Mozambique

Mozambique is one of Africa’s up-and-coming hot-spots, with stunning beaches, excellent diving and magical offshore islands. Go snorkelling around the Bazaruto Archipelago, sail on a dhow through mangrove channels or laze under the palms in the Quirimbas Archipelago, take an off-beat safari in the wilds of Gorongosa National Park, wander along cobbled streets past stately colonial-era buildings on Ilha de Moçambique, sip a café espresso at one of Maputo’s lively sidewalk cafés (or maybe a caipirinha at one of its jazz bars), watch the silversmiths at work on Ibo Island or dance to the country’s trademark marrabenta music.

For almost two decades, many of these attractions were inaccessible due to a protracted guerrilla war. Now dark times are in the past, and Mozambique is one of Africa’s rising stars, with an upbeat atmosphere, overflowing markets and a 2500km coastline waiting to be discovered.

If you’re inclined to something tamer, stick to the south, where roads and transport links (especially with neighbouring South Africa) are good and accommodation options abound. For more adventure, head across the Zambezi into the wild north, one of Africa’s last frontiers. Getting around here takes time, but the paradisiacal coastal panoramas and sense of space, the sheer adventure of travel and – for those with a healthy budget – some of the continent’s most idyllic island lodges make the journey well worthwhile.

HIGHLIGHTS
- **Maputo** (p939) Explore lively sidewalk cafés, pumping salsa bars, flame-tree-lined streets, and excellent art and cultural scenes.
- **Bazaruto Archipelago** (p945) Swim and snorkel in a quintessential tropical paradise with turquoise and jade waters full of colourful fish.
- **Tofo** (p944) Relax against a backdrop of white sand dunes and a long, curving beach in a town with a perpetual party-time atmosphere.
- **Ilha de Moçambique** (p947) Catch up with history in the former capital of Portuguese East Africa, now a haunting town of pastel-painted mansions, whitewashed churches and waving palm trees.
- **Quirimbas Archipelago** (p949) Soak up Ibo’s magical ambience amidst ruined colonial villas, or luxuriate in some of the continent’s most exclusive island getaways.

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO
Sunshine, blue skies and temperatures averaging between 24°C and 27°C along the coast are the norm, except during the rainy summer season from about December/January through to April when everything gets soggy and sticky, and temperatures exceed 30°C in some areas.

The best time to visit is from May/June to November, during the cooler dry season. During the Christmas/New Years holidays, around Easter and in August, the southern resorts fill up with the vacationing South African neighbours.

ITINERARIES
- **One Week** For a week in the south, start with a few days enjoying Maputo’s (p939) vibe before heading to Inhambane (p944) and Tofo (p944), or on to Vilankulo (p945) and the Bazaruto Archipelago (p945).
- **Two Weeks** Follow the One Week itinerary. Continue north to Nampula (p947) – if time is tight you’ll need to fly – and divide your remaining time between Ilha de Moçambique (p947) and Pemba (p949) or one of the other Quirimbas Islands.
- **One Month** Follow the previous itineraries, but now with time for all the options mentioned, plus a detour to Gorongosa National Park enroute north. Alternatively, from Nampula head west to Cuamba (p948) and on to Lichinga (p948), Lake Niassa (p948) and into Malawi.

HISTORY
While Europeans were still struggling in the Dark Ages, the light of the ancient world had already fallen on Mozambique. From the 9th century AD, Mozambique’s coast was part of a chain of civilised merchant kingdoms, visited by ships from as far afield as India, Arabia and Persia. They came sailing in on the monsoon winds to buy slaves, ivory, gold and spices. Muslim merchants intermarried with African families, and set up trading posts along the coast.

Sailing onto this scene came the first Europeans – Portuguese explorers such as Vasco da Gama. These 15th-century buccaneers pursued their trade interests with armed raids on coastal towns or cannon bombardments from their warships, and constructed forts to protect themselves from their English and Dutch rivals. In the 17th century, the Mozambican interior was divided into huge agricultural estates, nominally under the Portuguese crown but in fact run as private fiefdoms with their own slave armies.

In the late 19th century, Portugal and several other European powers began a lengthy political arm-wrestle for a chunk of Africa to call their own. British eyes began to fall on Mozambique, and Portugal reacted by strengthening its previously lax colonial
control. The country was so wild, however, that the government had to lease large areas of land to private firms, which soon became notorious for the abuses they inflicted on their workers.

**Resistance**

The early stirrings of resistance were kindled, and the independence movement erupted into full force after the ‘Mueda Massacre’ in 1960, in which peacefully protesting villagers were gunned down by Portuguese troops.

In 1962 the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) was formed, led by the charismatic Eduardo Mondlane. Mondlane was assassinated in 1969 and succeeded by Frelimo’s military commander, Samora Machel. Frelimo decided early on a policy of violent resistance. Finally, after bitter struggle, the independent People’s Republic of Mozambique was proclaimed on 25 June 1975, with Frelimo as the ruling party and Samora Machel as president.

The Portuguese pulled out virtually overnight – after sabotaging vehicles and pouring concrete down wells – and left Mozambique in chaos with few skilled professionals and virtually no infrastructure. Mozambique’s new government threw itself into a policy of radical social change. Ties were established with European communist powers, cooperative farms replaced private land, and companies were nationalised. Mass literacy programmes and health initiatives were launched. For a while, the future looked rosy, and Mozambique was fitted in left-wing Western circles as a successful communist state. Bob Dylan even wrote a song about it.

**Civil War**

By 1983, the country was almost bankrupt. The roots of the crisis were both economic and political. Concerned by the government’s support for resistance movements such as the ANC, the white-minority-ruled countries of Rhodesia and South Africa deliberately ‘destabilised’ their neighbour with the creation of a manufactured guerrilla movement known as the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo).

Renamo was made up of mercenaries, co-opted soldiers and disaffected Mozambicans, and funded by the South African military and a motley collection of Western interests. Renamo had no desire to govern – its only ideology was to paralyse the country. Roads, bridges, railways, schools and clinics were destroyed. Villagers were rounded up, anyone with skills was shot, and atrocities were committed on a massive and horrific scale.

