



Mozambique ~ Land of Contrasts

Introduction

Mozambique's history can be traced approximately 1700 years when the area was settled by migrating tribes, who dominated the more peaceful nomadic tribes and intermarried with them.

The Portuguese involvement in Mozambique started around 1498 when Vasco da Gama landed at Ilha da Mozambique en route to India. Their interest came about from a need to establish supply points on the routes sailed between Europe and the East. In the following 200 years numerous other trading posts were set up along the coast with Ilha da Mozambique becoming the capital and by the mid sixteenth century, ivory had replaced gold as the main trading commodity.

By the eighteenth century slaves were being sold by the thousands through many of Mozambique's ports. In the seventeenth century the Portuguese strengthened their control in the country by establishing private agricultural lands granted by either the Portuguese crown or by conquest of African Chiefs. Major companies in Mozambique during the eighteenth century tried to gain control of the Zambezi Valley by forming charter companies, of which the Zambezia Company was the largest. Most failed at this attempt, but the Zambezia Company profited through forced labor abuses and harsh conditions under which the locals were made to live. In 1891 the British-Portuguese treaty was signed which set the boundaries of Portuguese East Africa (the former name for Mozambique). Significant events in the early twentieth century were the large scale migration of labor forces from the southern regions of Mozambique to South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Another equally important occurrence was the growing economic importance of the southern part of the country as ties with South Africa strengthened.

In the late nineteenth century, Lourenço Marques (Maputo) became increasingly popular as a major export channel and became the country's capital after being transferred from Ilha da Mozambique.

In 1919, António Salazar came into power and consolidated Portuguese control over Mozambique. This resulted in the introduction of agriculture, which boosted the economic growth. Alas, conditions for Mozambicans worsened and only a handful of schools and hospitals existed, of which most were situated in cities and only available to the Portuguese and other white nationalities. In 1960 an official meeting was held at Mueda in northern Mozambique where peaceful villagers protested against taxes. Portuguese troops opened fire killing large numbers of demonstrators.

This fuelled the Makonde people and the struggle for independence grew steadily until the 25th of June 1975 where the independent People's Republic of Mozambique was proclaimed with Samora Machel as President and Joaquim Chissano as Prime Minister.

The Portuguese left the country in a state of chaos with few skilled professionals and hardly any infrastructure. Aims at teaching 100 000 people to read and write each year, the formation of banks, insurance companies and basic health services fell apart by 1983 when the country became bankrupt and the money useless. The Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) came into action, which later had backing from the South African military and certain sectors in the West. Renamo had no ideology of its own and sought sole destruction of the social and communications infrastructure and destabilization of the government.

From then on, the 17 year 'Civil War' brought mass destruction of roads, bridges, schools, clinics and villagers with any sort of skill were shot. A disastrous drought in 1983 crippled the country and led Frelimo to opening Mozambique to the West for Western Aid. When Samora Machel died in 1986, Joaquim Chissano took his place as the war continued. By the early 1990's Frelimo had abandoned its Marxist ideology and announced the changing over to a market economy. State enterprises would be privatized and multi-party elections were to be scheduled. In October 1992, a formal peace agreement was arranged and a successful UN-monitored disarmament and demobilization campaign was established. Since the signing of the peace accords, Mozambique has moved forward in a quest for transforming military conflict into political competition.

Geography

Situated on the east coast of Southern Africa, Mozambique has a coastline that stretches for nearly 3000 km. The country covers an area of approximately 800 000 sq km, and its inland waters include a portion of Lake Malawi. Long, winding rivers flow across its territory. One of the is the Zambezi, which has its source in Angola, enters Mozambique at the country's westernmost in the Tete province, and flows almost 800 km before reaching the sea at Chinde.

It has an extensive coastal plain which varies from 100 – 2000km's wide in the south. The north is dominated by plateaus and mountainous terrain where towering granite outcrops called inselbergs occur. While the south coast is edged with barrier lakes, the Zambezi River Valley is situated in the central regions of Mozambique and creates an extensive delta region towards the coast. Mount Binga is Mozambique's highest peak at 2436m situated in the Chimanimani Mountains on the Zimbabwean border. Other important rivers which flow through the country are the Limpopo River, the Save River and the Rovuma River (the border between Mozambique and Tanzania in the north).

