AFRIQUE UNIE · TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Mozambique in 12 days: a day-by-day itinerary

Southern Mozambique makes for a gentle trip, between Portuguese-speaking culture and the Indian Ocean. In twelve days, this route links Maputo, with its café terraces and architecture, the Inhambane coast, where you can swim with whale sharks and manta rays, then Vilankulo and the dunes and lagoons of the Bazaruto Archipelago. It deliberately stays in the south: the far north, in particular Cabo Delgado province, is currently formally advised against.

Day by day

Days 1-2 · Maputo, a capital of café terraces (night : Maputo)
Maputo charms with its avenues lined with flame trees and jacarandas, its modernist architecture from the 1950s and 1960s and its Portuguese-style café life. In the Baixa, the historic centre, visit the central railway station with its iron and bronze dome, the fortress and the central market, then head up to the avenues of Polana. The next day, take a guided walking tour of the Mafalala district, birthplace of many artists and independence activists, then browse the Feima craft market. In the evening, have grilled prawns and piri-piri chicken at the fish market. Use booked taxis rather than walking after dark.

Day 3 · The coast road to Tofo (night : Tofo)
The EN1 national road heads north past lagoons and coconut groves: allow seven to eight hours to Tofo, near Inhambane, for a little under five hundred kilometres, leaving early so as to arrive before dark. Stop at Xai-Xai or Bilene, on the shore of a large lagoon. To save a day, a flight links Maputo with Inhambane in about an hour. Tofo is a small, lively beach village popular with divers from all over the world, with fish restaurants and a market. In the evening, settle in for three nights: life here follows the sea and diving conditions.

Days 4-6 · Tofo and Inhambane, manta rays and whale sharks (night : Tofo)
The Tofo coast is one of the best places in Africa to see whale sharks and manta rays, although their presence varies from year to year and season to season. Dive centres offer snorkelling trips to swim with whale sharks and dives on the reefs where mantas come to be cleaned; from roughly July to October, humpback whales pass offshore. Choose an operator that follows the rules for approaching animals. On another day, cross the bay by dhow to Inhambane, one of the oldest towns in the country, with its cathedral and market, or head to the quieter beach at Barra.

Day 7 · On to Vilankulo (night : Vilankulo)
About four hours' drive north separates Tofo from Vilankulo, through a region of coconut palms, cassava fields and small roadside markets selling cashew nuts and fruit. Vilankulo is a small town stretched along a bay of shallow turquoise water, where dhows, the traditional sailing boats, wait for the tide. Late in the day, stroll to the fish market and along the beach, from where you can see the Bazaruto islands on the horizon. Book the next day's trip locally or in advance, checking the weather: wind can cancel crossings.

Days 8-10 · The Bazaruto Archipelago by dhow (night : Vilankulo or Bazaruto Archipelago)
Bazaruto Archipelago National Park groups five islands of dunes, lagoons and sandbanks. A day by dhow or motorboat from Vilankulo lets you climb the huge dunes of Bazaruto, with a striking view over the lagoons, then snorkel on Two Mile Reef among tropical fish and sometimes turtles. Dugongs still live here but are rarely seen. The next day, take a trip to Magaruque or Santa Carolina island, or treat yourself to a night in one of the island lodges. On the last day, stay ashore for a kitesurfing lesson or a horse ride on the beach.

Days 11-12 · A last day in Vilankulo, then home (night : Vilankulo)

Keep a day with no plans to enjoy the bay, a last boat trip or a massage facing the islands. Vilankulo has an airport with flights to Maputo and Johannesburg, which saves the drive back south; check schedules, which vary by season. If you return to Maputo by road, allow a full day, about eleven hours, and preferably break the journey in Tofo or Bilene. Before leaving the country, try matapa one last time, a dish of cassava leaves with coconut milk and peanuts, along with the local beer.

Getting around

The EN1 national road links Maputo, Tofo and Vilankulo, with some sections in good condition and others badly worn. A car with a driver or organised transfers are the simplest options; traffic drives on the left. Never drive at night, and always carry your passport, licence and vehicle papers, as police checks are frequent. Domestic flights to Inhambane and Vilankulo save time. Cabo Delgado province and parts of Niassa and Nampula provinces are advised against: check your government's official travel advice before you leave.

When to go

The dry season, from May to November, is the most pleasant: clear skies, moderate heat and calm seas. Humpback whales pass offshore from roughly July to October. Whale sharks and manta rays can be seen all year round in Tofo, with variations. The rainy season, from December to March, is hot and humid, with a risk of cyclones on the coast from January to March.

Practical information

Mozambique

Entry	Depends on your passport: visiterafriqueunie.com/en/visa/mozambique/
Yellow fever	Certificate required if arriving from a risk country
Malaria	throughout the country
Currency	Mozambican metical (MZN)
Languages	Portuguese
Plugs	type C, F, M · dialling code +258 · UTC+2
Emergencies	police 112 ou 197 ou 199 · ambulance 112 · fire 112 ou 198

Departure checklist

Documents

☐ Passport valid for at least six months after your return, with blank pages
☐ Visa or e-visa (printed if required)
☐ International vaccination certificate (yellow fever if required)
☐ Travel insurance certificate and assistance number
☐ Paper and digital copies of your passport and bookings
☐ Tickets, bookings and addresses saved offline
☐ International driving permit if you are hiring a vehicle

Health

☐ Travel consultation done and vaccinations up to date
☐ Malaria tablets if your doctor recommends them
☐ First-aid kit: plasters, antiseptic, anti-diarrhoea tablets, rehydration salts
☐ Mosquito repellent suitable for the tropics
☐ Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
☐ Personal medication and prescriptions

Money and connectivity

☐ Bank told, Visa or Mastercard (and a backup card)
☐ Cash in euros or dollars, recent notes in good condition
☐ eSIM or local SIM card sorted
☐ Plug adapter for the country
☐ Power bank and cables
☐ Offline maps downloaded
☐ Afrique Unie app installed

In the bag

☐ Light clothes that cover up (sun, mosquitoes, places of worship)
☐ A fleece for evenings, dawn safaris and altitude
☐ Walking shoes and sandals
☐ Head torch
☐ Water bottle (ideally with a filter)
☐ Small daypack and waterproof pouches
☐ Luggage padlock

Before you close the door

☐ Your government's travel advice reread
☐ Trip registered with your consular service (if it offers this)
☐ Itinerary and contacts left with someone close
☐ Online check-in done and baggage allowance checked

Notebook made from visiterafriqueunie.com/en/itineraries/mozambique-in-12-days/ · information checked in November 2026 against official sources. Entry, health and safety rules change: check them again before you leave (your country's official advice, the embassy of the country you visit).