But by the late 1980s, change was sweeping through the region. The collapse of the USSR altered the political balance in the West, and new, more liberal policies in South Africa restricted Renamo support. Samora Machel died under questionable circumstances in 1986 and was succeeded by the more moderate Joaquim Chissano. Frelimo switched from a Marxist ideology to a market economy, and Renamo began a slow evolution into a genuine opposition party. A formal peace agreement was signed in October 1992.

In October 1994, Mozambique held its first democratic elections. Frelimo won, but narrowly, with Renamo netting almost half the votes. The 1999 election produced a similar result, this time followed by rioting and discord. Since then, things have settled down.

**Mozambique Today**

In December 2004, long-time Frelimo insider Armando Guebuza was elected with a solid majority to succeed Chissano. While the government has certainly not acquitted itself cleanly in all areas over the past decade-plus – recent scandals include massive bank fraud and officials investigating a journalist Carlos Cardoso – Mozambique is enjoying unprecedented peace and stability. The cornerstones have recently been laid for bridges over the Rovuma and Zambezi Rivers. Once completed, these bridges will open up the country and facilitate further development. Most observers watch Mozambique among the continent’s rising stars.

**CULTURE**

You don’t need to travel long in Mozambique before hearing the word *pacência* (patience). It’s the great Mozambican virtue, and most Mozambicans have it in abundance, for each other and for outsiders. You’ll be expected to display some in return, especially in dealings with officialdom, and Western-style impatience is always counterproductive. But don’t let the languid, tropical pace sway you completely: underlying it is a rock-hard determination that the marked Mozambique has carried Mozambique from complete devastation following two decades of war to near the top of the list of Africa’s success stories.
Most Mozambicans work at least part-time tending small plots with cassava and other crops, and you’ll see these machambas (farm plots) wherever you travel. Along the coast, fishing is a major source of livelihood. The small ports are fascinating to watch at dawn and in the late afternoon when the boats arrive with their catches.

While tourism and the economy are booming, life continues to be a struggle for many, with an annual per capita income of about US$300. HIV/AIDS (with infection rates at 16%) and malaria also take heavy tolls.

But despite the hardships, Mozambicans have a flair that sets them apart from their more strait-laced neighbours, and partying is a central feature. Sunday in particular is a day to gather on the beach or village square, put on smart clothes, open a bottle of wine or a cask of home-brewed beer, and dance to pop music blasting from old car stereos.

PEOPLE

There are 16 main tribes, including the Makua and Makonde in the north, and the Shangaan, who dominate the southern provinces of Gaza and Maputo. Although Mozambique is relatively free of tribal rivalries, there has long been an undercurrent of north–south differences, with geographically remote and independent-minded northerners often feeling neglected by the upwardly mobile denizens of powerhouse Maputo.

Religion, once suppressed under the Marxist regime, now flourishes, and most villages have a church, a mosque, or both. About 35% of Mozambicans are Christians, about 25% to 30% are Muslims – mostly in the north and along old trading routes – and the remainder follow traditional animist beliefs.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Mozambicans are superb dancers, and experiencing the rhythms and moves – whether in a Maputo nightclub or at a traditional dance performance in the provinces – is a chance not to be missed. In the north, especially on Ilha de Moçambique, watch for the slow-paced, Arabic-influenced tufu, and for the masked mapiko dancing of the Makonde.

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**DANGERS & ANNOYANCES**

Walking around central Maputo during day-time hours is generally safe, and most tourists visit the city without mishap. However violent crime does occur. Be vigilant when out and about, avoid isolating situations and avoid the areas between Ave Patrice Lumumba and Ave 25 de Setembro, between Ave Friedrich Engels and Ave Marginal, and Ave Marginal between Praça Robert Mugabe and the Holiday Inn. Always carry your passport (see p950).

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

The artists at Núcleo de Arte (☎ 21-492523; www.africasever.nl/nucleo; 194 Rua da Argélia; ☸ closed Sun) turn arms into art, as AK-47s, landmines and other weapons are exchanged for agricultural tools. They’re on display (and for sale — along with other artwork) in the gallery and the small garden.

The National Art Museum (http://musart.tv cabo.co.mz; 1233 Ave Ho Chi Min; admission free; ☸ 2-6pm Tue-Sun), just west of Ave Karl Marx, showcases a wonderful collection of paintings and sculptures by Mozambique’s finest contemporary artists.

The impressive domed **train station** on Praça dos Trabalhadores was designed by a pupil of Gustave Eiffel (of Tower fame) and has been well restored with a coat of pistachio-green paint, potted plants, and several old locomotives. Nearby at the **Municipal Market** (Mercado Municipal; Ave 25 de Setembro) stalls overflow with fruits, vegetables and spices. On Praça da Independência, check out the imposing **City Hall**, the spired **Cathedral of Nossa Senhora de Conceição** and the **Iron House**.

The beach at **Catembe** fishing village across the bay comes alive on weekends as the town’s fly girls and guys crank up their stereos and flirt, drink or play football on the sand, with the Maputo skyline as a backdrop. A great place for a plate of prawns and people-watching.

**SLEEPING**

**Budget**

Maputo’s backpackers have English-speaking staff and heaps of city info, and can help with airport pick-ups and bus-depot transfers.

**Base Backpackers** (☎ 21-302723; thebasebp@tvcabo.co.mz; 545 Ave Patrice Lumumba; dm US$8, d US$20) Often full, the Base has a central location, a kitchen, and a backyard bar, terrace and braai area overlooking the port in the distance.

**Maputo Backpackers** (☎ 21-451213; Quarta Avenida, Bairro Triunfo, dm US$8-10, d/tw US$32/35, tr with/without bathroom US$55/49) A cosy place near Costa do Sol with spotless rooms with fans, and use of the kitchen if the house isn’t too crowded. Chapas to/from town stop nearby.


**Midrange & Top End**

**Ibis** (☎ 21-352200; www.acorihotels.com; 1743 Ave 25 de Setembro; r US$49; ☜ Centrally located and good value, Ibis has small, spiffy rooms, satellite TV and business facilities.

**Residencial Palmeiras** (☎ 21-300199; carlos.pereira@tv cabo.co.mz; 948 Ave Patrice Lumumba; s/d with bathroom US$40/55; ☜ without bathroom US$35) A converted residence with quiet, good-value rooms near the British high commission.
EATING

The gigantic prawns that made Maputo famous in the 1970s are still jumping out of the sea and into the pan in the city’s many fantastic seafood restaurants.

