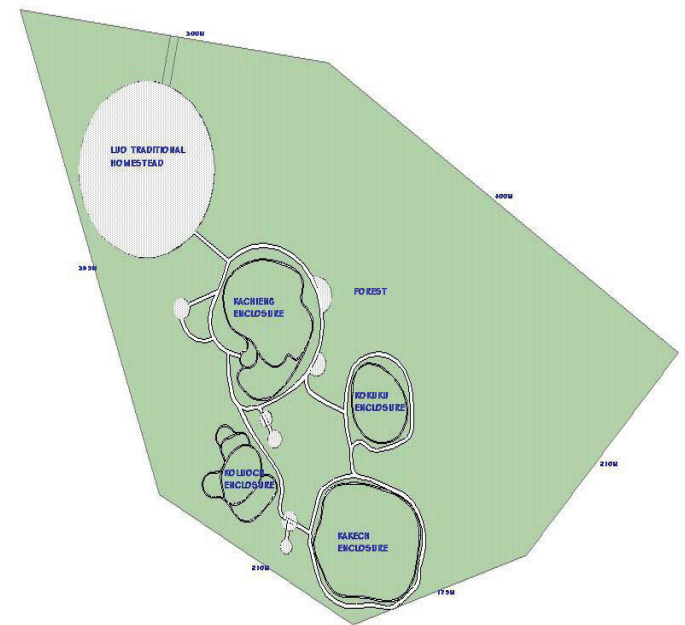


# Welcome to the (Dense, Scary) Jungle

The Luo tribe named this site Thimlich Ohinga, which translates to “frightening dense forest or jungle” in their Dholuo language. However, a walk along this trail will show you the beauty and significance that this land possesses.

Continuing along this path, the Kachieng Enclosure, will take you on a journey through Thimlich Ohinga’s rich history and its hopeful future. You are welcome to take the side paths leading to three smaller enclosures, as shown on the map to the right. Although those enclosures do not offer interpretation, they give you extra time to reflect on Thimlich Ohinga’s natural wonder.



## Please Stay On the Trail!

For your safety and the safety of the many animals that call Thimlich Ohinga home.

# 8 Years of History

Oral Kenyan tradition describes various Bantu tribes as Thimlich Ohinga's original creators. However, frequent migrations and abandonments led the site to have many different occupants.

The Luo, the tribe that gave Thimlich Ohinga its name, took control of Ohinga's 2 acres in the 8th century. They remained until the beginning of the 19th century, after which the grounds were abandoned.

Many local tribes, including the Luo, Wagire, Kabuch-Kachieng, Kanyamkago, Kadem, and Kamyawa, have called Thimlich Ohinga home and shared in creating its cultural legacy.

## Thimlich Ohinga Now

Thimlich Ohinga was named a National Monument in 1981, and since then has been under the care of the National Museums of Kenya.

Thimlich Ohinga is currently under review to become a Unesco World Heritage Site, which would allow these historic grounds to be protected forever.

# How Did They Do That?

**Take a close look at the walls surrounding you.**

**Do you notice anything missing?**



These immense walls were built without the use of mortar, exemplifying the traditional native dry-stone building technique. Each stone was carefully placed on top of or between other stones to snugly fit together, like pieces of a giant puzzle.

Just imagine how much teamwork it took to gather so many stones and create such an intricate structure!

# Life at Thimlich Ohinga



Luo Homestead.

The small enclosures seen along this path and pictured to the right are cattle kraals, where livestock was devotedly cared for.

The narrow entryway served as security for the cattle. If Thimlich Ohinga was ever raided, the cows would have to leave the kraal in a single-file line, slowing down the robber.

The Luo Homestead located near the site entrance was created in the 1980s to show what Thimlich Ohinga looked like when occupied. Feel free to peek inside them on your way out!

Evidence throughout the site proves that Thimlich Ohinga was once a busy community. The best indication is a blacksmith area, complete with furnace and iron smelting stones. Experts believe that Ohinga was also a local hub for the exchange of goods, such as pottery that was made on-site.



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# They Knew How to Have Fun, Too

## Care for a Game, Anyone?



If the stone in front of you and pictured above look familiar, it is because the game favored by Thimlich Ohinga residents hundreds of years ago is still a favorite today!

The stone is an early version of the popular East-African game Bao, a form of the Mancala board game. It seems that despite the responsibilities of life at Thimlich Ohinga, there was still time for leisure activities!



Bao, or Mancala, as it looks today.

# Can Thimlich Ohinga Survive Without Our Help?

No, it cannot. Although Thimlich Ohinga has endured many centuries, the years have left a toll. Weather and human contact have caused sections of the wall to crumble, and overgrown grass is popping its head through cracks in the stones. Preservation of this cultural landmark is essential to its continued existence.



Fallen trees are possible threats to the site.

As a World Heritage Site, Thimlich Ohinga will receive the care that it deserves, and will become an educational resource for anyone wanting to learn more about the memorial's history and geology.



A collapsed section of wall.



Weeds poke through the stone.

# The Mysteries That Remain



Preserving Thimlich Ohinga will assist researchers who seek to answer lingering questions about the site. They still do not know exactly what tribe built the walls, whether Thimlich Ohinga's original purpose was fortification, or whether it was ever involved in conflicts.

Another mystery lies in the etchings above the gates to this enclosure. No one has been able to translate these markings. Take a close look at them as you leave this trail. What do you think they mean?

Is the engraving above the gate a warning, or maybe the enclosure name?

# One Community. One Legacy. One Future.



The local community having fun at Thimlich Ohinga.

Thimlich Ohinga was built through hard work, a dedicated and unified community, and the hands of many. These same components are being utilized again to preserve the site for today's global audience and future generations.

Residents of the South Nyanza province will be on the front lines of Thimlich Ohinga's conservation, and are excited to teach others of its wonder. Ask the visitor's center how you can share and preserve Thimlich Ohinga's cultural legacy!



The global community also cares about this heritage site. American museum professionals are helping us tell Thimlich Ohinga's story.



Citizens from across Kenya gather to learn how to keep Thimlich Ohinga's legacy alive.