

MOZAMBIQUE



Each beachside villa at Azura has its own private pool, garden, loungers and 'sala'

Long, palm-fringed beaches with sand so fine it squeaks underfoot; remarkable deltas, shady mangrove forests and freshwater lagoons; tropical islands surrounded by turquoise waters, where iridescent fish swim amongst pristine coral: this is the coastline and islands of Mozambique.

On most of the islands the marine life is untouched. Shallow reefs protect a kaleidoscope of neon-bright clownfish, angelfish, moorish idols and lionfish. Further out, the coral harbours rays, sharks and three species of turtle, whilst the rich waters of the deep Mozambique Channel are the cruising ground of harmless whale sharks, spectacular game-fish, whales, dolphins and a population of rare dugongs (sea-cows).

One of Mozambique's pristine islands can make a magical island holiday for a week or so after a safari!



Satellite Maps Online

Our website now incorporates satellite maps of Africa, including Mozambique. Just click 'Maps' on the menu of www.expertafrika.com – you can zoom in on these stunning islands with the camps and lodges clearly marked, and then link to relevant trip ideas and information.

MAPUTO

Maputo was founded in the late 18th century, and named after the Portuguese trader, Lourenço Marques, who first reached the area around 1544. Some 350 years later, a railroad linked it to the gold-rush areas of South Africa – and by 1907 it was Mozambique's capital. After several decades of strife, peace has reigned in Mozambique since the late 1990s; now the capital, and the country, is peaceful and working hard to develop economically.

To facilitate more esoteric Mozambique itineraries, you may occasionally need to overnight in Maputo. You'll find a vibrant, colourful African city where the roads are lined with makeshift stalls, old colonial buildings and modern office blocks. It doesn't appear to be neat or well ordered, but as a slice of modern Africa – Maputo is fascinating.

Most of our visitors to Maputo stop for a night or two, and stay at the five-star **Polana Serena Hotel**: one of Africa's classic old colonial hotels. Marble floors and wrought-iron lifts lead to comfortable, well-appointed rooms and there's a huge swimming pool, grand restaurants and a great sea view. (The Polana is being upgraded during 2009.)

VILANCULOS AND THE BAZARUTO ARCHIPELAGO

The coastal town of Vilanculos is the gateway to Mozambique's Bazaruto Archipelago, strung out in the Indian Ocean. It's a chain of four large islands: Bazaruto, Benguerra, Santa Isobel and Santa Carolina (formerly known as Paradise Island). The two smaller islands are uninhabited, while the others have a few small villages scattered amongst wild orange and cashew-nut trees. These are places to relax, to escape and to explore. A marine national park covers most of the archipelago, protecting the exquisite marine life of its turquoise seas.

In February 2007 the Bazaruto Archipelago was hit by tropical cyclone Favio, which did tremendous damage, destroying much that was on the islands. The remainder of 2007 was a year of construction: communities and lodges were redesigned and re-built, but few visitors came. The lodges have now been completely rejuvenated, and 2008 saw guests again enjoying this beautiful archipelago.

Vilanculos

On the mainland, on its own peninsula, a short boat transfer from Vilanculos town, **Dugong Lodge** stands on a long beach. This 14-room lodge was completely rebuilt in 2008 and is a possible option for 2009. Talk to us for the latest news on this.



All the lodges on Benguerra Island offer sunset cruises



Local fisherman on the sandbanks off Pansy Island, in the Bazaruto Archipelago

Bazaruto Island

We first visited the original lodge here ten years ago. In 2007, **Indigo Bay Island Resort & Spa**, set in the middle of a sweeping bay, was completely re-built and refurbished, although it still faces into the sunset from an idyllic beachside setting.

It now has 30 beach chalets and 14 bay-view villas – all very modern with air-con, mini-bars, king-size beds and satellite TVs. Indigo Bay's amenities are extensive and the standard of service here is high. In some ways it feels like a good international hotel, with lovely swimming pools, a spa, a diving/watersports centre, horse-riding and a 9-hole 'golf' course (a cross between croquet and golf). It's great for children, with a superb kids' pool and supervised games room.

Pestana Bazaruto Lodge stands at the northern tip of Bazaruto Island. It was re-built after cyclone Favio and, despite the very high profile of one frequent royal visitor, it remains refreshingly unpretentious. Bazaruto Lodge now has 40 A-frame chalets with solid walls and cool thatched roofs – all standing on a sandy beach beneath a canopy of palm trees and hibiscus bushes. Each has air conditioning, a fan, tea/coffee-making facilities and a private bathroom with an outdoor shower. The superior chalets and honeymoon suite are beside the ocean; the rest are slightly set back.