**Restaurante Costa do Sol** (21-450038; Ave Marginal, Costa do Sol; meals from US$55; dinner) A Maputo classic, this Art Deco seafood restaurant on the beach draws the crowds on weekend afternoons.

**Restaurante Marisol** (21-380050; www.catembe.net; meals from US$150; dinner) In Catembe, with Mozambican cuisine, make-your-own pizzas and live music on Sundays. It’s 4km from the ferry – call first and they’ll collect you.

**Villa Itália** (21-479298; 635 Ave Friedrich Engels; meals from US$55; lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) An oasis of calm in the city centre, with a plunge pool, a peaceful garden, pastas, pizzas and seafood.

**Feira Popular** (Ave 25 de Setembro; admission US$70; **lunch & dinner** is another Maputo institution, with dozens of small bars and restaurants around sprawling fairgrounds, including **O Escopário** (21-302180; meals from US$50) and **Coqueiro** (meals from US$35) with Zambian cuisine.

There are dozens of sidewalk cafés (all open from about 8am to 9pm daily) where you can get scrumptious pastries and light meals, and watch the passing scene. Try **Naútilus Pastelaria** (cnr Aves Julius Nyerere & 24 de Julho; Mon-Thu) or the faded colonial-era **Café Continental** (cnr Aves 25 de Setembro & Ave Samora Machel).

For self-catering try **Shoprite** (Ave Acordos de Lusaka) or **Mercado Janeta** (cnr Aves Mário Té Tung & Vladimir Lenine), which has cheap plates of maize meal, cassava and peanut sauce.

SHOPPING

**Shopping**

**Pubs & Clubs**

Thursday through Saturday are the main nights, with things getting going after 11pm. **Mũmũ’s** (Praca dos Trabalhadores; Wed-Sat) This classic jazz café (formerly known as Chez Rangel) at the train station is one of Maputo’s best spots, especially on Saturdays when there’s live music (admission US$12). An ideal spot to sip a caipirinha while taking in afro-jazz bands.

**Arcádia** (21-314821; 212 Ave 24 de Julho; admission US$2; Wed-Sun) Hyper-trendy hangout popular with expats and local media types. Beautiful decor, and live jazz on Thursdays (admission free).

**Cocorico** (21-322217; Complexo Mini-Golf, Ave Marginal; admission weekdays US$5, lounge free) This place has a sleek weekend disco on Friday and Saturday nights and a popular chill-out lounge open Wednesday to Sunday.

**Traditional Music & Dance**

Check with the Centro Cultural Franco-Mozambicano (p939) for upcoming music and dance performances.

Rehearsals of Mozambique’s renowned **Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança** (21-400913; cnr cnr.ccm.moz.mz; 1719 Ave Albert Lulhlu) are often open to the public.

**Shopping**

Maputo has fantastic woodcarvings, textiles and other crafts. In addition to the morning craft market (Praca 25 de Junho) and the vendors at Hotel Polana, try the following (all closed Sunday):

**Arté Abadj** (Ave Marginal; 9am 2-3.30pm Mon & Wed-Sat) A disabled persons’ cooperative, with carvings, basketry and leatherwork.

**Casa Elefante** (Ave 25 de Setembro) Shelves and shelves of capulanas (sharongs). MozArte (Ave Filipe Samuel Magaña) Artists’ workshops around a courtyard, and a craft shop.

**Shanty Craft** (Segunda Avenida, Bairro Triunfo) High-quality crafts from around the country.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

**Air**

Airline offices include the following:

- **Air Corridor** (21-311582, 21-311585; 33 Storey Bldg, cnr Ave 25 de Setembro & Rua da Imprensa)

**Train Station**

Departure and ticketing points for express buses to Johannesburg include the following (see p952 for prices):

- **Greyhound** (21-335700; www.greyhound.co.za; 1242 Ave Karl Marx) At Cotur Travel & Tours.
- **InterCape Mainliner** (21-431006; www.intercape.co.za; 899 Ave 24 de Julho) At Tropical Travel.

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HOT TIP

Travelling north from Maputo, sit on the left-hand side of the bus to avoid being baked by the rising sun.
Panthera Azul (☎ 21-302077/83; www.pantherazul.com; 273 Ave Zedequias Mangangela) Behind the post office.

Translux (☎ 21-303825; 21-303829; www.translux.co.za; 1249 Ave 24 de Julho) At Simara Travel & Tours.

Boat
The ferry (per person US$5.20, per vehicle US$58) and boats to Catembe run from dawn to about 11pm from the dock near the Ministry of Finance. The trip takes about 20 minutes.

GETTING AROUND
Maputo’s Mavalane International Airport is 6km northwest of the city centre (US$8 to US$10 in a taxi).

Chapop goes everywhere (US$0.20). Some have name boards, otherwise listen to the destination called out by the conductor. For Junta, catch a charta going to ‘Jardim’ from the Natural History Museum (‘Museu’). Coming from Junta into town, get a charta heading to ‘Museu’. For Costa do Sol, take bus 17 or a charta from the corner of Aves Maa Tse Tung and Julio Nyerere.

Car-rental agencies include Avis (☎ 21-465497, 21-465498; www.avis.co.za; cnr Aves Julio Nyerere & Maa Tse Tung) and Europcar (☎ 21-497338; europcar@viconn.com; 1418 Ave Julio Nyerere).

There are taxi ranks at Hotel Polana and at the Municipal Market; otherwise you can call the taxi company (☎ 21-492255). Town trips start at US$2 (US$12 from Costa do Sol to Junta).

SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE

Fantastic beaches, heaped plates of prawns, good tourism infrastructure, and easy road and air access make the southern coast Mozambique’s most popular destination, and an easy introduction to the country. Be prepared to share your space with hordes of vacationing South Africans at holiday time.

INHAMBANE
Sleepy, charming Inhambane is one of Mozambique’s oldest settlements, and well worth a stroll before heading to the beach at nearby Tofo. Pensão Pachicha (☎ 219-20655; farol.turismo@teledata.mz; Rua 3 de Fevereiro; dm US$11; d US$40) is a waterfront backpackers that has been completely refurbished and is the best place to stay, with dorms, doubles, a restaurant-bar and a rooftop terrace. Go left from the ferry jetty for about 300m. Restaurant Tic-Tic (Ave da Revolução; meals US$2-3), opposite the market, has cheap meals.

