

Northern Mozambique



If southern Mozambique's lures are the accessible beaches and relaxing resorts, in the north it's the paradisaical coastal landscapes, the sense of space and the sheer adventure of travel. This is one of Africa's last frontiers – wild, beautiful and untamed. Inland are vast expanses of bush where enough lions and elephants still roam to be the stuff of local lore and wreak havoc on villages. Along the coast is an almost endless succession of unspoiled beaches and islands, plus Ilha de Moçambique – one of Southern Africa's top attractions.

In many respects, the north – the provinces of Nampula, Niassa and Cabo Delgado – might as well be a separate country. It's divided from the rest of Mozambique by several major rivers and hundreds of kilometres of road. And, although home to one-third of Mozambique's population, it accounts for only one-fifth of the gross national product, has the lowest adult literacy rates and often seems to drop out of sight for the southern-oriented government.

Culturally, northern Mozambique is intriguing as the home of many matrilineal tribes, in contrast with the strictly patrilineal south. Islamic influences are also stronger here, with centuries-old ties to the old Swahili trading networks. The north is also the birthplace of Mozambique's independence struggle. It was here, in the bush, that the Frelimo cadres did their training, and it was here – in the unlikely village of Chai – that the first shots of war were fired.

In the main destinations – Nampula, Ilha de Moçambique, Pemba, the Archipélago das Quirimbas and Lichinga – there is enough infrastructure to travel as comfortably as you like. Elsewhere, journeys are rough and rugged.

Places in this chapter are described clockwise from south to north.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Wander at dawn through the streets of **Ilha de Moçambique** (p137), taking in its surreal, time-warp atmosphere
- Go island hopping by dhow or chill out on your private slice of paradise in the **Archipélago das Quirimbas** (p158)
- Revel in the rugged remoteness of the **Lago Niassa** (p148) shoreline and spend a night at the wonderful **Nkwichi Lodge** (p150).
- Chill out on Pemba's **Praia de Wimbi** (p154)
- Set off on one of the wildest safaris of your life in the **Reserva do Niassa** (p150)





Climate

In theory, the rainy season starts somewhat earlier in Mozambique's far north – from late December until March – although in recent years the rains have held off until later, around February, and have continued through to April. There's less rainfall along the coastal areas and more in inland areas at altitude.

National Parks

The big drawcards here are the Reserva do Niassa (p150) and the Arquipélago das Quirimbas (p158), much of which is protected as a national park; see also p40. In the far northwest is the Manda Wilderness Area (p149).

Getting There & Away

There are straightforward air and road connections linking northern Mozambique with Tanzania and Malawi, and if your focus is on this part of the country, it's often less expensive and more time-efficient to enter this way, than via Maputo; see p186. Within Mozambique, there are good north-south air links. While the north-south road situation is improving (it's mostly tarmac the whole way, following main routes), it's still a long, rugged journey, so allow ample time for overland travel.

NAMPULA

Bustling Nampula is Mozambique's third-largest city, a convenient transport hub and – as the jumping-off point for visiting Ilha de Moçambique – an inevitable stop for many travellers.

While there are few, if any, tourist attractions, the city's good facilities, broad avenues and its main plaza, graced by an imposing white cathedral and rimmed by flowering trees, make it an amenable enough spot to spend a night or two.

The surrounding countryside is dotted with enormous inselbergs – large masses of smooth volcanic granite which intruded into the earth's crust aeons ago and were then exposed over the millennia by erosion of the softer surrounding rock. Some soar close to 1000m into the air. Climbing them is tempting, but before doing so check with locals about the presence of land mines. For any technical climbing, you'll need to get permission from the local district administrator.

History

It's only recently that Nampula has come into its own, having spent much of the 19th century languishing in the shadow of nearby Ilha de Moçambique. The construction of a rail link from the coast in the 1930s and the expansion of the city's port in the late 1940s boosted Nampula's growth as a rail junction and administrative centre. Today, it's the capital of Nampula province (Mozambique's second most populous province after Zambézia) and the commercial centre of the north.

Orientation

The train station and main transport stand are at the northern edge of town. About 10 minutes on foot southwest of here is the cathedral, a major landmark. Once at the cathedral, internet cafés, ATMs and several hotels are within easy reach, scattered around within about a 1km radius.

The best map, if you can manage to find one – check in local stationery shops or at **Gabinete de Endereçamento da Cidade de Nampula** (☎ /fax 26-213848; 256 Rua Daniel Napatima) – is the excellent *Planta de Endereçamento da Cidade de Nampula*. There are **BIM Expresso** branches with ATMs on Av Eduardo Mondlane, and on the corner of Avs da Independência & Francisco Manyanga.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

IT Services (Av Eduardo Mondlane; per hr US\$2; ☎ 7am-9pm) Next to Frango King.

Teledata (Av Eduardo Mondlane, Centro Comercial de Nampula; per hr US\$1.60; ☎ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-1pm & 3pm-8pm Sat) Next to Hotel Girassol.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Farmácia Calêndula (Av Eduardo Mondlane; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun) One block up from the museum.

Hospital Provincial (Praça da Liberdade) Malaria testing.

MONEY

Centro Comercial de Nampula (Av Eduardo Mondlane) ATM; next to Hotel Girassol.

Shoprite (Rua dos Continuadores) ATM.

Standard Bank (Av Eduardo Mondlane) ATM, and changes travellers cheques for a minimum US\$35 commission per transaction; just up from the museum.

TELEPHONE

TDM (Telecomunicações de Moçambique; Rua Monomotapa) International and domestic calls; near the cathedral.

Sights & Activities

The Museu Nacional de Etnografia (National Ethnography Museum; Av Eduardo Mondlane; admission free, donations welcome; ☎ 2-4.30pm Tue-Thu & Sat, 2-6pm Fri, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Sun) is well worth a visit, with a well-arranged collection documenting various aspects of local life and culture and explanations in English and Portuguese.

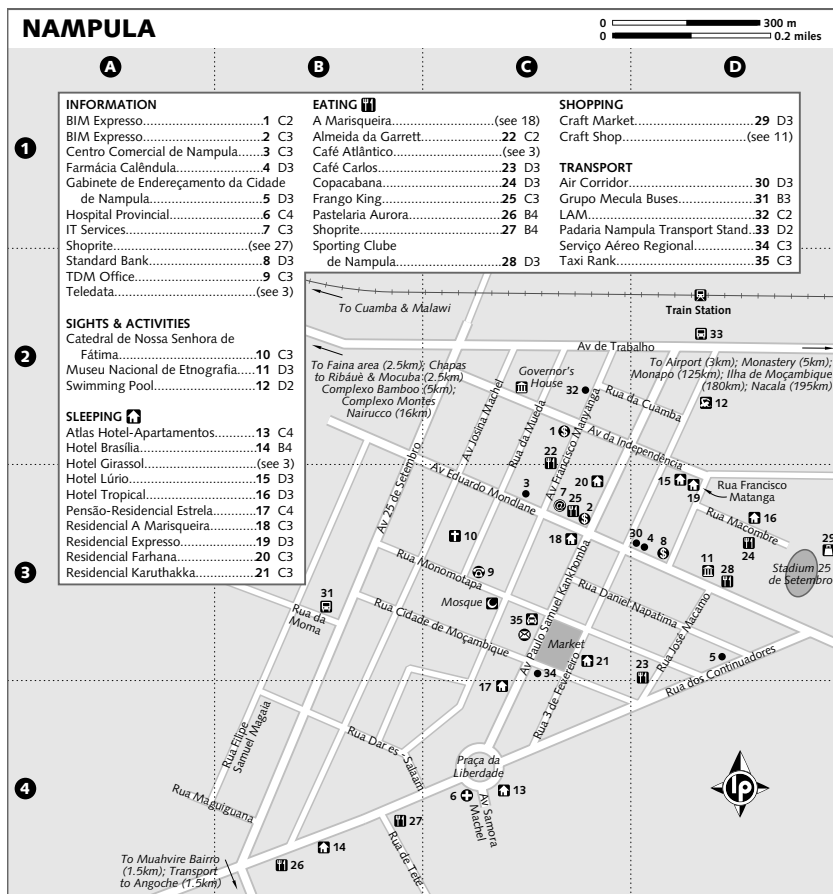
Nampula doesn't have as much to offer architecturally as Maputo and Beira, but there are a few intriguing buildings. The main one is the imposing **Catedral de Nossa Senhora de Fátima**, in a large plaza flanked at one end by the governor's house.

The public **swimming pool** (Clube CFM; Rua 3 de Fevereiro; entry US\$2) is a decent spot to cool off. The **pool** (Ribáuê Rd; adult/child US\$3/2) at Complexo Bamboo is smaller, but the surrounding greenery is pleasant.

About 5km north of town is a **monastery** run by a contemplative women's order, with an interesting church that is periodically open to the public. Follow the airport road out of town past the roundabout to the first major fork; take the first left and watch for the small signpost.

Sleeping

What Nampula lacks in sights, it makes up for in its array of sleeping options, which is reasonably wide at the upper end of the spectrum, although mediocre at the budget level.

**BUDGET**

Hotel Lúrio (☎ 26-218631; Av da Independência; s/d US\$20/32, ste s/d US\$48/60) A large, cavernous high-rise a few blocks south of the train station, with faded rooms, all with fans and without hot water, that are among the cheapest in town. Continental breakfast is included.

Hotel Brasília (☎ 26-217531; 26 Rua dos Continuadores; tw/d US\$26/30; ☎) Hotel Brasília has clean, decent-value rooms with bathroom and a small restaurant (snacks from US\$1, meals and pizzas US\$2.50 to US\$7) featuring Mozambican and standard cuisine. It's close to Shoprite, but otherwise a bit of a walk to internet cafés and the transport depots.

Pensão-Residencial Estrela (☎ 26-214902; Av Paulo Samuel Kankhomba; tw without/with bathroom US\$32/56)

Proudly displaying its single star (only about half of which is actually merited), this shoestring establishment has overpriced twin-bedded rooms with fan – some with TV and minifridge – a tolerable shared bathroom, and a central but noisy and rather seedy location one block downhill from the post office. There's no food.

Residencial A Marisqueira (☎ 26-213611; cnr Avs Paulo Samuel Kankhomba & Eduardo Mondlane; s/d/tw US\$36/41/53; ☎) Several big steps up is the well-located and central A Marisqueira, with no-frills rooms (ask for one of the newer ones), all with TV, and a restaurant downstairs. There's no hot water.

Residencial Farhana (☎ 26-212527; Av Paulo Samuel Kankhomba; s/d/tw US\$35/48/62; ☎) Formerly Pen-

são Marques, this large, rather dingy edifice has a row of straightforward rooms – the doubles come with a rattling air-conditioner and musty private bathroom – plus hot water and TV. There's no food. Rooms to the front have small balconies, but they get the street noise; those to the back are quieter, but ventilation isn't as good.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

The selection improves if you're willing to pay a bit more, with several more upper-end places under construction.

Residencial Expresso (☎ 26-218808/9; fax 26-218806; Av da Independência; s/d US\$53/67; ☎) Six large, spotless, modern rooms with fridge and TV. Breakfast is included and meals can be arranged.

Residencial Karuthakka (☎ 26-216730, 82-6707320; residencialkaruthakka@hotmail.com; Rua 3 de Fevereiro; r without/with breakfast US\$45/50, ste US\$60; ☎) A new place behind the market with a large front veranda, plus spacious, spotless rooms, some with balcony, and all with minifridge, TV, fan, air-con and hot water.

Atlas Hotel-Apartamentos (☎ 26-218222; fax 26-218233; Av Samora Machel; s/d US\$70/80; ☎) Spacious (though the bedroom itself is smallish) and rather heavily furnished self-catering apartments with sitting room, kitchenette and fridge. It's at the southern edge of town near the hospital.

Hotel Tropical (☎ 26-213220, 82-4997670; Rua Macombre; s/d/tw US\$53/62/77; ☎) Behind the museum, this hotel was once Nampula's only midrange choice and still does a steady business, though it's seen better days and isn't as good value as the other options in this category. Rooms come with TV, bathroom and breakfast buffet and there's a popular restaurant downstairs.

Complexo Bamboo (☎ 26-217838; www.teledata.mz/bamboo; Ribáuê Rd; s/tw/d US\$60/80/80; ☎) Pleasant, well-maintained rooms (the twins are nicer than the doubles) in expansive grounds with a tiny playground make this a good choice for families. All rooms have TV and minifridge and there's a restaurant. It's about 5km out of town – follow Av do Trabalho west from the train station, then right onto the Ribáuê Rd; Bamboo is 1.5km down on the left.

Hotel Girassol (☎ 26-216000; www.girassolhotels.co.mz; Av Eduardo Mondlane; s/d US\$90/105, ste US\$130-150; ☎) Upstairs in the Centro Comercial de

Nampula high-rise, this good four-star place catering to business travellers has efficient service and Nampula's best rooms. All have small, modern bathrooms, plus TV, telephone and minifridge and some have excellent views over the cathedral and town.

Complexo Montes Nairucco (☎ 26-240081; idalecio@teledata.mz; Ribáuê Rd; camping per person US\$4, s/tw/d US\$50/65/65, day visitors per person US\$2) This Portuguese-run getaway is nestled under the towering Monte Nairucco on a large farm planted with mango and orange groves about 16km west of town. It makes a peaceful weekend retreat or day trip (6am-10pm), with a reservoir where you can swim, a restaurant (meals US\$4 to US\$8; breakfast, lunch and dinner), a bar and a braai area, plus walks in the vicinity. The camping ground overlooks the reservoir and has hot-water ablutions. Taxis from town charge from about US\$10. Driving, follow the Ribáuê Rd for about 15km to the signpost, from where it's 1km further down a small lane.

Eating**RESTAURANTS**

Copacabana (☎ 26-218121; Rua Macombre; pizzas & meals US\$4-8; ☎) Closed Sun) Opposite Hotel Tropical, with covered outdoor seating, fresh pasta, pizzas and a large menu featuring grilled seafood and meat dishes.

Sporting Clube de Nampula (Av Eduardo Mondlane; meals US\$4-8; ☎) 8am-10pm) Next to the Museu Nacional de Etnografia, this popular watering hole features the usual chicken and fish grills, plus *fejoada* (a bean-and-sausage dish) and more. Sit inside or outdoors – there's a playground at the adjoining school for children.

Café Carlos (☎ 26-217960; Rua José Macamo; meals from US\$4; ☎) Closed Sun) Just off Rua dos Continuadores, this pleasant place has seafood grills, a pizza oven and seating in a small, outdoor courtyard.

Almeida da Garrett (Av Francisco Manyanga; meals US\$6; ☎) 9am-11pm Wed-Mon & Tue 5pm-11pm) A darkish, rather seedy establishment with pool tables inside and nicer dining on a small balcony. The large menu features good Goan cuisine, including some vegetarian dishes, plus a range of burgers, grills and other standards. Stop by in the morning to place your order.

Complexo Bamboo (☎ 26-217838; www.teledata.mz/bamboo; Ribáuê Rd; meals from US\$4; ☎) The restaurant at this hotel serves all the usual dishes in pleasant, leafy surroundings.

CAFÉS & FAST FOOD

Café Atlântico (Av Eduardo Mondlane, Centro Comercial de Nampula; snacks & meals from US\$1; ☎ 6am-9pm; ♿) Burgers, pizzas and other light meals.

Marisqueira (☎ 26-213611; cnr Avs Paulo Kankhomba & Eduardo Mondlane; meals US\$4) Reasonably priced plates of the day, plus snacks and sweets, in a bright dining room with views of the passing scene.

Pastelaria Aurora (Rua dos Continuadores; dishes from US\$2) This place, near Hotel Brasília has light meals and snacks, and is known for its curries. Also on offer are a few Chinese dishes.

Frango King (Av Eduardo Mondlane; half/whole chicken US\$3/5; ☎ 7.30am-4am) Grilled chicken to go.

Self-caterers can try **Shoprite** (Rua dos Continuadores; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun).

Shopping

The best place for crafts is the Sunday morning **craft market** (☎ dawn to dusk) in the large stadium field downhill from Hotel Tropical. The best time to go is from about 7am, before things get hot and crowded. Leave your bags at home, and watch out for pickpockets.

The craft shop behind the museum has ceramic Makonde pots, basketry and woodcarvings.

