

Southern Mozambique



For over 500 years, visitors have been marvelling at the beauty of the southern Mozambican coastline. For the early Portuguese explorers, its white sands and sheltered bays served as a gateway to the fabled gold fields of the interior, and as convenient staging points on the long sea journey to the Orient. In more recent times, a steady stream of holiday-makers have been lured by promises of heaping plates of giant prawns and grilled *lagosta* (crayfish); languid days cooled by gentle Indian Ocean breezes; sultry nights enlivened by pulsating *marrabenta* rhythms; and the best diving and game fishing to be found in the region.

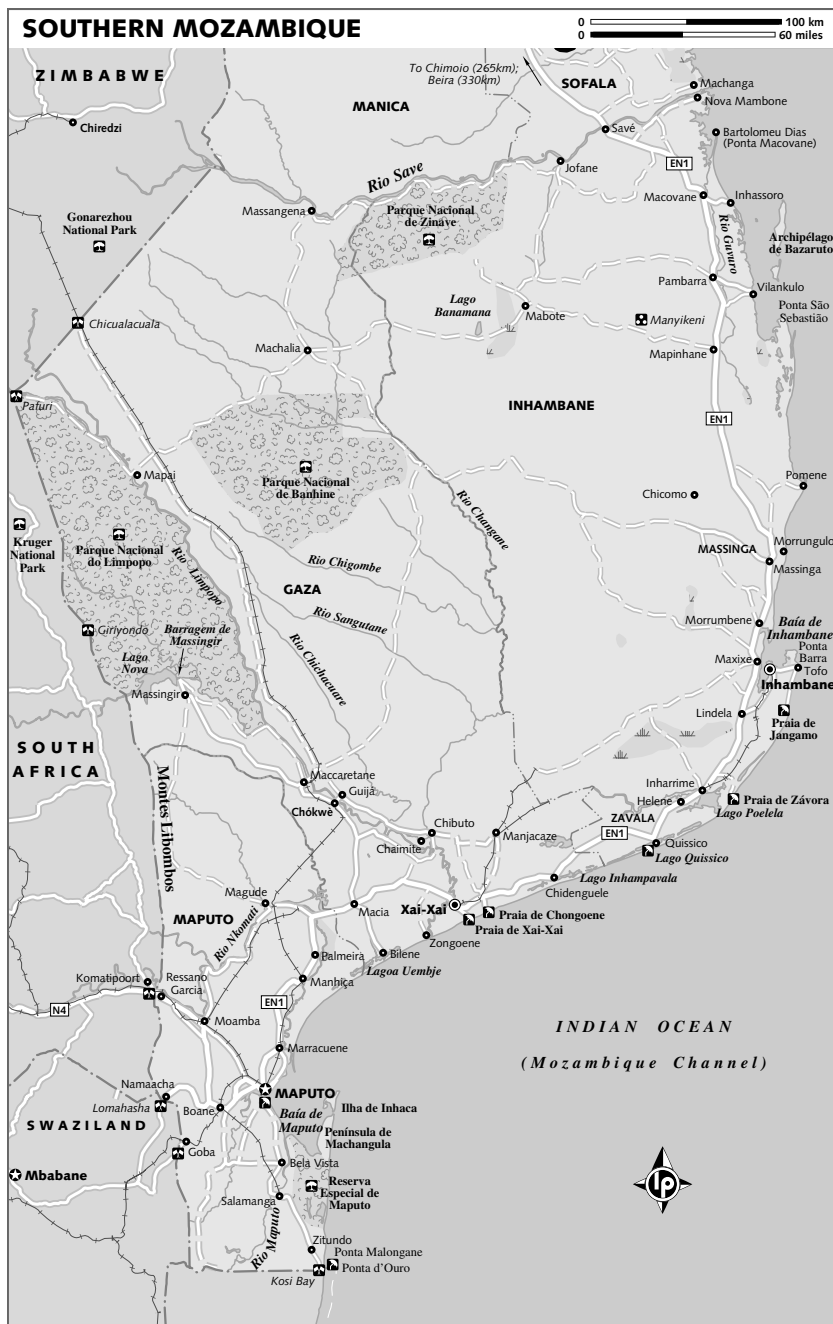
Today, Mozambique's southern coast is the most developed part of the country for tourism. And this popularity is well justified. From Ponta d'Ouro, with its pounding surf and windswept dunes, to the serene lagoons and shallow coastal lakes between Bilene and Závora, and the legendary beaches of Tofo and Barra, it boasts some of the most stunningly beautiful stretches of sand on the continent. In addition to the beaches, southern Mozambique has a wealth of cultural highlights as well, if you have the time to seek them out. These include the famed *timbila* (marimba) orchestras of the Chopi people and a rich body of traditional lore, much of which focuses on the old kingdom of Gaza.

Tourism infrastructure is fast expanding and caters to all budgets. Transport links – especially with nearby South Africa – are good, with sealed major roads and a reliable bus network. If you want an easy introduction to Mozambique, the south is a good place to start.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Plunge into the **Archipelago de Bazaruto's** (p99) turquoise waters amidst shoals of colourful fish
- Stroll along charming **Inhambane's** (p86) waterfront promenade, watching dhows silhouetted against the setting sun
- Drift off to sleep, lulled by the sounds of the sea at **Ponta d'Ouro** or **Ponta Malongane** (p77)
- Wander along the white, palm-fringed sands lining **Tofo** (p90) and nearby beaches and dive with the manta rays
- Marvel at the intricate rhythms and masterful techniques of a **Chopi timbila orchestra** (p83)



**WARNING!**

Southern Mozambique's beaches are spectacular, but don't let the beauty lull you into forgetting common sense safety precautions. See p172 for general tips. Women especially should avoid isolating situations, particularly at the mainland beaches around Tofo and Vilankulo. Enjoy the coastline but always stay within sight of your hotel or the beach alone.

National Parks & Reserves

Southern Mozambique's main park protects the Arquipélago de Bazaruto (see p99). For more on other protected areas, see p84 and p40.

Getting There & Away

There are good air and road links between southern Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland; see p183.

PONTA D'OURO & PONTA MALONGANE

The sleepy colonial-era town of Ponta d'Ouro has boomed in popularity in recent years and is the first Mozambique stop on many Southern Africa overland itineraries. Its best asset is its excellent beach – long, wide and surf-pounded. Offshore waters host abundant sea life, including dolphins and whale sharks and – from July to October – whales. Thanks to Ponta d'Ouro's proximity to South Africa, it fills up completely on holiday weekends.

About 5km north is the quieter and even more beautiful Ponta Malongane, with a seemingly endless stretch of windswept coastline fringed by high, vegetated dunes and patches of coastal forest.

There are no internet cafés, banks or ATMs; South African rands are accepted everywhere.

Activities**DIVING**

For general information on diving, see p43. Dive operators are listed below in the Sleeping section. There's a dive equipment shop under Fishmonger Barracas.

DOLPHIN TOURS

Dolphins frequent the waters offshore from Ponta d'Ouro, and catching a glimpse of these

beautiful creatures can be a wonderful experience. However, they're wild, which means sightings can't be guaranteed – let them come to you, if they wish, and don't go off in wild pursuit or try to touch them.

Dolphin Encounters (below) runs the best tours. Most are done as part of a three-night package from Johannesburg, priced from about US\$422 per person. They include a short marine ecology course plus accommodation with half board, transfers to/from the Kosi Bay border post and – weather permitting – daily dolphin excursions. Walk-ins are accommodated on a space-available basis. Between June and August it's chilly in the boats, so bring a windbreaker.

Sleeping**PONTA D'OURO****Budget**

Tandje Beach Resort (☎ in South Africa 011-678 0972; fax 011-678 0970; camping per person US\$13, 2-/4-/6-person chalets US\$47/112/180, per vehicle US\$0.40) This large, seaside camping ground at the southern end of Ponta d'Ouro has shaded camping and somewhat tatty self-catering chalets with shared ablutions.

It's also the base for a handful of dive camps, which is where most budget travellers stay. All offer simple tented and/or reed hut accommodation, sharing ablutions with the camping ground, as well as diving courses and equipment rental. Most also offer both catered and self-catering options. The camps include the following:

Dolphin Encounters (☎ 82-920 8952, in South Africa 011-462 8103; www.dolphin-encounters.co.za; per person with half board in reed/wooden huts US\$44/55) The best setup, with a choice of wooden huts with mosquito nets or simpler reed huts, and some hammocks for lounging. It's not actually a dive camp, but the base for Dolphin Encounters' dolphin tours.

Simply Scuba (☎ in South Africa 011-678 0972; www.simplyscuba.co.za; per person sharing from US\$22) A cluster of high-domed tents and a communal kitchen.

Scuba Adventures (☎ 21-650026; www.scubatravel.co.za; per person sharing tent/hut US\$23/27) More tents and reed huts, with the main office at Fishmonger Barracas.

The Whaler (☎ in South Africa 011-213 0213; www.thewhaler.co.za; s/d hut from US\$29/42) Reed huts and a kitchen area.

Other recommendations:

Campismo Ninho (☎ in South Africa 082-788 8742; debby.viljoen@metso.net; camping per person US\$11)

Basic camping in a great setting up a steep dune from the beach, with a bar and much more quiet than you'll find at other local camping grounds. It's a few kilometres north of Ponta d'Ouro, en route to Ponta Malongane.

Planet Scuba (☎ 82-809 7971; www.planetscuba.co.za; per person with half board US\$55) On the hillside to the right about 300m before reaching Tandje Beach Resort, with rooms with net, fan and shared bathroom, plus diving and meals. Bring your own towels.

Midrange & Top End

Devocean Diving (☎ in South Africa 082-332 9029, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri only; www.devoceandiving.com; tents per person from US\$55, r per person with full board from US\$66, 8-person self-catering house US\$495) About 400m from the sea along the main road into town, this is basically a dive camp but more pampered. Accommodation is in rooms in the main house or in furnished safari-style tents set around a small garden, with two self-catering houses nearby. Management was changing as we passed through, so check for updates.

Café del Mar (☎ 21-650048; cafedelmarponta@tropical.co.mz; r per person with half board US\$59) This restaurant also has rooms, in spiffy reed chalets closely spaced around a small garden. All have net, fan and shared bathrooms with hot water. It's perched on a hilltop in the town centre about 200m in from the beach – look for the unmissable orange building. If you're after quiet, midweek is best; on weekends the bar has music until dawn.

Motel do Mar (☎ 21-650000; www.pontadoouro.co.za; 4-person chalets with/without sea view US\$105/85) In a good seaside location (though not all rooms manage to have full sea views), this motel is a throwback to colonial days. It has a restaurant that does seafood grills, a 1960s ambience and blocks of faded two-storey self-catering chalets, each with two twin-bedded rooms.

Bugan Villa Sol (☎ 82-310 4360, 84-752 0973; bougainvillasol@gmail.com; per person from US\$70; 🍷) New, and a welcome addition to Ponta d'Ouro's diving-dominated accommodation scene, this cosy B&B-style guesthouse makes a good weekend retreat for anyone wanting a break. There are three double rooms plus two larger family-style self-catering apartments, all impeccably decorated and set around well-tended gardens. There are also braai facilities and the beach is just a five-minute walk away. Prices include breakfast. The guesthouse is signposted from the entrance to town.

Praia de Ouro Sul (☎ in South Africa 082-871 2791; www.praiaedeourosul.co.za; 4-person tents US\$156, 6-person

chalets US\$344) This beautiful place has luxurious logwood chalets on a high, vegetated dune with commanding views over the sea. Each comes with a fully equipped American-style kitchen, veranda and ceiling fans. There are also some safari-style tents tucked away amidst the trees on a forested hillside, each with refrigerator and nearby braai area, and a restaurant serving brunch and dinner. It's about 5km south of Ponta d'Ouro village and signposted from town.

Other recommendations:

Lar do Ouro (☎ 21-650038; info@pontadoouro.com; s/d with half board US\$98/141; 🍷) A homy B&B-style place with rooms (with nets) in white terracotta-roofed cottages and tasty meals. It's about a 15-minute walk from the beach; follow the well-signposted road leading to Praia de Ouro Sul, watching for Lar do Ouro's signboard to your right.

Kaya Kweru (☎ 21-650065; www.u-can.co.za; 2-person cottage US\$62-94, 4-person cottage US\$78-125; 🍷) About 200m north of the town centre and an option if you crave a dive-camp ambience but want more facilities. Accommodation is in rows of closely spaced stone-and-thatch cottages with bathrooms, all set in a featureless compound just in from the beach. There's also a restaurant, an open-air bar facing the sea and a full range of activities.

PONTA MALONGANE

Ponta Malongane is quieter and more spread out than Ponta d'Ouro, without a town, and with an excellent beach. You'll need your own transport here.

Budget

Ponta Malongane (☎ in South Africa 013-741 1975; www.malongane.co.za; camping per person US\$13, dive-camp tents from US\$16, rondavel/log hut d from US\$24/25) This long-running, laid-back place is based at the sprawling and shaded Parque de Malongane. It has various accommodation options, including camping, simple two-person rondavels and small, rustic twin-bedded log cabins. There's also a restaurant, and a large self-catering area. Ask about dive-accommodation deals.

Midrange

Tartaruga Marítima Luxury Camp (☎ in South Africa 083-309 3469; www.tartaruga.co.za; s/d US\$95/147; 🍷) About 2km further north, Tartaruga is a lovely and tranquil retreat, with spacious, comfortable safari-style tents tucked away in the coastal forest behind the dunes and just a few minute's walk from a wonderful stretch of beach. There's no restaurant but there's a

raised lounge-bar and self-catering braai area with views over the open ocean.

