

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe continues to make headlines for all the wrong reasons. In 2005 the Government stole another election, the opposition imploded, and half a million of the poorest people were evicted in the midst of winter. Unemployment is at 70%, inflation has topped 1000%, and women die younger in Zimbabwe than anywhere else on the planet.

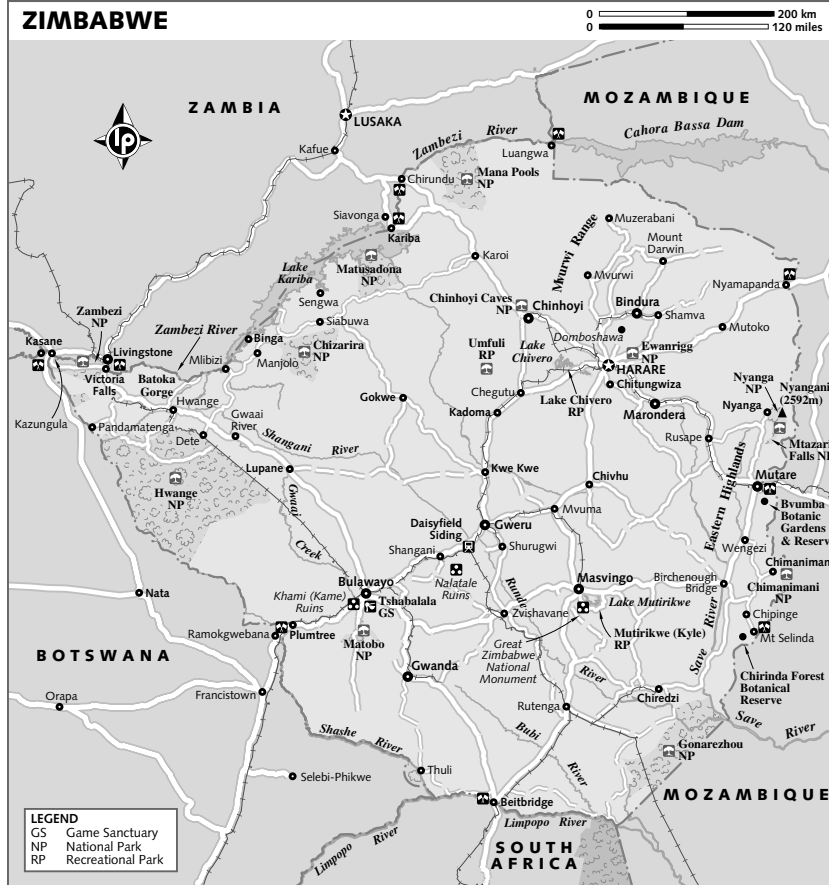
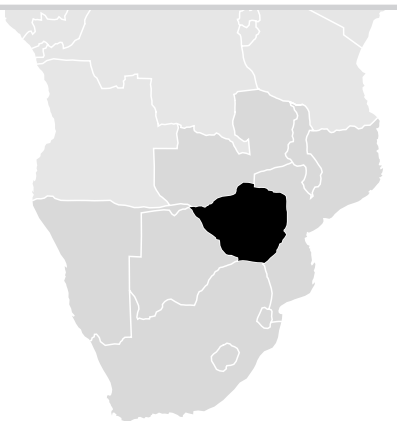
But behind the grim data lies one of Southern Africa's most beautiful – and today, un-touristed – countries. And despite being forced to sacrifice so many things, Zimbabweans have not lost their humour or resolve. With so few visiting the country, those who do can expect royal treatment. They need you.

While the world's media focuses on the fall of Zimbabwe, visitors will see a very different image of the country. From the absolute wilderness of Mana Pools National Park, the ruins of Great Zimbabwe and the mountains looking over Mozambique, to fine dining in the capital, Zimbabwe continues to be a great place to visit.

Zimbabwe is no longer nearly as cheap as it once was, but its richness in culture and colour remain. Colonialism remains etched in all sorts of ways, but local traditions are visible. If you're willing to join a tour group, or *pay* and plan your own trip, then a country of charm, political intrigue and magnificent wilderness awaits. Oh, and Zimbabwe's got one of the world's best climates...even the worst government can't destroy that.

FAST FACTS

- **Area:** 390,580 sq km (slightly larger than Germany)
- **Capital:** Harare
- **Country code:** +263 260
- **Famous for:** Great Zimbabwe, Hwange National Park, Zambezi River canoe safaris, Victoria Falls
- **Languages:** English, Shona, Ndebele
- **Money:** Zimbabwe dollar (ZWS)
- **Phrases:** *Siyabonga kakulu* (thank you; Ndebele); *ndatenda/masvita* (thank you; Shona)
- **Population:** 13 million (official, though up to three million Zimbabweans are thought to have emigrated since 2001)



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Mana Pools** (p705) Africa's only national park (with lions) that allows unguided walking safaris. Canoe the Zambezi past hippos and crocs.
- **Great Zimbabwe** (p716) Visit this ancient city with Africa's largest stone structures south of the pyramids.
- **Harare** (p692) Go to Harare's International Festival of the Arts in April or play golf on a world-class course any time.
- **Eastern Highlands** (p706) Fish, safari on horseback, win millions (read: US\$5) at the casino, or climb Zimbabwe's second-highest peak.
- **Off the beaten track** (p723) Observe the Big Five in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe's largest and most wildlife-packed park.

babwe's largest and most wildlife-packed park.

ITINERARIES

- **One to two weeks** It's best to base yourself in one or two places – eg **Harare** (p692); **Masvingo** (p715), from where you can visit **Great Zimbabwe** (p716); **Bulawayo** (p718), from where you can access **Matobo National Park** (p722); or **Mutare** (p707), good for visiting the **Eastern Highlands** (p706). Make sure you also visit Victoria Falls (see p626).
- **Three weeks** Spend longer at (and around) the places mentioned in the one- to two-week itinerary, and add in **Gweru** (p714), **Kariba** (p703) and **Hwange** (p723), **Nyanga** (p710) or **Mana Pools** (p705) **National Parks**.

HOW MUCH?

- **Soapstone sculpture** US\$2-200
- **Safari** US\$50-350
- **Wooden carving** US\$1-100
- **Steak** US\$7
- **Sunscreen** US\$7

LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **1L of petrol** US\$1
- **1L of bottled water** US\$0.75
- **Bottle of beer** US\$1
- **Souvenir T-shirt** US\$3
- **Plate of chips** US\$0.80

Alternatively, try a semicircular route: ie Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park, Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo, Mutare, the Eastern Highlands, Harare, Kariba and Mana Pools National Park.

- **One month** You can take your time with one month up your sleeve. One excellent route is to fly from Johannesburg to Victoria Falls (see p626), spend a few days there, then be driven to **Hwange National Park** (p723) for a stunning safari. You could then fly to **Harare** (p692) and take a road trip to the **Bvumba Mountains** (p708) overlooking Mozambique. Another would be to land in Harare, take a charter flight to **Lake Kariba** (p703) or **Mana Pools** (p705) on the banks of the Zambezi, safari, fish, then fly back to Harare and drive south for three hours to **Masvingo** (p715) and the **Great Zimbabwe** (p716) ruins.

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Zimbabwe stretches over a high plateau and enjoys a pleasantly temperate climate during the dry season. The cooler, drier months (May to October) are similar to the Mediterranean summer, with warm, sunny days and cold, clear nights. It never snows, though overnight frosts and freezing temperatures are not uncommon.

The lowveld and the Zambezi Valley experience hotter and more humid temperatures, but in winter there's still very little rainfall. Most of Zimbabwe's rain falls in brief afternoon deluges and electrical storms in the relatively humid and warmer months from November

to April. Zimbabwe has the second-highest incidence of lightening strikes in the world, so do be careful during those storms.

Generally, the dry winter months are the most comfortable for travelling, though in truth Zimbabwe has a beautiful climate all year round, and given the chance of drought, even the wettest wet season isn't a great hindrance. In winter night-time temperatures can fall below freezing, while in summer daytime temperatures can climb to 35°C, but may be tempered by afternoon thunderstorms.

Winter is the best time for wildlife viewing because animals tend to congregate around a diminishing number of water holes, and are therefore easier to glimpse. At the end of a drought in 2005, herds of 300 elephants were seen at Hwange National Park. Obviously this is an incredible sight, though it can also be a stressful one, as many animals don't gain access to the scarce water and die.

No matter when you choose to come, you will have so much of the country to yourself. Tourism is a fraction of what it was just five years ago. This is awful news for Zimbabweans, though does mean that those who do come to Zimbabwe will have a choice of the full range of remaining lodges and activities, and will be spoiled by their hosts.

HISTORY

The precolonial history of the area that became Zimbabwe, along with the rest of Southern Africa, is covered on p37.

The Shona Kingdoms & the Portuguese

Historians believe that in the 11th century, the Great Zimbabwe society encountered Swahili

TRAVEL TIPS

The currency is an ongoing and unmitigated disaster that sadly greatly impacts upon the tourist (see the boxed texts, p684 and p686). At the time of writing petrol was now readily available in all petrol stations (for the first time since January 2005). But a capricious government could change laws on the importation of fuel at any moment. These two – fuel and money – are two central reasons why almost all visitors to Zimbabwe will organise their trip through a travel agent, or a friend in the country.

SHOULD YOU GO?

If your only doubts about holidaying to Zimbabwe concern your dollars going to government cronies, then pack away your worries and get out your passport. This is a debate for international donors, and if they still see a role in Zimbabwe (and they do), then you shouldn't worry. Yes, the government has a stake in some hotels and the national airline, but more than that there are thousands of talented sculptors, guides, small businesses, waiters and artists who are all on the bread line because tourism has all but dried up in Zimbabwe. They need you in Zimbabwe, both for your business, your tips, but also so that the country and its people continue to get an outsider's perspective. There could be nothing worse for everyday Zimbabweans than a boycott from tourists.

traders who had been plying the Mozambique coast for over four centuries. They traded gold and ivory for glass, porcelain and cloth from Asia, and Great Zimbabwe became wealthy and powerful. However, by the 15th century, its influence was in decline because of overpopulation, overgrazing, political fragmentation and uprisings.

During Great Zimbabwe's twilight period, Shona dynasties fractured into autonomous states. In the 16th century Portuguese traders arrived in search of riches and golden cities in the vast empire of Mwene Mutapa (Monomatapa to the Europeans), where they hoped to find King Solomon's mines and the mysterious land of Ophir.

Alliances between Shona states led to the creation of the Rozwi state, which encompassed over half of present-day Zimbabwe. This state continued until 1834 when raiders known as the Ndebele (Those Who Carry Long Shields), under the command of Mzilikazi, invaded from the south and assassinated the Rozwi leader. Upon reaching the Matobo Hills, Mzilikazi established a Ndebele state. After Mzilikazi's death in 1870, his son Lobengula ascended the throne and relocated the Ndebele capital to Bulawayo.

Lobengula soon found himself face to face with the British South African Company (BSAC). In 1888 Cecil Rhodes, the founder of the company, coerced him to sign the Rudd Concession, which granted foreigners mineral rights in exchange for 10,000 rifles, 100,000 rounds of ammunition, a gunboat and £100 each month.

But a series of misunderstandings followed. Lobengula sent a group of Ndebele raiders to Fort Victoria (near Masvingo) to prevent Shona interference between the British and the Ndebele. The British mistook this as aggression and launched an attack

on Matabeleland. Lobengula's *kraals* (hut villages) were destroyed and Bulawayo was burned. A peace offering of gold sent by Lobengula to the BSAC was commandeered by company employees. Ignorant of this gold token, the vengeful British sent the Shangani River Patrol to track down the missing king and finish him off. In the end, Lobengula died in exile of smallpox.

Without their king, the Ndebele continued to resist the BSAC and foreign rule. In the early 1890s they allied themselves with the Shona, and guerrilla warfare broke out against the BSAC in the Matobo Hills. When Rhodes suggested a negotiated settlement, the Ndebele, with their depleted numbers, couldn't refuse.

Meanwhile, finding little gold, the colonists appropriated farmlands on the Mashonaland plateau. By 1895 the new country was being called Rhodesia, after its heavy-handed founder, and a white legislature was set up. European immigration began in earnest: by 1904 there were some 12,000 settlers in the country, and seven years later the figure had doubled.

The First Chimurenga

The government of Rhodesia was set up 'for, by and of' the whites. The Ndebele had effectively been quashed, but trade between the Shona and Europeans continued until it became apparent that the colonists intended to control both African and Rhodesian interests. Spotting a weakness in the BSAC army, the Ndebele came back with a vengeance, gathering forces and single-mindedly attempting to drive the enemy from their land forever. This warlike spirit proved contagious; the Shona, traditional enemies of the Ndebele, joined in, and by 1896 the First Chimurenga, (War for Liberation) had begun. Although the

MONEY MATTERS *Matthew D Firestone*

At the time of writing, the official exchange rate between the US dollar and the Zimbabwean dollar was 1:250. Just a few weeks earlier, the rate was 1:250,000. For more on the volatile money situation, see the boxed text, p686.

For the uninitiated, changing money in Zimbabwe can be a head-splitting (and potentially dangerous) endeavour. For starters, it helps to know that locals change money on the 'parallel market', and that the exchange rate can be three or four times as favourable as the official rate. At the time of writing, the parallel exchange rate was US\$1 to Zimbabwean \$750.

Keep in mind that changing money outside a bank is illegal, and the consequences for being caught are severe – you will be fined and possibly imprisoned.

If you do decide to use the parallel market, always seek out the latest information. Talk to the people at your hotel, hostel or tour operator as they're likely to be able to help you change money in a safe environment. Finally, never change money on the streets as the majority of touts work hand-in-hand with the tourist police and it's likely that you will get caught.

Before arriving in Zimbabwe, stock up on post-1996 US dollars (the ones with the big heads), though euros or British pounds are usually easy to change. Credit cards, travellers cheques and ATM cards occasionally work, though your money won't go very far since you'll be given the official exchange rate. Generally, hotels and tour operators prefer payments in foreign currency, though transactions in town are best paid for in Zim dollars.

revolt gained some momentum, it was stalled in 1897 when its leaders were captured and subsequently hanged.

Beginnings of Nationalism

Conflicts between black and white came into sharp focus after the 1922 referendum in which the whites chose to become a self-governing colony rather than join the Union of South Africa. Although Rhodesia's constitution was in theory nonracial, suffrage was based on British citizenship and annual income, so few blacks qualified. In 1930 white supremacy was legislated in the form of the Land Apportionment Act, which disallowed black Africans from ownership of the best farmland, and a labour law that excluded them from skilled trades and professions. Poor wages and conditions eventually led to a rebellion, and by the time Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were federated in 1953, mining and industrial concerns favoured a more racially mixed middle class as a counterweight to the radical elements in the labour force.

Two African parties soon emerged – the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), a breakaway group under the leadership of Ndabaningi Sithole. Following the federation's break-up in 1963 – which paved the way for the independence of Northern

Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) – the ZAPU and ZANU were banned and their leaders imprisoned.

Ian Smith & the Second Chimurenga

In 1964 Ian Smith took over the Rhodesian presidency and began pressing for independence. British prime minister Harold Wilson countered by outlining conditions to be met before Britain would agree: guarantee of racial equality, course towards majority rule, and majority desire for independence. Smith realised the whites would never agree, so in 1965 he made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

Britain responded by declaring Smith's action illegal and imposed economic sanctions (which were also adopted by the UN in 1968). However, the sanctions were ignored by most Western countries and even by British companies. By this stage, both ZANU and ZAPU had opted for guerrilla warfare. Their raids struck deeper into the country with increasing ferocity, and whites, most of whom had been born in Africa and knew no other home, abandoned their properties.

On 11 December 1974 South Africa's John Vorster and Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda persuaded Smith to call a cease-fire and release high-ranking nationalists – including Robert Mugabe – and to begin peace negotiations. The talks, however, broke down; ZANU split and Mugabe fled to Mozambique. The follow-

ing year, ZANU chairman Herbert Chitepo was assassinated in Lusaka by Rhodesian intelligence.

The nationalist groups fragmented and re-formed. ZANU and ZAPU created an alliance known as the Patriotic Front (PF), but the expected spirit of cooperation was never realised. Similarly, Zipra and Zanla (the military arms of ZAPU and ZANU respectively) combined to form the Zimbabwe People's Army.

Smith, facing a wholesale white emigration and a collapsing economy, was forced to try an 'internal settlement'. Sithole, and the leader of the ANC, Abel Muzorewa, joined a so-called 'transitional government' in which whites were guaranteed 28 out of the 100 parliamentary seats; veto over all legislation for 10 years; guarantee of their property and pension rights; and control of the armed forces, police, judiciary and civil service. And an amnesty was declared for PF guerrillas.

The effort was a dismal failure. Indeed, the only result was an escalation of the war, now known as the Second Chimurenga. To salvage the settlement, Smith entered into secret negotiations with Nkomo, offering to ditch both Sithole and Muzorewa, but Nkomo proved to be intransigent. Finally, Smith was forced to call a general, nonracial election and hand over leadership to Muzorewa, but on much the same conditions as the 'internal settlement'.

Independence

On 10 September 1979 delegations met at Lancaster House, London, to draw up a constitution favourable to both the PF of Nkomo and Mugabe, and the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian government of Muzorewa and Smith. Mugabe, who wanted ultimate power, initially refused to make any concessions, but after 14 weeks the Lancaster House Agreement was reached. It guaranteed whites (then 3% of the population) 20 of the 100 parliamentary seats.

In the carefully monitored election of 4 March 1980, Mugabe prevailed by a wide margin and Zimbabwe and its majority-rule government joined the ranks of Africa's independent nations.

Soon after, the economy soared, wages increased, and basic social programmes – notably education and healthcare – were initiated. However, the initial euphoria, unity and optimism quickly faded: a resurgence of rivalry

between ZANU (run mostly by Shona people) and ZAPU (mostly by Ndebele) escalated into armed conflict, and the ZAPU leader Nkomo was accused of plotting against the government. Guerrilla activity resumed in ZAPU areas of Matabeleland, and Mugabe deployed the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade in early 1983 to quell the disturbances. The brigade launched an orgy of killing; innocent villagers were gunned down and prominent members of ZAPU were eliminated in order to root out dissidents. The result was horrific massacres in which tens of thousands of civilians, sometimes entire villages, were slaughtered. A world that was eager to reverse Mr Mugabe closed its eyes. The eyes of Zimbabweans were forced shut.

Nkomo, meanwhile, fled to England until Mugabe (realising the strife threatened to erupt into civil war) publicly relented and guaranteed his safe return. Talks resulted in a ZAPU-ZANU confederation (called ZANU-PF) and amnesty for the dissidents, thereby masterfully sweeping the matter – but not the underlying discontent – under the rug. Zimbabwe's one-party state had begun.

Increasing Taxes & Tensions

Despite tragic experiments with one-party socialism in neighbouring countries, President Mugabe's Marxist dream remained alive. In 1988 the abolition of the law that guaranteed 20 parliamentary seats to whites, and the imposition of strict controls on currency, foreign exchange and trade, were steps in this direction.

In the 1990 elections, ZANU-PF was challenged by the newly formed Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), which promoted free enterprise and a multiparty democratic state. A gerrymander engineered by Mugabe, however, enabled ZANU-PF to post a landslide victory. Soon afterwards, Patrick Kombayi, a ZUM candidate, was wounded in an assassination attempt and those with ZUM ties immediately sought a low profile. In 1990, despite Mugabe's persistence, members of parliament voted against the implementation of Marxism in Zimbabwe.

In 1995, with his popularity waning and elections due, Mugabe revealed a US\$160-million antipoverty programme. The election, however, was characterised by general apathy and voter turnout was poor, so Mugabe won. A year later, government officials had ripped

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY – IT'S ALMOST FUNNY

How did it come to this?

In 1980 US\$1 was worth ZW\$1.50. By 1990, after 10 very successful years of independence, the Zimbabwe dollar was still very strong against the world's major currencies and one of the healthiest in Africa. (US\$1 was worth ZW\$2.60). In July 2006, the parallel (or market rate) was US\$1 to ZW\$400,000 and the biggest bank note was ZW\$100,000 note (or 25 cents). That same month the government changed currencies, lopping three zeroes from the old currency and introducing a new set of notes. Today there is a new ZW\$100,000 note (formerly worth ZW\$100,000,000) which, officially, at the time of writing was worth a whopping US\$400. Beware of counterfeiters – it's suddenly super profitable.

Zimbabwe's decline began in earnest in late 1997 when President Mugabe paid billions of dollars of unbudgeted gratuities to war veterans. The veterans had seen their fund sucked dry by ruling party corruption. They remained a force to rival the President's, and his financial move was both to improve his waning popularity and placate angry war vets. Within a day after the payments, Zimbabwe's currency crashed.

In 1998 Mugabe sent Zimbabwean troops to back government soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ostensibly to appease and fund party generals and other big shots. The burden of massive military expenses was another hefty blow to the suffering economy.

The last five years has seen a string of antimarket economic policies, with funds thrown at corrupt and inefficient state-run organisations, the currency fixed, 'land reform' extended with economic devastation on *all* other industries that relied on agriculture, and trillions of local dollars printed to pay salaries and the IMF (International Monetary Fund). Inflation has topped 1300% and some warn it may go to 3000%, while the president has promised to no longer follow 'orthodox economic policies' and to print money when he wants to.

off the War Victims' Compensation Fund. Veterans began demonstrating and demanding their rightful compensation; their demands culminated in a confrontation with Mugabe at the 1997 Heroes' Day rally. Mugabe hastily promised money for the veterans, and an increase in income and fuel taxes was announced.

Already heavily burdened by excessive taxes, the normally passive Zimbabweans found the new tax levies unsustainable. They rebelled and boycotted work. Throughout the country, all colours united in a peaceful demonstration of disapproval, but in Harare, police attempted to halt the demonstration by firing tear gas into the crowds. The parliament soon rejected the proposed income-tax increase and mandated that the fuel price be dropped. The president and his ministers were incensed.

Meanwhile, the Zimbabwe dollar lost over 50% of its value. The increased cost of imports caused immediate price hikes for most goods, including basic foodstuffs. In Harare, protesters again took to the streets and rioting ensued. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) called on the government to address the problems or face a two-day work

stoppage. The government simply threatened 'stern action' if the boycott went ahead. Undaunted, workers stayed home on 3 and 4 March 1998. Riot police came out in force and waited for a demonstration that never happened.

Life as the Opposition

In 1999 thousands attended a ZCTU rally to launch the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Morgan Tsvangirai, the secretary general, stated he would lead a social democratic party fighting for workers' interests.

The arrival of the MDC brought waves of new hope and real opportunity for the end of Mugabe's era. Ironically, the MDC's greatest success led to its ultimate defeat. In 2000 Mugabe's chief propaganda architect, Jonathan Moyo, led the president's campaign for a new constitution. Three months later – and despite the full weight of state media and Treasury – the president's constitution was given the thumbs down by the people. It was Mugabe's first defeat and it notified him of MDC's very real strength at the ballot box. A parliamentary election was due later that year.

The tide had turned and it seemed a clear majority of a highly educated populace wanted

change. Mugabe responded to the threat of defeat with waves of violence, voter intimidation, and a chaotic and destructive land reform programme. Despite this, and the election being damned by the US and European Union as 'neither free nor fair', the MDC lost by a mere four seats. Two years later Mugabe's rule was under even greater threat during the country's presidential elections. Again, an election marred by violence and intimidation, backed by a new set of repressive laws, with no independent monitors and huge numbers of voters turned away, was stolen by Mugabe.

The next parliamentary election – in 2005 – was not so close. Mugabe and his security and propaganda networks had five years since 2000 to readjust the playing field. Newspapers were closed (bombed in one case), the state dominated print, radio and TV, voters were bought with food (and threatened with no food), the leader of the opposition, Morgan Tsvangirai, went through two treason trials, and up to one million ghost voters were created on the role. The result was that Mugabe not only guaranteed victory in the 2005 elections, but was brazen enough to steal a two-thirds majority and hence win the ability to change Zimbabwe's constitution and pave the way for a successor of his choice. Part of the changes made in the constitution was to create a senate. Another arm for Mugabe to offer political patronage, the senate also saw the acrimonious division of the opposition over whether or not to contest the 'elections'. At the time of writing Morgan Tsvangirai controlled the anti-senate faction of the MDC, and former Rhodes scholar, Arthur Mutambara, the pro-Senate faction (though Mutambara says he too is anti-senate). Mass protests are continually planned against the government, but people appear more concerned with feeding their families than fighting the well-armed state.