Getting There & Away**AIR**

There are flights on **LAM** (☎ 26-213322, 26-212801; Av Francisco Manyanga; ☎ 7.30am-12.30pm, 2.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri) to Maputo (daily), Beira, Lichinga, Quelimane, Tete and Pemba (all several times weekly).

Air Corridor (☎ 26-214444, 26-213333; aircorridor@teledata.mz; cnr Av Eduardo Mondlane & Rua 3 de Fevereiro) stops in Nampula on its daily run up and down the coast.

Serviço Aéreo Regional (SAR; ☎ 26-212401, sargaw@teledata.mz; Rua Cidade de Moçambique), opposite the market, flies twice weekly between Nampula and Cuamba (US\$72 one-way).

The airport is about 4km northeast of town (US\$4 in a taxi).

BUS & CHAPA

Grupo Mecula has daily buses to Nacala (US\$4, two to three hours); Pemba (US\$7, seven hours); Quelimane (US\$14, 11 hours); Montepuez (US\$7, eight hours); and Mueda (US\$12, 13 hours). All depart at 5am except the bus to Nacala, which departs at 1pm. Departures are from the Grupo Mecula garage

(in the area known as 'Roman') on Rua da Moma, just off Av 25 de Setembro and one block south of Rua Cidade de Moçambique.

To Ilha de Moçambique (US\$3.60, three to four hours), there are chapas departing between about 5am and 11am from Padaria Nampula transport stand along Av do Trabalho, east of the train station. Look for one that's going direct – many that say they're going to the island go only as far as Monapo, where you'll need to wait for another vehicle. Currently, the best connection is on the *tanzaniano* chapa departing Nampula about 10am (get there about 9am to be sure of a seat) and continuing more or less nonstop to Ilha. Alternatively, ask for one of the other *tanzaniano* chapas, which depart Nampula anywhere between around 7am and 10am, depending on how early they arrive from Ilha. The Padaria Nampula transport stand is also the place to find chapas to Mossuril, Namapa, and other points north and east.

Transport to Angoche (US\$4.80, three hours) departs from Muahvire bairro, along the extension of Av das FPLM, beginning about 5am.

Chapas to Ribáuè and Mocuba (US\$11, eight hours) leave from the western end of Av do Trabalho, about 2.5km west of the train station near the Ribáuè road junction in the Faina area. There are also buses several times weekly from here to Cuamba, and the road is in decent shape most of the way, although most people go by train. If you drive, there's accommodation en route at **Complexo Turístico Malaya** (☎ 26-340004; d US\$22; ♿) in Malema, with small and surprisingly decent rondavels, and a restaurant.

TRAIN

A six-times weekly passenger train connects Nampula and Cuamba; see p145.

Getting Around

The main **taxi rank** (Moti Taxi; ☎ 82-352 0970; Av Paulo Samuel Kankhomba) is near the market. Moti Taxi is planning to open another stand soon next to the main bus station opposite Padaria Nampula.

Car rental agencies include the very efficient and helpful branch of **Imperial** (☎ 26-216312, 82-300 5170; imperial.npl@teledata.mz; Airport); and **Moti Rent-A-Car** (☎ 82-352 2770; Airport). Moti Rent-A-Car takes Visa cards only and doesn't offer any insurance.

MOGINCUAL

Mogincual, an old trading settlement 175km southeast of Nampula, sits near an estuary divided by a narrow finger of land from the sea, surrounded by wetland areas that are good for birding.

Bay Diving (p144) runs a basic bush camp (advance reservations essential) on the estuary about 3km from town. However, it's soon to be relocated closer to Nacala; check with them for an update.

Getting There & Away

Take any chapa running along the Nampula-Nacala road and disembark at the Monapo junction. From here, you'll have to walk a few minutes to the market in Monapo town, from where chapas run once or twice daily to Mogincual.

ANGOICHE

This quiet, somewhat dilapidated district capital has a long and intriguing history. While few reminders of its past remain, it has stayed relatively isolated and is worth a visit if you're in the area. About 7km north of town is the attractive **Praia Nova**, and about 45km further on is the village of **Quinga**, near another beautiful stretch of sand.

Stretching well south of Angoche towards Moma and on to Pebane are the **Arquipélagos das Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas** (soon to be Mozambique's newest protected area – see p40), several of which are favoured as nesting areas by local green turtles and many of which are encircled by coral reefs. Dugongs are also frequent visitors. There are no tourist facilities.

History

Angoche (formerly António Ennes) is an old Muslim trading centre dating from at least the 15th century. It was one of Mozambique's earliest settlements and an important gold and ivory trading post. By the late 16th century, Angoche had been eclipsed by Quelimane as an entry port to the interior. However, it continued to play a role in coastal trade and was an important economic and political centre, with close ties to Ilha de Moçambique. In the 19th century, Angoche became the focus of the clandestine slave trade, which continued until the 1860s when the town was attacked by the Portuguese. While effective Portuguese administration was not established until several decades later, the attack marked the be-

ginning of Angoche's downfall and the town never regained its former status.

Sleeping & Eating

Inas Casa de Hospedes (☎ 26-720232; r US\$52; ♿) Angoche's most comfortable accommodation has straightforward rooms and meals. It's behind the Catholic church; ask for Mooxelele (mo-oh-sheh-lay-lay).

Otherwise, there are several basic *pensões* (inexpensive hotels) with no-frills rooms for about US\$4, including Pensão Mafamede and Pensão Parapato. For meals, try **Restaurante O Pescador** (Av Liberdade; meals from US\$2), on the main street near BIM bank.

Getting There & Away

Daily chapas connect Nampula and Angoche during the dry season, departing Nampula about 5am (US\$4.80, three hours). It's also possible to reach Angoche from Monapo. Most public transport on this route only goes as far as the village of Liúpo, where you'll need to change vehicles.

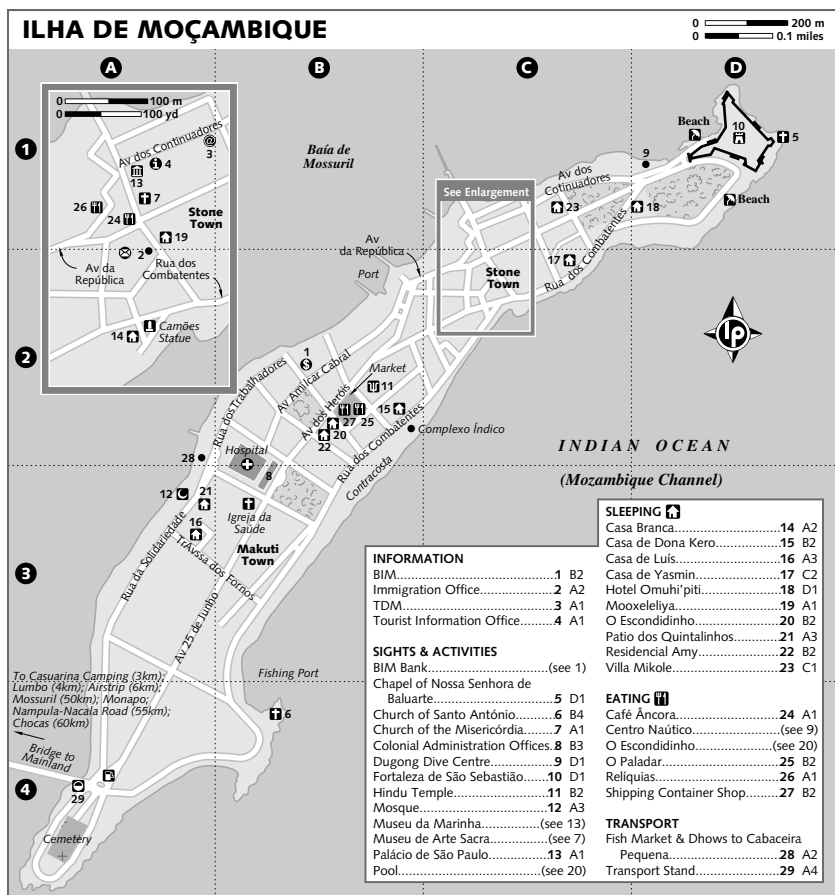
Quinga can be reached with your own vehicle from Angoche (going inland via Namaponda), or via Liúpo, from where there's a daily chapa on to Quinga. There is no direct public transport from Angoche.

Dhows to the offshore islands can be arranged at Angoche's bustling fish market.

ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

Tiny, crescent-shaped Ilha de Moçambique (Mozambique Island) measures only 3km in length and barely 500m in width at its widest section. Yet it has played a larger-than-life role in East African coastal life over the centuries, and today is one of the region's most fascinating destinations. Close your eyes for a minute and imagine the now-quiet streets echoing with the footsteps of Arab traders, ushered in on the monsoon winds. Or hear the crisp voice of the Portuguese governor-general barking orders from his plush quarters in the Palácio de São Paulo. Or try to imagine the sweat, anger and despair of the Africans herded into the closed cells of the Fortaleza de São Sebastião before being sold into slavery.

Today, Ilha de Moçambique is an intriguing anomaly – part ghost town and part lively fishing community. It's also a picturesque and exceptionally pleasant place to wander around, with graceful praças rimmed by once-grand churches, colonnaded archways



and stately colonial-era buildings lining the quiet, cobbled streets of the Stone Town. In Makuti Town, with its thatched-roof huts and crush of people, narrow alleyways echo with the sounds of playing children and squawking chickens, while fishermen sit on the sand repairing their long, brightly coloured nets.

Since 1991, this cultural melting pot has been a Unesco World Heritage site and – while there are still many crumbling ruins – there's fresh paint and restoration work aplenty.

Interestingly, there are no wells on Ilha de Moçambique; it was settled despite the lack of water sources because of its favourable location and natural harbour. To compensate, most houses in the early days had cisterns, as

did the Fort of São Sebastião, which had three. Now, water is piped in from the mainland.

History

For most of its history, Ilha de Moçambique has served as a meeting point of cultures and a hub of Indian Ocean trade. As early as the 15th century it was an important boat-building centre, and its history as a trading settlement – with ties to Madagascar, Persia, Arabia and elsewhere – dates back well before that. Vasco da Gama landed here in 1498 and in 1507 a permanent Portuguese settlement was established on the island. Unlike Sofala to the south, where the Portuguese also established a foothold at about the same time, Ilha de Moçambique prospered as both a trading

station and naval base, with connections to places as far away as Macau and Goa. In the late 16th century, the sprawling Fort of São Sebastião was constructed. The island soon became capital of Portuguese East Africa – a status that it held until the end of the 19th century when the government was transferred to Lourenço Marques (Maputo). As focus shifted southwards, Ilha de Moçambique's star began to fade. The construction of a rail terminus at Nacala in 1947 and the development of the island's fate and sent it into an economic decline from which it never recovered.

Apart from its early strategic and economic importance, Ilha de Moçambique also developed as a missionary centre. Beginning in the 17th century, numerous orders established churches here and Christians intermixed with the island's traditional Muslim population and Hindu community. Various small waves of immigration over the years – from places as diverse as East Africa, Goa, Macau and elsewhere – contributed to the ethnic and cultural mix and the resulting melange is one of the island's most intriguing aspects. Over the last century, as the Portuguese presence on the island has faded into obscurity, Muslim influence has reasserted itself and, together with local Makua culture, is now dominant.

Orientation

Ilha de Moçambique's fusion of cultures is best seen in Stone Town, as the cobwebbed, quiet northern half of the island is known. Here, you'll find the majority of historic buildings – most constructed between the early 16th and late 19th centuries when the Portuguese occupied the island and most original residents were banished to the mainland. Makuti Town – the island's younger, more colourful southern half – reflects Ilha de Moçambique's other face. It dates from the late 19th century, and is where most islanders now live, with daily Makua life going on much as it has for centuries. The waterfront in between, along the island's eastern edge, is known as the *contracosta*.

Maps are available from the tourist information office.

Information

BIM (Av Amílcar Cabral; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri) On the western side of the island; has an ATM, and changes cash dollars, euro and rand.

Immigration Office Diagonally opposite Mooxeleliya, down from the Church of the Misericórdia.

TDM (per min US\$0.04; ☎ 7.30am-8pm) Just up from the tourist information office; internet access and international calls.

Tourist information office (☎ 26-610081; Av de Continuidores; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm, in theory) Information on things to see and do, island guides and accommodation listings.

Sights

PALÁCIO DE SÃO PAULO

The imposing **Palácio de São Paulo** (☎ 26-610081; fax 26-610047; adult/child US\$4/1; ☎ 9am-4pm) – the former governor's residence and now a museum – dates from 1610 and is the island's historical showpiece. The interior has been renovated to give a remarkable glimpse into what upper-class life must have been like during the city's 18th-century heyday. In addition to an impressive collection of knick-knacks from Portugal, Arabia, India and China, there are many pieces of original furniture, including an important collection of heavily ornamented Indo-Portuguese pieces. In the chapel, don't miss the altar and the pulpit, the latter of which was made in the 17th century by Chinese artists in Goa. On the ground floor is the small **Museu da Marinha** (Maritime Museum), with relics hauled up from the surrounding depths. Behind the palace are the **Church of the Misericórdia** (still in active use) and the **Museu de Arte Sacra** (Museum of Sacred Art, closed at time of writing), containing religious ornaments, paintings and carvings. The museum is housed in the former hospital of the Holy House of Mercy, a religious guild that assisted the poor and sick in several Portuguese colonies from the early 1500s onwards. The ticket price includes entry to all three museums.

FORTALEZA DE SÃO SEBASTIÃO

The island's northern end is dominated by the massive **Fortaleza de São Sebastião** (admission free, guide US\$2; ☎ 8am-5pm), which is the oldest complete fort still standing in sub-Saharan Africa. Construction began in 1558, and about 50 years later the final stones were laid. Guides can be arranged with the tourist information centre. Just beyond the fort, at the island's tip, is the whitewashed **Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Baluarte**. Built in 1522, it's considered to be the oldest European building in the southern hemisphere and one of the best examples of

MUSIRO

All along the northern coast, and especially on Ilha de Moçambique, you'll frequently see women with their faces painted white. The paste is known as *musiro* (also *n'siro* or *msiro*), and is used as a facial mask to beautify the skin, and sometimes as a sunscreen by women working in the fields, or as a medicinal treatment (though the medicinal paste usually has a yellowish tinge). *Musiro* was also traditionally applied in ways that conveyed messages – for example whether the wearer was married, or whether her husband was away – although most of the meanings have since been lost.

Musiro is made by grinding a branch of the *Olex dissitiflora* tree (known locally as *ximbuti* or *msiro*) against a stone with a bit of water. Local women usually leave the mask on for the day, and sometimes overnight. If you go walking in villages early in the morning and see women with white paste on their hands, chances are that they are in the midst of preparing *musiro*.

Manueline vaulted architecture in Mozambique (add that one to your store of cocktail party trivia). At the southern tip of the island, keeping watch over the fishing port, is the impressive, white and no-longer-used **Church of Santo António**.

OTHER SIGHTS

Other places to watch for while wandering through Stone Town include the restored ochre-toned **BIM bank** (Av Amílcar Cabral) and the ornate **colonial administration offices** overlooking the gardens east of the hospital. A few blocks north of the market is a **Hindu temple** and on the island's western edge a fairly modern **mosque** painted an unmissable shade of green.

Activities

Ilha has several small beaches, the cleanest of which is Praia Nancaramo, next to the fort. Strong tidal flows make it dangerous to swim around the northern and southern ends of the island. Better quality beaches are located in Chocas (p142) or points further north. For cooling off, try the small **pool** (Av dos Heróis; adult/child US\$2/1) at O Escondidinho.

Dugong Dive Centre (☎ 26-610027, 82-454 7810; caku@teledata.mz; Centro Náutico; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sun) can sort you out with diving around Goa and Sena, two tiny islands off Ilha de Moçambique, plus overnight dhow safaris (September to November only), sea kayaking and boat transfers to Chocas. Their base is opposite Hotel Omuhí'piti.

Sleeping

There's a reasonably good range of accommodation on the island, but at the budget level, many of the rooms are small and poorly

ventilated. If your funds permit, it's often worth paying a modest amount more for one of the midrange places.

