

Ultimate Zanzibar



Zanzibar is part of a beautiful, semi-autonomous archipelago off Tanzania

With a preposterously beautiful tropical coastline, a wealth of Swahili history and great food, this dreamlike island off the coast of Tanzania is quite the destination. This guide will help distil its highlights.

📍 SIGHTS

Anglican Cathedral (zanzibaranglican.or.tz; New Mkunazini Rd)

The tall spire and grey-yellow walls of this cathedral dominate the surrounding streets in this part of capital Stone Town, while the dark-wood pews and stained-glass windows will remind British visitors of churches at home. This was the first Anglican cathedral in East Africa, constructed on the site of the former slave market after slavery was officially abolished.

Jozani Sea Turtle Sanctuary (00 255 777 443 008;

Uwemajo, Swahili Wonders)

The aim of this community initiative is to help locals benefit from tourism and conservation. In three large pools, you can see

sea turtles and fish-farming side-by-side. It's also a great place to see giant tortoises, brought from Chunguu Island as a gift from the President of Zanzibar.

Kizimkazi Old Mosque (Kizimkazi Dimbani)

While this mosque is thought to be one of the oldest Islamic buildings on the East African coast, it has been extensively restored. Inside, look out for inscriptions (in Kufic and Arabic) dating from 1107 and 1770.

Mangapwani Coral Cave (Mangapwani)

This large natural cavern with a freshwater pool was originally used as a source of drinking water for local people and is rumoured to have been used in connection with the slave trade.

Princess Salme Museum

(00 255 0779 093 066;
Hurumzi St)

Curated by the renowned historian Said al Gheithy, this museum tells the story of Princess Salme, a sultan's daughter who eloped with a German merchant in the late 19th century and later wrote *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar*.

ZALA Park

(00 255 0777 850816;
Muungoni Village)

ZALA (Zanzibar Land Animals) Park was founded as a project to help the community appreciate the value of wildlife, with funds raised by tourist visits. There are tours exploring local woodland, a mangrove shoreline and nearby villages by foot, bike or kayak.

🔥 ACTIVITIES

Nungwi Cycling Adventures

(zanzibarcyclingadventures.com)

Explore the world beyond Stone Town on bike tours to rural villages, ancient ruins, coral caves, traditional blacksmiths, farms and secret beaches.

Safari Blue

(safariblue.net; Fumba)

Safari Blue is a tour company that organises day trips on beautiful traditional dhows around Menai Bay. Each dhow carries about 20 people, and each trip includes swimming, snorkelling (equipment provided), a seafood lunch on a remote island beach and time to relax on a sandbank. It's a great activity for families (kids under six years old go free).

Seaweed Centre

(00 255 688 805597;
seaweedcenter.com)

The Seaweed Centre is the HQ of a local social enterprise that enables the women of Paje to make a living harvesting seaweed and transforming it into organic soaps, scrubs and essential oils (also involving cloves, coconut and island honey).

🍴 EATING

Lukmaan

ZANZIBARI £

(lukmaanrestaurant.com;
Under the Baobab Tree,
New Mkunazini Rd)

This is probably the best local restaurant for quality Zanzibari food. There's no menu: just make your way inside to the 1950s counter and see what's on offer. Servings are enormous and include various biryanis, fried fish, coconut curries and freshly made naan.

Mr Kahawa

CAFÉ £

(mrkahawa.com; Paje)

This is the place for a top-notch espresso or cappuccino, accompanied by a sweet pancake, savoury wrap, panini, juice or salad. It's cool and stylish and has a fantastic position on the beach.

The Rock

SEAFOOD £££

(therockrestaurantzanzibar.com;
Michamvi Pingwe)

Zanzibar's most photogenic restaurant is perched on a coral outcrop in a stunning location surrounded by sea. At low tide you can walk to it; at other times (maybe after a long lunch) boats are provided. Of course, you're paying for the location, but the food is good and, unsurprisingly, includes prawns, lobster, crab, fish and other seafood.

Don't miss

Kendwa Community Tours

are run by local people. On offer are tours to Stone Town and other parts of Zanzibar Island, but most interesting are the tours of Kendwa village itself. Leave the beach for a while and see how Zanzibaris live day-to-day. Be prepared for arrangements to be a little relaxed (00 255 778 883 306; Kendwa North Zanzibar, close to Gold Hotel).



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MAP KEY

SIGHTS

- 1 Anglican Cathedral
 - 2 Jozani Sea Turtle Sanctuary
 - 3 Kizimkazi Old Mosque
 - 4 Mangapwani Coral Cave
 - 5 Princess Salme Museum
 - 6 ZALA Park
- ### ACTIVITIES
- 7 Nungwi Cycling Adventures
 - 8 Safari Blue
 - 9 Seaweed Center
- ### EATING
- 10 Lukmaan Restaurant
 - 11 Mr Kahawa
 - 12 The Rock
- ### SLEEPING
- 13 Chumbe Island Coral Park Lodge
 - 14 Emerson Spice
 - 15 Jambo Guest House
 - 16 Lost & Found Hostel
 - 17 Mangrove Lodge
 - 18 Zanzibar Coffee House

TOP PICKS

Sleeping

Chumbe Island Coral Lodge £££
Best for the environment (chumbeisland.com)

These are 'eco-bungalows' with solar power, rainwater collection, ocean views and a loft sleeping area that opens to the stars.

Emerson Spice £££
Best for a boutique stay (emersonspice.com)

With stained-glass windows and a soft-hued colour scheme, this is one of the most stylish hotels in Stone Town.

Jambo Guest House £
Best for local décor (jamboguest.com)

Jambo runs like clockwork: it has nine spick-and-span rooms with Zanzibari beds, free coffee, air conditioning and ceiling fans.

Lost & Found £
Best for a budget option (lost57.com)

Modern, friendly and well located, Lost & Found houses its guests in 'pods' (single or double), with curtains for privacy.

Mangrove Lodge ££
Best for a tropical feel (mangrovelodge.com)

The delightful Mangrove Lodge is owned by a Zanzibari-Italian couple, and their gentle style imbues the whole place.

Zanzibar Coffee House ££
Best for caffeine lovers (riftvalley-zanzibar.com)

This stylish hotel above a first-class coffee shop has eight rooms, all named after different types of coffee.



FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Tanzania* guide (£16.99) has a section on Zanzibar, which is also available to download as a separate PDF (£2.99; lonelyplanet.com).