

The Home Forum®

We step back in time with the Hadza

**kid
space**

MAGAMA hands his bow and arrow to 14-year-old Travis. The arrow is tipped with a sharp metal barb. Travis lets fly, and his arrow lands close to the target, a burlap bag lying in the African dust.

Magama and the other Hadza hunters clap politely.

Travis is the best shot among our group of American visitors, but among Hadza hunters, he would probably be the guy who cleans the carcass.

Magama takes us for a walk in the bush. With eight Americans (my family and another) trailing behind, it's not surprising when he doesn't find game.

"I wanted him to come back with a dead moose," 8-year-old Connor says. "Oh, they don't live in Africa - a dead antelope or something." Walking back into the Hadza camp, Connor spots a Cape buffalo skull. "Cool!" Through our translator, Magama tells us he shot it last week. Archery isn't a game for the Hadza. They are in a real-life "Survivor," where everyone plays for keeps.

What is a hunter-gatherer?

The Hadza are hunter-gatherers who live in Tanzania, in east Africa. (See map on page 19.) Hunter-gatherers search for their food. Instead of growing fruits and vegetables on a farm, they gather wild plants to eat. Instead of raising animals like cattle or sheep, hunter-gatherers get meat by killing wild animals. The men usually hunt, while women and children usually do the gathering. Hadza men hunt animals like zebra, giraffe, and impala (a medium-size antelope). Sometimes they steal animals that lions have killed. Hadza women and children gather berries, roots, and other wild plants.



PHOTOS BY PAMELA S. TURNER

OPEN-AIR LIVING ROOM: Eight American tourists visit a group of Hadza hunter-gatherers in northern Tanzania. These Hadza were paid to host the visitors.

Our families have come to visit the Hadza while on safari in Africa. From our campsite, it is an hour's ride in a four-wheel-drive truck and a short hike to reach the Hadza camp.

The Hadza camp is very simple. The Hadza sit on impala and gazelle skins spread around a central fire. There is a small dome made of twigs and grasses. It looks like a giant bird's nest turned upside down. It isn't much of a shelter, but this is the dry season, so little is needed. Most Hadza sleep under the stars. The lack of furniture, gear, and knickknacks is very practical. Hunting and gathering means moving around to find food, and it's a lot easier if you don't have much to carry.

If Travis had shot something tastier than a burlap bag, we would need a fire to cook it. The Hadza show us how to make fire the old-fashioned way. Numbile, a Hadza man, helps 8-year-old Josh set an arrow shaft (minus the arrowhead) on a flat piece of wood surrounded by bits of dry grass. When Josh rubs his hands together very fast - the way you make a long skinny snake out of Play Dough - the tip of the spinning arrow shaft heats up. A tiny plume of smoke rises from the dry grass around the tip. Num-

bile puts his head to the ground and, blowing carefully, nurses the spark into a little blaze. Josh beams. "Look, Mom, no matches!"

Humans were all like Hadza, once

There are only about 750 Hadza in Tanzania. Most of them live in the north near Lake Eyasi. "Probably only a few hundred Hadza support themselves entirely by foraging" (hunting and gathering), says James O'Connell, an anthropologist at the University of Utah who studies the Hadza. Anthropologists study people and their way of life. Over the years, many anthropologists have come to Tanzania to learn about the Hadza. Why are scientists interested in a lifestyle that few people lead?

We're so used to eating hamburgers and French fries, we forget that raising cows and growing potatoes are relatively new ways to put food on the table. Scientists say that fully modern humans have been around for 100,000 years or so. But only for the past 11,000 years have people been farming and raising animals. Before that, all humans were hunter-gatherers. For 90 percent of our history, we were like the Hadza.

The Hadza group we are visiting has six men, seven women, and one 3-year-old boy. The boy, Numbu, is very shy and hides behind his mother. He wears shorts and a few strings of beads. We go out to gather food with Numbu's mother and her sister. Not far from camp, they show us bushes covered with the tiny orange berries they call "madabe" (mah-DAH-bee). The berries taste like dried apricots. Numbu joins in. He



HIGH-TECH MIRROR: Paul Blumenthal uses his digital camera to show Hadza how they look. Their shelter is behind.

pulls off low-hanging fruit, and, with a little grin, pops them into his mouth.

