Mombasa is the second-largest city in Kenya, situated on the east coast bordering the Indian Ocean. The city is a regional cultural, economic and tourism hub. The city is the host to the Coast Province Administration. Mombasa’s large deepwater port and international airport make it an important trading centre due to its strategic position. The city centre is located on Mombasa Island and sprawls to the surrounding mainlands. The island is separated from the mainland by two creeks: Tudor Creek and Kilindini Harbour. It is connected to the mainland to the north by the Nyali Bridge, to the south by the Likoni Ferry and to the west by the Makupa Causeway, alongside which runs the Kenya-Uganda Railway. The port serves both Kenya and countries of the interior, linking them to the Ocean.

The exact founding date of the city is unknown; Swahili scholars place the founding of Mombasa as 900 A.D. It was already a prosperous trading town in the 12th century and most of the early information on Mombasa comes from Portuguese chroniclers writing in the 16th century. The city is a gateway into East and Central Africa through the port. Huge investment in the Port of Mombasa has improved cargo handling efficiency, in addition to being the cruise port of choice along Africa’s east coast. It is home to major manufacturing and warehousing companies due to its proximity to the port and transport infrastructure. During the pre-modern period, Mombasa was an important centre for the trade in spices, gold, and ivory. Its trade links reached as far as India and China and oral historians today can still recall this period of local history. Throughout the early modern period, Mombasa was a key node in the complex and far reaching Indian Ocean trading networks.

Mombasa is a centre of coastal tourism in Kenya. Mombasa Island itself is not a main attraction, although many people visit the Old Town and Fort Jesus. The Nyali, Bamburi, and Shanzu beaches are located north of the city. The Shelly, Tiwi, and Diani beaches are located south of Mombasa served by several luxury beach hotels. The Mama Ngina drive is perhaps the most visited place in Mombasa; the three kilometer scenic seafront provides a breathtaking view of the ocean. The northern shoreline is renowned for its vibrant 24-hour entertainment offers, including both family entertainment and watersports activities. A wide range of restaurants, bars and nightclubs offer a broad range of culinary specialties and diverse musical cultures. The 2007 World Cross Country Championships were held in Mombasa. Mombasa Marathon is competed annually and the town also hosts the biennial classic edition of Safari Rally and annually a Kenya National Rally Championship round.