Ponta Mamoli (☎ in South Africa 83 444 6346; www.pontamamoli.com; s/d chalets with half board US\$176/281; 🍷) Cosy and pleasant two- and four-person log cabin-style chalets, a restaurant, a bar with good views, a braai area and a small pool surrounded by a large sun deck overlooking the sea. It's ideal for a pampered getaway, set on a quiet and deserted stretch of coastline 11km north of Ponta Malongane, and signposted. Diving, fishing and horseback riding can be arranged.

Eating

The following are all located in Ponta d'Ouro; the only dining options for Ponta Malongane are the restaurants at Ponta Mamoli and Ponta Malongane.

Café del Mar (☎ 21-650048; meals US\$3-6; 🍷 lunch & dinner Wed-Mon) Café del Mar has the best food in town, featuring crêpes and other French fare, plus a bar with live music most weekends.

Scandals (meals US\$1.50-5; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner) This amenable divers' hangout just outside Tandje Beach Resort has all-day breakfasts, omelettes and light meals.

Fishmonger Barracas (☎ 21-650026; meals from US\$5; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner) A popular rooftop gathering spot in front of Café del Mar, with filling breakfasts, seafood platters and other hearty fare.

A Florestinha do Índico (meals US\$5-8; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Several doors south of Fishmonger Barracas, with seating under thatched umbrellas scattered around a shady lawn, plus a selection of grills and other standards.

Other recommendations:

Bar Babalaza (meals from US\$3; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Next to A Florestinha do Índico, with grilled fish, hamburgers, and more.

Bula Bula (meals US\$5; 🍷 lunch & dinner) Next to Fishmonger Barracas, with burgers, pizzas and pub food.

For self-caterers, there's a tiny, pricey grocery store next to Fishmonger Barracas; almost everyone brings supplies from South Africa.

Getting There & Away

Ponta d'Ouro is 120km south of Maputo. The road is in decent shape for the first 60km, but soft, deep sand and slow going thereafter. Allow about 3½ hours in a private vehicle (4WD only).

Chapas depart Maputo's Catembe ferry pier at 8am on Tuesday and Friday (US\$5, five hours). Departures from Ponta d'Ouro are at 8am Wednesday and Saturday. Otherwise, take the ferry (p71) to Catembe, where you can find transport to Salamanga (US\$2.50, two hours) or Zitundo (US\$4.50, four hours), two villages en route. From Zitundo, there's sporadic transport to Ponta d'Ouro (US\$1, 30 minutes), which is 20km further south.

Kosi Bay border post is 11km south of Ponta d'Ouro along a sandy track (4WD), but there's no public transport. Coming from South Africa, there's a guarded lot at the border where you can leave your vehicle in the shade for US\$5 per day. All the hotels do pick-ups from the border from about US\$10 per person, minimum two. Allow about five hours for the drive to/from Durban (South Africa).

There's no public transport to Ponta Malongane, though chapas between Maputo and Ponta d'Ouro stop at the signposted turn-off, about 5km before Ponta Malongane. To get between Ponta d'Ouro and Ponta Malongane, you can walk along the beach at low tide or go via the road.

RESERVA ESPECIAL DE MAPUTO

En route to Ponta d'Ouro and just two hours from the capital is the 90 sq km **Reserva Especial de Maputo** (Maputo Special Reserve; admission per adult/child/vehicle US\$8/2/8), which runs along a spectacularly beautiful and completely isolated stretch of coastline. It was gazetted in 1969 to protect the local elephant population (about 350 in the late 1970s), plus several turtle species. Until recently it was known as the Maputo Elephant Reserve. The elephants, who suffered from the effects of the war and poaching, are estimated to number only about 180 today – most quite skittish and seldom seen but planned restocking should improve chances of sightings. There are also small populations of antelope, hippo and smaller animals. The main attractions are the pristine wilderness feel of the place – it offers a true bush adventure close to the capital – and its birds. Over 300 different types of birds have been identified, including fish eagles and many wetland species. The coastline here is also an important nesting area for loggerhead and leatherback turtles; peak breeding season is November to January.

The heart of the reserve is Ponta Milibangalala, about 35km from the main gate along the sea. While there are few spots that can rival the beauty of the coastline here, the bush road in from the gate is also highly interesting, as it passes through the reserve's rich diversity of habitats, including woodlands, grasslands and dry forests.

Although rehabilitation is scheduled, in conjunction with the planned extension of the reserve, and its ultimate merger with South Africa's Tembe Elephant Park, there are currently no facilities, apart from a basic beachside **camping ground** (camping per person US\$6) at Ponta Milibangalala. You'll need to be completely self-sufficient, including with food and water (water suitable for washing is sometimes available at the main entrance). There's also an area at the main entrance next to the reserve office where you can pitch a tent, though almost everyone goes further in to camp along the beach.

About 4km north of the reserve along the main road (and 8km south of Salamanga village) is **Tsakane ka Madjadjane** – a community development project where you can experience local life, take nature walks, learn about honey-making and get a meal or simple overnight accommodation.

Continuing north within the reserve, past its northern boundary and on to the tip of the Peninsula de Machangula, brings one to **Ponta Torres Camp** (☎ 82-252 4670, in South Africa 083-460 9492; www.africaafrica.co.za/Pontatorres.htm; per person US\$38), a self-catering place targeted at anglers and birders in a beautiful setting on Cabo Santa Maria. It offers rustic safari-style tents (minimum four persons) with bathrooms and cooking facilities. Bring food and drink with you, though a few basics (including beer) are available from the nearby village. A 4WD is essential and you'll need to pay vehicle and entry fees for the reserve.

Getting There & Away

Tour operators organising visits to the reserve include **Dana Tours** (☎ 21-497483, 21-495514; info@danatours.net; 729 Av Mao Tse Tung) and **Nau Tours** (☎ 21-380034; www.nautours.co.mz). **Catembe Gallery Hotel** (☎ 21-380050; www.catembe.net) runs good-value all-inclusive day trips for US\$85 (US\$130 including a night in one of their luxury rooms). If you have your own transport (4WD), look out for the main entrance (known as '*campeamento principal*') marked

with a rusty signboard about 65km from Catembe along the Ponta d'Ouro road. From the turnoff, it's 3km to the park gate, and then about 35km further through the reserve to the coast. There's a second entrance further along the Ponta d'Ouro road, marked with a barely legible signpost, from where it's about 22km into the reserve.

Nau Tours organises visits to Tsakane ka Madjadjane.

NAMAACHA

Cool Namaacha lies on the border with Swaziland, about 70km west of Maputo. Its streets are lined by lavender, jacaranda and bright orange flame trees, and thanks to its favourable climate, it's the source of many of the flowers for sale on Maputo's street corners. The ornate colonial-era church is the main building of interest. At Namaacha's eastern edge is a rusty sign marking the way down to a small **cascata** (waterfall), 3.6km north of the main road and a good picnic spot.

Located on the main road in the town centre, **Hotel Libombos** (☎ 21-960102, 21-960099; d/ste US\$52/70; 🍷) has comfortable rooms, some with views over the hills. There's a **restaurant** (meals about US\$10) and a casino.

Behind the church, **Xisaka** (☎ 21-960330; s/d/ste weekend US\$39/55/70, midweek US\$50/80/102; 🍷 📺 📶) has pleasant rooms with TV, a restaurant and conference facilities.

Chapas run throughout the day to/from Maputo (US\$2, 1½ hours), departing Namaacha from the border, and stopping in front of the market on the main road.

BILENE

Despite a raft of new resort developments in the beach-facing areas, this small resort town seems stuck in a permanent time warp, with a collection of faded 1950s Portuguese-era holiday cottages and an old-timers' feel.

Bilene isn't on the open ocean, but rather spread along the edge of the wide and tranquil Lagoa Uemlje (Uemlje Lagoon), which is separated from the sea by a narrow, sandy spit. Thanks to its sheltered waters and its position as the first resort area north of Maputo, it's a popular destination with vacationing South African families, and on holiday weekends you'll be tripping over motorboats, windsurfing boards and quad bikes. If you're based in Maputo with a car at your disposal, it makes an enjoyable getaway but if you're touring and want some

sand, head further north to the beaches around Inhambane or south to Ponta d'Ouro.

Unlike most of Mozambique's other coastal lakes and lagoons, Uemlje gets influxes of fresh water via a narrow channel to the sea, so conditions vary with the seasons. In general the winter months are best, with breezes and waves.

In the 19th century, the area around Bilene served as capital for the Gaza chief, Soshangane. During colonial days, Bilene was known as São Martinho and the saint's feast on 4 November is still celebrated, often with processions, singing and dancing in the upper part of town away from the beach.

Sleeping

Complexo Palmeiras (☎ 281-59019; www.palmeiras.itgo.com; camping per site US\$12, plus per person US\$5, 4-person chalets with bathroom US\$45) At the northern edge of town on the beach, the long-standing Palmeiras is very popular with South African families. It has good camping with hot-water ablutions, basic reed huts lined up in the sand, a few no-frills chalets, a restaurant and a braai area. Go left along the beachfront road for about 1km.

Praia do Sol (☎ 82-3193040; www.pdsol.co.za; per person with half board US\$86) About 4km south of town along the beach, this place has a collection of spacious two-, four- and five-person A-frame chalets overlooking the lagoon, plus some double rooms; all come with bathroom and nets. There's a restaurant (no self-catering), a bar and diving, canoeing, snorkelling and quad-bikes, plus boat trips across the lagoon to the ocean. Turn right onto the beachfront road and continue for about 3km, staying right at the fork.

Girassol Bilene Lodge (☎ 282-59071; www.girassolhotels.co.za; per person half board US\$85; 🍷) The Girassol (formerly Mahelane) is a pleasant change of pace, on the eastern banks of the lagoon and just over the dunes from the open sea, with four- and six-person chalets scattered around the hillside overlooking the lagoon and a restaurant. There's also swimming over the dunes in the sea. Access is via a short boat ride across the lagoon; in Bilene, leave your car at the guarded lot opposite the Petromoc petrol station, and follow the path from there to the beach to get the boat. Diving, fishing and other water sports can be organised.

Other recommendations:

Humula Complexo Turístico (☎ 282-59020, 21-314576; www.humulahotel.com; d US\$50, ste from US\$60, 4-person chalet from US\$120; 🍷 📺) Set amidst

manicured lawns in the town centre and away from the beach, with doubles, plus modern self-catering chalets (all with kitchenette and sitting area) and a restaurant. Breakfast costs extra.

Pousada São Martinho (☎ 281-59058, 82-722 2390; d US\$20, 4-person chalets US\$80-100; 🍷) No-frills rooms, plus pink block-style chalets set around a fenced compound, each with a tiny porch and a small living room. It's along the main road, just up from the beachfront road.

Eating & Drinking

Most of Bilene's eateries are clustered along or just off the beachfront road. They include **Estrela do Mar** (meals from US\$2); **Complexo Aquarius** (☎ 281-59000; meals US\$3-5), which also has air-con rooms, plus some cooped-up birds; the basic **Tchin-Tchin** (meals US\$1-3), with grilled chicken and chips to take-away; and **Pavilhão Tamar** (meals about US\$3), which also has a weekend disco (entry US\$0.80). Just up from the main road next to the petrol station is **Café O Bilas** (pizzas from US\$3), with pizzas and upstairs seating. Except as noted, seafood grills and Portuguese cuisine are the order of the day. Most places are open daily for lunch and dinner.

Getting There & Away

Bilene is 140km north of Maputo and 35km off the main road. A direct chapa departs Maputo's Xipamanine market at about 7am. Otherwise, go to Junta and have any north-bound transport drop you at the Macia junction, from where pick-ups run throughout the day to/from Bilene (US\$0.50, 30 minutes).

Leaving Bilene, a direct 30-seater bus to Maputo departs daily at 6am (and sometimes again at 1pm) from the town centre near the market (US\$3.60, four to five hours). Otherwise take a chapa (from the roundabout at the entrance to Bilene, about 2km from the beach) to Macia and get onward transport from there.

Driving, the road to Bilene is tarmac throughout. Boat charters across the lagoon can be arranged with Praia do Sol or Complexo Palmeiras or more cheaply with local fishermen (from about \$10 round-trip).

XAI-XAI

Xai-Xai (pronounced 'shy-shy'), and known during colonial times as João Belo) is a long town, stretching for several kilometres along the EN1. It's of little interest to travellers, but its beach (Praia do Xai-Xai or 'Xai-Xai Beach', about 10km from the town centre),

THE GAZA KINGDOM

Gaza province is now famous for its beaches and coastal lakes, but as recently as the mid-19th century it was renowned as the seat of the kingdom of Gaza, one of the most influential in Mozambican history. At the height of its power around the 1850s, it stretched from south of the Rio Limpopo northwards to the Zambezi and westwards into present-day Zimbabwe, Swaziland and South Africa.

One of Gaza's most famous chiefs was Soshangane, who ruled most of southern Mozambique from his base at Chaimite. Soshangane died in 1858 and was succeeded by his son, Umzila, who in turn was succeeded by his son, Ngungunhane. Ngungunhane's first priority was to defend the Gaza kingdom from ever-increasing European encroachment. While outwardly acknowledging Portuguese sovereignty, he allowed raiding parties to attack Portuguese settlements and struck numerous deals with the British, playing off the two colonial powers against each other.

By the mid-1890s, the tides began to turn. In 1895 Ngungunhane was captured by the Portuguese, and spent the remainder of his life in exile in the Azores. He died in 1906, and the mighty Gaza kingdom came to an end.

with invigorating sea breezes, is an agreeable overnight stop if you're driving to/from points further north.

