

# History

From Bantu-speaking farmers and fishers to Arabic traders, Goan merchants and adventuring Europeans, Mozambique has long been a crossroads of cultures.

## IN THE BEGINNING

The first people to see Mozambique's Indian Ocean sunrises were small, scattered clans of nomads who were likely trekking through the bush as early as 10,000 years ago. They may have been distant cousins of the San – skilled hunter-gatherers who left rock paintings throughout southern Africa and who still live in the region today. However, Mozambique's early nomads left few traces and little is known about this era.

The real story begins about 3000 years ago, when Bantu-speaking peoples from the faraway Niger Delta in West Africa began moving slowly through the Congo basin in one of the greatest population migrations on the African continent. Over a period of centuries they journeyed into east and Southern Africa, reaching present-day Mozambique sometime around the 1st century AD, where they made their living farming, fishing and raising livestock.

## EARLY KINGDOMS

Most of these early Mozambicans set themselves up in small chiefdoms, some of which gradually coalesced into larger states or kingdoms. In central Mozambique, the most organised of these states were those of the Karanga or Shona, who by the 11th century AD were grouped into a loose confederation with its centre at Great Zimbabwe, present-day Zimbabwe. Around 1450 Great Zimbabwe was mysteriously abandoned. However, the related Manyikeni chieftaincy, inland from Vilankulo, prospered as a trading centre until the 17th century (you can still visit the remains, see p84). Other Karanga kingdoms – most notably Manica, along the current Mozambique–Zimbabwe border – continued to thrive as late as the 19th century.

At about the same time that Great Zimbabwe began to decline, the renowned kingdom of Monomotapa emerged. This kingdom, named after the *mwene mutapa* (the title of the ruler), was based south and west of present-day Tete. From this pivotal point it controlled the lucrative gold trade between the Zambezi and Save rivers. It was tales of these legendary gold fields ruled over by Monomotapa that first attracted European interest in Mozambique. However – perhaps ironically – both the gold fields and Monomotapa's kingdom were smaller and less cohesive in reality than the Europeans believed.

In northern Mozambique, one of the most powerful groups was the Maravi (also known as the Malawi), who exercised dominion over a large area extending from the Rio Zambezi into what is now southern Malawi and Zambia. Maravi rule was based on control of the ivory trade. At the height of its power in the late 17th century AD, it reached as far as Mogincual and Angoche on the coast, although the kingdom was plagued by weak central structure and infighting. In the far north near Lago Niassa and in present-day Niassa province, were various Yao chiefdoms. Their power gradually increased, until by the 17th and 18th centuries Yao commercial networks

'At about the same time that Great Zimbabwe began to decline, the renowned kingdom of Monomotapa emerged'

## TIMELINE from c100AD

Bantu-speakers begin arriving in present-day Mozambique

## from 8th century

Sofala and other trading settlements are established along the coast

extended across Mozambique to the Indian Ocean, where they were the main trading partners with Arab ivory and slave merchants. Yet, like the Maravi, the Yao remained only loosely organised and decentralised.

In the northeast, in what are now Nampula and Zambézia provinces, were groupings of Makua-Lomwe peoples. Their largest political unit was the village, although some loosely confederated chiefdoms began to form around the 16th century.

Southern Mozambique, which was settled by the Nguni and various other groups, remained decentralised until the 19th century when consolidation under the powerful kingdom of Gaza gave it at least nominal political cohesion.

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE ARABS

From around the 8th century AD, sailors from Arabia began to arrive along the East African coast. Trade flourished and intermarriage with the indigenous Bantu-speakers gave birth to Swahili language and culture. By the 9th century several settlements had been established – most notably Kilwa island, in present-day Tanzania, which soon became the hub of Arab trade networks throughout southeastern Africa.

Along the Mozambican coast, the most important trading post was at Sofala (p112), near present-day Beira, which by the 15th century was the main link connecting Kilwa with the old Shona kingdoms and the inland gold fields. Other early coastal ports and settlements included those at Ilha de Moçambique, Angoche, Quelimane and Ilha do Ibo, all ruled by local sultans. Today, the traces of this long history of eastward trade, carried out over the centuries on the winds of the monsoon, are still evident in the rich cultural melange found in Mozambique's coastal towns.

## PORTUGUESE ADVENTURERS

In 1498 Vasco da Gama landed at Ilha de Moçambique en route to India. It is likely that another Portuguese explorer, the intrepid Pêro da Covilhã, had reached Sofala even earlier via an overland route, disguised as a Muslim merchant. Within a decade after da Gama's arrival, the Portuguese had established themselves on the island and gained control of numerous other Swahili-Arab trading posts – lured in part by their need for supply points on the sea route to the East and in part by their desire to control the gold trade with the interior.

Over the next 200 years, the Portuguese busily set up trading enclaves and forts along the coast, making Ilha de Moçambique the capital of what they called Portuguese East Africa. By the mid-16th century, ivory had replaced gold as the main trading commodity and by the late 18th century, slaves had been added to the list, with close to one million Africans sold into slavery through Mozambique's ports.

### MOZAMBIQUE

No-one is quite sure where the name Mozambique (Moçambique in Portuguese) originated. According to tradition, it's derived from the name and title of the sultan on Ilha de Moçambique when the Portuguese arrived there in the late 15th century – Musa Mbiki (Musa bin Mbiki), or possibly Musa Malik.

### late 15th century

Rise of the kingdom of Monomotapa

### 1498

Vasco da Gama lands on Ilha de Moçambique

The first major journey inland was made around 1511 by António Fernandes, who got as far as the kingdom of Monomotapa and returned with extensive information about river routes and trade conditions in the interior. Following Fernandes' trip, several other expeditions went inland. By the 1530s, the Portuguese had occupied settlements which had been established earlier by Arab traders in the Zambezi River Valley at Tete and Sena, and over the next century they became increasingly involved at the inland trading fairs (*feiras*), although the coast continued to be the focus of activity. Yet, both on the coast and inland, there was little cohesion to the Portuguese ventures and their influence in Mozambique remained weak and fragmented.

## PORTUGAL'S POWER STRUGGLE

In the 17th century, the Portuguese attempted to strengthen their control by setting up *prazos* (enormous agricultural estates) on land granted by the Portuguese crown or by wresting control of it from local chiefs. This, however, did little more than consolidate power in the hands of individual *prazeiros* (holders of the land grants).

The next major effort by the Portuguese to consolidate their control came in the late 19th century with the establishment of charter companies, operated by private firms who were supposed to develop the land and natural resources within their boundaries. Major ones included the Zambezia Company (with a concession in present-day Tete and Zambézia provinces); the Mozambique Company (in Manica and Sofala provinces, and also under British control); and the Niassa Company (in present-day Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces). In reality, these charter companies operated as independent fiefdoms, and did little to consolidate Portuguese control. They also were economic failures for labour abuses and for the cruel and appalling conditions under which the local populations within their boundaries were forced to live.

With the onset of the 'Scramble for Africa' in the 1880s, Portugal faced growing competition from Britain and the other colonial powers and was forced to strengthen its claims in the region. In 1891 a British-Portuguese treaty was signed, which set the boundaries of Portuguese East Africa and formalised Portuguese control in the area. Despite this, the country continued without cohesion. The Portuguese were only able to directly administer the area south of the Rio Save (which had attained some degree of political unity under the rulers of the Gaza kingdom) and Ilha de Moçambique. The rest of the centre and north remained under the control of *prazeiros* (charter companies).

## THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

One of the most significant events in early 20th-century Mozambique was the large-scale labour migration from the southern provinces to South Africa and Rhodesia. This exodus was spurred by expansion of the Witwatersrand gold mines, and by passage of a new labour law in 1899 which formally divided the Mozambican population into nonindigenous (*não indígenas* or *assimilados*), who had full Portuguese citizenship rights, and indigenous (*indigenas*), who were subject to the provisions of colonial law and forced to work, to pay a poll tax and to adhere to pass laws. For an African to acquire nonindigenous status, it was necessary to demonstrate Portuguese 'culture'

'In 1891 a British-Portuguese treaty was signed, which set the boundaries of Portuguese East Africa and formalised Portuguese control in the area'

### from 17th century

Portuguese divide large areas of central Mozambique into vast agricultural estates (*prazos*)

### 1850s

Gaza kingdom reaches its height under Soshangane

and a level of education. For *indigenas* Mozambicans who were unable to get employment on European-run plantations in their home regions, the options were limited to accepting six months of annual labour at minimal pay on public works projects, leaving Mozambique to seek a better life in the surrounding colonies or accepting employment as contract labourers in South Africa.

The other major development defining early 20th-century Mozambique was the growing economic importance of the southern part of the country. As ties with South Africa strengthened, Lourenço Marques (as Maputo was then known) took on increasing importance as a major port and export channel and in the late 19th century the Portuguese transferred the capital here from Ilha de Moçambique.

In the late 1920s António Salazar came to power in Portugal. To maximise the benefits that Portugal could realise from its colonies, he sealed them off from non-Portuguese investment, terminated the leases of the various concession companies in the north, abolished the remaining *prazos* and consolidated Portuguese control over Mozambique. While some of his policies, including the introduction of agricultural schemes, resulted in economic growth, overall conditions for Mozambicans worsened considerably. There was not even a pretence of social investment in the African population and of the few schools and hospitals that did exist, most were in the cities and reserved for Portuguese, other whites and privileged African *assimilados*.

**‘Resentment at the ‘massacre of Mueda’ helped to politicise the local Makonde people and became one of the sparks kindling the independence struggle.’**

## THE MUEDA MASSACRE

Discontent with the situation grew and a nationalist consciousness gradually developed. This was nurtured by Mozambican exile groups and by the country’s small group of educated elite, including nationalist intellectuals such as the poets Marcelino dos Santos, José Craveirinha and Noémia de Sousa.

In June 1960, at Mueda in northern Mozambique, an official meeting was held by villagers protesting peacefully about taxes. Portuguese troops opened fire on the crowd, killing large numbers of demonstrators. Resentment at the ‘massacre of Mueda’ helped to politicise the local Makonde people and became one of the sparks kindling the independence struggle. From this point onwards, the Mozambican liberation movement began to grow. External support came from several sources, but most notably from the government of Julius Nyerere in neighbouring Tanganyika (now Tanzania). In 1962, following a meeting of various political organisations working in exile for Mozambican independence, the Frente pela Libertação de Moçambique or Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) was formed in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). The first president of the organisation was Eduardo Chivambu Mondlane, a southern Mozambican educated in the USA, Portugal and South Africa who had spent several years working with the UN.

## THE INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE

Frelimo was plagued from the outset by internal divisions. However, under the leadership of the charismatic Mondlane and operating from bases in Tanzania, it succeeded in giving the liberation movement a structure and in defining a programme of political and military action to support its aim of complete independence for Mozambique. On 25 September 1964, Mondlane proclaimed the beginning of the armed struggle for national independence,

which Frelimo initiated by attacking a Portuguese base at Chai, in Cabo Delgado province.

By 1966 large areas of Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces were liberated, but progress was slow. A setback for Frelimo came in 1969 when Mondlane was assassinated by a letter bomb delivered to him at his office in Dar es Salaam. He was succeeded as president by Frelimo’s military commander and another southerner, Samora Moises Machel. Under Machel, Frelimo sought to extend its area of operations to the south. The Portuguese meanwhile attempted to eliminate rural support for Frelimo by implementing a scorched earth campaign and by resettling people in a series of fortified village complexes (*aldeamentos*) where they would be isolated from contact with Frelimo forces, and where they could receive social services (provided by the Portuguese in an effort to win support for the Portuguese cause). However, struggles within Portugal’s colonial empire and increasing international criticism sapped the government’s resources. The final blow for Portugal came in 1974 with the overthrow of the Salazar regime. In 1974 at a ceremony in Lusaka (Zambia), the Portuguese government agreed to hand over power to Frelimo and a transitional government was established. On 25 June 1975, the independent People’s Republic of Mozambique was proclaimed with the wartime commander Samora Machel as president and Joaquim Chissano, a founding member of Frelimo’s intellectual elite, as prime minister.

