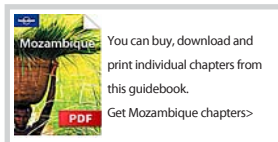


# Getting Started



Mozambique is a vast country – over three times the size of the UK – with internal flights that don't always coordinate and a still-adventurous road network, so you'll need to give some thought to which areas you'd like to visit. After narrowing down your main interests, there's little point in setting a rigid itinerary, as chances are you won't be able (nor want) to stick to it anyway.

In major cities and tourist areas along the coast, all budgets and travel styles are catered for. Here, you'll find an ever-expanding selection of midrange and upscale accommodation options, and good flight and bus connections, but expect prices to be generally higher than elsewhere in the region. Away from popular coastal destinations, travel is rough and rugged. It will be of appeal primarily to toughened backpackers who don't mind bumping around for hours on a bus over bad roads and staying in no-frills *pensões* (inexpensive hotels), and alternatively, to well-moneyed adventurers who can afford the necessary charter flights and hefty price tags to enjoy exclusive bush and island getaways.

## WHEN TO GO

Mozambique is best visited during the cooler dry season from May to October/November. It's also possible to travel during the early part of the warmer, rainy season from November to January (though be prepared for high temperatures, especially in January). If possible, avoid the height of the rains – from about February to March/April – as many roads become impassable and flooding is common in the south and centre.

Apart from weather, another consideration is South African school holidays – although this is relevant mainly for southern coastal destinations. Around Easter, Christmas/New Year's and in August, Mozambique's southern coastal resorts become overrun with the vacationing neighbours and advance bookings are highly advisable.

For the best times for diving, see p43.

See Climate (p171) for more information

## DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

You can get most things you'll need in Maputo, except for specialised camping and sporting equipment, and certain toiletries, such as contact lens solution. Some essentials to bring from home:

- mosquito repellent and net
- torch
- shore-shoes for beach walking
- sunscreen and sunglasses
- travel alarm (to help you wake up in time to catch all those early morning buses)
- Visa card for accessing cash at ATMs
- bed sheet or lightweight sleep sack (for shoestring travellers)
- sturdy water bottle
- travel insurance including medical air evacuation to Johannesburg
- Portuguese phrasebook
- jerry cans for carrying extra fuel, if driving
- passport and a notarised copy
- a country map

## COST-CUTTING TIPS

Some tips for saving money, whatever your budget:

- Focus on one area of the country to minimise long-haul transportation costs.
- Use public transport.
- Eat local food.
- Always ask about children's, midweek and low-season discounts.
- Keep your schedule flexible to take advantage of last-minute deals.
- Avoid peak season travel (eg Christmas–New Year's, Easter holidays) when prices are highest.
- Travel in a group (four is ideal) for any organised tours.
- Watch for flight-accommodation packages from Johannesburg, especially for the southern resorts and Pemba.

## COSTS & MONEY

Mozambique has the well-deserved reputation of being expensive in comparison with its neighbours. Accommodation and internal flights will be your highest-cost items; fruits, produce and seafood bought at local markets, together with local road transport, are among the least costly categories.

For accommodation, especially at the budget and midrange levels, you'll need to hunt to find value for money (and you should expect to pay more than in South Africa), although there are an increasing number of places catering to backpackers in the south and the far north. Staying in basic lodging, eating local food and travelling with public transport, plan on spending from at least US\$25 per day.

Midrange travel with some comforts will cost from US\$50 to US\$150 per day, excluding airfares. At the top end, plan on anywhere from US\$150 to US\$500 per day at some of the exclusive island lodges, excluding rental cars and flights.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

*Kalashnikovs and Zombie Cucumbers: Travels in Mozambique* by Nick Middleton – part travelogue and part historical overview – is a highly entertaining read covering everything from colonial times and the war to aid and development.

*With Both Hands Waving: A Journey Through Mozambique* by Justin Fox is another insightful and often humorous look at Mozambique in the early 1990s.

*Empires of the Monsoon* by Richard Seymour Hall – a scholarly yet readable book – covers a broad historical and geographical sweep, including Mozambique, and gives an excellent overview of the influences shaping coastal cultures.

*Hunting Pirate Heaven* by Kevin Rushby looks at the entire East African coast, including Mozambique. Although it's nominally about tracking pirate footprints, it offers glimpses of local life as well.

*A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique* by William Finnegan examines the roots of Mozambique's civil war through a series of vivid close-ups on various areas of the country and is essential reading for anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the country's postcolonial era.