The capital of Gaza province, Xai-Xai was developed in the early 20th century as a satellite port to Maputo, although its economic significance never approached that of the national capital. Running just south of Xai-Xai is the 'great, grey-green greasy' Rio Limpopo (Limpopo River) of Rudyard Kipling fame. It's Mozambique's second largest waterway, with a catchment area of more than 390,000 sq km, and drains parts of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe as it makes its way to the sea. Despite its size, water levels vary dramatically throughout the year, leaving some sections as just small streams during the dry winter months. The wetlands around the Limpopo's lower reaches are rewarding birding areas, and are most accessible near Zongoene.

Information

There are ATMs at **BIM Expresso** (EN1) near Kaya Ka Hina; at Standard Bank, one block behind Kaya Ka Hina; and at the BP petrol station at the northern end of town. For internet access try **Teledata** (per min US\$0.04; ☎ 7.30am-10pm), diagonally opposite Standard Bank.

Sleeping & Eating

Kaya Ka Hina (☎ 282-22391; EN1; s/d US\$15/19, with air-con & bathroom from US\$24/26; 🍴) This is the best deal if you need to stay in the town centre, with clean, no-frills rooms and a restaurant (meals US\$2 to US\$5). It's about 100m north of the *praça* transport stand.

Xai-Xai Camping & Caravan Park (☎ 282-35022; Praia do Xai-Xai; camping per site US\$5, 2-person bungalows from US\$22, 4-person self-catering house US\$55) Xai-Xai Camping (ask for the '*campismo*') is shaded and well located on the edge of the sand, though facilities are rundown. In addition to camping there are a few basic bungalows with shared bathroom, a self-catering house and a slow restaurant. It's just north of Complexo Halley.

Complexo Halley (☎ 282-35003, 282-35014; Praia do Xai-Xai; d with sea view US\$36, ste from US\$40; 🍴) This long-standing beachfront hotel is the first place you reach coming down the access road from town and is the best choice. It has stiff sea breezes, a seaside esplanade, a restaurant (meals from US\$2.50) and pleasant rooms (ask for one that's sea facing), all with bathroom and some with air-con and TV. On Friday evenings there's a disco at the hotel; on Saturdays it's across the road at the esplanade.

Getting There & Away

Buses between Xai-Xai and Maputo depart daily in each direction about 6am and 1pm (US\$5, three to four hours, 200km) from the Oliveiras depot along the main road opposite Banco Austral. However, it's usually faster to try to get a seat on one of the north-south buses. To do this, take a chapa to the bridge control post (*pontinha*) at the southernmost end of town, where all traffic needs to stop.

Chapas, including to Macia (for Bilene) depart from the *praça* transport stand near the old Pôr do Sol complex on the main road at the southern end of town.

The beach is 8km off the main road. Chapas (US\$0.20) depart from the *praça*, or you can catch them anywhere along the main road. They run at least to the roundabout about 700m uphill from the beach and sometimes further.

AROUND XAI-XAI

The lagoon-studded coast north and south of Xai-Xai has a string of attractive beaches – all quiet, except during South African school holidays. It's a fine destination if you have your own vehicle and are interested in birding or just enjoying the tranquil waterscapes.

Sleeping

SOUTH OF XAI-XAI

Protea Zongoene Lodge (☎ 82-402 6791, in South Africa 012-346 8868; www.zongoene.com; camping per site US\$8 plus per person US\$14, 4-person self-catering house from US\$195, s/d with half board US\$161/258) This luxurious South African-run place is set near a good section of sand just south of the mouth of the Rio Limpopo. Accommodation is in spacious 'pool chalets', or more rustic cabins set just in from the beach amid vegetation and low dunes. There's also camping, a self-catering house,

a restaurant and the usual array of activities including fishing, snorkelling and boating. The turnoff is about 15km south of Xai-Xai at Chicumbane, from where it's about 35km further down a sandy track that can be negotiated by 2WD during the dry months.

NORTH OF XAI-XAI

Chongoene Holiday Resort (☎ 82-837 9700, in South Africa 012-997 7786; camping per person US\$10, 6-person chalet per person US\$23) About 8km north of the Xai-Xai Camping & Caravan Park along the beach (or about 12km north of Xai-Xai town via the main road), this still-in-process place is the reincarnation of the old colonial era Hotel Chongoene. It has camping, several rustic self-catering cottages and a restaurant, with more facilities planned.

Paraíso de Chidenguele (☎ in South Africa 082-550 7559; www.chidbeachresort.com; 4-/6-/8-person chalets US\$155/208/258, 'overnight rooms' per person US\$36) A low-key self-catering resort about 70km north of Xai-Xai and 5km off the main road. It's set on a narrow strip of heavily vegetated coast bordered by several shallow coastal lakes, the largest of which is Lago Inhampavala. There are straightforward self-catering thatch-and-wood

CHOPI TIMBILA ORCHESTRAS

The intricate rhythms and pulsating beat of Chopi *timbila* music are among Southern Africa's most impressive musical traditions. The music is played on *timbila* (singular: *mbila*) – a type of marimba or xylophone made of long rows of wooden slats carved from the slow-growing sneezewood tree. In age-old rites of passage, young Chopi boys would go into the bush to plant sneezewood (*mwenje*) saplings, which would then be harvested for *timbila* construction years later when their grandsons came of age.

At the heart of *timbila* music is the *mgodo* (performance), which involves an orchestra of up to 20 or more instruments of varying sizes and ranges of pitch, singers and dancers, rattle or shaker players and a single composition with movements similar to those of a Western-style classical symphony. Rhythms are complex, often demanding that the players master different beats simultaneously with each hand, and the lyrics are full of humour and sarcasm, dealing with social issues or community events.

Following a decline during the immediate postindependence and war years, *timbila* music is now experiencing a renaissance, due in part to the efforts of Venâncio Mbande, a master composer, player and *timbila* craftsman *par excellence*. Like many other Chopi, Mbande left Mozambique at a young age to seek work in the South African mines but kept the art of *timbila* alive and ultimately formed his own orchestra. In the mid-1990s Mbande returned to his home near Quissico, where he began teaching *timbila* music and craftsmanship. His orchestra, Timbila ta Venâncio, has received international acclaim. Numerous other orchestras have since been formed around Zavala district and Quissico is a centre for training young players.

Rehearsals of Venâncio Mbande's orchestra, which are free and open to the public, are held on most Sundays (weather permitting) at Mbande's unassuming house in Helene village – about 25km north of Quissico and just east of the EN1, marked by a small yellow signpost. The annual *timbila* festival in Quissico is usually held sometime between June and August.

GAZA'S NATIONAL PARKS

Although it took a severe blow during the war years, the wildlife which used to roam the interior of Gaza province is slowly making a comeback.

PARQUE NACIONAL DO LIMPOPO

Together with South Africa's Kruger National Park and Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou National Park, **Parque Nacional do Limpopo** (Limpopo National Park; ☎ 21-713000; entry per adult/child US\$8/2) forms part of the Parque Internacional do Grande Limpopo (p40). Gonarezhou connections are still in the future, but Kruger and Limpopo are now linked via the Giriyondo border post, west of Massingir.

Limpopo's most interesting area is the so-called 'sanctuary' – a 30,000 hectare tract along the Kruger border where wildlife translocation efforts are focused. However, sightings are still hit and miss, and it's quite possible to drive through the park without seeing large animals. The only officially open roads are those connecting Giriyondo with Massingir, plus several smaller wildlife-viewing loops. There are people living within the park boundaries so it's likely that you'll also see some of these communities and their livestock on the park's eastern fringes.

Most visitors use Limpopo as a transit corridor between Kruger and the coast. There's also a four-day 4x4 'eco trail' (US\$594 per vehicle) starting at Kruger's Punda Maria camp and continuing south through Limpopo park to the Komatipoort border post (book through www.dolimpopo.com, or www.sanparks.org). Additional offerings: the four-day Massingir Hiking Trail (US\$406 plus accommodation and meal costs) from Barragem de Massingir (Massingir Dam) west along the Rio Machampane, and similarly priced three-night wilderness trails from Machampane Wilderness Camp (for details and bookings, see www.dolimpopo.com).

Sleeping

Campismo Agua Pesqueira (camping per person US\$4, tent rental per day US\$4) This good park-run camping ground has camping along the edge of the escarpment overlooking Barragem de Massingir in the distance plus cold-water ablutions and a few tents for rent. It's about 20km inside the park gate and about 50km from Giriyondo border post. Bring all supplies with you.

Covane Community Lodge (covane2006@yahoo.com.br; camping per person US\$8, tent tr US\$18, bungalow d US\$28, 5-person chalet US\$64) On a rise overlooking Lago Nova and Barragem de Massingir, this good place is about 20km from the main park entrance. It's run by the local Canhane community with support from the Swiss aid agency, Helvetas, and offers camping plus rustic but pleasant accommodation in traditional houses or larger chalets. There are also tasty local meals and impressive sunset views over the water. In addition to trips into the park (from US\$8 per person), staff can organise village tours, visits to a traditional healer and boat trips on the lake. Chapas run daily from Maputo's Junta to Massingir town (US\$7), from where you can arrange a free pick-up to Covane with lodge staff.

chalets (the larger ones have lofts) plus some simple twin-bedded rooms, a bar and meals with advance notice. Snorkelling and fishing are possible with your own equipment. When driving through nearby Chidenguele town, stop for a look at the impressive cathedral.

Nhambavale Lodge (☎ in South Africa 082-326 6350; www.nhambavale.co.za; camping per person US\$14, chalet d US\$64) This relaxing lodge just north of Paraíso de Chidenguele is in a sheltered setting on Lago Inhampavala, and an easy 2km from the sea. In addition to good camping, it offers cosy, fully serviced stone chalets and is ideal for birding.

Also recommended:

Sunset Beach (☎ 82-057 5960; www.sunsetbeache.com; 6-person chalets US\$225, 3-person rondavels US\$90) At the southern edge of Chidenguele beach, with white stone-and-thatch self-catering chalets and smaller rondavels plus a restaurant. Low-key and pleasant.

Nascer do Sol (☎ 282-64500; www.nascer.co.za; camping per person US\$16, chalets per person US\$30-60) About 45km north of Xai-Xai and about 10km off the main road (4WD) amidst low dunes, with rustic, wooden self-catering chalets overlooking the sea and in varying sizes – accommodating from two to 10 persons – plus camping with hot water and a good restaurant.

Machampane Wilderness Camp (www.dolimpopo.com; ord tent with full board US\$285) Limpopo park's first luxury camp, with five spacious, attractive and well-located safari tents directly overlooking the Machampane River in the sanctuary area, about 20km from Giriyondo border post. Guided day and overnight walks can be arranged, as can vehicle safaris (all at extra cost).

Getting There & Away

The Giriyondo border post is about 70km west of Massingir. The main park entrance on the Mozambique side is **Massingir Gate** (☎ 6am-6pm), about 5km from Massingir town on the opposite side of the impressive dam wall (currently being rehabilitated). There's another gate well north of Massingir near Mapai (accessed from South Africa via the Pafuri border post), and while it's not yet officially open, we've heard of several people transiting here.

If entering Limpopo from South Africa, you'll also need to pay Kruger park entry fees, and Kruger's gate quota system (see www.sanparks.org) applies. Only 4WDs are permitted to cross. The road is in good shape for the first 30km or so from Giriyondo but deteriorates thereafter.

From Massingir Gate, it's easy to continue eastwards via Macarretane and Chokwé to the EN1 at Macia, and then north to Xai-Xai and beyond. From Mapai, it's possible to continue on to Vilankulo along a rough route via Machalia, Mabote and Mapinhane (the junction with the EN1, about 55km southwest of Vilankulo); the Rio Limpopo near Mapai is unbridged, and only crossable during the dry season. About 30km before reaching Mapinhane, and signposted to the north of the road, are the overgrown ruins of **Manyikeni** – once the seat of a major trading centre and chieftaincy which was occupied between the 13th and 17th centuries, and which had links to Great Zimbabwe. At the moment the site is quite neglected, although it has been proposed for inclusion as a Unesco World Heritage site.

There's no petrol for sale in or near Limpopo; the closest tanking up stations on the Mozambique side are in Xai-Xai and (less reliably) at Manjacaze or Chibuto. Travelling via Mapai, there is no fuel until Mapinhane.

PARQUE NACIONAL DE BANHINE (BANHINE NATIONAL PARK)

Banhine is currently completely undeveloped as a protected area and has no large wildlife of note. Camping is possible but there are no facilities and you'll need to be completely self-sufficient.

PARQUE NACIONAL DE ZINAVE (ZINAVE NATIONAL PARK)

Actually in Inhambane province, except for a tiny corner extending into Gaza, Zinave is also completely undeveloped, although rehabilitation of park infrastructure is underway. It's wild, beautiful and somewhat wetter than Banhine, thanks to the Rio Save along its northern border, and an intriguing birding destination, though also with no large wildlife of note. It's sometimes used as an overnight stop by those transiting the rugged bush route to the coast but for any camping you'll need to be self-sufficient.

QUISSICO

Quissico, capital of Zavala district, is noteworthy for being one of the main meal and bathroom stops on long-haul bus routes along the EN1. If the bus stops for long enough, look down the escarpment eastward to a chain of shimmering, pale blue lagoons in the distance. Quissico's other claim to fame is that it's the centre of the famed Chopi *timbila* (marimba) orchestras, and site of the annual *timbila* festival.

About 11km from Quissico, **Praia Mar e Sol** (www.reviteresort.com; camping per adult/child US\$12/6, chalet per person US\$34) is sandwiched between the

beach and the lagoon, on the inland side of the dunes. It has 10 campsites set amidst the vegetation, each with its own braai area, plus a six-person self-catering chalet. There's no restaurant; bring all supplies.

