

Tumbili and the Very Fun Homestay

This is Tumbili. He is an African monkey. As we all know, monkeys are very curious and all too often, a bit mischievous. He is very excited that you are going to do a homestay in an African home. Tumbili's greatest desire is to get inside an African home! Of course, he wants to get in to see if there are any BANANAS he can eat, or any GLITTERY THINGS he can play with, or any PAPER he can rip up. He's hoping you can give him some insider information about the insides of your homestay!



Tumbili wants to know where your homestay is. Are you in the city (monkeys love cities – there's lots of stuff around) or are you in the countryside (monkeys love the countryside – there's lots of food to eat)? What's your homestay house like? Is it big with big windows (easier for monkeys to get in)? Is it in a building – a 'flat' as we usually call it here in Africa? Is it a nice, cosy, small farmhouse? Whatever it is like, it's nice to have a roof over your head. Poor Tumbili just lives in the trees! He gets wet when it rains.

Tumbili wonders where you are going to sleep at your homestay. You may have had your own room at home, but Africans think it is much more fun to sleep in the same room together. Your family may be given one room to sleep in or you may share a room with your brothers and sisters... or even with the children of the homestay family. It's nice to be close to others at night... you won't get lonely! Africans hate to be alone, they really love other people around. Sometimes it can be a bit noisy, but don't let that bother you. Tumbili would really like to jump on your bed, but remember: NO MORE MONKEYS JUMPING ON THE BED!!!



I bet you're wondering about the toilet. Tumbili couldn't care less about toilets, he goes wherever he feels like it! Some African homes, especially in the city, have bathrooms with toilets, although they may look different from what you are used to. Some are holes in the floor. You get to squat over this potty. It's a SQUATTY POTTY! This will certainly get you to exercise your leg muscles! Don't worry, you'll get used to it soon. If you do a homestay upcountry, there may be a "long drop" outhouse to use. These work great. Just don't take a long drop into the long drop!!

Tumbili is waiting impatiently to hear about the BEST part of the house... the kitchen!! Little monkeys think about food all the time. Does your homestay kitchen have a stove and a refrigerator? Many African homes do, but in others the cooking is done over a charcoal fire, or with gas or electric burners. Whichever way, the food gets cooked. But you must be careful not to get burned if there is an open fire. Some African homes don't bother with a refrigerator. That's because the mama shops everyday in the market and all the food that is prepared gets eaten. There's always somebody who will finish up the food (and if not, Tumbili will gladly volunteer). To some Africans, having a refrigerator means you are selfish. You should share all the food and never have leftovers to store. We can learn a lot from Africans about hospitality. What can you



do to help your new African mama in the kitchen? I'm sure if you ask she will give you a job to do. The more help in the kitchen, the sooner the meal will get on the table! No grumbling if the meal is later than you are used to.

Apart from eating, Tumbili's favorite thing to do is play with his monkey friends in the trees. Hopefully during your homestay you will find some friends to play with, too. Many African children go to school all day, but there may be some around to play with. Don't be afraid if African children want to look at you and touch your hair. They are just curious, like Tumbili, and they like looking. But they really like running



around chasing each other, just like you do. They have some great toys, like balls made out of plastic bags and tires to roll. You may think it looks easy to roll a tire, but just try it! You'll see it takes a lot of practice. It's nice to show your toys to your new friends so they can play with them. Remember to put your toys away when you all are finished playing. When an African child sees something like a toy just lying around on the ground, he thinks no one is using it so he might as well take it and play with it. This isn't stealing, he's happy to give it back to you when you say you are ready to use it again.

To avoid any misunderstanding about your toys, it's best to take them inside when you are finished playing. Also, little monkeys LOVE to grab anything lying on the ground, but their favorite game is "Mr. Destructo". So don't leave your toys where Tumbili can get them!

Tumbili thinks your homestay is super fun and he wishes he could stay with you, but at the end of the day, there's no one like mommy and daddy to be with, even for a monkey. Whatever your adventures during your homestay, mommy and daddy will be there at the end of the day to talk about all that you are learning.