The food is good and fresh but not fancy, and is usually served as a buffet. Expect extensive breakfasts, tasty bar snacks and dinners that major on seafood.

Bazaruto Lodge has a wide range of activities including *NAUI diving, fishing and watersports trips, plus 4WD safaris across the island with picnics. Walking around this area of the island is lovely, with the lighthouse hill particularly worth exploring. You can snorkel from a boat trip, or just walk to the long sandspit north of the island and swim from the beach onto an excellent coral reef.

[*NAUI stands for the 'National Association of Underwater Instructors' and is the world's largest not-for-profit diver training organization.]

Benguerra Island

Both of the archipelago's better-known lodges are on Benguerra Island. In recent years **Marlin Lodge** has run very smoothly – with consistently high-quality food and service. It has 14 luxury beach chalets which all feature four-poster, queen-sized beds, air conditioning, indoor and outdoor showers, and a private boardwalk directly onto the beach. Three executive suites have king-size beds and almost identical facilities, but a lot more space.

Marlin's large bar and dining area opens out onto a vast wooden sundeck with loungers and a swimming pool beyond. The 'beauty & wellness' centre takes spa treatments very seriously, whilst a watersports and diving centre organises activities including deep-sea fishing, snorkelling and excellent diving.

Built beside a long beach, **Benguerra Lodge** has been here since 1989, and now has 13 rooms, divided into three different types. There are two 'cabanas', right beside the beach, which have a jacuzzi on their private deck; and 10 'casitas', which are larger and include a separate lounge area, a large deck with a plunge pool, and an outdoor gazebo. The villa here has two double bedrooms, even more space and a private chef.

Activities from Benguerra include 4WD picnic safaris to find freshwater lakes, sand dunes, grasslands and mangroves, or simply lazing by the small beachside pool. Benguerra has a well-equipped dive centre and plenty of watersports on offer, including snorkelling, sea-kayaking and fly-fishing.

A new and luxurious boutique resort, **Azura Mozambique**, opened at the end of 2007 just north of Benguerra Lodge. It has 14 beachside villas, all thatched and with air conditioning; plenty of wood and natural pastel colours have been used in their design. You can bathe indoors, or shower outside – and each villa has its own small infinity plunge pool and outdoor 'sala' (a private lounge area with roof but no walls).

Activities offered here include island drives to look for crocodiles, scuba-diving, snorkelling, big-game fishing, kayaking,

island-hopping trips and salt-water fly-fishing. There is also a beachside spa which offers indulgent treatments based on local ingredients and traditions.

Trip Ideas: Southern Mozambique

Most of our travellers who visit southern Mozambique come for a relaxing beach stop after a trip to Namibia, Botswana or the Cape. Hence we have designed these as 'add-ons'. All prices below are 'per person sharing'; they include return flights from Johannesburg, transfers, meals and some activities (these differ between properties; ask us for details). Mozambique departure taxes are payable locally.

Green Turtle Add-on

6n Bazaruto Archipelago – Marlin Lodge (fb)

Costs £1,940 for a luxury beach chalet in Jan; and £2,315 for Feb–Dec.

Olive Ridley Turtle Add-on

6n Bazaruto Archipelago – Bazaruto Lodge (fb)

Costs £1,344 for a standard room 28 Mar–14 Apr, Aug and 11–31 Dec; £1,250 for the rest of the year. The cost to upgrade to a superior room is £12 per person per night.

Loggerhead Turtle Add-on

6n Bazaruto Archipelago – Benguerra Lodge (fb)

Costs £2,711/£3,105 for a cabana/casita for Jan–Mar; £3,011/£3,480 Apr–Dec.

Leatherback Turtle Add-on

6n Bazaruto Archipelago – Azura Mozambique (fb)

Costs £2,808 for a luxury beach villa 7 Jan–30 Jun; £3,183 for 1 Jul–15 Dec; and £3,558 for 16–31 Dec.

Getting to the Bazaruto Archipelago

See the map on pages 4–5 to appreciate the sheer size of Mozambique, and to understand why the Bazaruto Archipelago is easiest to approach from Johannesburg. There is at least one flight each day from Johannesburg to Vilanculos; from there, some lodges are reached by air, others by speedboat.