Climate

The main dry season runs from April to November and during this time, daytime temperatures average 24oC. The rainy season is from November to March and temperatures average 27oC. The country's highest temperatures occur in the north around Pemba and west towards Tete. Rainfall averages 850mm per annum along the coast while during intense rainfall periods, up to 2200mm can be recorded.

Environment

Mozambique has diverse ecosystem with extensive wetlands, mangrove forests, offshore marine habitats and montane habitats including the Chimanimani Mountains and the Gorongosa Massif in central Mozambique. A lack of official regulations and structures harbor the conservation of many areas. Even when boundaries have been set, many of Mozambique's natural resources are being ignored or squandered. Timber trade in the northern parts of Mozambique is an example of how over utilization and inappropriate logging practices are being pulled off with large scale damage to the surrounding environment as neither replanting nor sustainable harvesting is implemented. There are however a number of small projects which focus on the promotion of sustainable development and community resource management.

Flora

Flora includes some 5600 species of which an estimated 250 are endemic. Two areas of notable high biodiversity are those of the Chimanimani Mountains and the Maputoland Center of Plant Diversity along the South African border. The latter area is considered a site of global botanical significance with coastal forests and some 2500 species of vascular plants. Common species which occur throughout most of Mozambique include various types of *Brachystegia* (Miombo) and the tall Mopane tree. Mangrove swamps are a common feature along Mozambique's central and northern coastline and cover an approximate area of 400 000ha.

Fauna

Although most large mammal populations were exterminated during the war period, some 200 mammal species, 170 reptile and 40 amphibian species occur. In most places, recovery is in place of animal populations and an example of the drastically reduced numbers is shown in the Gorongosa National Park where 3000 elephants occurred before the war compared to the 120 that occur there now. Similar are the buffalo population numbers which were 14 000 prior to the war where in 1994 there were now none. An approximate 600 bird species have been identified in Mozambique with efforts under way to fully document the numbers. As for marine life, mammals include the spinner, bottlenose, humpback and striped dolphins and the endangered dugongs. Leather, loggerhead, green, hawksbill and olive Ridley turtles occur along the coastline and whales such as the humpback use the calm waters as breeding grounds during the winter months. Endangered species include the black rhino, giraffe, tsessebe, roan antelope and African wild dog. As well as the African rock python, the wattled crane and most notably the dugong which occurs in marine estuarine habitats.

National Parks

Three mainland national parks occur in Mozambique, namely the Gorongosa, the Zinave and the Banhine. Bazaruto National Park is situated off-shore and at present is the main attraction for visitors to the country. Both Zinave and Banine parks are still closed while the infrastructure of the reopened Gorongosa National Park is extremely limited. Five wildlife reserves occur, namely Niassa, Marromeu, Pomene, Maputo and Gile. Only the Niassa and Maputo Elephant Reserve are open to tourists. Various other Transfronteir Conservation Areas (TFCA's), which will include the use and management of local communities, are in the pipeline to be opened. Such areas include linking the Maputo Elephant

Reserve with South Africa's Tembe Elephant Reserve, the Chimanimani National Park incorporating Zimbabwe and the Gaza TFCA, which encompasses South Africa's Kruger National Park and Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou National Park.

People, Education and Language

Mozambique's population is roughly 23 million (2003) of which 53% are concentrated in the north and 80% in rural areas. The country is divided into 10 administrative provinces.

There are 16 main ethnic groups, most notably the Makua (largest group), Makonde, Sena, Ronga and the Shangaan. About 1% of the population is Portuguese and there are small numbers of European and Asian residents. There are two levels of primary education (EP1 and EP2) followed by two levels of secondary education (ESG1 and ESG2). There are universities or tertiary education institutes in Maputo, Beira, Nampula and Cuamba. Portuguese is the official language and is widely spoken in larger towns. Of the numerous African languages the most common is the Makua-Lomwe language. Sena-Nyanja is spoken in the centre and Tsonga in the south.

Currency

Mozambique's local currency is the *Metical*, however US dollars and SA Rand are widely accepted.

CABO DELGADO PROVINCE

The most northerly province of the country is the home of the Makonde group of people, who are concentrated on the Mueda Plateau.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 77 867 km²

Borders: Tanzania to the north, Nampula to the south, Niassa to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east.

Main Products: marble, clay, graphite and hard woods.

Population density: 16 inhabitants /sq. km

Most represented ethnic group: Makonde and Makua.