On the EN1, **Pousada de Zavala 'Quissico'** (☎ 293-65007; r US\$10-14) is the main place to stay in the town centre, with undistinguished rooms sharing bathrooms, and a restaurant. Just behind is a good viewpoint over the lagoons.

Quissico is 130km northeast of Xai-Xai on the EN1. To reach the lagoon and Praia Mar e Sol, take the signposted turn-off just north

of town, from where it's 11km down to the water (4WD).

PRAIA DE ZÁVORA

About 55km north of Quissico and about 80km south of Inhambane is Praia de Závora (Závora Beach), yet another beautiful stretch of southern Mozambican coastline. There's a reef here for snorkelling and the fishing is rumoured to be good. Otherwise, the main activities are relaxing and taking walks to the nearby lighthouse.

Závora Lodge (www.zavoralodge.com; camping per person US\$8.50-12.50, 4-/6-person bungalows US\$94/140, 8-person house US\$212) has camping, including a few sites on the seaside of the dunes, some with *barracas* (food stalls) and all with basic ablutions; self-catering reed bungalows with hot and cold water; a couple of self-catering houses on the beach; and meals (with advance notice). The bungalows and houses come with bedding and mosquito nets but otherwise bring everything with you. The turn-off is signposted 11km north of Inharrime town (no public transport), from where it's 17km further down a sandy track that's usually negotiable with 2WD.

Just north of the Závora Lodge turnoff, and about 12km from Inharrime town, is the turnoff for the more upscale and not-yet-operational **Dolphin Lodge** (www.zavora.co.za).

INHAMBANE

With its serene waterside setting, tree-lined avenues, faded colonial-style architecture and exotic mixture of Arabic, Indian and African influences, Inhambane is one of Mozambique's most charming towns and well worth a visit. It has a history that reaches back at least 10 centuries, making it one of the oldest settlements along the coast. Today Inhambane is the capital of Inhambane province, although

it's completely lacking in any sort of bustle or pretence. It is also the gateway to a superb collection of beaches, including Tofo and Barra.

History

As early as the 11th century, Inhambane served as a port of call for Arabic traders sailing along the East African coast. Textiles were an important commodity, and by the time the Portuguese arrived in the early 16th century, the area boasted a well-established cotton-spinning industry. In 1560 Inhambane was chosen as the site of the first Jesuit mission to the region. Development was also helped along by Inhambane's favourable location on a sheltered bay, and before long, it had moved into the limelight as a bustling ivory trading port. By the early 18th century, the Portuguese had established themselves here, together with traders from India. This mixture of Indian, Christian and Muslim influences continued to characterise Inhambane's development in later years, and is still notable today.

In the coming decades, the focus of trade shifted from cloth and ivory to slaves. By the mid-18th century, an estimated 1500 slaves were passing through Inhambane's port each year, and this human trafficking had become the town's economic mainstay.

In 1834 Inhambane was ravaged by the army of the Gaza chief, Soshangane. However, it soon recovered to again become one of the largest towns in the country. The abolition of the slave trade in the late 19th century dealt Inhambane's economy a sharp blow. The situation worsened in the early 20th century as economic focus in the region shifted southwards to Lourenço Marques (now Maputo). Many businesses moved south or closed, and Inhambane began a gradual decline from which it still has not recovered.

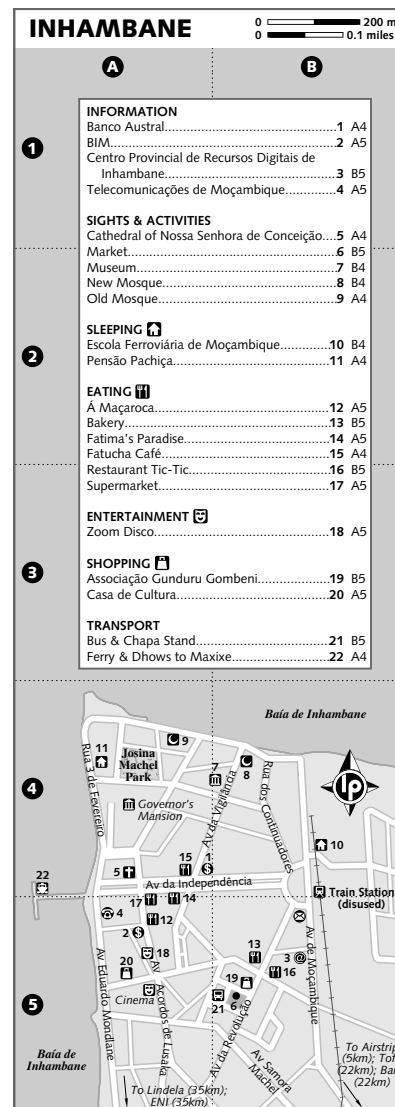
Information

There's a good map of Inhambane, complete with historical background information, published by GTZ. Ask around town, or at Bar Babalaza at the Tofo-Barra junction.

Banco Austral (Av da Independência) Two branches just up from the ferry, with an ATM on the north side of the road.

BIM (Av Acordos de Lusaka) Opposite Á Maçaroca restaurant; ATM.

Centro Provincial de Recursos Digitais de Inhambane (Av da Moçambique; per min US\$0.02; ☎: 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat; 🌐) Internet access.



Telecomunicações de Moçambique (Av Eduardo Mondlane; ☎: 7am-10pm) Domestic and international telephone calls; head right coming off the ferry jetty.

Sights & Activities

Strolling around Inhambane's quiet traffic-free streets comes as a treat if you've been frequenting some of Mozambique's other urban areas.

The stately **Cathedral of Nossa Senhora de Conceição**, dating from the late 18th century, is one of the main landmarks. It rises up behind the newer cathedral, just north of the jetty. North of here, reached by following the waterfront road, is the small **old mosque** (1840). The **new mosque** is several blocks further east. Don't miss strolling along the **waterfront** at sunset, and watching the sun sink into the flamingo-frequented Baía de Inhambane (Inhambane Bay).

Inhambane's colourful **market** is at its best in the early morning. Also recommended is the tiny **museum** (Av da Vigilância; admission free, donations welcome; ☎: 8am-3pm Mon-Sat) near the new mosque. Its displays include collections of traditional musical instruments, clothing and household items from the surrounding area, with some captions in English.

About 10km northeast of Inhambane in the bay are two islands, **Ilha dos Ratos** (Isle of Rats) and **Ilha dos Porcos** (Isle of Pigs). Boats can be arranged through Pensão Pachica; allow at least five hours for the trip.

Sleeping

Pensão Pachica (☎: 293-20565, 293-20046; farolturismo@teledata.mz; Rua 3 de Fevereiro; dm/d US\$11/40) This fine backpackers on the waterfront near the cathedral has been given a complete refurbishing and is the best place to stay. It has dorm beds, a few private rooms, an outdoor restaurant-bar-pizza area, a rooftop with sunset views, and a resident masseur and beauty centre. Rooms have nets and clean shared bathrooms, and the owner can assist with arranging excursions. The same management also runs the campsite at Barra lighthouse (p92). Take a left coming off the ferry jetty; Pensão Pachica is about 300m down.

Escola Ferroviária de Moçambique (☎: 293-20781; Av da Moçambique; r without/with fan US\$15/19) By the train station at the eastern edge of town, this is the only other choice. It has functional but soulless attached doubles (no nets), with each two-room unit sharing a bathroom. Unless they are full, you'll usually only be charged per occupied bed, rather than for the entire room. From the ferry jetty, continue straight through town to the end of the main road and look for the grey monstrosity.

Eating

For inexpensive local meals try **Fatucha Café** (Av da Independência; meals from US\$2; ☎: 8am-8pm Mon-Sat), with outdoor seating, or **Restaurant Tic-Tic** (Av da

TANGERINAS DE INHAMBANE

Mention Inhambane province to a Mozambican, and chances are they will say something about *tangerinas de Inhambane*. In season, you'll see bushel baskets lining the roadsides piled to overflowing. The fruit has even made it into local pop culture through the poem, *As saborosas tangerinas d'Inhambane*, written by renowned Mozambican poet José Craveirinha.

LAND OF THE GOOD PEOPLE

On arrival in Inhambane, 15th-century Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama was reportedly so charmed by the locals that he gave the area the name *terra da boa gente* or 'land of the good people'.

Revolução 227a; meals US\$2-3), diagonally opposite the market. Next to the market is a **bakery** (Av da Revolução), with piping hot, fresh rolls.

Fatima's Paradise (Av da Independência) has a shaded outdoor seating area, with snacks and drinks from the adjoining Takeaway Sazaria. Upstairs is a rooftop bar without much of a drink selection but with views over town and the bay.

One block south of Av da Independência, **Á Maçaroca** (☎ 293-20489; Av Acordos de Lusaka; meals US\$6-10; 🍷 9am-11pm Mon-Sat) is Inhambane's only midrange restaurant, with a selection of grilled fish, meat, curries and other dishes.

There's a reasonably well-stocked **supermarket** (Av da Independência) just up from the jetty.

Shopping & Entertainment

For woodcarvings and other crafts, try the **Associação Gunduru Gombeni** (🕒 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat), next to the market. They are also a good contact for local cultural events and theatre productions.

The provincial Casa de Cultura (House of Culture), across from the cinema, is a good place to meet local musicians or arrange lessons.

Zoom Disco, just off Av Acordos de Lusaka and behind the Pep Store, is the main night-spot, but it's much nicer to go have a drink at the popular bar at Pensão Pachiça.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are three flights weekly to/from Maputo (US\$164 one-way) on LAM that connect reasonably well with onward flights to Johannesburg. There are also frequent charter flights to/from Johannesburg. Check with places listed in the Tofo and Around Inhambane Sleeping sections for an update on charter operators. If you are unable to find a Johannesburg-Inhambane flight, another option is flying from Johannesburg to Vilankulo (p95) and then taking a bus to Inhambane.

BOAT

Between about 6am and sunset, an old and precipitously overloaded ferry runs sporadically throughout the day between Inhambane and Maxixe (US\$0.50, 20 to 25 minutes), alternating with smaller motor boats. Minor mishaps, such as getting stuck on sandbanks during low tide, are routine. Dhows do the trip more slowly for US\$0.15 and one of Inhambane's great morning sights is sitting on the jetty and watching them load up. To charter a motorboat for yourself costs US\$5 for the boat; the journey takes about 10 minutes.

BUS

The bus station is behind the market. Chapas to Tofo depart throughout the day (US\$0.60, one hour). Oliveiras buses to Maputo depart at 6am and 11am (US\$9, seven hours, 450km). It's faster to catch one of the 30-seaters – at the moment the main lines are Inhambane Ceu and Inhambane Expresso – which depart at 5am (US\$8). For other southbound buses, and for all northbound transport, you'll need to head to Maxixe.

Coming from Maputo, Inhambane Ceu and other smaller buses depart Junta between 5am and 7am. Alternatively, take any northbound bus to Maxixe.

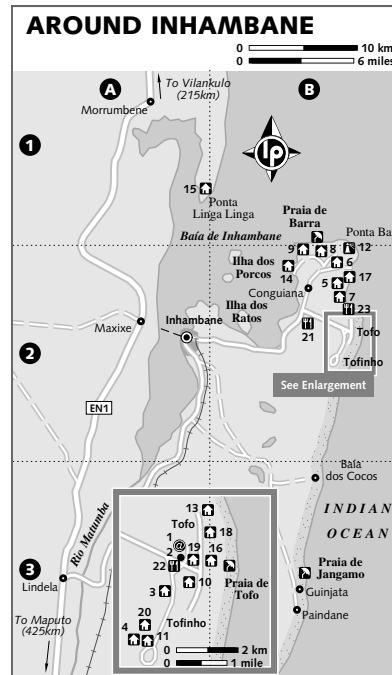
For shuttles between Swaziland and Tofo, see p188.

AROUND INHAMBANE

The coast southeast of Inhambane is lined by a succession of attractive beaches, and is a good destination for families. Facilities are geared toward drive-in visitors looking for a self-catering holiday though most can also organise transfers to/from Inhambane. Most places have only limited facilities during the off-season (any time other than South African holidays), and during the holidays they're often fully booked. All are accessed by well-signposted, sandy (4WD) access roads, branching off the main road between about 10km and 35km south of Inhambane. Listings here are roughly north to south.

Sleeping

Coconut Bay (Baía dos Cocos; ☎ 293-20882, 82-311 7250; www.coconutbay.co.za; camping per person US\$12 plus per site from US\$8, s/d casitas US\$42/75, 4-person rondavels US\$128, 6-person chalets from US\$188) This pleasant, low-key place has camping barracas amidst the palms, plus a range of self-catering rondavels and



chalets, most set back from the beach, and some on the edge of the dune overlooking the water. There are also a few no-frills *casitas* with bathroom, but without self-catering facilities, a restaurant/bar and a dive centre (certified divers only). The turn-off is signposted about 10km south of town, from where it's 17km further.

Jeff's Palm Resort (☎ 293-56063, in South Africa 013-750 2439; www.jeffsmoz.com; 8-person camping barracas US\$34, plus per person US\$10, 4-/8-person houses US\$129/300) Another good spot, the small Jeff's Resort is nestled in the palm groves behind the dunes, with a collection of self-catering houses, plus barracas for camping, each with its own ablutions block and cooking area. There's a restaurant and bar, and diving and fishing can be arranged. Bring your own towels and mosquito nets (and, for the barracas, all camping gear).

Jangamo Beach Resort (☎ in South Africa 013-750 2439; www.jangamo.co.za; d US\$55, 6-person chalets US\$155, 6-person houses US\$219) About 22km off the main road and immediately south of Jeff's Resort, Jangamo is set on the dunes overlooking and somewhat back from the sea. Rooms include doubles in the main lodge, reed and thatch chalets and some six- to eight-person houses.