BUDGET

Casuarina Camping (lenavie@hotmail.com; Lumbo; camping per person US\$3, r per person US\$20, vehicle US\$4, day visitor US\$0.40) Casuarina is on the mainland opposite Ilha de Moçambique, just a two minute walk from the bridge. On offer: camping on a small beach (where you can also swim), plus no-frills bungalow-style rooms, ablution blocks with bucket-style showers and meals.

Otherwise, the cheapest options are in homes with local families, generally offering small, no-frills rooms in the family quarters. They include:

Casa de Luís (O Macutini; Travessa dos Fornos, Makuti Town; camping per person US\$4, s/d US\$8/14) Quite basic, and not the best option in heavy rains, as the yard gets flooded, but the owner is friendly and has been welcoming shoestrings travellers for years. Take the first left after passing the green mosque (to your right), then the first left again; ask one of the small boys who will inevitably attach themselves to you to show you the way.

Casa de Dona Kero (☎ 26-610034; Rua dos Combatentes, Contracosta; r US\$10, d/tr US\$14) A small house with small rooms, all with fans but no nets, and on the stuffy side, but the proprietors are friendly. Prices include continental breakfast. It's opposite Complexo Índico.

Residencial Amy (Av dos Heróis; d/tr US\$16/18) Near the park, with several basic, dark rooms – most lacking exterior windows – in the main house and a common area with TV. Breakfast costs US\$2.

Casa de Yasmin (☎ 26-610073; Rua dos Combatentes; r US\$20) At the northern end of the island, with a handful of small, clean rooms – some with private bathroom – in an annex next to the family house. A few air-con rooms with bathroom are planned. No breakfast.

MIDRANGE

Casa Branca (☎ 26-610076; flora204@hotmail.com; Rua dos Combatentes; r US\$24) On the island's eastern side near the Camões statue, Casa Branca has three simple but spotless rooms with views of the turquoise sea just a few metres away and a shared kitchen. One room has its own bathroom, and the other two share. Rates include breakfast. Adjoining is a seaside garden/sitting area.

Mooxeleliya (☎ 26-610076; iannika@teledata.mz; d/f US\$22/48) Under the same management as Casa Branca and equally good value – the Makua name translates roughly as, 'Did you rest well?' – with five large, high-ceilinged rooms upstairs and two darker 3- to 4-person family-style rooms downstairs. All have their own bathroom, breakfast is included and a backyard garden is planned. It's just down from the Church of the Misericórdia.

Patio dos Quintalinhos (Casa de Gabriele; ☎ 26-610090; www.patiadosquintalinhos.com; Rua da Solidariedade; s/d without bathroom US\$20/25, d US\$30, q & ste US\$35) Opposite the green mosque, with a handful of comfortable, creatively designed rooms around a small courtyard, including one with a loft, and a suite with its own star view skylight and private rooftop balcony with views to the water. All have bathroom, except for two tiny rooms to the back. There's also a rooftop terrace and secure parking (per night US\$6); breakfast is included and meals can sometimes be arranged, as can bicycle and vehicle rental and excursions to the outlying islands.

Villa Mikole (Casa Dugong; ☎ 26-610156, 82-454 7810; s/d US\$50/70) On a small side street just down from Centro Náutico, this private, well-furnished house run by Dugong Dive Centre has several comfortable rooms to rent, a shaded, airy common area and self-catering and braai facilities. Advance bookings are essential.

O Escondidinho (☎ 26-610078; ilhatur@itservices.co.mz; Av dos Heróis; r US\$36/52; ☎) An atmospheric place with spacious, high-ceilinged rooms, all with nets, ceiling fans and mosquito netting in the windows, plus a garden courtyard, and a good restaurant. A few rooms have private bathroom. Advance bookings advisable. It's near the public gardens.

Hotel Omuhí'piti (☎ 26-610101; h.omuhipiti@teledata.mz; s/d from US\$60/72; ☎) In a good setting at the island's northern tip, this three-star establishment is Ilha de Moçambique's concession to luxury, with modern, quiet rooms, some with views over the water. Breakfast is included and there's a restaurant.

Eating

O Paladar (meals from US\$3; ☎ lunch & dinner) At the eastern corner of the old market and unmarked, O Paladar is the place to go for local cuisine. Stop by in the morning and place your order with Dona Maria for lunchtime or evening meals.

O Escondidinho (☎ 26-610078; meals US\$6-8) The restaurant at this hotel has some of Ilha's best dining, with a changing daily menu featuring shrimps, crayfish and other seafood dishes with French overtones and tables near the small garden.

Relíquias (☎ 26-610092; Av da República; meals US\$4-10; ☎ 10am-10pm) Another good spot, with a range of seafood and meat dishes, including prawn curry, matapa and coconut rice. It's close to the museum.

Café Âncora (☎ 26-610006; brunch US\$9; ☎ 8am-11pm) Newly reopened, Café Âncora, directly opposite the Church of Misericórdia, has delicious brunches (10am to 2pm Sunday), with fresh yogurt and juice, muesli, waffles and more, plus a menu featuring sandwiches, seafood and homemade ice cream.

Centro Náutico (snacks & beers US\$1) Drinks and snacks on a breezy waterside terrace opposite Hotel Omuhí'piti.

For self-caterers, there's a well-stocked shipping container shop next to the market.

Entertainment

Ilha de Moçambique is a good place to see *tufu* dancing. Ask at the tourist information office about upcoming events.

The best time to experience Ilha de Moçambique's time-warp atmosphere is just before dawn, or on an evening when the power goes off (a fairly frequent occurrence), especially if there's a full moon.

Getting There & Away**AIR**

There's an airstrip at Lumbo on the mainland for charter flights. For regularly scheduled flights to/from Nampula, see p136.

BUS & CHAPA

Ilha de Moçambique is joined by a 3.5km bridge (built in 1967) to the mainland. Most chapas stop about 1km before the bridge in Lumbo, where you'll need to get into a smaller pick-up to cross over Baía de Mossuril (Mossuril Bay), due to vehicle weight restrictions on the bridge.

All transport departs from the bridge. The only direct cars to Nampula (US\$3.60, three hours) are the *tanzaniano* minibuses, with one or two departing daily between 3am and 5am. The best thing is to ask your hotel to help you get a message to the chapa driver to come collect you. Currently only one (departing about 5am) goes non-stop to Nampula. After about 6am, the only option is open pick-up trucks to Monapo (US\$1.20, one hour), where you can get transport on to Nampula (US\$2.20, two to three hours) or Nacala (US\$2, one hour). Once in Nampula, there are daily buses north to Pemba and south to Quelimane, though both leave early so you'll need to overnight in Nampula. To head direct to Pemba, take the 4am *tanzaniano* chapa as far as Namialo, where – with luck – you should be able to connect with the Mecula bus from Nampula, which usually passes Namialo about 6am.

Chapas to Lumbo cost US\$0.20. If you're driving: wide vehicles won't pass over the bridge, and maximum weight is 1.5 tonnes. There's a US\$0.40 per vehicle toll payable on arrival on the island.

AROUND ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

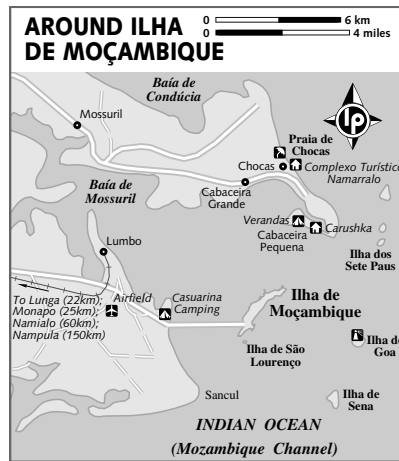
Ilha de Goa

This tiny island shimmers offshore, about 5km east of Ilha de Moçambique. It has a lighthouse built during the 1870, run by the lighthouse keeper and his family, who have lived on Goa for more than 20 years. Its name comes from the island's position on the sea route from Goa – the base for local government between 1509 and 1662. The lighthouse is now solar powered, and according to the keeper, the batteries give out about 1am. You can climb to the top for some views.

Before visiting, get permission from the port captain (*capitania*) on Ilha de Moçambique; it's free and can often be arranged on the spot. You'll also need to hire a motorised dhow (about US\$60 for a 10 to 15 person boat). Be prepared for choppy seas, and tidal limits on the length of time you can spend on the island. Allow about 40 minutes one-way with favourable winds and currents, otherwise at least double this. Ask at your hotel for a reliable captain.

Ilha de Sena

About 2km south of Ilha de Goa, and prettier, is the Ilha de Sena (also known as the Ilha das Cobras). It takes its name from its



location along the old sea route aiming towards the trading centre of Sena, on the Rio Zambezi. The beach here is attractive and there's snorkelling offshore. In the interior are some rock pools lined with mangrove forests. Permission from the port captain on Ilha de Moçambique is necessary to visit and details for getting here are the same as for Ilha de Goa. Centro Náutico (p141) rents snorkelling equipment.

Ilha de São Lourenço

Just off the southern tip of Ilha de Moçambique is this tiny island, which is completely covered by a small eponymous fort dating from 1695. You can walk across the channel at low tide (watch that you don't get stuck out there), but will need to clamber up over the walls, as the ladder into the fort is missing.

Lumbo

Sleepy Lumbo, on the mainland opposite Ilha de Moçambique, was formerly the terminus of a railway line from the interior. Today it's of interest for its Commonwealth war cemetery, a once grand but now abandoned hotel, a few old Portuguese houses and salt flats.

South of Lumbo on Baía de Mocambo (Mocambo Bay) is Lunga, future site of a new, upscale hotel.

CHOCAS

Just to the north of Ilha de Moçambique and across Baía de Mossuril is the old Portuguese holiday town of Chocas. It makes an agreeable

day or overnight excursion, except during holiday weekends when it's completely overrun.

Nearby are two villages formerly used as getaways by wealthy residents of Ilha de Moçambique. **Cabaceira Grande** is the more interesting of the two, with a well-preserved church dating from the late 16th century, the ruins of the old governor-general's palace dating to the mid-19th century and a tourism training school. **Cabaceira Pequena**, a few kilometres southeast, has some old houses, an old Swahili-style mosque and the ruins of a cistern used as a watering spot by Portuguese sailors. It's near the tip of the Mossuril isthmus, connected by a narrow strip of land.

Nearby is the tiny and underwhelming **Ilhas dos Sete Paus**, with snorkelling offshore.

Sleeping & Eating

Complexo Turístico Namarralo (☎ 26-660049; 2-/4-person bungalows with bath US\$40/80; ♿) The busy Namarralo has straightforward stone bungalows in a large, fenced compound on the beach. All have bathroom and breakfast included and there's a restaurant serving Portuguese cuisine. It's signposted from the entrance to Chocas.

Carushka (☎ 82-516 0173; ophavela@teledata.mz; 4-/8-person bungalows US\$32/64) Ideal for a quiet getaway (except on holiday weekends), Carushka has rustic, spotless bungalows set back from the water between the mangroves and one of the best stretches of beach. Wooden walkways take you through the mangroves to the water. A restaurant is planned, but for now you'll need to bring all food and drink with you and staff will prepare it (the bungalows aren't self-catering). It's about 2km south of Chocas town, en route to Cabaceira Pequena. Get here by 4WD or on foot from Chocas town, or hire a boat from Ilha de Moçambique to drop you at the beach.

Verandas (camping per person US\$2) Camping (bring your own tent) under simple thatched shelters on the beach at Cabaceira Pequena, several kilometres past Carushka. Bring everything with you, although more facilities (and even horse riding) are planned.

Getting There & Away

There are one or two direct chapas daily between Chocas and Nampula; the *tanzaniano* chapa departs Nampula anywhere between 10am and noon and departs Chocas about 4am (US\$4). Otherwise, take any transport between Monapo and Ilha de Moçambique, disembarking at the signposted Mossuril

junction 25km southeast of Monapo. Sporadic chapas go from here to Mossuril (20km), and then on to Chocas (12km further), along an unpaved but good road.

From Chocas, it's about a 30-minute walk at low tide to Cabaceira Pequena, and from one hour to 1½ hours to Cabaceira Grande. Alternatively, dhows depart daily in the morning for Cabaceira Pequena from the fish market near the green mosque on Ilha de Moçambique (US\$0.20). Departures from Cabaceira Pequena back to Ilha de Moçambique are also in the morning, so if you want to return the same day, you'll need to charter a boat (about US\$20 for a motorised dhow). If there's no wind, the trip across the bay can take up to six hours or more. Dugong Dive Centre (p140) organises boat trips to Chocas, as do all of Ilha de Moçambique's midrange hotels and the tourist office.

NACALA

Nacala is set on an impressive natural harbour and is northern Mozambique's busiest port, developed in the mid 20th century. The town itself has nothing of interest for travellers, but there's good diving, and attractive beaches nearby. The most popular are **Fernão Veloso** to the north, with a resident dive operator, and **Relanzapo** to the east.

Orientation

The first part of Nacala you'll enter is Nacala-Alta (the high town) which merits no more time than it takes to drive through. After several kilometres, you'll see the bay ahead of you, and the main street (Rua Principal) begins to head downhill to the train station and harbour in the baixa or Nacala-Porto (port) area. The market, transport stand, banks and most shops are along or just off Rua Principal during its route downhill. The best place to get off the bus is at the top, near Hotel Maiaia. The beaches are about 10km to 15km north and west of town, reached via a turnoff in Nacala-Alta.

Information

Banco Austral (cnr Rua Principal & Rua 8) ATM.

BIM (Baixa) ATM; in an isolated highrise.

BP Petrol Station (Nacala-Alta) ATM.

Farmácia Calêndula (Rua 8; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat)

TDM (per min US\$0.04; ☎ 7.30am-10pm) Internet access; diagonally opposite Hotel Maiaia.

Sleeping & Eating

Residencial Bela Vista (☎ 26-520404; Nacala-Alta; s/d from US\$10/18, d with bathroom US\$31; 🚽) This shoestring place in Nacala-Alta is only worth considering if you don't want to be by the beach, don't have the budget for Hotel Maiaia and don't have onward transport to anywhere better. Rooms are very basic – most share bathrooms – and there's a restaurant. Turn left off the main road at the town entrance in front of Mini-Bar Owannhoka. Chapas to the baixa (US\$0.20) pass nearby.

Bay Diving (☎ 26-520017; www.fimdomundosafaris.com; Fernão Veloso; camping per person US\$6, dm US\$8, d US\$21.50, 2- to 4-person chalets with bathroom US\$31-41, breakfast per person US\$6; 🚽) Almost everyone heads to this popular divers' base on an escarpment overlooking the beach at Fernão Veloso. It has rustic reed and thatch A-frame chalets with fans and nets, plus dorm beds, camping with hot water, a good restaurant (ask about the chocolate cake) and a steam room. They offer PADI and NAUI instruction and equipment rental, plus sea kayaking and road excursions to Ilha de Moçambique. There's also a customised dhow for overnight or day dhow safaris, including to Ilha de Moçambique, and day trips or overnight camping on a deserted stretch of beach across the bay. Follow directions to Fernão Veloso (see right) and then follow the Bay Diving signs. Pick-ups can be arranged from Nacala town. Alternatively, pay any chapa heading to Fernão Veloso a bit extra to take you all the way to Bay Diving.

Complexo Turístico Napala (☎ 26-520608; Fernão Veloso; d/q chalets US\$40/70; 🚽) A new establishment directly on the beach northeast of Bay Diving, with small stone rondavels – all with TV, minifridge, bathroom and hot water – and a waterside restaurant. Chapas to/from town run nearby.

Hotel Maiaia (☎ 26-526842; inturhoteis@teledata.mz; Rua Principal; s/d from US\$60/70; 🚽) The centrally located three-star Maiaia is where most business travellers stay. It has a restaurant and spiffy, modern rooms with TV (some also have a small balcony). It's on the main street diagonally opposite the central market, where the road starts its final descent into the baixa. Visa cards are accepted.

All the hotels have restaurants. Otherwise, try the slightly seedy **Baía Azul** (Rua 8; meals US\$2) or **Restaurante Sandokan** (Rua 8; meals from US\$2), on the opposite side of the main road, and temporarily closed when we passed through.

Pastelaria Carioca (cnr Ruas Principal & 8), near Banco Austral, has light meals and pastries.

Getting There & Around

Grupo Mecula buses to Nampula (US\$4, 2½ hours) and Pemba (US\$7, seven hours) depart daily at 5am from the Mecula garage. Head down Rua Principal to the large roundabout, then follow the street going left and uphill next to Mozstar. Mecula is about 400m up on the left, behind an unmarked wall.