## HOW MUCH?

Plate of grilled prawns  
US\$12

Single day dive US\$40  
to US\$50

Short taxi ride US\$2

Daytime dhow safari  
US\$45

Maputo–Inhambane bus  
fare US\$9

## TOP TENS

### THINGS TO DO IN MOZAMBIQUE

#### ....If You Have Plenty of Money

- Treat yourself to a week in the Archipelago de Bazaruto (p99)
- Enjoy your own tropical paradise at one of the private island getaways in the Archipelago das Quirimbas (p158)
- Base yourself at Nkwichi Lodge on the shores of Lago Niassa, and explore the surrounding Mozambican bush (p148)
- Luxuriate in a sea-view room at Maputo's Hotel Polana (p66) and charter a vintage *habana* (p64) to take you around town
- Visit Reserva do Niassa (p150)

#### ....If You're on a Shoestring Budget

- Visit magical Ilha de Moçambique (p137) – also add this to the list if you have plenty of money
- Spend a week chilling out at Praia de Tofo, a long arc of white sand near Inhambane (p90)
- Take the train between Cuamba and Nampula, and enjoy the passing scenes of rural Mozambican life (p132)
- Get a group together in Vilankulo for a dhow safari and snorkelling around the islands of the Archipelago de Bazaruto (p97)
- Travel overland to laid-back Pemba and relax on the beach for a few days before making your way to Pangane (p152)

### MOZAMBIKAN MUSIC

For an introduction to Mozambique's music scene, dip into some of the following:

- *Karimbo* (Mabulu)
- *Timbila Ta Venancio* (Venancio Mbande)
- *Timbila* (Eduardo Durão)
- *Katchume* (Kapa Dêch)
- *Afrikiti* (Stewart Sukuma)
- *Soul Marrabenta* (Mabulu)
- *Vana Va Ndota* (Ghorwane)
- *Tsuketani* (Kapa Dêch)
- *Dilon* (Dilon Djindji)
- *Automy Dzi Txintxile* (Léman)

### CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Whatever your budget, there's nothing better than immersion for getting to know local life. For starters, give the following a try:

- Spending the early morning or late afternoon sitting at a dhow port, watching the boats arrive with their catches
- Watching a Chopi *timbila* performance or some *mapiko* dancing
- Listening to church singing
- Browsing a small-town market
- Sailing in a dhow
- Sharing a plate of *xima* or *matapa* with locals
- Watching the sun rise over the Indian Ocean
- Walking around Ilha de Moçambique or Ilha do Ibo at dawn
- Spending an afternoon in a small village without a camera
- Watching Makonde carvers at work

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**African Studies Centre Mozambique Page** ([www.africa.upenn.edu/Country\\_Specific/Mozambique.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Country_Specific/Mozambique.html)) Lots of links.

**Kanimambo** ([www.kanimambo.com](http://www.kanimambo.com)) In Portuguese, but with English listings and many links.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Travel tips, the Thorn Tree bulletin board and other links.

**Mozambique Guide** ([www.mozguide.com](http://www.mozguide.com)) Especially helpful if you'll be visiting Mozambique with your own vehicle, with a chat site and updated information on routes and road conditions.

**Mozambique Home Page** ([www.mozambique.mz](http://www.mozambique.mz)) Mozambique's official website, with general information in Portuguese, news and links.

**Mozambique News Agency** ([www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/](http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/)) Mozambique news in English.

**Niassa Tourism** ([www.niassatourism.com](http://www.niassatourism.com)) Good info and beautiful photos to lure you to oft-forgotten Niassa province.



## TAILORED TRIPS

### 'BEST OF MOZAMBIQUE' SAMPLER

Mozambique's highlights are its beaches and islands, its cultures and people, and the adventure of it all. Here's a small sampling of some of the best the country has to offer in each area. For beaches and islands, there are too many to name, but among the finest stretches of sand are those at **Ponta d'Ouro** (p77), **Tofo** (p90), **Morrungulo** (p94), the **Archipélago de Bazaruto** (p99) and the **Archipélago das Quirimbas** (p158). The two archipelagos, together with **Ilha de Moçambique** (p137) – a Unesco World Heritage site – easily crown the list of island getaways.

Cultural highlights include **tufo dancing** (p32) on Ilha de Moçambique, masked **mapiko dancing** (p160) in the Cabo Delgado province, **Chopi timbila orchestras** (p83) around Quissico and a sampling of **Maputo's art museums** (p61) and its **nightlife** (p68).

Start the latter with a performance by the **Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança** (p68), and then charter a vintage **habana** (p64) to take you around on a city pub- and club-hopping tour.

For pure adventure, it's hard to beat Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces, especially the coastal stretch from **Pangane** (p162) north to the Rio Rovuma; the **Reserva do Niassa** (p150); and the beautiful **Lago Niassa** (p148) shoreline between Còbuè and Metangula, an ideal place to get an authentic taste of the African bush.

### INLAND IDYLLS

The majority of Mozambique's finest attractions are along the coast, but there are some inland gems as well. If you're after greenery and something off-beat, don't miss the **Montes Chimanimani** (p117) and the **Penha Longa** (p117) area, with cool forests, villages and hiking – though you'll need to have plenty of time and be self-sufficient. The wilderness, birds and animals at **Parque Nacional de Gorongosa** (p111) are another highlight for nature lovers.