Pemba

The city of Pemba, located at the large bay of the same name, never had a role in historical world trading activities, which tended to be concentrated on the islands off Mozambique. Similarly, today there is little industrial activity in this city, thus its natural beauty has been preserved and its beautiful beaches are untouched by pollution.

Getting to Pemba

There are regular flights (LAM) from Maputo to Pemba and a 440 km road linking Pemba with Nampula.

Things to see

Old Town: The Old Town contains several traditional markets. Also known as “bazares” these can be found in the *bairros* of Paquitequete, Natite and Cariacó. In these *bairros* you can also admire the silversmiths at work on their verandas. These craftsmen transform coins into silver necklaces, bracelets and earrings. This is an old art, passed down through many generations from father to son.

Ibo Island

This beautiful island is part of the idyllic Quirimbas Archipeligo. In historic times, it was an important Portuguese trade post. To visit the island you can hire a boat in Pemba for the crossing.

Beaches

Praia do Wimbe: This is a palm-lined beach with white sand and clear blue waters.

Praia do Farol: You can walk along Wimbe beach in a southerly direction to the lighthouse (farol) and beach nearby. In addition, a visit to **Mecufi** and **Mocímboa da Praia** beaches are recommended.

Makonde Traditions

The Makonde are known as fearless people and ardent followers of initiation rituals. For the male initiation, it is common practice to use “mapico” masks for the mapico dance, one of their most important dances. Another cultural characteristic is the tattooing of the body and the sharpening of the teeth, both for aesthetic purposes. The Makonde are also known as artists, particularly for their wood and ivory carvings.

NIASSA PROVINCE

Niassa province is the largest and the most sparsely populated region of the ten provinces of Mozambique. It offers breathtaking views and scenery to the visitor.

Characteristics Of The Province

Area: 122 176 km²

Borders: Tanzania to the north, Nampula and Zambezia to the south, Cabo Delgado to the east and Lake Niassa and Malawi to the west.

Main products: cotton, maize, sorghum, hard woods and semi-precious stones.

Population density: 6 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic group: Makua, Yao and Nyanja.

Lichinga

Lichinga is a town of approximately 75000 inhabitants located on the plateau of the same name. The surrounding countryside is characterised by extensive pine forests.

Getting to Lichinga

The most practical way to visit Lichinga is on the regular LAM flights from Maputo. There is no road link between Tanzania and Niassa Province but there is a gravel road from the coast at Pemba to Lichinga. Alternatively it is possible to reach Lichinga and Lake Niassa from Malawi via the Chipode/Mandimba border.

The Surrounding Countryside

Lake Niassa: A visit to the lake is obligatory if you want to have a “real Africa” experience. The journey down to the edge of the lake has to be in a 4x4 vehicle due to the quality of the road, thus the lake is inaccessible to many tourists and still unspoilt. The road to the lake passes through unique and picturesque scenery.

There are three small fishing villages, Meponda (42km from Lichinga), Metangula (138km) and Cóbue (190km), where you can buy delicious fresh fish and drink refreshing coconut milk.

Wildlife

The Niassa Reserve to the north of the province is famous due to the large quantity of elephants.

Music Tradition

Music is a very important component of the cultural tradition of the people of this province. They use blown instruments made from dry and hollowed calabashes, which produce a sound similar to that of a trumpet. Groups of musicians play together with calabashes of different sizes.

NAMPULA PROVINCE

Nampula province presents contrasting scenery. The miombo forest alternates with the magnificent towering granite domes and peaks, a paradise for rock climbers.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 78 197 km²

Borders: Cabo Delgado and Niassa to the north, Zambezia to the south-west and the Indian Ocean to the east.

Main products: cashew, cotton, tobacco, precious stones and uranium.

Population density: 38 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic group: Makua.

The City Of Nampula

The capital city is an inland town surrounded by flat plains dotted by rocky granite outcrops.

Getting to Nampula

Nampula can be reached on one of the regular LAM flights from Maputo or by road from Malawi. The Chipode/Mandimba border crossing, in Niassa Province, is 505 km away. There is also a road from Beira, through Zambezia province, crossing the Zambezi river by ferry at Caia.

Things to see

Nampula Cathedral: is a remarkable building with twin towers and a massive dome.

Nampula Museum: is located on Av. Eduardo Mondlane. There are displays of the diverse forms of art typical of Mozambican culture.