The ageing ferry to/from Maxixe runs from sunrise to sundown (US$0.50, 25 minutes), alternating with small motorboats and slow dhows (US$0.15). Other services to Maputo depart from behind the market (US$9, seven hours, 6am and 1am), Faster buses depart at 5am (US$8). For northbound transport, go to Maxixe.

TOFO
Tofo has long been legendary on the southern Africa holiday-makers’ circuits, with its azure waters, sweeping white sands, rolling breakers and perpetual party-time atmosphere. There are no ATMs or banks – sort out your finances before coming to Tofo.

For diving (with lots of manta rays), contact Tofo’s main hangout, with good vibes, but nevertheless a good budget bet. The dorm and double have nets, shared bathrooms and kitchen use.

Fatima’s Nest (☎ 82-414 7350; www.mozambiquebackpackers.com; camp sites per person US$3, tent rental US$18, dm US$5, d/tr bungalow US$24/36) The more makeshift Fatima’s is just north of town on the beach.

Nordin’s Lodge (☎ 21-300902; 21-300900; www.casabarry.com; camp sites US$8, d/tr bungalow US$24/36) Well-located on the beach at the southern end of town on the beach and quiet, with large, thatched, faded chalets and basic self-catering facilities.

Casa Barry (☎ 21-300907; www.casabarry.com; camp sites US$8, d/brick casita US$70/86, 4-/6-person chalets US$172/206) Just off the road. For diving, contact Vilanculos Dive Charters (☎ 82-856 2700; bigblue@teledata.mz; Agua Negra Lodge), which also arranges island transfers.

Sleeping & Eating
The best places to stay are along or near the beach road and its northern extension.

Zombie Cucumber (www.zombiecucumber.com; d/tr chalets US$18) Everything a backpackers should be, with comfy hammocks, a garden, home-cooked meals and local info from the English owners.

Vilanculos Camping (☎ 21-300903; www.vilanculoscamping.co.za; camp sites per person US$7, chalets per person US$24/36) A large, shaded camping area with good facilities. Lots of fruit-stands and bungalows with beds.

Complexo Turistico Jose e Tina (☎ 21-302140; camp sites per site US$10, d/q rondavel US$24/32, d from US$30)

Basic reed chalets in a pleasant garden, and a few rooms.

Agua Negra Lodge (☎ 21-302387; www.aguanegra.co.za; d/s/person chalets US$55/86/147;  ) About 2km north of the old Dona Ana Hotel, with breezy A-frame chalets on sea-facing grounds and a restaurant.

Smugglers (☎ 21-302533; www.smugglers.co.za; s/d US$44/66, without bathroom US$38/55;  ) A reliable midrange bet with rooms around lush gardens, and a restaurant serving up hearty pub fare from US$3.

Casa Rex (☎ 21-302084; www.casarex.com; s/d US$95/150;  ) A small, upmarket getaway in peaceful, manicured gardens.

Other eating options include Restaurant Monte (meals US$5/6) at Na Somba guesthouse near BIM Expresso and Bar Ti’Zé (meals from US$1) near the bus stand, both of which have good local food.


For diving, contact (☎ 21-300925; www.sailaway.co.za), near Vilanculos Camping, offers day and overnight dhows to Bazaruto Archipelago. To arrange something locally, ask for pointers at the helpful Tourist Services (☎ 21-302228; margie@teledata.mz; 2-5pm Mon-Sat) just off the beach road. For diving, contact Vilanculos Dive Charters (☎ 82-856 2700; bigblue@teledata.mz; Agua Negra Lodge), which also arranges island transfers.

Central Mozambique

Central Mozambique doesn’t draw the tourist crowds, but it’s a convenient transit zone for travel to/from Malawi and Zimbabwe. Among its attractions are wild Gorongosa National Park and beautiful, rolling hills.
BEIRA 

pop 400,000

Mozambique’s second-largest city is as famed for its steamed crabs and prawns as for its tawdry nightlife. A decent beach (at Makuti, 5km out of town) and a few well-preserved colonial buildings are the major attractions, but it’s primarily of interest as a transport hub.

Sleeping & Eating

Biques (☎ 23-313051; Makuti Beach; camp sites per person US$5.50) A faded seaside camping ground, but the sunset views from the restaurant adequately compensate.

Pensão Moderna (☎ 23-329901; Rua Afife R. da Silva; d/t from US$52/31) Near the cathedral, with adequate bedroom and a cafe next door.

Jardim das Velas (☎ 23-312209; jardimdavelas@yahoo.com; 282 Ave das FPLM, Makuti Beach; t/f US$75/85) Well-equipped doubles near the lighthouse, plus a family room with kitchenette. No meals are available.

Hotel Tivoli (☎ 23-320300; tivoli-beira@teledata.mz; cnr Ave de Bagamoyo & Rua da Madeira; s/d from US$83/99; ☎) Beira’s business-travellers’ hotel, with small rooms and a restaurant-bar. It’s in the baixa section of town near the port.

Café Riviera (Prança do Município; snacks from US$2.50; lunch & dinner) Plump, pink sofas inside, and outdoor tables overlooking the praça – ideal for watching the passing scene.

Clube Náutico (Ave das FPLM; meals US$6-11; ☎ lunch & dinner) Seafood grills by the beach. For self-catering, there’s Shoprite (cnr Aves Armando Tivane & Samora Machel).

Getting There & Away

Buses leave from Praça do Maquinino, north-west of Praça do Município (Beira’s main square) to Chimoio (US$5, three hours), Vilankulo (US$12, nine hours) and Maputo (US$24 to US$30, 18 hours). Buses to Queimane (US$16.50, nine hours) depart from Mar Azul in Pioneiros bairro, 1km north of the centre.

Otherwise, take a chapa to Inchope, 130km west of Beira at the EN6-EN1 junction, and try your luck with passing buses there. Travel north is much improved these days thanks to the excellent sealed road from Inchope to Caia, where there’s a ferry over the Zambezi River.

