



Mozambique

Mozambique is a picturesque beach getaway, with its swaying palm trees and sparkling blue waters. After struggling through a turbulent 20th century of civil war and a number of national disasters, Mozambique has emerged as a largely peaceful, if not prosperous, nation.

Popular with European and South African holidaymakers, the country's travel industry is booming as more and more beachfront resorts spring up along the coast and upon the idyllic semi-deserted islands of the Bazaruto Archipelago.

There is some 1500 miles of empty coastline to explore, and with the world famous Kruger National Park sitting on the border with South Africa, Mozambique is an ideal beach and safari destination.

The clear blue waters of the Indian Ocean are teeming with sea life, ranging from tiny fish and sea urchins populating coral reefs to the gentle and giant whale sharks cruising along the coast. Altogether, they make Mozambique one of the best places in the world for fishing, diving, and snorkelling.

While not well-known for its urban tourism, a day or two in Maputo is unmissable for the city's lovely colonial architecture, great restaurants and enormous curio markets. The city is also home to several interesting museums that detail Mozambique's tumultuous past.

A rough-and-tumble travel destination, a vacation in Mozambique is perfect for tourists seeking a bit of adventure alongside a healthy dose of luxury and relaxation. With a colourful nightlife and gorgeous scenery, the country is one of the best-value travel destinations in the world.

Best time to visit Mozambique

The best time to visit Mozambique is between April and October. June to October is Mozambique's cooler season, when evening temperatures require a duvet. But during the day, the weather is still very hot and good for swimming and beach activities. Late November to March is the wet season in Mozambique, and temperatures during this period can be uncomfortably hot.

What to see in Mozambique

- Take a dhow ride to the isolated beaches of Benguerra Island.
- Relax in the sand at Vilanculos.
- See the historic Portuguese and Muslim architecture on Mozambique Island.
- Spot wildlife in Gorongosa National Park.

What to do in Mozambique

- Learn to scuba dive on the beaches of Tofo.
- Go fishing and waterskiing on Cahora Bassa Lake.
- Swim with dolphins in Ponta d'Ouro.
- Strike a bargain in Maputo's sprawling Central Market.

Getting to Mozambique

There are no direct flights to Mozambique from the UK or the US, but there are plenty of connecting flights through Johannesburg and Nairobi.

Read

Chronicler of the Winds by Henning Mankell and *Sleepwalking Land* by Mia Couto.

Listen

Marrabenta.

Watch

O Povo Organizado (1975) and *Fogata* (1992).

Drink

Laurentina and 2M beer.

Eat

Freshly caught seafood and piri-piri chicken.

What to buy

Bright wax-printed fabric, wooden carvings and bead necklaces.

What to pack

Remember a hat and sunscreen, as the sun is relentless in Mozambique.

Did you know?

-Maputo was formerly known as Lourenco Marques.

-The colours of Mozambique's flag are green (wealth), red (freedom), black (the continent of Africa), white (peace) and yellow (mineral wealth).

-Mozambique is the only country in the Commonwealth never to have been part of the British Empire.

A final word

Mozambique offers an idyllic beach getaway on the exotic Indian Ocean coast of Africa.

Things to do in Mozambique

A laidback, friendly, and comparatively safe tourist destination in East Africa, Mozambique offers visitors numerous things to see and do. Perhaps most popular are the dozens of stunning tropical beaches that are perfect for just lazing around on.

For beach holidays, Mozambique is arguably the best destination in Africa. It's widely lauded as one of the best destinations in the world for scuba diving and game fishing, and its colourful and well-preserved coral reefs and clear warm waters attract plenty of snorkellers and honeymooners.

Travellers should see the enormous sand dunes and freshwater lakes of Bazaruto Island or visit Benguerra Island's forests and wetlands. History enthusiasts will enjoy the historic lighthouse on Inhaca Island and a number of UNESCO-listed cultural attractions.

Known mainly for its beach resorts and ocean activities, other attractions include Africa's fourth-largest artificial lake, Cahora Bassa, and Gorongosa National Park. The north of the country offers some amazing wilderness areas.

It's worth horse riding on the beach in Vilanculos or scuba diving in its turquoise waters, and taking a trip on a Pemba Bay dhow. Ponta d'Ouro, in the south, is good for swimming with dolphins, or surfing one of the most perfect waves in the world.

Mozambique travel info

Electricity

Electrical current is 220 volts, 50Hz. The rounded three-pin plug is common, particularly near the border with South Africa and in Maputo. Two pronged, round- and flat-pin plugs are also found.

Language

Portuguese is the official language, though over 40 languages are spoken in the country. English is taught in secondary schools, but is only spoken in the southern tourist regions.

Money

The official currency is the Mozambican Metical (MZN), which is divided into 100 centavos. In the southern parts of the country, South African rands and US dollars are often also accepted to pay for accommodation. It's prudent to carry some cash in these currencies for times when an ATM is out of order or nonexistent. Credit cards are accepted in most upmarket hotels in Maputo, but card facilities throughout the rest of the country are limited so, again, it's advisable to carry cash.

Tipping

Tipping has become standard practice in Mozambique, particularly in tourist areas where a tip of about 10 percent is expected in restaurants.

Health

Health regulations in Mozambique require visitors to have a yellow fever certificate if travelling from infected areas. Malaria is a risk throughout the year and prophylactics are recommended, as well as precautions against mosquitos.

Vaccinations are recommended for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and typhoid. Visitors who will be spending a lot of time outdoors and may be at risk of animal bites should consider a rabies vaccination. All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

Diseases caused by unsanitary conditions are common throughout the country, and untreated water should be considered as unsafe to drink. Cholera and other waterborne diseases are prevalent during the rainy season.