Mozambique Island

The old part of the Island, about two third of its total area, was declared a “World Heritage Site” by UNESCO in 1992. Here there are buildings constructed out of coral, although many are in a poor condition due to the lack of maintenance in recent years.

Places of interest include: St. Paul’s Palace, The Museum of Sacred Art and The Fortress of St Sebastion.

Beaches

Praia de Fernão Veloso: Located near Nacala 80 km north of Mozambique Island.

Praia das Chocas: Near Mozambique Island, on the mainland, is a very popular beach. The residents of Nampula often spend their holidays there.

Makua Traditions

The Makua women paint their faces with “muciro”, a white extract from a root, to make beautiful masks that can be seen in public. They also make baskets, mats and other articles woven out of straw as well as creating sculptures out of black ebony and clay.

ZAMBÉZIA PROVINCE

Zambezia is an agricultural region of extensive coconut and magnificent tea plantations.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 103 127 km²

Borders: Nampula and Niassa to the north, Sofala to the south, Malawi and Tete to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east.

Main products: coconut, tea, shrimp and precious stones

Population density: 29 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic groups: Chuabo and Makua.

Quelimane

Is an important river port, located on the Rio dos Bons Sinais. Quelimane is known for the affability and friendliness of its residents.

Getting to Quelimane

To visit the city, there are regular LAM flights from Maputo or Beira. However, if you have an adventurous spirit it is possible to go by road from Beira (Dondo-Caia-Nicoadala) or from Nampula, enjoying the charming views *en-route*.

Things to see

Old Cathedral: A magnificent and austere building.

The Mosque: A modern building with ornate lattice-work at the top of the façade.

Beaches

Praia de Zalala: This wonderful beach of endless white sand is reached from Quelimane by 45 km of tarred road to the north-east. The beach is lined by dense and leafy casuarina trees.

The Surrounding Countryside

Gurue: This mountain region in the northern part of the province has extensive areas of tea plantations. The second highest point of Mozambique, Namuli Mount (2419M), is found here.

Hot water springs: Known as “fontes quentes”, bubble up from the ground near Morrumbala and Lugela and Gilé. The water temperature is so high that it is possible to boil an egg or cook food in it.

Wildlife

Gilé Game Reserve. This is a wildlife conservation area with a great variety of mammal and bird species.

Traditional Gastronomy

Zambezia is famous for its traditional cooking which is quite spicy. Zambezian chicken, grilled with palm oil, is known all round Mozambique, but few prepare it as perfectly as the Zambezians are able to do.

TETE PROVINCE

Tete province is well known as the location of the colossal Cabora Bassa dam, but this province is also rich in minerals, such as coal, iron, fluorite and gold.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 100 724 km²

Borders: Malawi to the east, Zambia to the north, Zimbabwe to the west and Manica and Sofala to the south.

Main products: coal, iron and fishing (on the Cabora Bassa Lake)

Population density: 7 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic groups: Nyanja and Nyungue.

The City Of Tete

Tete is one of the hottest parts of Mozambique as it lies on a plateau 500 M above sea level.

Getting to Tete

To reach Tete, there is a road from Zimbabwe, crossing the border at Cuchamano (191 km from Tete), passing through to Malawi at the Zobué border (120 km). There is another road from Zambia via the Cassacatiza border crossing (293 km), and also the EN 6 and EN 102 roads from Beira via Guro and Changara. Alternatively, it is possible to fly with LAM from Beira or Maputo.

Things to see

The Tete Suspension Bridge: Crossing over the Zambezi river this bridge links Tete to Moatize. It was built at the end of 1960s.

Boroma Church: Around 30 km from Tete, this magnificent Jesuit Church was built at the end of the 19th Century.

The Surrounding Countryside

Cabora Bassa Dam: This is the second largest dam in Africa and the fifth largest in the world. The enormous reservoir behind the dam has a surface area of more the 2000 sq. km. You must obtain a written permission to visit the dam from the “Hidroeléctrica de Cabora Bassa” (HCB) office in Tete before travelling to Songo (150km from Tete), where guided tours to the power station and dam are available.

The “Embondeiro” or Baobab Tree: is widely spread throughout this province. This ancient and legendary tree is intimately linked to the lives of the people in Tete, Cabo Delgado and Inhambane provinces. Innumerable stories about the baobab tree have been passed down through the generations. The baobab is a mighty tree, its trunk can have a diameter of up to 8 metres and the tree can grow up to 15 metres high. The trunk is crowned with very thick branches.

