

# Geology of the Serengeti

The Serengeti National park in north-western Tanzania is one of the most famous National Parks in Africa.. Within this huge, protected area, the diverse ecosystems - including that of the savannah grasslands - are shaped by fascinating geology, from some of the oldest rocks on the planet to rich, volcanic soils!



## Volcanic Nutrients

The various grasses found in the Serengeti plains are fed by thin - but nutrient filled - soils. A lot of the nutrients found within the soils come from volcanic ash carried far and wide on the wind from nearby volcanoes. The grasses that grow here provide perfect grazing grounds for huge numbers of herbivores such as wildebeest. Some regions are even rich in nutrients



such as calcium thanks to their neighbouring volcanoes, which can help grazing animals develop strong bones!

## Ancient rocks

Underlying the soils, and sometimes even seen creeping through, are some of the oldest rocks on the planet. Rocks such as greenstones and granite-gneiss were formed in the Precambrian era, with some being almost 3 billion years old! Ancient movements in the Earth's tectonic crust allowed these molten rocks formed under high pressure and temperature in the mantle to move upwards, where they cooled and solidified. Over long periods of time, wind and rain have since weathered away some of the top layers of softer rock, leaving the ancient rocks exposed. These piles of huge boulders are called 'kopjes' (or koppies) and are extremely important habitats for many plants and animals by providing food, shelter and water.



## Step back in time!

If you're lucky enough to live close enough to Dynamic Earth, why not take a walk back in time by visiting the front of the building (which you can do even while we are closed). Starting from the top, walk down the ramp, examining the rocks to discover their age and their story. See if you can find the ash, granite and gneiss in amongst all the other interesting Scottish rocks. Share any photos from your visit with us!