## INDEPENDENCE – THE EARLY YEARS

The Portuguese pulled out virtually overnight, leaving the country in a state of chaos with few skilled professionals and virtually no infrastructure. Frelimo, which found itself suddenly faced with the task of running the country, threw itself headlong into a policy of radical social change. Ties were established with the USSR and East Germany and private land ownership was replaced with state farms and peasant cooperatives. Meanwhile, schools, banks and insurance companies were nationalised and private practice in medicine and law was abolished in an attempt to disperse skilled labour. Education assumed a high priority and literacy programmes were launched with the aim of teaching 100,000 people each year to read and write. Much assistance

Since 1995 Mozambique has been part of the Commonwealth of Nations, to which all its neighbours belong. It is the first member not to have been ruled by Britain at some point.

### WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Spend enough time in Mozambique and you’ll soon start to notice that many street names are the same. Here’s a quick guide to the figures and events behind them.

**Eduardo Mondlane** Founding president of Frelimo, and leader of the independence movement

**Samora Machel** Successor of Mondlane as Frelimo president, and first president of independent Mozambique

**Josina Machel** A prominent freedom fighter, married to Samora Machel; Mozambican Women’s Day (7 April) was inaugurated in her honour, on the anniversary of her death

**Julius Nyerere** First president of Tanzania (then Tanganyika) and major supporter of the Mozambican independence movement

**Kwame Nkrumah** Ghanaian president, founding member of the Organisation for African Unity and leader of the Pan-African movement

**25 de Junho** Mozambican independence day (1975)

**25 de Setembro** Start of the independence war in 1964

**Amilcar Cabral** Freedom fighter and revolutionary leader in Guinea-Bissau

1962

The Mozambican Liberation Front (Frelimo) is born

1964

Eduardo Mondlane declares the beginning of the independence war

1975

Mozambique gains independence, with Samora Machel as president

1980s

Externally supported Renamo destabilisation tactics ravage the country

was received from foreign volunteers, notably from Sweden. Maoist-style 'barefoot doctors' provided basic health services such as vaccinations and taught hygiene and sanitation.

However, Frelimo's socialist programme proved unrealistic and by 1983 the country was almost bankrupt. Money was valueless and shops were empty. While collectivisation of agriculture had worked in some areas, in many others it was a disaster. The crisis was compounded by a three-year drought and by South African and Rhodesian efforts to destabilise Mozambique – largely because the oppositional African National Congress (ANC) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), both of which were fighting for majority rule, had bases there.

Onto this scene came the Resistência Nacional de Moçambique or Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo). This ragtag group had been established in the mid-1970s by Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) as part of its destabilisation policy. It was kept alive in later years with backing from the South African military and certain sectors in the West.

## RAVAGES OF WAR

Renamo, which had been created by external forces rather than by internal political motives, had no ideology of its own beyond the wholesale destruction of social and communications infrastructure within Mozambique and destabilisation of the government. Many commentators have pointed out that the war which went on to ravage the country for the next 17 years was thus not a 'civil' war, but one between Mozambique's Frelimo government and Renamo's external backers.

Recruitment was sometimes voluntary but frequently by force. Roads, bridges, railways, schools and clinics were destroyed. Villagers were rounded up and anyone with skills – teachers, medical workers etc – was shot. Atrocities were committed on a massive and horrific scale.

Ironically, part of the problem stemmed from the Frelimo re-education camps that were established after independence. Their inmates included political opponents as well as common criminals and they were notorious for their human rights abuses. Rather than establishing respect for state authority, the camps provided a fertile recruitment ground for Renamo.

The drought and famine of 1983 crippled the country. Faced with this dire situation and the reality of a failed socialist experiment, Frelimo opened Mozambique to the West in return for Western aid.

In 1984 South Africa and Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord, under which South Africa undertook to withdraw its support of Renamo, and Mozambique agreed to expel the ANC and open the country to South African investment. While Mozambique abided by the agreement, South Africa exploited the situation to the full and Renamo activity did not diminish.

Samora Machel died in a plane crash in 1986 under questionable circumstances, and his place was taken by the more moderate Joaquim Chissano. The war between the Frelimo government and the Renamo rebels continued but by the late 1980s, political change was sweeping through the region. The collapse of the USSR altered the political balance, and the new president of South Africa, FW de Klerk, made it more difficult for right-wing factions to support Renamo.

For a well-researched look at the roots of civil war in Mozambique and Angola, including the role of apartheid-era South Africa in continuing the conflicts, read William Minter's *Apartheid's Contras*.

*And Still They Dance* by Stephanie Urdang is an intriguing analysis of women's roles in the wars and struggles for change.

## CHIEFS & PROVINCES

Before independence, most villages were led by traditional leaders (*régulos*, often inherited positions). Beginning in the late 1970s, the Frelimo government displaced these leaders, installing local government administrators (*secretários*) in their place. Population displacement during the war further weakened traditional authority structures. More recently, many traditional leaders have been reinstated and both structures often coexist, with power divided between the chief and the government-appointed administrator, and many communities organised around a council of elders, headed by a chief.

Mozambique's 10 provinces (each with a governor and some autonomy) and their capitals: Maputo (Maputo), Gaza (Xai-Xai), Inhambane (Inhambane), Sofala (Beira), Manica (Chimoio), Tete (Tete), Zambézia (Quelimane), Nampula (Nampula), Niassa (Lichinga) and Cabo Delgado (Pemba). Maputo city is sometimes considered an 11th province.

## PEACE AT LAST

By the early 1990s, Frelimo had disavowed its Marxist ideology, announcing that Mozambique would switch to a market economy, with privatisation of state enterprises and multiparty elections. After protracted negotiations in Rome, a ceasefire was arranged, followed by a formal peace agreement in October 1992 and a successful UN-monitored disarmament and demobilisation campaign.

Since the signing of the peace accords, Mozambique has been remarkably successful in moving beyond war and in transforming military conflict into political competition. In October 1994, the country held its first multiparty elections. With close to 90% of the electorate participating, Renamo won a surprising 38% of the vote, compared with 44% for Frelimo, and majorities in five provinces. The results were attributable in part to ethnic considerations and in part to Frelimo's inability to overcome widespread grassroots antipathy. In the second national elections, held in December 1999, Renamo made an even stronger showing, winning in six out of 11 provinces. However, unlike the first elections, which earned Mozambique widespread acclaim as an African model of democracy and reconciliation, the 1999 balloting sparked protracted discord. Renamo accused Frelimo of irregularities in counting the votes and boycotted the presidential inauguration, sparking a wave of rioting and violence.

## MOZAMBIQUE TODAY

Since then, things have settled down. In December 2004, prominent businessman and long-time Frelimo insider Armando Guebuza was elected with a solid majority to succeed Chissano, who had earlier announced his intent to step down. With a long-running banking and corruption scandal dominating the headlines, Frelimo is now working to polish its public image, while Renamo is still striving to prove itself as a viable political party. Progress has been interrupted by natural calamities, including severe flooding in 2000 and 2001. Yet Mozambique has a remarkable ability to rebound in the face of adversity and most observers count the country among the continent's rising stars.

There are many small political parties, but none with parliamentary seats. Political allegiance tends to be regional – Renamo is strong in the centre, Frelimo in the north and south.

*Moçambique para todos* (<http://macua.blogs.com>) has an excellent survey of Mozambique's current events, in Portuguese, with English translations available.

1992

Peace comes to Mozambique

1994

First multiparty elections

1995

Mozambique becomes a member of the British Commonwealth

2005

Cornerstone is laid for 'Unity Bridge' linking Mozambique and Tanzania across the Rio Rovuma



# The Culture

## THE NATIONAL PSYCHE

You don't need to travel long in Mozambique before hearing the word *paciência* (patience). It's the great Mozambican virtue and most Mozambicans have it in abundance, with each other and with outsiders. You'll be expected to display some in return, especially in dealings with officialdom, and Western-style impatience is always counterproductive. While at times frustrating to a pressured, Western mentality, it is this same low-key, warm Mozambican way that soon gets hold of most visitors to the country and keeps them here much longer than they had originally planned. But don't let the languid, tropical pace sway you completely: underlying it is a rock-hard determination that has carried Mozambique from complete devastation following two decades of war to near the top of the list of the continent's success stories.

Another prominent feature of modern-day Mozambique is its cultural diversity. To casual observers, the country may look like one long beach backed by faceless bush, yet it is remarkably decentralised in comparison with many of its neighbours, with each province boasting its own unique history, cultures and traditions. There has long been an undercurrent of north-south differences, with geographically remote northerners often feeling neglected by powerhouse Maputo, where proximity to South Africa and good road links have pushed economic development along at a rapid pace. Yet this has remained low-level and tribal rivalries don't play a major role in contemporary Mozambican life. Religious frictions are also minimal, with Christians and Muslims living side by side in a relatively easy coexistence.

AIDS continues to cut its dark swathe through Mozambican society. Infection rates are highest in the south and centre, where they exceed 20% in some areas, and about 20,000 children die annually of AIDS-related causes. Public discussion has opened up dramatically in recent years, spurred in part by former first lady Graça Machel, who was one of the first to break the taboo with her 1999 announcement that her brother-in-law (and brother of former president Samora Machel) had died of AIDS-related complications. There are prominent public advertising campaigns in major towns and lots of work being done at the local level, especially through theatre groups and peer chat sessions at schools, to break down the stigmas. Yet discussion still remains muted in many areas and deaths are commonly explained away as 'tuberculosis' or with silence.

## LIFESTYLE

Much of Mozambique moves to centuries-old rhythms of the harvest and the monsoon. About 80% of Mozambicans are involved at least parttime in subsistence agriculture, tending small plots with cassava, maize and other crops. You'll see these *machambas* (farm plots) wherever you travel, along with large stands of cashew trees (especially in the north), mangoes and – in the central highlands around Gurúè – tea plantations. Along the coast, fishing is a major source of livelihood. The small ports are fascinating to watch at dawn and in the late afternoon when the boats come in with their catches. At the national level, commercial fishing – especially the prawns for which Mozambique is famous – accounts for about one-fourth of merchandise exports.

Despite the occasional setbacks of seasonal flooding, which gained Mozambique worldwide attention in 2000 and 2001, tourism has become an

increasingly important source of income, as the world discovers the country's charms. This is particularly evident in Maputo, where top-end hotels are rapidly multiplying, and in the far north, where there has been extensive investment in the luxury travel market.

On the personal level, despite the tourism boom and encouraging economic news, much of daily life is shaped by the struggle to make ends meet. Annual per capita income is about US\$300 (compared with about US\$26,000 in the UK) and most Mozambicans strive to earn a living in the expansive and lively informal sector as traders, street vendors and subsistence farmers.

Mozambique's main social security system and welfare net is the community and extended family, and family obligations are taken seriously. If one family member is lucky enough to have a good job, it is expected that their good fortune will filter down to even distant relatives. Another example is seen with funerals, which are always attended by all those concerned, even if this necessitates long journeys and time away from work. It's expected that friends, acquaintances and other family members will make a small donation – either monetary or in-kind (such as a bag of rice) – to the family of the deceased to help them cover expenses and get by in the months ahead.

Funerals themselves are generally lengthy affairs and are preceded by a period of mourning at the family homestead, where friends and acquaintances go to pay their last respects and offer condolences. It's common for widows and other members of the immediate family to wear black for up to a year after the death in remembrance.