The Land Fiasco

With the economy in dire straits and Mugabe furious that white farmers had supported the MDC, the president played the race card. Hoping to win the support of the majority peasant population and pacify war vets he began violently confiscating land from white commercial farmers for resettlement by African farmers.

Few independent observers will disagree that land reform was necessary in Zimbabwe, where prior to 2000 70% of the best land was

owned by around 4000 white commercial farmers. But Mugabe's policy had little to do with equitable distribution of land, and much to do with power. Hundreds of black farm workers were killed, along with scores of white farmers. Land was given to ministers, party faithfuls and foreign friends. Some genuine farmers attempted to work their new land, though critical shortages of fuel, seed and fertiliser meant their efforts were in vain. Other farm invaders simply stole crops, stripped houses, machinery and irrigation systems, then fled, leaving millions of acres of land idle. From time to time various ministers mention that it may be time to invite some white farmers back, but in reality as recently as the middle of 2006 farm invasions continued.

The result has been absolutely devastating. Production of the staple meal, maize, has plummeted by 60%, leaving one-quarter of the entire population dependent on food aid. From 2001 to 2003, Zimbabwe lost 20% of its wildlife to poaching. Tobacco production – the mainstay of foreign currency earnings – has fallen from 262 million tonnes in 2000 to 69 million tonnes in 2005.

It is, of course, necessary to put Zimbabwe's current tragedy into the colonial context from which it emerged. However, none of this is much use to Zimbabweans, who now find themselves suffering more than during colonial days.

Most recently, Mr Mugabe has reiterated his intention to nationalise Zimbabwe's mining sector, which produces what little foreign exchange the country still earns. And government's amended constitution cancels all freehold title to property and bars those whose property has been expropriated from appealing to the courts. It has been called, 'the most draconian measure introduced since independence' and that's a tough list to top.

THE CULTURE The National Psyche

Zimbabweans are fascinating. Whether black, white or in-between, they have a philosophical stoicism reminiscent of bygone eras. In Zimbabwe, the Southern African expression to 'make a plan' can be defined as: If it's broke, fix it. If you can't fix it, live with it, or, change your life (overnight if need be). This pretty much sums up the Zimbabwean approach to life. For instance, Zimbabwe has the highest number of orphans (per capita) in the

world – almost one in three children – and yet despite an economic crisis, 90% of these orphans are still cared for by the extended family. This kind of mental strength and generosity, combined with a love of their country for its abundant mix of wild and tailored beauty and wonderful climate is key to their survival.

Daily Life

Zimbabwe's wonderful infrastructure, world-class climate, rich soil, and leading education rates should allow for nothing less than a comfortable lifestyle for almost all. Unfortunately great gains made in everything since independence – life expectancy, education, health – have all been reversed in the last five years. Today Zimbabwe's lifestyle is one of survival or escapism. Survival for the masses who live below the poverty line; escapism for the rest (from the reality of the masses).

Somehow, despite the immense hardship for everyday Zimbabweans, crime remains relatively low. Locals here laugh that if this was West Africa there would have been a coup once a week since 2001. Others argue that Zimbabweans today are paying for their genteel demeanour. The truth – as ever – lies somewhere in between.

Population

About 65% of the population lives in rural areas; while around 40% of the population is under 18 years old. Only a few years ago, the average life expectancy was nearly 60 years;

today, with the onslaught of AIDS, it's about 40 years.

Most Zimbabweans are of Bantu origin; 9.8 million belong to various Shona groups and about 2.3 million are Ndebele. The remainder are divided between the Tonga (or Batonga) people of the upper Kariba area, the Shangaan (or Hlengwe) of the Lowveld, and the Venda of the far south. Europeans (18,000), plus Asians (10,000), and mixed Europeans and Africans (25,000) are scattered around the country. Local whites today joke that there are more elephants in Zimbabwe today than white Zimbabweans.

SPORT

Football is the country's lone national sporting passion. Stadiums regularly fill to capacity (anywhere between 5000 and 40,000) and neutral visitors would be welcomed to this intense event. Zimbabwe qualified for the 2006 African Nations Cup and football today is one of a few things that regularly puts smiles on the faces of the people. Unfortunately, like the rest of society, it is often sullied by greed and corruption.

Cricket – although at first only played by whites – was in the late 1990s and early 2000s gaining increasing exposure on the back of several leading black players and an overall team progressing on the world stage. Most recently, Tatenda Taibu was made captain of the team after some of the players (white and black) boycotted the World Cup games bemoaning the 'death of democracy' and were banned. Taibu led a young and terribly inexperienced

team with courage and skill, but quit in 2005, citing power struggles within the sport.

RELIGION

The majority of Zimbabweans are Christian, although traditional spiritual beliefs and customs are still practised, especially in rural areas, where merciless economic times are leading to an increase in faith and fraud.

Meanwhile, noticing this drive towards religion, more and more government ministers are tying themselves to the Church. Most worryingly, perhaps, senior church leaders are tying themselves to government! For years concerned church leaders have tried to meet President Mugabe. In mid-2006 the president finally agreed. In a country with the lowest life expectancy for women, the highest rises in child mortality, and the world's fastest-falling economy, it was a God-given opportunity for church leaders to discuss the suffering of Zimbabweans.

Somehow, though, the church leaders lost their nerve. At the end of the meeting the head of the delegation and president of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches told national TV cameras that, 'we know we have a government that we must support, interact with and draw attention to concerns. Those of us who have different ideas about this country must know we have a government who listens.' It was the most immoral of sell-outs.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Zimbabwe's festivals and fairs, live music, poetry, dance, art, and sculpture are great expressions of Zimbabwe and a wonderful way for visitors to meet the locals and learn about their lives. All Zimbabweans are creative in some way: whether they knit, embroider, weave, sculpt, carve, sing or act, they do it anywhere and everywhere (so long as they're allowed to).

Unfortunately, during Operation Murambatsvina (see opposite), the Government destroyed the ubiquitous street-side stalls and markets that lined the main roads of Zimbabwe, offering all manner of handicrafts. But, as a metaphor to Zimbabweans, the stalls do keep popping back up here and there.

For information on music in Southern Africa, see p52.

Literature

Although oral traditions perpetuated a large body of stories, legends, songs and poetry,

the first written works by black authors didn't appear in print until the publication (in Shona) of *Feso*, by S Mutswairo, in 1956. The first Ndebele novel, published in 1957, was *Umthawakazi*, by PS Mahlangu.

Subsequent works dealt with pre-colonial traditions, myths and folk tales, and focused on the experiences of blacks under a white regime. The first serious treatise on this topic was Stanlake Samkange's *On Trial for My Country* (1966).

Since independence, Zimbabwe literature has focused on the liberation effort and the struggles to build a new society. The 1992 Commonwealth Prize for Literature went to Zimbabwean writer Shimmer Chinodya for *Harvest of Thorns*, an epic novel of the Second Chimurenga. Another internationally renowned writer is Chenjerai Hove, who wrote the war-inspired *Bones*, the tragic *Shadows* and the humorous *Shebeen Tales*.

Mukiwa (A White Boy in Africa), by Peter Godwin, is an engrossing book. It's the story of a small boy who witnesses the death of his neighbour by guerrillas, and then the beginning of the end of white rule in Africa.

Traditional Crafts

Even before Arab traders brought cloth from India, Zimbabweans were spinning and weaving garments from wild cotton that grew on the plateau. They were also making blankets, mats and clothing from strands of the soft and pliable tree bark known as *gudza*. Zimbabwean women have also developed nontraditional crafts, such as crochet and batik.

Pottery, another traditional female activity, has been an enduring art form. Intricately designed pots have always played a practical role in everyday life. They are used for storage, cooking, serving, carrying, preparing curdled milk and even brewing yeast beer.

Wooden stools, whose intricate decorations reach their highest level in the Tonga culture of western Lake Kariba, are also carved from a single piece of wood. Historically, only men were allowed to sit on them and male heads of households used them as 'thrones' from which to oversee family affairs.

ENVIRONMENT The Land

Landlocked Zimbabwe is roughly three times the size of England and half as big as Texas. It lies within the tropics and consists of highveld

OPERATION 'DRIVE OUT THE TRASH'

In May 2005 the Zimbabwean government began a demolition campaign that over the next three cold months destroyed urban markets and homes, arbitrarily arresting market vendors, and locking up street children. The operation – named Murambatsvina (or 'drive out the trash') – particularly targeted the poor. Coming on top of massive unemployment and in the midst of winter, the operation brought almost one million Zimbabweans closer to their knees.

President Mugabe said he wanted people to return to their rural homes, and that the operation was to clean up 'a chaotic state of affairs' in the informal sector. A more widely held view is that after successful revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia, the Zimbabwean government – now by any measure a dictatorship – was making a pre-emptive strike against densely populated, and largely opposition areas. By de-urbanising cities, the government could send people to rural areas where it controlled food.

The result was devastating. A report released by a United Nation's Special Envoy to Zimbabwe said the nationwide operation had destroyed the homes and/or livelihood of 700,000 Zimbabweans, indirectly affected one out of five Zimbabweans, and had left the country 'deeper in poverty, deprivation and destitution'. It was, said the UN, 'the worst possible thing at the worst possible time'.

and middleveld plateaus between 900m and 1700m above sea level. A low ridge running northeast to southwest across the country marks the divide between the Zambezi and Limpopo-Save River systems.

The northwest consists mostly of plateaus, characterised by bushveld dotted with kopjes (small rocky hills) and bald knob-like domes of smooth rock known as *dwalas*. The hot, dry lowveld of southern Zimbabwe is mainly the level savanna of the Save Basin, sloping almost imperceptibly towards the Limpopo River.

The predominant mountainous region is the Eastern Highlands, which straddles the Zimbabwe–Mozambique border. Zimbabwe's highest peak, Nyangani, rises to 2592m near the northern end of the range.

Wildlife

ANIMALS

Most of the animals highlighted in the Wildlife Guide (p69) are represented in Zimbabwe. The largest lizards are the leguans (or water monitors), docile creatures that are often over 2m long. Other reptiles include geckos, chameleons and legless snake lizards. The rivers, dams and lakes are home to 117 species of fish; most visitors prefer bream on their plate, while anglers love the fight put up by the powerful tigerfish.

Twitchees will be delighted with the hundreds of bird species found all over the country, including buff-spotted fluff tails and stripe-cheeked bulbuls. Matobo National Park, for example, is home to one-third of the world's eagle species.

PLANTS

The vegetation is uniform throughout Zimbabwe. Most of the central and western plateau is covered with bushveld (thorny acacia savanna) and miombo (dry open woodland), while the drier lowlands of the south and southeast are characterised by thorny scrub and baobabs. Among this are towering cactus-like euphorbias resembling pipe organs, 30 diverse species of aloes, wildflowers (that bloom between September and November), jacarandas (whose flowers bury the streets of Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare in October), and a host of succulent tropical flowers and palms.

National Parks

Zimbabwe's national parks and reserves offer larger animal populations, and as much variety

of species, as most countries in Southern and Eastern Africa. (And with the current paucity of tourists, you will have stretches of the parks and reserves to yourself.) Some 13% of Zimbabwe's surface area is protected, or semiprotected, in national parks or safari areas. This doesn't include privately protected areas such as game ranches and nature conservancies, as well as recreational parks – all of which would increase the percentage considerably. Sadly, however, much of this is under threat as land seizures continue. The focus in Zimbabwe's chaotic land reform – which is now more a 'smash and grab' – is shifting from farms to profitable lodges and reserves.

VISITING PARKS & RESERVES

It was never guaranteed that the majority of fees paid by foreigners ended up back in national parks, but today the parks face a far bigger problem. That is, no revenue at all. Foreign visitors to Zimbabwe's national parks are at an all-time low. The result is twofold. Firstly, parks face constant problems, eg artificially pumped water holes often go dry, facilities are becoming increasingly shabby, and the reservations system has its difficulties. Secondly, the main source of revenue now for the national parks comes through hunters.

Admission fees to all government-run parks are valid for 24 hours if you're just visiting for the day, but valid for up to seven days if you have pre-booked accommodation inside the park for that amount of time. If you stay longer than seven days, you must pay an extra fee at the gate on departure. Admission fees vary for each park (see the relevant sections for details). The only standard fee is for vehicles: those with more than six seats pay US\$10 per vehicle per entry (ie valid for the length of your stay in the park); other vehicles are free. For obvious safety reasons, motorbikes are not allowed in the parks.

Zimbabwe is famed for some rare activities, such as walking safaris, horse riding and wildlife drives, which are offered by the national parks. You can expect to pay for all safaris in US dollars. Given the currency issues (see the boxed texts, p684 and p686), this matters little now, though certainly Zimbabwe is no longer the relatively cheap African safari experience of a few years ago.

Hitching is forbidden in all national parks, though park officials realise that not everyone has a vehicle and usually tolerate discreet or

informal hitching that originates from outside the park. However, hitching in Zimbabwe is not recommended. Cats and dogs are forbidden inside all parks.

Each of Zimbabwe's national parks has its own special attraction: Hwange (p723) is well-known for its abundant wildlife (100 species of animals and 400 species of birds) and for being one of the few great elephant sanctuaries left in Africa – herds of up to 100 can be seen. Matobo (p722) has a bizarre landscape of round balancing boulders. Among these exist ancient cave paintings and a vast amount of predators and birds. It has long been considered the centre of spiritual power. Chimanimani (p712) has lush top-of-the-world mountain scenery and Mana Pools (p705) and its Zambezi riverside environment is about walking with the animals – or gently paddling right past them.

Park entry fees range from US\$5 to US\$20 per day, and you can book your accommodation through tour operators or the National Parks offices.

See p695 for information about booking lodges and camp sites run by National Parks & Wildlife Zimbabwe (NPWZ).

Environmental Issues

The usual ecological problems faced by countries in Southern African – eg land degradation, urban sprawl, soil erosion, poaching, and slash-and-burn farming – have been greatly exacerbated by the frenzied and anarchic land-reform programme (that is ongoing) and Zimbabwe's continued political and economic crises.

THE ELEPHANT 'PROBLEM'

Zimbabwe's 70,000 elephants are not endangered, but according to some the country faces ecological disaster because of their destructive habits. For instance, Zambezi Valley elephants have already proven a menace by destroying thousands of hectares of crops. But others claim that crops are often planted in areas that have always been frequented by elephants and that popular water holes are often drained by farmers.

Some have even suggested that elephant numbers could be reduced by culling (to half the current number) and trophy hunting. Currently, hunters pay about US\$20,000 to shoot a bull elephant, providing badly needed revenue. Sadly this alluring revenue stream

has led to more and more operators with no conservation background entering the market.

In late 2002 Cites (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) allowed Zimbabwe and several other Southern and Eastern African countries to sell ivory already collected and stockpiled through natural causes. Conservationists believe this will give poachers the green light to start illegally slaughtering more of these endangered beasts (see the boxed text, p68). In reality, poachers are running wild in Zimbabwe (with or without the new convention).

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

In 1989 increasing disquiet over the government's 'shoot to kill' policy to combat poaching gave rise to Campfire (the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources). This channelled revenue from hunting on communal lands, where wildlife had become a nuisance to subsistence farmers, back into the communities. From its inception to 2000, Campfire participation prospered and the amount of land in Zimbabwe dedicated to conservation doubled. By mid-2001 poaching had also slowed and populations of endangered species – including rhinos – were rising. About 90% of Campfire's revenue is derived from leases on sport hunting and tourism concessions to commercial safari operators, as well as from foreign sources.

Unfortunately all this good work is now being unravelled. From 2001 to 2003, Zimbabwe lost at least 20% of its wildlife to poaching. There are no figures beyond this time, though experts estimate that the same number again has been lost until today. Zimbabwe's land-reform programme has become a free for all among ministers and party heavies, as assets from farms to mining to lodges are seen as fair game. The result is that this precious – and free – natural asset is considered just that: an asset that is there to be stripped.

Despite Zimbabwe's relentless problems, there is good reason to believe that if Mugabe went, things would quickly normalise in Zimbabwe. Tourism, with agriculture, would be the mainstay of a recovery. However, the fearful question now is can Zimbabwe's wildlife survive long enough to see the change?

If you're interested in learning more about Zimbabwe's ecological problems, contact

Wildlife & Environment Zimbabwe (www.zimwild.org). This organisation educates Zimbabweans about the environment and assists projects involved in the prevention of soil erosion and the protection of endangered species.

FOOD & DRINK

Food

Zimbabwean cuisine is mostly the legacy of bland British fare – soggy sausages, greasy eggs and fatty chips (French fries) – as well as stodgy African dishes, such as the dietary staple *sadza*, the white maize meal porridge most locals are raised on. The second component is meat (or *nyama*), though *sadza ne nyama* is more likely to be *sadza* with meat gravy only.

Zimbabwe was once one of the world's great beef producers and, despite the decline, good meat remains available nearly everywhere. Popular fish include bream and the whitebait-like dried *kapenta*, both plentiful in Lake Kariba, and trout from rivers and dams in the Eastern Highlands.

The cities and bigger towns offer a variety of restaurants, mostly in homes with beautiful gardens and swings for kids (though be warned, the swings are from an era when no one sued if their child cut themselves on jagged metal!). There is good Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Lebanese and continental cuisine, though you will need local advice if you want to find a decent coffee. Most mid- to upper-range restaurants offer decent vegetarian options. All tourist hotels harbour expensive restaurants serving average European dishes. Generally the restaurants in Harare are excellent, though the poor currency conversion forced on visitors will mean an exquisite three-course meal is more likely to cost US\$60 than US\$15 (if you could change at the black-market rate).

Drinks

NONALCOHOLIC DRINKS

The water in Zimbabwe is no longer safe to drink. As with basically every sector, a critical shortage of foreign currency has meant an inability to buy essential parts and chemicals to treat the water. The result was that in 2005–06, Harare faced a cholera outbreak that killed dozens of people.

Plastic bottles of mineral water, boxed fruit juices and soft drinks are widely available.

Although tea and coffee are grown in the Eastern Highlands, the best is exported. An

increasing number of cafés and restaurants serve real local or imported coffee (though few know how to make it), while others sell a revolting blend made of 10% instant coffee and 90% chicory. Although it isn't the optimum-quality stuff, Nyanga tea is pretty good and available throughout the country.

ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

The tippie of the masses is Chibuku, which, as its advertising asserts, is 'the beer of good cheer'. Served up in large plastic containers which, after the 1991 Gulf War, came to be known as scuds, it has the appearance of vomit, the consistency of thin gruel and a deceptively mellow build-up to the knock-out punch. It's sold mainly in roadside and township beer halls, and is distinctly a male social scene.

The beer you will more commonly see and drink is lager, which is always served cold. A popular brand is the South African-owned Castle, though the domestically brewed Zambezi and Bohlinger lagers are superb.

Although the climate isn't suited to grape growing, Zimbabwe does sustain a limited wine industry, particularly east and southeast of Harare. The largest and most renowned winery is Mukuyu, near Marondera. And like it or not, you may have to experience the local wines – imported wines start at US\$15, though some of the best safaris offer South African and Australian wines included in the price.

HARARE

 04 / pop 2 million

Harare is the capital and heart of the nation. More attractive than most other regional African cities (eg Lusaka), Harare has just enough attractions and restaurants to keep most weary and jaded travellers satisfied for several days.

Harare is a bizarre mix of visual information – in any one day you can feel as though you've stepped back into the '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s or '90s.

Most travellers will spend their time in the fairly orderly streets of 'town' with its high-rise buildings ranging from cool to quirky. The relatively small city centre is busy, a mix of office workers and shoppers from all walks of life. Shopping in and around Robert

Mugabe St is more hectic with Indian fabric shops, cheap shoe and clothes shops from other Eastern markets and outlets for car spares.

Contrast this with the quiet, green suburban streets (known as 'low density' areas) which heave with oversized gardens (complete with tennis courts and pools) spilling out over high, house-concealing walls onto handsome grass-and-tree-lined roads, which themselves, are busy with knitting uniformed maids, gentlemen on bicycles and snappily dressed school kids.

The transit routes out of town are dotted with designated pick-up spots and hordes of hopefuls waiting patiently for rides to their rural areas – either for good or just for the weekend. Waiting with a bed or an entire lounge suite does not seem to make a lot of difference to one's prospects.

But cut to the places where visitors rarely go, the 'high-density areas', or townships, and you'll find a timeless and vibrant African feel where people promenade, sit and chat, or upturn boxes to create a fresh produce stall – even with as little as two tomatoes.

ORIENTATION

The city centre is formed by the collision of two grids, and further confused by a complicated one-way traffic system. But the city is compact and easy to get around on foot. Most decent shops, restaurants, bars and banks are between Samora Machel Ave and Robert Mugabe Rd, while classier homes, shops and eateries are dotted around the area between Samora Machel and Josiah Tongogara Aves. Cheaper shops and markets, and much of Harare's seedier nightlife, are concentrated in the bustling area southwest of Robert Mugabe Rd. The rest of Harare sprawls outwards in both high- and low-density suburbs, while the industrial area is in the southwestern suburbs.

Samora Machel Ave cuts from east to west through the centre of Harare – it morphs into Mutare Rd if you go east or Bulawayo Rd if you go west. Julius Nyerere Way cuts through the absolute centre in a north to south direction. This is the heart of the city, with Harare Gardens and the National Gallery at this junction. There are several pretty, shady gardens and squares close to the centre including, in the eastern part of the city, Africa Unity Sq. There are really only a handful of main routes;

they lead away from the city centre and on to other parts of Zimbabwe: Enterprise Rd, Borrowdale Rd, Second St, Simon Mazorodze Rd and Samora Machel Ave.

Maps

Your hotel or travel agent will be able to give you a map (and hopefully a driver and car... and some fuel).

If you get lucky you may find a compact *Central Harare* map at a service station.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Book Café (Map pp696-7; Fife Ave Shopping Centre, Fife Ave) Offers an appealing selection of African literature and reference material, and is the place for literary buffs with a healthy appetite.

Kingston's (Map pp696-7; cnr Second St & Jason Moyo Ave) Kingston's offers an excellent selection.

Emergency

Medical Air Rescue Service (MARS; ☎ 727540)

Police station (Map pp696-7; ☎ 733033; cnr Ince Tce & Kenneth Kaunda Ave)

Internet Access

Most internet centres in Harare also offer phone and fax services. A few with reliable power are listed. All charge around US\$2 per hour.