There are also chapas each morning to Nampula and Monapo (US\$1.20, one hour), departing from the blue shipping container diagonally opposite Hotel Maiaia, and also from next to the BP petrol station in Nacala-Alta. Once in Monapo (ask your hotel for help in timing the connection), you can find transport to Ilha de Moçambique and Namialo, the junction town for Pemba.

To Fernão Veloso: take the turn-off for the airport and military base at the Nacala town entrance. After about 9km watch for the signposted turn-off opposite the base, from where it's about another 1.5km. Chapas to Fernão Veloso (US\$0.20) depart from the Nacala-Alta market near the Catholic church, or you can catch them at the airport turn-off.

Relanzapo is reached by taking the same turn-off for the airport and military base. Turn right on the dirt road immediately before the base and continue 15km east. There's no public transport.

Nacala has a few metered taxis; dial **Moti-Taxi** (☎ 26-526111).

CUAMBA

This lively rail and road junction (formerly known as Novo Freixo), with its dusty streets, flowering trees and large university student population, is the economic centre of Niassa province and a convenient stop-off if you're travelling to/from Malawi. The surrounding area is known for its garnet gemstones.

Information

BIM Expresso (Av Eduardo Mondlane) ATM; near the post office.

TDM (Av Eduardo Mondlane; per min US\$0.04) Internet access and telephone calls.

Sleeping & Eating

Namacha (s/d US\$12/18) Just off the main road (Av Eduardo Mondlane) in the town centre and one of the better bets for budget accom-

FIM DE MONDO

'*Fim do mundo*' ('the end of the world') is how many Mozambicans describe Niassa – the least populated of Mozambique's provinces – and as far as the rest of the country is concerned, it might as well be. This wild, remote and beautiful area is generally overlooked by the government and other locals and ignored by tourists. Yet, if you're after adventure and time in the bush, it's an ideal destination. Apart from Niassa's scenic rugged terrain, the main attraction is the alluring Lago Niassa (Lake Niassa) coastline. Much of the northern part of the province enjoys protected status – from the Manda Wilderness Area between the coast and the Rio Messinge (see p150), to the Reserva de Sanga (p147), which goes from the Rio Messinge east to the edge of the buffer zone around Reserva do Niassa, and then the vast Reserva do Niassa (p150), which reaches east to the Rio Lugenda and the border of Cabo Delgado province.

modation, with surprisingly decent rooms and a pleasant courtyard.

Pensão-Restaurante São Miguel (r without/with bathroom US\$15/18) Between Namacha and Hotel Vision 2000 and of similar standard to Namacha. Rates include breakfast.

Hotel Vision 2000 (☎ 271-62632; h-vision2000@teledata.mz; cnr Avs Eduardo Mondlane & 25 de Junho; r US\$50-70; 🚽) On the main intersection, this is Cuamba's only midrange option. Rooms in the main building are faded but spacious and quite decent, with TV and mini-fridge, and there's a restaurant. Staff here can help you arrange a visit to one of the gemstone mines near Cuamba.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are twice-weekly flights to/from Nampula on **Serviço Aéreo Regional** (sargaw@teledata.mz) for US\$72 one-way. Hotel Vision 2000 is the booking agent.

BUS, CAR & CHAPA

The main transport stand is at Maçanqueira market, at the southern edge of town and just south of the railway tracks. Most chapas also pick up passengers at the train station closer to the town centre. The best times to find transport are between 5am and 6am, and again in the afternoon at the station, on days when the train from Nampula arrives.

To Nampula, there's at least one vehicle daily along a long, red ribbon of road winding past beautiful inselberg landscapes. However, it's cheaper and generally at least as 'fast' to travel by train.

To Gurúè, the best way is via train or chapa to Mutuáli, from where you can find vehicles for the remainder of the journey. Via train, this works best going from Cuamba to Gurúè.

In the other direction, vehicles usually leave Gurúè for Mutuáli in the morning, which means you may have to wait for up to six hours for the train on to Cuamba.

To Lichinga, there are several cars daily, departing by 6am from Maçanqueira market (US\$12, six to eight hours).

To Malawi, vehicles go daily from Cuamba to both Entre Lagos (US\$3.50, four hours) and to Mandimba (US\$6, 3½ hours). Once at Entre Lagos, there's a weekly train on the Malawi side to Liwonde. For more on these routes, see p186.

TRAIN

A train connects Cuamba with Nampula (US\$20/10/4 for 1st/2nd/economy class, 10 to 11 hours, sometimes much longer), departing in each direction at 5am on alternate days. (Currently departures from Cuamba are on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; there are no trains in either direction on Monday.) First class has been temporarily discontinued and second class sometimes doesn't run. If you're travelling on a day when there's third class only, try heading to the more comfortable dining car and ingratiating yourself with staff – though we have heard from some travellers that they had to buy something every hour or so for the privilege of sitting there. Women travelling alone in 1st- or 2nd-class will be given seats in a females-only cabin. The ride is enjoyable, stopping at many villages along the way and offering a good slice of Mozambican life.

To transport your vehicle on the train (about US\$90), you'll need to load it the night before and arrange a guard. During the journey you can ride with the car.

Train service between Cuamba and Entre Lagos is suspended.

MANDIMBA

Mandimba is a small, bustling border town and transport junction.

Pensão Massinga (r US\$8-32) is the best place to stay, with clean rooms with fan and meals.

En route between Mandimba and Lichinga is the town of **Massangulo**, the site of the first Catholic mission in Niassa. Its church, about 2km off the main road, is worth a detour if you have your own vehicle.

Vehicles go daily to Lichinga and Cuamba. For border information, see p186.

LICHINGA

Niassa's capital is pretty, low-key Lichinga (formerly Vila Cabral), which sits at about 1300m altitude, with an invigorating cool climate and quiet jacaranda-lined streets. It's worth a day or two in its own right and is also the best jumping-off point for exploring the lake. The surrounding area – home mainly to Yao, as well as smaller numbers of Nyanja and Makua people – is dotted with pine groves and ringed by distant hills.

Orientation

Lichinga is set out in a series of concentric circles, with a large plaza at the centre and the main transport stand at its southeastern edge near the market. It's easy to cover on foot – nothing is more than about a 10-minute walk.

The section of road running past the governor's mansion on the northwestern edge of town is closed to vehicle traffic and the area immediately in front of the mansion is also closed to pedestrians.

Information

Acord (Av Filipe Magaia; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri) Internet access.

Banco Austral (Av Samora Machel) ATM.

BIM (cnr Av Samora Machel & Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia) Also has ATM.

Hotel Girassol Lichinga (Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia) Internet access.

Immigration Just off the airport road, diagonally opposite Escola Industrial e Comercial Ngungunhane.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Hotel Chiwindi (☎ 271-20345; Av Julius Nyerere; r without/bathroom US\$25/30) No-frills rooms in a convenient location near the bus stand and market.

Ponto Final (☎ 271-20912; Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia; r with bathroom US\$22, with bathroom, fridge & TV US\$27)

This long-standing place at the northeastern edge of town has reasonable rooms with bathrooms and low ceilings, and a bar.

MIDRANGE

Pousada de Lichinga (☎ 271-20176, 271-20177; Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia; s/d without bathroom US\$30/34, s/d US\$36/40) The Pousada has a convenient central location, straightforward rooms and a restaurant. Prices include continental breakfast.

Casa Nurbay (☎ 271-20819; Rua de Nachingwea; r per person US\$20) This private house rents out good rooms, one with bathroom, the others with shared facilities. From Av Samora Machel, take the second right down from the post office.

Hotel Girassol Lichinga (☎ 271-21280, 271-21279; www.girassolhotels.co.mz; Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia; s/d US\$85/92, with advance booking US\$70/80; ☎ ☎ ☎) Hovering between three and four stars, this is Lichinga's most upmarket option and one of the few places in the province catering to business travellers. There's a restaurant, tennis courts and rooms with satellite TV and all the trimmings. Book in advance for a discount.

Eating

O Chambo (☎ 271-21354; meals from US\$2.50) The unassuming and long-standing O Chambo, in the FEN (Feira Exposição Niassa) compound next to the market, is Lichinga's best-known restaurant. Great soups cost US\$1 and there are delicious local dishes and other meals.

Pousada de Lichinga (☎ 271-20176, 271-20227; Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia; meals from US\$3) This hotel restaurant has reasonably prompt service and tasty grills and other meals.

Other recommendations:

O Gordo (Av Julius Nyerere; meals from US\$3.50) On the airport road near Escola Industrial e Comercial Ngungunhane, with hearty Portuguese fare.

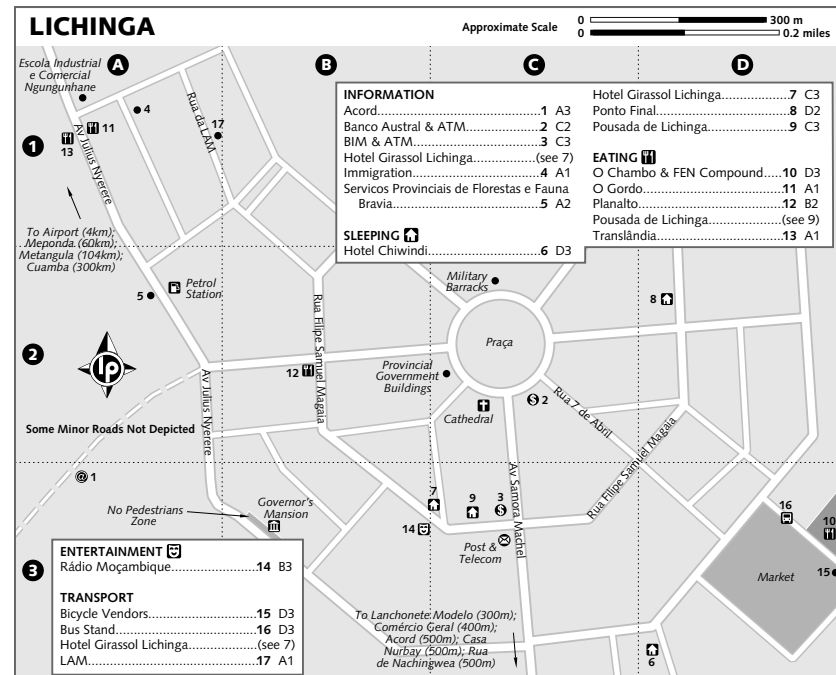
Lanchonete Modelo (Av Samora Machel; snacks & meals from US\$2) Burgers, chips and light meals; it's several blocks down from BIM on the main street.

Planalto (☎ 271-20385; Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia; meals US\$3) On the western side of town near the provincial government buildings, with a modest selection of standards.

Supermarkets include **Translândia** (Av Julius Nyerere), opposite O Gordo, and Nurbay's **Comércio Geral** (Av Samora Machel).

Entertainment

Lichinga has an active cultural scene. One of the highlights is Niassa province's renowned



song and dance group, Massukos, which is based here and gives occasional performances, usually on holidays and other special occasions. For information on their schedule, and on other cultural events, ask at **Rádio Moçambique** (Rua Filipe Samuel Magaia), near Pousada de Lichinga and just off Av Samora Machel.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are four flights to/from Maputo, going via Tete, Nampula and/or Beira on **LAM** (☎ 271-20434, 271-20847; Rua da LAM). Their office is just off the airport road.

BUS & TRUCK

All transport departs from next to the market, with vehicles to most destinations leaving by around 6am. There are several chapas daily to Cuamba (US\$12, 6½ hours) via Mandimba along a road that's reasonably good to Mandimba and then good from there to Cuamba, with a couple of vehicles daily to Metangula (US\$5, 2½ hours) and to Meponda (US\$2.50 1½ hours). If you're trying to hitch from Lichinga to Cuamba, the best place to wait

for a lift is at the police checkpoint about 5km south of town at the beginning of the Mandimba/Cuamba road.

Lichinga is easily accessed from Malawi, via Likoma Island and Cóbue. See p189, and p150.

GETTING AROUND

There are no taxis, but Lichinga is easily covered on foot. Alternatively, you can arrange bicycle rental at the market.

Hotel Girassol Lichinga is the best contact for arranging car hire.

AROUND LICHINGA

Reserva de Sanga

About 150km north of Lichinga, towards the Tanzanian border and edging the buffer zone of Reserva do Niassa, is **Reserva de Sanga** (Sanga Reserve, or Chipange Chetu; entry per person per visit US\$10), the site of a community-oriented wildlife conservation project. It's temporarily closed to visitors, but hopefully to reopen soon. When functioning, it offers the chance to experience one of the wildest and most isolated parts of Southern Africa. Birding is good and

the wildlife – including elephants, buffalos, antelopes, wildebeests and zebras – is there, although often difficult to spot. For an update on the reserve's status, stop by the **Serviços Provinciais de Florestas e Fauna Bravia** (Provincial Forestry Department; ☎ 271-20986, 271-20977, 271-20917; Av Julius Nyerere) in Lichinga. You'll also need to stop by here anyway to get a permit (free) to enter the reserve area. The forestry office is on the northwestern edge of town. Follow the road leading to Translândia supermarket and the airport, and look for a petrol station on the right; the forestry offices are just opposite the petrol station and signposted, near a large tree.

The basic **Uzuzu Camp** (zambezhunters@yahoo.com; tented accommodation per person including guide about US\$5) is primarily used by a hunting concession, but also takes other visitors; advance bookings are essential, and you'll need to be self-sufficient.

The reserve entrance is about 20km north of Macaloge village. Once at the entrance, it's about 30km further to the village of Nova Madeira, where you turn right and continue 6km to Uzuzu Camp. There's a truck several times weekly from Lichinga to Nova Madeira, departing Lichinga at 5.30am (US\$5, five to six hours). For a negotiable extra fee, the driver is usually willing to take you the 6km in to the camp. Several times weekly, the same truck that goes to Nova Madeira continues north along a bush track to the Rio Rovuma, from where you can enter Tanzania (arrange a visa in advance).

LAGO NIASSA (LAKE MALAWI)

The Mozambican side of Lago Niassa is beautiful and – in contrast to the Malawian side – almost completely undeveloped. It sees a small but steady stream of adventure

travellers and is an excellent destination for anyone wanting to get off the beaten track.

The main area for exploring is the coast between Metangula and Cóbuè, with a succession of narrow, sandy beaches backed by mountains and steep hills rising up directly from the lakeshore. Most local residents are Nyanja ('People of the Lake'), and their distinctively painted square, thatched dwellings dot the countryside. Fishing is the main source of livelihood, though it's mostly small scale. The only commercial fishing operation on the Mozambican side of the lake is at Metangula.

Allow plenty of time for getting around and be prepared to rough it. When venturing onto the lake, keep in mind that squalls can arise suddenly, often with strong winds.

Meponda

This small, lakeside village is completely undeveloped and a possibility for a day trip from Lichinga. The tiny harbour to the south of the main road as you enter Meponda is the hub of activity, with the town centre and market nearby. About 1km north of here is a small beach, which is ideal for picnicking and watching the fish eagles. Local fishermen will take you out on the lake for about US\$2 per hour.

The only accommodation is at the very basic and not very appealing **O Pomar das Laranjeiras** (rondavel per person US\$6), on the beach about 500m north of the harbour, which can also arrange food with lots of advance notice.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Meponda is 60km southwest of Lichinga. A few chapas run between the two towns daily (US\$2.50, 1½ hours). Schedules don't usually cooperate to make a day trip possible. However, on weekends, if you take a chapa out in

LAGO NIASSA FAST FACTS

- At more than 550km long, up to 75km wide, and 700m deep in parts, it's the third largest lake on the African continent after Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika.
- About one-fourth of the lake's area is in Mozambique.
- Within its deep blue waters are over 500 species of fish, including over 350 that are unique to the lake. Lago Niassa is also home to about one-third of the earth's known cichlid (freshwater fish) species, including the brightly coloured mbuna.

the morning, it's usually easy to find a lift back to Lichinga in the afternoons.

Meponda was formerly linked with Malawi's Senga Bay via the weekly MV *Mtendere*. It's currently not running, but worth asking around to see if ferry services have resumed.

