

# WELCOME , TO THIMLICH OHINGA



Follow the trail to see the great stone walls of Thimlich Ohinga.

The trail is about 0.5 miles long and takes you around six stone enclosures.

Look out for the interpretive signs along the way. They will tell you more about the history and culture of Thimlich Ohinga.

Feel free to ask the site staff if you have any questions.

And remember...



Do not feed the monkeys  
—they may bite!



Please stay on the  
trail; it helps  
preserve the natural  
environment



Enjoy this wonderful place!

# Who Lived Here?

The cultural history of Thimlich Ohinga spans from about 500 years ago to the present day. Throughout the course of its history, Thimlich Ohinga has been used by various groups of people.

Archaeologists believe that Thimlich Ohinga was occupied first by the Bantu for around 200 years, then by the Luo for the last three centuries.

Oral history of the Luo, however, suggests that Thimlich Ohinga has been occupied by both the Luo people and a mixed-race group known locally as Kagwa.



## Try It!

Look around you. What do you think this site was used for? Why do you think its original inhabitants built the structures this way?

# A Day in the Life

Feel the warm sun on your skin, listen to the sounds of the animals calling to you from the forest, smell the fresh air...

**Now imagine what it was like to live your daily life here at Thimlich Ohinga.**



This is an example of a board game, which the site's inhabitants created out of this stone. Does it remind you of any games you play at home?

We can deduce that the inhabitants of Thimlich Ohinga lived a communal lifestyle, based on the layout of the homesteads and stone enclosures. Residents lived in huts made of mud and thatch and cooked in some of the smaller stone enclosures. The community most likely kept its cattle inside the inner enclosures, or *kraals*, to protect them from predators. The entrance gates were low, a defensive mechanism, to allow a limited number of people to enter at once.

## Try It!

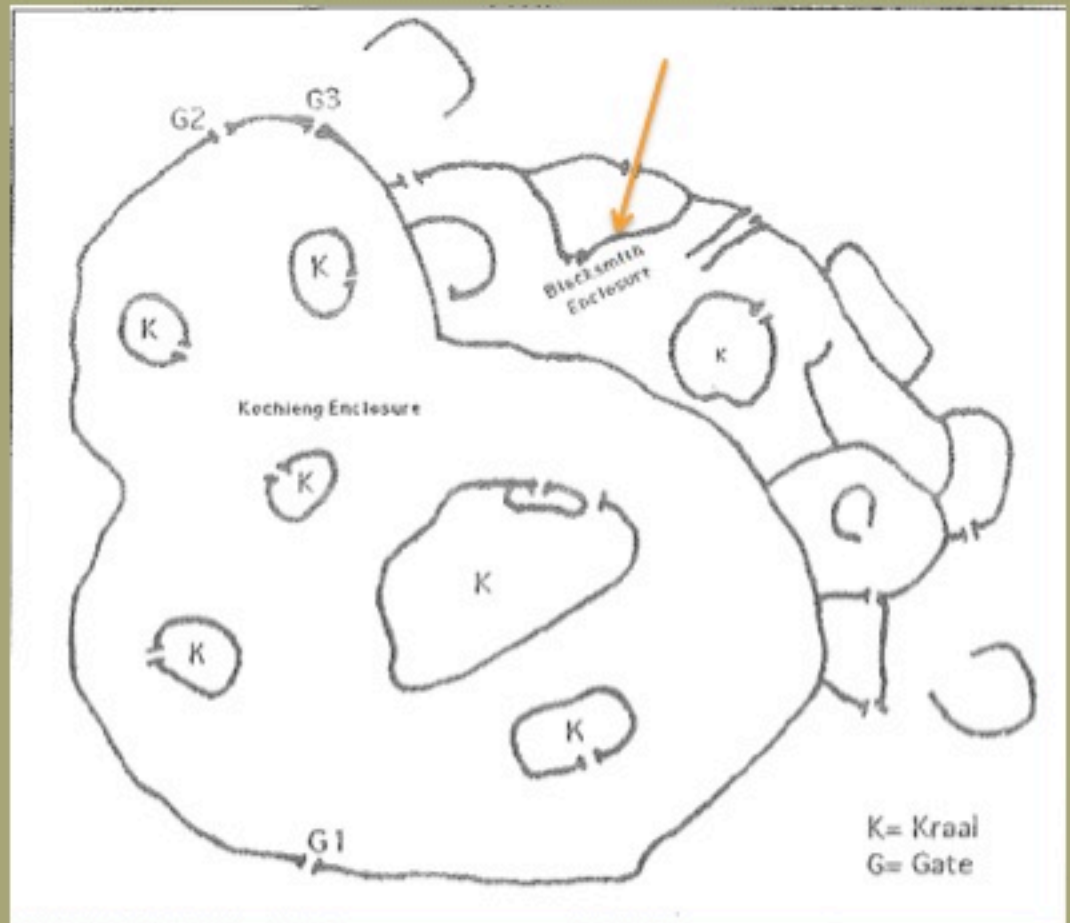
The inhabitants of Thimlich Ohinga had to grind millet to make some of their food. It was hard work! Try grinding some corn or millet on the stones below.