"During the wet season, Hadza kids as young as 5 can provide half of their daily nutrition by themselves," says Dr. O'Connell. "They take stuff that is easy to pick, shallow-growing roots, fruit, sometimes small game like [baby] birds. Little kids aren't very good as hunters, but they are good collectors."

Making a connection with face paint

What's a fun activity you can share in the African bush with people you can't really communicate with?

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REAL-LIFE 'SURVIVOR' SKILLS: Eight-year-old Connor takes aim at a burlap-bag target with Magama's (at right) bow and arrow. The shaft of an arrow (minus its barbed tips) doubles as a fire-starting device.

Be a suburban hunter-gatherer

DAD roams garage sales, Mom's a bargain shopper. Your sister cruises eBay, and your brother is always after the perfect rock for his collection. At heart, we're still hunter-gatherers.

If you'd like to try collecting wild food instead of Pokémon cards, start in your own backyard. Parts of cactuses, cat-tails, chicory, dandelions, day lilies, and violets – just to name a few – are edible. Be sure you know exactly which plants are safe to eat, and make sure that no herbicides have been applied and no dogs have been walked there. If you're in doubt, ask someone who knows – a parent, teacher, or naturalist. Don't ever eat wild mushrooms, as some of them are poisonous.

Here's a tasty dandelion recipe courtesy of chef John Townsend. You can weed your lawn – and feed your family!

DANDELION SALAD

- 4 cups dandelion leaves, rinsed well (or mix dandelion greens into other salad greens)
- 1/4 cup dried cherries or cranberries
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans

VINAIGRETTE DRESSING

- 1 peach, peeled, or 1 cup wild berries
- grated peel of 1/2 orange (don't grate the white part, just the orange skin)
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup raspberry vinegar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

Combine "dandelion salad" ingredients in a large bowl. Then mix all the "vinaigrette dressing" ingredients in a blender. Pour the desired amount of dressing over the salad, and serve.



LILIAN AKWISOMBE – STAFF

prefer a traditional lifestyle.

Still, traditional Hadza life is hard, and it is made harder by their neighbors. As we said goodbye to the Hadza, a herd of goats wandered across our path.

"There are many more pastoralists [people who graze goats and cattle] today," O'Connell says. "They compete with the Hadza for water and land." Where goats and cattle graze, there are fewer wild animals to hunt and fewer plants to supply food. When farmers and goat-herders move into Hadza areas, the Hadza may be pushed onto drier land with fewer animals and plants.

Tourist visits such as ours give the Hadza extra income, but the money isn't always helpful. "The cash leads to alcohol abuse," O'Connell says.

Hadza men sometimes spend their money in bars, and neglect their families.

Challenging a lion for his meal

Compared with the rules of the modern world, the rules of the bush are simple: You have to survive, and in order to survive, you must face dangerous animals.

"We would look for lion kills on the basis of where vultures are landing," O'Connell recalls of one stay with the Hadza, "and then walk up and try to take the kill from the lions.... That can be very scary, walking up with a Hadza man when there are several lions and hyena on the kill, and it's just you and your camera and him and his one bow. And he is fully confident he is going to take that meat away. He has no doubt. We watched Hadza hunters get meat this way 20 times, and each time they drove off the lions."

What if the lion doesn't back off? "That happened one time," O'Connell says. "The lion got killed and eaten." A wise lion knows the Hadza are masters of the bush.

Pamela S. Turner

■ For more information on visiting the Hadza, see: www.thompsonsafaris.com

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Everybody likes art, so our friend Lynne has brought face paints. To demonstrate, I paint a flower on 12-year-old Kelsey. "Would you like me to paint a flower on your cheek?" I ask through our translator. "No," says Numbu's aunt. "I want a Cape buffalo." I end up painting an entire African savannah on the cheeks of the Hadza women: a zebra, an antelope, an eland, a baboon, and a lion. Not wanting to be outdone, the Hadza men ask for bigger animals: elephant, rhino, and hippo.

