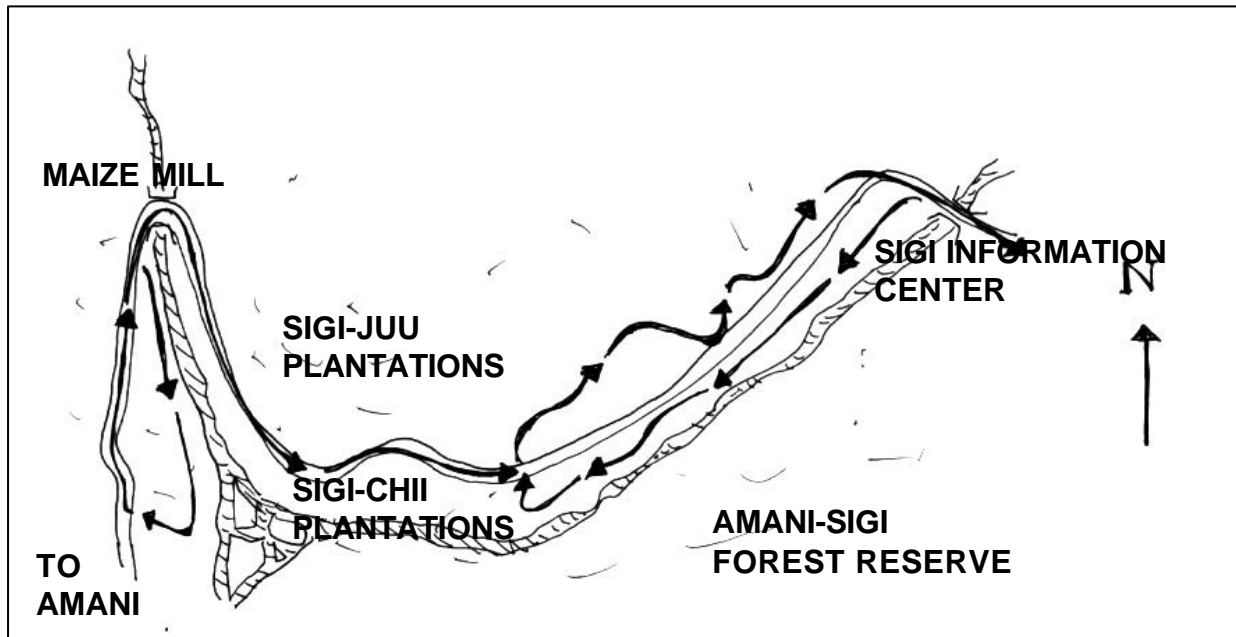


SIGI SPICE GARDEN AND CHEMKA VILLAGE TOUR MAP



Amaní Nature Reserve:

Sigi Spice Garden and Chemka Village Tour

...IN A NUTSHELL

The Sigi Spice Garden and Chemka Village Tour is a leisurely walk through palm, spice and fruit gardens passing through village agriculture, German relics and alongside the picturesque Sigi and Nangaruwe rivers.

Total time required is about 2 - 3 hours.

The route can also be walked in two separate parts. If walking the road from Sigi to Amani (8km), the Chemka Village part of the tour can be used as an interesting detour. And vice versa: if walking the road down from Amani to Sigi, the Sigi Spice Garden part of the tour can be an interesting discussion alongside the road.

Like with all other trails, this too passes a wide range of animals and plants - indigenous and exotic - too numerous to mention in the leaflet. So to get most out of it, a guide is recommended.

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

Unlike other trails, the Sigi Spice Garden and Chemka Village Tour begins from Sigi Information Center located at the entrance to Amani Nature Reserve, 8 kilometers from Amani Nature Reserve headquarter. The Information Center is located at a restored house which used to house the railway station-master. During German times, a branch of the main Tanga-Moshi railway operated all the way to Sigi to carry timber out of the lush forests of East Usambara to the coast. The main exploited species at the time were *Beilschimidia kweo* (Mfimbo) and *Milisia excelsa* (Mvule) - both species now carefully protected by Amani Nature Reserve.