One Stop Internet Café (Map pp696-7; 60 Speke Ave)

Quick N Easy Internet Shop (Map pp696-7;

☎ 799224/5; Linqenda House, Nelson Mandela Ave)

Telco Internet (Map pp696-7; ☎ 751263; Shop 22, Ximex Mall, cnr Angwa St & Jason Moyo Ave)

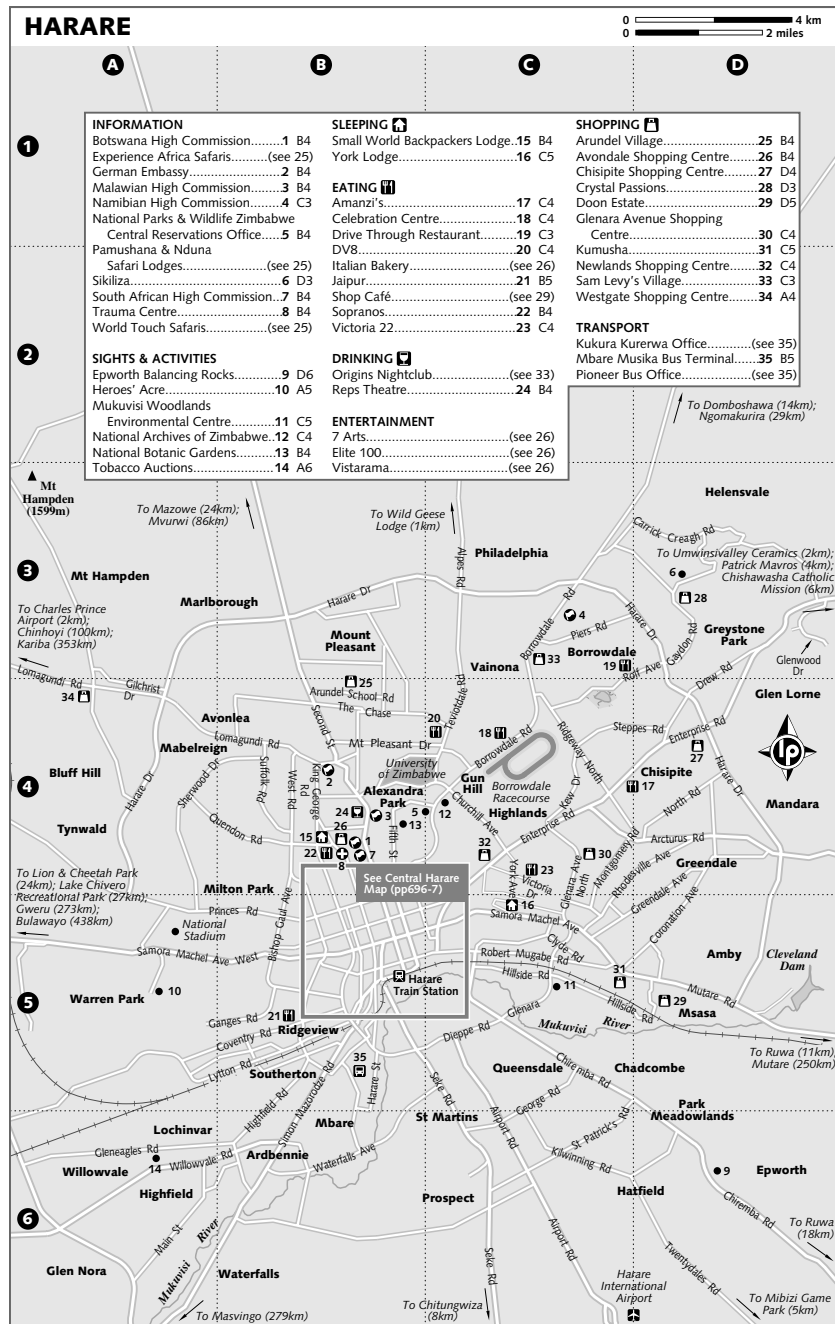
Internet Resources

Commercial Farmer's Union (www.cfu.co.zw) The on-line classifieds service is good for all from shipping goods home to holidays and travel (especially for houseboats on Kariba). Email aidsadmin@cfu.co.zw and subscribe for free. Its website is not updated frequently.

Twin Arts (www.twinarts.co.zw) Reliable source of up-to-date information and what's on in Harare. The site covers everything from live music, festivals and shopping to bushwalking and other activities, with links to NGOs, Civic Organisations and newslinks relevant to Zimbabwe.

Laundry

Dry cleaners can be found in most shopping centres, but the only place to do it yourself is the **Fife Avenue Laundrette** (Map pp696-7; Fife Ave Shopping Centre, Fife Ave). Otherwise, use your hotel. It remains cheap.



Media

Zimbabwe's media is heavily controlled. The state runs the radio and lone TV station, together with the only daily newspapers. The most popular newspaper was the *Daily News*, though it was bombed a few years back and has since been closed by the government. Dissent is allowed through Friday's *Independent* and in part Thursday's *Financial Gazette* (although recently it was alleged that Zimbabwe's CIO – Central Intelligence Organisation – is a part-owner of the *Financial Gazette*). TV broadcasts national news (mainly government propaganda), international news and music programmes in English, Shona and Ndebele.

Medical Services

Night pharmacies are listed in the *Herald*.

Avenues Clinic (Map pp696-7; ☎ 251 180-99; cnr Mazowe St & Baines Ave) Recommended by expats.

Parirenyatwa Hospital (Map pp696-7; ☎ 701555; Leopold Takawira St) Large and central, but not recommended for tourists (as it has a shortage of key drugs).

Trauma Centre (Map p694; ☎ 700666/815; Lanark Rd, Belgavia) Also recommended by expats.

Money

If you use your credit card you will be billed at the lowest bank rate. See the boxed texts, p684 and p686 for information about Zimbabwe's currency problems and changing money.

Post

Main post office (Map pp696-7; Inez Tce; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 8-11.30am Sat) Stamp sales and post-restante facilities are in the arcade, while the parcel office is in a separate corridor downstairs.

Telephone

Most public telephones along the main streets were vandalised and gutted long ago, so use your hotel.

Tourist Information

Department of Immigration Control (Map pp696-7; ☎ 791913; 1st fl, Linqenda House, cnr Nelson Mandela Ave & First St) To extend your visa, contact this office.

Harare Publicity Association (Map pp696-7; ☎ 781810; Second St; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) This association is waning, but you find more information from travel companies, newspapers and online.

National Parks & Wildlife Zimbabwe central reservations office (Map p694; ☎ 706077; fax

726089; national-parks@gta.gov.zw; cnr Borrowdale Rd & Sandringham Dr; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) Information and accommodation bookings relating to Zimbabwe's national parks and reserves are available here. It's near the northern end of the National Botanic Gardens, and a fair hike from town, so take a taxi.

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (Map pp696-7; ☎ 758712; fax 758826; www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw; 1 Union Ave; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) For information about Zimbabwe in general.

Travel Agencies

The following are good for all flights, safaris, lodges and local knowledge. For information on tours of Zimbabwe, see p731.

Premier Travel & Tours (Map pp696-7; ☎ 704783; jenny@premier.co.zw; 24 Cleveland Ave, Milton Park)

Rennies Travel (☎ 703423; rennies@renniestravel.co.zw; Kenilworth Gardens, Newlands)

Sikiliza (Map p694; ☎ 861286; sikiliza@zol.co.zw; 3 Rye Hill Rd, Greystone Park)

World Touch Safaris (Map p694; ☎ 301496; belinda@zol.co.zw; Shop 37, Arundel Village, Mount Pleasant)

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Given rates of unemployment and suppression, Zimbabwe's crime rates are impressively low. Most crime remains petty, though it would be foolish to think Zimbabwe today is as safe as it once was. It is not. Bag snatching and car jacking are both on the rise, as are robberies at bars and nightclubs.

Be particularly careful when coming from the airport. 'Coca-Cola corner' (Seke Rd and Crips St) has become a favourite for robbers, who work with cohorts at the airport who tell them who has left the airport and where they put their baggage. As ever, ensure your bags are in the boot, or if not possible, safely locked under your feet.

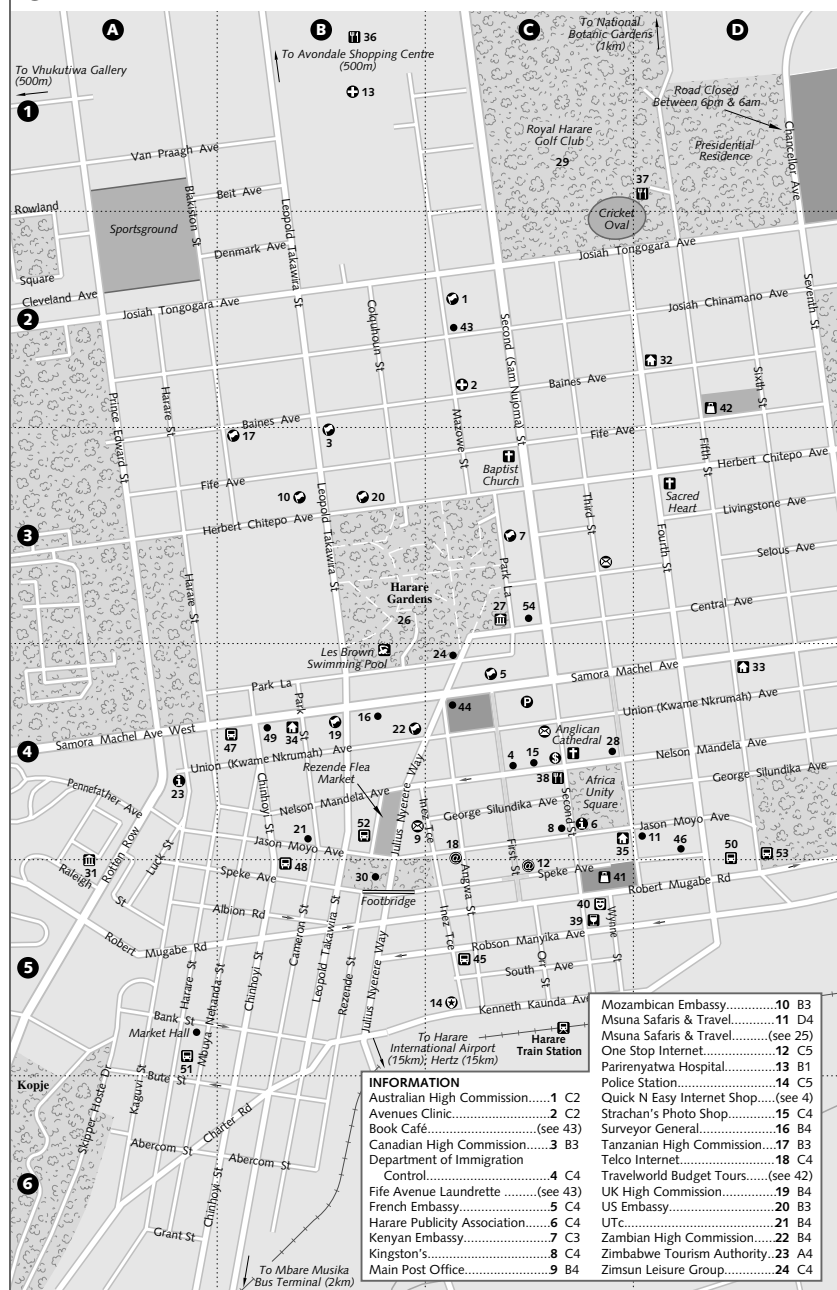
None of the internal political hostilities are directed at visitors, though this should not tempt you to openly espouse your political views (particularly if they are critical of President Mugabe – this is a crime). Nonetheless, compared with the way Zimbabwe is featured in foreign press, the country is surprisingly safe for the visitor, and the locals endlessly generous.

SIGHTS

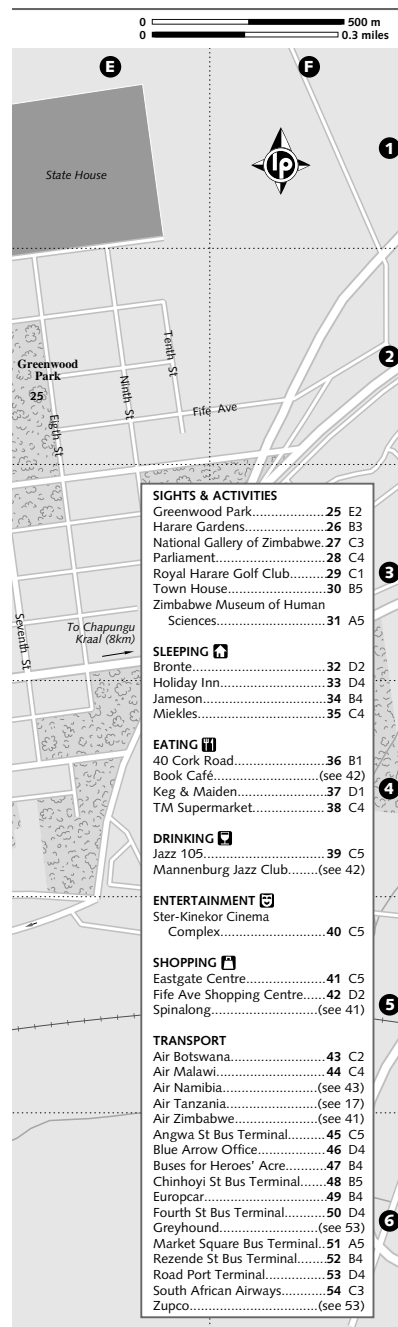
National Archives of Zimbabwe

Founded in 1935, this **building** (Map p694; Ruth Taylor Rd; admission US\$3; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat),

CENTRAL HARARE



INFORMATION	Mozambican Embassy.....10 B3
Australian High Commission.....1 C2	Mswana Safaris & Travel.....11 D4
Avenues Clinic.....2 C2	Mswana Safaris & Travel.....(see 25)
Book Café.....(see 43)	One Stop Internet.....12 C5
Canadian High Commission.....3 B3	Pariirenyatwa Hospital.....13 B1
Department of Immigration Control.....4 C4	Police Station.....14 C5
Fife Avenue Laundrette.....(see 43)	Quick N Easy Internet Shop.....(see 4)
French Embassy.....5 C4	Strachan's Photo Shop.....15 C4
Harare Publicity Association.....6 C4	Surveyor General.....16 B4
Kenyan Embassy.....7 C3	Tanzanian High Commission.....17 B3
Kingston's.....8 C4	Telco Internet.....18 C4
Main Post Office.....9 B4	Travelworld Budget Tours.....(see 42)
	UK High Commission.....19 B4
	US Embassy.....20 B3
	UTC.....21 B4
	Zambian High Commission.....22 B4
	Zimbabwe Tourism Authority.....23 A4
	Zimsun Leisure Group.....24 C4



SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	Greenwood Park.....25 E2
Harare Gardens.....26 B3	National Gallery of Zimbabwe.....27 C3
Parliament.....28 C4	Royal Harare Golf Club.....29 C1
Town House.....30 B5	Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences.....31 A5
SLEEPING	Bronte.....32 D2
Holiday Inn.....33 D4	Jameson.....34 B4
Mieles.....35 C4	
EATING	40 Cork Road.....36 B1
Book Café.....(see 42)	Keg & Maiden.....37 D1
TM Supermarket.....38 C4	
DRINKING	Jazz 105.....39 C5
Mannenburgh Jazz Club.....(see 42)	
ENTERTAINMENT	Ster-Kinekor Cinema Complex.....40 C5
SHOPPING	Eastgate Centre.....41 C5
Fife Ave Shopping Centre.....42 D2	Spinalong.....(see 41)
TRANSPORT	Air Botswana.....43 C2
Air Malawi.....44 C4	Air Namibia.....(see 43)
Air Tanzania.....(see 17)	Air Zimbabwe.....(see 41)
Angwa St Bus Terminal.....45 C5	Blue Arrow Office.....46 D4
Buses for Heroes' Acre.....47 B4	Chinhoyi St Bus Terminal.....48 B5
Europcar.....49 B4	Fourth St Bus Terminal.....50 D4
Greyhound.....(see 53)	Market Square Bus Terminal.....51 A5
Rezende St Bus Terminal.....52 B4	Road Port Terminal.....53 D4
South African Airways.....54 C3	Zupco.....(see 53)

off Borrowdale Rd, is the repository for the history of Rhodesia and modern Zimbabwe. It features fascinating colonial artefacts and photos, accounts of early explorers and settlers, and a display about the Second Chimurenga. Prints of excellent oil paintings of Victoria Falls, among other places, are sold at the entrance.

Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences
This small museum (Map pp696-7; Civic Centre, btwn Pennefather Ave & Raleigh St; admission US\$1; ☎ 9am-5pm) has enough fossils and dioramas to keep most museum buffs happy for an hour or so. The highlights are the archaeological displays and the exhibits of traditional Shona crafts, arts and music. The museum is a 10-minute walk west of the city centre.

National Gallery of Zimbabwe
This collection (Map pp696-7; ☎ 704666; cnr Julius Nyerere Way & Park Lane; admission US\$0.25; ☎ 9am-5pm) is in the southeast corner of Harare Gardens. It has a mix of contemporary Zimbabwean and African art including paintings, (you can usually purchase paintings) stone sculptures, masks and carvings. The attached shop is excellent for sculptures, crafts and books on art.

Harare Gardens
The city's largest park (Map pp696-7; admission free) is a haven from the city bustle just a few blocks south, and a favourite spot for wedding photos and canoodling couples. Look for the island-like stand of rainforest with its miniature Victoria Falls and Zambezi Gorge.

Despite its peaceful atmosphere, Harare Gardens is notorious for crime, so always avoid short-cutting through the park at night and watch your belongings carefully by day. No cycling is allowed.

National Botanic Gardens
The 58-hectare botanical gardens (Map p694; Fifth St; admission US\$5; ☎ dawn-dusk) contain examples of the diverse flowers and greenery that thrive in Harare's pleasant climate. Most Zimbabwean species are also represented, as well as specimens from Southern Africa. It's a great place to spend the day.

Historic Buildings
For background on Harare's colonial architecture, look for a copy of *Historical Buildings of Harare* by Peter Jackson.

The **Parliament** (Map pp696-7; cnr Nelson Mandela Ave & Third St) was originally built as a hotel in 1895, but was soon commandeered for army barracks. It has undergone several renovations since and is now used by the senate and legislative assembly. It's not normally open to the public, but requests to sit in the gallery during the fiery political debates can be arranged by ringing the **Chief Information Officer** (☎ 700181). You may also be lucky enough to join a free weekly tour.

The **Town House** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 752577; Julius Nyerere Way) dates back to 1933. This primarily Italian Renaissance-style structure houses the mayoral, city council and town clerk's offices. The centrepiece of the gardens is a colourful floral clock and fountain. Free visits are available by calling the official number.

Mukuvisi Woodlands Environmental Centre

The nearest thing to a zoo in Harare is the **Mukuvisi Woodlands** (Map p694; ☎ 747152; Glenara Ave; admission US\$1; ☎ 8am-5pm), also given the trendy title of 'environmental centre'. Two-thirds of this 265-hectare woodland reserve, 7km east of the city centre, is natural msasa parkland, ideal for picnics, walking and bird-watching. The remaining area is a wildlife park where antelopes, zebras, giraffes and warthogs roam free.

Mukuvisi is at its best when they have special events on, such as lectures or family days, which they advertise via banners around town.

Heroes' Acre

On a hill overlooking Harare is the obelisk of **Heroes' Acre** (Map p694; ☎ 774208; Fourth Ave; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk). This dominating monument – built in true North Korean style – serves as a memorial to the Zipra and Zanla forces who died during the Second Chimurenga (see p684).

Tobacco Auctions

Tobacco used to be one of Zimbabwe's major foreign-exchange earners and the country produced the best leaf in the world. Today there is talk that the famous **tobacco floor** (Map p694; ☎ 668921; Gleneagles Rd; ☎ 8am-noon Mon-Fri Apr-Oct) will be closed. If you get the chance, check it out before it goes! Although the quantity traded now is a fraction of the amount in years gone by, it remains a fascinating look at where the cigarette begins.

ACTIVITIES

The most famous of the seven golf courses around Harare is the internationally acclaimed **Royal Harare Golf Club** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 702920; Fifth St; ☎ 6am-6pm), a 15-minute walk north of the city centre. Guests are welcome for a temporary membership fee of US\$12.

HARARE FOR CHILDREN

Harare remains a good place for kids, though many of the previous attractions (including Water Whirl) have closed. Most restaurants are very child-friendly, with children's menus, swings, jumping castles etc. One remaining favourite is **Greenwood Park** (Map pp696-7; cnr Herbert Chitepo & 7th; all-day pass US\$10; ☎ 10am-5pm) with rides for kids, particularly for those under seven.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Harare International Festival of Arts (☎ 300119; www.hifa.co.zw) is the annual event, held in the last week of April. Embassies and corporate sponsors bring out international acts to produce a crammed timetable alongside Zimbabwean artists. Performances include classical music, jazz, soul, funk, theatre and dance. Workshops and craft markets feature alongside the action during the day and at night, it's time to eat and party. If you're in the region don't miss it.

The **Bulawayo Music Festival** is held for a week in mid-June.

Zimbabwe International Film Festival is held for 10 days over the last week of August and the first few days of September.

SLEEPING

Small World Backpackers Lodge (Map p694; ☎ 335341; mail@backpackerslodge.com; 25 Ridge Rd; r US\$55) The problem with backpackers lodges is that they have seen so few backpackers that if they have survived, they are now pretty sleazy. But this one is still good. Close to Avondale shopping centre, it has a bar and a city view from its rooftop deck.

Jameson (Map pp696-7; ☎ 774106; cnr Samora Machel Ave/Park Street; s/d US\$87/122) Right in the centre of town with 123 rooms, this place is dated but has most mod cons plus a beauty salon and chapel.

Bronte (Map pp696-7; ☎ 700691, 796631; 132 Baines Ave; s/d US\$97/122) Located on the eastern edge of town within a pretty and peaceful walled garden, it has plain rooms but is walking distance from town.

Holiday Inn (Map pp696-7; ☎ 7795611; cnr Samora Machel Ave & Fifth St; s/d US\$125/155) This hotel is centrally located and although a bit tired has no pleasant or unpleasant surprises.

York Lodge (Map p694; ☎ 746622; 1 York Ave, Newlands; s/d US\$130/170) This is a lovely safari-style lodge set in the suburbs and is a nice alternative to a city hotel. Run by a very nice couple.

Meikles (Map pp696-7; ☎ 795655; www.meikles.com; cnr Jason Moyo Ave & Third St; r US\$240; ☎) This is the fanciest hotel in town, sister of the Victoria Falls Hotel. Has fine dining, a smart bar, a gym, pool, bar and beautician on the rooftop, and a couple of great shops in the foyer.

EATING Cafés

Most cafés serve coffee for US\$2, cakes and snacks from US\$4, and light meals from US\$7. Cafés are generally open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, with some open later on Friday and Saturday. Many are closed on Sunday.

Italian Bakery (Map p694; ☎ 339732; ground fl, Avondale Shopping Centre, King George Rd; ☎ 7.30am-11pm) Despite views of the car park, the décor is old-world Italian as the owners are Italian-Ethiopian. This means the coffee is good and the meals – rolls, wraps and pastas – tasty.

Sopranos (Map p694; ☎ 333833; Argyle Rd, Avondale; ☎ 8am-8pm) Named after the long-running American TV series, Sopranos caters for the whole family, with food and an indoor climbing gym for kids, and steak, fish and vegetarian meals for grown-ups.

40 Cork Road (Map pp696-7; ☎ 253585; 40 Cork Rd, Belgravia) Like many businesses in Harare, this is a house-turned-restaurant with a huge garden. It also has an art gallery and an interiors and plant shop. It has some of the best coffee and cakes in Harare.

Shop Café (Map p694; ☎ 446086; Doon Estate, 1 Harrow Rd, Msasa) Most perfect for brunch and lunch any day except Sunday, the Shop Café serves some of the most appetising food in Zimbabwe, from its amazing homemade muesli, yogurt and stewed fruit to vegetable moussakas and fish curries. The food here will put you in the right mood for shopping in the attached shop for hand-printed textiles, hand-painted ceramics and cane and teak furniture.

Book Café (Map pp696-7; ☎ 792551; 1st fl, Fife Ave Shopping Centre; ☎ 8am-10pm) This café is fairly dead during the day but at night hosts popu-

lar local musicians, poets and writers, and is crowded and lively when there's a performance. You can eat traditional food here, especially *sadza* (maize-meal porridge) – the staple and national obsession.

Celebration Centre (Map p694; ☎ 850875; 162 Swan Dr) A huge new church/concert hall/event centre with a café on the ground floor at the entrance which stays open later than other cafés. You don't have to be religious to pitch up for the best cakes in Harare, and great coffee too. Rub shoulders with regionally famous gospel singers. Swan Dr is parallel to Borrowdale Rd.

Restaurants

Restaurants are open for lunch and dinner but most are closed on Sundays.

Keg & Maiden (Map pp696-7; ☎ 700037; Harare Sports Club; mains US\$4) Tuck into bangers and mash or steak and chips in a cheerful pub atmosphere. You can also order a veg meal. Try this place, off Fifth St, for a pub meal and check out the magnificent international cricket ground (sadly, minus cricketers). On Saturday nights there's live music.

DV8 (Map p694; ☎ 745202; Groombridge shops, cnr the Chase & Teviotdale Rd; mains US\$8) The steaks here are divine. It also serves chicken and pasta dishes.