Customs surrounding engagements and weddings are similarly oriented to encompass the entire family, and payment of *lobola* (bride price) by the family of the husband to the family of the wife is common. For more on the status of women, see p181.

## SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

Most Mozambicans are fairly easy-going towards foreigners. However, keeping a few basics in mind will help to smooth your interactions.

- Always greet others and inquire about their wellbeing prior to launching into questions or conversation. It's also usual to greet people when entering or leaving a room.
- When shaking someone's hand, the custom in many areas is to touch your left hand to your right elbow.
- Ask permission before photographing people, especially in remote areas, and follow through if you promise to send a copy of the photo.
- In traditional Mozambican culture, elders and those in positions of authority are treated with deference and respect. It smoothes things considerably to follow suit.
- When visiting villages, ask to see the chief to announce your presence and request permission before setting up camp or wandering around. You will rarely be refused.
- When receiving a gift, it's polite in many areas to accept it with both hands, sometimes with a slight bow or, alternatively, with the right hand while touching the left hand to the right elbow. When only one hand is used to give or receive, make it the right.
- Spoken thanks are not as common as in the West, so don't be upset if you are not verbally thanked for a gift.
- Shorts and sleeveless tops are fine at beach resorts. In traditional communities, you'll have an easier time with more conservative garb. Long trousers or a skirt (for women) and a top with some sort of sleeve are appropriate anywhere.

Samora Machel's famous rallying cry, '*A luta continua*' ('The struggle continues'), inspired Mozambicans in the early independence years, and still stirs up national pride.

## POPULATION

Sparsely populated Mozambique (about 19 million inhabitants) has a population density averaging only about 24 people per sq km – well below all of its neighbours except Zambia. About half of the population is concentrated in the centre and north, especially in Zambézia and Nampula provinces, which – with about 40% of the total – are the most densely populated provinces in the country. Over 70% of the total population lives in rural areas. Settlement in the south of the country is primarily along the coastal belt, with only scattered villages in the dry interior. Niassa province – the Siberia of the southern hemisphere – is the least densely populated province, with about seven inhabitants per sq km. Mozambique's population growth rate is estimated at about 1.4%, tempered by an AIDS infection rate that is officially estimated at about 16% countrywide, but exceeds 20% in some areas such as the Tete and Beira corridors.

There are 16 main ethnic groups or tribes. The largest is the Makua, who inhabit the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Nampula and parts of Zambézia and comprise about 25% of the total population (although the designation 'Makua' was externally determined and actually includes many distinct subgroups). Other major groups include the Makonde in Cabo Delgado; the Sena in Sofala, Manica and Tete; and the Ronga and Shangaan, who dominate the southern provinces of Gaza and Maputo. You'll likely also encounter Lomwe and Chuabo (Zambézia); Yao and Nyanja (Niassa); Mwani (Cabo Delgado); Nyungwe (Tete); and Tswa and Chopi (Inhambane).

Patrilineal systems predominate in southern Mozambique and in the Islamic coastal areas of the far north (among the Mwani, for example), while in the centre and in northern inland areas many tribes are matrilineal, including the Lomwe, Makonde, Makua and Nyanja. Some groups in the Rio Zambézi valley, such as the Chuabo, Sena and Nyungwe, incorporate elements of both systems in their traditions.

About 1% of Mozambique's population is of Portuguese extraction, most of whom are at least second generation and consider themselves Mozambicans first. There are also small numbers of other European and Asian residents. Life expectancy is about 40 years.

As expected with such ethnic diversity, there is also a rich array of languages. For more, see p204, which also includes an introduction to Portuguese pronunciation and a glossary of words and phrases.

## SPORT

Soccer (football) is the main spectator sport. Local games always draw large and enthusiastic crowds – the whole village may turn out in rural areas – and the nationally known teams such as Maxaquene, Costa do Sol and Ferroviário de Maputo inspire fierce loyalty on the part of their fans.

Second to soccer is basketball, which also draws crowds – especially women's basketball, with the famed Clarisse Machanguana (now back in Mozambique after a pro-career in the USA) leading the way.

The track and field scene is dominated by the internationally acclaimed 800m runner, Maria de Lurdes Mutola (the 'Maputo Express'), who has won numerous world cup titles and in 2000 became Mozambique's first Olympic gold medallist.

## MEDIA

Mozambique has a lively media, which includes the government-aligned *Notícias* (the most widely circulated daily) and a number of independent publications. Its growth since state press controls were loosened in the early

Among many matrilineal peoples, clan members are believed to descend from a common female ancestor. Family name and important decisions are determined through the mother or through her brother or other male relatives.

## TRADITIONAL HEALERS

Feeling under the weather? If you follow what most Mozambicans would do, you'll head straight for the nearest *curandeiro* (traditional healer). Traditional medicine is widely practised in Mozambique – often as the only remedy and sometimes in combination with Western medical treatment. As a result, *curandeiros* are respected and highly sought-after. They are also often relatively well paid, frequently in kind rather than in cash. In some rural areas far from health clinics or a hospital, the *curandeiro* may be the only provider of medical assistance.

Individual *curandeiros* have various powers, so selection of the proper one is important. After clamping down on *curandeiros* following independence, the government now permits them to practice, although it attempts to regulate the system. A national association of *curandeiros* has been formed (Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais de Moçambique, or Ametramo), with centres in each of the provincial capitals. Officially, each *curandeiro* must be registered at the provincial level, although unlicensed practice remains widespread.

The practice of traditional medicine is closely intertwined with traditional religions, and in addition to *curandeiros*, you may encounter *profetas* (spirit mediums or diviners) and *feticeiros* (witch doctors). All three power areas can be vested in one person, or they can be different individuals. While *curandeiros* and *profetas* are commonly recognised, the identity of a *feticheiro* is usually not known. Most larger markets have a traditional remedies section selling bird claws, dried leaves and plants, and the like. Diviners often carry a small sack of bones (generally matching male and female parts of the same species) which facilitate communication with the ancestors.

1990s was spearheaded largely by Carlos Cardoso. Cardoso, one-time head of the state news agency, *Agência de Informação de Moçambique* (AIM), was Mozambique's leading investigative journalist and founder of the independent *Mediafax*, a publication once described by the *New York Times* as the vanguard of free press in Africa. Cardoso's murder in November 2000, in connection with his investigation into a massive banking scandal in which high-ranking government circles were implicated, sent shock waves through the press world in Mozambique and abroad. Since then, the ongoing efforts of his convicted assassin, Anibal Antonio dos Santos Junior ('Anibalzinho'), to escape from prison continue to garner headlines and shadows still linger over open reporting in Mozambique.

For background on the Cardoso case, see [www.cpj.org/Briefings/2002/Cardoso\\_nov02/car\\_doso\\_nov02.html](http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2002/Cardoso_nov02/car_doso_nov02.html).

## RELIGION

About 35% of Mozambicans are Christians, about 25% to 30% are Muslims, and the remainder are adherents of traditional religions. Among Christians, the major denomination is Roman Catholicism. However, membership in evangelical Protestant churches is growing rapidly, particularly in the south. One church you're also likely to come in contact with is the local Zionist church, whose members are often seen on the beach along Maputo's Avenida Marginal in the early morning carrying out initiation rituals. Muslims are found primarily in the northern provinces of Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa, with the highest concentrations on the coast and along old trading routes.

Traditional religions based on animist beliefs remain widespread, and traditional beliefs are often incorporated into the practice of Christianity. In most areas, there are strong beliefs concerning the powers which the spirits of the ancestors have over the destiny of living persons. There is also often identification of different levels of deities. In the south, for example, most groups identify an all-powerful God as well as various lesser spirits who receive prayers and influence events. In connection with these beliefs, there are many sacred sites, such as forests, rivers, lakes and mountains, which play important roles in the lives of local communities.

### THE GENDER GAP

The gender gap in Mozambican education has been narrowing at the primary level over the past decade, thanks to strong government priority placed on increasing enrolment levels across the board. However, at the secondary level, the gap has widened. Only about one-third of students at the upper secondary school level, and only about one-fourth of tertiary level students, are girls. Maputo city is the only place in the country where there is a negligible gender gap at all levels.

Comparatively lower enrolment rates and higher drop-out rates countrywide among girls are due in part to cultural attitudes. There is a traditional preference for sons and a pervasive expectation that girls will take on chores at home. Early marriages and early pregnancies are another factor. HIV/AIDS is also a major contributor. As the number of AIDS orphans rises – there are currently an estimated 470,000 in Mozambique – girls are required to stay home to take care of ill family members or younger siblings. For more on the status of women in general, see p181.

### EDUCATION

The Mozambican educational scene shows a mixed picture. On the one side, there is an ever-increasing number of university graduates and, thanks to a major government campaign, primary school enrolment levels have increased to a nationwide average of almost 70%. On the other side, dropout rates are high, and less than 5% of the population goes on to complete secondary school. One factor is financial constraints, with annual fees (about US\$60 per year) posing formidable sums for many rural families. Uneven school distribution is another, as many zones are still without adequate facilities, despite a massive postwar school rebuilding programme.

Other issues include low levels of teacher training and morale. Close to 40% of teachers at the primary level are inadequately trained and salaries are often low, missed or delayed. High teacher-to-pupil ratios (sometimes as high as one primary-level teacher for 80 or more pupils) means that in many classrooms little learning is occurring. AIDS is also an increasingly serious problem. The Ministry of Education predicts that within the next decade, about 17% of teachers in the country will die of AIDS across all educational levels.

### ARTS

During the colonial era, indigenous artistic expression in Mozambique was generally suppressed, especially if it was deemed to display overly strong nationalist leanings. Those traditions that were permitted to continue were often trivialised by the colonial administration and relegated to the realm of folklore.

With independence, the situation changed. The new Frelimo government made promotion of indigenous culture one of its priorities, and actively supported international artistic exchanges. The start of the civil war brought this heady period for the arts to an abrupt halt. Fortunately things are again on the upswing. Since the signing of the peace accords, Mozambique's rich artistic traditions have been at the forefront, and today – despite an influx of Western influences – are thriving.

### Dance

Mozambicans are superb dancers, and experiencing their rhythm and movement – whether in a Maputo nightclub or at a traditional dance performance in the provinces – is a chance not to be missed.

Dance, music and singing accompany almost every major occasion. Many dances tell a story, and often offer political and social commentary as well.

One person can make a difference. For an inspiring story of one woman's accomplishments in helping more Mozambican children to have the chance for an education and future, see [www.asemworld.org/eng/](http://www.asemworld.org/eng/).

Others are specific to particular events. Most dances involve some sort of costume, which frequently includes rattles tied to the legs. Masked dancing is not as common in Mozambique as in some areas of Africa and is done primarily by the Makonde in northern Mozambique (see p160) and the Chewa-Nyanja in Tete province, who are known for their Nyau masks.

On Ilha de Moçambique and along the northern coast, you're likely to see *tufo*, a dance of Arabic origin. It is generally performed only by women, all usually wearing matching *capulanas* (Mozambican sarongs) and scarves, and accompanied by special drums (some more like tambourines) known as *taware*. *Tufo* was traditionally danced to celebrate Islamic feast days and other special events. A similar dance, usually performed to celebrate the Islamic feast of Maulidi, is also found in Zanzibar and around Kilwa, in Tanzania.

Other dances found in the north, particularly around Moçimboia da Praia, include *muáli*, a dance of initiation; *batuque*, sometimes performed at circumcision ceremonies; and *rumba*.

In the south, one of the best known dances, particularly in Maputo, is *makwaela*, characterised by a cappella singing accompanied by foot percussion. It developed in South Africa among mine-workers who were often forced to practise their dance steps without disturbing their white guards. The lyrics focused traditionally on the hardships and dreams of daily life. It was Mozambique's Grupo Makwaela dos TPM that, together with South Africa's Ladysmith Black Mambazo, helped internationalise *makwaela*.

