

THE WEEKENDER

WEEKEND TRAVEL & FOOD JOURNAL

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 7-8 2007

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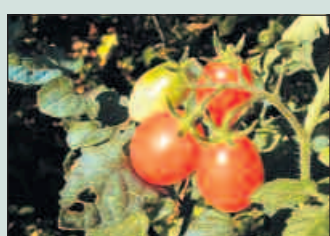
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ALL AT SEA: Fisherman preparing for the catch of the day in the coastal town of Tanga, the town that Tanzanian tourism may have forgotten. Picture: BARBARA ADAIR

Tea and taking time in Tanga

BARBARA ADAIR takes the dusty road seldom travelled in Tanzania

ON AN Air Tanzania jet I travel to Arusha in Tanzania, the beginning of the sexy, "this is the real Africa", northern circuit: the Serengeti Plains, the flamingo Lake Manyara, the Ngorongoro Crater. Cowboys sit astride their 4x4s outside the numerous bureaux de change, dollars flash neon and passing

pretty girls laugh. Here the northern circuit begins and ends, Arusha. But from there I never did drive the trendy road. I went to Tanga instead.

Tanga is on the west coast of Tanzania. It is a coastal town. An estuary makes up the harbour. It is ramshackle and run down. The overhanging German mansions that line one side of the shore front are not as white as they used to be; the plaster in the

walls bubbles black from the sweaty salt sea, vivid green creepers grow up between rutted brickwork and decorate the handiwork of German conquerors. Most tourists never go to Tanga; they may pass through it on their way to the resorts at Pangani, but even then they do not need to stop in this town, they can just pass it by; move on to endless beaches where the waves are safe and the prepacked holiday resorts are clean.

It takes a very long time to get to Tanga, maybe because it is the kind of town that never was, never has been and never is. From Arusha it is approximately 370km. The journey by car takes six hours. You can fly to Tanga – but who flies to Tanga?

He does not lean backwards for the chair does not have a back. His spine holds him

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