GORONGOSA NATIONAL PARK

This park (www.gorongosa.net; adult/child/vehicle Mtc200/50/200, payable in meticais only; ☎ 1 Apr-1 Dec), once one of southern Africa’s premier wildlife areas, is getting a second wind thanks to assistance from the US-based Carr Foundation.

Arrange vehicle rental and wildlife guides, plus hikes on nearby Mt Gorongosa, at park headquarters (☎ 23-335012; travel@gorongosa.net), where there’s also a camp site (per person US$4), a restaurant and rondavels (s/d US$26/38).

Head 43km north from Inchope to Nota village, then 17km east to the park gate, or take a chapa to Vila Gorongosa (25km further north) and arrange a pick-up from there in advance with park staff.

CHIMOIO

pop 250,000

Lowly Chimoio sits on the edge of scenic country near the Chimanimani Mountains. Access to the foothills is time-consuming, and you’ll need a guide for hiking.

Pink Papaya (☎ 82-555 7310, 82-257 2980; helem.large@hotmail.com; cnr Rua Pingue & 3 de Fevereiro; camp sites per person US$54, dm US$58, d US$225) is the best budget accommodation option. With the bus stand to your right and train station to your left, walk straight, take the fourth right into Rua 3 de Fevereiro; continue one block to Rua Piquet. The three-star Hotel Residencial Castelo Branco (☎ 231-23934; Rua Sussundenga; US$50-62; ☎) is just off Praça dos Heróis, and caters mostly to business travellers.

Hotel-Residential Castelo Branco (☎ 231-23934; Rua Sussundenga; US$50-62; ☎) has island information and guides; it is near the old mosque, is better. Hotel Flamengo (☎ 231-25602; sogret@teledata.mz; cnr Rua Kwame Nkrumah & Ave 1 de Julho; d US$50/60; ☎) has newish midrange rooms with full breakfasts, and a restaurant.

Go to Esplanada A Coquinha (☎ 231-24019; ☎ Aves Josa Machel & Julius Nyerere; meals from US$5; ☎ lunch & dinner) for delicious Zambesi cuisine. Otherwise, take a chapa to the excellent sealed road from Inchope to Chimoio (US$1.50; four hours), get a chapa from there. Travel departs from the northern end of Ave Eduardo Mondlane. The Mecula bus to Nampula departs at 4.30am (US$14, 10 hours), buses to Beira depart at 5am (US$16.50, nine hours), and vehicles go daily to Milange (Malaui border). Chapas to Zalala (US$1) leave from the capuzinho, 1km from town on the Zalala road.

QUILIEMAINE

pop 170,000

Friendly compact Quelimane is ideal for a few days of peace on the north shore. Zalala beach is an hour’s drive away through the coconut plantations.

Hotel 1 de Julho (cnr Ave Samoa Machel & Rua Felipe Samuel Magaia; tw US$16-28) is near the old cathedral, with reasonable no-frills rooms, and a pastelaria downstairs. Hotel Rosy (☎ 21-241969; 21-238252; ☎ 231-1 de Julho & Paulo Samuel Kankombhoma; s/d US$24/28; ☎), near the old mosque, is better. Hotel Flamengo (☎ 21-25602; sogret@teledata.mz; cnr Rua Kwame Nkrumah & Ave 1 de Julho; d US$50/60; ☎) has newish midrange rooms with full breakfasts, and a restaurant.

Transport departs from the northern end of Ave Eduardo Mondlane. The Mecula bus to Nampula departs at 4.30am (US$14, 10 hours), buses to Beira depart at 5am (US$16.50, nine hours), and vehicles go daily to Milange (Malaui border). Chapas to Zalala (US$1) leave from the capuzinho, 1km from town on the Zalala road.

NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE

Northern Mozambique is one of the continent’s last wild frontiers – rugged and challenging for travel, except for a few oases of island luxury. Yet the rewards are spectacular, including magical, time-warped Ilha de Moçambique, stunning beaches and the unspoilt Swahili culture of the Quirimbas Archipelago.

NAMPULA

pop 303,000

Bustling Nampula is the jumping off point for visiting Ilha de Moçambique (below). The National Ethnography Museum (Ave Eduardo Mondlane; admission free; ☎ 2-4.30pm Mon-Thur & Sat, 2-6pm Fri, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Sun) has English explanations and a mask collection.

For budget rooms, try the bleak Hotel Lúrio (☎ 21-268849; Ave de Lagarto; s/d US$50/65; ☎) or the slightly better Hotel Brasília (☎ 26-271531; 26 Rua dos Continuadores; tw/d US$26/30; ☎) near Shoprite, and a 20-minute hike from the bus/train depots.

Residencial Expresso (☎ 26-218808/9; fax 26-218806; Ave da Independência; s/d from US$55/67; ☎) has six large, spotless rooms with both fridge and TV.

Hotel Girassol (☎ 26-216000; www.girassolhotels.com.mz; Ave Eduardo Mondlane; s/d US$90/105, ste US$130-150; ☎) is a four-star place located in the Centro Commercial de Nampula high-rise, and boasts Nampula’s best rooms. There are cafés and restaurants scattered along Ave Eduardo Mondlane between Hotel Girassol and the museum.

Mecula buses depart for Pemba (US$7, seven hours) and Quelimane (US$14, 11 hours) at 5am from the Mecula garage on Rua da Moma, off Ave 25 de Setembro. To the south, buses depart daily to Milange (Malaui border), three to four hours) for a Tanzanian chapa from the Padaria Nampula transport stand east of the train station between 7am and 10am. Be sure it’s going direct, otherwise you’ll need to change at Monapo.

Trains to Cuamba (US$20/10/4 for 1st/2nd/economy class, 10 to 11 hours) leave Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 5am.

ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

Tiny red houses and pastel-coloured colonial mansions rub shoulders among the palm trees on tiny Ilha de Moçambique (Mozambique Island), the former capital of Portuguese East Africa. It’s haunting, magical, and a must-see.

The ‘Ilha’ is attached to the mainland by a 3.5km causeway. Chapas and buses arrive at the southern tip of the island, from where it’s a short walk north through the makuti (reed) town to the old colonial stone town.

The tourist office (☎ 26-610081; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm) has island information and guides; it is next to the museum.
Sights
Get up early and wander through makuti town as it’s waking up, with cockcs crowing in the narrow streets. After a breakfast of spicy bhajas (fried Indian-style vegetable pancakes) from the food market, walk into the stone town as the museums open.