Sand dollars are often found on the beaches



Part of the Quirimbas: pristine islands in a shallow tropical sea

PEMBA & THE MAINLAND

Mozambique's gateway to the Quirimbas Archipelago is Pemba (not to be confused with the Tanzanian island, on page 129). It's a neat, unremarkable town, although it does have one good hotel, the **Pemba Beach Hotel**, which is beside the ocean and has 105 pleasant rooms, landscaped gardens and a reasonable restaurant.

Also on the mainland are two small lodges. **Londo Lodge** stands above a small sandy cove within Pemba Bay, one of the world's largest natural harbours. Its six large, octagonal villas are perched high on a coral cliff. The quality of Londo's construction is impressive, from its curved wooden decking to a hand-dug, coral-stone swimming pool.

About five hours' drive (200km) north of Pemba, or a short boat ride from Matemo Island, is the very different **Guludo Beach Lodge**. Beside a long golden beach, Guludo's approach focuses firmly on the environment and local community development. It's a simple camp, with three mosquito-net tents under thatched roofs, plus seven newly designed chalets. Each has a private open-air shower and clever composting 'loo with a view'. Activities involving the community, as well as diving and snorkelling, are available.

Mozambique: the Facts

Speak to us for more details – but in brief:

Currency: The Mozambique currency is the metical. Currently £1 = 36,000MZM. Hotels and lodges accept US\$ and usually credit cards.

Visas: Usually needed for Mozambique, but can often be obtained on arrival.

Health: Malaria is endemic in Mozambique. The islands are generally healthy, though the usual vaccines (typhoid, polio and tetanus) are sensible and yellow fever certificates may be required. Check with your doctor before you travel.

Language: Portuguese is the official language; English is also usually spoken in hotels and lodges.

Food: The food is excellent, and the seafood superb. Mozambican beer is popular, as are South African wines and beers.

Climate: For details of Mozambique's climate, see 'When to go' on pages 14–15.

Diving in Mozambique

The marine life around Mozambique's more remote islands is outstanding; both the Bazaruto and Quirimbas archipelagos are dotted with pristine reefs. Most lodges have dive centres with qualified instructors and quality equipment. Novices can take short 'resort courses', or finish PADI courses that were started at home – learning in amazing shallow reef areas with first-class marine life.

There are some lovely dive sites, including spectacular under water drop-offs, in the Quirimbas. Manta rays, groupers and potato bass are common, while marlin and sailfish abound in the deep-water channels. Magnificent whale sharks visit from December to February.

Around the Bazaruto Archipelago you'll also find superb diving, with some very impressive coral walls, and whale sharks visit between October and December. So far, over 354 species of reef fish, five species of turtle and 30 different genera of coral have been catalogued here. Ask our advice: several of the *Expert Africa* team are keen scuba divers.

Guludo has long planned a sister-camp, **Mipande Bush Lodge**. This is due to open at the end of 2009.

QUIRIMBAS ARCHIPELAGO

The most spectacular jewels in Mozambique's marine crown rest in the far north. Over 2,500km from Maputo, the remote Cabo Delgado Province has the last stretch of East African coastline where the marine environments are ecologically pristine and largely unexplored. Stretching for 200km, the Quirimbas Archipelago consists of 12 major islands and about 20 smaller, coralline outcrops. The Quirimbas National Park protects part of the archipelago.

In the heart of the Quirimbas National Park, Quilálea Island covers 34 hectares. In 2002, **Quilálea Island Resort** opened with nine en-suite villas, each beautifully built from wood, natural rock and traditional palm thatch. The villas are widely spaced, and inside, each has a king-sized bed draped with mosquito netting. With solid wooden furniture and quality fittings, its simplicity is stylish. Friendly staff provide excellent service, great food, and a range of watersports from island kayaking to diving. Quilálea's marine environment is as good as



The Quirimbas has numerous sandbanks and small isolated islands lined with beaches

it gets: there's a superb house reef right off the beach and deep coral walls a 10-minute boat ride away. (Other activities include fly-fishing, canoeing, dhow trips, birdwatching, and day trips to Ibo Island.) Quilálea changed hands recently, and changes are planned for 2009 – call us for details.

Almost three years ago, a stunning lodge opened up on Vamizi, a beautiful crescent-shaped island in a very isolated location near the Tanzanian border. In late 2008, the running of the island was taken over by a very good Tanzanian safari company; we expect this to make it an even smoother operation for 2009.