Jaipur (Map p694; ☎ 740919; Sunrise Sports Club, Hurtsview Rd, Ridgeview; meals per person US\$9) This place is open on Sundays. Delicious Indian food – including vegetarian thalis – upstairs overlooking a cricket ground where Harare's Indian community plays cricket.

Amanzi's (Map p694; ☎ 497768; 158 Enterprise Rd, Highlands; dinner US\$40) Set in a stunning former colonial house with African décor and an even more amazing garden, Amanzi's has delicious food from around the world and a great vibe. You can also buy a painting from a local artist on the way out. A must.

Victoria 22 (Map p694; ☎ 776429; 22 Victoria Rd, Newlands; dinner US\$50) Yet another restaurant set in what was once a colonial house, this is a favourite of well-heeled locals. It is pretty formal (for Harare standards), with choices within a set menu of four courses, and probably has the best food in town.

Drive Through Restaurant (Map p694; ☎ 253 585/6; cnr Rolf Valley Rd & Fisher Ave) An incredibly casual affair where you buy fish and then have it cooked for you. Delicious food and laid back, though you can make bookings.

Wild Geese Lodge (☎ 860466; 2 Buckland Lane) One restaurant that is open on Sundays for a good ol' Sunday roast is this place off Alpes Rd. It's a thatched complex 10 minutes' drive north with views across the grassy highveld to wildlife. It also has accommodation: nine private suites.

Self-Catering

Every shopping centre (see Shopping, right) has supermarkets. In the city centre, try **TM Supermarket** (Map pp696-7; cnr Nelson Mandela Ave & Second St).

ENTERTAINMENT

Harare is a great place to shake your booty to live African bands or to Western-style electronic music at a disco. For information about upcoming events, and to find out what's hot and what's not, check the listings in the *Daily News* and the weekly Standardplus supplement in the *Standard*.

Never walk to or from any of these (or any other) late-night spots after dark; always take a taxi.

Bars & Nightclubs

Harare's music scene rocks, and you can catch many traditional and contemporary music performances at bars and cafés around the capital where well-known local musicians play regularly. To see who's playing where, look at the entertainment page of the Friday and Saturday editions of the *Herald* or online at www.twinarts.co.zw.

Reps Theatre (Map p694; ☎ 308159; Second Street Extension Shopping Centre) One of the only true bars in town for just a drink and a chat is behind the foyer here.

Origins Nightclub (Map p694; Sam Levy's Village, cnr Borrowdale & Piers Rds) If you wanna disco there's this nightclub at Sam Levy's Village.

Jazz 105 (Map pp696-7; ☎ 722516; cnr Second St & Robson Manyika Ave) This trendy place has live Afro jazz on Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

The Book Café and the **Mannenburg Jazz Club** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 730902), right next door, have live performances every night except Sunday.

Cinemas

Cinemas offering recent films, and cheap and comfortable seats (\$3), include the **Ster-Kinekor Cinema complex** (Map pp696-7; Robert Mugabe

Rd), opposite the Eastgate Centre, and the Elite 100, Vistarama and 7 Arts cinemas, all at the Avondale Shopping Centre (Map p694).

SHOPPING

Shopping centres around Harare include the Eastgate Centre, Fife Ave Shopping Centre and Arundel Village in the centre (Map pp696-7); and Chisipite, Glenara Ave, Newlands, Sam Levy's Village and Westgate further out (Map p694).

Visit the Avondale markets situated on top of the old car park at Avondale Shopping Centre for carvings, beaded jewellery and other crafts.

Doon Estate (Map p694; 1 Harrow Rd, Msasa) Has a number of shops, including Art Mart, which is stocked with the work of dozens of local artisans and crofters. The Cocoa Tree (more commonly known as The Belgian chocolate shop), also here, has to be experienced to be believed. Eat and drink in or takeaway – its novelty chocolates make great presents.

Kumusha (Map p694; ☎ 446944; 2 Coronation St. Musasa) Sublime, handmade Zimbabwean furniture and household goods for interiors and exteriors. A must to check out.

Umwinsivalley Ceramics (☎ 883959) Along the Umwinsedale Rd, this is a workshop, gallery and shop, specialising in hand painted china and set on the top of a hill overlooking a valley. The view alone is worth the trip.

Patrick Mavros (☎ 860131; www.patrickmavros.com) Follow the signpost to the studio and gallery at the end of Haslemere Lane, 1km off the Umwinsedale Rd. Set atop a spectacular hill, overlooking a picture perfect valley complete with giraffe and buffalo, a visit is a must. This place sells designer silverware from jewellery to tableware and whimsical paperweights (collector items or presents for the person who has everything). Mavros's signature style in his jewellery is the ndoro shell, the original currency of Zimbabwe. He also has a shop in Knightsbridge, London, though this one is cheaper!

Crystal Passions (Map p694; ☎ 882466; www.ourcrystalpassion.com; 24 Newbold Rd, Greystone Park) Hand-cut and polished Zimbabwean crystal jewellery for beauty and healing.

Spinalong (Map pp696-7; Sam Levy's Village) This music shop has a great selection of local music CDs, including artist such as Oliver Mtukudzi, Thomas Mapfumo, Simon Chimbetu and mbira groups.

MOVERS & SHAKERS: OLIVER MTUKUDZI

Oliver Mtukudzi is so ubiquitous in Zimbabwe, so accomplished and so loved, that he is seen across generations as a father figure. His lyrics are largely socially driven and are an inspiring force in a country where most of the people have been silenced. He is candid about AIDS, honest about politics and savvy about mixing it all with essential doses of hope.

Mtukudzi's music is called 'soul and R&B, a mix of his homeland and South African townships' which is all true enough. But the man cannot be tied down so easily. In Zimbabwe he is known as 'Tuku' and across Southern Africa people will talk of 'Tuku' tunes and the sounds borne by Mtukudzi.

A prolific musician with more than 30 albums to his name, the composer of three movie soundtracks, and a contributor to Mahube, Southern Africa's super-group, Oliver Mtukudzi has made the most of his 54-years.

His own heroes – Otis Redding and Jamaica's Toots Hibbert – would be proud.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

For details about international flights to and from Harare, see p729.

Air Zimbabwe (Map pp696-7; ☎ 253752; Eastgate Centre) operates flights to/from Bulawayo (US\$140/250 one way/return, 45 minutes) and Victoria Falls (US\$230/375 one way/return). The following airlines also have offices in Harare: **Air Botswana** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 793195/228/229; Travel Plaza); **Air Namibia** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 732094/5; Travel Plaza); **South African Airways** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 794511/2/6/47/83; SCC House); **Air Tanzania** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 752537/8); **Air Malawi** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 752563).

Air France, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, KLM, Lufthansa can all be reached by calling ☎ 703880.

Bus

Most buses to destinations within Zimbabwe leave from the Mbare Musika Bus Terminal (Map p694) next to the market 5km from the city centre. A few buses leave from the Road Port terminal (Map pp696-7) in town, which is where international services leave from. Bus companies include the following:

Blue Arrow (Map pp696-7; ☎ 729514; barrow@africaonline.co.zw; Chester House, Speke Ave)

Greyhound (Map pp696-7; ☎ 720801; Road Port Terminal)

Kukura Kurerwa (Map p694; ☎ 669973/6; Mbare Musika Bus Terminal)

Pioneer Bus (Map p694; ☎ 795863, 790531; Mbare Musika Bus Terminal)

Zupco (Map pp696-7; ☎ 704933; Road Port Terminal)

Train

The train station is near the corner of Kenneth Kaunda Ave and Second St. In theory, trains

go from Harare to Bulawayo (sleeper US\$10, nine hours, 9pm); Harare to Mutare (US\$6, 8½ hours, 9.30pm) and from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls (sleeper US\$11, 8pm).

In reality, train timetables are constantly changing and trains are not particularly safe for tourists and are frequently used as travelling brothels. See p731 for more information.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

All international and domestic airlines use the Harare International Airport, 15km southeast of the city centre. Charter flights and other light aircraft operate out of Charles Price airport, 2km northwest of Harare.

Car & Motorcycle

Major international car rental companies in Harare include **Europcar** (Map p694; ☎ 752559; carhire@europcar.co.zw; 19 Samora Machel Ave West) and **Hertz** (☎ 706254; admin@hertz.co.zw).

Minibus

There are too few minibuses these days for locals. Tourists use taxis or private cars.

Taxi

Always take a taxi at night, and even consider using one during the day to save your legs. There are taxi stands on the corner of First St and Nelson Mandela Ave; on Samora Machel Ave near First St; on Union Ave between Angwa St and Julius Nyerere Way; and in front of large hotels. All taxis are private hire. Official services include **Rixi Taxi** (☎ 753080). To or from anywhere in the city centre costs from US\$3 to US\$8 and to the suburbs costs from US\$10 to US\$30.

AROUND HARARE

Most places listed in this section can be visited on day trips from the capital.

Epworth Balancing Rocks

Although better examples of balancing rocks can be found all over Zimbabwe, those at **Epworth** (admission with guided tour US\$4; ☎ 6am-6pm), 13km southeast of Harare, off Chiremba Rd, are probably the most famous. The main attraction is the group known as the 'Bank Notes', which were catapulted to rock stardom by being featured on Zimbabwe's bank notes.

Ewanrigg National Park

This small **national park** (admission US\$12; ☎ 6am-6pm), 40km northeast of Harare, consists of 240 hectares of elaborate gardens and woodland. The gardens are characterised by an array of prehistoric-looking aloes, cacti and palm-like cycads, and during winter the slopes glow with the brilliant red and yellow blooms of the succulents and the variegated hues of tropical flowers. The best time for blooms is June to October. But don't go on Saturday or Sunday, because the crowds will easily spoil the tranquillity.

Lion & Cheetah Park

This **park** (admission per adult/vehicle US\$15/3; ☎ 8am-5pm) sits on a private estate, 24km west of Harare and just off the road to Bulawayo. It's the only place close to Harare where visitors can 'ooh' and 'aah' at the variety of big cats (many of which are offspring from orphans that have lived in the park since 1968). You can also see baboons, crocodiles, giraffes and elephants, and even Tommy, a 250-year-old tortoise. Visitors must have a rented, chartered or private vehicle; walking and hitching are not permitted, though you can now take lion cubs for a walk (with a guide and a gun). The Lion and Cheetah Park regularly has new cubs.

Lake Chivero Recreational Park

This 5500-hectare park is 32km southwest of Harare. It focuses on the 57-sq-km **Lake Chivero** (formerly Lake McIlwaine), where

day-trippers from Harare love to spend their weekends fishing, boating and partying. But avoid swimming: if the crocs don't get you, the nasty bilharzia bugs might.

On the northern shore, **Kuimba Shiri Bird Sanctuary** (admission US\$7; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun) boasts over 450 types of birds, apparently the largest variety of indigenous species in Africa. The Admiral's Cabin (below) offers all sorts of activities, such as horse riding and boat/canoe hire.

SLEEPING & EATING

National Parks Accommodation (camping per person ZW\$125, lodges with 2/4/5 beds US\$2/3/4, chalets with 1/4/5 beds US\$1/2/3; ☎) Guests at this place on the northern shore of the lake can use the swimming pool and braai pits.

Admiral's Cabin (☎ 062-2309; bird.park@mango.zw; camping per person US\$3, chalets with breakfast per person US\$12) Offers comfy accommodation inside the bird sanctuary. A bar and restaurant are attached.

Domboshawa & Ngomakurira

Domboshawa ('Red Rock' in the Shona language), 16km northeast of Harare, is renowned for its rock paintings. From the small **museum** at the car park, a well-marked 15-minute walk takes you to the **Domboshawa Caves** (☎ 790044; admission US\$4; ☎ 6am-6pm) where the paintings are concentrated.

Ngomakurira (☎ 790044; admission US\$2; ☎ 6am-6pm) offers even more spectacular rock paintings (especially photogenic in the afternoon).

Both sites make an interesting day or half-day trip. Domboshawa is 30km north of Harare. Drive north along the Borrowdale Rd to Domboshawa village or take the Bindura via Chinamora bus, from Harare's Mbare Musika bus station (Map p694). The bus can drop you at the turn-off, and you'll need to walk 1km from there to the entry gate.

For Ngomakurira, follow the same directions but go 15km further to Ngomakurira village (45km north of Harare). The entrance is 2km in from the main road.

NORTHERN ZIMBABWE

The major attractions in this part of the country are the eastern section of Lake Kariba and the Mana Pools National Park, though the Chinhoyi Caves and Matusadona National Park are also worth the effort.

KARIBA

☎ 061 / pop 15,000

The small lakeside town of Kariba is spread out along the steep lakeshore and across a hill (Kariba Heights) overlooking the lake. The road alongside the lake is, not surprisingly, called Lake Dr. From here another road winds up through the tree-covered hills to Kariba Heights. There are lovely lake views through the trees, and wildlife often comes through town.

Information

The **Kariba Publicity Association** (☎ 2328; www.kpa@mweb.co.zw; ☎ 8am-5pm), a steep 15-minute walk uphill from Lake Dr, has an impressive view of the dam wall and the deep gorge below. The staff are friendly but can't help with much. However, it's worth coming here for the views.

Sights

The main road leads to the **dam wall**, which straddles the Zimbabwe-Zambia border. You can walk or drive across the dam wall into Zambia or just to look at the spectacular view. If you want to visit the dam wall independently, tell the Zambian or Zimbabwean immigration officials of your intention so that you don't have to pay any extra visa fees.

In Kariba Heights (or 'the Heights') the quaint **Church of Santa Barbara** (Kariba Heights; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm) is dedicated to the patron saint of Italian military engineers, as well as to the Virgin Mary and St Joseph (the patron saint of carpenters). Workers from the Italian company that helped create Kariba Dam built the church in memory of 21 colleagues who died during construction. The **Operation Noah Monument** nearby commemorates the 1959 rescue of wildlife from the rising waters of Lake Kariba.

Activities

There's not a lot to do in Kariba town, apart from book a trip to Matusadona or Mana Pools National Parks, or a Lower Zambezi canoeing safari. You can also arrange houseboats and canoeing trips on Lake Kariba.

Al Cove (☎ 3338; rstubs@ecoweb.co.zw; Heights Shopping Centre, Kariba Heights) operates houseboat trips (US\$7 per person per day). **Kariba Houseboats** (☎ 2766; houseboats@zol.co.zw; Andora Harbour) is another operator.

Several operators run canoeing safaris between Chirundu and Mana Pools (two/three days from US\$120/300), and walking or driving safaris to Mana Pools and Matusadona National Parks (from US\$80 per day). There is a small charter plane based in Kariba that does fairly reasonable charters from Kariba to Mana and back. Rates for activities in national parks do not include park admission fees. Recommended companies include: **Buffalo Safaris** (☎ 3041; buffalo@ecoweb.co.zw; Kariba Kushinga Lodge) and **River Horse Safaris** (☎ 2447; www.riverhorse.co.zw; Kariba Breezes Hotel).

WILDLIFE DRIVES

Several companies offer wildlife drives around the Matusadona National Park. The best time for wildlife viewing is between July and November.

River Horse Safaris (☎ 2447; www.riverhorse.co.zw; Kariba Breezes Hotel) specialises in a full-day, four-in-one 'combo' including a wildlife drive, walking safari, canoe trip and lake cruise (about US\$100 per person).

Buffalo Safaris (☎ 3041; buffalo@harare.iafrica.com; Kariba Kushinga Lodge) provides experienced guides and has better than average access to Matusadona.

Sleeping & Eating

The plummet in tourism has led to the demise of several lodges including the once-popular Breezes Hotel.

If you want to stay on the edge of the lake, hiring a house is a good option. With sweeping views, pools and often tennis courts, these can be a great option for a family or two. And as prices can be paid direct in US dollars, you will avoid painful exchange rate differences. Travel agents or the Commercial Farmers Union's online classifieds has a good listings service for houses and houseboats. Email aidsadmin@cfu.co.zw and subscribe for free.

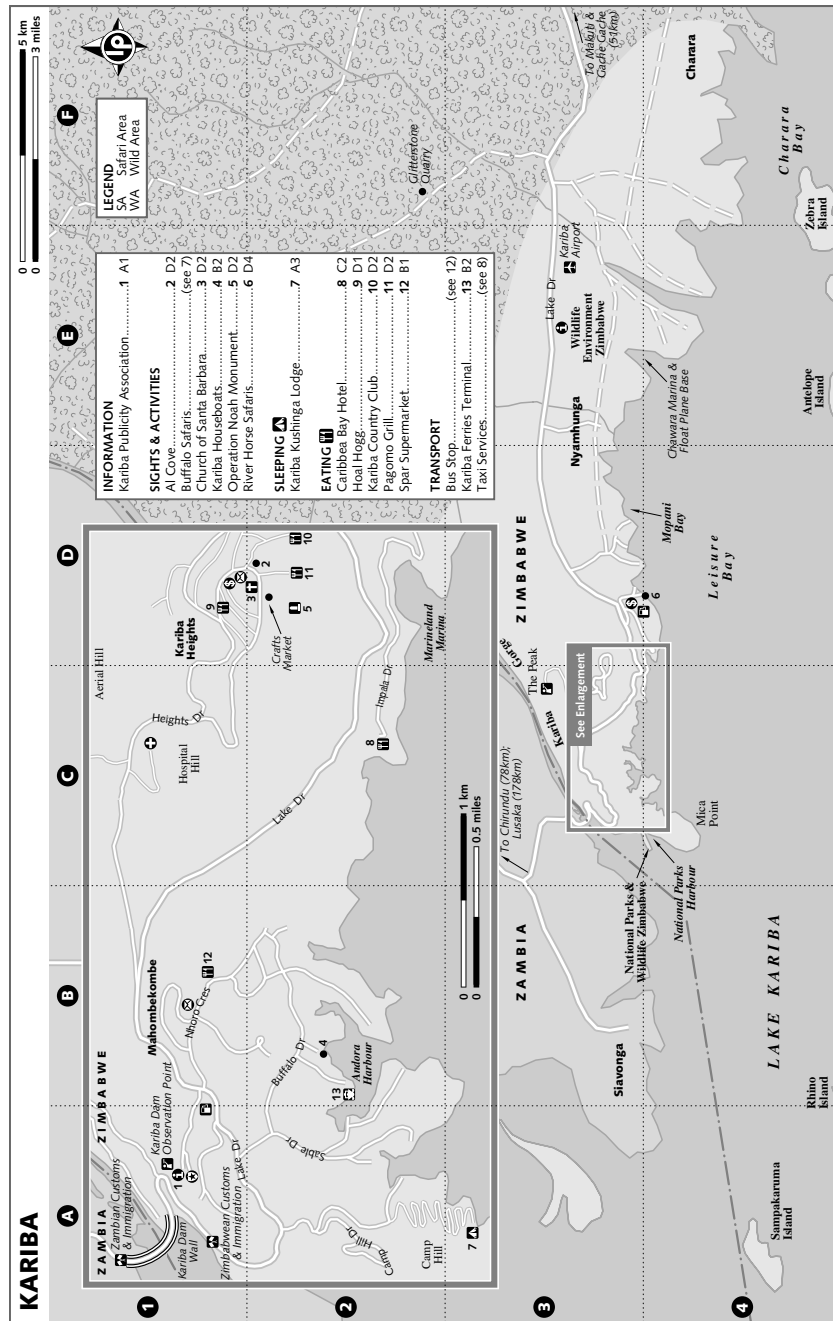
For self-catering lodges, buy your food at ZV Spar Supermarket in Kariba town or bring food from Harare, as Kariba prices tend to be higher than Harare.

Kariba Kushinga Lodges (☎ 3041/2/3; kushinga@zol.co.zw; Stand 780, Camp Hill; camping US\$5, chalets with 2/4/6/12 beds US\$40/60/70/120) Beautifully appointed and overlooking the lake; fully self-catering, cooking and camping facilities, toilets and laundry.

Hoal Hogg (Kariba Heights; meals US\$7) Behind Barclays Bank, it offers hot and cold (soft) drinks,

WARNING

Despite almost everyone's greatest efforts, almost everything in Zimbabwe is on the slide. This includes safety. If something looks dangerous, it probably is.



and simple meals, in a charming garden setting. A few souvenirs are for sale inside.

Pagomo Grill (☎ 2894; Kariba Heights; meals US\$8) Serves up light snacks and grilled dinners in a tasteful setting, but ironically most dishes on offer are not fish. If you've made the trek up to Kariba Heights anyway, it's well worth enjoying a nice cold beer while savouring the views from the terrace.

Other recommendations:

Caribbea Bay Hotel (Impala Dr) Has good food too.
Kariba Country Club (Kariba Heights) Known for its home cooking.

Around Karibe

The following places can be booked through any of the travel agents in Kariba.

Musango is the most popular tented camp in Kariba because of its location, good guiding and abundant game, given its proximity to Matusadona National Park. The park is not very child-friendly, though, with a lack of activities and electric fences surrounding the camp.

Rhino Island is also wonderful – very remote and very wild. But, again, not a place to take children. It's rustic and basic and there are many lions in the area.

Spurwing is a great lodge for kids, safely fenced and has babysitters.

Sanyati is gorgeous and luxurious, though the food is only OK.

Gache Gache is in a beautiful setting with the best fishing of the islands, but not much game.

MANA POOLS NATIONAL PARK

This magnificent 2200-sq-km **national park** (admission US\$15; ☎ 6am–6pm) is a Unesco World Heritage Site, and its magic stems from its remoteness and pervading sense of the wild and natural. The word *mana* means four in the Shona language, and refers to the four pools around the park headquarters that are popular with crocs and hippos. This is one park in Zimbabwe where you're almost guaranteed to see plenty of hippos, crocs, zebras, antelopes and elephants.

There are two main options for visitors to the unparalleled Mana.

The first is to book a tented camp through a travel agent – this is the easiest option and the one that most people do. There are different levels of tented camps, from fairly basic to wonderful luxury. (Note that a 'tented

camp' does not mean you have to pitch your own tent – at the very least there are normal pre-erected walk-in tents with comfortable camp beds, and a camp cook to provide three full meals per day, usually around a table set up on the banks of the Zambezi or similar stunning location.) The level of luxury varies greatly, and some of the camps are not much different from a normal safari camp. The central difference everywhere in Mana is that nowhere is fenced in, so there can be elephants strolling by while you have your breakfast. This is what sets Mana Pools apart from just about any other safari park in the world and makes it a truly magical experience. You're also allowed to walk around without a guide, as you can see for miles around. Talk to a travel agent about the different options, they'll be able to clue you up on what's good and what you get at each camp.

Try a tented camp safari with Craig Van Zyl or Natureways through travel agent **Experience Africa Safaris** (Map p694; ☎ 301494/369185; Shop 37 Arundel Village, Quom Avenue, Mt Pleasant, Harare).

The second option is to book a self-catering lodge through **National Parks & Wildlife Zimbabwe** (Map p694; ☎ 706077; fax 726089; national-parks@qta.gov.zw; cnr Borrowdale Rd & Sandringham Dr; ☎ 8am–4pm Mon–Fri). There are two main self-catering lodges at Mana Pools, each sleeping up to eight people, with four people in two enclosed bedrooms and four sleeping under mosquito nets on the balcony. Each has a gas stove, but no gas, so you cook your own food outside on the braai. There is also a gas fridge inside but you need to take ice blocks to bolster it; buy this in Kariba. There is limited electricity through solar panels, which literally run a couple of light bulbs – and you need to take a car battery to charge it.

The lodges are pretty basic – more or less like camping in a lot of ways, only that you have solid brick walls, and comfortable chairs and beds, and can sit inside at night time when the lions are on the prowl! The best thing is cooking bacon and eggs on the braai in the morning, keeping an eye on the monkeys who will steal food the second you turn your back, and the elephants that are approaching in the distance.

All of the animals – elephants, lions, buffalo, hippos, bushbucks – come right up to the lodge. With the upstairs balcony you also have your own private viewing platform, so if the animals get a bit too close for comfort

you can retire up there with a G&T and watch them in comfort!

Booking is open three months in advance. September/October is the best time of year to go there and it's incredibly popular. You need to get to the National Parks office at 3am on the morning of 1 June/July to book for those months.

MIDDLE ZAMBEZI CANOE SAFARIS

For many locals, the Zambezi River is the highway system around this stretch of northern Zimbabwe. To take advantage of this awesome wilderness route, several companies run canoe trips between Kariba and Kanyemba (on the river junction with Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique).