The bright red Palace and Chapel of São Paulo (adult/child US$4/1; 8am-4pm) has been impeccably restored, with opulent furniture, tapestries and sinister portraits of colonial grandees. Adjoining are a Maritime Museum, the Church of the Misericórdia and the Museum of Sacred Art (closed at the time of research), all included in the entry price.

The massive Portuguese Fort of São Sebastião (admission free, guide US$2; 8am-5pm) is best visited in the late afternoon, when it’s bathed in glorious golden light.

Dining along Ilha’s southern tip is the white-washed Church of Santo António, overlooking turquoise seas and fishermen repairing their nets on the sand.

Sleeping & Eating
Casa de Luís (Travessa dos Fornos, Makuti Town; camp sites per person US$4, d/US$8/7) Quite basic, but an Ilha institution, with a friendly owner and a tiny courtyard. It is near the green mosque.

Casa de Yasmin (26-610073; Rua dos Combatentes; r US$40) Near the fort, with small rooms in an annex next to the owner’s-family house.

Moxoeleiya (26-610076; iannika@teledata.mz; d US$52, f US$48) Good value, with large, high-ceilinged rooms and breakfast. Near the Church of the Misericórdia.

Casa Branca (26-610076; flora204@hotmail.com; Rua dos Combatentes; r US$24) Excellent value, with spotless rooms (one with bathroom), sea views and breakfast.

Patio dos Quintalinhos (Casab de Gabrielle; 26-610090; www.patioquilantilinhos.com; Rua do Celeiro; s/d with bathroom US$20/25, d/q without bathroom US$20/25, d/q with bathroom US$30/35, ste US$53) Opposite the green mosque, with Italian-Mozambican fusion design, a rooftop terrace and help with info and excursions.

O Escondiho (26-610078; ilhauto@itservices. co.mz; Ave dos Heróis; s/d US$36/52; ) About three stars, with atmospheric, spacious, high-ceilinged rooms, some with bathrooms, and a great restaurant.

O Paladar (market; meals from US$5; lunch & dinner) has local meals. O Escondidinho, Relíquias (26-610092; Ave da República; meals US$4-10; lunch & dinner) near the museum and Café Ancora (26-610006; brunch US$9; 8am-11pm), diagonally opposite the Church of the Misericórdia, have delicious seafood, curries and some veg dishes. Café Ancora also has Sunday brunch.

Getting There & Away
Transport departs from the bridge. Direct tanzaniano chapas to Nampula (US$3.60, three hours) leave daily between 3am and 5am; ask your hotel to arrange a hotel pick-up with the driver. For travel to Pemba, take the 4-am tanzaniano to Namialo, and – with a bit of luck – connect there with the Mecula bus from Nampula.

CUAMBA
A lively rail and road junction, Cuamba is a convenient stop en route to/from Malawi.

Namacha (s/d US$12/18) and Hotel Vision 2000 (271-62632; h-vision2000@teledata.mz; r US$100-200; ) are the places to stay.

Road transport leaves from Macaúqueira market south of the railroad tracks. Trains to Nampula (US$20/10/4 for 1st/2nd/economy class, 8 hours) leave daily between 3am and 5am. Buses depart from the Mecula bus stand.

LICHINGA
This low-key town with jacarandas and pine groves is a hub for travel to/from Lake Niassa and Malawi.

Ponto Final (271-20912; Rua Filipe Samule Magia; r US$22) has small, low-ceilinged rooms with bathroom, plus a bar. Hotel Girassol Lichinga (271-21280; www.girassolhotels.com.co.mz; Rua Filipe Samuel Magia; s/d US$50/92; ) Lichinga’s most upmarket option, catering primarily to business travellers.

All transport departs early from next to the market, including to Cuamba (US$12, 6½ hours) and Metanguela (US$5, 2½ hours).

LAKE NIASSA
The tranquil Mozambican side of Lake Niassa (Lake Malawi) sees a small but steady stream of adventure travellers.

In Cóboé there’s Mira Lago (R US$10), or Mchenga Wede (per person US$5, meals US$7-10), 20km south, with camping or budget bungalows, bush walks and canoe trips.

Nkwichi Lodge (www.mandawilderness.org; s/d full board US$220/280) is a wonderful lakeside ecolodge 15km south of Cóboé, with hand-crafted chalets, bush walks, boating and snorkelling. Advance bookings are essential.

The Ilala ferry connects Cóboé with Metangula and Likoma Island; see p953. From Cóboé, walk to Mchenga Wede, or arrange a boat transfer with Nkwichi Lodge.

PEMBA
The main draw of the sunny seaside town of Pemba is long Wimbi (also spelled Wimbe) beach, 5km down the coast. Kaskazini (297-20371; www.kaskazini.com; Pemba Beach Hotel, Ave Marginal, Wimbi Beach) has information on the town and the islands, and can organise dhow safaris on your behalf.

Sleeping & Eating
Pensão Baia (cnr Rua 1 de Maio & Rua Beira Base; d with fan US$10) Spartan budget rooms in the town centre.

Russell’s Place (Cashew Camp; 82-686 2730; www.pembafrican.com; Wimbi Beach; camp sites per person US$5, dm US$4, d/tr chalet US$35) A chilled-out backpackers 3.5km beyond Complexo Náutilus (US$5 from a taxi), with travel info, a bar and pizzas.

Complexo Turístico Caraçol (272-202147; saulane@teledata.mz; Ave Marginal; s/d US$90/150; ) One of the beach road extension, with nice self-catering chalets in quiet, green quarters.

Pemba Beach Hotel (272-21770; www.pemba beachresort.com; Ave Marginal; s/d from US$160/220; ) Five-star luxury overlooking the water.

Restaurant-Bar Samar (272-20415; Ave 25 de Setembro; meals US$3-8; lunch & dinner Sun-Fri) has good-value Portuguese cuisine, and Aquila Romana (272-21972; Ave Marginal, Wimbi Beach; meals US$4-10; lunch Tue-Fri, breakfast, lunch & dinner Sat & Sun) has pizzas and Italian dishes.