Metangula

Bustling Metangula is the capital of Distrito do Lago, the largest Mozambican town along the lakeshore, and the site of a small naval base. The town is divided into two areas – the staid administrative quarters perched on a small escarpment with wide views over the lake and the lower lying residential areas along the lake shore. Metangula itself has little for visitors. However about 8km north of town is the tiny village of **Chuwanga**, which is on an attractive beach, and is a popular weekend getaway from Lichinga. About 5km northeast of Chuwanga is **Messumba**, site of a well-known Anglican mission that traces its history back to the arrival of the first missionaries in the area in 1882. Until being forced to close during the war, Messumba served as headquarters for Anglican missionary activity in northern Mozambique. It was renowned for its hospital and for the Colégio de São Felipe, where numerous notables studied, including several members of Frelimo's elite. Most of the mission buildings are now in disrepair, although you can still visit the impressive church and walk around the grounds. Today, the only secondary school in Distrito do Lago is in Metangula.

Chuwanga Beach Hotel (Complexo Cetuka or Catawala's; camping per person US\$5, s/d bungalows US\$15/20) On

the beach at Chuwanga, this is where everyone stays. It has camping and simple bungalows on the sand. Meals are available and there's a grill for cooking your own.

Otherwise, there are a few basic guesthouses in town; if you get stuck, ask at Bar Triângulo at the main junction. It's also occasionally possible to get a **room** (niassa@skyfile.com; US\$20) at the Mtendere Estates guesthouse on the escarpment.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Several chapas daily connect Metangula and Lichinga (US\$5, 2½ hours). Most depart early, though there is usually at least one vehicle in each direction at about 1pm. Departures in Metangula are from the fork in the road just up from the market. The all-weather road from Lichinga is tarmac for the first 75km and then good dirt for the final 29km to Metangula. The final 20km or so winding down to the lakeshore is very scenic.

There are occasional chapas between Metangula and Chuwanga, and hitching is easy on weekends. To get to Messumba, you'll need your own 4WD.

For information on the *Ilala* ferry between Metangula and Cóbuè, see p189. Local boats leave Metangula from the small port down from the market and below the Catholic church.

Cóbuè

Tiny Cóbuè is the gateway into Mozambique if you're travelling from Malawi via Likoma Island, about 10km offshore. The island is surrounded by Mozambican waters, but belongs to Malawi.

In addition to its immigration post, Cóbuè's attractions include a lakeside setting and the ruins of an old Catholic church and school. The school was used as a wartime base by Frelimo, which means that there still may be some land mines, so use caution when walking around the grounds.

The community-owned **Manda Wilderness wildlife reserve** (entry per person about US\$5) is being established south of town by local residents with support from Nkwichi Lodge and the Swedish government. Fees and guides can be arranged at any of the places listed under Sleeping.

SLEEPING

Hotel Inyati Yoyela (White Buffalo; r US\$12) Somewhat of a Cóbuè institution, and long the

SWIMMERS, TAKE CARE

In addition to being home to countless colourful fish, Lago Niassa also hosts healthy populations of the tiny snail that causes bilharzia. While there is less risk of bilharzia infestation on the Mozambique side of the lake, you should still use caution when swimming: don't swim anywhere with reeds and other shoreline growth, or in shallow, still water. If you swim anyway (and many people do, with no ill effects), get a bilharzia test once you return home. Keep in mind, though, that if you are infected, it won't show up for at least six weeks or longer, and several tests may be necessary. One place where you can enjoy Lake Malawi without worrying about bilharzia is in the crystal clear waters around Nkwichi Lodge (p150).

Another water-related danger to watch out for is the crocodile. Locals say that they lurk in the river that joins Lago Niassa near Meponda and in other river mouths along the lakeshore.

main backpackers' stop, with basic rooms and meals, and now under new management.

Mira Lago (r about US\$10) In Còbuè town just behind Hotel Inyati Yoyela, this new-ish place is no-frills, clean and pleasant, with solar-powered lighting and sometimes TV.

Mchenga Wede (per person US\$5, meals about US\$7-10) About 5km south of Nkwichi Lodge near Mbueca village, Mchenga Wede is a good choice if you are backpacking around the lake, with bush walks, snorkelling and local canoe trips. It's run by some enterprising staff from Nkwichi Lodge, and in addition to camping, they have no-frills bungalows and a small restaurant and bar. Bookings can be made through Nkwichi (Mchenga Wede should also feature soon on the Nkwichi website) or you can just show up.

Nkwichi Lodge (info@mandawilderness.org; www.mandawilderness.org; s/d with full board US\$240/380) Apart from its convenient location as part of a larger Southern Africa circuit linking Mozambique and Malawi, the main reason to come to Còbuè is to get to this wonderful and highly recommended lodge. It offers the chance to explore an area of Southern Africa that is about as remote as it gets, while enjoying all the comforts and contributing to the local community and environment as well. The lodge is part of the Manda Wilderness Area – a privately initiated conservation area along the lakeshore that also promotes community development and responsible tourism. The surrounding bush is full of birds, with ospreys, palm nut vultures, Pell's fishing owls and fish eagles all regularly seen. There's also a reasonable amount of wildlife roaming around and with luck, you may see the occasional elephant or antelope.

Accommodation is in seven lovely handcrafted bungalows, with private outdoor baths and showers built into the trees, each looking out onto its own little white-sand cove. The lake here is crystal clear and safe for swimming and there's a dhow for sails and sunset cruises. You can also arrange canoeing and multi-night wilderness walking safaris. Staff will come meet you in Còbuè and boat transfers can be arranged from Còbuè (per person US\$50), Likoma Island, Mbueca village or Metangula. Advance bookings are essential.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There's an airstrip in Còbuè for charter flights. More common is to charter flight

from Lilongwe (Malawi) to Likoma Island (US\$535 for a three-passenger plane, arranged through Nkwichi Lodge) and then arrange a boat transfer from there with the lodge.

The weekly *Ilala* ferry runs between Còbuè and Metangula, and between Còbuè and Likoma Island; see p189. A local dhow sometimes meets the *Ilala* in Còbuè, and goes down the coast with many stops, including at Nkwichi Lodge and Mchenga Wede.

Otherwise, there are a couple of slow boats sailing weekly between Còbuè and Metangula. These boats take at least two days to Còbuè and sometimes longer, stopping frequently en route, which means passengers have to sleep on the beach. Many of the boats continue on to Likoma Island. It's also possible to hire or hitch a ride with one of the occasional speedboats doing business along the lakeshore. These take between six and eight hours to/from Metangula, and are more easily arranged in Metangula than in Còbuè. Guests of Nkwichi Lodge can arrange boat transfers (dhow or speedboat) with the lodge from Còbuè, and from Likoma Island. The lodge's dhow, the *Miss Nkwichi*, can also be chartered for pickups from Metangula (six hours).

The 75km road between Còbuè and Metangula is rough (4WD) but improving, though there's no regular public transport. If you have your own vehicle and are heading to Nkwichi Lodge, there's secure parking at Mira Lago in Còbuè and at Mchenga Wede in Mbueca.

Walking takes about two days, going along the river via the villages of Ngoo and Chia and past remote wilderness and beautiful, untouched beaches. Guides and porters can be arranged at Nkwichi Lodge or Mchenga Wede. Allow four to five hours on foot between Còbuè and Mchenga Wede.

Reserva do Niassa

About 160km northeast of Lichinga on the Tanzanian border is the **Reserva do Niassa** (Niassa Reserve; entry per person/vehicle for three days US\$5/10, may increase), a vast tract of wilderness with the largest wildlife populations in Mozambique. It's particularly notable for its elephants (estimated to number about 12,000), sable antelopes (over 9000), buffaloes and zebras. They are kept company by duikers, elands, leopards, wildebeests, hippos and even a population of the endangered African wild dog, as well as over 400 different types of birds.

The reserve – which is Mozambique's largest protected area and twice the size of South Africa's Kruger National Park – was established in the early 1960s to protect local elephant and black rhino populations. However, because of inaccessibility, scarce finances and the onset of war it was never developed. Although wildlife populations here suffered during the 1980s from poaching and the effects of armed conflict, losses were far less than those in other protected areas further south. In more recent times, significant progress has been made in curbing poaching, and there has been a trend of increasing animal numbers.

In the late 1990s Reserva do Niassa was given new life when a group of private investors, working in partnership with the Mozambican government, was granted a 10-year renewable lease on the area. The reserve's size was increased to about 42,000 sq km, and the boundaries now stretch from the Rio Rovuma in the north to the Rio Lugenda in the south and east. Much of the area in between is covered by woodland and dotted with massive granite Inselbergs.

An estimated 20,000 people live within the reserve's boundaries, which also encompass a 20,000 sq km buffer zone and there are plans for community-based tourism, although these are in the future. A recent proposal introduced by the Peace Parks Foundation in South Africa aims to tie the Reserva do Niassa into an enormous protected swathe stretching from Lago Niassa in the west to the Indian Ocean in the east and northwards to Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve.

One of the main reasons the Reserva do Niassa has been able to maintain its magnificent wildness and impressive wildlife populations up to this point has been its relative isolation from almost everywhere. However, with the building of a bridge over the Rovuma at Negomane, this isolation is likely to come increasingly under threat in the coming years.

INFORMATION

Headquarters are about 40km southwest of Mecula at Mbatamila, and the main gate is near Salimo in the reserve's southeastern corner.

Wildlife in Reserva do Niassa is spread relatively thinly over a vast area, with dense foliage and only a skeleton network of bush tracks. As a result, most tourism to date has

been exclusively for the well-heeled, with the most feasible way to visit by charter plane from Pemba. With the imminent opening of the reserve's first safari camp and the gradual upgrading of road connections linking Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces, this is beginning to change, although the reserve's main markets are likely to remain top end for the foreseeable future. For more information, contact **reserve headquarters** (rdn01@bushmail.net) or the **Sociedade de Gestão e Desenvolvimento da Reserva do Niassa** (www.niassa.com), the private concern overseeing development of the reserve. Vehicle safaris are possible using the limited network of bush tracks and walking safaris can be arranged at reserve headquarters.

SLEEPING & EATING

Until now, most visitor activity has centred around hunting safaris. The first luxury safari camp for photographic tourism – **Lugenda Bush Camp** (www.raniresorts.com), on the Lugenda River near the eastern edge of the park – is set to open soon, primarily offering fly-in safaris based out of Pemba Beach Resort Hotel (p156), with both walking and vehicle safaris. The same management also operates the **Luwire Hunting Camp** (www.luwire.com) on the reserve's southeastern edge.

At reserve headquarters, there are three twin-bedded **chalets** (per chalet US\$30) with bathrooms, and three large two-person **tents** (per tent US\$20) sharing hot- and cold-water ablutions, plus a communal kitchen/dining area. **Bush camping** (per person US\$5) is also permitted, though you'll need to be completely self-contained.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Air

There are about 11 airstrips that can accommodate charter flights, including one at Mecula. The reserve sits roughly midway between Lago Niassa to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east, both about an hour's flight away via small plane. The easiest charter access is from Pemba (arrange through Pemba Beach Resort Hotel, p156, or Kaskazini, p152), or from Nkwichi Lodge (opposite). Charter rates from Pemba start from around US\$360 per hour for a five-seater plane.

Car

The reserve is accessible during the dry season with a 4WD from Lichinga via Muembe and Mataka (allow at least one full day); from

Cuamba via Maúa, Marrupa and Salimo; and, from Pemba via Montepuez, Marrupa and Salimo (usually at least a two-day drive, the stretch between Balama and Marrupa is in bad condition). Before setting out, inquire locally about road conditions, as there are several bridges en route that occasionally wash away and make road access impossible. To undertake any of these journeys, you'll need to be self-sufficient and equipped with spares for everything, as there's nothing available en route. For any driving within the reserve, take a guide from reserve headquarters to maximise your chances of seeing wildlife. There's a nine-seater safari vehicle that can be rented at headquarters for US\$150 per day with driver.

MONTEPUEZ

Montepuez, a busy district capital, previously rivalled Pemba as the largest town in Cabo Delgado. Today, it's known for its marble quarries, and as the start of the wild road west across Niassa province to Lichinga. About 2km southeast of town, and signposted off the main road, is **Aurora** (☎ 84-781-3820, 82-633 4150; www.auroramozambique.com; dm with full board & cultural activities US\$50, s/d/tr with full board & cultural activities US\$75/120/165), which offers visitors the chance to immerse themselves in local Mozambican life at a level that normally isn't possible unless you're based in the country long-term. Among other things, you can spend a day in the bush with a traditional medicinal practitioner, learn local cooking or pottery techniques, take guided botanical walks, watch *mapiko* dancing or visit Makonde carvers at work. Accommodation is in spacious, rustic rooms – all with mosquito nets – in a refurbished colonial-era house near the old São José mission church, with hot water, solar power and good cuisine (vegetarian and other special meals are available on request).

If this doesn't suit, there are several basic *pensões* in the town centre.

Several chapas go between Pemba and Montepuez (US\$4, three hours, daily), along a good road; the first departure from Pemba is at 5am. If you're headed for Aurora, ask to get dropped at the turnoff, from where it's about 600m further on foot. The road from Montepuez west to Lichinga is passable in a well-equipped 4WD. Allow at least three days for the journey and inquire locally about conditions before setting out.

PEMBA

Pemba sprawls across a peninsula jutting into the enormous and magnificent Baía de Pemba, one of the world's largest natural harbours. It was established in 1904 as administrative headquarters for the Niassa Company and for much of its early life was known as Porto Amelia. Today, it's capital of Cabo Delgado province, the main town in Mozambique's far north, and gateway to the Archipelago das Quirimbas and an endless string of white-sand beaches. The town is also a relaxing and enjoyable stop in its own right, with almost perpetual sunshine and blue skies, a long, palm-fringed beach just down the road and a lazy, languid ambience.

Orientation

Pemba's baixa area is home to the low-lying port and old town, with a row of small shops and traders lining Rua do Comércio, the main street. Steeply uphill from here, the busier and less atmospheric town centre is the place to get things done, with banks and offices, a few restaurants and unappealing hotels, and the main bus stand. About 5km east of the town centre is Praia de Wimbi (also spelled Wimbe), the main hub of tourist activity and the favoured destination of most visitors.

MAPS

The best map is *Planta de Endereçamento da Cidade de Pemba*, part of the series done by Cooperação Française in cooperation with the local Conselho Municipal, usually on sale at Artes Maconde's main branch, at Pemba Beach Hotel. Kaskazini also has a free Pemba tourist map.

Information

IMMIGRATION

Immigration office (Rua 16 de Junho; ☎ 7.30-11am & 2-4pm Mon-Fri) Just off Rua Base de Moçambique.

