



## GREAT CITIES OF AFRICA



# THE CITY OF KILWA KISIWANI



The Swahili Kingdoms were established in eastern Africa in 700 AD by the indigenous Swahili east Africans of the region. The Swahili Kingdoms were located alongside the Swahili Coast in East Africa from modern-day Somalia in the north down to modern-day Mozambique in the south. The entire Swahili Coast region was 3200 kilometers in length and borders East Africa.

Kilwa Kisiwani was one of the city settlements of the Swahili Kingdoms located on a modern-day eastern Tanzania coastal island established in around 800 AD by the Swahili people. Kilwa Kisiwani became another hub for trade where the Swahili merchants traded gold, silver, pearls, perfume, Persian goods and Chinese porcelain. At its peak Kilwa Kisiwani had 12,000 residents. At Kilwa Kisiwani stone buildings were built for the housing of the city

residents and also many ports and harbours to house their merchant ships. The Swahili people of Kilwa Kisiwani constructed the great mosque of Great Mosque of Kilwa in 900 AD. The Great Mosque of Kilwa included a large octagonal bathing pool, numerous prayer halls, a dome in the ceiling, interlocking circular patterns for decoration, ablution areas and stairways. In the nearby coastal town of Songa Mnara the Swahili people constructed at least 5 mosques, numerous homes and a palace. By 1000 AD the Swahili people of Kilwa Kisiwani had began minting their own coins which were used in trade. In 1310 AD the ruler of Kilwa Kisiwani who was an African Muslim named Sultan Al-Hasan Ibn Sulaiman constructed the large palace named Husini Kubwa. Husini Kubwa was made from coral stone and comprises over 100 rooms, the palace also overlooks the Indian Ocean.