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All have hot water and the chalets and houses have their own bathrooms. There's a bar and a good restaurant and fishing charters can be organised.

Guinjata Bay Resort (☎ in South Africa 013-741 2795; www.guinjata.com; camping per person US\$17, 2-/3-/4-bedroom chalets US\$146/211/273) A large, sprawling place set among the dunes, with a range of camp sites and self-catering chalets, plus a restaurant. Fishing charters can be arranged with advance notice and there's diving (including instruction).

Sea Blue Scuba Safaris (☎ 84-644 8370, in South Africa 013-744 0357; www.seablue.co.za; 2-/3-/4-room chalets from US\$159/239/212) Sea Blue is mainly a dive centre that's recently expanded and now offers its own accommodation, with stone-and-thatch chalets on the dunes, including some with private bathrooms, some with self-catering facilities and some with views of the water. There's also a restaurant, and half-board rates are available.

Paindane Beach Resort (☎ 082-569 3436; www.paindane.com; camping per adult/child US\$10/5, 4-/6-person chalets from US\$91/118, 8-pe-rson villas from US\$250)

About 35km southeast of Inhambane by road, the good Paindane has camping barracas, as well as reed-and-thatch chalets on the dunes overlooking the sea and larger, less appealing 'villas'. All are self-catering (bring your own sleeping bag or sheets), though there's a good restaurant and bar as well. Diving and instruction are available, and there's snorkelling equipment for rent and wonderful snorkelling at low tide just offshore.

TOFO & TOFINHO

Thanks to its sheltered azure waters, long stretches of white sand, easy access and fine diving, the beach at Tofo has long been legendary on the Southern Africa holiday circuit. The beach runs in a long arc, at the centre of which is a small town with a perpetual party-time atmosphere. Just to the south and easily accessed from Tofo is Tofinho, set on a green hillside looking out over turquoise waters, and known for its strong currents, its good wave and its surfing vibe. Many people come to Tofo expecting to spend a few days, and instead stay several weeks or more. If the partying crowd isn't your scene, head around the point to quieter Barra, or further north or south.

Tofo On-Line (per hr US\$5; ☎ 10am-6pm Thu-Tue), in the town centre, has internet access and milkshakes. The closest banks and ATMs are in Inhambane.

Diving

Tofo is Mozambique's unofficial diving capital. For diving information, see p43. Dive operators (both PADI Gold Palm) include: **Diversity Scuba** (☎ 293-29002; www.diversityscuba.com) in the town centre.

Tofo Scuba (☎ 82-826 0140; www.tofoscuba.com) Based at Casa Barry.

Surfing

Surfers should head straight to Tofinho's Turtle Cove – check out their website (www.feralsurf.com) for a description of conditions. The Waterworks Surf & Coffee Shop, near Diversity Scuba, rents and sells gear (for diving, too).

Sleeping

TOFO

Budget

Bambooz (☎ 293-29040; camping US\$9, dm US\$14, 2-/4-person bungalows US\$23/46, 4-person chalets/honeymoon ste US\$94; 🍷) Justifiably popular, with a large,

thatched and circular dorm plus camping, hot-water ablutions, a kitchen area, bungalows and chalets nestled amongst the palms behind a high dune, a dune-top bar-restaurant with fantastic views and a dive operator. It's 3km north of town along a sandy road. Management was changing when we passed through, and we've received some complaints, but hopefully things should be sorted out by now. Wednesday and Friday are party nights.

Fatima's Nest (☎ 82-4145730; www.mozambiquebackpackers.com; camping per person US\$5, dm US\$7-9, 2-/3-person bungalow US\$24/36) A low-key, rather makeshift place about 1.5km south of Bambooz's in a (sometimes very) breezy setting on low dunes directly overlooking the beach. On offer: camping, tents for rent, no-frills reed bungalows, a kitchen, bar, pool table and – if the partying doesn't wear you out – a trampoline, plus good dinners and evening beach bonfires. Staff can help sort you out with pick-ups from Inhambane and excursions.

Pensão Tofo (☎ 82-827 4590, in South Africa 083-308 0733; dm/d US\$8/23 🍷) Small, clean and without the beach vibes, but nevertheless a good budget bet – especially if you're visiting during the rainy season, when the beachside backpackers tend to get flooded out. It has several rooms – including a six-bed dorm with fan and nets, plus an air-con double, all with shared bathroom and a kitchen. A restaurant, bar and pizzeria are coming soon. It's opposite Tofo On-Line in the town centre.

Nordin's Lodge (☎ 293-29009; 2-/4-person chalets with bathroom US\$50/100) The quiet Nordin's is at the far northern end of town, just south of Fatima's Nest. It has rustic but spacious thatched chalets with hot water, fridge and self-catering facilities.

Midrange

Casa Barry (☎ 293-29007, in South Africa 082-808 5523; www.casabarry.com; camping per site US\$8, d reed/brick casita US\$70/86, 4-/6-person chalets US\$172/206) Well-located on the beach at the southern end of town, this is one of the better midrange choices. To the back of the compound is a camping area, and to the front a collection of closely spaced, rustic reed-and-thatch self-catering chalets and a beachfront restaurant. Fishing charters can be arranged, and there's an onsite dive operator.

Albatroz (☎ 293-29005, 293-29034; restalbatroz@teledata.mz; s/d US\$32/48, 4-/6-/8-person chalets

US\$74/112/132) Mainly known as one of Tofo's better restaurants, with some reasonable if rather cluttered self-catering chalets (including well-outfitted kitchens with microwaves) and a handful of rooms. Most rooms have an exterior window and a semi-interior one covered with thatching that blocks ventilation.

Aquático Lodge (☎ 82-857 2850; aquatico.lodge@teledata.mz; 5-person chalet US\$141) This self-catering place is at the far northern end of the beach, about 3.5km from town. There are a handful of five-person A-frame houses set behind the dunes, all with loft and raised veranda, plus a restaurant and quad bikes for hire.

Mango Beach (☎ 82-943 4660; luckylil@webmail.co.za; r US\$20, 4-person house US\$55, 6-person chalet US\$102) Tofo's northernmost lodge at the moment, about 500m up from Aquático Lodge and about 4km from town via road. There's a dune-top bar-eating area with impressive views over the long beach, plus a large cluster of cabanas and chalets behind the dunes. Rooms are basic – with shared bathrooms and you'll need your own linens. Much nicer are the houses (also with shared bathroom), and the chalets, which come with their own kitchenette, bathroom and all bells and whistles. For swimming, best to head a bit south, to avoid the rocks just in front.

Hotel Tofo Mar (☎ 82-294 5150; hoteltofomar@yahoo.com.br; s/d US\$38/70, with sea view from US\$42/75; 🍷) In a prime location directly on the beach in the town centre, this is the only hotel (ie, nonbungalow style place). Although rather faded these days, management is planning an upgrade. Once completed, it will be worth checking out. There's a restaurant and a bar, and the sea-view rooms have small, breezy balconies overlooking the beach.

To rent no-frills **private beach houses** (4-person house from US\$100) in Tofo town, ask around at Pensão Tofo or Dino's bar.

TOFINHO

With its superb turquoise vistas and top-notch surfing, Tofinho – just over the escarpment from Tofo – draws its own crowd.

Budget

Turtle Cove (☎ in South Africa 011-803 4185; www.feral surf.com; camping per person US\$8, dm US\$12, r per person with bathroom in reed/stone bungalows US\$16/22) Turtle Cove has been completely rebuilt after being damaged several years ago in a fire, and is *the*

place to go if you're interested in surfing or chilling. There are pleasant stone-and-thatch casitas, plus simpler reed and thatch bungalows (gradually being upgraded to stone) set amidst the palm trees. All have private bathroom and there's a common area with Moorish overtones. Other attractions: evening bonfires, yoga instruction, surf board rental (guests only), video equipment for filming your surfing and good meals. Bring your own bedding for the dorms.

Midrange

Annastasea (☎ in South Africa 011-803 4185; bookings@mozcon.com, or through Turtle Cove; 12-person house US\$390) This classy and spacious house with ochre, tile and wood overtones and a vaguely Moorish ambience is an optimal choice if you're in a group. It's set on expansive lawns, with full facilities – beautiful kitchen, washing machine, etc – in the main house and four adjoining three-person cottages, all with mosquito netting. In high season it's only rented in its entirety but off-season is generally available for about US\$23 per person.

Casa de John (Casa Amarela; ☎ 82-451 7498, in South Africa 011-827 5745; www.casajohn.co.za; 6-person house US\$189; 🍷) Very nice, fully equipped two- and three-bedroom self-catering houses in a breezy setting on the cliff overlooking the sea.

Eating

TOFO

Casa de Comer (☎ 82-764 8160; meals US\$7; ☎ 10am-9pm Wed-Mon) This is Tofo's classiest cuisine, with a Mozambique-French fusion menu that changes daily (delicacies include seafood lasagne and fish creole with saffron) plus wines, all reasonably priced and served against a backdrop of candlelight and classical music.

Waterworks Surf & Coffee Shop (breakfasts US\$2-3.50, light meals US\$4; ☎ 7am-5pm Tue-Sun) Another great addition to the Tofo dining scene, with excellent breakfasts plus a small menu of light meals and (coming soon) evening hours and dinners. It's next to Diversity Scuba in the town centre.

Dino's Beach Bar (meals from US\$2; ☎ 10am-late Thu-Tue) Good vibes, good music and good food on the beach just past Fatima's Nest, this is Tofo's main hangout. On offer: pizzas, seafood, toasted sandwiches, salads, full breakfast, desserts and more.

Albatroz (☎ 293-29005; restalbatroz@teledata.mz; meals from US\$5, breakfast buffet US\$14; ☎ lunch & dinner)

At the top of the hill in the town centre, and worth the walk or drive up, this restaurant offers delicious seafood dishes, generally prompt service and a good Sunday breakfast buffet.

TOFINHO

Turtle Cove is the place to go, with its eclectic mix of dishes, sometimes featuring sushi, and a laid-back ambience. Bar closing time is at 11.30pm. Everywhere else in Tofinho is self-catering.

Getting There & Away

There are chapas throughout the day along the 22km asphalt road between Tofo and Inhambane, with the first reliable departure from Tofo about 6am (US\$0.60, one hour). There's no direct transport to Maputo or points north; you'll need to go via Inhambane or Maxixe, which means that to catch an early northbound or southbound express bus, you'll need to stay in Inhambane the night before. If you leave early from Maputo, it's possible to get to Inhambane in time to continue straight on to Tofo that day, with time to spare.

Tofinho is a 15- to 30-minute walk from Tofo, depending on which route you take.

BARRA

Barra's beach is just as beautiful as that at Tofo, featuring surf, sand dunes and palm groves. It's set at the tip of the Barra peninsula, at the point where the waters of Baía de Inhambane mix with those of the Indian Ocean. On the bay side are stands of mangrove and wetland areas that are good for birding. There's been a building spree in recent years – mostly South African-run self-catering places – but unlike Tofo, there's no town here, and everything's quite spread out. This is no problem if you have your own transport – many self-drivers prefer Barra's generally quieter scene and its greater range of midrange lodging options – but Tofo is a better bet if you're backpacking.

Diving

For general diving information see p43. Dive operators (all offer instruction, and can organise snorkelling and other water sports) include:

Barra Lodge Scuba Diving (www.barradiveresorts.com; Barra Lodge) Also arranges diving around Pomene.

Barra Reef Divers (www.barrareef.co.za; Barra Reef)

Fishing

Barra has long been a popular angler's destination. Good contacts include **Hains Fishing Charters** (www.hainsfishingcharters.co.za) and Barra Lodge.

Sleeping & Eating

Farol de Barra (☎ 82-960 3550, 82-355 9590; www.barralighthouse.com; camping per adult/child US\$12/6, electricity per day per site US\$5) This wild spot, under the same management as Pensão Pachica in Inhambane, has rustic camping on the beach at Barra point (nothing but your tent, sand, sea grasses and sea), and a simple bar-restaurant with tasty seafood. There are about 30 campsites, plus hot and cold ablutions, plug points, good security and views. Tents can sometimes be hired, boats can be launched and quad bikes aren't permitted. Take the signposted sandy (4WD only) right off the Barra road, when coming from Bar Babalaza.

Barra Lodge (☎ 293-20561, in South Africa 011-3143355; www.barralodge.co.za; dm US\$13, casita s/d with half board US\$132/221, 6-person self-catering cottages US\$181) This midrange establishment is one of Barra's largest, longest-running and most outfitted places, with a range of accommodation – from small twin-bedded reed casitas with bathroom to larger self-catering cottages – plus a beachside bar-restaurant. It offers a full range of activities, including diving, horseback riding and quad bikes, plus fly-in packages from Johannesburg and excursions (including diving) to Pomene. Backpacker facilities include a divers' bunkhouse with hot showers and a cooking area.

Barra Reef (☎ 293-56035, 82-712 6640; www.barra Reef.co.za; s/d bunkhouse US\$26/31, 4-person casitas US\$109, 5- to 6-person self-catering villas US\$125) About 1km further on is the relaxing Barra Reef, with a good setting – directly on the beach, with open views of the coast. There's a choice of simple self-catering chalets, including some double-storey A-frames with upstairs veranda, plus casitas sharing a communal kitchen, a bunkhouse and a beachside restaurant-bar. In addition to diving, there's kayaking and other activities.

Bali Hai Lodge (☎ 293-56017, 293-56082; www.balihailodge.com; s/d chalet US\$59/88, 8-person main house US\$391) Rather more reminiscent of South Africa than the South Pacific but nonetheless quite pleasant, with a main house consisting of four doubles with private bathrooms around a large common area plus some separate two-room chalets. It's all self-catering

(no restaurant) and fishing charters can be arranged.