The trip is normally done in stages: ie Kariba to Chirundu (three days), Chirundu to Mana Pools National Park (three to four) and Mana Pools to Kanyemba (four to five). Any combination is possible, but if you can do only one stage, the Chirundu to Mana Pools segment offers the best scenery and diversity of wildlife, and the departure point is accessible by public transport. July to October are peak months for wildlife viewing. Some readers have even complained about too *much* wildlife at times, because thirsty hippos and frisky elephants can be dangerous obstacles.

Most canoe safaris include transport to and from Kariba or Harare and visas (if required). You can always save some money by making your own way to Kariba, Chirundu or Siavonga (in Zambia) if you've booked your trip elsewhere, or simply book and start the canoe trip in Kariba town. There are places to stay and eat at the Chirundu villages on the Zimbabwean and Zambian sides.

Most canoe safaris run from April/May to October/November, but some operate year-round. Since Zimbabwe limits the number of operators allowed on each of the three segments (and restricts their days of operation), some companies run from the less-regulated Zambian side of the river. Please encourage your operator to observe good environmental practice if this is the case.

Finally, two points to remember. Firstly, the currents along this part of the Zambezi are deceptively strong. Secondly, all canoeists must stay within the territorial waters, and remain close to the bank, of the country they started in. Operators from Zambia are not permitted to cross the invisible border along

the Zambezi into Zimbabwe (or vice versa), despite what they may claim.

Canoe Safari Operators

The rates listed here are per person (but negotiable), and include transport from the booking office, guides, canoes, food and tented accommodation. Rates usually do not include admission fees (if required) to Mana Pools National Park. The high season is about July to October.

Buffalo Safaris (Map p704; ☎ 061-3041; buffalo@harare.iafrica.com; Kariba Kushinga Lodge, Kariba) In low/high season it charges US\$250/315 from Kariba to Chirundu, US\$470/620 from Kariba to Mana Pools, and US\$650/977 from Kariba to Kanyemba. Costs are lower if you start in Chirundu.

River Horse Safaris (Map p704; ☎ 061-2447; www.riverhorse.co.zw; Kariba Breezes Hotel, Kariba) Offers one-day canoe trips down the gorge for US\$75 and two-/three-/four-day excursions for US\$120/300/395.

CHINHOYI CAVES NATIONAL PARK

This small but worthwhile 'roadside' national park (admission US\$12; ☎ 6am-6pm) is 115km north-west of Harare. It's riddled with limestone and dolomite caves and sinkholes, which have been used for storage and refuge by traditional people for nearly 1500 years. The focus is **Sleeping Pool** or Chirorodzira (Pool of the Fallen), so named because locals were cast into the formidable hole by the invading Ngoni tribes in the early 19th century. The pool maintains a constant temperature of 22°C.

From **Dark Cave** (the rear entrance to Chirorodzira), the views through the sombre shadows to the sunlit waters far below reveal a magical effect. The clear water admits light so perfectly that the water line disappears and the pool takes on the appearance of a smoky blue underworld.

Caves Motel (☎ 067-22340; fax 22113; s/d with breakfast US\$25/31; 🚰) is at the park entrance. It also has a restaurant, poolside terrace and petrol supplies.

EASTERN HIGHLANDS

Few travellers to Zimbabwe expect to find anything like the Eastern Highlands, but once they discover them, fewer still can get enough. The narrow strip of mountain country that makes up Manicaland isn't the Africa that normally crops up in armchair travellers'

fantasies. It's a land of mountains, national parks, botanical gardens, rivers, dams and secluded getaways.

MUTARE

☎ 020 / pop 200,000

Mutare has a pretty setting in a bowl-like valley surrounded by hills. Zimbabwe's third-largest city, it has a relaxed rural-town atmosphere. Its real value, though, is its proximity to either Mozambique or the Bvumba region and Nyanga National Park.

Information

Chip Board Internet Café (Old Mutual Bldg)

Internet Cyber Café (☎ 67939; 67 Fourth St; per hr US\$2.20)

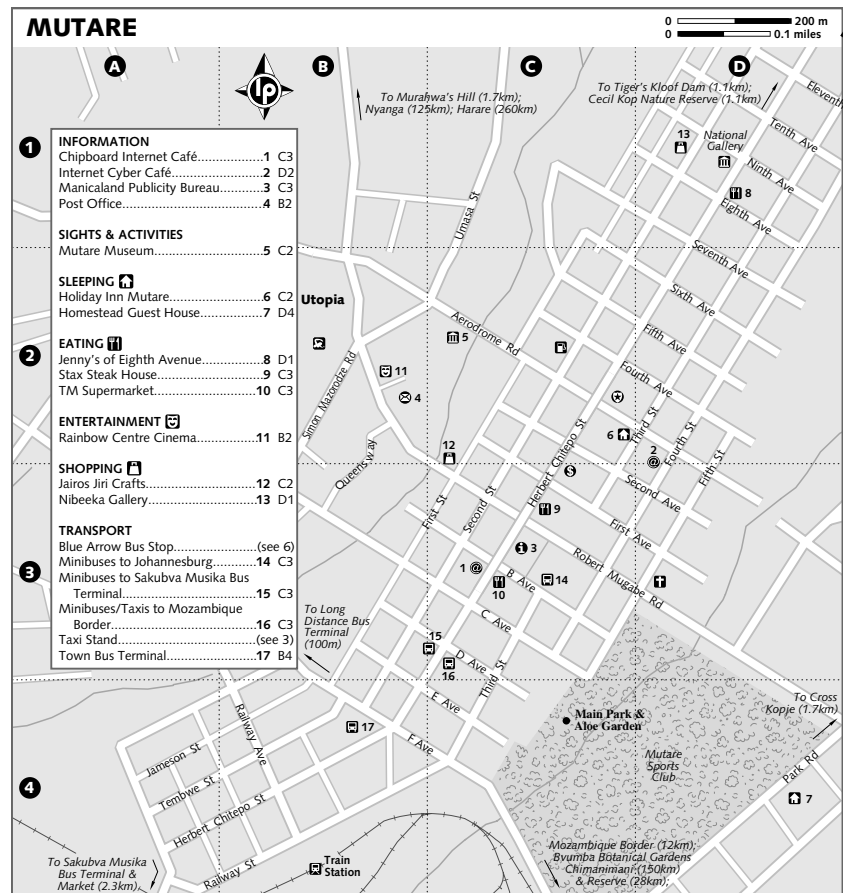
Manicaland Publicity Bureau (☎ 64711; fax 67728; cnr Herbert Chitepo St & Robert Mugabe Rd; ☎ 8.30am-12.45pm & 2-4pm Mon-Fri) Offers a book exchange and informal luggage-storage facility as well as accommodation, activities and transport information.

Post office (Robert Mugabe Rd) Four blocks west of the publicity bureau.

Sights

The **Mutare Museum** (☎ 63630; Aerodrome Rd; admission US\$10; ☎ 9am-5pm) is close to the centre and has interesting exhibits on geology, history, anthropology, technology, zoology and the arts.

The National Trust nature reserve located on **Murahwa's Hill** (admission free) has great views and natural landscapes. The complex encloses



some **rock paintings** and the crumbled **ruins** of an Iron Age village. Look for the *mujejeje* (rocks that resonate when struck).

The 1700-hectare **Cecil Kop Nature Reserve** (☎ 61537; admission US\$3; ☒ dawn-dusk) wraps around the northern side of Mutare and abuts the Mozambique border. Part of the park that can be reached without a vehicle is **Tiger's Kloof Dam**. Try to visit Tiger's Kloof at feeding time (about 4pm) when rhinos, antelopes, giraffes and zebras congregate at the dam.

Sleeping & Eating

Most travellers stop only briefly in Mutare on their way up to or down from the Eastern Highlands.

Homestead Guest House (☎ 65870; 52 Park Rd; s/d US\$10/15; ☒) This renovated late-19th-century home is set in a pretty garden with a pool. It has clean and comfortable rooms.

Holiday Inn Mutare (☎ 64431; reservations@him.zimsun.co.zw; cnr 3rd St & Aerodrome Rd; r US\$130) Typical of Holiday Inns. Not flash, but clean and good service.

Stax Steak House (☎ 62653; First Mutual Arcade, Herbert Chitepo St; mains US\$1-2, dinner US\$25) As well as succulent steaks, this restaurant serves veggie burgers, salads and delicious desserts.

Jenny's of Eighth Avenue (☎ 67764; cnr Eighth Ave & Herbert Chitepo St; mains around US\$8) You can pop into this craft shop café for a coffee or lunch.

Self-caterers can stock up at the **TM Supermarket** (cnr Herbert Chitepo St & B Ave) or visit the large fruit and vegetable market at the Sakubva Musika Bus Terminal.

Entertainment

Rainbow Centre Cinema (Robert Mugabe Rd) Shows rubbishy American films that fill in a rainy afternoon.

Shopping

Jairos Jiri Crafts (41 First St) Offers a number of cheap souvenirs, such as batiks, carvings, wall hangings and T-shirts, with the added bonus that all profits go to charity.

Nibeeka Gallery (Green Coucal Café, 111 Second St) This is more avant-garde, with hand-painted textiles and other crafts.

BVUMBA MOUNTAINS

☎ 020

Just 28km southeast of Mutare, the Bvumba (Vumba) Mountains are characterised by cool, forested highlands alternating with deep,

densely vegetated valleys. In the language of the Manyika Shona people, Bvumba means 'drizzle' and you'll probably have the opportunity to determine the name's validity. With its meadows, apple orchards, country gardens and teahouses, the area seems to recreate the British countryside. If you're staying for more than a few days, pick up *Bvumba: Magic in the Mist* by David Martin from any decent bookshop in Zimbabwe.

Sights

BUNGA FOREST BOTANICAL RESERVE

This sprawling 1558-hectare **reserve** (admission free) is a rare pocket of forest that has not been (nor can be) chopped down or burnt off. There are no facilities, but the 39 hectares that straddle the main road to the botanical gardens do feature some ill-defined and overgrown hiking tracks, with plenty of butterflies, chameleons and birds to keep you company. These tracks are a bit of a crime spot, however, so take care.

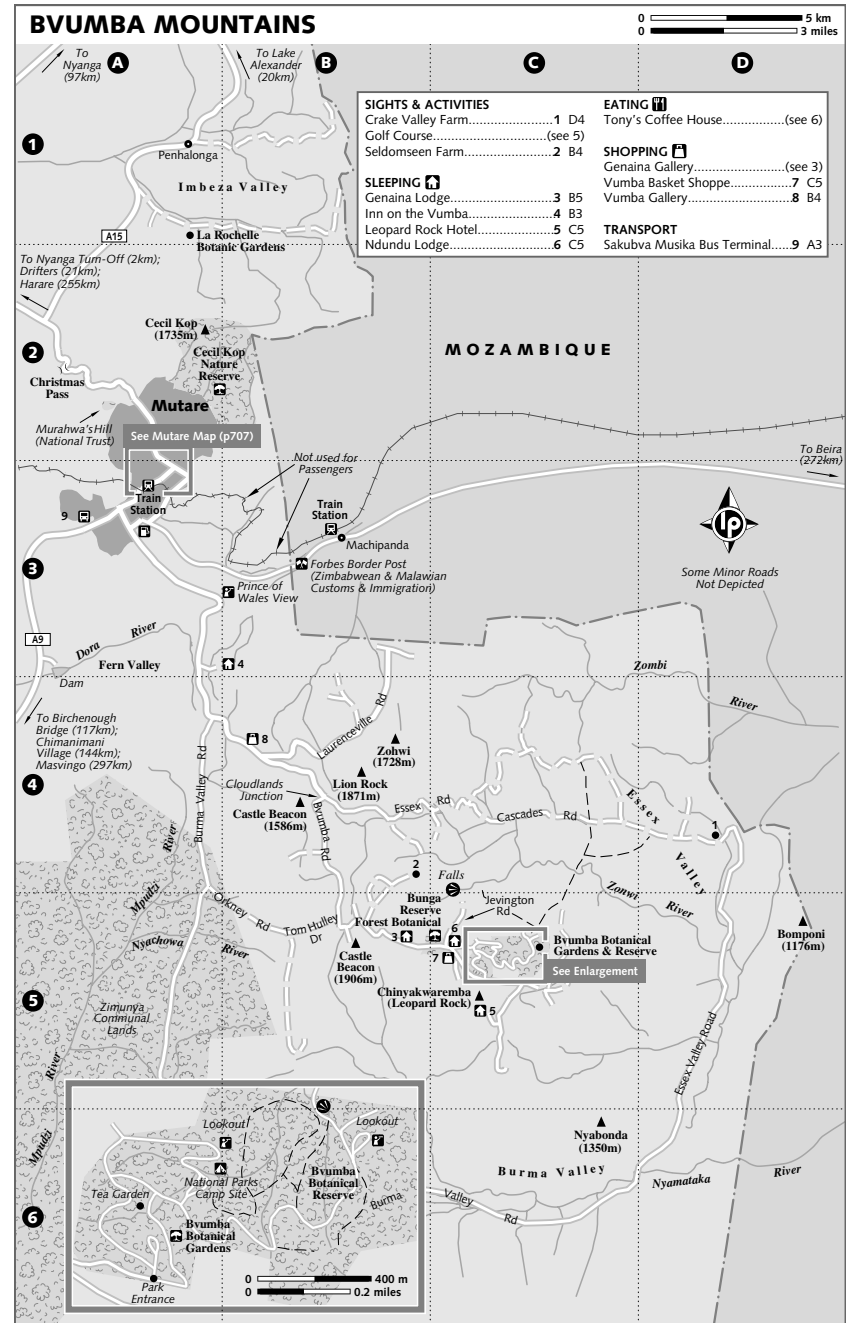
BVUMBA BOTANICAL GARDENS & RESERVE

These **gardens** (admission US\$14; ☒ 7am-5pm) are divided into a landscaped botanical garden (159 hectares), with specimens from around the world and wide lawns, and a wild botanical reserve (42 hectares), crisscrossed with footpaths through natural bush. Wildlife includes samango monkeys (unique to the Eastern Highlands), as well as elands, duikers, bushbucks and sables. Watch the forest floor for the odd little elephant shrews, tiny but ferocious beasts that hop like kangaroos and have long ears and elongated snouts.

BURMA & ESSEX VALLEYS

These two densely populated valleys, nearly 900m lower than Bvumba, are accessed by a 70km scenic loop road. The partially paved route passes through coffee, banana, tobacco and cotton plantations, and over some beautiful forest-laden mountains with views into Mozambique.

A favourite stop is the **Crake Valley Farm** (☎ 61769; Essex Valley Rd). It produces and sells the famous, soft Bvumba cheese, as well as a dozen or more other regional varieties. Tours and samplings are available from 10am to 3pm Monday to Saturday, but ring to make sure it's open before making a special trip out there.



Activities

Even if you can't tell a putter from a wedge, don't miss out on a round of golf at the Leopard Rock Hotel (below), with its superb grounds and breathtaking vistas. The European PGA called it the second-toughest course in the world. Budget travellers may never play on a course like this anywhere in the world so cheaply: nine/18 holes cost US\$12/24 (guests get a discount), while clubs cost less than US\$2 for 18 holes and caddies, who are compulsory, charge even less. There is a dress code (shirts with collar), though the authorities can be pretty relaxed about this.

Twitchers should book (in advance) a two-hour bird life walk with **Seldomseen Farm** (☎ 68482). Keep your eyes peeled for a buff-spotted fluff tail or stripe-cheeked bulbul.

Sleeping & Eating

Ndundu Lodge (☎ 63777; www.ndundu.com; Bvumba Rd; camping or dm per person US\$5, s/d US\$10/14) This delightful thatched cottage, 10 minutes' walk from Bvumba Botanical Reserve, has a library, and impressive CD collection, a well-stocked bar and a restaurant offering veg and meat dishes. The enthusiastic owners have mapped out great walking and bike trails (for free) through the Bvumba.

Genaina Lodge (☎ 68177; s/d US\$100/140, cottages US\$200) Located 24km along Bvumba Rd from Mutare-Bvumba. Has tiny private, thatched cottages with a sometimes-open gallery of African artefacts.

Leopard Rock Hotel (☎ 60192; s/d US\$150/200) A favourite of the Queen Mother and the late Lady Di, Leopard Rock Hotel, at the end of the Bvumba Rd, is one of Zimbabwe's grand old dames. Although it reeks of glory from another era, it is still fancy and luxurious with views across one of the most stunning – and most difficult (championship rated) golf courses in the world.

Inn on the Vumba (☎ 67449; 🍷) At the start of Bvumba Rd, 5km from Mutare. Has five cottages and two family rooms. Great for kids with swimming pool and playground

Tony's Coffee House (Bvumba Rd; coffees from US\$1, cakes from US\$3; ☎ 10am–5pm Wed–Mon) This legendary little thatched-roof café is an experience. The entertaining host will give you a lowdown on the area while he watches you devour delectable but sinful cakes, coffees, teas and hot chocolates. You won't need to eat for the rest of the day.

Shopping

Along Bvumba Rd you'll see women sitting underneath embroidered tablecloths, aprons and hankies, all strung up and swaying in the breeze.

Vumba Basket Shoppe (Hivu Nursery, Tea Garden & Lodge, Bvumba Rd) Sells cheap basketware, as well as the famous Bvumba cheese.

Vumba Gallery (Bvumba Rd) This massive gallery houses an extensive range of cheap T-shirts, baskets and pottery.

Genaina Gallery (Bvumba Rd) Sells more expensive, high-quality crafts from Zimbabwe and the region.

NYANGA NATIONAL PARK

☎ 029

The 47,000-hectare **Nyanga National Park** (admission US\$10; 🕒 6am–6pm) is a scenically distinct enclave in the Eastern Highlands. Cecil Rhodes fell in love with the area, so he simply bought it for his own residence. Near Nyanga (Rhodes) Dam, he built a luxurious homestead and created an English-style garden with imported European hardwoods.

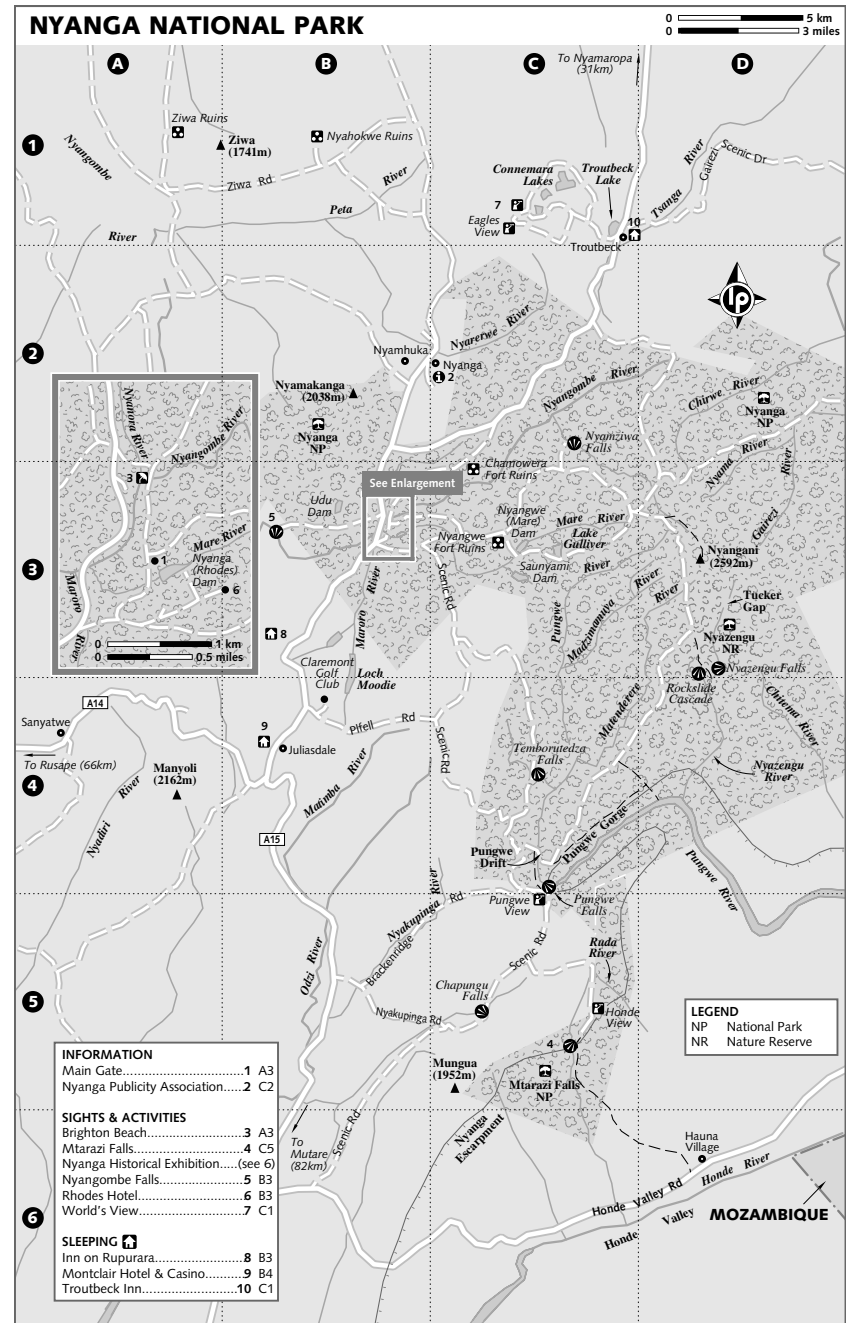
Close to the old hotel is the **main gate** (☎ 8274) to Nyanga National Park. The **Nyanga Publicity Association** (☎ 8435; 🕒 8am–1pm & 2–4pm Tue–Fri, 9–11am Sat) is housed in the Nyanga village library, halfway between the village centre and the appropriately named Village Inn.

Sights & Activities

The **Rhodes Hotel**, with its tropical veranda and well-kept gardens overlooking the Nyanga Dam, was once the home of Cecil Rhodes. It's worth a visit for a meal or drink or to admire the gardens.

The **Nyanga Historical Exhibition** (Rhodes Museum; admission US\$4; 🕒 9am–1pm & 2.30pm–5.30pm Thu–Tue) is housed in the old man's former stables in the grounds of what is now the Rhodes Hotel. It features displays about Rhodes, as well as exhibits about black African history, the struggles of the Second Chimurenga and the admirable works of Zimbabwean war hero and philanthropist Rekayi Tangwena.

Near the Nyangombe Camp Site is a natural wide spot below a cascade in the Nyangombe River. The sandy beach, unofficially known as **Brighton Beach** (admission free), features changing rooms, bilharzia-free swimming (if you're prepared to brave the chilly mountain water) and a green lawn.



Just outside the park's western boundary, the Nyangombe River tumbles over terraced stacks of cuboid boulders and plunges into a steep but shallow gorge called **Nyangombe Falls** (admission free). Once you've seen the upper falls, have a look downstream where there's a higher and louder single drop into a deep river pool.

World's View (admission US\$4; permanently open) is perched atop the Troutbeck Massif on a precipice above Troutbeck. This National Trust site affords broad views of northern Zimbabwe, but not of the rest of the world! It's 11km up a winding, steep road from Troutbeck – follow the signposts.

The flat-topped and myth-shrouded **Nyan-gani** (2592m) is Zimbabwe's highest mountain. From the car park 14km east of Nyanga Dam, the climb to the summit takes two to three hours. Note that the weather can change abruptly, and when the mists drop the view becomes irrelevant. Local inhabitants even believe that the mountain devours hikers! Visitors must register at the main gate to the national park before setting off, and check back in on their return.

The tiny **Mtarazi Falls National Park** (admission US\$12; 6am-6pm) lies just south of Nyanga National Park and is, for all practical purposes, a part of the same park. The central attraction is the 762m-high **Mtarazi Falls**, but it's little more than a trickle of water that reaches the lip of the escarpment and nonchalantly plummets over the edge. It is, nevertheless, the highest waterfall in Zimbabwe. Along the main road from Mutare, turn right along the Honde Valley Rd and then turn left (northeast) after 2km for Scenic Rd. It's then 16km to the turn-off to the falls and another 7km to the car park.