INTERNET ACCESS & TELEPHONE

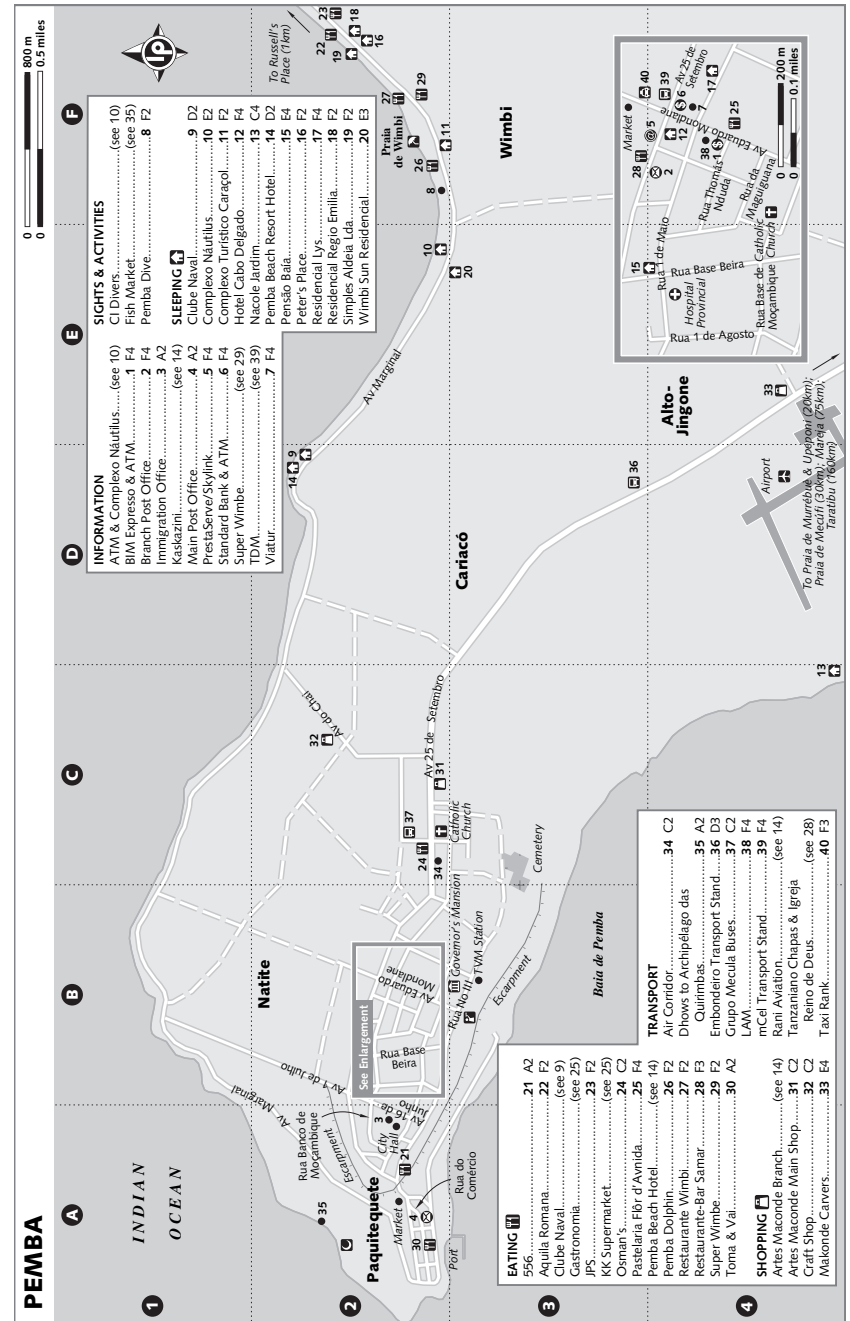
PrestaServe/Skylink (Av 25 de Setembro; per hr US\$3; ☎) Internet.

Super Wimbi (Av Marginal, Praia de Wimbi; per hr US\$5) Internet.

TDM (cnr Avs Eduardo Mondlane & 25 de Setembro; per hr US\$4, ☎ 7am-10pm) Internet, plus domestic and international telephone calls.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Hospital Provincial (cnr Ruas Base Beira & 1 de Maio) Malaria tests.



MONEY

At Praia de Wimbi, there's an ATM in the lobby of Complexo Náutilus.

BIM Expresso (Av Eduardo Mondlane) ATM.

Standard Bank (Av Eduardo Mondlane) ATM; also changes travellers cheques (minimum US\$35 commission per transaction, original purchase receipts required).

POST

Branch post office (Av 25 de Setembro)

Main post office (Rua No 1, Baixa) Poste restante.

TOURIST INFORMATION & TRAVEL AGENCIES

Kaskazini (☎ 272-20371, 82-309 6990; www.kaskazini.com; Av Marginal, Praia de Wimbi; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) Efficient, knowledgeable and the best first stop. They give free information on Pemba and elsewhere in northern Mozambique, help with accommodation and flight bookings and can organise everything from dhow safaris to sunset cruises on a luxury yacht to car hire and visits to Reserva do Niassa. Based at Pemba Beach Hotel.

Viator (☎ 272-21431; www.viator.net; Av Eduardo Mondlane) Just up from Standard Bank; good for city tours, car rentals and flight bookings.

Sights

Almost everyone heads straight for **Praia de Wimbi**, where you can swim or enjoy the sea breezes at one of the many waterside restaurants or bars.

On Pemba's outskirts are several colourful and vibrant *bairros* (neighbourhoods). The most intriguing is **Paquitequete**, which is on the southwestern edge of the peninsula and is Pemba's oldest settlement. In contrast with the other *bairros*, which are newer and more heterogeneous, the population here is almost exclusively Muslim, and predominantly

Mwani and Makua. The atmosphere is at its best in the late afternoon just before sunset. At Paquitequete's northern edge is a small **fish market**. The nearby beach buzzes with activity in the early morning as *makuti* (dried palm fronds used for constructing roofs), bamboo and other building materials are unloaded and readied for market.

Up on the hill behind the governor's mansion is a large **cemetery**, with fragrant frangipani trees shading the Christian and Muslim graves. Close to the sea is a section containing Commonwealth war graves.

Beginning about 10km south of town is a string of tranquil, attractive beaches, including **Murrêbuê** and **Mecúfi**.

Activities**DIVING**

There's rewarding diving around Pemba; see p46.

CI Divers (☎ 272-20102; www.cidivers.com; Complexo Náutilus, Av Marginal, Praia de Wimbi) is the main operator, offering PADI open-water certification, equipment rental and boat charters. Further down Praia de Wimbi, opposite Complexo Turístico Caraçol, is another good operator, **Pemba Dive** (☎ 82-661 1530, ☎/fax 272-20820), which offers equipment hire and dives (though no instruction). Either of these places can also help you arrange excursions to Archipelago das Quirimbas and rental of jet skis, fishing boats, sailboards, windsurfing equipment and bicycles.

Pemba Beach Hotel has resident dive instructors for its guests.

DHOW SAFARIS & SAILING

Kaskazini can arrange day trips around Baía de Pemba (from about US\$40 per person per

half day, minimum four people) or overnight dhow safaris to Archipelago das Quirimbas (from about US\$150 per boat, up to six people). Together with Pemba Beach Hotel, they also offer an upscale sunset cruise for US\$50 per person, including drinks. Pemba Beach Hotel's private luxury yacht, the *MY Fantastique*, can be chartered for sails.

Sleeping**TOWN CENTRE**

Central Pemba has slim accommodation offerings – all budget, at least in standard, if not in price – and is only worth considering if you can't find anything at Praia de Wimbi or if you have an early morning bus.

Pensão Baía (cnr Ruas 1 de Maio & Base Beira; d with fan US\$16, with bathroom & air-con US\$20; ☎) Basic and spartan, with no-frills rooms and meals with advance notice. No clothes washing allowed.

Hotel Cabo Delgado (☎ 272-21552; cnr Avs 25 de Setembro & Eduardo Mondlane; s/d/tw US\$19/24/29) This ageing hotel on the main street is well past its prime, although the central location, diagonally opposite the mCel transport stop, is convenient. The faded rooms come with bathroom, fan and continental breakfast.

Residencial Lys (☎ 272-20951; sulemane@teledata.mz; Rua 1 de Maio; r US\$18, with fan and bathroom US\$24, with air-con US\$36; ☎) Acceptable but somewhat seedy and noisy, and not recommended for women alone. The no-frills rooms have fans and some have bathrooms. It's one block in from Av Eduardo Mondlane.

PRAIA DE WIMBI

Almost everyone stays at the beach. Book in advance if travelling during the December/January and Easter South African school holidays.

Budget

Russell's Place (Cashew Camp; ☎ 82-686 2730; www.pembamagic.com; camping per person US\$6, dm US\$4, 2-/3-person chalet with bathroom US\$35) About 3.5km beyond Complexo Náutilus along the beach road extension, Russell's place has camping, dorm beds and a few A-frame chalets. The ablation blocks have bucket-style showers with hot water, and there's a bar, well water for drinking, a self-catering area and a restaurant with evening buffets and pizzas. The beach is just a few minutes' walk away across the road (high tide swimming only).

Nacole Jardim (☎ 82-661 1530; info@kaskazini.com; camping/chalet per person US\$5/15) A tranquil spot well-suited for families or anyone interested in birdlife, coastal ecosystems and traditional medicine. One of the owners is a traditional healer and can give a fascinating two-hour botanical walking tour focusing on local medicinal plants. Three mangrove gardens and 40 baobab trees are scattered throughout the property, including one enormous tree used during the war as local refuge. In addition to camping, there's a self-catering chalet (with more planned), and a beachside bar and braai area. It's about 10 minutes from town (US\$6 in a taxi), behind the airport on the bay (so the only place in these listings not on Praia de Wimbi) and about 5km off the main road along an unpaved track. It's under the same management as Pemba Dive.

Midrange

Peter's Place (☎ 272-20102; cidivers@teledata.mz; Av Marginal; d US\$45) Along the extension of the Wimbi beach road directly opposite SAL, this good-value place consists of one small but wonderfully airy room on the shady, green grounds of a private residence, with a few more rooms planned. Just outside is a huge, beautiful baobab tree, with a sitting area built into its upper branches. There's no food.

Residencial Regio Emilia (☎ 272-21297; c.forma@teledata.mz; Av Marginal; r from US\$50; ☎) Next door to Peter's Place (look for the Italian flag), this is another good-value choice, with a handful of comfortable chalets (15 rooms total, in a mix of smaller and family-style chalets) set in large, green and quiet grounds. One chalet has a veranda (more are planned) and all come with kitchenette. The owner, Carlos, is extremely knowledgeable about Cabo Delgado and can give cultural tours in various languages. Continental/full breakfast costs US\$5/10 extra.

Wimbi Sun Residencial (☎ 82-318 1300; Av Marginal; r US\$45-60; ☎) A new place with modern, clean rooms – the best are the spacious 'suites'. None have nets and all have bathrooms. It's at the start of the Wimbi Beach strip, diagonally opposite Complexo Náutilus on the inland side of the road. Breakfast costs US\$6.

Complexo Turístico Caraçol (☎ 272-20147; sulemane@teledata.mz; Av Marginal; s/d US\$40/50, 1-/2-room apt US\$75/85; ☎) This place is well-located – on the inland side of the beach road just beyond Complexo Náutilus – and nothing fancy but

CABO DELGADO

Although remote from Maputo, Cabo Delgado province has played a disproportionately important role in recent Mozambican history. It's known in particular as the birthplace of the independence struggle, which began here supported from bases in nearby Tanzania. Cabo Delgado is also where some of the most protracted wartime fighting took place during the 1980s. At the height of the war, it could take up to a month to travel – convoy-style, and moving only at night – between Pemba and Moçimboa da Praia, which makes the seven-hour bus ride today seem like a stroll in the park. Another legacy of the war years is that most district capitals in the north have airstrips, including some large enough to accommodate jets.

As in neighbouring Niassa province, large tracts of Cabo Delgado are wild and trackless and local lore is full of tales about the dangers of lions and the like.

Major ethnic groups include the Makonde, the Makua and, along the coast, the Mwani.

good value for money. The rooms are straightforward – all set in a row of apartment blocks and all with either fan or air-con. The apartments have hot plate and minifridge and some have views to the water.

Simples Aldeia Lda (SAL; ☎ 272-20134; Av Marginal; s/d from US\$42/55; 2-room cottage s/d US\$88/115; 🏠) This self-catering place, about 1.5km beyond Caracol, and on the opposite side of the road, has simple rooms in three small cottages, all with twin beds, TV, screens, fridge and hot-plate.

Complexo Náutilus (☎ 272-21520; nautiluscas@teledata.mz; Av Marginal; 2-/4-person bungalows from US\$120/140; 🏠 📺) A good setting directly on the beach, marred only by indifferent service and management. Accommodation is in closely spaced beachside bungalows of varying sizes, all with TV and minifridge, and there's a restaurant. Ask for one of the 'newer' front bungalows. Rates include breakfast.

Top End

Pemba Beach Resort Hotel (☎ 272-21770, in South Africa 011-465 6904; www.pembabeachresort.com; Av Marginal; s/d US\$160/220; 🏠 📺 📺) This five-star establishment is a beautiful spot to relax for a few days. It's built on large grounds overlooking the water, with a good restaurant, a seaside pool and a luxury yacht for charters around the Archipélago das Quirimbas and deep-sea fishing. Package deals from Johannesburg are available.

Clube Naval (☎ 272-21770; www.pembabeachresort.com; Av Marginal; 4- to 6-person self-catering apt US\$312) Next door to Pemba Beach Resort Hotel and under the same management, Clube Naval has well-equipped, upscale self-catering apartments. All have two bedrooms, kitchens, washing machines and cable TV, and accommodate up to four adults and two children.

Eating

TOWN CENTRE

Restaurante-Bar Samar (☎ 272-20415; Av 25 de Setembro; meals US\$3-8; ☎ 9am-10pm Sun-Fri) Tucked away in the parking lot of the Igreja Reino de Deus, this good-value place features a wide array of delicious Portuguese cuisine and covered outdoor seating with lots of plants and greenery.

Pastelaria Flôr d'Avineda (☎ 272-20514; Av Eduardo Mondlane; meals from US\$3) A long-standing and informal eatery, with outdoor tables on a small, street-side plaza, and a good selection

of standards and pastries. Indian food, including vegetarian dishes, is available with 24-hour notice.

Gastronomia (☎ 272-21038; Av Eduardo Mondlane; sandwiches US\$5; ☎ closed Sun) A small shop next to Flôr d'Avineda, selling imported meats and cheeses, plus tasty sandwiches to takeaway.

556 (☎ 272-21487; Rua No 1; meals US\$6-14; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Sat; 🏠) On the hill overlooking the port and bay, this is the best place for carnivores, with a good selection of South African meats, plus chicken grills, pizza and pub food.

Toma & Vai (Rua do Comércio; meals from US\$2) In the baixa area near the port, with a few tables and a small selection of Italian and local dishes.

For self-catering try **Osman's** (Av 25 de Setembro), about 1.5km east of the main junction, or **KK Supermarket** (Av Eduardo Mondlane) next to Pastelaria Flôr d'Avineda.

PRAIA DE WIMBI

Budget

Super Wimbe (Av Marginal; meals US\$2-3; ☎ from 7am) This inexpensive local hangout with burgers and omelettes is just past Complexo Caracol.

JPS (Av Marginal extension; half chicken & chips US\$4) A local haunt on the inland side of the road just beyond SAL, with grilled chicken, matapa and other local dishes, and screened-in eating areas. Service isn't speedy, but the price is right and the food is good.

Restaurante Wimbi (Av Marginal; meals US\$3-4) A local place featuring seating on the beach, seafood grills and good service.

Pemba Dolphin (Av Marginal; seafood grills from US\$5) Directly on the beach, with music and a beach-bar ambience, plus seafood grills. Grilled *lagosta* (crayfish) starts at US\$14.

Midrange

Aquila Romana (☎ 272-21972; Av Marginal, Praia de Wimbi; pizzas & meals US\$4-10; ☎ 6.30pm-10pm Tue-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat & Sun) In a tranquil beachside setting about 200m after the tarmac ends, this good place has pizza, homemade pasta and delicious Italian food.

Clube Naval (☎ 272-21770; Av Marginal, Praia de Wimbi; meals US\$5-11; ☎ 10am-midnight) A waterside restaurant-bar next to Pemba Beach Hotel, with a breezy setting directly on the beach and a large menu featuring salads, seafood, chicken, ribs, pizzas and desserts (apple pie, ice cream and more). There's a volleyball area in the sand, plus a tiny playground for children.

Pemba Beach Hotel (☎ 272-21770; Av Marginal, Praia de Wimbi; breakfast/dinner buffet US\$14/18) The restaurant here features breakfast and dinner buffets plus dining *à la carte*, with seating indoors or outside on the covered veranda.

About 20km south of Pemba at Murrêbuê is **Upeponi** (meals from US\$3) with good seafood on a beautiful, quiet beach and basic accommodation. Follow the tarmac road out of town for about 10km, then go left on an unpaved road towards Mecúfi, branching left again near a small power station.

Shopping

Pemba has some wonderful crafts, and is an especially good place to buy Makonde carvings.

Artes Maconde (☎ /fax 272-21099, 272-21100; ceebee@teledata.mz; Town Centre Av 25 de Setembro; Praia de Wimbi Pemba Beach Hotel) has an excellent selection of carvings and other crafts from around the country. They do international air and sea shipping and also take orders for local crafts and carvings. For anyone interested in high-quality Mozambican crafts, it's an essential stop.

There's a group of **Makonde carvers** (EN106) in Alto-Gingone near the large mango tree opposite the airport, where you can get some good pieces at very reasonable prices. Also try the small **craft shop** (Av do Chai) on the road between town and Wimbi beach. It's about 700m down from Av 25 de Setembro on the left side and unmarked.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are daily flights on **LAM** (☎ 272-21251; Av Eduardo Mondlane; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) to/from Maputo (often via Nampula and/or Beira), and three times weekly to/from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Air Corridor (☎ 272-20799, 272-28012; Av 25 de Setembro), diagonally opposite Osman supermarket, has daily flights down the coast, stopping at Nampula, Beira, Quelimane and Maputo.