Flamingo Bay Water Lodge (☎ 293-56001, in South Africa 011-314 3355; www.flamingobay.co.za; s/d with half board US\$250/391; ☎ ☎ ☎) Barra's most upscale choice, with 20 luxurious wood-and-thatch stilt houses lined up in a neighbourly row over the bay plus an overflow pool, a restaurant and little golf carts to take you from the main lodge down the long wooden walkways to your room. It's just past Barra Lodge and signposted. No children under 12 years of age.

Apart from the lodge restaurants, the main option is **Bar Babalaza** (meals from US\$2), about 6km from Barra at the junction where the roads to Tofo and Barra diverge. It's a local institution, with meals and drinks, air for your tyres and local information. In Barra itself, there are no shops or nonhotel restaurants but fish is available from local fishers.

Getting There & Away

AIR

For air connections to/from Inhambane (from where all the Barra lodges do transfers), see p88. Barra Lodge and several other places offer fly-in packages from Johannesburg.

BUS

There are lots of daily chapas between Inhambane and Conguiana village along the Barra road, from where you'll need to sort out a pick-up or walk (about 4km to Barra Lodge).

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The turn-off for Barra is about 15km from Inhambane en route to Tofo – bear left at the Bar Babalaza junction. You can easily make it in 2WD most of the way, but you'll need 4WD to reach Barra lighthouse and the self-catering anglers' places at the point. Hitching is easy in season from Bar Babalaza.

MAXIXE

Maxixe (pronounced 'ma-sheesh') is about 450km northeast of Maputo on the EN1, and has nothing to recommend it except its convenient location as a stopping point for traffic up and down the coast. It's also the place to get off the bus and onto the boat if you're heading to Inhambane, across the bay.

There are ATMs at BIM, just in from the main road near Pousada de Maxixe, and

at Banco Austral – about 600m north, and just in from the EN1. Telecomunicações de Moçambique (TDM), near Banco Austral, has internet access.

Sleeping & Eating

Maxixe Camping (☎ 293-30351; EN1; camping per person US\$5, 2-person beach bungalows from US\$32) Next to the jetty, with reasonable ablutions and self-catering facilities. In addition to camping, there are also a few faded bungalows with bathrooms. You can arrange to leave your vehicle here while visiting Inhambane.

Pousada de Maxixe (☎ 293-30199; EN1; d without/with bathroom US\$16/24), Across the road from Maxixe Camping, this relic of the past has grubby rooms and sporadic water supplies, but surprisingly good local food in the evenings.

Stop (☎ 293-30025; EN1; meals from US\$2; ☎ 6am-10pm; r US\$26; ☎) Overlooking the water on the northern edge of the jetty and a good place to dine while waiting for the ferry. The same management also rents clean rooms with bathroom and TV next to Banco Austral (no meals).

For self-catering, try Taurus, just in from the EN1, with South African imports, meats and cheeses.

Getting There & Away

Thirty-seater buses to Maputo (US\$8, 6½ hours, 450km) depart from the bus stand by the Tribunal beginning at 6am. For chapas to Morrumbene, Vilankulo (US\$6, 3½ hours) and other points north, go to Praça 25 de Setembro (just ask for the 'praça'), a couple of blocks north of the Tribunal bus stand in front of the Conselho Municipal. For information on the Inhambane ferry, see p88.

PONTA LINGA LINGA

This old whaling station is about 15km from Inhambane at the tip of a small peninsula on the northern side of Baía de Inhambane. The offshore waters are home to a population of dugong. Onshore is a small village, nestled among the coconut palms.

The only accommodation is **Funky Monkeys** (camping per person US\$4, dm US\$4), a bare-bones backpackers. It's run by Lúcio and his wife, who is an excellent cook, and if you wind up staying longer he's usually willing to negotiate with prices. He can also help you arrange canoeing in the nearby mangroves.

TROPIC OF CAPRICORN

There are no signs marking the spot, but you cross the tropic of Capricorn – the southernmost latitude (22.5°) at which the sun is directly overhead – about 15km south of Massinga town on the border between Massinga and Morrumbene districts.

Linga Linga can be reached from Morrumbene or by dhow from Inhambane (about US\$5, bring extra water and shade). There's nothing regular, so you'll need to charter one – ask staff at Pensão Pachica (p87) to point you in the right direction.

MORRUMBENE

This town on the EN1 30km north of Maxixe is notable as the place to get a dhow to Ponta Linga Linga. If you get stuck for the night, **Pousada do Litoral** (EN1; r US\$10) has undistinguished rooms.

Chapas run throughout the day to/from Maxixe (US\$0.80, 30 minutes) and in the mornings to/from Vilankulo (US\$3, 3½ hours). From the chapa stand, you'll need to walk about 20 minutes to the water (ask for the *ponta*), where you can catch a boat to Linga Linga (US\$0.20). Sailings depend on the winds, but there's usually a 'public' boat departing daily (except Sunday) about 11am. Otherwise, you can hire your own for about US\$6, though after about 3pm it's difficult to find willing captains. When approaching Linga Linga, ask the captain to take you all the way to the point. Otherwise they'll drop you along the side of the peninsula, from where you'll need to walk another couple of kilometres to Funky Monkeys.

MASSINGA

Massinga is a bustling district capital on the EN1. It's decidedly free of tourist attractions, though there is an interesting mural on the main street. Like many parts of coastal Inhambane province, the town is surrounded by landscapes lush with coconut palms. In contrast, much of northern Massinga district (which stretches north and west from Massinga town) and other inland areas are arid and browner, and dotted with enormous baobab trees. There are some particularly impressive baobab stands about 50km north of Massinga, just west of the EN1 at the turn-

off for Chicomo locality. Local residents use hollows in the trunks of the trees for storing water during the dry season. These same communities rely on hunting as an important food source. It's normally done with bow and arrow, mostly at night when the landscape is illuminated by a full moon.

There's a TDM office diagonally opposite the bank for domestic and international telephone calls, and several ATMs in the town centre.

The friendly **Dalilo's Hotel** (☎ 293-71043; EN1; r with/without bathroom from US\$20/30; 🚽) at the northern end of town is the best place to stay and **Dalilo's Restaurant** (meals from US\$3) is the place to go for information on what's happening.

Getting There & Away

Most north-south buses stop at Massinga. The first departure to Maputo is about 6am. Going north, buses from Maputo begin to arrive in Massinga by about 2.30pm, en route to Vilankulo (US\$5 between Massinga and Vilankulo).

MORRUNGULO

Several kilometres north of Massinga is the signposted turn-off for Praia de Morrungulo, a particularly beautiful and seemingly endless stretch of coast lined by palm trees and striking low cliffs.

Amongst the bougainvilleas and palm trees bordering the beach sits the attractive, self-catering **Morrungulo Beach Resort** (www.morrungulo.co.za; camping per adult/child US\$11/5.50, bungalow d US\$78, 4-person chalets US\$144, bunkhouse per person about US\$31). It has reed-and-thatch chalets with kitchenette and bathroom, thatched shelters (*barracas*) with plug points and an eight-bed bunkhouse; bring your own bed sheets and linen. There's also a dive centre (book instruction in advance) and fishing charters can be arranged. Advance bookings are essential during South African and Zimbabwean school holidays. Excellent value and a great place for families. No restaurant.

Also recommended is the laid-back **Baobab Lodge** (☎ 82-865 6980, 21-455010; baobab_lodge@yahoo.co.uk; camping/barraca per person US\$5/8, dm US\$8, cliff/beach d US\$30/35, 6-person cottage US\$75-100), located between Morrungulo Beach Resort and Sylvia Shoal. It has rooms and a self-catering cottage at the top of the small escarpment (about five minutes on foot down to the sea), camping with hot water showers, and more

self-catering cottages and camping down near the water. There's a good restaurant with seafood grills and local meals, plus homemade pizzas, and a cultural centre that sometimes has traditional dance performances. Staff can help you arrange visits to nearby villages.

On the beach about 3km north of Morrungulo Beach Resort, **Sylvia Shoal Lodge** (La Rosa; ☎ in South Africa 011-884 6055, 082-900 4886; camping per person US\$15, 2-person bungalow US\$95) is a small, agreeable place with camping with hot-water showers and *barracas*, a few self-catering bungalows and (in season) a beachside bar and restaurant. There's a resident dive instructor (the beautiful Sylvia Shoal reef is offshore) and dive gear for rent.

Just before reaching Morrungulo is a tiny bakery selling fresh bread daily.

Getting There & Away

Morrungulo is 13km from the main road down a good sand track that is negotiable with 2WD. Sporadic chapas run to locations within walking distance of the lodges. The turnoffs for Sylvia Shoal and Baobab Lodge are signposted. For Morrungulo Beach Resort, continue straight.

POMENE

Pomene, the site of a colonial-era beach resort, is known for its fishing, birding and its striking estuarine setting. The surrounding area is part of the Pomene Reserve, which was gazetted in 1972 with 20,000 hectares to protect the mangrove ecosystems, dune forests and marine life of the area, including dugongs and turtles. The reserve is now neglected but the beach here is lovely. It's on the coast about halfway between Inhambane and Vilankulo off the EN1. Massinga is the best place to stock up. There's an airstrip for charter flights.

Pomene Lodge (☎ in South Africa 011-314 3227; www.pomene.co.za; camping per person US\$16, d dive hut US\$55, s/d chalet US\$66/102, tr cabin US\$125, 6-/8-person chalets US\$250/334) is a relaxing, remote place set on a spit of land between the estuary and the sea. It has a collection of no-frills self-catering chalets, all with bedding and mosquito nets, plus basic reed beach huts sharing ablutions (bring your own bed sheets). There's also camping (hot and cold water), a restaurant-bar and diving, and estuary boat trips can be arranged, as can transfers to/from Barra Lodge (p92). Check locally

about swimming, due to strong currents. The turn-off is 12km north of Massinga, from where it's another 55km down a sandy track (4WD) to the lodge; there's no regular public transport.

Pomene View (☎ in South Africa 083-962 9818; www.pomeneview.com; 5-person chalets US\$156; 🚽) lacks Pomene Lodge's beachside setting (it's set on a rise amidst the mangroves and coastal vegetation on the mainland side of the estuary), but it's friendly, small and tranquil, with its own special appeal and wide views. Accommodation is in self-catering brick-and-thatch chalets, each with bedding, mosquito nets and braai area, and there's a bar. Take the same turnoff north of Massinga as for Pomene Lodge, and then follow the Pomene View signs. Transfers across the estuary are easily arranged, as are mangrove excursions and fishing charters.

VILANKULO

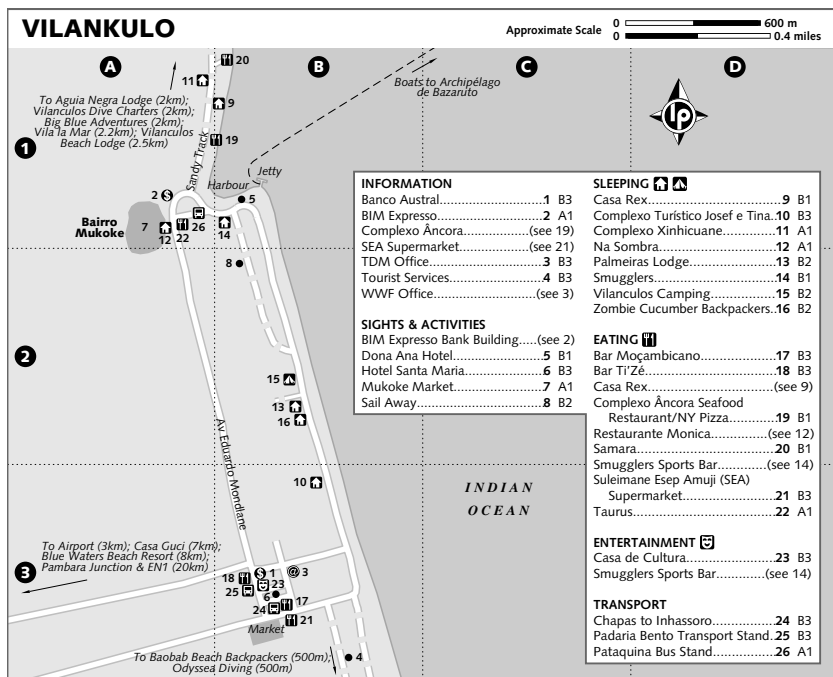
Vilankulo is the finishing (or starting) point of Mozambique's southern tourist circuit, and an institution on the Southern Africa backpackers' loop, as well as on the South African overlander scene. It's also the gateway for visiting the nearby Archipelago de Bazaruto, separated from the mainland by an expanse of turquoise sea. During South African holidays, Vilankulo is overrun with pick-ups and 4WDs, but otherwise it's a quiet, slow-paced town.

Orientation

Vilankulo is spread over about 5km and chapas are few and far between, so you may spend a fair amount of time walking. The bus stand, market area and main centre of activity are at the south-western end of town, while most accommodation starts about 20 minutes on foot northeast of here along the seafront. Bairro

VILANKULO

Like many towns in Mozambique, Vilankulo takes its name from an early local chief (*régulo*), Gamala Vilankulo Mukoke. The name was rendered as 'Vilanculos' during colonial times, but was then changed back to Vilankulo after independence. Bairro Mukoke (Mucoque), west of BIM Expresso, is named after Gamala Vilankulo's son, who lived there.



Mukoke, reached by following the tarmac road (Av Eduardo Mondlane) north for about 2km from the bus stand, is a second centre of sorts, with an ATM, a market and several sleeping options within easy reach.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

Complexo Ancora (per ½hr US\$1.60; ☎ 8am-8pm Wed-Mon; 📶) Lots of terminals and sea views, located along the waterfront.