In Tete and Manica provinces, a common dance is *nyanga*, which involves a dancer who simultaneously sings and plays the panpipes (which are also known as *nyanga*).

The best place to get information on traditional dance performances is at the *casa de cultura* ('house of culture' or cultural centre), found in every provincial capital. These exist primarily to promote traditional culture among young Mozambicans by offering music and dance lessons and similar training. However, you can often see rehearsals and performances of local song and dance groups here, and staff can be a good source of information on cultural events in the province.

### Literature

Mozambique has a rich body of literature, written almost exclusively in Portuguese. However, a number of major works (including all titles in this section cited in English) have been translated. Despite the harshness of the colonial era, the Portuguese language is not viewed with animosity, but rather as playing a unifying role for Mozambique's various ethnic groups. It takes on a unique richness in the context of Mozambican literature, where it has given voice to the country's aspirations for independence and expression to its national identity.

During the colonial era, local literature generally focused on nationalist themes. Two of the most famous poets of this period were Rui de Noronha and Noémia de Sousa. De Sousa in particular focused on affirmation of Mozambican nationalism through definition of racial identity.

In the late 1940s José Craveirinha (1922–2003) began to write poetry focusing on the social reality of the Mozambican people and calling for resistance and rebellion – which eventually led to his arrest. Today, he is honoured as Mozambique's greatest poet, and his work, including 'Poem of the Future Citizen', is recognised worldwide. A contemporary of Craveirinha's was another nationalist called Luis Bernardo Honwana, famous for short stories such as 'We Killed Mangey Dog' and 'Dina'.

As the armed struggle for independence gained strength, Frelimo freedom fighters began to write poems reflecting their life in the forest, their marches

In addition to his poetry and political activism, José Craveirinha is credited with discovering and encouraging Maria de Lurdes Mutola (see p30) to become a runner when she was still an unknown soccer player.

and the ambushes. One of the finest of these guerrilla poets was Marcelino dos Santos. Others included Sergio Vieira and Jorge Rebelo.

With Mozambican independence in 1975, writers and poets felt able to produce literature without interference. The new-found freedom was soon shattered by Frelimo's war against the Renamo rebels, but new writers emerged, including Mia Couto, whose works include *Voices Made Night*, *Every Man is a Race* and *Under the Frangipani*. Other writers from this period include Ungulani Ba Ka Khossa, Heliodoro Baptista and Eduardo White. More recent is Farida Karodia, whose *A Shattering of Silence* describes a young girl's journey through Mozambique following the death of her family.

Lilia Mompole, born on Ilha de Moçambique in 1935, has long been a major voice in contemporary literary circles. Her works include *Neighbours – The Story of a Murder* and *The Eyes of the Green Cobra*. Other contemporary woman writers include journalist and activist Lina Magaia, who is known for her *Dumba-Nengue – Run for Your Life: Peasant Tales of Tragedy in Mozambique*, and Paulina Chiziane, who authored *Niketche – A Story of Polygamy*, and whose *Balada de Amor ao Vento* (Love Dance for the Wind, 1990) was the first novel to be published by a Mozambican woman.

A significant development was the establishment of the Mozambique Writers' Association in 1982, which has been active both in publishing new material and in advancing the spread of indigenous literature throughout the country. Its prestigious José Craveirinha prize was recently awarded to Mia Couto and Paulina Chiziane.

## Music

### TRADITIONAL

Traditional music is alive and well in Mozambique, particularly in villages and rural areas. Some musical instruments you are likely to see include:

**mbila** A marimba or xylophone common in central and southern Mozambique (the plural is *timbila*), that can range from less than 1m to several metres in length. The keys are made of wood, under which are resonance chambers made from gourds and covered by animal membrane.

**nyanga** The *nyanga* (panpipe) is found around Tete city and in southern Tete province. It is made of hollow cane tubes joined together by cord. *Nyanga* is also the name given to the dance which is traditionally done to the accompaniment of panpipes.

**pankwe** A small guitarlike instrument made of a hollow gourd and wooden stem with six or seven strings. It is found primarily in Nampula, as well as in parts of Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces.

**tchakare** This is another stringed instrument found in northern Mozambique. It has only one string, which is played with a bow similar to a hunting bow.

**xikitsi** This flat, wooden instrument is made with reeds and filled with stones or grain kernels, and is found throughout southern Mozambique. The *xikitsi* is played by shaking it back and forth with the hands while simultaneously using the thumbs to beat a rhythm, and is commonly used as accompaniment for vocal groups.

The *timbila* orchestras of the Chopi people in southern Mozambique are one of the best-known musical traditions in the country; for more, see p83.

### MODERN

Modern music flourishes in the cities and the live music scene in Maputo is excellent. *Marrabenta* is considered Mozambique's national music. It developed in the 1950s in the suburbs of Maputo (then Lourenço Marques) and has a light, upbeat style and distinctive beat inspired by the traditional rural *majika* rhythms of Gaza and Maputo provinces. It is often accompanied by a dance of the same name. Initially, *marrabenta* was played with acoustic guitars, traditional drums and other percussion instruments, with a lead

singer and a female chorus. Later, electric guitars and other modern instruments were introduced. One of *marrabenta's* best known proponents was Orchestra Marrabenta, formed in the 1980s by members of another popular band, Grupo RM, together with dancers from Mozambique's National Company of Song and Dance. When Orchestra Marrabenta split in 1989, several members formed Ghorwane ([www.ghorwane.com](http://www.ghorwane.com)), who perform frequently in Maputo; check their website for upcoming events.

There are numerous new generation bands. One of the best known is Kapa Dêch (pronounced 'kapa dez'), a group of musicians who have taken traditional beats and built popular melodies around them using a keyboard and other modern instruments. Another is Mabulu, a band that combines classic *marrabenta* rhythms (in the venerable persons of the late Lisboa Matavel together with Dilon Djindji) with hip-hop. They recorded their top-selling first release, *Karimbo*, in 2000 when much of the southern part of the country was under water in severe flooding, followed by *Soul Marrabenta*.

Other acclaimed musicians include Chico António, who plays sophisticated, traditionally based melodies with conga drums, flute, and bass, electric and acoustic guitars; Léman, a trumpet player and former member of Orchestra Marrabenta, whose music combines traditional beats with contemporary inspiration; José Mucavele, an acoustic guitarist who plays a mixture of traditional and contemporary rhythms; Roberto Chidsondo; and Elvira Viegas. Fany Mpfumo, now deceased, was one of Mozambique's best known *marrabenta* musicians and still features on popular cassettes. For a listing of CDs to get you introduced to the scene, see p14.

## Sculpture & Painting

Mozambique is well known for its woodcarvings, particularly for the sandalwood carvings found in the south and the ebony carvings of the Makonde. The country's most famous sculptor is the late Alberto Chisano, whose work received wide international acclaim and inspired many younger artists. The main centre of Makonde carving is in Cabo Delgado province, particularly around Mueda on the Makonde Plateau, with carving communities also around Pemba, and in Nampula province. While some pieces have traditional themes, many Makonde artists have developed contemporary styles. One of the leading members of the new generation of Makonde sculptors is Nkatunga, whose work portrays different aspects of rural life. Others carvers include Miguel Valingue, and Makamo, who is known for his sandalwood carvings that combine Makonde influences with southern stylistic elements from his native Gaza.

The most famous painter in the country is Malangatana. Other internationally famous artists include: Bertina Lopes, whose work reflects her

AK-47s, land mines and other weapons are turned into art – for more on Arms into Art, see [www.africaserver.nl/nucleo/eng](http://www.africaserver.nl/nucleo/eng).

*Malangatana*, edited by Júlio Navarro, is a beautiful collection of reproductions of many of the famous painter's works, plus a bit of background text as well.

### MALANGATANA

Malangatana Valente Ngwenya – known universally as 'Malangatana' – is one of Mozambique's and Africa's greatest artists. Although best known for his paintings, Malangatana has also worked in various other media, including murals, sculptures and ceramics. His style is characterised by its dramatic figures and flamboyant yet restrained use of colour, and by its highly symbolic social and political commentary on everything from colonialism and war to peacetime rebuilding and the universality of the human experience.

In addition to his artwork, which is displayed in galleries worldwide, Malangatana has left his mark across a broad swath of Mozambican cultural life. This has included playing founding roles in the establishment of the Museu Nacional de Arte (p61) and the Núcleo de Arte (p61) and setting up the Centro Cultural de Matalana (p73).

For an excellent survey of Mozambique music, see [www.mozambique-music.com](http://www.mozambique-music.com).



For an overview of  
Mozambique's art scene,  
see [www.arte.org.mz](http://www.arte.org.mz).

research into African images, colours, designs and themes; Roberto Chichorro, known for his paintings dealing with childhood memories; and Samate, one of Mozambique's earliest painters. Naguib, Victor Sousa and Idasse are among the best-known artists in the newer generation. All of these painters and sculptors have exhibits in the Museu Nacional de Arte (p61) in Maputo.

Ricardo Rangel, who is known for his black-and-white stills, is widely regarded as Mozambique's most famous photographer (plus co-owner of Chez Rangel, one of Maputo's best night spots – see p68).

### Cinema

Mozambique's tiny film industry is distinguished primarily by its short but powerful documentaries on current social issues. One of the most esteemed directors is Licínio Azevedo. His *Disobedience* (2001), which tells the tale of a woman accused of causing her husband's suicide, was given a citation at the Zanzibar International Film Festival. Azevedo's *Time of the Leopards* is another classic, based on stories from Mozambique's independence war.

Another prominent director is Gabriel Mondlane. His credits include codirecting *A Miner's Tale* (2001), the story of a Mozambican migrant worker in the South African gold mines and the scourge of AIDS that he brings back to his rural community.

For a historical perspective, watch for Margarida Cardoso's *Kuxa Kanema – The Birth of Cinema* (2003) – a fascinating chronicle of the birth and rise of Mozambican cinema in the heady postindependence days under the direction of Samora Machel, and then its downfall a decade later with Machel's death.

# Environment

## THE LAND

Mozambique is a vast land spread out over about 800,000 sq km. To the east, it is edged by a spectacular coastline that winds for about 2500km, from Ponta d'Ouro in the south to the Rio Rovuma in the north. To the north and west it shares its borders with six other countries, including Malawi, which almost slices it in half.

Unlike most of its seaside neighbours, Mozambique has extensive coastal lowlands, which form a broad plain 100km to 200km wide in the south and leave the country vulnerable to seasonal flooding. In the north, this plain narrows and the terrain rises to mountains and plateaus on the borders with Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi.

One of the most notable geographical features in southern Mozambique is the chain of shallow, coastal barrier lakes strung between Ponta d'Ouro and the Archipelago de Bazaruto. In central Mozambique, the predominant geographical feature is the long Rio Zambezi valley and its wide delta plains. In many areas of the north, particularly in Nampula and Niassa provinces, towering granite outcrops or inselbergs dominate the landscape.

Two of Southern Africa's largest rivers – the Zambezi and Limpopo – cut giant swathes through the country on their way to the sea. Other major rivers are the Rio Save, dividing southern and central Mozambique, and the Rio Rovuma, which forms the border with Tanzania.

Mozambique's highest peak is Monte Binga (2436m) in the Montes Chimanmani on the Zimbabwe border.

The Zambezi is Africa's fourth largest river, after the Nile, Zaire and Niger rivers.

## WILDLIFE

### Animals

Mozambique doesn't have the animal herds that you'll see in neighbouring Tanzania, Zambia or South Africa, and most of its large animal populations were decimated during the war. Yet there's still plenty left, with over 200 different types of mammals wandering around the interior. Challenging access, dense vegetation and skittishness on the part of the animals make spotting in most areas difficult; as it stands, the country will likely be of appeal as a safari destination primarily to a small circle of well-moneyed adventurers. Watch close for developments though, as work is going full force in reviving Mozambique's parks and reserves, especially Reserva do Niassa and Parque Nacional de Gorongosa, and the wildness and relatively low visitor numbers mean that anyone who does venture this way on safari is likely to come away satisfied.