# Clink, Clink, Clink...

Did you hear that? If you lived here at Thimlich Ohinga 200 years ago, you would have heard the sound of the blacksmith creating tools out of metal. Archaeologists have uncovered numerous pieces of iron and broken pieces of *luyeres*, or smoking bellows, which a blacksmith would have used on the job.

Try It!

Feel free to touch some of the iron pieces below!



# Set in Stone

---

See these stone walls? They were more difficult to build than you might think. Each stone was collected and individually shaped to fit together like a puzzle.



There is no mortar or cement between the stones to hold them together, yet the walls remain standing nearly 500 years after they were first built!

**Try It!**

Try lifting the sample stone below. How heavy do you think it is? How long do you think it took to build one wall?

# Preserving History

---



As strong as these walls are, they still require regular maintenance. When stones fall down, they are re-fitted by local stone masons and the wall is restored as much as it can be.

Trees, like this one, sometimes grow through the walls, causing damage to the structure. Further damage has been caused by weather and human activity. Do your part to preserve Thimlich Ohinga: **Please do not touch the walls or stones.** We want Thimlich Ohinga to last another 500 years!



# Connections Around the World



What makes Thimlich Ohinga great?

Perhaps it is the level of human innovation and achievement visible in its stone walls. Like the pyramids of Giza or Stonehenge, the walls of Thimlich Ohinga stand as reminders of human capability and living examples of cultural history.



# Our World, Our Heritage

Kenya has submitted an application with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) to make Thimlich Ohinga a World Heritage Site. This would mean financial gains for Kenya and greater protection and conservation of the site.



Try It!

Lift the flaps to learn about other  
UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Kenya