For anglers, or anyone after something different, spending a few days at **Lago Cahora Bassa** (p121) will likely fit the bill, with attractive hill scenery, a cool, refreshing climate and an impressive dam. **Gurúè** (p128), with its tea plantations, and the sacred **Monte Namúli** (p128) nearby, is another worthwhile stop.

The newly opened **Parque Nacional do Limpopo** (p84) is a convenient



place to visit if you're arriving with your own vehicle from South Africa, and anyone interested in birding should consider the area south and east of **Caia** (p123), perhaps with a stop at **Monte Gorongosa** (p112) en route.

The train ride between **Nampula** (p132) and **Cuamba** (p144) cuts through often-striking, inselberg-studded landscapes and offers a great slice of Mozambican life. Topping the list are **Lago Niassa** (p148), with its unspoiled coastline and crystal clear waters, and the wild **Reserva do Niassa** (p150), one of the most remote areas of the country.

# Snapshot

*Orgulhosamente Moçambicana* (Proudly Mozambican); *Deixe a malaria fora da rede* (Leave malaria outside of the net); *Vamos viver com Jeito* (double meaning – ‘Let’s live with care/flair’, ‘We’ll live with Jeito [a condom brand]’). In many ways, Mozambique’s mood can be read in its billboards.

In 1992, following almost two decades of fighting, the country was in a shambles and schools and infrastructure were destroyed. No-one would have dreamed of pasting ‘proudly Mozambican’ – the bold advertising slogan used by mCel (Mozambique Cellular) – across a massive billboard atop Maputo’s tallest building. Yet in the decade and a half that have passed since then, the country has moved forward light years. It has its first Olympic gold medal winner (Maria de Lurdes Mutola, the face accompanying the mCel slogan), close to one million people with cell phones, and a raft of new, modern high-rises and hotels in Maputo and other major towns. Tourism – which has been slowly on the incline for years – is finally beginning to boom as the world wakes up to the country’s charms and as the country readies itself to receive visitors. There’s a lively and fast-developing cultural scene, picking up where colonial-era oppressions and war caused things to leave off. The political arena is relatively stable, and the government is making at least nominal efforts to battle corruption – new president Armando Guebuza campaigned on an anticorruption ticket. And the economy, helped along by large infusions of external aid, is on a definite upswing.

Yet the picture isn’t all rosy. While the macroeconomic statistics are indeed impressive, many people still struggle to eke out a living on an official monthly minimum wage of less than US\$60. HIV/AIDS is another shadow. Despite a well-funded advertising effort to promote the use of Jeito condoms and general AIDS awareness, the government recently revised its estimate of the nationwide infection rate upwards to about 16%. Countrywide, up to 1.7 million people are living with HIV.

Malaria, a scourge throughout much of the continent, takes its toll in Mozambique and surpasses HIV/AIDS as the main cause of death. It also results in countless hours of lost work, decreased productivity and illness on the part of those who suffer with it but survive. On the political front, the investigation into the 2000 murder of journalist Carlos Cardoso drags on, fettered by entrenched interests and corruption at the highest levels.

Balancing out these differing faces of Mozambique, it’s sometimes hard to see which one wins out. But if you took a poll, chances are that most Mozambicans would side with the optimistic view. Yes, there are problems with AIDS, education, jobs and more. But the future is bright, the mood is upbeat and these days it’s likely that almost all Mozambicans, if asked, would smile and agree with the sentiment of being proudly Mozambican.

## FAST FACTS

Population: 19.7 million

Area: 801,590 sq km

HIV prevalence rate: 16%

Official language:

Portuguese

Literacy rate: 48% (64% for males, 33% for females)

Life expectancy at birth: 40 years

Inflation: 7.8%

Elephants in Reserva do Niassa: about 12,000

Number of islands in the Archipelago das Quirimbas: 22 plus numerous islets

Dugongs around Archipelago de Bazaruto: less than 100

# The Author



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## MARY FITZPATRICK

Originally from Washington, DC, Mary set off after graduate studies for several years in Europe. Her fascination with languages and cultures soon led her further south to sub-Saharan Africa, where she has spent much of the past decade living and working, including almost four years in Mozambique. Mary has travelled extensively throughout the country, speaks Portuguese and Swahili, and has authored and co-authored numerous other guidebooks on Southern and East Africa and elsewhere on the continent. She calls Cairo home at the moment, travels south whenever she gets the chance and, when she's not in Mozambique, spends her free time dreaming of the Mozambican coastline.

### My Favourite Trip

If I could set my own itinerary, I'd spend as much time as possible in northern Cabo Delgado province (p131) between Pemba and Palma, including island hopping in the Archipélago das Quirimbas (p158). Niassa province would be next on the list, exploring the Lago Niassa coastline (p148) and visiting the Reserva do Niassa (p150). Heading southwards, essential stops would include Ilha de Moçambique (p137), Parque Nacional de Gorongosa (p111), the Archipélago de Bazaruto (p99), Morrungulo (p94), Inhambane (p86) and Ponta Malongane (p77) before finishing up in and around Maputo (p54).



### LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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