### MOZAMBIQUE'S COASTAL LAKES

Apart from Madagascar, Mozambique is the only country in East Africa with major coastal barrier lakes or lagoons. The lakes are separated from the sea by well-developed longshore dune systems, and most aren't more than 5m deep. Among the most important are Lagoa Uembje (Uembje Lagoon) at Bilene, Lago Inhampavala (Lake Inhampavala) north of Xai-Xai, Lago Quissico (Lake Quissico) just east of Quissico town and Lago Poelela (Lake Poelela), about 30km north of Quissico and traversed by the EN1.

With the exception of Uembje, none of the lakes have links with the sea and their brackish waters are rich with marine and bird life. This includes numerous freshwater fish species, white storks, little egrets and pink flamingos. At Lake Quissico alone, between 50 and 60 bird species have been recorded.

The largest wildlife concentrations are found in the Reserva do Niassa in Mozambique's far north, which is home to large herds of elephants, buffaloes and zebras. Modest populations of elephants, hippos and several other large mammals also make their home in Parque Nacional de Gorongosa. With the creation of the **Parque Internacional do Grande Limpopo** ([www.greatlimpopopark.com](http://www.greatlimpopopark.com)), work is underway to encourage wildlife populations in the south to rebound, and wildlife restocking is already underway in the Mozambique section of the park (Parque Nacional do Limpopo, see later in this chapter), although everything is still in the early stages.

Mozambique is officially home to 170 reptile and 40 amphibian species, although the actual numbers are almost certainly much higher. In the Chimanimani area alone, 60 reptile species (including the endemic flat rock lizard and 34 species of snake) have been identified. More visible are the crocodiles, which you'll likely either see or hear about if you spend time near any of the country's rivers.

Mozambique's rich insect biodiversity includes an endemic dragonfly (*Ceriatrion mourae*) and the malaria-carrying *anopheles* mosquito. Endemic mammal subspecies include the blue Niassa wildebeest and a subspecies of Burchell's zebra, both of which are found only in northern Mozambique.

## BIRDS

Mozambique makes up for its lack of easily accessible large mammal populations with an abundance of colourful birds. If you have an adventurous bent and don't mind the lack of facilities, it's an ornithologist's paradise.

Of the approximately 900 bird species that have been identified in the Southern Africa region, close to 600 have been recorded in Mozambique. Among these are numerous aquatic species, which make their homes in the country's extensive southern wetlands. On Ilha de Inhaca alone, 300 bird species, including seven species of albatross, have been recorded. Rare and unique species (most of which are found in isolated montane habitats such as the Montes Chimanimani, Monte Gorongosa and Monte Namúli) include the dappled mountain robin, the chirinda apalis, Swynnerton's forest robin, the oliveheaded weaver and the greenheaded oriole. Other rare species include the Cape vulture, the east coast akalat and the longbilled apalis; see p168.

## MARINE LIFE

Until its terrestrial parks become more accessible, Mozambique's highest profile wildlife attractions are those swimming around under the sea. The

### ELEPHANTS OF THE SEA

The dugong, whose closest terrestrial relative is believed to be the elephant, is a lumbering marine mammal that favours the tropical coastal waters of the Indian and western Pacific oceans. They may live up to 70 years, sometimes reach up to 3m in length, and can tip the scales at 170kg. To maintain their rotund figures, dugong spend their days lazing in the shallows and feeding on sea grasses and algae.

Dugong are prized for their meat and fat and their large size and gentle manner make them easy prey for hunters. They also frequently become trapped in fishing nets and are then killed for their meat. Today they are classified as endangered.

Dugong have been sighted in many areas along the Mozambican coastline, including around Baía de Inhambane, Angoche, Ilha de Moçambique, Nacala and the Archipelago das Quirimbas. However, the largest population – which is also considered to be the largest population in East Africa – is found in the waters of the Archipelago de Bazaruto. Dugong numbers here plummeted to fewer than 100 but seem to be stabilising, thanks to the protection given to them by Parque Nacional de Bazaruto.

Ornithologists should look for *Birds of the Niassa Reserve* (Vincent Parker), *Birds of the Maputo Special Reserve* (V Parker & F de Boer), plus Vincent Parker's *Atlas of the Birds of Sul do Save, Southern Mozambique*.

Mozambique hosts five of the world's seven turtle species. Yet, their situation is precarious due to consumption of turtles and their eggs, and the popularity of shells and other turtle products for souvenirs and medicines.

## MANGROVES

In addition to being famous for its beautiful beaches, the Mozambican coast is also notable for its extensive mangrove swamps, especially in the centre and north of the country. These play an essential role in coastal ecosystems by curbing erosion, enriching surrounding waters with nutrients, and providing resources for local communities. The wood of mangroves is resistant to insects, and is prized for building houses, beds and fishing traps. Around Pemba, an infusion of the bark of one species of mangrove is used for dyeing fishing nets.

Despite their usefulness, Mozambique's mangroves have come under attack. Large stands are cleared for the establishment of solar salt pans and shrimp aquaculture ponds. Others are cut for charcoal production and firewood.

country's coastal waters host populations of dolphins, including spinner, bottlenose, humpback and striped dolphins, and Ponta d'Ouro is one of the best places in the region for swimming with these graceful creatures. Mozambique's waters are also renowned as the home of the ungainly and elusive dugong (see boxed text), as well as loggerhead, leatherback, green, hawksbill and olive Ridley turtles.

The Mozambican coast also serves as a winter breeding ground for the humpback whale, which occurs primarily in the country's southern waters between Ponta d'Ouro and Inhambane. Between July and October, it's also common to see whales in the north, offshore from Pemba.

For more on the best times and places for spotting some of this marine life, see p47.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mozambique's once abundant wildlife herds have been exploited since at least the 16th century, when there are records of thriving trade in ivory and tortoise shell. In more recent times, the war and poaching have taken their toll. Today, large mammals believed to be extinct or on the verge of extinction in the country include the black rhino, white rhino, giraffe, tsessebe, roan antelope and the African wild dog. The blue Niassa wildebeest is found in the Reserva do Niassa but is thought to be endangered. One snake species, the African rock python, is also believed to be endangered.

The dugong is probably the best known among endangered marine species, while marine turtles are considered threatened. Endangered birds include thyolo alethes and wattled cranes.

## Plants

Mozambique is bursting at the seams with colourful and varied flora. This is most obvious in the array of lavender jacarandas, brilliant red flamboyants, and other flowering trees that you'll see lining the streets of Maputo and other provincial capitals. Along the coast are endless stands of coconut palms, especially in Inhambane and Zambézia provinces, while in drier inland areas, such as around Tete, the landscape is dotted with enormous baobabs – a tree whose rootlike branches make it look as if it were standing on its head.

Large tracts of central and north-central Mozambique are covered by miombo or light woodland, characterised by broadleaf deciduous *brachystegia* trees. Mopane woodland derives its name from the tall, multistemmed mopane tree, which grows well in soils with a high clay content. It is predominant in southern inland areas between Rio Limpopo and Rio Save, and in the upper Zambezi River Valley.

New plant species are being discovered in Mozambique all the time, with close to 6000 recorded thus far. Of these, an estimated 250 are thought to be

found nowhere else in the world. The Maputland Centre of Plant Diversity, straddling the border with South Africa south of Maputo, is considered one of the most important areas of the country in terms of plant diversity and has been classified as a site of global botanical significance. The Montes Chimanimani along the Zimbabwe border are also notable for their diversity of plants, with at least 45 endemic species. Other important highland areas include Monte Namúli, the Gorongosa Massif and Monte Chipirone in western Zambézia province.

## NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES

Mozambique has six national parks: Gorongosa, Zinave, Banhine and Limpopo in the interior; Parque Nacional de Bazaruto offshore; and Parque Nacional das Quirimbas, encompassing both coastal and inland areas in Cabo Delgado province.

Bazaruto is the most accessible, and the most visited. In addition to its tropical island setting, it's famed for its offshore coral reefs and fish and the fact that it hosts the largest remaining dugong population in the region. Various islands within the boundaries of Parque Nacional das Quirimbas can now also be easily (albeit rather expensively) visited and diving can be arranged with all the island lodges both here and on Bazaruto.

Gorongosa is easy to visit if you have access to your own vehicle. For now, the park is primarily of interest to birders and anyone just wanting to experience the bush rather than as a safari destination, although its tourism and wildlife are beginning to make a comeback, thanks to the involvement of the US-based Carr Foundation (see p111).

Parque Nacional de Limpopo is now open to visitors; see p84. Zinave and Banhine are not yet officially open, and have no visitor infrastructure. Both will ultimately be incorporated into a 'transfrontier conservation area' surrounding Parque Internacional do Grande Limpopo, which will link Mozambique's Limpopo park with South Africa's Kruger National Park and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe. For all parks, those under 12 years

The Parque Internacional do Grande Limpopo is part of the larger Peace Parks Foundation initiative that envisions a series of transfrontier conservation areas throughout Southern Africa; see [www.peaceparks.org](http://www.peaceparks.org).

### MAJOR NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES

Park	Features	Activities	Best time to visit
Parque Nacional das Quirimbas (p158)	islands, sea, mangroves & coastal forest: corals, marine turtles, coconut crabs, dugongs & more	diving & snorkelling	year-round
Parque Nacional de Bazaruto (p99)	islands & sea: corals, dolphins, dugongs, marine turtles, flamingos & more	diving, snorkelling, birding	year-round
Parque Nacional de Gorongosa (p111)	grasslands, coastal plain, rainforest & lakeshore: birds, waterbucks, impalas, occasionally hippos, lions & elephants	birding, hiking, vehicle safaris	Apr/May-Nov
Parque Nacional do Limpopo (p84)	rivers & bush, farmland: occasional elephants, plus smaller wildlife & birds	short vehicle safaris, birding	May-Dec
Reserva Especial de Maputo (p79)	woodlands, grasslands, dry forest, coast: elephants, birdlife	camping & limited vehicle safaris	May-Dec
Reserva do Niassa (p150)	miombo woodland, savannas, wetlands, rivers & riparian forests: elephants, antelopes, buffaloes, zebras & more	walking & vehicle safaris	May-Dec

## SACRED FORESTS

A good example of the contributions that local traditions can make to biodiversity conservation is seen in western Manica province around the beautiful foothills of the Montes Chimanimani. Communities here recognise various types of sacred areas. One is the *dzimbahwe* (chief's compound), where each chiefdom has its own spot, generally in a densely forested area, and access is strictly limited. Another is the *gwasha*, a forest area used by chiefs, elders and spirit mediums for rainmaking and other ceremonies. Both the *dzimbahwe* and the *gwasha* are treated with great respect and no development, wood cutting or harvesting are permitted. Hunting is under the control of the chiefs, as is the gathering of medicinal and other plants.

of age are admitted free and those between 13 and 20 years are eligible for the child rate.

In addition to Reserva do Niassa, Mozambique's wildlife reserves include Marromeu, Pomene, Maputo and Gilé, plus numerous controlled hunting areas and forest reserves.

The government has also approved development of several 'transboundary natural resources management areas', including one which is to form part of Parque Internacional do Grande Limpopo. The goal is to try to create an environment favourable for both local residents and the local wildlife, without regard to national boundaries.