Nhau Traditions

The Nhau dancers require extreme agility. They dance holding a huge and frightening wooden mask to the sound of strong drum beats. These dances are often initiation rituals.

MANICA PROVINCE

This province, essentially agriculturally based, is an important producer of a wide range of fruits and vegetables.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 61661 km²

Borders: Tete Province to the north, Inhambane and Gaza Provinces to the south, Sofala Province to the east and Zimbabwe to the west.

Main Products: gold, mica, fluorite, chalcopryrite, tobacco, citrus and vegetables.

Population density: 11 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic groups: Shona and Sena

Chimoio

Chimoio, the capital city of Manica Province, is an important commercial centre for the trade of agricultural products, which come in from the surrounding fertile areas.

Getting to Chimoio

To reach Chimoio there is a road from Zimbabwe, via the Mutare/Machipanda border (87km), or from Beira (the EN 6, about 200km). Alternatively, it is possible to fly in on a charter flight. LAM does not service Chimoio.

Things to see

Cabeça do Velho (Face of the Old Man): The most well known feature of the city is a spectacular natural stone formation resembling the face of an old man.

The Town of Manica

Manica is to the west of Chimoio, and is entered through the charming, historic town gates.

Museum of Geology: is one of the main attractions of Manica. The museum displays a complete and rare collection of the minerals and rocks of the region.

The Surrounding Countryside

Chicamba Real is a hydroelectric dam between Manica and Chimoio. About 36 km after Chimoio on the main road, turn left at the T-junction and travel a further 15 km down a dirt road to the dam wall. It is a stunning scene with the sheered off rock forming a natural V-shape to house the dam. About one kilometer further on there is a pleasant outdoor bar overlooking the lake.

Wildlife

Bird watching, crocodile viewing and fishing: About 45 km from Chimoio toward the Machipanda border to the left, near a rock quarry, there is a sign for Casa Msika, a tourist resort on the edge of Lake Chicamba with chalets, a campsite and a pool. This is the ideal place for a fisherman or an ardent bird watcher.

SOFALA PROVINCE

Sofala is one of the richest Mozambican provinces producing primarily shrimps and sugar.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 67218 km²

Borders: Tete and Zambézia to the north, Inhambane to the south, Manica to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east.

Main products: shrimp, sugar and hard woods

Population density 20 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic groups: Sena and Ndau

Beira

The provincial capital, Beira, has about 350,000 inhabitants and is built on a plain below sea level. The city spreads along the coast from the port to the lighthouse in the Macuti area.

Getting to Beira

To reach Beira there is a road (EN 6) from Zimbabwe (about 300 km) passing through Manica Province. Maputo, via the EN 1 road is 1200 km away. There are also LAM flights from Maputo.

Things to see

Largo do Município: In the heart of the city, this square is surrounded by old colonial buildings, terraces, tea rooms and shops.

Casa Portugal: This house is built in typical colonial style. It is located near the Praça do Metical.

Casa Infante de Sagres: This is a beautiful house of magnificent architecture. It is found in the Largo Infante Sagres.

The Cathedral: is found on Av. Eduardo Mondlane. The cathedral was erected in 1925 and is partially built of stone from the sixteenth century Fort of Sofala which has since been flooded beneath the sea.

Beaches

Beira's best beaches are found between the Cube Náutico and the lighthouse.

Wildlife

For game viewing, there is the famous **Gorongosa National Park**, 150 km from Beira, and the **Marroneu Buffalo Reserve**, to the north of the province. In both areas there are restocking programmes underway.

INHAMBANE PROVINCE

Inhambane province is characterised by its extensive coconut palms and cashew trees. This province has one of the most famous tourist destinations of the country: the Bazaruto archipelago.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 68 615 km²

Borders: Sofala and Manica to the north, Gaza to the west and the Indian Ocean to the south and east.

Main Products: cashew, coconuts and tangerines.

Population density: 19 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic groups: Tsua (Tsonga) and Chope.

The City of Inhambane

The Portuguese established a permanent settlement and trading post at Inhambane in 1534, making it one of the oldest settlements in Southern Africa.