Charters to the Archipélago das Quirimbas or west to Reserva do Niassa or Lago Niassa can be booked through Rani Aviation (contact through Pemba Beach Hotel), **Quirimbas Aviation** (☎ 272-21808; aircharters-quirimbas@plexusmoz.com) and Kaskazini.

BOAT

For local dhows to the Archipélago das Quirimbas, ask around at the beach behind the mosque at Paquitequete; also see p154 and p161.

BUS & CHAPA

Grupo Mecula (☎ 272-20821) has daily buses to Nampula (US\$7, seven hours), Nacala (US\$7, seven hours), Moçimboa da Praia (US\$6.50, 7½ hours) and Mueda (US\$6.50, eight hours). For Ilha de Moçambique, take the Nacala bus as far as Monapo, where you'll need to get out and catch a chapa for the remaining 55km. All departures are at 4.45am from the Grupo Mecula office (where you buy your ticket), on a small side street behind Osman's supermarket, just off the main road and about 1.5km from the centre. All buses also pass by the mCel office at the corner of Avs 25 de Setembro and Eduardo Mondlane to pick up more passengers, before departing town by around 5am.

If you miss the bus, try your luck with other transport at mCel or head to Embondeiro transport stand, about 3km from the centre, to the left of the main road (US\$2 in a taxi). Alternatively, *tanzaniano* chapas depart in all directions from Igreja Reino de Deus from 4am, with high speeds and prices marginally cheaper than the Mecula buses.

Getting Around

Pemba's **taxi rank** (☎ 272-20187; Av Eduardo Mondlane) is just past the mCel office (from US\$2 from town to Wimbi beach).

For car rental, try **Moti Rent-A-Car** (☎ 272-21687; motimoz@teledata.mz), based at the airport, or arrange through Kaskazini or your hotel.

Chapas only run sporadically between Praia de Wimbi and town (US\$0.20), but it's easy enough to find lifts. Most of the beach hotels can arrange lifts from US\$5 per person.

CI Divers (p154) rents bicycles for US\$5 per hour.

AROUND PEMBA

Within about a 2½ to three hour drive from Pemba are several new camps and lodges, all of which offer visitors a chance to experience a part of Cabo Delgado's wild, untamed bush and possibly see an elephant or two.

Mareja (www.mareja.com; camping per person US\$10, r without/with bathroom US\$20/30) is an impressive community-focused project where you can experience local life in the bush, including traditional dancing, wildlife watching and walks. Luxury fly-camps are planned, but for now, there's camping, dorm beds and a couple of rustic but pleasant guesthouse rooms. It's

about 40km northwest of Pemba as a bird flies; allow about 2½ hours by road. Mareja may be able to help with transfers.

Beautifully set on the northern side of Pemba Bay, **Londo Lodge** (www.londolodge.com; per person full board US\$350; 📞) has six luxury beach-facing villas, a restaurant, a range of water sports, and safaris and bushwalking planned, though they weren't yet open when this book was researched.

Taratibu (Veka) is located about 160km northwest of Pemba in Ancuabe district in a wild area known for its elephants. Four chalets are planned, but for now it's just camping and self-catering. Kaskazini (see Information) is the Pemba booking agent.

ARCHIPÉLAGO DAS QUIRIMBAS

The Archipélago das Quirimbas consists of about two dozen islands and islets strewn among the turquoise waters along the 400km stretch of coastline between Pemba and the Rio Rovuma. Some are waterless and uninhabited, while others have histories as long as the archipelago itself.

Throughout, the archipelago's natural beauty is astounding, with searing white patches of soft sand surrounded by brilliant turquoise and azure waters alternating with greener and vegetated islands, fringed in part by mangroves. Dense mangrove forests also link many of the islands with each other and with the coast, with only skilled dhow captains able to navigate among the intricate channels that were cut during Portuguese times.

Today, many of the southern islands, including Ibo, Quirimba, Matemo and Rolas, are part of the **Parque Nacional das Quirimbas** (Quirimbas National Park; entry per adult/child US\$8/2), which also includes large inland areas on the fringing coastline. Fees are currently collected by hotels within the park area, although this is likely to change. There are also various other park fees, including US\$4 per person per day for camping, but their enforcement status is still in flux.

In addition to its pristine natural beauty, the archipelago is known for its diving, which is considered to be especially good around Quilaluia, Vamizi and Rongui; see p46.

History

Ibo and Quirimba, the two main islands in the archipelago, were already important Muslim trading posts when the Portuguese arrived in

the 15th century. The islands were renowned in particular for their production of silks, cottons and maluane cloth – on some old maps, they are shown as the Maluane Islands. Ivory, ambergris and turtle shell were also important items in local commerce, and trade extended south as far as Sofala, Zambézia and north to Malindi, off the Kenyan coast.

By the early 17th century the Portuguese had established a mission on Quirimba and a fortified settlement on Ibo. They also built cisterns to store rainwater, which encouraged the development of agriculture, and the islands began to supply food to Ilha de Moçambique. Beginning in the mid 18th century, the archipelago – particularly Ilha do Ibo – served as a base for the clandestine slave trade, attracting boats from as far away as Zanzibar and Kilwa in present-day Tanzania. In the late 19th century, as the slave trade came to an end and colonial attention shifted to the mainland, trade in the archipelago began to decline. Today Quirimba, with its coconut and sisal plantations, is probably the most economically active of the islands, though all are quiet – largely ignored until recently and caught in a fascinating time warp.

Ilha do Ibo

Ibo, the best-known of the Quirimbas islands, is an enchanting place, its quiet streets lined with dilapidated villas and crumbling, moss-covered buildings and echoing with the silent, hollow footsteps of bygone centuries. Architecturally it is more open than Ilha de Moçambique, although its ambience is more insulated and its pace more subdued. The

TO TIDE YOU OVER

Unless you're travelling by chartered plane (which is easily arranged and often reasonably priced), access to most of the islands of the Archipélago das Quirimbas is dependent on winds and tides. To avoid getting stranded, always check tide tables before setting out. Dhows only come and go at high tide, setting sail just before the high tide point.

Tide tables are available at the port in Pemba. Otherwise, ask at shops in town or inquire of resident expatriates. Tide tables for the entire country are available at Inahina in Maputo (see p175).

best time to visit is during a clear, moonlit night, when the old colonial houses take on a haunting, almost surreal aspect.

Ibo was fortified as early as 1609 and by the late 18th century had become the most important town in Mozambique after Ilha de Moçambique. During this era, the island was a major export point in the slave trade, with demand spurred by French sugar plantation owners on Mauritius and elsewhere. In the late 19th century, it served briefly as headquarters for the Niassa Company. However, in 1904, the headquarters were relocated to Pemba (then Porto Amelia) to take advantage of Pemba's better sea access routes and harbour, and Ibo faded into oblivion.

At the island's northern end is the star-shaped **Fort of São João**, which was built in 1791 and designed to accommodate up to 300 people. In the days when Ibo was linked into the slave trade, the fort's dark, cramped lower chambers were used as slave holding points. Today it's known for the **silver artisans** who have set up shop near the entrance. Much of the silver used is made from melted-down coins and is often of inferior quality, but the distinctive and refined Swahili artisanship is among the best in the region.

There are two other forts on the island, neither well preserved. The **Fort of São José** to the southwest dates from 1760, but ceased to have any military use once the larger fort of São João was built. The **Fort of Santo António** near the market was built around 1830. Other places of interest include a large church near the fort of São José, and the island's three cemeteries, including an old Hindu crematorium along the road running northwest from the port.

Traditional religious practices are alive and well on Ibo and if you spend some time on the island, you'll undoubtedly come into contact with them. One of the best times to see dancing is in late June, when the feast of São João is celebrated with numerous festivities.

Ibo doesn't have many beaches, but as compensation there are magical sunset views over the mud flats just north of the tiny port.

SLEEPING & EATING

The accommodation situation on Ibo was in a state of flux as this book was researched, with almost all everywhere moving rapidly upscale. Especially if you're on a budget, stop at Kaskazini in Pemba (p154) for an

update before heading out this way, as much of the following information is likely to be outdated.

Karibuni (Casa de Janine; ibo_pemba@yahoo.fr; camping per US\$3, r US\$24) The long-standing Karibuni is located in Vila Ruben, an old house along the waterfront just northwest of the tiny port. It's cheap and friendly, with a few clean, no-frills rooms with shared bathroom and bucket bath and delicious meals on order. Plans are underway for this entire strip of waterfront, including Vila Ruben, to be converted to a luxury property, so get an update before setting your plans.

Telecomunicações de Moçambique Guesthouse (☎ 272-43001, 272-43000; r US\$26) About 500m east of the port near the telecom building, this guesthouse has spacious, clean rooms, occasional electricity and a TV in the common area, plus clean bucket showers. It's a good deal – the only problem is that there's not always someone around to open it up for you, and when there is, it's often filled with official guests. The tiny **Bar São João**, diagonally opposite, has cheap meals and drinks and sometimes sells bottled water.

Ibo Island Lodge (☎ in South Africa 021-702 0643; www.iboisland.com; s/d with half board US\$360/560) This atmospheric and very promising 12-room luxury boutique hotel (it was about to open as this book was researched) is housed in three charming, restored mansions overlooking the water just northwest of the dhow port, with spacious, high-ceilinged rooms and wonderful sunset views. It's operated by Ocean Island Safaris (p190); check with them for the latest information.

Ilha de Quirimba

Quirimba, just south of Ibo, is the most economically active island of the archipelago, with large coconut plantations, a sizeable sisal factory and an airstrip. While it is more bustling than Ibo, it is far less interesting from an architectural and historical perspective and not nearly as scenic as the little patches of paradise further north. It is possible to walk between Quirimba and Ibo at low tide, but the route is through dense mangrove swamps, and you'll need a guide.

Historically, Quirimba was an important Muslim trading centre well before the arrival of the Portuguese. In 1522 it was raided by the Portuguese and the town was destroyed, although it was later rebuilt. In the 16th century

Quirimba served as a centre for missionary work.

There is currently no accommodation on the island, though this is likely to soon change.

Quilaluia

Until recently, tiny Quilaluia was inhabited only by seasonal fishing communities. Now, it's a protected marine sanctuary and home to **Quilálea** (☎ 272-21808; www.quilalea.com; per person all-inclusive full-board from US\$375), a luxurious private resort, and the place to come if you're looking for a secluded tropical island retreat. Accommodation is in nine well-spaced private chalets of rock, teakwood and other natural materials, each with sea-facing verandas, king-sized beds and billowing mosquito nets – though the nets are hung more for the ambience than anything else, as the island is considered to be mosquito-free. There's excellent cuisine, and the sea stretches out before you to the horizon. The surrounding waters offer prime diving and snorkelling immediately offshore.

Medjumbe & Matemo

Idyllic Medjumbe is a narrow sliver of island draped with white coral sand and home to **Medjumbe Island Resort** (☎ in South Africa 011-465 6904; www.medjumbersort.com; s/d with half-board US\$389/576; 🍷 🍷). Accommodation is in 13 thatched wooden chalets set directly on the

sand. Diving and fishing are available just offshore.

Unlike Medjumbe, which is unpopulated except for the resort, the much larger island of Matemo, north of Ibo, has been inhabited for generations, and was an important centre for cloth manufacture into the 17th century. Today villages dot much of the north and interior of the island. At its tip is **Matemo Island Resort** (☎ in South Africa 011-465 6904; www.matemoresort.com; s/d with half-board US\$389/576; 🍷 🍷), the largest of the island developments, with 24 chalets – all with sliding glass doors opening onto the beach, indoor and outdoor showers and Moorish overtones in the common areas.

Both lodges are run by Rani Africa, which also runs the Pemba Beach Hotel in Pemba (p156), and island-mainland packages are available.

Vamizi, Rongui & Macalóe

These three islands are part of the **Maluane Project** (www.maluane.com) – a privately-funded and highly impressive community-based conservation project. Ultimately it will encompass not only the islands, but also an adjoining coastal strip and a 33,000 hectare inland area, where wildlife safari-tropical island combinations will be possible. For now only Vamizi has accommodation, with lodges on Rongui and Macalóe and an inland luxury bush lodge to follow soon.

MAPIKO DANCING

If you hear drumming in the late afternoons while travelling around Cabo Delgado, it likely means *mapiko* – the famed masked dancing of the Makonde.

The dancer – always a man – wears a special wooden mask or *lipiko* (plural: *mapiko*), decorated with exaggerated features, hair (often real) and facial etchings. After being carved, the masks are kept in the bush in a special place known as the *mpolo*, where only men are permitted to enter. Traditionally, they cannot be viewed by women or by uncircumcised boys unless they are being worn by a dancer.

Before *mapiko* begins, the dancer's body is completely covered with large pieces of cloth wrapped around the legs, arms and body so that nothing can be seen other than the fingers and toes. All evidence that there is a person inside is supposed to remain hidden. The idea is that the dancer represents the spirit of a dead person who has come to do harm to the women and children, from which only the men of the village can protect them. While boys learn the secret of the dance during their initiation rites, women are never supposed to discover it and remain in fear of the *mapiko*. (*Mapiko* supposedly grew out of male attempts to limit the power of women in matrilineal Makonde society.)

Once the dancer is ready, distinctive rhythms are beaten on special *mapiko* drums. The dance is usually performed on weekend afternoons, and must be finished by sunset. The best places to see *mapiko* dancing are in and around Mueda and in Macomia. To take a mask home, look in craft shops in Pemba and Nampula.

Historically, the most important of the three islands was Vamizi – a narrow, paradisaical crescent about midway between Moçimboa da Praia and Palma at the northernmost end of the archipelago. It was long a Portuguese and Arabic trading post and there are ruins of an old Portuguese fort at its western end, plus a large village and several stunning beaches to the north and east. All three islands are important seasonal fishing bases.

Vamizi Island Lodge (www.vamizi.com; r per person with full board & activities from US\$485) This 24-bed luxury getaway sits on a long arc of spectacular white sand draped along Vamizi's northern edge and is without doubt one of the most beautiful places to relax along the northern Mozambican coast. The 10 spacious beach chalets have large, open sitting areas and private verandas, plus all the comforts you could want, presented in a tasteful and low-key way. Offshore is first-class diving and snorkelling; deep-sea fishing can be arranged, plus walks – including to some hawkbill and green turtle nesting areas – and birding.

Other Islands

Tiny **Quiipaco**, about midway between Pemba and Quissanga and the first island in the Quirimbas string, is notable for its birdlife and mangrove ecosystems. The surrounding waters, especially at the nearby Ponto do Diablo, are considered prime fishing areas and the island itself makes a tranquil stop, although it lacks the tropical backdrop of some of the other islands further north. There are a few A-frame houses that can be booked through jam@teledata.mz or Kaskazini in Pemba; bring all food and drink.

Further north is small **Quisiva**, which has no infrastructure, although you can still see some old Portuguese plantation houses. The tiny and densely vegetated **Rolas** is uninhabited except for some seasonal fishing settlements and a fascinating population of coconut crabs. The island is part of the Quirimbas national park area and a WWF campsite is planned.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Several of the islands, including Ibo, Quirimba and Matemo, have airstrips for charter flights. Island lodges all organise plane and/or motorboat transfers for their guests. Individual seats are often available; Pemba to Ibo costs US\$65 per person one way.

COCONUT CRABS

Illa das Rolas is known for its giant coconut-eating land crabs. These nocturnal creatures, considered to be the largest arthropods in the world, sometimes grow up to 1m long. They get their name from their proclivity for climbing coconut palms, shaking down the nuts, and then prying the cracked shells open to scoop out the flesh.

BOAT

To reach Ibo or Quirimba on your own steam, you'll need to go first to Quissanga, on the coast north of Pemba, and from there to the village of Tandanhangue, where you can get dhows to the islands. From Pemba, there's a direct chapa to Quissanga (US\$4, five hours) from the fish market behind the mosque in Paquitequete, departing about 4am daily. In a private car, the trip takes about 3½ hours.