TDM (per min US\$0.04; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri; 📶) Internet access and international telephone calls; one block behind Banco Austral.

MONEY

Banco Austral (Av Eduardo Mondlane) ATM, and changes cash dollars; at the junction where the road from Pambara comes into town.

BIM Expresso (Av Eduardo Mondlane, Bairro Mukoke) ATM.

SEA Supermarket (near the market) Has an ATM.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Services (☎ 293-82228; margie@teledata.mz; 🕒 2-5pm Mon-Sat) Very helpful, sells town maps and can assist with flight bookings, info and excursions. It's about

500m north of Baobab Beach Backpackers and one road in from the beach.

WWF Office (☎ 293-82383; 🕒 7.30am-noon, 2pm-4pm Mon-Fri) Near TDM and the place to pay entry fees for Arquipélago de Bazaruto.

Dangers & Annoyances

Vilankulo's beaches are generally fine during the daytime, as long as you're within sight of the hotels or the crowds. However, especially after sundown, avoid the stretch by the old Dona Ana Hotel near the washed away road. Also avoid the route through the villages leading from the market area down to Baobab Beach Backpackers – ask staff from the backpackers to accompany you if you need to leave before dawn to catch the bus.

Sights

It's worth taking a stroll through the bustling market area near the bus stand. Nearby is the now derelict **Hotel Santa Maria**, built by tycoon-entrepreneur Joaquim Alves. At the northern end of town on the beach is the rambling, currently derelict and soon to be rehabilitated **Dona Ana Hotel**, also built by Alves. Just inland are the

BIM Expresso bank building, which used to be Alves' residence, and the colourful **Mukoke market**.

Activities

DIVING & SNORKELLING

For general information see p43. Dive operators (all also arrange day snorkelling trips and island transfers) include:

Odyssea Diving (☎ 293-82492, 82-781 7130; www.odysseadive.com; Baobab Beach Backpackers) PADI instruction.

Vilanculos Dive Charters (☎ 82-856 2700; bigblue@teledata.mz; Aguaia Negra Lodge) A long-standing outfit offering PADI instruction and dive-accommodation deals.

DHOW SAFARIS

The recommended **Sail Away** (☎ 293-82385, 82-387 6350; www.sailaway.co.za) is the best contact for island dhow safaris, with various day and overnight sails in the archipelago (check out their website for a sampling). Prices are very reasonable: a day trip including snorkelling around the islands of Magaruque or Benguera, a good lunch, refreshments, park entry fees and snorkelling equipment costs US\$47, with discounts sometimes available for walk-ins. Overnight safaris range from two to four days and cost from US\$70 per person per day, with everything that the day trip includes, plus full board and accommodation. All boats have extra motors, safety and first-aid equipment and communication on board. Sail Away's Vilankulo base is on the road paralleling the beach road and about 400m south of the Dona Ana Hotel.

FISHING & OTHER WATER SPORTS

For fishing charters, boat hire, snorkelling and other water sports, contact **Big Blue Adventures** (☎ 293-82425; bigblue@teledata.mz), based at Aguaia Negra Lodge.

Sleeping

Vilankulo has one of the best accommodation selections along the southern coast, especially for midrange travel. Advance bookings are essential if you'll be travelling around the Christmas-New Year's or Easter holidays.

BUDGET

Zombie Cucumber Backpackers (www.zombiecucumber.com; dm US\$10, d chalet US\$28; 📶) An excellent backpackers, and prime for relaxing, with lots of green space, hammocks, a bar and a circular 10-bed dorm, plus small, spotless cha-

lets, most with double bed, net and fan, and hot water when the weather's cool. It's just back from the beach road, south of Palmeiras Lodge. The owner cooks up great meals each evening (order by 5pm) and breakfast is available (US\$2 to US\$5).

Baobab Beach Backpackers (☎ 293-82202, 82-731 5420; baobabmoz@yahoo.com; camping US\$6, dm US\$8, chalet d US\$20, beachfront chalet d with bathroom US\$40) Has a beachside setting (though camping and most accommodation is inland) and a definite party vibe (full moon parties are a regular feature) plus camping space, a kitchen, a bar-restaurant and several chalets. It's at the southern end of town, reached from the bus station-market area via a sandy path winding through the village. Get someone to accompany you (a modest fee is expected), especially at night or in the predawn hours.

Vilanculos Camping (☎ 293-82043, in South Africa 015-516 1427; www.vilanculoscamping.co.za; camping per person US\$11, chalets per person US\$16, with bathroom US\$23) This large, shaded camping area is in a good setting on the inland side of the beach road and rather lacking in atmosphere, but otherwise is wellkept and a good bet. There's plenty of room for tents or caravans, plus ablution blocks, and some straightforward rooms and bungalows with bedding.

Complexo Turístico Josef e Tina (☎ 293-82140; camping per tent US\$10, d/q rondavel US\$24/32, d in main house from US\$30) A local-style place on the beach road just up from Zombie Cucumber with camping, a self-catering area, no-frills rooms in reed bungalows and several rooms in the main house with bathroom and communal kitchen facilities.

Na Sombra (☎ 293-82429; s/tw/d/q US\$11/14/16/21) Just southwest of BIM in the Mukoke section of town, with small, no-frills rooms – all with fan and shared bathroom – and the good Restaurante Monica. The owner has a minivan available for rental and can help organise excursions.

MIDRANGE

Smugglers (☎ 293-82253; www.smugglers.co.za; s/d US\$38/55, s/d with bathroom US\$44/66; 📶) Just southwest of the Dona Ana Hotel on the inland side of the road, this well-run place has pleasant rooms – most twin-bedded with shared hot-water bathrooms, fans and nets – set around lush, green gardens with two small pools, and rooftop sprinkler systems to keep things cool during the afternoon heat. There are also a few

family-style rooms with bathrooms, and a good restaurant. Children's discounts are available.

Agua Negra Lodge (☎ 293-82387; www.aguanegra.co.za; 6-person chalets about US\$147, s/d chalet US\$55/86, luxury s/d US\$86/140; 📍) About 2km north of the Dona Ana Hotel, the popular Agua Negra has breezy, rustic six-person A-frame chalets set around a large, grassy compound overlooking the sea, each with an open loft area, plus a bathroom with hot water. There's a restaurant and a resident dive and water sports operator. The newer 'luxury rooms' to the side of the property have air-con, TV and minifridge, and canoe and windsurfing equipment is available for guests; rates include a good full breakfast.

Palmeiras Lodge (☎ 293-82257, or through Vilanculos Beach Lodge; s/d cottages US\$66/109, 6-person self-catering bungalow US\$211; 📍) Spread out on tranquil green grounds bordering the beach at the eastern edge of town, the good Palmeiras has accommodation in very nice whitewashed stone-and-thatch cottages, or in a more rustic eight-person self-catering block. There's no restaurant but the chalets include continental breakfast.

Vilanculos Beach Lodge (☎ 293-82388; www.vilanculos.co.za; s/d from US\$117/203; 📍) A large, busy resort-style place about 1km north of Agua Negra Lodge, with accommodation in chalets – each with verandas – set back from the water on a hillside, plus a restaurant and a range of water sports.

Blue Waters Beach Resort (www.vilanculosresorts.com/bluewaters; camping per person US\$9, d bungalow US\$47, 4-person chalet US\$133) About 8km south of town past the airport and signposted from the main road into town, with large grounds and good camping, simple double bungalows, self-catering chalets and a beachfront bar and restaurant. You'll need your own transport.

TOP END

Casa Rex (☎ 293-82048; www.casa-rex.com; s/d from US\$95/150; 📍) This is the place to go if you're after a small, upmarket getaway. It sits in peaceful, manicured grounds about 500m north of the old Dona Ana Hotel, with comfortable rooms – ranging from garden to premium to luxury suites – in terracotta cottages with mosquito netting, plus delicious home-cooked cuisine.

Vila la Mar (☎ 293-82302; vilalamar@teledata.mz; 6-/10-person houses US\$250/280) This good-value self-catering place has spacious, fully furnished chalets – most with sea views, and all with

spotless, modern kitchens, fans, netting and attractive décor. It's between Agua Negra and Vilanculos Beach Lodge.

Complexo Xinhicuane (☎ 293-82450; r per person US\$130-150; 📍) A new place up the road from Casa Rex on the inland side and just about to open when we passed through. It has a large garden, plush and tastefully appointed rooms and attractive common areas with carved wood décor. A pool and a restaurant are planned.

Casa Guci (☎ 82-868 6540; www.casaguci.com; s/d US\$116/172; 📍) Another new and very nice place about 7km south of town overlooking the water, and signposted from the main road into town. It has modern, well-equipped two- and four-person self-catering chalets set around large, green grounds. Self-catering rates are also available.

Eating

Complexo Ancora Seafood Restaurant/NY Pizza (☎ 293-82444; pizzas & meals US\$4-10; 🕒 7am-10pm Wed-Mon) This place on the waterfront by the port is a piece of Americana in the middle of Mozambique, with large meals, apple pie for dessert plus a breezy waterside eating area. Everything's halal (no alcohol) and they have a free takeaway/delivery service.

Samara (☎ 293-82068; meals US\$9-14; 🕒 lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) A cosy waterfront eatery tucked away about 200m off the main road on the beach, north of Casa Rex. Specialities include seafood platters, prawns and crayfish.

Most listings under Sleeping also have good restaurants, especially the restaurant at **Casa Rex** (☎ 293-82048; meals from US\$12), with seafood and gourmet fare (advance bookings only); **Smugglers Sports Bar** (☎ 293-82253; www.smugglers.co.za; meals from US\$3), with good breakfasts and hearty pub fare, and volleyball out front; **Restaurante Monica** (☎ 293-82429; meals US\$2.50-US\$6), at Na Sombra, featuring tasty local cuisine and **Agua Negra** (☎ 293-82387; meals US\$5-US\$7).

For self-catering, there are fruits and vegetables at the market and, in the afternoons, fresh seafood which you can usually arrange to get grilled up at your hotel. Also try **SEA Supermarket** (🕒 9am-1pm & 3pm-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) near the market and **Taurus** (☎ 293-82326), diagonally opposite BIM, with South African imports, meats and cheeses, plus soft serve ice cream.

Other recommendations:

Bar TiZé (meals from US\$1) A small local eatery on the main road near the bus stand, with fresh, inexpensive meals.

Bar Moçambicano (snacks US\$1; 🕒 8am-5pm Mon-Fri) Just down from the market, with cheap snacks and burgers, and a bakery (also open Saturday) next door.

Entertainment

There's sports TV at **Smugglers Sports Bar** (☎ 293-82253; www.smugglers.co.za). Casa de Cultura, just down from the market, is the best contact for special events and traditional music.

Getting There & Away

AIR

If your budget permits, it's worth flying at least one-way into Vilankulo to see the incredible panorama of the Archipelago de Bazaruto from the air (assuming your pilot does a fly-over route, and the weather is clear) – seas in brilliant hues of turquoise and jade laced with shimmering white sand banks.

LAM, with a representative at the airport, flies four times weekly to/from Maputo (US\$216 one way), with links three times weekly to/from Chimoio and weekly to/from Beira. **Pelican Air** (☎ 293-82348, 293-82149, in South Africa 011-973 3649; www.pelicanair.co.za; Airport), trading in Mozambique as TTA, has daily flights between Johannesburg and Vilankulo (US\$266 one-way), with onward connections to Bazaruto and Benguera islands (about US\$312 one-way from Johannesburg to the islands). There are also twice-weekly links from Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (near Nelspruit) to Vilankulo (though no connections on this stretch in the opposite direction). **Swazi Express** (☎ in Swaziland 518-6840; www.flyswazi.com; Airport) has three flights weekly connecting Vilankulo with Durban (from US\$148 one-way) and Swaziland's Matsapha Airport (from US\$89 one-way).

The airport is about 3km from town. There are no taxis, so you'll need to arrange a lift with a hotel, or hitch (usually easy).

BUS

Vilankulo is 20km east of the EN1 down a tarmac access road, with the turnoff at Pambara junction. Chapas run regularly between the two throughout the day (US\$0.80). Except as noted, all transport departs from the main road just down from Padaria Bento.

To Maputo (US\$16, nine to 10 hours), there are two to three buses daily, departing town by about 4.30am – get to the stand by 4.15am, and you should find something. If you're staying in the Mukoke section of

town, it's more convenient to board the bus at Pataquina (down the small street opposite BIM Expresso); the first bus of the day (an express) usually departs from here between 3am and 3.30am, before stopping at the main stand near Padaria Bento. Pass by Pataquina in the late afternoon the day before to get an update from the driver. Wherever you board, arrive early if you're choosy about your seat, as there's no advance booking.

Coming from Maputo, aim to be in Junta by about 4.30am. One of the better lines is Xiluva, departing Junta about 5am. The fastest option (unless they break down – not infrequent) is the Panthera Azul bus to Beira, which will drop you at Pambara junction at about 2pm, from where it's easy to catch a chapa into town.

To Beira (US\$12, nine hours), 30-seater buses depart Vilankulo at 4.30am. Unlike the Maputo buses, you should book the afternoon before (which also means you can choose a seat).

To Chimoio, there's a daily 30-seater bus departing Vilankulo at 4am (US\$14, 8½ to nine hours). Otherwise, you'll need to go via Inchope or Beira.

To Maxixe (for Inhambane), minibuses run throughout the day (US\$6, four hours).

To Inhassoro (US\$2, 45 minutes), chapas depart throughout the morning from opposite SEA supermarket.

Getting Around

Vilankulo is very spread out and there are no taxis, but lifts are easy to find. Occasional chapas run along the main road, but not out to the beach places on the northeastern edge of town.