Getting to Inhambane

The easiest way to reach Inhambane is by road from Maputo (469 km on EN 1) or it is possible to drive from Beira or Zimbabwe on the EN 6 and EN 1 after Inchope. LAM does not fly to Inhambane, but charter flights can be arranged.

Things to see

Cathedral of Our Lady of the Conception: This old and imposing church, with a fine clock tower, was built by the Portuguese about 200 years ago.

Beaches

This province has innumerable famous beaches, amongst which are: Praia de Zavala (11 km from Quissico), Praia de Závora (85 km south of Inhambane), Baía dos Cocos (Coconut Bay) and Praia do Tofo (22 km east of Inhambane), Praia da Barra (20 km north of Inhambane) and Pomene (174 km north of Inhambane).

Bazaruto Archipelago: This idyllic archipelago consists of five islands (Bazaruto, Benguera, Magaruque, Santa Carolina & Bangwe). They are situated off mainland between Vilanculos and Inhassoro (780 km from Maputo). There are high quality hotels on two of the islands. To reach the islands it is possible to hire a boat locally, or to travel by air from Maputo and Beira or to fly directly from a neighbouring country via Vilanculos where there are immigration and custom services.

Wildlife

Zinave National Park (in the north west corner of the province) and **Bazaruto National Park** are conservation areas.

Chope Traditions

The "Timbila" is both the name of a percussion instrument and the name of a dance. The instrument, the "marimba chope", is similar to a xylophone, and has keys, "muenje" made of a special wood only found in Inhambane. There are hollow calabashes of varying sizes under the keys that serve as a soundbox. During the timbila dance, 18 to 23 of these instruments of different sizes are played simultaneously, forming an orchestra such as the famous "marimbeiros de Zavala".

GAZA PROVINCE

Gaza Province is known as the "granary" of Mozambique due to the fertility of the Limpopo valley where there is extensive cereal and rice cultivation.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 75 450 km²

Borders: Manica to the north, Maputo to the south, South Africa to the west, Inhambane to the east and the Indian Ocean to the southeast.

Main products: cashew, cotton, rice and maize.

Population density: 16 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic group: Changana (a sub-division of Tsonga)

Xai-Xai

The provincial capital of Xai-Xai is 224 km from Maputo and the nearby beach (10 km) is a popular tourist destination. The Limpopo river flows to the south of the town in a wide, fertile plain where predominantly rice is cultivated.

Getting to Xai-Xai

There is a good road from Maputo (EN 1) which connects with the roads from the Namaacha and Ressano Garcia borders. It is also possible to travel to Xai-Xai by charter flight from Maputo.

Beaches

Praia do Xai-Xai: The massive reef running parallel to the beach provides natural protection against the strong waves at high tide and forms several small pools at low tide. At low tide, the reefs are invaded by women and children gathering shellfish, which they sell to appreciative tourists.

Praia do Chongone: This beach is similar to that at Xai-Xai in having a protective reef. It is found about 8 km north of Xai-Xai where there is an old ruined hotel. There are plans to restore this building to its former glory.

Bilene: About 145 km north of Maputo (EN 1) is the small town of Macia which is the turning for Bilene, some 30 km further. Bilene lies on the shore of a huge, 27 km long lagoon of clear, brackish water and fine white sand. The sea can be reached by crossing the lagoon by boat.

Wildlife

The **Banhine National Park**, situated between the Limpopo and Changane rivers, is an important area, protected due to its rich variety of wildlife.

MAPUTO PROVINCE

Famous because of Delagoa Bay (Baía do Espírito Santo) where the capital, Maputo, is located, this province has a rare charm provided by the contrast between urban and rural ways of life.

Characteristics of the Province

Area: 23 576 km²

Borders: Gaza to the north, South Africa to the south, Swaziland to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east.

Main products: citrus, sugar, diatomite, bentonite and limestone.

Population density: 44 inhabitants / km²

Most represented ethnic group: Tsonga

The City of Maputo

Maputo, formerly named Lourenço Marques has wide avenues lined with red acacia and lilac jacaranda trees. It offers the tourist innumerable historical, cultural and scenic spots.

Getting to Maputo

Maputo can be reached from South Africa via the Komatipoort/Ressano Garcia border (120 km from Maputo), or from Swaziland crossing the Namaacha border (80 km from Maputo).

There are daily flights from Johannesburg and others direct from Europe.

Things to see

Cathedral: The Catholic Cathedral, located on the Praça da Independencia, is an imposing white building with a beautiful tower.