Once in Quissanga, most vehicles continue on to the village of Tandanhangue (US\$4 from Pemba), which is the departure point for dhows to Ibo (locals pay US\$0.80 – foreigners are often quoted rates up to ten times higher) and Quirimba islands.

If you're driving, take the dirt track to the left about 2km before Quissanga town to reach Tandanhangue (4WD). There's secure parking at Casa de Isufo (signposted 2km before the Tandanhangue port – you'll need to walk back to the port) for US\$1.50 per day.

Dhows leave Tandanhangue only at high tide, and take from one to six hours. There's no accommodation in Tandanhangue or Quissanga, but if you get stuck, Isufo (at Casa de Isufo) can help you find a meal and has an enclosed area where you can sleep on the ground.

An alternative to a dhow is to try and charter a local motor boat, for which you should expect to pay about US\$40. For those with larger budgets, it's easy to arrange speedboat charters from Pemba direct to the islands. The best contact for this is Kaskazini.

For island-hopping along the coast, contact Kaskazini. Guludo (p162) arranges dhow safaris for its guests. When planning a route, check that the winds are in your favour (see p191).

MACOMIA

The small district capital of Macomia is the turn-off point for the beach at Pangane. If you find yourself stuck here on a weekend,

chances are good that you'll be able to see some *mapiko* dancing. Soccer is also popular and there are frequent matches pitting local teams against those from Pemba and elsewhere in the area.

The only place to stay is the very basic **Pen-são Kwetu-Kumo** (rUS\$9), about 1.5km west of the main road, with tiny, grubby rooms.

Several vehicles daily go to Mucojo, sometimes continuing on to Pangane. Hitching is possible but very slow. If you're stranded, a good place to ask for a lift is at Chung's Bar, at Macomia's main intersection.

To continue southwards to Pemba, the Mecula buses from Moçimboa da Praia and Mueda pass Macomia from about 8.30am or 9am. Going northwards, you'll often need to wait until around 9am or 10am for a vehicle to pass through.

CHAI

It was in the large village of Chai that Frelimo's military campaign against colonial rule began in 1964. There's a small monument near the main road and every year on 25 September (Revolution Day), national attention turns here as the independence struggle is remembered with visits by high-ranking officials and reenactments of historical events.

Chai is about 40km north of Macomia along the main road between Pemba and Moçimboa da Praia. Take any vehicle heading to/from Pemba and ask to be dropped off, but do it early enough in the day that you have a chance of onward transport, as there's no accommodation.

PANGANE

Pangane is a large village on a long, palm-fringed beach about 10km north of Mucojo, and 50km off the main north-south road. Many seasonal fishermen come up from Nacala and other places in the south, so the sand isn't always the cleanest, but the setting is beautiful. Just offshore is Macaloé island, part of the Maluane project, and beyond that the St Lazarus Banks, renowned for their diving and fishing.

Sleeping & Eating

Hashim's Camp (camping per person US\$6, bungalow US\$10) Run by the helpful Hashim, this place is set at Pangane's breezy point on the nicest stretch of sand and is ideal for sitting back for a few days. Staff will prepare grilled fish and other-

wise take care of you and while everything's very basic, it's clean and relaxed. Sleeping is in three reed bungalows with sand floors, mattresses, and decent ablutions.

Guludo (☎ in UK 01323-766 655; www.guludo.com) This upscale fair-traded camp – set against a backdrop of palm groves, white sands and turquoise seas – makes a fine base if you want to get a taste of northern Mozambique's coastal paradise while learning about and supporting local community development initiatives. On offer are nine spacious, sea-facing safari-style tents, island excursions, diving and even elephant tracking. (The surrounding area is one of the best places in these parts for spotting the giant pachyderms.) A bush lodge is planned and staff can also arrange walks to see the village school and other community initiatives. It's about 15km south of Mucojo junction; transfers can be arranged from Pemba and Macomia, as well as from Montepuez; Aurora (p152) makes a good combination itinerary with Guludo if you want to continue the theme of learning about local life.

Alternatively there are several guesthouses, the best of which is the long-running **Pensão Suki** (r US\$12). It's owned by the same people who run Chung's Bar in Macomia, so you can inquire there as you're passing through.

Getting There & Away

There's at least one vehicle daily between Pangane and Macomia (where fuel is sometimes available). Otherwise, there are several chaps daily between Macomia and the Mucojo junction (US\$2), from where you can find a pick-up on to Pangane (US\$0.80), 10km further north. Driving, the road from Macomia is sandy (4WD). From both Pangane and Guludo, it's easy to arrange a dhow to various islands of the Archipelago das Quirimbas, including Ibo (12 to 20 hours, depending on the winds); check with Hashim's Camp or Guludo. For the well-heeled, there's an airstrip at Mucojo for charter planes.

MUEDA

Mueda – the main town on the Makonde Plateau and the centre of Mozambique's Makonde people – is rather lacking in charm. However, this is compensated for by a wonderfully cool climate, a rustic, highland feel and an attractive setting, with views down from the escarpment along the southern and

THE MAKONDE

The Mueda Plateau around Mueda is home to the Makonde, who are renowned throughout Africa for their amazing woodcarvings. Like many tribes in the north, the Makonde are matrilineal. Children and inheritances normally belong to the woman and it's common for husbands to move to the village of their wives after marriage, setting up house near their mothers-in-law. Settlements are widely scattered – possibly a remnant of the days when the Makonde sought to evade slave raids – and there is no tradition of a unified political system. Each village is governed by a hereditary chief and a council of elders.

Due to their isolated location, the Makonde remained largely insulated from colonial and postcolonial influences. Even today, many Makonde still adhere to traditional religions, with the complex spirit world given its fullest expression in their carvings.

Traditionally, the Makonde practised body scarring and while it's seldom done today, you may see older people with markings on their faces and bodies. It's also fairly common to see elderly Makonde women wearing a wooden plug in their upper lip, or to see this depicted in Makonde artwork.

western edges of town. The surrounding area holds the potential for some good hiking, but it was heavily mined during the war, so stick to well-trodden paths. The plateau itself lies at about 800m altitude, with water available only on its slopes and at its base.

Sights & Activities

Mueda was originally built as an army barracks during the colonial era. In 1960 it was the site of the infamous massacre of Mueda. There's a statue commemorating Mueda's role in Mozambican independence and a mass grave for the 'martyrs of Mueda' at the western end of town. Maria José Chipande – wife of Alberto Chipande, who was a well-known Makonde guerrilla commander during the independence struggle, one of the founding members of Frelimo and a former Minister of Defence – is also buried here. Just behind this monument is a ravine (known locally as *xiudi*) over which countless more Mozambicans were hurled to their deaths.

The outlying villages are good places to see Makonde woodcarvings.

About 50km northwest of Mueda on the edge of the Makonde Plateau is the outpost town of **Moçimboa do Rovuma**, which offers views down to the Rio Rovuma, although it's inaccessible unless you have your own vehicle.

Sleeping & Eating

Pensão Takatuka (Rua 1 de Maio; r US\$10, in annexe US\$12) Takatuka has reasonably clean but very basic rooms in the main building or in an annexe out back, all with shared bucket bath. Food

can be arranged, but order well in advance. It's on the tarmac road in the town centre.

Motel Sanzala (Rua 1 de Maio; r US\$10) The only other choice, with similarly basic rooms, but the advantage of running water. It's just down the road from Pensão Takatuka.

Getting There & Away

Grupo Mecula has daily buses to Pemba (US\$7, eight hours) and Nampula (US\$12, 13 hours), both departing at 5am from the main road. There are also several vehicles each morning to Moçimboa da Praia (US\$3.50, seven hours).

There's usually one chapa daily to Moçimboa do Rovuma (US\$4, two hours), from where you can cross the border into Tanzania; see p188. All transport leaves from the main road opposite the market and it all leaves early. After about 10am, it's difficult to find vehicles to any destination.

If you're driving, there are two roads connecting Mueda with the main north-south road. Most traffic uses the good road via Diaca (50km). The alternate route via Muidumbe (about 30km south of Diaca), is scenic, winding through hills and forests, but rougher. Near Muidumbe is **Nangololo**, a mission station and an important base during the independence struggle, with an old airstrip large enough to take jets.

MOÇIMBOA DA PRAIA

This bustling outpost is the last major town before the Rio Rovuma and the Tanzanian border. Most local residents are Mwani

THE STORY OF THE NÁVILO

Once upon a time, the Yao and the Makonde, two of the largest tribes in northern Mozambique, were great enemies. This enmity arose in bygone days when Mataka was the most powerful Yao chief and M'Bavale an important leader among the Makonde. In those days the Yao (most of whom live in present-day Niassa province) earned their livelihood from hunting, fishing and trading. However the Makonde, who are at home in northern Cabo Delgado province, were farmers. As links between the coast and the interior grew, the Yao began to cross through the territory of the Makonde in order to trade with Arab coastal merchants. This intrusion on their territory angered the Makonde, and led to many battles. Before long, the Yao and the Makonde were sworn enemies, enmeshed in what seemed to be an intractable conflict.

Weeks, months and years passed. Finally, Mataka and M'Bavale reached an agreement that their people would stop fighting against each other. Not only that, but they would also embody this truce in a special relationship, known as the *návilo*. Under the *návilo*, the Yao and the Makonde would meet each other in peace. They would also each be bound to go to any length necessary to meet the needs of the other, and in turn would have full liberties with the property of the other. A Yao would thus always be welcome into the home of a Makonde and treated as a royal visitor, and a Makonde would receive the same treatment from a Yao. The demands made by each side would be tempered by the knowledge that the other party could request the same of them. According to many Yao and Makonde, this special relationship between the two groups endures to this day.

(‘People of the Sea’) – a Swahili and hence Muslim people known for their textiles and silver craftsmanship, as well as for their rich song and dance traditions. Moçimboa da Praia does brisk a trade with Tanzania, both legal and illegal, and from here northwards, a few words of Swahili will often get you further than Portuguese.

The town itself is long – stretched over several kilometres between the main road and the sea. In the somewhat scruffy, upper-lying section is a small market, several *pensões* and the transport stand. About 2km east near the water are a few more places to stay, police and immigration, a lively fish market and the colourful dhow port.

Information

If you're travelling by dhow and enter or leave Mozambique here, have your passport stamped at the immigration office near Complexo Miramar. An immigration officer meets arriving charter flights.

Banco Austral (Av Eduardo Mondlane) Changes US dollars cash; out of hours, try changing with some of the Indian shop owners.

TDM (Av 7 de Março; per min US\$0.60) Internet access.

Sleeping & Eating

Pensão Leeta (☎ 272-81147; Av Samora Machel; camping US\$5, r US\$10) At the entrance to town near the transport stand, with no-frills and slightly

scruffy twin-bedded rooms sharing bucket-style baths. They'll also let you pitch a tent on their grounds.

Pensão-Residencial Magid (☎ 272-81099; Av Eduardo Mondlane; r US\$12) Convenient to the Grupo Mecula bus garage, with basic rooms sharing facilities.

Complexo Miramar (Complexo Natasha or Chez Bebé; ☎ 272-81135/6; s/d US\$18/24) Several steps up from the previous two listings, with a breezy, waterside location, three no-frills rondavels with just a trickle of running water, and a popular restaurant-bar (meals from US\$3). Follow the main road downhill to the water, near the police station.

Hotel Chez Natalie (☎ 82-527 9094; natalie@teledata.mz; camping per tent US\$8, 4-person chalet US\$68) This tranquil place – designed by the same architect responsible for Carushka in Chocas (p142) – is the best bet in town, especially if you have your own transport. On offer are camping (though with only minimal ablutions), and three rustic and very pleasant chalets, each with a double bed and two twins in a family-style setup, plus a refrigerator, running water, electricity, internet access if you happen to have your own laptop, a bar and meals with advance arrangement (or pans and a small grill, if you want to cook your own). Breakfast is included in the room price, and staff can help you arrange bicycles for around town or dhow excursions. It's about 2km from the town centre (no public

transport), overlooking some mangroves and the estuary that rims Moçimboa to the north. Watch for the signposted turnoff near Clubé de Moçimboa.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There's an airstrip outside town for charter flights (currently used mainly for charters to Vamizi island in the Archipelago das Quirimbas).

BOAT

It's easy to arrange dhows from Moçimboa da Praia. Expect to pay from US\$10 to US\$15 per day, and read the boxed text on p191 first.

BUS & PICK-UP

The transport stand is near the market at the entrance to town. Two pick-ups go to/from the Rovuma via Palma (US\$10, four hours) daily, leaving Moçimboa da Praia by around 3.30am or 4am latest; arrange with the drivers the afternoon before to be collected from wherever you're staying. The village on the Mozambican side of the border is known locally as Namoto. Allow two to three hours between Moçimboa da Praia and Palma, and another 1½ to two hours to the border. If all goes smoothly, you can do the entire journey to Mtwara (Tanzania) in half a day in the dry season; see p188. During the rainy season, it takes much longer and sometimes isn't possible at all.

To Pemba, the Mecula bus departs daily at 4.30am sharp (US\$7, seven hours). The

best place to get it is at the garage where it's kept during the night, about midway between Complexo Miramar and the bus stand. Other-wise, there are usually one or two chapas or pickups that do the journey as well, departing by 7am from the main road in front of the market.

PALMA

The large fishing village of Palma is nestled among the coconut groves about 45km south of the Tanzania border. It's a centre for basketry and mat weaving – though most of this is done in the outlying villages – and for boat making, and it is fascinating to watch craftspeople using centuries-old techniques. The area is also a melting pot of languages, with Makwe, Makonde, Mwani, Swahili and Portuguese all spoken.

About 15km offshore across Baía de Túnguê is idyllic **Ilha de Tecomaji**, which is usually deserted except for some local fishermen who use it for drying octopus. Dhows can be arranged from the small harbour near Hotel Palma; allow about three hours with good winds, and bring water and everything else with you. Just south of Tecomaji is **Ilha de Rongui**, followed by **Ilha de Vamizi**, both of which are privately owned as part of the Maluane Project (p160). Beaches in town are not clean enough for swimming.

About 20km north of Palma is tiny Kiviya junction, where a sandy track branches about 17km seawards to **Cabo Delgado** – the point of land from which Cabo Delgado province takes its name – and a lighthouse.

COASTAL LIFE

Life along much of the northern Mozambican coast centres around fishing and dhow building, often using centuries-old methods and equipment. Dhows are often constructed without nails, using only wooden pegs and tightly fitted wooden slats, which are sealed and waterproofed with a mixture of natural gum and resin.

One of the main catches in Palma and other areas of the far north is octopus. Fishermen head out to sea armed only with a snorkel mask and a spear or handmade spear gun. Once well offshore, they leave their boats and swim to locate the octopus, which they then target between the eyes.

At night, look out to sea and you'll see little lanterns bobbing up and down on the waves – rigged on dhows to lure fish into large nets spread out in the surrounding waters. Sometimes, groups of fishermen will pull trawl nets – some up to 100m long – through shoreline waters in search of fish that feed on sea grass meadows in the shallows. In delta areas and around mangrove creeks, you may see traps – some up to 50m long – made from mangrove poles. Smaller reed traps and baskets are often used in the southern part of the country and in inland lakes. A common sight at low tide is women in their brightly coloured capulanas and head scarves wading into the sand flats to harvest clams, oysters and other shellfish.

Orientation

Palma has an upper, administrative section of town with immigration, the post office and a small market, and a lower section, about 2km downhill along the water, with the main market, the hotel and many local houses. There's nowhere to change money, although changing meticaís and Tanzanian shillings at the markets is no problem.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Palma (rUS\$8) The friendly, family-run and very basic Hotel Palma, about 2km downhill from the immigration office, is the only place to stay. Meals can be arranged or you can get plates of rice and sauce at the market.

Getting There & Away

For travel between Palma and Tanzania, see p188. Chapas from Moçimboa da Praia en route to the Rio Rovuma pass Palma between about 6am and 8am and charge US\$5 from Palma. Transport from the Rovuma south to Moçimboa da Praia passes through Palma between 11am and 2pm, and there's usually a car from Palma to Moçimboa da Praia each morning (US\$5, 2½ hours).

All transport leaves from the Boa Viagem roundabout at the entrance to town, about 3km from Hotel Palma. Some drivers continue down to the market near Hotel Palma, or will at least be willing to drop you at the top of the hill.