Getting There & Away
Mecula buses go to Nampula, Nacala, Mocimboa da Praia and Mueda (all about US$8, seven hours), departing at 5am from the Mec office. (Corner of Aves 25 de Setembro and Eduardo Mondlane). To Wimbi beach from town, hitch or take a taxi (US$2) from near Mec.

MOZAMBIQUE DIRECTORY
ACCOMMODATION
There are many great camp sites along the southern coast. Cheap hotels aren’t as cheap here as in neighbouring countries – most pensions start at around US$8 and are considerably overpriced. Backpacker places, found especially in the south, are much better value; dorm beds average US$10. Midrange options

QUIRIMBAS ARCHIPELAGO
Ancient wooden sailing dhows take fisherman around the Quirimbas Archipelago, one of Mozambique’s most remote and beautiful destinations. Ibo, with coppers growing through its crumbling colonial mansions, seems to have been untouched for centuries, while Vamizi has some of the region’s most stunning beaches. Many of the islands are part of Quirimbas National Park (adult/child US$8/2), which also includes parts of the fringing coastline.

All accommodation is moving upscale. Ibo Island Lodge (in South Africa 021-702 0643; www.ibo island.com; s/d with half board US$360/560) is a beautifully restored boutique hotel overlooking the water near the dhow port. Vamizi Island Lodge (www.vamizi.com; per person incl full board & activities from US$485) is part of the Malanue project (www.malanue.com), and one of the continent’s most idyllic island getaways.

Kazikazini in Pemba arranges charter flights, speedboats and dhows. Otherwise, take a chapa from Pemba’s Paquitequete fish market, departing daily at 4am, to Quissanga and on to Tandahangue village, where you can get a dhow to Ibo (one to six hours). There’s parking at Casa de Isufo, 2km before Tandahangue port.

MOCIMBA DA PRAIA
This one-horse port town is the last major stop between Pemba and the Tanzanian border.

Pensão Leeta (272-81147; Ave Samora Machel; camp sites US$5, r US$10), near the transport stand, has basic rooms. Hotel Chez Natalie (82-527 9094; natale@teledata.mz; 4-person chalet US$68) is 2km from town on the estuary, and is the best, with family-style chalets and a grill. Pickups to the border leave from opposite Pensão Leeta from 3.30am. The Mecula bus to Pemba departs at 4.30am sharp.
DANGERS & ANNOYANCES
Mozambique is generally safe, but there are some areas and situations where caution is warranted.

Thefts and robberies are the main risks: watch your pockets in markets, avoid carrying a bag or otherwise giving a potential thief reason to think you have anything of value, and avoid isolating situations.

More likely are simple hassles, such as underpaid authorities in search of bribes. You’re required to carry your passport or (better) a notarised copy at all times. If stopped by the police, remain polite, but don’t surrender your documents – insist on going to the nearest police station (esquadrão) instead.

Land mines – a legacy of the war days – are more limited than in South Africa, though the selection is fast increasing. For top-end travel, there are some idyllic island lodges. When quoting prices, many establishments distinguish between a duplo (twin beds) and a casal (double bed).

Around Christmas, Easter and during August, the southern coast fills up and most places raise their prices – advance bookings are highly advisable.

Except as noted, all midrange and top-end listings in this chapter include private bathroom, while budget listings usually have communal facilities.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES
Mozambican Embassies & Consulates
Mozambican diplomatic representations abroad include the following:
France (01 47 64 91 32; 82 Rue Laugier, Paris 75017)
Germany (010-3987 6500; emoz@aoe.com; Stromstrasse 47, 10551 Berlin)
Malawi (01-774100; off Convention Dr; Limbe (01-643189; 1st fl, Celtel Bldg, Rayner Ave, Limbe, near Blantyre)
South Africa (021-401 0300, 021-321 2288; 529 Edmund St, Arcadia; Johannesbourg (011-484 6427; 11 Boundary Rd, cnr with Carre O’Gowrie Rd, Houghton);
Cape Town (021-426 2944; 45 Castle St, Castle Bldg, 7th fl); Durban (031-304 0200; 320 West St, Room 520); Helsigur (013-752 7396; 32 Bell St)
Swaziland (024 3700; Mountain Inn Rd, Mbabane)
Tanzania (022-211 6502; 25 Garden Ave, Dar es Salaam)
UK (020-7383 3800; www.mozambiquehc.org.uk; 21 Fitzroy Sq, London WIT 6EL)
USA (202-293 7146; www.embamoc-usa.org; 1990 M St NW, Suite S70, Washington, DC 20036)

HOLIDAYS
Public holidays include the following:
1 January New Year’s Day
3 February Heroes’ Day
7 April Women’s Day
1 May Labour Day
25 June Independence Day
7 September Victory Day
25 September Revolution Day
25 December Christmas/Family Day

INTERNET ACCESS
All larger towns have internet cafés, often at the local TDM (telecom) office. Rates average US$2 per hour.

MONEY
Mozambique’s currency is the metical (plural – meticais). As of mid-2006, the 'metrical nova familia' (new family metical) was introduced, at a rate of 1000 old meticais to one new metical.

All major towns have ATMs, often operated by Banco Internacional de Moçambique (BIM), and all accepting Visa, but not MasterCard.

You can change US dollars at cash banks and some ATMs. Visitors can change hard currency in banks (and at selected bureaux de change) with the usual commission, and use ATMs, but should keep a record of the transactions. Credit cards are widely accepted, but check with your bank to confirm they are usable in Mozambique.
Maputo. Other connections include the following (see p943 for further contact details): 

Kenya Airways Nairobi (Kenya) to Maputo.

Pelican Air Services (☏ in South Africa 011-973 3649; www.pelicanair.co.za) Jo’burg to Vilankulo via Nelspruit, with connections to the Bazaruto Archipelago.

SAAirlink (www.saaairlink.co.za) Jo’burg to Beira, and Durban (South Africa) to Maputo.


Swazi Express Durban (South Africa) and Matsapha (Swaziland) to Maputo and Vilankulo.

TAP Air Portugal Lisbon to Maputo.

**Land**

All overland travellers must pay an immigration tax of US$2 or the local currency equivalent.

Most borders are open from 6am to 6pm.

**Malawi**

There are at least eight border crossings, with only the main ones covered here.