Vamizi has 10 vast, luxury villas tucked into the island's forest fringe, beside a long white beach. Each has a veranda under a huge makuti (palm thatch) roof; a lounge dotted with handmade wooden furniture and deeply cushioned seats; a huge open-plan bathroom; and a stylish bedroom draped in colourful muslin cloth with a king-size four-poster bed. Vamizi occupies a very remote spot and offers excellent snorkelling and fishing, as well phenomenal diving – the best we have done in the Quirimbas. Vamizi is the ultimate beach getaway, with great service and luxury in a relaxed and unpretentious atmosphere.

The Saudi-owned group, **Rani Resorts**, now has two islands in the Quirimbas: Matemo and Medjumbe. Both have a restaurant, a bar, a large pool and a PADI watersports centre – and both are due to have a much-needed refurbishment in 2009.

Matemo Island Resort has 24 thatched chalets, all in a row beside the beach. The interiors are currently uninspiring but do include mod-cons: a mini-bar, air conditioning and satellite TV. All have a bath, hot showers inside and out, and a private veranda.

Medjumbe is an idyllic island paradise that's barely a kilometre in length. Here **Medjumbe Island Resort** consists of 13 luxurious, thatched chalets, each with similar facilities to those on Matemo, plus a private plunge pool. Currently this is a heavenly island with a mediocre resort; we hope this will change with the refurbishment.

Manda Wilderness

On the western side of Mozambique's mainland, far from the ocean, is an exciting new conservancy, Manda Wilderness – where **Nkwichi Lodge** stands beside the stunning shore of Lake Malawi, and enchants most who visit! As it is most easily accessed from Lake Malawi, we have included it in that section of this brochure – on page 90.

Ibo Island

Within the Quirimbas National Park, Ibo Island is a unique outpost with a turbulent history. It turned from a prosperous Portuguese trading post in the 1500s to a place where fading colonial buildings crumble beside quiet streets.

A day trip to Ibo Island to see its large church, impressive fort and the local artisans making silver filigree, is easily achieved from Quilálea, Matemo or Guludo. To really get a feel for the place, stay here for a few nights though.

The charming **Ibo Island Lodge** consists of three old mansions beside the ocean. They have been lovingly restored to make a boutique hotel of 14 rooms – complete with huge wooden doors, high ceilings, traditional shutters and king-size beds. Some of the furniture is antique; the rest has been beautifully crafted locally.

You can relax or be active here. A daily trip to a nearby sandbank (with good snorkelling) is included, as are trips to explore the mangroves by sea-kayak. With a history of community development, the walking guides at Ibo offer great insights into the island's history and culture.



Ibo Island Lodge is a good base to explore this historical island

Trip Ideas to Northern Mozambique

Most travellers to northern Mozambique's islands come here for the beach, after a safari in Tanzania. Hence we have designed these trips as 'add-ons' to such safaris, which include transfers, meals and some activities. The costs below are 'per person sharing'; and note that Mozambique departure taxes are always payable locally.

Currently there are flights between Dar and Pemba, and between Dar and Vamizi. Flights also operate between Jo'burg and Pemba, daily except for Monday and Thursday. It's easily possible to travel one-way via Jo'burg, and the other via Dar – ask us for the latest details.

Spinner Dolphin Add-on

1n Pemba – Pemba Beach Hotel (bb)
3n The Mainland – Guludo Beach Lodge (fb)
3n Ibo Island – Ibo Island Lodge (hb)

Costs £2,215 for Aug and 17–31 Dec; £2,087 for the rest of the year. Starts/ends at Dar.

Hawksbill Turtle Add-on

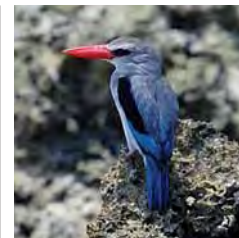
1n Pemba – Pemba Beach Hotel (bb)
6n Quirimbas Archipelago – Quilalea Island (fba)

Costs £3,086 for Apr; £3,092 for Aug; and £2,880 for the rest of the year. Starts/ends at Dar.

Humpback whale add-on

5n Quirimbas Archipelago – Vamizi Island (fba)

Costs £2,993 for Jan; £2,466 for Feb–Mar; £3,083 for Apr–Jul and Sep–9 Dec; £3,317 for Aug and 19–31 Dec. Starts/ends at Dar.



A mangrove kingfisher

Getting to Northern Mozambique

See the map on pages 4–5 for an overview of Mozambique's geography. You'll see that the Quirimbas Archipelago is most easily reached from Dar, in Tanzania. Approaching from the south is possible, using the direct Jo'burg–Pemba flights which operate daily, except for Monday and Thursday. Note that flights to/from northern Mozambique continue to be prone to changes – check with us for the latest news as you plan your trip.