A new protected area is in the process of being declared around the Archipelagos das Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas, offshore between Angoche and Pebane. It will protect one of Mozambique's largest green turtle nesting sites. The area is also known for its whales, coral reefs and prolific birdlife, and is a major breeding ground for sooty terns.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

From rampaging elephants destroying farmers' crops and massive flooding to the plundering of natural resources by unscrupulous timber harvesters and commercial fishing operators, Mozambique's challenges to preserving its exceptional ecosystems reads like a high adventure novel. Fortunately the country and its natural resources have come increasingly into the international spotlight over the past decade; WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature) and other organisations are working with the Mozambican government to make large strides in protecting the country's wealth.

Some of the most exciting progress is the protection of Mozambique's marine resources. Highlights here include the recent creation of Parque Nacional das Quirimbas, the creation and recent extension of Parque Nacional de Bazaruto, and ongoing efforts to declare a new protected marine area around the Archipelago das Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas. In the Archipelago das Quirimbas, the area's new protected status has already brought noticeable improvement in the previously rapidly declining fish populations in inshore fishing areas. On the Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas, local fishermen are already working with the WWF to protect sooty tern and green turtle breeding grounds, with a focus on minimising sale and consumption of eggs and products.

On the terrestrial side, as conservation measures and antipoaching efforts have begun to show successes, and populations of elephants and other wildlife increase, instances of human–elephant conflict are increasing. This is particularly a problem in the far north of the country, where elephants eat and destroy crops in large areas of Niassa province, as well as in coastal sections of Parque Nacional das Quirimbas and elsewhere in the region. Thus far, the main way of combating this has been to lay

In 2006, Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood joined forces with The CarbonNeutral Company to plant a new forest in Mozambique's Parque de Nacional Gorongosa. Fans were offered the chance to buy their very own tree in Ronnie Wood Wood, in return for a certificate of ownership designed by the rocker-cum-artist.

Reserva do Niassa is Mozambique's largest protected area. The Niassa-Selous corridor, spanning the Mozambique–Tanzania border, is the world's largest elephant range.



### RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

With the increase in tourism in Mozambique, popular coastal resorts are beginning to show the effects of degradation. Some things you can do to prevent the situation from worsening:

- Don't drive on the beaches. (It's bad for the environment, and illegal in Mozambique.)
- Support the local economy whenever possible – shop at local markets, patronise local establishments and buy local crafts, preferably directly from those who make them.
- Pack up your litter from beaches and campsites.
- Save natural resources. Water especially is a precious resource throughout much of the country. Try not to waste it in hotels, and in rural areas try to avoid spilling or wasting water from communal pumps. Ask permission before drawing water from a community well.
- Look for opportunities to interact with local communities.
- Reciprocation of kindness is fine, but indiscriminate distribution of gifts from outside is never appropriate. Donations to recognised projects are more sustainable and have a better chance of reaching those who need them most.
- Don't buy items made from ivory, skin, shells, turtles, coral, etc.
- Respect local culture and customs.

Also check out the website of the **UK-based Tourism Concern** ([www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)) for some additional steps you can take to minimise your impact.

For more on what's happening environmentally in Mozambique, check out WWF-Mozambique at [www.wwf.org.mz](http://www.wwf.org.mz).

The Endangered Wildlife Trust ([www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)) is also active in Mozambique through its partner, the Fundação Natureza em Perigo.

electric fencing in community areas. However, the fences are expensive and difficult to maintain and it is not possible to use them in all affected areas. More sustainable techniques are also gradually being introduced to complement the fences, including encouraging cultivation of Mozambique's famous *piri-piri* (chilli peppers), clearing of small buffer zones between crop areas and the bush and roping off crop areas with strings soaked in a mixture of oil and chilli peppers.

Illegal timber practices are more complicated to combat, with entrenched interests at every level. An illustration of the challenges is seen in northern and central Mozambique, where tropical hardwoods are felled with little or no regulation. The inspectors who are supposed to patrol forest areas and control logging activities are poorly paid, with little incentive and inadequate resources to do their job. Bribery is commonplace and controls are weak or nonexistent. Reports indicate that even if companies get a logging permit they often operate outside the areas assigned to them. In addition to environmental damage, the widespread practice of exporting unprocessed logs (rather than processing the timber in Mozambique, with the attendant local economic gain) means local communities receive little benefit from timber resources. There is often neither replanting nor sustainable harvesting (ie taking one tree in every 10 in a cyclical pattern) and the potential for farming on the cleared forest is limited, as soils are unsuitable or too thin.

While lasting improvements in the protection and management of Mozambique's timber and other natural resources will only be possible as the country's overall economic situation progresses, there are several bright spots in the picture, including a network of smaller-scale projects focused on sustainable development and community resource management. For one example of what is being done in the timber area, see p108.

# Diving

Travelling around Southern Africa and trying to decide whether to come to Mozambique for the diving? The answer is: come! Although word is slowly leaking out, the country still remains largely unknown and underrated as a diving destination. It's hard to believe when you consider the length of its coastline, the almost-pristine condition of many offshore reefs and the chance of landing coveted sightings of dolphins, whale sharks, manta rays or even dugongs. Quality equipment, instruction and certification are readily available in all of the main coastal areas, including Ponta d'Ouro, Ilha de Inhaca, Tofo, Vilankulo, the Archipelago de Bazaruto, Ilha de Moçambique, Nacala, Pemba and the Archipelago das Quirimbas. Prices are comparable to elsewhere in East Africa, though somewhat higher than in South Africa. Rounding off the picture are an almost complete lack of overdevelopment and commercialism, the natural beauty of the Mozambican coast, seasonal humpback whale sightings, excellent fish diversity and a fine and generally untouched array of hard and soft corals, especially in the north. You'll also have most areas almost to yourself – a treat if you've been fighting for space in more popular dive destinations – plus, in some areas, the adventure of exploring relatively unknown sites.

## INFORMATION Conditions & Seasons

While Mozambique is considered a year-round diving destination, conditions and visibility can vary significantly. The best months are generally April/May to July and again in November/December (August to October can get quite windy). The worst months are generally February and March, when rains are heavy, and some resorts only operate with skeleton staff, though all this varies as you move up the coast. Visibility tends to be best in late autumn and winter (April through October), when water temperatures are between 22° and 25°C. In summer, the water temperature rises to 28° or 29°C.

All ability levels are catered for, with dive sites ranging from shallow snorkelling reefs close to shore, to deeper dives, with depths varying from about 7m to more than 35m. Most dives are done from rubber inflatable boats powered by 2x85HP+ motors, or a similar configuration. An exception to this is diving with some of the top-end resorts on the Bazaruto and Quirimbas archipelagos, and in Nacala, where refitted dhows or yachts are common.

Depending on the location and season, most divers are content with a full 3mm wetsuit, though some operators use 5mm suits as standard.

## Dive Training & Certification

While some travellers get their certification in South Africa and then come to Mozambique to actually dive, quality dive instruction and certification (generally PADI, although a few places also offer NAUI) is available at all of the coastal dive resorts surveyed on p44. For operator listings and contact details see the regional chapters.

Prices for dives and instruction are fairly uniform, though some of the best deals are available up north, and throughout there are often discounts in the low season. Rates average between US\$40 and US\$50 per dive, including equipment and boat travel, and decrease the more dives you do. With your own equipment, expect to pay from about US\$25 to US\$35 per dive. Four-day open-water certification courses cost from about US\$300 to

For general background information on diving in the region, it's well worth hunting up a copy of *Lonely Planet's Diving & Snorkelling South Africa*, which also includes a section on southern Mozambique.

**DIVING SAFETY**

Some things to keep in mind before starting your diving:

- Possess a current diving certification card from a recognised scuba diving instructional agency (and don't forget to bring it with you, together with your log book).
- Be sure you are healthy and feel comfortable diving.
- Obtain reliable information about physical and environmental conditions at the dive site (eg from a reputable local dive operation).
- Dive only at sites within your realm of experience; if available, engage the services of a competent, professionally trained dive instructor or dive master.
- Be aware that underwater conditions vary significantly from one region, or even site, to another and that seasonal changes can significantly alter any site and dive conditions.
- Ask about local laws, regulation and etiquette regarding local marine life and the environment.

US\$450 and should generally be booked in advance, especially during peak seasons and in the south.

If your main reason for coming to Mozambique is to dive, it's worth considering booking a dive-accommodation package. Most of the resort-based operators listed in the regional chapters offer these and they can also be arranged with some of the operators listed on p190. For liveboard arrangements around the Bazaruto and Quirimbas archipelagos, see [www.dive-the-big5.com/html/liveboard.html](http://www.dive-the-big5.com/html/liveboard.html). Pemba Beach Resort Hotel (p156) arranges liveboards in the Archipelago das Quirimbas on its luxury yacht, *MY Fantastique*, and dhow-based liveboard arrangements are possible in Nacala; see p47.

**Dive Operators & Dive Tours**

Most operators are resort-based, with reliable rental equipment, secure washing and drying facilities and South African staff who are familiar with the local terrain and conditions. When choosing, quality should be the main consideration. Take into account the operator's experience and qualifications; knowledgeability and competence of staff; and the condition of equipment and frequency of maintenance. Try to assess whether the overall attitude is serious and professional, and ask about safety precautions – radios, oxygen, emergency evacuation procedures, boat reliability and back-up engines, first-aid kits, safety flares and life jackets. On longer dives, do you get an energising meal, or just tea and biscuits? An advantage of operators offering PADI courses is that you'll have the flexibility to go elsewhere in the country (or world) and have what you've already done recognised at other PADI dive centres.

**PRINCIPAL DIVE SITES**  
**Southern Mozambique**

Most dive sites are in the south, where there is a wide choice of operators.

**PONTA D'OURO & PONTA MALONGANE**

This stretch of coast is a popular destination for divers venturing over from South Africa, and gets crowded during the April and December South African school holidays (see p175), when certification courses should definitely be booked in advance. Visibility is generally better than at sites just over the border, coral growth is prolific at some sites and, with luck, it's possible to

dive amongst sharks (primarily hammerheads and Zambezi), plus potato bass and dolphins (there's also an onsite dolphin tour operator, p77). Most sites are within a short boat ride from shore and there's a good reef wall at the southern end of the point for snorkelling. Most diving is based out of informal dive camps catering to budget travellers and dive-accommodation deals are available. For more upmarket diving, contact Ponta Mamoli (p79).

**ILHA DE INHACA**

Diving from Ilha de Inhaca is tide-dependent and conditions are variable, though on good days you can expect to see a variety of sharks, manta rays, potato bass and more. Bottlenose and humpback dolphins are also sometimes seen, and occasionally dugongs. August and September should be avoided, as it's often too windy to go out.

Until recently, diving has been a one-operator show (no certification courses), but several new developments are planned for the near future so this may change.

Snorkelling features high on the list at Inhaca, with the best snorkelling in the sheltered waters around Cabo Santa Maria, off Inhaca's southernmost tip. For more see p72.

**TOFO & BARRA**

It was diving that put Tofo (p90) on the map, and it's still one of the most popular places in Mozambique to dive and get certified. There's a selection of operators and a lively dive subculture. Corals aren't as plentiful as to the south or north but this is compensated for by the likelihood of manta and whale shark sightings, and the relative proximity to the world-class Manta Reef, plus Amazon and other choice sites.

**RESPONSIBLE DIVING**

As Mozambique's popularity as a tourist and diving destination grows, pressure on dive sites is increasing. Following are some tips for helping preserve the ecology and beauty of the reefs:

- Don't use anchors on reefs and take care not to ground boats on coral.
- Avoid touching living marine organisms or dragging equipment across the reef. If you must hold on to the reef, only touch exposed rock or dead coral.
- Be conscious of your fins. Even without contact, the surge from heavy fin-strokes near the reef can damage delicate organisms. Take care not to kick up clouds of sand, which can smother delicate reef organisms.
- Practise and maintain proper buoyancy control. Major damage can be done by divers descending too fast and colliding with the reef.
- Take care in underwater caves. Spend as little time in them as possible as your air bubbles may get caught within the roof, leaving previously submerged organisms high and dry. Take turns to inspect the interior of a small cave.
- Resist the temptation to collect or buy corals or shells (which is not only ecologically damaging, but also illegal).
- Take home all rubbish. Plastics in particular are a serious threat to marine life.
- Don't feed fish, as this disturbs their normal eating habits and encourages aggressive behaviour.
- Minimise your disturbance of marine animals, including dolphins and turtles.