We have a problem: no mirrors! The solution is very high-tech. Paul and Rob take photos of everyone's cheeks with Paul's digital camera, and show the Hadza their "body art" in the viewfinder. Shy Numbu refuses a face painting, but gazes happily at the camera images.

Settlers push Hadza out

Do Hadza want to live far from planes, phones, and digital cameras? Our Hadza hosts seem amused by our electronic gadgets, not envious. The Tanzanian government has tried several times to get the Hadza to settle in villages. It has built houses and schools and given the Hadza farmland. However, many Hadza seem to

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An article of special interest to young people

Playing soccer

JEN HAD A BIG SMILE on her face when she shared the news. Her soccer team had just won second place in the regionals. They'd won the state championship three years in a row, but this was the first year they were able to compete in the regionals. So this was a really special thing.

Jen has been playing soccer since she was four years old, so she knows a lot about the game. Here are some thoughts she shared.

"Winning the regional was really satisfying. We worked so hard, and no one really expected us to do that well.

"I prayed about those games. I prayed that we'd all do our best. Then we'd glorify God with our skill and talent. I was proud, because our team did their best. And I did the best I could do, too."

Prayer is important in Jen's life. So it's natural for her to pray about playing soccer. Jen knows that she's God's child and that God made her spiritual and perfect. She knows God loves her and always takes care of her. (And everyone else, too, of course.) So Jen feels connected to God.

Jen has a favorite verse in the Bible that helps her think about her playing. It's Matthew 5:16, and it says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

"I like this verse," Jen said, "because it always reminds me that my purpose in playing is to glorify God. I don't play sports to make myself happy or to be able to be proud or to brag. I'm not hoping that others will think or say that I'm so good at sports. I don't play to glorify myself but to glorify God. He gave me all my talents. When I do well and use my talents, I'm doing what God made me to do. I'm using God's gifts to me. I like to think about that.

"I always pray before a game. I pray to do my best, but even if I don't do my best, I know that God still loves me. God always loves us no matter if we win or lose.

"One time our team was playing a really good team in a tournament game. No one thought we'd win. Everyone expected we'd get blown out. I thought, 'We have nothing to lose. Nothing to be afraid of. God will be there, and God will watch over us and protect

us.' I think we all felt free just to play our best. Well, we won that game 1-0. And no one got hurt in that game.

"Another time, a girl on our team got an ankle injury. She was one of our strongest defenders. Everyone was worried, because they thought her ankle was broken. I thought about how God made her, and how He made her spiritual and perfect, too. God was loving her and always protecting her. He wouldn't let an injury happen. So what everyone was thinking and worrying about had to be a mistake. I prayed that God would show us all that He wouldn't let her be hurt, so we didn't need to worry. They took the girl to the doctor, and there wasn't anything wrong with her ankle. She just had some bruises and was back playing soccer in a week."

Jen talked about how she feels when her team loses. "Sometimes we lose a game, of course. I'm always disappointed. But if I did my best, I'm not ashamed. The other team must have had better skills. I know that I can work on my skills and improve. I know I'll always have another chance to play and do better."

Jen said she has never had a soccer injury. "I pray about this, too. I don't beg God to take care of me. I just know God is always protecting me. He is always keeping me safe. I know God is a comforter, and so He'll protect and comfort me. I know that God loves me."

Jen has played soccer for 10 years. Here's her advice for kids who want to play a better game: "Don't give up on yourself. You might think you're not very good. But keep practicing. You can always do better. Don't let fear and discouragement get in the way of doing something you love to do. Don't ever give up."

'When I do well and use my talents, I'm doing what God made me to do.'

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber... The Lord is thy keeper.

Psalm 121:2, 3, 5

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