Fort Jesus

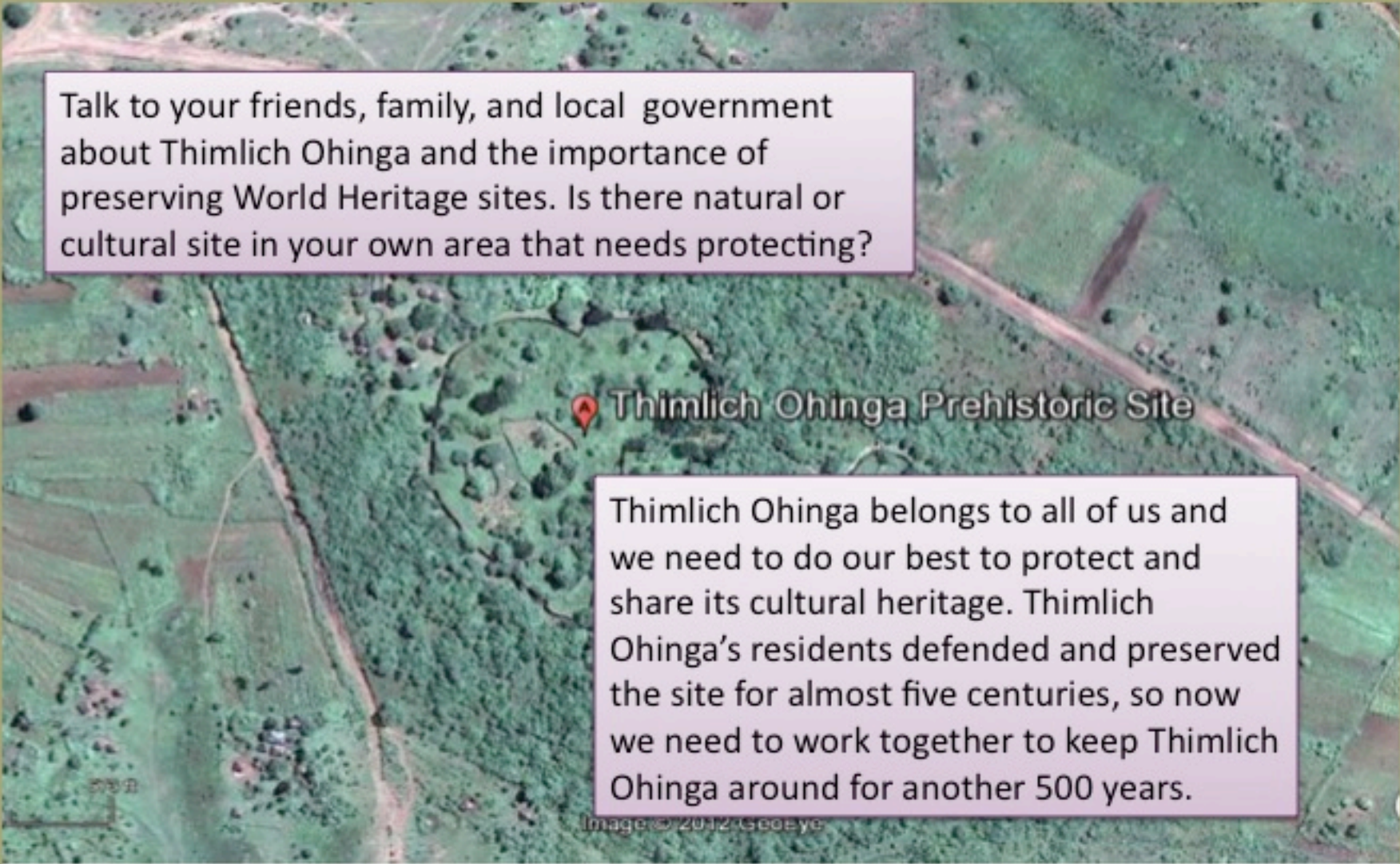
Mount Kenya  
National Park

Lamu Old Town

Lake Turkana  
National Parks



# Preserve Locally, Share Globally

An aerial satellite image of a landscape. A river flows from the top left towards the bottom left. In the center, a red pin marks a location labeled 'Thimlich Ohinga Prehistoric Site'. The terrain is a mix of green vegetation and brownish soil. There are some small structures or ruins visible near the river and the marked site.

Talk to your friends, family, and local government about Thimlich Ohinga and the importance of preserving World Heritage sites. Is there natural or cultural site in your own area that needs protecting?

Thimlich Ohinga Prehistoric Site

Thimlich Ohinga belongs to all of us and we need to do our best to protect and share its cultural heritage. Thimlich Ohinga's residents defended and preserved the site for almost five centuries, so now we need to work together to keep Thimlich Ohinga around for another 500 years.

Image © 2012 Google