City Council Chambers: is a neo-classical building, also found on the Praça da Independencia.

Tunduro Gardens: Located off Av. Samora Machel, where you can admire the fine cycad collection and other indigenous and exotic plants.

Railway Station: Built in 1910, this green and white building has a metal dome on the top designed by Mr Eiffel. It is located on Praça dos Trabalhadores.

The Fortress: Found on the Praça 25 de Junho, this fort is one of the oldest buildings in Maputo. It is now a military museum.

Museums

There are several museums in the town. However the Natural History is recommended.

Museum de História Natural: (Natural History Museum). On the Praça da Travessia do Zambeze, housed in a gothic style building, this museum displays many of the animal species of Mozambique.

Beaches

Praia da Macaneta: is a beach with strong and big waves. You may stay at the Complexo Turístico da Macaneta. To reach Macaneta you can go by boat from Maputo or by road to Marracuene.

Ponto do Ouro: The 117 km road to Ponto do Ouro from Maputo requires a 4 x 4 vehicle. From the South African side, the Ponto do Ouro border post can be reached by taking the road to Kosi Bay and turning left at the fork after the Manguzi Spar. There are accommodation facilities at Motel do Mar or at the caravan and camping site.

Ponto Malongane. 5 km to the north of Ponto do Ouro, there is a beautiful beach with white sand and a blue-green sea. There is a motel and camping site at Malongane.

Inhaca Island: 34 km from Maputo in the bay, this island is accessible by both boat and plane. Organised tours to various parts of the island such as Ponto de Santa Maria or to Portuguese Island are possible. It is possible to stay at Inhaca Hotel.

The Surrounding Countryside

Marracuene and the Incomati River: 30 km to the north of Maputo is located the village of Marracuene, which overlooks the Incomati River. It is possible to catch the ferry across to the other side and then to drive for 8 km along a sandy/muddy road to the beach.

Pequenos Libombos Dam: (40 km from Maputo). The reservoir is a tranquil spot for bathing and sundowners. Accommodation is available in a mini resort.

Namaacha: is at the border with Swaziland, 80 km west of Maputo and at an altitude of 600m. This is the ideal spot to rest. It is surrounded by pine and eucalyptus forests and a scenic waterfall with picnic site 3 km from the town.

Wildlife

Maputo Elephant Reserve. Situated 79 km south of Maputo on the road to Ponto do Ouro via the ferry to Catembe, or 112 km from Maputo via the Boane road. The Maputo Reserve is famous for its elephant herds. Flamingos can also be seen on the large inland lakes near the sea.

Greater Bazaruto Archipelago National Park

Location - Inhambane Province, between 21 30' and 22 00' south of the equator, the group of 5 islands are situated approximately 15 to 27 km east of the mainland centers of Vilanculos and Inhassoro.

Attraction - The islands are home to approximately 2600 people, who rely heavily on fisheries subsistence for their livelihood. These sand islands have spectacular, moving dunes and a diverse range of habitats for exotic and endemic wildlife. On the land there are freshwater lakes, home to crocodiles, fish and migrant wading birds; mangroves, where one regularly sees the beautiful 'Greater flamingo'; remnant forests along the dunes; grasslands and swamps which house a variety of bird life and mammals.

In the surrounding ocean, which attracts the majority of tourists, there are near-pristine inshore and offshore coral reef; sea-grass beds, upon which the dugong (the legendary mermaid) and turtles feed; good stocks of pelagic fishes, and long stretches of sandy beaches, ideal for swimming, walking or just relaxing. Two of the islands have a total of four tourist hotels, and these offer facilities for relaxing or exploring, scuba diving, snorkeling, fishing and other water sports.

The districts of Vilanculos and Inhassoro administer management – The Bazaruto

Archipelago. The National department of Flora and Fauna (DNFFB) is present on the islands and is responsible for control of the National Park, collecting entrance fees and enforcing regulations concerning use of natural resources. The administrative headquarters for the Park is situated at Sitone, and the ranger headquarters at Zenguelemo, both on Bazaruto Island. Chizungune; the ranger's camp; is situated in the north part of Benguerra Island.

Present management of the islands is being conducted from the Sitone headquarters by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Endangered Wildlife trust (EW), and is funded by the European Union (EU). This is known as the Bazaruto Archipelago Multiple Resource Use Projects.