Sleeping & Eating

Many hotels listed here are popular with ex-pats in Mutare, and business conferences from Harare, so it's worth booking ahead.

Montclair Hotel & Casino (☎ 2441; fax 2447; s/d with breakfast US\$16/20; 🍷) A three-star place with luxurious trappings, such as a casino, swimming pool and mini-golf course, as well as tennis courts, croquet pitches and horse-riding facilities. The rooms are large and cosy, and the roaring fires in the foyer are a nice touch. Bookings on weekends are essential.

Inn on Rupurara (☎ 3021/4; rupurara@innsofzimbabwe.co.zw; full-board s/d US\$110/140) A beautifully appointed hotel of African-style lodges with

verandas. Ask for views overlooking the valley to Rupurara Mountain (or bald man's head).

Troutbeck Inn (☎ 8305; zimsuncro@zimsun.co.zw; s/d US\$140/156) A very English-style inn with a lake, roaring fires and hearty English food including high tea. Fish for trout, walk or go shooting. Good for families.

CHIMANIMANI

📞 026

Chimanimani village, 150km south of Mutare, is enclosed by green hills on three sides, and opens on the fourth side to the dramatic wall of the Chimanimani Mountains. Even if you're not going to Chimanimani National Park, the village is certainly worth visiting for its serenity and scenery.

There are information notice boards at the Chimanimani Hotel, Blue Moon Bar and Msasa Café. There's a post office on the street past the village green. For information on hiking in the national park, see p714.

Sights & Activities

Be careful about muggings while walking in remote areas.

You can walk (or drive) around **Nyamzure**, also known as Pork Pie Hill (because of the shape). The well-defined path (5km uphill) to the summit starts near the church and offers spectacular views all around.

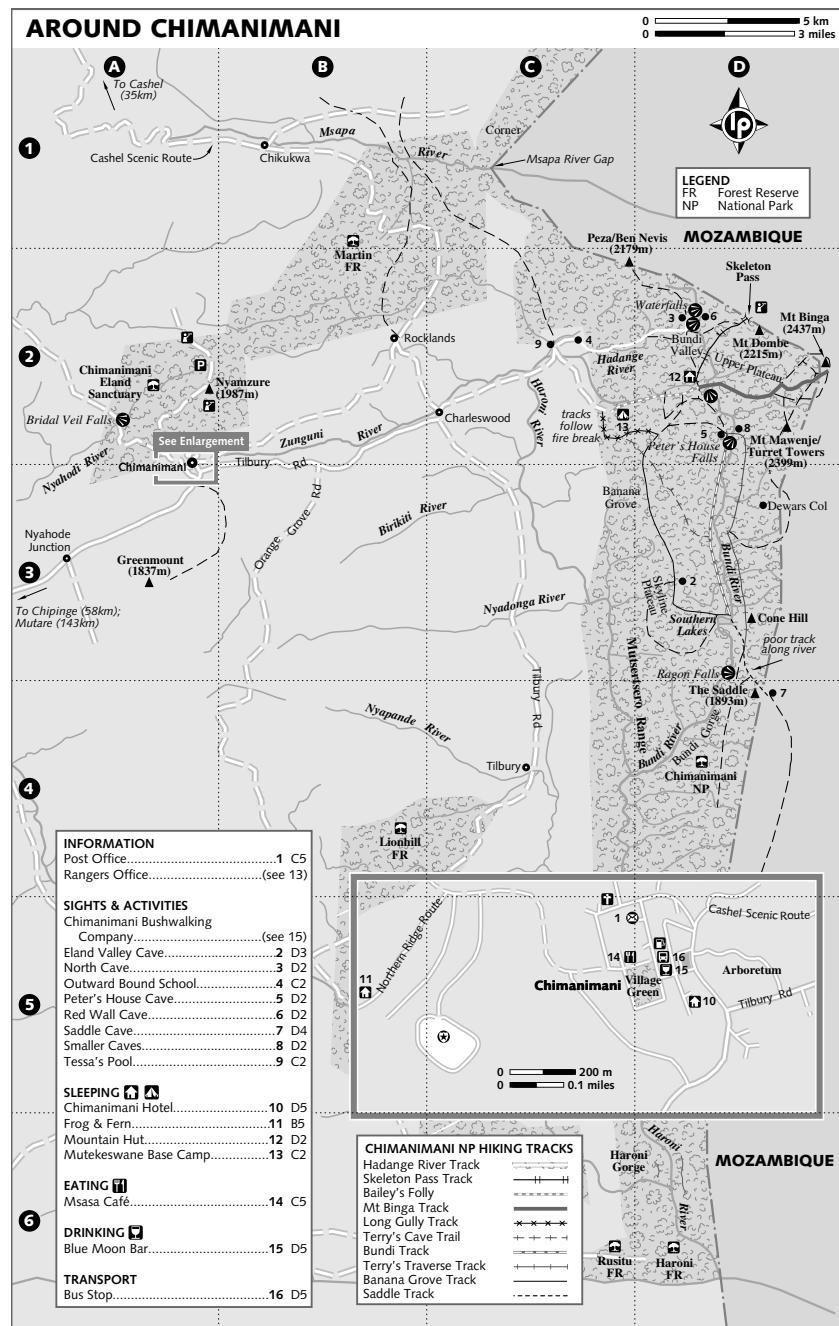
The same path continues for another 2km to the entrance of the **Chimanimani Eland Sanctuary** (admission US\$6; 🌅 dawn-dusk). The odd thing about this 18-sq-km park is the conspicuous absence of elands; apparently, there were flaws in the sanctuary concept and all were poached, presumably by Mozambican insurgents. You may, however, see waterbucks, baboons, duikers, klipspringers and zebras.

Sleeping, Eating & Drinking

Unfortunately, most of the lodges and hotels that were located on farms have been taken over by war veterans and therefore have ceased to exist.

Chimanimani Hotel (☎ 2511; full-board s/d US\$75/100; 🍷) In the village, this place is tired but decent, surrounded by pleasant gardens, a pool and buzzing casino. Ask for a room with mountain views.

Frog & Fern (☎ 2294) It's very hard to contact this hotel but it's worth it for its three pretty stone lodges, or the Round House for six, with



great views of the mountains. It is located 1.2km west of the village.

Msasa Café (mains around US\$4; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Sat) This place is the best spot in the village for eating out. It offers a wide variety of meals and snacks from local *sadza* and stew to delicious Mexican tortillas.

For a cheap drink, and a long chat with some locals, head to Blue Moon Bar.

CHIMANIMANI NATIONAL PARK

Chimanimani National Park is a hiker's paradise. To go hiking in **Chimanimani National Park** (admission US\$10; ☎ 6am–6pm), 19km from Chimanimani village, you must sign in and pay park fees at Mutekeswane Base Camp. There's a road to the base camp, but after that the park is accessible only on foot.

From base camp, Bailey's Folly is the shortest and most popular route to the mountain hut (around three hours). Another option is the gentler Banana Grove Track. From the mountain hut, it's an easy 40-minute walk to **Skeleton Pass**, a former guerrilla route between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Go in the late afternoon for an unsurpassed view into Wizard Valley in Mozambique.

The highest point in the Chimanimani Range is the 2437m-high **Mt Binga** on the Mozambique border, a stiff three-hour climb from the hut. Carry plenty of water. The last stream for a fill-up is less than halfway between the hut and the summit.

Hadange River Track is a good but challenging exit route that comes out near the **Outward Bound School** (☎ 026-2935). But you'll need to walk back along the road to sign out at base camp. Near Outward Bound is **Tessa's Pool**, a lovely swimming hole and a great place to cool off. Tessa's Pool is used by Outward Bound for some of its courses, and at these times it's closed to the public. So phone in advance to find out when it's available.

The Bundi Valley is riddled with **caves** and rock overhangs, which make ideal (free) camp sites. The most accessible caves lie near the valley's northern end. **North Cave**, a 30-minute walk north of the mountain hut, overlooks a waterfall and opens onto views of the highest peaks. Above the waterfall is a pool, ideal for a teeth-chattering dip, if you need some refreshment. **Red Wall Cave** lies 10 minutes further on.

Chimanimani Bushwalking Company (☎ 026-2932; www.bushwalking.co.com; Chimanimani village) at the filling station in Chimanimani village, offers hik-

ing and camping trips in the park (one/five days per person US\$45/240). Rates include a guide, porter, transport, meals, camping gear and park admission fees. You camp in caves.

Sleeping & Eating

At Chimanimani National Park you can either camp at **Mutekeswane Base Camp** (camping per person US\$2), which is at the park entrance, or stay in the **mountain hut** (per person US\$5), which is a long and steep half-day walk from the base camp.

THE MIDLANDS & SOUTHEASTERN ZIMBABWE

Geographically, the Midlands are known as the highveld, while the warmer, lower-lying southeast is the lowveld. At the transition of the two regions is the appealing town of Masvingo. Nearby, is the expansive Lake Mutirikwe and the fabulous Great Zimbabwe, which gave its name to the country. The lowveld's finest attraction is the wildly beautiful but often-ignored Gonarezhou National Park.

KWE KWE

☎ 055 / pop 75,000

Kwe Kwe is a worthy place to break up the journey between Harare and Bulawayo, though you're unlikely to spend the night there.

The worthwhile **National Mining Museum** (First Ave; admission incl guided tour US\$2; ☎ 9am–5pm daily) provides a fascinating introduction to commercial gold-mining in Zimbabwe, past and present.

GWERU

☎ 054 / pop 128,000

Zimbabwe's fourth-largest city isn't a travelers' destination, though many pass through at some stage.

The **Gweru Publicity Association** (☎ 28606; cnr Eighth St & Robert Mugabe Way; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri) is inside the front door of the grand Municipal Offices.

Sights

The **Zimbabwe Military Museum** (Midlands Museum; Lobengula Ave; admission ZW\$400; ☎ 9am–5pm) is the

only one of its kind in the country. It houses a predictable collection of weapons, costumes and medals, as well as tanks, planes and other big toys.

Sleeping & Eating

Pamusha Guest House (☎ 23535; 73 Kopje Rd; s/d with shared bathroom US\$14/25, s/d US\$9/11) Offers the best value in town. It's quaint and friendly, some rooms contain massive, new bathrooms and all rooms come with breakfast.

Waldorf Café (54 Fifth St; meals under US\$1) This place serves African fare. The bakery inside is good.

OK Supermarket (Robert Mugabe Way) You can stock up here.

AROUND GWERU

Nalatala (also spelt Nalatala or Nalatele) rates among the best of Zimbabwe's 150 walled ruins. This simple structure on a remote granite hilltop enjoys a commanding view across the hills, plains and *kopjes*. The main feature, a decorated wall, exhibits in one collection all the primary decorative wall patterns found in Zimbabwe: chevron, chequer, cord, heringbone and ironstone.

The ruins are well signposted. From Gweru, turn south off the Bulawayo road at Daisyfield Siding and follow the gravel road approximately 27km to the signposted left turn-off. The site is 1km uphill from the parking area.

Commonly known as Dhlo Dhlo (approximate pronunciation: 'hshlo hshlo'), **Danangombe** isn't as lovely or as well preserved as Nalatala, but it is quiet and unspoilt. The most interesting feature is a crumbling enclosure formed partially by natural boulders, but the whole thing is overgrown by wandering tree roots and sheltered by large trees. Relics of Portuguese origin have been uncovered by amateur treasure hunters, but Danangombe's past largely remains a mystery. After the Ndebele invasions of the 1830s, the site was abandoned and only rediscovered by white settlers after the 1893 Ndebele uprising.

MASVINGO

☎ 039 / pop 51,000

Masvingo emits a clean and routine small-town laziness, while Muccheke township, 2km to the southwest, is typically African – vibrant and chaotic. The name Masvingo, which was adopted after Zimbabwean independence, is derived from *rusvingo*, the Shona word

for 'walled-in enclosures', in reference to the nearby Great Zimbabwe. Masvingo is easy-going and compact, though there are warmer bases for trips to Great Zimbabwe and Lake Mutirikwe (see p717 for details).

Information

Kingston's (Robert Mugabe St) This bookshop sells maps and international magazines.

Masvingo Publicity Association (☎ 62643; mgpa@mweb.co.zw; Robert Mugabe St; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9–11am Sat) Sells a useful map of Lake Mutirikwe (US\$3).

Telco Internet Cafe (Shop 5, 2nd fl, Old Mutual Centre, Robert Mugabe St) The only place to surf the Net.

Sights

The **Church of St Francis of Assisi** (Italian Chapel; admission free; ☎ 8am–6pm) was constructed between 1942 and 1946 by Italian POWs to commemorate 71 of their compatriots who died in Zimbabwe during WWII. The simulated mosaics in the apse were the work of an Italian engineer, while the wall murals were completed 10 years later by Masvingo artists. Drive (or walk) 4km east towards Mutare from the caravan park, take the left turn at the signpost and then turn immediately left again. Just in front of the military barracks, turn left yet again.

The small **Shagashe Game Park** (admission US\$8; ☎ dawn–dusk) lies 5km north of Masvingo along the road to Harare. You can either drive or charter a taxi from Masvingo, or take a guided tour at the park (the extra cost depends on the number of passengers). It's easy to spot wildlife from the viewing platforms during daily feeding times (usually at 4.30pm and 6pm).

Sleeping

Backpackers Rest (☎ 63960; Josiah Tongogara Ave; dm US\$20, s/d with breakfast & shared bathroom from US\$36/48) Offers dark, musty and noisy rooms, but it is convenient and friendly. The hostel is upstairs and easy to miss; the entrance is along Robertson St.

Flame Lilly (s/d with breakfast US\$40/60) Set within a large garden, this is secure and friendly and right in the centre of town.

Chevron Hotel (☎ 63581; chevron@icon.co.zw; 2 Robert Mugabe St; s/d with breakfast US\$60/90; ☎) Don't expect your usual 'Chevron', but this is convenient, and most rooms have a TV, and overlook the pool and garden.

GREAT ZIMBABWE

☎ 039

Great Zimbabwe (admission US\$20; ☎ 6am-6pm) is the greatest medieval city in sub-Saharan Africa and provides evidence that ancient Africa reached a level of civilisation not suspected by earlier scholars. As a religious and temporal capital, this city of 10,000 to 20,000 dominated a realm that stretched across eastern Zimbabwe and into modern-day Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa. The name is believed to come from one of two possible Shona origins; *dzimba dza mabwe* (great stone houses) or *dzimba woye* (esteemed houses). The grand setting and history-soaked walls certainly qualify as a highlight of Southern Africa.

If you need more information about the site than we can provide here, try and find one of the latest *Great Zimbabwe* booklets (US\$6) at the main gate or *A Trail Guide to the Great Zimbabwe National Monument* at any decent bookshop around Zimbabwe. Alternatively, arrange a two-hour guided tour (about US\$12 per person) at the **main gate** (☎ 7055) or Information Centre, a grandly

named open-air building at the start of the walking trails.

Inside the complex, Matombo Curios offers a huge selection of tacky souvenirs at reasonable prices. It also sells cold drinks.

History

Despite nearly 100 years of effort by colonial governments to ascribe the origins of Great Zimbabwe to someone else (in fact, anyone else), conclusive proof of its Bantu origins was established in 1932 by British archaeologist Gertrude Caton-Thompson. Outside influences did, however, play a role in the development of Great Zimbabwe. Swahili traders were present along the Mozambique coast from the 10th century, and trade goods – Chinese porcelain, Persian crockery and beads, and Indian trinkets – have been found in the ruins.

Historians do know that what became Great Zimbabwe was first occupied in the 11th century. The settlers probably comprised several scattered groups that recognised the safety of numbers. Construction of the Hill Complex commenced in the 13th century,

while the remainder was built over the next 100 years.

Fuelled by Swahili gold trade, the city grew into a powerful religious and political capital, and became the heart of Rozwi culture. Royal herds increased and coffers overflowed. But eventually Great Zimbabwe probably became a victim of its own success: by the 15th century, the growing human and bovine population, and their associated environmental impacts, had depleted local resources, necessitating emigration to more productive lands. Great Zimbabwe soon declined rapidly, and when the Portuguese arrived in the 16th century, the city was virtually deserted.

Sights

The site is divided into several major ruins. Probably the first of the Great Zimbabwe structures to be completed, the **Hill Complex** (once known as the Acropolis) was a series of royal and ritual enclosures. Its most salient feature is the Western Enclosure, where the Ancient Ascent and Terrace Ascent converge.

The **Valley** is a series of 13th-century walls and *daga* (traditional round house) platforms. The area yielded metal tools and the soapstone birds that became the national symbol of Zimbabwe.

The **Great Enclosure**, thought to have served as a royal compound, is the structure most identified with Great Zimbabwe. Nearly 100m wide and 255m in circumference, it's the largest ancient structure in sub-Saharan Africa. The mortarless walls rise 11m and, in places, are 5m thick. The greatest source of speculation is the 10m-high **Conical Tower**, a solid and ceremonial structure that probably had phallic significance.

Leading north from the Conical Tower is the narrow 70m-long **Parallel Passage**. It may have been a means of moving from the northern entrance to the Conical Tower without being detected by those within the enclosure. It may also have been that the construction skills of the builders had improved so dramatically over time that they decided to rebuild the entire wall in a superior manner. The outside wall of the Parallel Passage, perhaps the most architecturally advanced structure in Great Zimbabwe, is 6m thick at the base and 4m thick at the top, with each course of stone tapering to add stability to the 11m-high wall. This stretch is capped by three rings of decorative chevron patterns.

Sleeping & Eating

If it's the ruins you want, it's better to stay at Great Zimbabwe than Masvingo, as the town is basically a truck stop and 26km away.

Great Zimbabwe Campground (☎ 7055; camping per person US\$3, dm per person US\$1.50, rondavel s/d US\$5/9) This camp, run by National Museums & Monuments, is inside the main gate within sight of the Hill Complex. Watch out for the thieving baboons and monkeys.

National Park Accommodation (camping per person US\$8, dm US\$25, rondavels with shared bathroom per person US\$40) Strung out along a trail that heads south of the main gate. The rondavels are small, but cheap, while the camp site offers little shade or security. The dormitory building is fenced off, but isolated – about 1km from the main gate. These places are not run by National Parks & Wildlife Zimbabwe, so book at the main gate.

Lodge at the Ancient City (☎ 7205; B&B US\$145) Beautifully designed individual African lodges set among recreated 'ruins' to blend beautifully with the landscape and the concept of the place.

Inn on Great Zimbabwe (☎ 64879; iogz@innsofzimbabwe.co.zw; B&B US\$180) This tranquil place on a wooded hill above Lake Mutirikwe, 6km east of Great Zimbabwe, is good value. Dated décor, comfortable, though like everywhere it lacks some life due to a lack of visitors!

LAKE MUTIRIKWE (KYLE) RECREATIONAL PARK

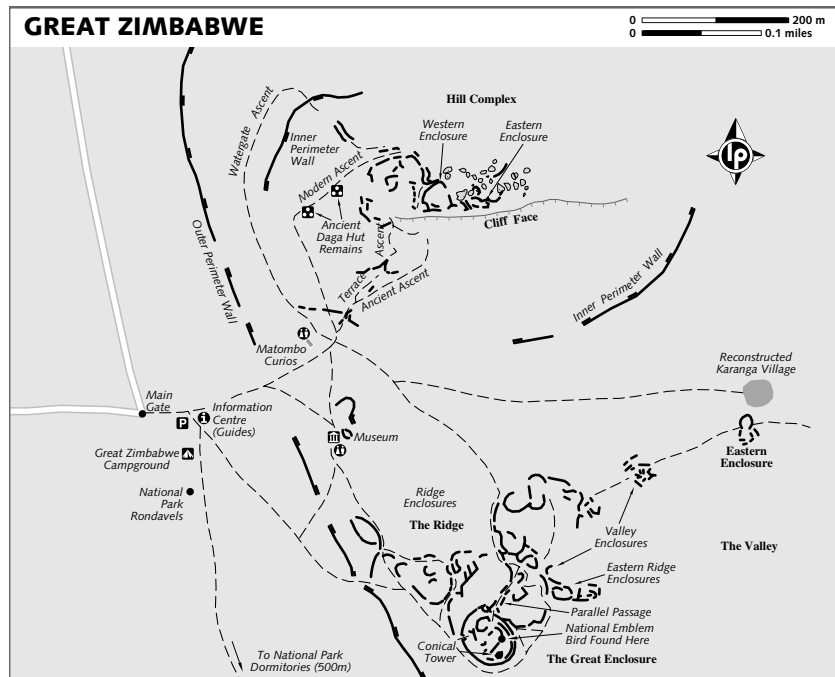
☎ 039

In 1961 a 305m-wide wall was built across Mutirikwe River to create Lake Mutirikwe, Zimbabwe's second-largest dam (90 sq km).

The lake is part of the 22,000-hectare Lake Mutirikwe Recreational Park (still often called the Kyle Recreational Park). Along the northern shore, the main feature of **Lake Mutirikwe (Kyle) Game Park** (admission US\$20; ☎ 6am-6pm) is that it hosts a healthy number of white rhinos. It also has more species of antelopes than any other park in Zimbabwe. Your best bet for accommodation is around Great Zimbabwe; then make a day trip to the park. Alternatively, Kyle is close enough to Harare to do a day trip from the capital.

GONAREZHOU NATIONAL PARK

When large-scale agriculture began encroaching on wildlife habitats during the late 1960s, tsetse-fly control measures (involving both



large-scale bush-burning and shooting) claimed the lives of 55,000 large animals. Pressure for a wildlife refuge and a poaching-control corridor along the border grew, so a scenic, 5055-sq-km chunk of southeastern Zimbabwe became the Gonarezhou Game Reserve. (In 1975 the reserve became a national park.)

Gonarezhou National Park (admission US\$10; ☞ 6am-6pm May-Oct) is virtually an extension of South Africa's Kruger National Park and borders Mozambique. So, in late 2002 the relevant authorities in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique created the **Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park**, a 35,000-sq-km park across the three countries (with no boundaries).

Although some roads in the park are passable to 2WD vehicles, most are rough and require a 4WD, especially in the south. From November to April, access is not allowed to the national park camps at Chipinda Pools, Mbalauta and Swimuwini.

Sleeping

The costs of camping range from US\$20 to US\$50 per person, while chalets at Swimuwini cost about US\$70. Book at National Parks & Wildlife Zimbabwe in Harare (p695) or Bulawayo (opposite).

The most accessible camp site in the Save-Runde subregion is the idyllic Chipinda Pools, 63km from Chiredzi along a badly corrugated but easily passable gravel road. The camp site overlooks vegetation-lined pools teeming with hippos. Further upstream is Chinguli Camp. Both Chipinda and Chinguli have showers and flush toilets, and in the dry season both are accessible without a 4WD.

WESTERN ZIMBABWE

With three of the country's major attractions, Victoria Falls (see p626), Hwange National Park and Lake Kariba, western Zimbabwe is an excellent place to spend a majority of your time in Zimbabwe.

BULAWAYO

☞ 09 / pop 1 million

Zimbabwe's intriguing second city was originally called Gu-Bulawayo (Killing Place), which probably came about because of the executions undertaken on Thabas Indunas (Hill of Chiefs) under Mzilikazi. These days, Bulawayo styles itself as the 'City of the Kings',

a prosperous and historic metropolis with plenty of attractions and great places to stay and eat. Bulawayo is also a base for trips to nearby attractions, such as the Khami Ruins and Matobo National Park (see p722). It's also an ideal staging point for trips to Hwange National Park, on the way to Victoria Falls.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Kingston's (Map p721; 91 Jason Moyo St) Kingston's bookshop sells maps, novels and a few international magazines.

EMERGENCY

Main police station (Map p721; ☞ 72516; cnr Leopold Takawira Ave & Fife St) For emergencies contact this office, or the smaller office in Central Park.

Medical Air Rescue Service (MARS; Map p721; ☞ 60351; 42 Robert Mugabe Way) For ambulance services.

INTERNET ACCESS

Kwik Net (Map p721; cnr Ninth Ave & Main St; per hr US\$0.30; ☞ 8am-10pm) Has phone, fax and internet facilities.

