on the left side.

6.4 km: Ignore a road to the right leading into tea. Cross small bridge and immediately after turn right. Keep to main road with tea on the left.

7.6 km: Reach Kwamkoro Tea Estate offices (on left) and tea factory (ahead on right, above road). Continue ahead over a small bridge, passing a junction and the factory on the right. As you leave the factory complex, the road climbs with tea on both sides and the Kwamkoro Forest lying beyond it.

9.0 km: Turn left off main road, over a concrete bridge to Kwamkoro Forest Office (signposted). Park at the office. If the offices are open, please introduce yourself to the forest officer before setting on the trail.

The walk begins at the Kwamkoro Forest Office, which is responsible for the southern and western sections of the Amani Nature Reserve. Walking takes place entirely inside the confines of the Amani Nature Reserve. After about a five minutes towards the forest on an overgrown road, you will see a nursery down to your right. The nursery produces for boundary planting, gap filling, and enrichment of indigenous species. The forest officers will be happy to show you around during working hours and explain the operations.

The path soon enters a forest following the old road. A small stream is to your right. You will also see a few big *Cephalosphaera usambaraensis* (Mtambaa) on the right, rising up pillar-like towards the canopy. This tall tree is endemic to Eastern Arc mountains.

The path crosses a bridge. Keep your ears open for bird calls: forest birds are notoriously difficult to see yet easy to hear. One of the most common is the Olive sunbird, who sounds like a squeaky wheel being cranked at different speeds. In the undergrowth by the path, you may also find some Wineberries *Rubus rosifolius*. They are edible. You may also pass some coconut-sized reddish fruits of *Allanblackia stuhlmannii* (Msambu). The seeds are eaten by bushpigs and dispersed through the forest by giant rats and squirrels. They are also used to make cooking oil.

After about 15 minutes on the trail, you will pass a large specimen of *Maranthes goetzeniana* (Ng'anga) on the right with a thick epiphyte coating. Further ahead, at a sharp bend to your left, you will see a dead trunk of the African camphorwood tree *Ocotea usambarensis*. This species has stopped regenerating in the East Usambara forests - leaving huge dead trunks behind to haunt the forest - and nobody knows why!

Continue on the road for about half a kilometer until you see a labeled *Polyscias fulva* tree on your right and a small path to the left. Walk down the small path on the left to a stream (about 30 m). On the rocks by the stream you will see some small African violet *Saintpaulia* plants. You are now at one of the genetic cradles of this popular house plant found across Europe and the Americas. It is endemic to the East Usambaras and some other scattered mountains of the Eastern Arc - as well as one of the mascots of the area's conservation efforts. Please do not damage or remove any parts of these plants!

Back on the road, at the next sharp bend to the left, the track bridges the stream again. You will enter the remains of the Kwamkoro Arboretum, an experimental plantation planted between 1960-1963, but now heavily reclaimed by the rainforest. For those interested in botany, there is a possibility for a 1.5 kilometer circular walk through the Arboretum. You may see the beginning of the walk entering the forest. The path winds horseshoe-like back on the direction you came from. It is however overgrown at parts so a guide and panga are recommended.

Continue for another 1.2 km along the old forest road to reach the top of the hill with a small clearing. This used to be the site for the old Forest Department Rest House. The house is now long gone, but the spot is recommended as a camping site for those interested in weathering a night in the rainforest. The views from the top of the hill - over the plain to the south and to the West Usambara Lwengera Valley - are fabulous, especially during a sunset that falls directly over the valley. And for those wishing to return, just retrace the steps back to the car, as well as onward to Amani Headquarters.