ARCHIPÉLAGO DE BAZARUTO

Rising out of the sea 10km to 25km offshore between Vilankulo and Inhassoro is the spectacular Archipelago de Bazaruto. It's about as close to a tropical paradise as you'll find (except for the Quirimbas islands further north, see p158), and is one of Mozambique's highlights, especially for honeymooners or anyone wanting a relaxing getaway. Among its attractions: clear, turquoise waters; tranquil, white-sand beaches; a plethora of colourful birds; and rewarding diving and snorkelling.

The archipelago consists of five main islands: Bazaruto, Benguera (also spelled



Benguerra, and formerly known as Santo António), Magaruque (Santa Isabel), Santa Carolina (Ilha do Paraíso) and tiny Bangué. Until about 10,000 years ago – relatively recent in geological terms – the larger islands were connected to the mainland at Ponta São Sebastião (see p102). The small population of Nile crocodiles that laze in the sun in remote corners of both Bazaruto and Benguerra islands is evidence of this earlier link.

Since 1971 much of the archipelago has been protected as a **national park** (per adult/child US\$8/2) under the auspices of the WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature). In late 2002 the park boundaries were extended southwards to encompass all of the islands, bringing the area under protection to about 1400 sq km.

Thanks to this protected status, and to the archipelago's relative isolation from the ravages of war on the mainland, nature bursts forth here in full force. You'll see dozens of bird species, including soaring fish eagles and graceful pink flamingos. There are also red duikers, bushbucks, and, especially on Benguerra, the Nile crocodiles. Dolphins swim through the clear waters, along with 2000 other types of fish, plus loggerhead, leatherback and green turtles. Most impressive, perhaps, are the elusive dugongs (see p38), who spend their days foraging among sea-grass meadows around the archipelago. As a backdrop to all this are excellently preserved coral formations, with up to 100 species of hard coral and over two dozen soft coral species identified thus far.

Living amidst all the natural beauty are about 3500 Mozambicans who call the archipelago home.

History

Although many of the island residents are relatively recent arrivals who sought haven during the war years, the archipelago's history reaches well back. The islands – which previously were known as the Hucicas or Vacicas – were long famed for their pearls and ambergris. By at least the 15th century, they were the site of a thriving maritime community sustained by the coastal dhow trade. The earliest Portuguese trading settlements dated from the mid-16th century, while the first permanent Portuguese settlement was established on Santa Carolina in the mid-19th century. Today, all of the islands are inhabited except Bangué.

At various times leading up to the colonial period, several of the islands – most notably Santa Carolina – served as penal colonies not only for Vilankulo, but for the entire region, including places as distant as present-day Beira. According to local lore, the variety of ethnic groups necessitated development of a common language, which led to growth of a unique dialect now considered indigenous to the southern part of the archipelago. Although this dialect has largely been replaced by Xitswa (one of the major languages of Inhambane province) and Portuguese, it's still spoken by some older inhabitants.

Information

Entry fees should be paid in advance at the WWF office in Vilankulo, unless your hotel has taken care of doing this for you (all the

island-based hotels do so, as does Sail Away in Vilankulo, for those on its dhow safaris). Park headquarters are located at Sitone, on the western side of Ilha de Bazaruto. While fees for diving, walking and other activities within the archipelago have been approved in principle, they aren't currently being enforced.

If you're with your own boat, you'll also need to arrange the necessary licences and boat permits at the WWF office.

Activities

DIVING

Diving is wonderful here – see p43 for general information. Dives, equipment rental and certification courses can be organised by any of the top-end lodges, or by the Vilankulo-based dive operators listed on p97.

FISHING

Game fishing – including for sailfish, tuna, barracuda and black, blue and striped marlin – is also excellent (and is all tag-and-release), and can be arranged by all of the lodges.

SAILING & DHOW SAFARIS

Away from the lodges, the best contact for arranging sailing trips around the archipelago is Sail Away (p97). The closest islands for day trips from Vilankulo are Magaruque (12km offshore) and Benguerra (15km).

Sleeping & Eating

All tourist facilities are on the western side of the islands where waters are calmer, currents less strong and sunset views superb.

All hotels and lodges are top end, and all require advance bookings through their head office or through a tour operator, although if you turn up at Vilankulo or Inhassoro and talk to a boat owner with a radio link to the islands you can often arrange something on the spot. For years, the only concession on the archipelago to budget travellers was Gabriel's Camp on Ilha de Benguerra, which is currently closed for upgrading to a luxury hotel. Fortunately, a new community-run camp, Ponta Dundo, is being built to fill the gap and should be open by the time this book is published. Otherwise, the best options if you have limited purse strings are arranging an island dhow cruise, or visiting in the off-season, when some of the lodges offer special deals.

ILHA DE BAZARUTO

Ponta Dundo Camp (camping per person US\$15) This soon-to-open place – the only budget accommodation in the archipelago – is on the southern point of Bazaruto island. It's run by the local community in partnership with the national park, and plans to offer accommodation in permanent two-person tents. Bring your own food and drink (there will be a kitchen area), and get an update in Vilankulo before heading over.

Bazaruto Lodge (☎ 21-305000; reservas@pestanda.co.mz; s/d with full board from US\$225/365; 🏠) This unpretentious four-star getaway sits at the northwestern end of the island in a prime location overlooking a small and placid bay, and Ilha de Santa Carolina in the distance. Accommodation is in 24 A-frame chalets nestled amidst lush gardens beneath the sand dunes. All have been recently renovated, some have sea views and the lodge offers good overall value. There's also a honeymoon suite and two family-style chalets, plus a restaurant and water sports. The lodge is under the same management as Hotel Pestana Rovuma in Maputo and Pestana Inhaca Lodge on Ilha de Inhaca, and combination itineraries can be arranged. A new five-star property under the same management is planned for the northern end of the island; check with Pestana's Maputo offices for an update.

Indigo Bay (☎ 293-82340, in South Africa 011-465 6904; www.indigobayonline.com; s/d US\$365/540) Under the same ownership as Pemba Beach Resort Hotel, Indigo Bay is the largest and most out-fitted lodge in the archipelago. You have your choice of private beachfront chalets or rooms that are set back on the lawn overlooking the water – all well appointed with telephones, televisions and other amenities to remind you that there's life beyond the palm trees waving just outside. There's also a full range of activities including horseback riding in the surf, guided birding walks and water sports. While it lacks the laid-back island touch of most of the other places (expansions and more activities are planned), for some visitors this will be compensated for by the high level of comfort, service and amenities.

ILHA DE BENGUERRA

Benguerra Lodge (☎ in South Africa 011-452 0641; www.benguerra.co.za; s/d with full board from US\$534/790; 🏠) Generally considered to be one of the best and most intimate of the island lodges, with

accommodation in 11 well-spaced and spacious luxury chalets set near a good beach amidst patches of forest. It's in the centre of the island's western coastline, and offers dhow cruises, diving, snorkelling, fishing and guided birding walks. There are also two beachside honeymoon suites, each with their own plunge pool, and a private honeymoon villa set off on its own.

Marlin Lodge (☎ in South Africa 012-543 2134; www.marlinlodge.co.za; s/d with full board from US\$320/430) Several kilometres south of Benguerra Lodge, and with a somewhat more bustling ambience, Marlin Lodge has accommodation in 19 pleasant reed and thatch chalets along the beach, all with hammocks, verandas and pleasing wood tones, plus a handful of spacious luxury suites. Also on offer is a range of activities, including fishing (marlin is probably the best choice on the islands for anglers), diving, water sports and dhow cruises.

ILHA DE MAGARUQUE

The hotel on Magaruque – founded by tycoon-entrepreneur Joaquim Alves in colonial days, and long a favoured haunt of the rich and famous – is undergoing renovation and not yet open. For now, the small island is ideal if you fancy walking around a small patch of tropical sand; it can be circled in a few hours, but bring plenty of shade or sunscreen. There's also good snorkelling in the crystal clear shallows just off the idyllic beach on the island's southwestern corner.

ILHA DE SANTA CAROLINA

The prettiest of the islands, with stands of palm and other vegetation, Santa Carolina was formerly the site of another Joaquim Alves property. Today, the old hotel is closed and crumbling, although renovation is planned. Meanwhile, several **rooms** (☎ 82-320 9970; per person US\$35) in an annex have been maintained for visitors, and offer surprisingly pleasant accommodation, with nets, clean linens and fresh towels, plus wonderful views over the water. There are no facilities otherwise and you'll need to bring your own food. For diversion, snorkelling is the highlight – Santa Carolina's waters offer among the best snorkelling in the archipelago, and it is possible just offshore. Sail Away in Vilankulo (see p97) has two-night, three-day dhow safaris to Santa Carolina for US\$234 per person all-inclusive.

THIEVES' ISLAND

Between Vilankulo and Ilha de Benguera is a large sandbar, visible only at low tide. According to local lore, it used to be known as 'Ilha dos Ladrões' ('Thieves' Island'), and lawbreakers were brought here and left to drown when the tides came in. Now, it's called 'Meu Sócio' ('My Partner' or 'My Helper') by sailors, who know it as a place of refuge if their dhow starts to sink.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are airstrips on Bazaruto, Benguera, Magaruque and Santa Carolina, though only the ones on Bazaruto and Benguera are regularly used. All of the top-end lodges offer fly-in packages from Johannesburg. Pelican Air has scheduled flights between Johannesburg or Nelspruit and Vilankulo, with connections on to the islands; see p99.

BOAT

All the top-end lodges can arrange speedboat transfers for their guests if you prefer not to go by plane. For day-trippers, speedboat charter from Vilankulo costs between US\$100 and US\$200 return, depending on the island. Good contacts include Vilankulo dive operators and Big Blue Adventures (p97). For a speedboat transfer between Inhassoro and Ilha de Santa Carolina (about 30 minutes), expect to pay from US\$100 return.

Alternatively, you can reach the islands by dhow from Vilankulo, best arranged through Sail Away (p97). There are also numerous freelancers who will offer to take you over. While some are reliable, others may quote tempting prices, and then ask you to 'renegotiate' things once you're well away from shore. Check with tourist information or with your hotel for recommendations; expect to pay from about US\$60 per boat for a day sail and don't pay until you're safely back on land.

For nonmotorised dhows, allow plenty of extra time to account for wind and water conditions; from Vilankulo to Benguera or Magaruque takes two to six hours.

PENINSULA DE SÃO SEBASTIÃO

This isolated promontory just south of the Archipelago de Bazaruto is now part of the Vilanculos Coastal Wildlife Sanctuary – a private

and somewhat controversial conservation and tourism initiative that's meant to combine the allure of wildlife safaris (once the now-stalled wildlife restocking plans are completed) and the languor of a tropical beachside getaway into one grand package (see www.thesanctuary.co.za). It's dotted with small lakes, lagoons and stands of mangrove and surrounded by the same turquoise waters that lap the islands of the archipelago, and is worth considering if you're interested in birding or just breaking away from it all. While there are small populations of bushbuck, duiker and other small animals, the main attractions are the flamingos and other water birds, and the tranquillity.

Set on the western side of São Sebastião peninsula is the exclusive **Dugong Lodge** (☎ in South Africa 011-463 3551; www.dugonglodge.co.za; chalet s/d with full board from US\$350/500; 🚰) There are 10 luxurious tented chalets, some right on the beach, and all with shaded verandas and large baths. There's no diving, but snorkelling and deep sea fishing can be organised, as can sea kayaks and excursions to nearby Bangué island, with nothing on it but white sands lapped by turquoise waters, and a few trees.

Linene Island Resort (www.linene-island.com; per person full-board from US\$133) is a rustic angler's hideaway on the eastern side of the peninsula, with small twin-bedded wooden chalets linked by a raised walkway and a full range of fishing.

Getting There & Away

The sanctuary is reached via air charter (US\$60 per person one-way) or speedboat (US\$25 per person one-way, 30 minutes) from Vilankulo, arranged with the lodges.

INHASSORO

Inhassoro's proximity to some prime fishing areas in the channel between the mainland and the Archipelago de Bazaruto has made the town a popular destination for anglers.

It's also the last of the southern beaches before the EN1 turns inland and begins the wild journey north. With its unhurried pace and wide stretches of sand, Inhassoro is also a welcome change from the more touristy towns further south.

The best place to stay is **Hotel Seta** (☎ 293-91000/1, 82-302 0990; camping per adult/child US\$8/4, chalets US\$32-45). A long-standing, straightforward establishment with good camping, it has faded but agreeable white stone-and-thatch cottages and a restaurant. Inhassoro is a convenient jumping-off point for Bazaruto and Santa Carolina islands, and the hotel can help arrange boat transfers.

Getting There & Away

Inhassoro is about 15km east of the main road. Several chapas run daily to/from Vilankulo (US\$2, 45 minutes). There are also direct buses to/from Maputo (US\$15, 10 hours). To Beira, the best bet is to head out to Macovane (the junction with the EN1) and wait for passing northbound buses from there. Driving northwards, there's a **bridge** (toll US\$0.80; ☎ 5am-8pm) over the Rio Save.

BARTOLOMEU DIAS (PONTA MACOVANE)

From Inhassoro, it's possible to continue northwards along a rough and sandy spur road (4WD only) for about 40km (allow two to three hours for the distance) to Bartolomeu Dias, where there's not much but sand, fresh air and sea views. If you can manage to overlook environmental concerns and the official ban against beach driving, the journey takes about 30 minutes following the coast (low tide only).

Once opened, the still-in-progress **BD Lodge** (☎ 84-390 5700, in South Africa 042-243 3552; www.mozadventures.com; 2-/4-person chalets US\$94/140) will offer stilted, rustic self-catering chalets, with both sunrise and sunset views over the water, plus a bar-restaurant and fishing charters.

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