The government has declared tuberculosis (TB) a national emergency and expects it to be a problem for the foreseeable future. Hospital facilities are generally poor in Mozambique, and outside the major cities of Maputo and Beira medical facilities are limited.

Comprehensive medical insurance is essential and visitors should carry personal medical supplies with them. Visitors should make sure that all medication is in its original packaging and accompanied by a signed and dated letter from a doctor, detailing what the medication is and why it is needed.

Safety

Most visits to Mozambique are trouble free, but tourists should remain vigilant at all times. Violent crime can occur in major cities and tourist areas, and there is some mugging, bag snatching, and pick-pocketing. Visitors are advised to be alert in public places, to keep valuables out of sight, and to avoid walking anywhere at night. All visitors, especially women, should avoid walking alone on the beach, as beaches and offshore islands are not policed.

Visitors are advised that it is extremely risky to wander off well-travelled paths and roads, as a few unexploded landmines still lie scattered about the southern parts of the country. Local information should be sought before going off-road outside provincial capitals.

Travellers should remain vigilant when driving, as traffic accidents are common due to the poor condition of the roads. Many roads can become impassable in the rainy season (November to April), when there is also a risk of cyclones. Overland travel after dark is not recommended, and travellers should be especially alert when driving near the Mozambique-South African border. Police checkpoints are common, where foreigners may be at risk of harassment. There have been many reports of police attempting to solicit bribes, but travellers should insist on a written citation that can be paid at a police station. Travellers should also not travel to some northern districts in Cabo Delgado Province due to terrorism.

Local customs

Identity documents should be carried at all times; drug offences are taken very seriously, and can receive long jail terms and heavy fines. Visitors should ask permission before photographing anyone, particularly in remote parts of the country.

Doing business

Conducting business in Mozambique can be difficult, as many people only speak Portuguese or their own ethnic language. Translators are usually found in Maputo, but remain hard to come by. Punctuality is important and dress is usually conservative, with lightweight materials recommended.

Business associates should be addressed by their professional titles unless otherwise stated, and meetings generally start and end with a handshake. Men and women may shake hands, but any additional physical contact can be interpreted as romantic interest.

Duty free

Travellers to Mozambique may enter the country with the following items without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 250g of tobacco, perfume for personal use, and 750ml of spirits or three standard bottles of wine. Drugs are strictly prohibited and a permit is required for firearms and ammunition.

Communications

The international dialling code for Mozambique is +258. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0027 for South Africa). Internet access is easy and fast in Maputo and other major centres; upmarket hotels offer WiFi. Mobile coverage is expanding to all main cities in most provinces.

Passport & Visa

All foreign passengers to Mozambique must hold return or onward tickets, the necessary travel documentation for their next destination, and proof of sufficient funds to cover their expenses while in the country. Until recently visitors of most nationalities could obtain a 30-day tourist visa on arrival in Mozambique, but visas can now no longer be purchased at points of entry and must be organised beforehand. Those visiting Mozambique from a country where there is no Mozambican diplomatic mission should be able to get a visa on arrival but this should be confirmed in advance. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required to enter Mozambique if visitors are arriving from or have transited through an infected area. It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Entry requirements

US citizens must have a passport that is valid on arrival in Mozambique. A visa is required.

British citizens must have a passport that is valid on arrival in Mozambique. A visa is required.

Canadian citizens must have a passport that is valid on arrival in Mozambique. A visa is required.

Australian citizens must have a passport that is valid on arrival in Mozambique. A visa is required.

South African citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least 30 days after their arrival in Mozambique. No visa is required.

Irish citizens must have a passport that is valid on arrival in Mozambique. A visa is required.

New Zealand citizens must have a passport that is valid on arrival in Mozambique. A visa is required.

Useful contacts

Department of Tourism official site: www.visitmozambique.net

Fire (198), medical emergencies (117), police (119).

Embassies / consulates in other countries

Mozambique Embassy, Washington DC, United States (also responsible for Canada): +1 202 293 7146

Mozambique High Commission, London, United Kingdom: +44 (020) 7383 3800

Consulate in Melbourne, Australia: +61 3 9652 9000

Mozambique High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 12 401 0300

Embassies / consulates in Mozambique

United States Embassy, Maputo: +258 21 492 797

British High Commission, Maputo: +258 21 356 000

Canadian High Commission, Maputo: +258 21 244 200

Australian Consulate, Maputo: +258 21 498 778

South African High Commission, Maputo: +258 21 243 000

Irish Embassy, Maputo: +258 (0)1 491 440

New Zealand High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa (also responsible for Mozambique): +27 12 435 9000

Climate in Mozambique

The climate of Mozambique is typically tropical between October and March, with a wet season during the long summer, and a dry season in the winter, from April to September. There is little variation of temperatures between the seasons.

Differences in climate are dependent mainly on altitude. The wet season brings the heaviest rain along the coast, and cyclones occur during this period. Mozambique's climate varies in different regions of the country. But generally, the inland areas are slightly cooler and more humid than the coastal areas during the rainy season.

Rainfall is usually heaviest between December and March. The southern parts of the country are drier and less tropical than the north, with temperatures along the coast averaging 80F (27C) during winter. The rainy season can get swelteringly hot and humid with average coastal temperatures of 88F (31C).

The best time to visit Mozambique is in the cooler, dry winter season between April and September, when it's sunny and the water is still pleasantly warm. The country is also a popular New Year's destination, particularly for South Africans, but those travelling in December and January should be prepared for rain.

Disclaimer: By its very nature much of the information in this travel guide is subject to change at short notice and travellers are urged to verify information on which they're relying with the relevant authorities. We cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above.

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