**To/From Blantyre**

For the Zóbuè crossing between Blantyre and Harare (Zimbabwe), vehicles depart Blantyre for the border via Mwanza (US$4), connecting in Mozambique with chapas to Tete.

The Milange crossing is convenient for Quelimane and Ilha de Moçambique, with regular buses from Blantyre via Mulanje to the border. Once across, daily vehicles service Mocuba, then Quelimane and Nampula.

Maputaland is convenient for Cuamba and northern Mozambique. There’s frequent transport on the Malawi side to Mangochi, where you can get minibuses to Nambwa and Chiponde. Once in Mozambique, vehicles go daily from Maputaland to Cuamba and Lichinga.

**To/From Lilongwe**

From the Dedza border post, 85km southeast of Lilongwe, chapas run along the sealed route to Tete via Ulongwé. Otherwise, go in stages via Moatize. Arrange your Mozambican visa in advance.

**South Africa**

**To/From Johannesburg**

Large ‘luxury’ buses go daily between Jo’burg and Maputo (US$30 to US$38, eight to nine hours) via busy Komatiport/Ressano Garcia (☏ 6am-10pm). It is essential to organise your Mozambique visa in advance if you’re travelling by bus. Companies include the following:

- **Greyhound** (☏ in South Africa 011-276 8500; www.greyhound.co.za)
- **InterCape Mainliner** (☏ in South Africa 021-380 4400; www.intercape.co.za)
- **Panthera Azul** (☏ in South Africa 011-618 8811/3; www.pantherazul.co.za)
- **Translux** (☏ in South Africa 011-774 3333; www.translux.co.za)

You can travel by train, though it’s much slower. South Africa’s Komati line (☏ in South Africa 011-774 4555; www.spoornet.co.za) serves Jo’burg and the Komatiport border post daily (13 hours), from where you can continue to Maputo by rail, but it’s much faster to take a chapa.

**To/From Kruger National Park**

Neither of the borders between Mozambique and South Africa’s Kruger park – **Giriyondo** (☏ 8am-4pm Oct-Mar, 8am-3pm Apr-Sep), west of Massingir, and **Pafuri** (8am-4pm), in northeastern Kruger – are accessible via public transport, and both require a 4WD on the Mozambique side. You’ll need to pay entry fees for Kruger and for Limpopo park (US$8/2 per adult/child). Mozambique visas aren’t issued at Pafuri.

**Other Routes**

There are bus connections three times weekly with **Panthera Azul** (☏ in Durban 031-309 7798) between Durban and Maputo via Namaacha and Big Bend in Swaziland.

The **Kosi Bay border post** (8am-4pm) is 11km south of Mozambique’s Ponta d’Ouro. There’s no public transport on the Mozambique side, and you’ll need a 4WD. Coming from South Africa you can leave your vehicle at the border and arrange a pick up in advance from Ponta d’Ouro hotels. To/from Mapute there are direct chapas twice weekly between Ponta d’Ouro and Maputo’s Catembe ferry jetty.

**Swaziland**

There are daily minibuses to Maputo (US$5, 3½ hours from Manzini) via Lomahasha/Namaacha (7am-8pm).

Bill’s Bus runs between Manzini, Maputo and Tofo; contact **Griffers** (www.grifferslodge.com) in Swaziland or Diversity Scuba, Tofo (p944).

**Sobantu Guest Farm** (www.swaziplace.com/sobantu) and Maputo Backpackers (p941) run similar services (US$23/55 to Maputo/Tofo).

The quiet border at **Goba/Mhileni** (7am-6pm) is good for drivers.

**Tanzania**

Pickups depart Mtwara (Tanzania) daily at 6.30am to the Kilambo border post, and on to the Rovuma River, crossed – adventurously or dangerously, depending on your perspective and water levels – via dugout canoe. Once across, two pick-ups daily go to the Mozambique border post (4km further) and on to Mocímboa da Praia (US$10, four hours).

A **vehicle ferry** (US$50 per vehicle) at Kilambo operates at high tide several times weekly.

**Zambia**

The main crossing is at Cassacatiza, northwest of Tete. Chapas go daily from Tete to Matema, from where there’s sporadic transport to the border, and then daily vehicles to Katete (Zambia), and on to Lusaka or Chipata.

**Zimbabwe**

The main crossings are at Nyamapanda (which lies on the well-travelled route linking Harare with Blantyre via Tete), and at Machipanda on the Harare-Beira route. Chapas go from Tete to Changara (US$3, ½ hour) and on to Nyamapanda, where there are vehicles to Harare. Through buses between Blantyre (Malawi) and Harare are another option.

From Chimoio chapos go to Manica and the border. Take a taxi to Mutare for Zimbabwe transport or the night train to Harare.

**Boat**

**Malawi**

The **Ilala** ferry stops at Cóbue and Metangula weekly on its way up Lake Malawi via Likoma Island (Malawi). Contact **Malawi Lake Services** (Ilala@malawi.net). Mozambique visas are issued at Cóbue. Slow sailing boats also go between Likoma Island, Cóbue and Metangula.

**Getting Around**

**Air**

Linas Aéreas de Moçambique (LAM; ☏ 21-468000; www.lam.co.mz/; reservas@lam.co.mz) links Maputo with Inhambane, Vilankulo, Beira, Chimoio, Quelimane, Tete, Nampula, Lichinga and Pemba. For discounts, ask for advance purchase ‘Jacto Popular’ fares.

**Car & Motorcycle**

You will need a South African or international drivers license (as well as your home country license) to drive in Mozambique, plus the vehicle-registration papers, a temporary import permit (available at most borders), and third-party insurance. Driving on the beach and driving without a seat belt are both illegal. While main roads in the south are fine with a 2WD, you will need a 4WD for most other areas. Unleaded fuel is generally available in major towns.

**Hitching**

Despite the potential dangers, hitching is often the only transport option in rural areas. Modest payment is expected.

**Local Transport**

Machibombos (buses) are the best option for getting around on main routes. Elsewhere, overcrowded, wildly-careening chapas (minibuses) connect smaller towns daily. Always take a bus if there’s a choice.

The main companies are the ageing Transportes Oliveira in the south, and the much better Grupo Mecula in the north. ‘Express’ services are a bit more expensive, but faster and more comfortable.

All transport leaves early (between 3am and 6am), and often on time.