For some detailed descriptions of diving sites in southern Mozambique, check out [www.diversityscuba.com](http://www.diversityscuba.com), [www.devoceandiving.com](http://www.devoceandiving.com) and [www.barra-diversorts.com](http://www.barra-diversorts.com).

Dive conditions and facilities at Barra (p92) are similar, although Barra has somewhat more upmarket accommodation offerings and you'll need to travel a bit further to get to several of the best sites.

Several of the resorts south of Tofo in the Inhambane area (see Around Inhambane, p88) have inhouse dive operators and this is another possible base for diving in this area. While it's convenient to Manta Reef (and to wonderful snorkelling at Pandane reef just offshore), you'll have to travel a bit to the other main sites.

For more detail on regional reefs and marine life, try *A Field Guide to the Seashores of Eastern Africa & the Western Indian Ocean Islands* by Matthew Richmond, *Coral Reefs of the Indian Ocean – Their Ecology and Conservation* by TR McClanahan et al and *Marine Life of the Pacific & Indian Oceans* by Gerald Allen.

### VILANKULO & ARCHIPÉLAGO DE BAZARUTO

There is wonderful diving and snorkelling around the islands of the Archipélago de Bazaruto, though it tends to be slightly pricier than further south and most sites are well offshore. Among the draws are Two Mile Reef, two miles northeast of Ilha de Benguera (about an hour in a speedboat from Vilankulo), which is considered the best in the area and has a variety of sites. On the inside of the reef is the sheltered Aquarium, which is also ideal for snorkelling. Dolphins and dugongs are highlights, as are seasonal humpback whales. Santa Carolina, which is the only rock island of the archipelago, offers excellent snorkelling. Magaruque island is also a snorkelling destination, with plenty of fish on the reef just off its western shore. The main drawback is relatively long boat rides to most sites, especially if you're based in Vilankulo. Budget and midrange travellers should arrange things in Vilankulo. Most of the top-end resorts on the islands also have dive operators. For more, see p97.

### Northern Mozambique

The north is Mozambique's adventurous frontier, not only for travel, but also for diving. Pemba has long had a low-key but quality dive scene that's now beginning to gain more attention. The newest developments are in the Archipélago das Quirimbas and surrounding areas which are considered to have some of the best unexplored diving to be found anywhere.

### ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

The main attraction of diving here is having Ilha de Moçambique (p137) as a backdrop. Other draws include wall dives off nearby Goa and Sena islands, a 16th-century wreck, sea turtles, dolphins, seasonal humpback whales (August/September to November), sea kayaking and the chance to

### MOZAMBIQUE'S CORALS

Corals are found only between the latitudes of 30° north and 30° south, and although scattered coral communities extend along the Mozambican coast into South Africa, the reefs near Mozambique's Ilha de Inhaca are considered to be the southernmost of the African mainland.

In addition to being fascinating to explore, coral reefs are among the most productive and diverse of the earth's ecosystems. About 25% of the world's fish species depend on reefs during at least some stage of their life cycle. Reefs also protect the coast from damaging wave action and erosion, and contribute to the formation of islands and sandy beaches.

Despite some areas of damage, Mozambique's reefs – including extensive fringing reef systems in the north, and the southern reefs dotting the southern coast at intervals between the Archipélago de Bazaruto and Ilha de Inhaca – are considered to be in generally very good condition and are mostly unexplored; a notable exception are those off Ilha de Inhaca which have been extensively studied. Studies are also underway of the northern reefs around the Archipélago das Quirimbas, with early reports indicating that these may be some of the richest reefs along this side of the continent.

### WATCHING WHALES & MORE

The likelihood of seeing whale sharks, humpback whales, dolphins, manta rays and dugongs is one of the highlights of diving the Mozambique coast. Whale sharks – the world's largest fish – are most prolific in the south during the summer months from about November to March/April, although they are occasionally seen at other times of year as well.

Humpback whales migrate up the southeast African coastline from Antarctica to mate and calve, reaching Mozambican waters around June. Between July and September/October, it's common to see them offshore along the length of the country.

Dolphins can be seen year round, although the winter months of June through August tend to be particularly good. Mantas can also be seen year round, and are almost guaranteed around Tofo and Barra and the nearby Manta Reef. Green and other sea turtles are a highlight of the north. Dugongs are usually sighted around the Archipélago de Bazaruto – see p38.

combine diving with a dhow safari (September to November only, see p140). As there's only one island-based dive operator, confirm your timing with them before setting plans.

### NACALA

Nacala's single – but very clued in and recommended – dive operator (Bay Diving, see p144) has put the enormous, blue Nacala Bay on the map in diving circles. If you have an adventurous bent and are after something different, consider diving at Nacala – it's cutting edge, personalised and well away from standard tourism loops. Diving can be arranged from a customised dhow (which can also be chartered for liveboard arrangements). There's an array of sights within relatively close reach and night dives are organised from shore.

### PEMBA

Pemba has a low-key, agreeable and good value dive scene, with rewarding dive sites, a relaxed, beachside ambience and professional, personalised operators catering to all ends of the market. There are a range of sites, suitable for all levels and diveable year-round.

The diving begins about 500m offshore from Praia de Wimbi, where the coastal shelf drops off steeply, offering a spectacular wall dive. Once you've had your fill here, there are other sites nearby and the Archipélago das Quirimbas is within easy reach.

### ARCHIPÉLAGO DAS QUIRIMBAS

This is Mozambique's newest diving destination and largely unexplored. Most diving here is top-end and based at the island resorts, though it's also possible to arrange packages with Pemba-based operators. Highlights include the protected marine sanctuary around Quilaluia island (which has a PADI dive centre) and the famed Lazarus bank, which is one of the most exciting new destinations in the country. Vamizi (certified divers only) and Rongui islands both have lovely coral gardens close to shore, as does Quilaluia. If you're island-based, there is a range of close-in sites to chose from, and fine snorkelling close to shore on Vamizi and Quilaluia.

There are good overviews of northern Mozambique dive sites on several resort websites, including [www.quilalea.com](http://www.quilalea.com), [www.pembabeachresort.com](http://www.pembabeachresort.com) and [www.medjumbe-resort.com](http://www.medjumbe-resort.com).



# Food & Drink

Mozambique has some of the best cuisine in Southern Africa, blending African, Indian and Portuguese influences. It's especially noted for its seafood, including excellent *camarões* (prawns) and *lagosta* (crayfish), and the ubiquitous *peixe grelhada* – grilled catch of the day. Even local dishes, especially along the coast, have a pizzazz that sets them off from those in neighbouring countries, with liberal use of coconut milk and *piri-piri* (hot pepper) to liven up what might otherwise come off as bland. Meat lovers have their day too, with a good selection of high-quality meats from nearby South Africa.

Whatever the meal may be, it's hard to beat the coastal backdrop – what wouldn't taste good while dining with your feet in the sand, the stars overhead and the waves lapping softly nearby – and the warm and lively local hospitality.

## STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

Local dishes generally consist of a maize- or cassava-based staple (called *xima* or *upshwa*) or rice, served with a sauce of beans, vegetables or fish, and in rural areas, this type of food – together with grilled chicken and chips, which is found almost everywhere – will be the main option. Specialities to watch for include *matapa* (cassava leaves cooked in a peanut sauce, often with prawns or other additions, and rumoured to be one of President Armando Guebuza's favourite dishes) in the south, and *galinha à Zambeziana* (chicken with a sauce of lime juice, garlic, pepper and *piri-piri*) in Quelimane and Zambézia provinces. *Caril* (curry) dishes are also common, as are *chamusas* (samosas – triangular wedges of fried pastry, filled with meat or vegetables) and other snacks. Avocado salads – often with tomatoes – are another treat. Grilled chicken is either plain with salt or liberally seasoned with *piri-piri*.

Along the coast and at most restaurants, the highlight is the excellent and reasonably priced seafood. In addition to grilled prawns, lobster and crayfish, *lulas* (calamari) are also popular, usually served grilled or fried. Inland, around Lago Niassa, the most popular fish is *chambo*.

Throughout the country, bakeries sell delicious, fresh and piping hot bread rolls every morning.

### IS THERE FISH ON THE MENU?

Long gone are the old war days when dining out in Mozambique meant bringing your own food to the restaurant. But eating out can still be something of an experience, especially when it comes to figuring out the rationale behind menu cards. Menu cards in Mozambique are often grand affairs – with long listings of *entradas* (entrées), *pratos principais* (main courses) and *sobremesas* (desserts). They get your mouth watering and hold out the promise of a fancy three-course meal with all the trimmings. Yet when it gets down to placing your order, what's actually available is often much more limited – although it can take a while to find this out. You'll ask the waiter for *cordón bleu*, as advertised on the menu. He will duly write down the order, head to the kitchen and then reappear several minutes later to tell you that *cordón bleu* 'acabou' (is 'finished'). Perhaps the process will be repeated again and then again until finally you get the hang of it and ask what is available. The answer will almost always be *peixe grelhada* (grilled fish) – most likely not the barracuda or other speciality described in glowing terms on the menu but (usually) just as good.

*Hoje Temos... Receitas de Moçambique*, edited by Marielle Rowan, has recipes for Mozambican dishes in English and Portuguese.

For more recipes for Mozambican cuisine, check [www.macua.org/receitas/receitas.htm](http://www.macua.org/receitas/receitas.htm) or [www.receitasemenus.net](http://www.receitasemenus.net) (follow the links to Cozinha Moçambicana).

## DRINKS

Mozambicans enjoy their drinks, and beer (*cerveja*) is available almost everywhere, though outside major cities you'll need to hunt to find it cold. Local brands include Manica and Laurentina, and are sold by the bottle (*garafa*) or can (*lata*). Dois M (2M) – the national lager – is produced jointly by Mozambique and South African Breweries. South African beers are also easy to come by, including Castle, Black Label, Lion and Amstel, as are Namibian beers, such as Windhoek Lager. Portuguese wine (*vinho*) is sold in hotels and in supermarkets in larger towns, and South African wines are easy to find in Maputo and other cities.

The most common local brews (called *nipa* in some areas of the north) are made from the fruit of the cashew as well as *mandioca* (cassava), mango and sugar cane – they are generally rather lethal and to be avoided, at least in larger quantities. Palm wine (*sura*), which is slightly tamer, is common in southern Mozambique, particularly in the area south and west of Maputo, where it is manufactured and then sold over the border in South Africa. The best places for trying local brew are at weddings or other local celebrations, where they are almost always served.

Bottled water (*água mineral*) is available in all larger towns. In villages and rural areas, it can be harder to find, so it's worth carrying a filter if you'll be travelling extensively away from main towns.

Soft drinks (*refrescos* or 'sodas') are available almost everywhere. In cities and larger towns, you usually have the choice of local brand soft drinks (for example, *cola nacional*) or the more expensive international brand. Good imported nonsweetened fruit juices from South Africa, sold in long-life cartons, are available in all larger towns.

## WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Most towns have a *café*, *pastelaria* or *salão de chá* where you can get coffee or a pastry, and inexpensive snacks and light meals such as omelettes, *pregos* (thin steak sandwiches) or burgers. Many of these places also offer more substantial meals (averaging under US\$4), such as chicken and chips and similar fare. Bread is often served, though you may be charged extra for this.