Follow the path below the Information Center. It is signposted Sigi Trail with Sigi River to the right of the trail. The railway used to extend all the way to a water tank alongside the river where the trains filled their water tanks. A short walk further down the trail, you may also see a dam on Sigi river. It acted as a powersource for the timber industry during the colonial times.

A little ahead on the trail, you will cross a small stream. Many of the species here have escaped from the Sigi Spice Garden on the other side of the Sigi River - and now blend in to the lush forests.

Further up the path you will cross the Nagaruve river. This landmarks the boundary between Amani Nature Reserve and the public lands of the ChemKa village. Be careful when crossing the river: the stones can be slippery. Climb the path from the river. As you do this, notice the cultivation of coconut, cassava, cardamom, bananas, pawpaws, sweet potato, black pepper and cocoyams on both sides of the path. Ignore a minor path leading to the left of the village. It goes to Sigi Mountain trail - a demanding trail that should not be attempted without an experienced guide.

The main path however continues through some further village cultivation of coconuts, jack-fruit, bananas, lemons, cinnamon, coffee, pineapples and cassava. You will enter the Chemka village. Turn left at the top of the village and descend towards the river. Cross a wooden bridge over a rapid where you often see women washing clothes and children swimming in the water. After the bridge climb through some bamboo *Phyllostachis hennonis* and in 20 meters fork left to visit a now-disused hydro-electric power plant. It supplied electricity to the Amani Medical Research Center from 1935 until 1978 when the Amani area was connected to the main national grid.

Walk back from the power station. Take the path steering upwards to the left. After 150 meters, you will see the Amani-Sigi main road. Take the path down that joins the main road. If you are en route to Amani continue upwards; if you wish to return to Sigi and the Spice Garden part of the tour - continue downward.

If going down towards Sigi, follow the road for about 500m to the next bend, where you will see a water-powered maize mill grinding flour for the local Chemka and Kisiwani villagers. 15 meters up the road from the mill, a path to the left leads to the original **Nursery Area** of Amani Botanical Garden. The nursery and the botanical garden where planted by German botanists between 1902 and 1913 - originally composing of palmetum and plantations of mainly fruit trees and spices. Later on, additions were made, first by the British administration and then by the Tanzanian government in the 1960s. More conspicuous species are labeled. Also depending your time of the visit, edible fruits of one or more species may be available. Once again, only a few species are mentioned in the leaflet. The best option would be to get one of the guides, who have been trained in the botany of the area by the Amani Nature Reserve.

The path down to the nursery is lined with Mexican cypress *Cupressus lusitanica* saplings. Being close to the river you are also likely to see - or hear - river birds such as the Giant kingfisher, the Brown-hooded kingfisher and greyish Mountain wagtail and many more. You may also see on the plantations huge fruit bats and Blue monkeys which feed in the fruits of the trees and the palms during the right seasons. Baboons are another regular visitor to plantations such as these - much hated by the local farmers for the damage they cause on cultivated crop.

Returning to the main road make your way down to the bridge over Sigi River. Further down on the right is a Ministry of Agricultural tree nursery, where seedlings of many fruit and spice trees can be bought.

You now enter the **Sigi-Juu and Sigi-Chini Plantations** - the main part of Botanical Garden, with Sigi-Juu on the left side of the road and Sigi-Chini on the right side of the road. You may venture out in both plantations freely and explore the diverse botany of the plantations.

In **Sigi-Juu** we recommend that you look out particularly for the Mangosteen *Garcinia mangostana*. Some claim that it is the most delicious of all tropical fruits. You can also see clumps of Cardamom and breadfruit trees with fruit like small footballs that act as important emergency food sources in many tropical countries. In **Sigi-Chini** do not miss the "mother clove tree" *Syzygium aromaticum* close to the road - the first one planted in Amani in 1902. Most of the trees are labeled.

After exploring both of the plantations freely, just cross the road bridge over Sigi River and return back to the Information Center where you began.