Tshaka's Communications (Map p721; ☞ 66992; Bulawayo Centre; ☞ 8am-6pm) Has a phone, fax and internet service.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Bulawayo Central Hospital (Map p719; ☞ 72111) The best-equipped and most accessible public hospital; near the Ascot Racecourse, off St Lukes Ave.

Galen House Emergency Medical Clinic (Map p721; ☞ 540051; cnr Josiah Tongogara St & Ninth Ave) This privately run clinic is better than the central hospital.

POST

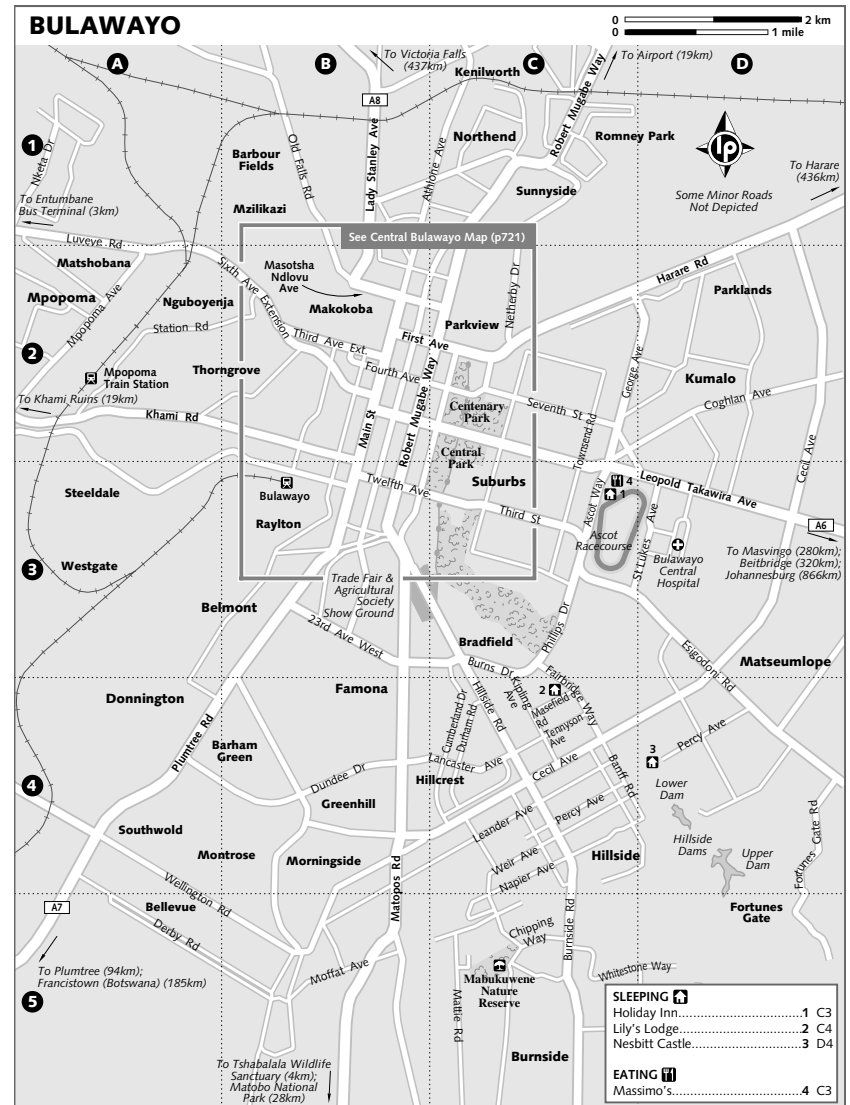
Main post office (Map p721; ☞ 62535; cnr Eighth Ave & Main St; ☞ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8-11am Sat) Has poste restante.

TELEPHONE

Telephones booths are inside and around the post office. Note that some Bulawayo phone numbers have five digits and others six.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Bulawayo Publicity Association (Map p721; ☞ 60867; www.arachnid.co.zw/bulawayo; ☞ 8.30am-4.45pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) In the City Hall car park, off Leopold Takawira Ave; has information on accommodation, transport, tours, activities and events in Bulawayo. It sells the detailed *Bulawayo Mobil Street Atlas*



(US\$0.60) and distributes *Bulawayo This Month*, which lists upcoming events and useful addresses.

National Parks & Wildlife Zimbabwe (Map p721; ☞ 63646; cnr Herbert Chitepo St & Tenth Ave; ☞ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) Takes accommodation bookings for Matobo National Park. For other parks you'll be better off booking at the Harare headquarters (p695), where the system is more reliable.

Wildlife & Environment Society of Zimbabwe (Map p721; ☞ 77309; 105 Fife St)

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Rennies Travel (Map p721; ☞ 880531; rtzim@africaonline.co.zw; Fidelity Life Centre, cnr Fife St & Eleventh Ave) Can arrange international travel bookings.

Dangers & Annoyances

Bulawayo is more laid-back than Harare, but massive increases in unemployment and general desperation mean it's not nearly as safe as it once was. Avoid walking alone anywhere at night.

Sights

Train enthusiasts must visit the **Railway Museum** (Map p721; ☎ 322452; cnr Prospect Ave & First St; admission US\$0.05; ☎ 9am-4pm). It has an impressive collection of antique locomotives, rolling stock, Cecil Rhodes' extravagant carriage built in the 1890s and even a 'museum on wheels' – a 1904 passenger coach with original fittings.

The **National Art Gallery** (Map p721; ☎ 70721; Douglas House, cnr Main St & Leopold Takawira Ave; admission US\$0.20; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), in a beautiful hundred-year-old colonial building, has temporary and permanent exhibitions of contemporary Zimbabwean sculpture and paintings. There's also a souvenir shop, a café and studios where you can see artists at work.

Sleeping

Packer's Rest (Map p721; ☎ 251111; packers@mweb.co.zw; 1 Oak Ave, Suburbs; camping per person US\$3, dm per person US\$4, s/d US\$8/12; ☎) Convenient to the city, this welcoming backpackers offers phone and internet access. The entrance is off Twelfth Ave.

Lily's Lodge (Map p719; ☎ 245356; nyararai@excite.com; 3 Masefield Rd, Malindela; r US\$30) This large house has a local atmosphere. Lily organises traditional evenings with food and dancing for guests.

Holiday Inn (Map p719; ☎ 252464; Milnerton Rd; r US\$124) Convenient, clean and has some useful advice on surrounding areas. Breakfast is a mere US\$36!

Nesbitt Castle (Map p719; ☎ 282726/735/736; nesbitt.castle@nanbb.co.zw) Built by an eccentric Englishman as his house, this place is quite surreal in its décor, each of the eight guestrooms being totally different – a great place for a decadent and romantic interlude. The place is beautiful and so is the food.

Eating

Brooks Fabrics Coffee Shop (Map p721; ☎ 66373; Fife St) Set in an old fabric factory/shop; the cakes and coffee are some of the best in Zimbabwe.

Café Baku (Map p721; ☎ 883809; Bulawayo Centre, Main St; snacks from US\$3; ☎ to late) This small, trendy café serves coffee, cakes and sandwiches.

Massimo's (Map p719; inside Ascot Shopping Centre; mains around US\$15) The Italian cuisine and the décor is authentic, its host is eccentric – he chooses his clientele from the queue outside, others are sent away.

Bonne Journée (Map p721; ☎ 64839; Robert Mugabe Way, btwn Tenth & Eleventh Aves; mains US\$20) Specialising in cappuccinos and ice cream, this popular choice also serves steaks, excellent *piri-piri* chicken and snacks.

Tunku's (Map p721; Eighth Ave, btwn Robert Mugabe Way & George Silundika St; dishes US\$4) and **Chop Suey Centre** (Map p721; ☎ 72828; Eighth Ave, btwn Robert Mugabe Way & George Silundika St; dishes US\$4) are neighbouring takeaways that serve Chinese dishes.

SELF-CATERING

Try the **Spar Supermarket** (Map p721; Herbert Chitepo St) and the truly massive **TM Hypermarket** (Map p721; Eleventh Ave) or even better, the **Haddon & Sly Department Store** (Map p721; cnr Eight Ave & Fife St).

Entertainment

Most Bulawayo pubs and clubs are fairly laid-back.

Old Vic Pub (Map p721; ☎ 881273; Bulawayo Rainbow Hotel) exudes an Anglo-Zimbabwean atmosphere.

Alabama (Map p721; Bulawayo Rainbow Hotel; ☎ Wed-Sun) A pleasant, casual bar with live jazz most evenings.

Walkers Pub & Restaurant (Map p721; ☎ 69527; Bulawayo Centre, Main St) Good for a drink.

Brass Monkey (Map p719; ☎ 880495; Zonk'Izizwe Centre, Hillside Rd) Also a good pub for a drink.

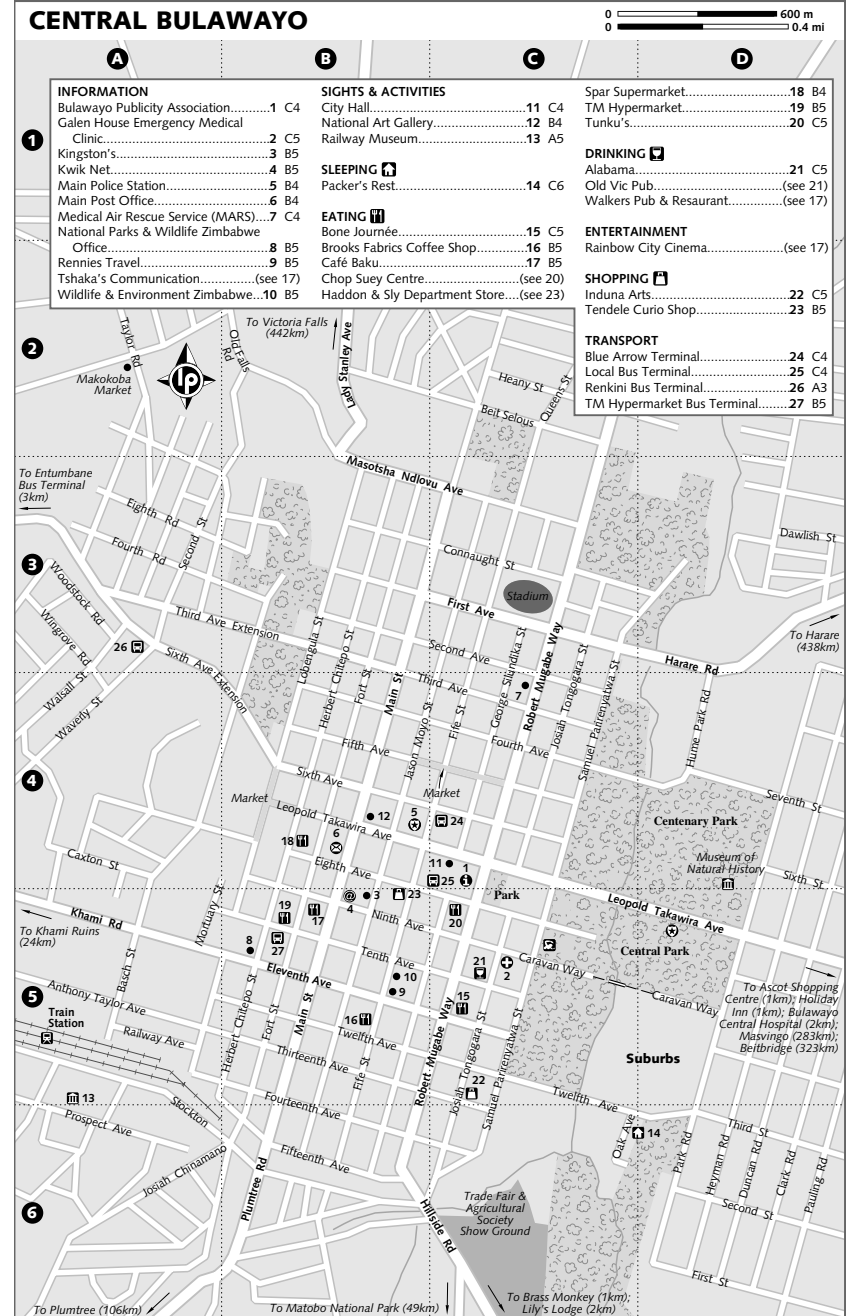
Amakhosi Theatre (Map p721; ☎ 62652; Township Square Cultural Centre, Basch St; admission US\$1.50) This African theatre, off the Old Falls Rd, stages traditional and contemporary theatre, dance and music productions. It also organises the annual Inxusa Festival, a traditional folk culture festival, around June and July.

Rainbow City Cinema (Map p721; Bulawayo Centre, cnr Main St & Ninth Ave) This multiscreen complex still shows a few flicks.

Shopping

The footpath along Fife St near the City Hall is lined with craft stalls. **Ascot Shopping Centre** (Map p721; cnr Ascot Way & Leopold Takawira) is good for general shopping.

Bulawayo is also a good place for art and craft galleries selling local jewellery, textiles, carvings, paintings and artefacts. Try **Tendele**



Curio Shop (Map p721; ☎ 52391; 90 Fife St) and **Induna Arts** (Map p721; ☎ 69179; 121 Josiah Tongogara St).

Ezeze Camping (Map p721; ☎ 62105; 95 George Silundika St) is probably the best outdoors shop in Zimbabwe – which isn't saying much – but it only sells (not rents) camping equipment.

Getting Around

The meters on Bulawayo taxis have been beaten by inflation, so ensure you agree on a price before setting out. **Rixi Taxi** (☎ 261933) and **Skyline** (☎ 470502) are reasonable options.

TSHABALALA GAME SANCTUARY

This small **sanctuary** (admission US\$9; ☎ 6am–6pm May–Oct, 8am–5pm Nov–Apr) is 9km south of central Bulawayo. It was established on land formerly owned by Fairburn Usher, a British sailor who arrived in 1883, and his Ndebele wife, one of Lobengula's daughters. The small interpretative centre at the main gate explains a bit more about the history and fauna.

Adventure Trails (contact through Bulawayo Publicity Association) offers half-day mountain-bike tours (US\$25 per person) of the sanctuary, including transport to and from Bulawayo.

KHAMI (KAME) RUINS

This **Unesco World Heritage Site** (admission US\$5; ☎ 8am–4.30pm), 22km west of central Bulawayo, was built by the Torwa dynasty in the 16th century. In the late 17th century, Torwa was apparently absorbed by the larger Rozwi state, which destroyed Khami.

At the northern end of the ruins, the **Hill Complex** served as the royal enclosure. The complex features several hut platforms and Khami's greatest concentration of stone walling. Also at the northern end is an odd platform with a stone Dominican cross, reputedly placed there by an early Portuguese missionary.

MATOBO (MATOPOS) NATIONAL PARK

Matobo (☎ 083-8258; admission US\$23; ☎ 6am–6pm), 33km south of Bulawayo, is the oldest national park in the country. Dotted around the 425-sq-km park are 3000 officially registered **rock-art sites**, including one of the best collections in the world of San paintings (many over 20,000 years old). Some hidden niches still shelter clay ovens, which were used as iron smelters in making the infamous *assegais* (spears) used against the colonial hordes.

Some peaks, such as Shumba Shaba and Imadzi (Bald One), are now considered sacred, and locals believe that even to point at them will bring misfortune.

With the history comes a superb array of wildlife, including leopards. The bird life is also extensive. You may have the chance to see African hawk eagles or rare Cape eagle owls; in fact, Matobo is home to one-third of the world's species of eagles, including the greatest concentration of black eagles.

Information

Maps of the park are available from the main (northern) gate; or from Wildlife & Environment Zimbabwe or the Bulawayo Publicity Association (see p718).

Sights & Activities

Stroll along the granite ridges and experience the overwhelming sense of tranquillity. Find solitude within an intimate retreat as secluded as the original Kalanga grain bins that nestle among the rocks. Check out World's View, the famous rock art galleries; visit an Ndebele village; go horse riding in the Matobo Game Park or on an organised walk.

The busiest part of Matobo is **Maleme Dam**, with its camp site, general store, horse stables, rangers offices and picnic sites. The area west and northwest of Maleme Dam is home to antelopes, baboons, hyraxes and zebras.

The **Northern Wild Area** offers glorious views down the Mjelele Valley to the Mjelele Dam. Surprisingly, it's not unusual to see rhinos outside the park, grazing on the dry grasses of the valley floor. The **White Rhino Shelter** lies a short walk from the signposted car park. Rather than polychrome paintings, outline drawings are found here – a rare art form in Zimbabwe. Most prominent are the finely executed outlines of five white rhinos and the head of a black rhino, with human figures behind them, and five well-observed and exquisitely drawn wildebeest. On the basis of this painting, rhinos were successfully reintroduced into Matobo.

Cecil Rhodes' Grave is atop the mountain he called **World's View**, which the Ndebele people knew as Malindidzimu (Dwelling Place of Benevolent Spirits). The **Shangani River Memorial**, just downhill from Rhodes' Grave, was erected in 1904 to the memory of Allan Wilson and 33 soldiers of his Shangani River Patrol. (The entire troop was wiped out by General Mtjanz

and his 30,000 Ndebele warriors.) A display at the bottom of the hill outlines highlights of Rhodes' remarkable life and career.

Tours

Safari operators and lodges offer walking and driving excursions to Matobo National Park and Whovi Game Park (day-trip/overnight from US\$50/90). Safari operators offering day trips or overnight trips to Matobo include **Black Rhino Safaris** (☎ 09-241662; www.blackrhinosafaris.com), **Circle Court Tours & Safaris** (☎ 09-881309; www.cirtours.co.zw) and **Khangela Safaris** (☎ 09-289733; www.khangela.com).

Adventure Trails (☎ 09-72702; adventuretrails2000@hotmail.com) offers mountain biking tours – an ideal way to explore Matobo (all day US\$70, half day US\$55).

Sleeping & Eating

Matobo National Park (loydmachine@yahoo.com; camping per person US\$11, chalet/lodge tw US\$74/112; executive r US\$326) There are several camp sites in the park, and there are chalets and lodges at Maleme Dam. You must book in advance at the parks office in Bulawayo (p719). Vehicle use is US\$5.

Big Cave Camp (☎ 0861 312 312; afrizim@flameofafrica.com) In Matobo Hills, this is 46km from Bulawayo and located on the edge of the National Park. There are seven thatched A-frame cottages with private bathrooms and balconies.

HWANGE

☎ 081

Hwange (sometimes still pronounced Wankie) is a stopover town along the road between Bulawayo and Victoria Falls and a gateway (of sorts) to the Hwange National Park. Your best bet is to arrange everything either before you come, or in Harare or Victoria Falls (p626).

HWANGE NATIONAL PARK

Hwange (admission per day US\$15; ☎ about 6am–6pm) is the largest (14,651 sq km) and most wildlife-packed park in Zimbabwe.

Hwange is home to some 400 species of birds and 107 types of animals, including one of the largest numbers (30,000) of elephants in the world. The best time for wildlife viewing is July to October when animals congregate around the 60 water holes or 'pans' (most of which are artificially filled by noisy, petrol-powered pumps). But when the rains come

and the rivers are flowing, successful viewing requires more diligence, because the animals spread across the park seeking a bit of trunk and antler room. Most visitors will only see a fraction of this park, though wildlife viewing is good throughout.

Access is possible in any sturdy vehicle between May and October, but seek advice if driving a 2WD during the wet season. And always consult a ranger (at any of the three camps) about road conditions before heading off too far into the park, regardless of what sort of vehicle you're driving.

Information and maps about the park are available at the rangers offices at the Hwange Main Camp, Sinamatella Camp and Robins Camp. Robins Camp is 60km west of Sinamatella, and park regulations stipulate that you must leave Robins by 3pm to reach Sinamatella (and vice versa). Also, Robins is 150km west of Hwange Main Camp, so you must depart Robins by noon (and vice versa). Similarly, Sinamatella is 125km northwest of Hwange Main Camp, so you must leave Sinamatella by 2pm (and vice versa).

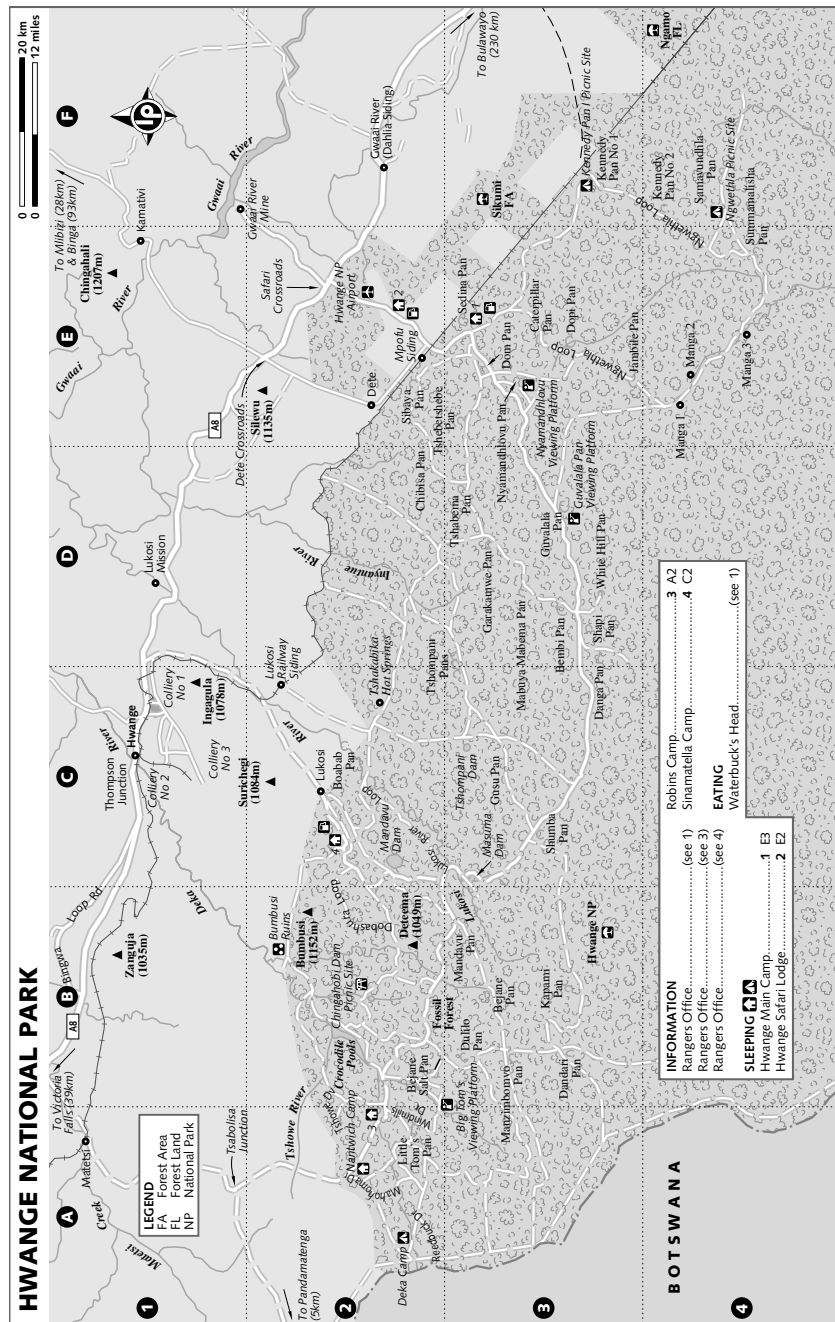
Activities

Two-hour **walking safaris** (per person US\$45) with armed guards to Sedina Pan can be organised at Hwange Main Camp, and to Mandavu Dam from Sinamatella Camp. These walks must be booked in advance at Hwange Main Camp, Sinamatella Camp or Robins Camp. Children under 12 are not permitted. Other walks can be organised through your lodge/operator and are included in your cost.

Hwange Main Camp

The main **camp** (☎ 371; fax 378; ☎ office 7am–6pm) is at the major park entrance. It offers most services, including a rangers office, grocery shop (open 7am to 7pm daily), souvenir shop and petrol station.

Most visitors make a few convenient loops starting near the main camp. One highlight is the **Nyamandhlovu Pan**, which features the high-rise **Nyamandhlovu Viewing Platform** overlooking a popular water hole. On the way from the main camp, check to see if there's any wildlife hanging around **Dom Pan**. South of the main camp is **Ngwethla Loop**, accessible to any vehicle. It passes the magnificent **Kennedy Pans**, particularly popular with elephants, though the greatest variety of wildlife can be found at the **Ngwethla Picnic Site**.