Larger towns and provincial capitals will have at least one fancier restaurant and generally several. Prices and menu offerings at these places are remarkably uniform throughout the country, ranging from about US\$6 to US\$10 for meals such as grilled fish or chicken with rice or potatoes (either fried, *batatas fritas*, or boiled, *batatas cozidas*). Most of these midrange restaurants also offer generally very good Portuguese-style soups, such as *caldão verde* (made with greens and often flavoured with sausage), with bread, and sometimes will have a small dessert menu that will include *salada de fruta* (fruit salad – made almost everywhere with banana, papaya and mango in season) and perhaps a few other choices. In addition, Maputo, Beira and larger towns have an array of restaurants offering a good selection of other cuisines. In villages and rural areas, sometimes the only choice are *barracas* (small food stalls).

If a hotel or restaurant tells you meals or particular dishes are available *por encomenda*, it means that you'll need to make a special order. The best thing to do is to call or stop by in the morning for a meal that evening.

Most restaurants are open daily for lunch and dinner. A few stay open straight through, but more standard are lunch hours from about 11am or noon to about 3pm, and dinner from about 6.30pm until 10pm. The smaller the town, the earlier its eating establishments will close down. Bookings are almost never necessary and are generally not possible anyway. Mozambique's

According to tradition, *ukanhi*, a southern Mozambique traditional brew made from the fruit of the *canhoeiro* tree, should never be sold.

Larger towns have wonderful sidewalk cafés where you can enjoy delicious *bolos* (cakes) or light meals, plus *café espresso* or *chá* (tea), while watching the passing scene.

restaurants are not known for their speedy service and waits of up to an hour (or more, especially when away from major centres) are common. If you're in a rush, stop by the restaurant several hours before you want to eat and put in an order. For info on tipping, see p177.

### Quick Eats

Everywhere in Mozambique – from cities to the smallest villages – you'll find *barracas*, often along the roadside or at markets, where you can get a plate of local food such as *xima* and sauce for about US\$1 or less. If the *barraca* seems to do a good business (with fast food turnover), the surroundings are reasonably clean and the food is well-heated and freshly prepared, you should have no trouble eating at these places and they offer fine insights into local life.

For self-caterers, it's easy anywhere along the coast or around Lago Niassa to make arrangements with local fishermen for a fresh catch, which you can then arrange to have cooked up at your hotel. The best times to look are early morning and late afternoon when the boats come in with their catch. If you plan on shopping frequently at fish markets, it's a good idea to carry your own pocket-sized weighing scale and a plastic bag for the fish.

Markets in all larger towns sell an abundance of fresh tropical fruits – papayas, mangoes, bananas, pineapples, tangerines, oranges and litchis are among the highlights – and a reasonably good selection of vegetables, plus rice and other grains – all inexpensive.

Maputo, Beira and larger towns have well-stocked supermarkets selling imported goods at high prices. South African products are widely available through Shoprite, a South African supermarket chain which has stores in Maputo, Beira, Chimoio and Nampula.

### VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians who eat seafood will have no problems in Mozambique. Otherwise, you will need to be more creative, as many sauces contain meat or seafood. Bean dishes (*feijão*) are available, although not as widely as in other parts of the region, and those served at Brazilian and Portuguese restaurants often include pork or other meat. Nuts – especially peanuts (*amendoins*) and cashews (*castanhas de caju*) – are easy to find on the streets and in markets. For lacto-ovo vegetarians, boiled eggs are available everywhere. Supermarkets in the larger towns usually stock long-life cheese. Yogurt is available in most provincial capitals, though it is often the sweetened, long-life variety rather than the real thing.

There is a large Indian population along the coast and Indian shop owners can often point you in the direction of a good vegetarian meal.

#### DINING MOZAMBIKAN STYLE

An invitation to share a family meal in Mozambique is a real treat. Before eating, it's usual that a bowl of water is passed around for washing hands. The usual procedure is to hold your hands over the bowl while your hostess pours water over them. Sometimes soap is provided, as is a towel for drying off.

A maize- or cassava-based staple or rice will be the centre of most meals. You'll often be offered utensils, but if everyone else is eating with their hands, it's good to do the same. It's a bit of an art and it may seem awkward at first but will start to feel more natural after a few tries. The usual procedure is to take a bit of the staple with the right hand, roll it into a small ball with the fingers, dip it into the sauce and eat it, trying to avoid letting the sauce drip down your arm.

While containers of water or home-brew may be passed around from person to person, it is not customary to share coffee, tea or bottled soft drinks. Following the meal, the water and wash basin are brought around again for the hands.

Mozambique is renowned for its prawns, and annual prawn export revenues exceed US\$90 million.

#### DOS & DON'TS

- If you receive an invitation to eat and aren't hungry, it's OK to explain that you have just eaten, but still try to share a few bites of the meal in recognition of the bond with your hosts.
- Try to leave a small amount on your plate at the end of the meal to show your hosts that you have been satisfied.
- For the same reason, don't take the last bit of food from the communal bowl or serving plate – your hosts may end the evening worrying that they haven't provided enough.
- Don't handle or eat food with the left hand; it's also generally considered impolite to give someone something with the left hand.
- If everyone else is eating with their hands, try to do the same, even if cutlery is also provided.
- Defer to your host for any customs that you are not sure about.

### HABITS & CUSTOMS

Meals connected with any sort of social occasion are usually drawn-out affairs for which the women of the household will have spent several days preparing. Local style is to eat with the (right) hand from communal dishes in the centre of the table. Sodas are the usual meal accompaniment. If water is on the table, it will generally be unpurified.

Three meals a day is the norm, although breakfast is frequently nothing more than tea or coffee and a piece of bread. Coffee is often made with a heavily sweetened mixture of Nescafé or an unappealing chicory blend and Nido milk powder, except in cafés and restaurants where the real thing is available. The main meal is usually eaten at midday.

Street snacks and meals-on-the-run are common. European-style restaurant dining – while readily available in major cities – is not really a part of local Mozambican culture, except among the small elite class, although sidewalk cafés are popular across a broad spectrum. Also common are gatherings at home, or perhaps at a rented hall, to celebrate special occasions, with the meal as the focal point.

### EAT YOUR WORDS

Want to know *matapa* from *mariscos*? Get behind the cuisine scene, by getting to know the language. For pronunciation guidelines see p204.

#### Useful Phrases

##### I'm (a) vegetarian.

*Eu sou vegetariano/a.* (m/f)

e-oo soh ve-zhe-ta-ree-a-noo/a

##### I don't eat meat.

*Não como carne.*

nowng ko-moo kaar-ne

##### I'll have a beer, please.

*Vou tomar uma cerveja.*

vo too-mar oo-ma ser-ve-zha

##### What would you recommend?

*O que é que recomenda?*

oo ke e ke rre-koo-meng-da

##### ... without/with chilli peppers ...

*... sem/com piri-piri ...*

seng/kong pee-ree pee-ree

##### That was delicious!

*Isto estava delicioso!*

eesh-too shtaa-va de-lee-see-a-zoo

##### The bill, please.

*A conta, se faz favor.*

a kong-ta, se faz fa-vorr

##### I'd like (a/the) ..., please.

*Queria ..., por favor.*

ke-ree-a ..., poor fa-vorr

**local speciality**

*uma especialidade local*  
**menu (in English)**  
*um menu (em inglês)*

oo-ma shpe-see-a-lee-daa-de loo-kaal  
 oong me-noo (eng eeng-lesh)

**I'm allergic to ...**

*Eu sou alérgico/a (m/f)*

**nuts**

*oleaginosas*

**peanuts**

*amendãos*

**seafood**

*marisco*

**shellfish**

*crustáceos*

e-oo soh a-ler-zhee-koo/a  
 o-lee-a-zhee-no-zash  
 a-meng-doo-eengsh  
 ma-reesh-koo  
 kroosh-taa-se-oosh

**Food & Drink Glossary****FOOD**

<i>arroz</i>	<i>a-rrosh</i>	rice
<i>batatas</i>	<i>ba-taa-tash</i>	potatoes
<i>batatas fritas</i>	<i>ba-taa-tash free-tash</i>	chips/fries
<i>bife</i>	<i>bee-fe</i>	steak
<i>camarão</i>	<i>ka-ma-rowng</i>	prawn
<i>caril</i>	<i>ka-reel</i>	curry
<i>carne</i>	<i>kaar-ne</i>	meat
<i>chamusa</i>	<i>sha-moo-sa</i>	meat- or vegetable-filled fried dough triangle; also samosa
<i>feijão</i>	<i>fay-zhowng</i>	beans
<i>frango/galinha</i>	<i>frang-goo/ga-lee-nya</i>	chicken
<i>fruta</i>	<i>froo-ta</i>	fruit
<i>lagosta</i>	<i>la-gosh-ta</i>	crayfish/lobster
<i>legumes</i>	<i>le-goo-mesh</i>	vegetables
<i>lulas</i>	<i>lao-lash</i>	squid (calamari)
<i>mandioca</i>	<i>man-dee-o-ka</i>	cassava/manioc
<i>ovos</i>	<i>o-voosh</i>	eggs
<i>ovos mexidos</i>	<i>o-voosh me-shee-doosh</i>	scrambled eggs
<i>pão</i>	<i>powng</i>	bread
<i>peixe</i>	<i>pay-she</i>	fish
<i>prego no pão</i>	<i>pre-goo noo powng</i>	steak sandwich
<i>sopa</i>	<i>so-pa</i>	soup

**DRINKS**

<i>agua ...</i>	<i>aa-gwa ...</i>	... water
<i>fervida</i>	<i>fer-vee-da</i>	boiled (OK to drink)
<i>mineral</i>	<i>mee-ne-raal</i>	mineral
<i>quente</i>	<i>keng-te</i>	hot
<i>(chávena de) chá ...</i>	<i>(shaa-ve-na de) shaa ...</i>	(cup of) tea ...
<i>(chávena de) café ...</i>	<i>(shaa-ve-na de) ka-fe ...</i>	(cup of) coffee ...
<i>com (leite)</i>	<i>kong (lay-te)</i>	with (milk)
<i>sem (açúcar)</i>	<i>seng (a-soo-kar)</i>	without (sugar)
<i>um copo de ...</i>	<i>oong ko-poo de ...</i>	a glass of ...
<i>cerveja</i>	<i>ser-ve-zha</i>	beer
<i>leite</i>	<i>lay-te</i>	milk
<i>sumo de laranja</i>	<i>soo-moo de la-rang-zha</i>	orange juice
<i>refresco</i>	<i>rre-fresh-co</i>	soft drink

**CONDIMENTS**

<i>açúcar</i>	<i>a-soo-kar</i>	sugar
<i>piri-piri</i>	<i>pee-ree-pee-ree</i>	chilli pepper
<i>sal</i>	<i>saal</i>	salt

**OTHER**

<i>almoço</i>	<i>aal-mo-soo</i>	lunch
<i>barraca</i>	<i>ba-rra-ka</i>	street food stall
<i>conta</i>	<i>kong-ta</i>	bill
<i>cozido/a (m/f)</i>	<i>koo-zee-doo/a</i>	boiled
<i>grelhado/a (m/f)</i>	<i>gre-lyaa-doo/a</i>	grilled
<i>jantar</i>	<i>zhang-taar</i>	supper
<i>mata bicho</i> (slang, literally, 'kill the beast')	<i>ma-ta bee-shoo</i>	breakfast
<i>menu</i>	<i>me-noo</i>	menu (a set meal)
<i>mercado</i>	<i>mer-kaa-doo</i>	market
<i>pequeno almoço</i>	<i>pe-ke-noo aal-mo-soo</i>	breakfast
<i>quiosque</i>	<i>kee-osh-ke</i>	snack bar
<i>recibo</i>	<i>rre-see-boo</i>	receipt
<i>restaurante</i>	<i>res-tow-rang-te</i>	restaurant

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