Hwange Main Camp is accessible along two sealed roads from the highway between Bulawayo and Victoria Falls: via Dete, and via the airport and Hwange Safari Lodge.

Robins Camp

This camp (☎ 3503; office ☎ 7am-6pm), at the western boundary, has a sparsely stocked shop and restaurant/bar. The best wildlife viewing spots nearby are **Big Tom's Viewing Platform** and **Little Tom's Pan**.

Sinamatella Camp

Sinamatella (☎ 2775; office ☎ 7am-6pm) is the nicest of the three main camps. It sits atop a 55m mesa with a commanding 50km panorama. By day, you'll see buffaloes and antelopes in the grassy patch below the camp, but it's at night time that Sinamatella really comes alive: expect to be haunted by the roaring of lions and the disconcerting howling of hyenas at the foot of the hill, along with a host of unidentified screeches, thumps and bumps. At any time, vicious little honey badgers skitter around the restaurant looking for hand-outs and even invade the chalets if given half a chance.

Amenities on offer include a rangers office, museum display, souvenir shop, virtually empty grocery shop, and horrid restaurant/bar.

Sleeping & Eating

Hwange Safari Lodge (☎ 750; fax 337; s/d incl meals & activities US\$180/220; 🍴) On a massive private estate within the Sikumi Forest Area. It looks more like a motel than a lodge, though all rooms thoughtfully overlook a popular water hole. Amenities include a restaurant/bar (open to nonguests) and swimming pool, and tours and activities are also available to the public.

Hide Safari Camp (☎ 4 498835; www.thehide.com; per person all-inclusive US\$275) One of the best safari camps in the country. Named after the man-made hiding points for viewing elephants close-up, The Hide has good guides, lovely accommodation and decent food. Bookings can be made at its office in the Triton Centre, 176 Enterprise Rd, Chisipite, Harare.

Waterbuck's Head (meals US\$2) A charming bar/restaurant right outside the main gate and rangers office at Hwange main camp.

WESTERN LAKE KARIBA

The western half of Lake Kariba, which bears little resemblance to the eastern half (see p703), is characterised by wilderness out-

posts, traditional Tonga culture and wild rolling hills.

Binga

The most interesting and accessible town along the western side of Lake Kariba is Binga. It was constructed expressly as a government administrative centre, with the purpose of resettling Tonga people displaced by the Lake Kariba dam. So, Binga is a good place to look for Tonga crafts, including decorative stools, headrests and drums. The town sprawls from the shore to the hills, and getting around without a vehicle entails some hot and tiring walks.

ZIMBABWE DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Although it has enjoyed little development since 2001, Zimbabwe's tourism infrastructure remains some of the best in the region. While many lodges and hotels have closed, those that remain offer stunning locations, good amenities, and smiley if slow service.

The array of hotels and lodges is no longer there, but those which have survived the collapse of the tourism sector clearly have something to show. The biggest hurdle for the visitor may be reconciling very real first-world prices with slipping standards.

National Park Accommodation

Zimbabwe's national parks provide the chance to stay in the best locations in Zimbabwe, indeed some of the best places in Africa. Given that they are in the national parks, the lodges will be located closer to the lakes, rivers, waterfalls and mountain views than larger commercial hotels are. They are very cheap and very basic, often with just beds, a bath and a braai stand outdoors. The NPWZ in Harare is very efficient or you can book through travel agents.

Reservations for national park accommodation are available through the NPWZ offices in Harare (p695) and Bulawayo (p719).

ACTIVITIES

Victoria Falls (see p618) is the epicentre of activities in Zimbabwe, if not all of Southern Africa. The adventurous can get their adrenaline pumping with white-water rafting, abseiling and bungee jumping; the less excitable can

PRACTICALITIES

- The government's relentless campaign to control all media – initially by force – has resulted in much self-censorship and bland press (though for the visitor on a short stay, newspapers and TV can be quite comical).
- The only surviving dailies are both state-run. Friday's *Independent* offers the week's only dose of propaganda-free political reporting.
- Oddly enough, the latest issues of *Vanity Fair* and *The Economist* can be found at some service stations for a fraction of the US-dollar cover price.
- The government controls all TV and radio, though most hotels and many lodges have satellite TV. Zimbabwe boasts the best coverage of world sport in Southern Africa.

enjoy wildlife drives and horse riding. Most other activities centre around Zimbabwe's natural features: hiking in the cool Eastern Highlands and Chimanimani National Park, horse riding and wildlife viewing in national parks, canoeing safaris on the lower Zambezi River, boating and houseboating on Lake Kariba, and a great round of golf almost anywhere.

BOOKS

This section covers books specific to Zimbabwe. For details on books about the Southern Africa region, see p24.

Guidebooks & Coffee-Table Books

Great Zimbabwe Described & Explained, by Peter Garlake, attempts to sort out the history, purpose and architecture of the ancient ruins at Great Zimbabwe.

The Painted Caves – An Introduction to the Prehistoric Art of Zimbabwe, by Peter Garlake, is a detailed guide uncovering major prehistoric rock-art sites in Zimbabwe.

Beneath a Zimbabwe Sun is a classy souvenir book containing plenty of awesome photos. The hardback and paperback versions are available throughout Zimbabwe.

History & Politics

The Great Betrayal, by Ian Smith, is the autobiography of colonial Rhodesia's most con-

troversial leader chronicling a tumultuous, emotion-charged period in Zimbabwean history.

Mugabe, by Colin Simpson and David Smith, is a biography of the Zimbabwean president tracing his controversial rise to power.

The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War, by David Martin & Phyllis Johnson, is a popular history of the Second Chimurenga, the tragic war that led to independence.

Where We Have Hope, by Andrew Meldrum, is a good overview of post-Independence Zimbabwe, up to 2003. It's not beautifully written, but as the last foreign correspondent to get the boot, Meldrum has some good insights.

Lonely Planet

Songs to an African Sunset: A Story of Zimbabwe, by Sekai Nzenza Shand, is an excellent introduction to Shona traditions and culture. Shand tells of her childhood in Zimbabwe, and of her return to the country after spending many years living in the West. Packed with cultural info about rural life, it also gives an insight into the lives of middle-class urban Zimbabweans. *Songs* is one of many titles in *Journeys*, Lonely Planet's travel literature series.

BUSINESS HOURS

Shops are generally open from 8am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm Monday to Friday, and from 8am to noon on Saturday. Very little (including restaurants) is open on Sunday.

CHILDREN

Zimbabwe is a pretty good place to travel with kids. In the current climate most travellers will organise their tours through agents, booking lodges and hotels and can therefore determine who caters for children. Most lodges these days accept children, though many won't take those under 12 years (for safety reasons).

CUSTOMS

Visitors may import a maximum of US\$250 in nontrade items, excluding personal effects. Travellers over 18 years of age can also import up to 3L of alcohol, including 1L of spirits.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Zimbabwe is nowhere near as dangerous as foreign media makes out, but nor is it anywhere near as safe as it once was. And crime is on the rise. Carjacking and smash and grabs

are the current dangers. Although the number of incidents and degree of violence are a far cry from Johannesburg and others, it is a reality. Drivers should take the following precautions: avoid stopping at traffic lights at night; lock all doors; lock all valuables in the boot; and unwind windows to a minimum level.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES Zimbabwean Embassies & Consulates

Zimbabwe has high commissions in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia (see the relevant chapters for details). Zimbabwean diplomatic missions are also located in the following countries:

- Australia** (☎ 02-6286 2700; fax 02-6290 1680; zimbabwe@dynamite.com.au; 11 Culgoa Circuit, O'Malley, Canberra, ACT 2606)
Canada (☎ 613-237 4388; fax 613-563 8269; zim.highcomm@sympatico.ca; 332 Somerset St West, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0J9)
France (☎ 01 56 88 16 00; fax 01 56 88 16 09; 12 Rue Lord Byron, Paris 75008)
Germany (☎ 0228-356071; fax 0228-356309; Villichgasse 7, 5300 Bonn 2)
UK (☎ 020-7836 7755; fax 020-7379 1167; 429 The Strand, London WC2R 0SA)
USA (☎ 202-332 7100; fax 202-438 9326; 1608 New Hampshire Ave NW, Washington, DC 20009)

Embassies & Consulates in Zimbabwe

The following embassies and high commissions are based in Harare.

- Angola** (☎ 04-790070; Doncaster House; 26 Speke Ave)
Australia (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-253661; www.zimbabwe.embassy.gov.au; 29 Mazowe St)
Belgium (☎ 04-700112; www.diplomatie.be/harare; 5th fl, Tanganyika House, cnr Kwame Nkrumah Ave & Third St)
Botswana (Map p694; ☎ 04-794645/7/8; 22 Phillips Ave)
Canada (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-252181/2/3/4/5; www.harare.gc.ca; 45 Baines Ave)
Ethiopia (☎ 04-725822; ethemb@ecoweb.co.zw; 14 Lanark Rd, Belgravia)
Finland (☎ 04-751654; inemb@id.cozw; 4 Duthie Ave)
France (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-703216; www.ambafrance-zw.org; First Bank Bldg, 74-76 Samora Machel Ave)
Germany (Map p694; ☎ 04-308655; germemb@earth.co.zw; 30 Ceres Rd, Avondale)
Italy (☎ 04-497200; segretaria@ambitalia.co.zw; 7 Bartholomew Cl, Greendale)
Kenya (Map pp696-7; 95 Park La; kenhicom@africaonline.co.zw)
Malawi (Map p694; ☎ 04-798584; emba@embamaw.org.zw; 42-44 Harare St, Alexandra Park)

Mozambique (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-253871; 152 Herbert Chitepo Ave)

Namibia (Map p694; ☎ 04-885841; 69 Borrowdale Rd)
Norway (☎ 04-252426; www.norway.org.zw/info/em-bassy.htm; 5 Lanark Rd, cnr Sam Nujoma St, Belgravia)

Russia (☎ 04-701957/8; russemb@africaonline.co.zw; 70 Fife Ave)

South Africa (Map p694; ☎ 04-753147/8/9; dhacon@mweb.co.zw; 7 Elcombe Ave)

Sudan (☎ 04-700111; www.sudaniharare.org.zw; 4 Pascoe Ave, Belgravia)

Switzerland (☎ 04-703997/8; 9 Lanark Rd; Belgravia)
Tanzania (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-721870; tanrep@icon.co.zw; Ujamaa House, 23 Baines Ave)

UK (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-772990; www.britisheembassy.gov.uk/zimb; 7th fl, Corner House, cnr Leopold Takawira St & Samora Machel Ave)

USA (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-250593/4; www.usembassy.state.gov/zimbabwe; Arax House, 172 Herbert Chitepo Ave)

Zambia (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-773777; 6th fl, Zambia House, 48 Union Ave)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Harare International Festival of Arts (☎ 300119; www.hifa.co.zw) Held annually in the last week of April. See p698 for more information.

Bulawayo Music Festival Held for a week in mid-June.
Zimbabwe International Film Festival Held for 10 days over the last week of August and the first few days of September.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexual activities for men is illegal and officially punishable by up to five years in jail (though penalties are invariably not nearly as severe), yet lesbianism is not illegal.

For information about gay and lesbian clubs and meeting places in Zimbabwe, contact **Gays & Lesbians of Zimbabwe** (☎ 04-741 736; fax 778 165; galz@samara.co.zw; 35 Colenbrander Rd, Milton Park, Harare).

HOLIDAYS

During the following public holidays, most government offices and other businesses are closed.

New Year's Day 1 January

Independence Day 18 April

Workers' Day 1 May

Africa Day 25 May

Heroes' Day 11 August

Defence Forces' Day 12 August

National Unity Day 22 December

Boxing Day 26 December

INTERNET ACCESS

There are internet centres in all the main cities and towns. Internet access is US\$1 to US\$3 per hour, though it can take you that long to get connected.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Zimbabwe is English. It's used in government, legal and business proceedings, but is the first language for only about 2% of the population. Most Zimbabweans speak Shona (mainly in the north and east) or Ndebele (in the centre and west). Another dialect, Chilapalapa, is actually a pidgin version of Ndebele, English, Shona and Afrikaans, and isn't overly laden with niceties, so most people prefer you sticking to English.

See p778 and p779 for phrases in Ndebele and Shona.

MAPS

Hotels are the best place to find any decent 'Tourist Maps'. More detailed maps of the cities and national parks are available from the **Surveyor General** (Map pp696-7; Samora Machel Ave, Harare).

MONEY

The unit of currency is the Zimbabwe dollar (ZWS\$1 = 100 cents).

Zimbabwe is nowhere near as cheap as it once was. Several years ago a main at a good restaurant cost the equivalent of US\$3 to US\$5. Now, if forced to convert at the weak bank rate, the same meal would cost a visitor the equivalent of US\$20. A lodge in Matobo National Park used to cost US\$2. It's now US\$112.)

For those goods that are locally made – beer, beef, sculptures and crafts – prices remain reasonable. But for a growing amount of products that must be imported, prices are often two to four times what they would be in neighbouring South Africa.

Therefore, most prices in this book will be quoted in US dollars and for those where you will ultimately pay in local currency, our conversion is done at the more expensive bank rate (currently about one-quarter of the parallel market).

See the boxed texts, p684 and p686 for more information on money in Zimbabwe. For exchange rates see the inside front cover of this guide.

ATMs

Generally speaking, ATMs at Barclays Bank accept Visa, and Standard Chartered Bank take MasterCard and any card with a Cirrus logo. But ATMs have strict – and small – limits on the amount that can be withdrawn and you will get the lowest bank rate.

Tipping

Some restaurants automatically add a 10% service charge to the bill; if so, no tip is required, though any tip is hugely appreciated. Most prices at markets and street stalls are negotiable, and vendors will happily 'sell' you things in exchange for clothes (especially designer brands), caps, pens and electronic items.

Travellers Cheques

All major brands of travellers cheques in US dollars or UK pounds can be exchanged for Zimbabwe dollars at most major banks.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Print and slide film and basic photographic accessories are easy to buy in Harare though increasingly more difficult in other towns.

Strachan's Photo Shop (Map pp696-7; 66 Nelson Mandela Ave) is the best place in Zimbabwe for all your photographic needs. It sells all sorts of films and accessories, offers one-hour photo processing, and you can take in your digital camera or flash card and download or print.

POST

Sending letters and postcards by surface mail to Europe and the UK costs US\$0.80, and US\$1.10 to the rest of the world.

TELEPHONE

You can make international calls from your hotel or lodge. It is impossible to buy a sim card in Zimbabwe. It's best to put mobile phones on international roaming.

If calling from overseas, the country code for Zimbabwe is 263, but drop the initial 0 for area codes. The international access code from within Zimbabwe is 00.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Local Tourist Offices

The **Zimbabwe Tourism Authority** (Map pp696-7; ☎ 758730; www.zimabwe-tourism.co.zw; 55 Samora Machel, Harare; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) has general tourist info. There are Publicity Associations in Harare, Bulawayo, Victoria Falls, Kariba, Masvingo and

Nyanga. Some are very efficient, helpful and have useful info, brochures and advice, but others have little more to offer than a smile.

Tourist Offices Abroad

Germany (☎ 069-920 7730; fax 920 7731; An der Hauptwache, 60313 Frankfurt am Main)

South Africa (☎ 011-331 3137; fax 616 8692; 2nd fl, Finance House, Oppenheimer Rd, Bruma Park, Johannesburg)

UK (☎ 020-7240 6169; fax 7240 5465; zta.london@btclick.com; 429 The Strand, London WC2R 0SA)

USA (☎ 212-486 3444; fax 486 3888; 128 East 56 St, New York 10022)

VISAS

With a few exceptions, visas are required by nationals of all countries. They can be obtained at your point of entry. Single-/double-entry visas cost US\$30/45 (and can be issued upon arrival) and multiple-entry visas (valid for six months) cost US\$55, but are only issued at Zimbabwean diplomatic missions (see p727). British citizens pay US\$55/70 for single/double entry. A good website for checking changes in requirements and other immigration news is www.safemigrationzimbabwe.com.

Vaccination for yellow fever is not required for entry to Zimbabwe unless you have recently been to an infected area. However, for all sorts of reasons, get a jab before you come to Southern Africa and carry a certificate to prove it.

Visas for Onward Travel

Harare is one of the best places in Southern Africa to pick up visas for regional countries (see p695). Requirements constantly change, but nearly all require a fee (most in US dollars) and two passport-sized photos.

Visas for Zambia, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa and Botswana are easy to obtain on arrival in those countries for most visitors, so there no need to obtain them in advance. In theory South Africa is easy too, though such are the queues at the South African Embassy each day, that it's best to get that one in advance.

TRANSPORT IN ZIMBABWE

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Information about travelling to Southern Africa from elsewhere in the continent, and from overseas, see p752.

Air

Most international flights arrive in Harare, and there are also direct flights between Victoria Falls and Johannesburg. International flights link Zimbabwe to Johannesburg (one way/return US\$227/339, 1½ hours), Gaborone (US\$572/906, 1½ hours), Windhoek (US\$716/962, 2½ hours), Maputo (US\$468/767, 1½ hours), Lilongwe (US\$999/1112, one hour), Lusaka (US\$729/956 50 minutes), Dar es Salaam (US\$1154/1888, 2½ hours) and Nairobi (US\$1070/1274, 3½ hours).

Airlines with services to/from Zimbabwe:

Air Botswana (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-793195/228/229)

Air Namibia (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-732094/5)

Air Malawi (☎ 04-752563).

Air Tanzania (☎ 04-752537/8)

Air Zimbabwe (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-253752; Eastgate Centre)

South African Airways (Map pp696-7;

☎ 04-794511/2/6/47/83)

There has been a reduction in the number of airlines that service Zimbabwe. Qantas and Singapore Airlines no longer offer a route to Harare.

Border Crossings

Most of Zimbabwe's border posts are open from 6am to 6pm with the exception of Beitbridge (to South Africa, open 24 hours) and Victoria Falls (to Zambia, open 6am to 10pm). Its other border posts are Plumtree and Kazungula (Botswana); Kariba and Chirundu (Zambia); and Mutare and Nyamapanda (Mozambique).

BOTSWANA

Zupco (\$15) and PCJ Coaches (\$60) run from Harare to Francistown. Zupco departs 6.30am Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; PCJ departs every day at 6pm.

MALAWI

The most direct route between Malawi and Zimbabwe is via Mozambique's Tete Corridor. You'll need a transit visa for Mozambique if travelling through Mozambique to Malawi.

Zupco runs from Harare to Blantyre (US\$35) every day from 6.30am.

MOZAMBIQUE

You can go to Beira via Mutare. Take a minibus from Mutare to the border, then catch

another bus on the Mozambique side. You can get to Malawi from Nyamapanda by minibus. Minibuses run infrequently between Nyamapanda and Tete (Mozambique) and more frequently between Tete and Zóbuè on the border with Malawi.

NAMIBIA

There's no direct overland connection between Zimbabwe and Namibia. The most straightforward route is to take the Botswana bus and then connect from Botswana.

SOUTH AFRICA

The following companies have services to Johannesburg (around US\$70, payable in local currency if bought in Zimbabwe).

Blue Arrow (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-729514; barrow@afrikaonline.co.zw; Chester House, Speke Ave, Harare)

Kukura Kurerwa (Map p694; ☎ 04-669973/6; Mbare Musika Bus Terminal, Harare)

Pioneer Bus (Map p694; ☎ 04-795863, 790531; Mbare Musika Bus Terminal, Harare)

Greyhound (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-720801; Road Port Terminal, Harare)

Departure times are subject to change without notice. It's best to call ahead.

Trains are once again running between Zimbabwe and South Africa. Rovos Rail operates its train from Pretoria to Victoria Falls travelling through Zimbabwe via Bulawayo. This trip is a three-day, two-night journey each way.

ZAMBIA

Zupco (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-704933; Road Port Terminal, Harare) has buses departing for Lusaka (via Chirundu) at 6.30am every day (US\$25).

GETTING AROUND

Air

Air Zimbabwe (Map pp696-7; ☎ 04-253751; Eastgate Centre, Harare) has one flight per day between Harare and Bulawayo (US\$140/250 one way/return) and Harare and Victoria Falls (US\$230/375 one way/return). There's a domestic departure tax of US\$5. Air Zimbabwe no longer flies to Hwange or Kariba, but agents will be able to organise charter flights.

Boat

Kariba Ferries (Map p704; ☎ 04-65476; Andora Harbour, Kariba) occasionally runs a ferry service between Kariba at the eastern end of the lake and

Mlibizi at the western end. The ferry departs when there is sufficient demand.

Bus

There are two types of local buses: express and local. The express buses operate according to published timetables (and depending on fuel). Local buses normally depart when full from township markets outside the centre of a town. These days they are full in about two seconds and most people wait hours for a ride.

Car & Motorcycle DRIVING LICENCE

All foreigners can use their driving licence from their home country for up to 90 days in Zimbabwe as long as it's written in English. However, given the growing propensity of police to illicit bribes, it's best to ensure you also have an International Driver's Licence.

FUEL & SPARE PARTS

Petrol – which is called 'blend' because it's mixed with ethanol – has gone up 500% in the last year, though it is now simply in line with most countries. The cost of petrol usually determines the black market rate, so is around US\$1.

HIRER

The minimum driving age required by rental companies varies, but is usually between 23 and 25 years. The maximum age is normally about 65 years.

Two of the more reliable car-rental agencies are **Hertz** (☎ 04-706254; admin@hertz.co.zw) and **Europcar** (www.europcar.co.zw). Per day it's US\$147 for 2WD and US\$216 for 4WD (unlimited mileage).

It's important to note that most collision damage waiver (CDW) insurance policies do not cover 2WD vehicles travelling on rough roads in national parks, especially in Mana Pools National Park.

ROAD HAZARDS

Zimbabwe has some awful drivers and many locals make a rule of not driving outside the major towns after dark. Roads remain pretty good, though in cities drink driving is a huge problem.

ROAD RULES

Seat belts must be worn by drivers and front-seat passengers, but almost every Zimbabwean

ignores this law. In most national parks and reserves private cars are not allowed to drive after sunset and motorbikes are banned for safety reasons. Driving (in theory) is on the left-hand side of the road.

Hitching

Hitching is no longer recommended in Zimbabwe, for issues of safety and practicality.

Local Transport

Buses and minibuses are always packed to way beyond capacity and are no longer used by travellers.

Taxis are largely safe, and can be booked direct or through your hotel. There are no meters, so be sure to check the price before starting.

Tours

Zimbabwe is best seen today with the assistance of a tour and/or safari operator.

Musuna Safaris & Travel (Map pp696-7;

☎ 04-705716; fax 704792; musuna@mweb.co.zw; ground fl, Travel Centre, 93-5 Jason Moyo Ave) Can book any tour and lodge around the country.

Pamushana & Nduna Safari Lodges (Map p694;

☎ 04-369523; www.pamushana.com; Shop 37, Arundel Village, Quorn Ave, Harare) These two lodges – both

based in Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve – are part of a private trust that runs one of the most eco-friendly safaris in Southern Africa. Neither are budget lodges, though Nduna is certainly cheaper. Pamushana is simply one of the most stunning safari lodges in the world. Recent guests include Catherine Zeta-Jones, Michael Douglas and Tom Cruise.

Zimsun Leisure Group (Map pp696-7; ☎ 737944; 735681; 99 Jason Moyo Avenue, Causeway, Harare; www.zimsun.com) Books larger 2- to 4-star family-style hotels as well as bush retreats and lodges in the main destinations of Zimbabwe. Perfect for groups and/or those who like entertainment and activities on tap.

Train

Zimbabwe's railway network connects Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare and Victoria Falls. Trains are very slow, and the tracks and trains are in desperate need of servicing and parts, and serious accidents continue to occur. All major services travel at night, and sleeping compartments with bedding are available. Check with local operators first as to the current safety of long distance train travel.

If considering this form of transport, contact the **National Railways of Zimbabwe** (☎ Bulawayo 09-322210; Harare 04-78604416, 78604519; Mutare 020-62825; Victoria Falls 013-44391) in the appropriate centre.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'