

EXPLORE!

Malawi and South Luangwa
12 days

Malawi, Zambia - Trip code ZA



Malawi and South Luangwa

Often referred to as the 'Warm Heart of Africa', Malawi is a hidden gem among its larger southern African neighbours. We walk across the forested Zomba Plateau offering incredible panoramas over Mozambique and descend to the shores of the impressive Lake Malawi. Staying in comfortable lodges and chalets, we cross into Zambia for some world-class game viewing in South Luangwa National Park.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Game viewing** - In search of the big game of Africa in one of the most unspoilt and off-the-beaten-track destinations.
- ★ **Zomba Plateau** - Excellent bio-diversity on a forested plateau.
- ★ **South Luangwa** - One of the finest national parks in Africa and the most renowned destination for walking safaris.
- ★ **Lake Malawi** - Take an optional activity or relax on the shores of the last of the Great Rift Valley lakes.

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:

8 - 14

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Lilongwe; afternoon guided walk in Lilongwe Sanctuary

Arrive in Lilongwe, Malawi's bustling capital, where we check-in at our lodge. This city started out as a small village along the banks of the Lilongwe River and was a small British colonial administrative centre when Malawi was known as Nyasaland. It was only when Dr Hastings Banda became president that Lilongwe became the capital of Malawi. Some say he ordered the move away from Zomba because he was born in the village along the banks of the river. Today Lilongwe is divided into two distinct parts of the Old Town and New Town with the Lilongwe Nature Sanctuary in the middle! The Old Town has the appearance of a traditional African settlement, while the New Town has much in common with other modern African urban developments. Its gleaming modern buildings with their garden-like settings contrast vividly with the colourful and vibrant hustle and bustle of Old Town. The Lilongwe Nature Sanctuary is a large stretch of land that aims to provide a location to help rehabilitate animals; a centre to educate the surrounding communities in the importance of conservation and offer a recreational facility for the citizens of Lilongwe. We spend the afternoon here walking through the Sanctuary.



Accommodation: Mafumu Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Drive to Zomba via Dedza Pottery; visit local markets

This morning we head toward the Zomba Plateau via Dedza. The Dedza-Kirk Highlands is the name given to the mountain range that forms part of the Great Rift Valley mountains that separate Malawi from Mozambique. As we journey toward Zomba, there should be some opportunities to take photos of this stunning landscape. The southern part of Malawi is littered with inselbergs, or island mountains. These are small granite mountains that stick from the landscape like islands and add a stunning addition to an already beautiful landscape. We stop en route at Malawi's famous Dedza Pottery. The pottery was started by Chris and Charity Stevens and has been tested and passed by the British Ceramic Research Association meeting all international safety standards. It is here that we will have the opportunity to have a brief tour of the famous pottery workshop. This was started in 1987 and has grown significantly, today it is one of the biggest exporters of ceramics in Southern Africa. Anything bought here is always a welcome memento of time spent in Malawi. When we reach Zomba, we will spend a little time in the town's market before heading up toward through the forests to our night stop on the edge of Zomba's Plateau.



Accommodation: Ku Chawe Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - On Zomba Plateau: guided walk

Zomba is the smallest of the three main plateaux in the country and is divided in two by the Domasi Valley. The entire plateau is a forest reserve with the northern area designated a wilderness section. It has a unique high tropical micro-climate and a huge biodiversity of birds and animals. This morning we take advantage of the cooler climate to take in the splendour of the plateau. We shall head towards Chingwe's Hole which local legend says is bottomless and once used as a burial chamber! We take in the dramatic scenery from the edge of the plateau from both Emperor's and Queen's View. The views were named after Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia who visited the area in 1964 and after Queen Elizabeth who visited Zomba in 1957, respectively. The plateau rises to nearly 7000ft (2100m) and from these viewpoints one can see the plains of Africa stretching far out to the horizon. The town of Zomba is at the base of the plateau with the Shire (pronounced 'sheer-re') River meandering lazily toward the Zambezi River far in the south and even further is Mt Mulange. The sheer edges of the escarpment are also covered in indigenous forest where, if you listen and look carefully, you may just hear or see blue monkeys jumping from tree to tree through branches draped in old man's beard. Walking through the forests of the plateau, with its cool climate, one realizes what a unique experience being here really is!



Accommodation: Ku Chawe Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 4 - Drive to Lake Malawi

As we drive down to the plains, we will see many bicycles laden with firewood for consumption in the town below. This morning we head north to spend time on the shores of Lake Malawi. David Livingstone was the first European to reach the lake, arriving at its shores in 1859 and naming it 'Lake Nyasa'. Because much of the surrounding area was claimed by the United Kingdom, it formed the basis of the new colony's name of Nyasaland. The Lake has a colourful history. It was here that a British warship sunk the first German vessel of WW1 on hearing that war had broken out! The Malawian government refers to the lake as Lake Malawi rather than Lake Nyasa because of deep-rooted geopolitical disputes between all the neighbours bordering the lake. There are also contested fishing rights as a result of long colonial administration boundaries and Malawi even has islands located deep in Mozambique waters! Be that as it may, Lake Malawi is the third largest lake in Africa, the ninth biggest in the world and the last of the Great Rift Valley lakes. It is rich with fish and this is the Malawians natural source of protein. The cichlids of the lake are often found in aquariums around the world and are particularly well known for having evolved rapidly into a large number of closely related but morphologically diverse species, important in the study of speciation in evolution.



Accommodation: Cape Maclear Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Optional activities Lake Malawi

Our time is spent enjoying and soaking up the unique environment of the lake complete with white sandy beaches! You might even indulge yourself with a leisurely visit to a nearby island, participating in the various watersports available or how about a little boat trip? If this sounds far too much like hard work, you may wish to just take it easy and lie on the beach!



Accommodation: Cape Maclear Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 6 - Visit Mua Mission; overnight at Kuti Wildlife Reserve

After a leisurely start this morning, we head up the lake's coast where we stop off at Mua Mission. The mission is famous for the quality of wood carvings and was established in 1976 by a Canadian missionary Fr. Claude Boucher Chisale who dedicated his life to researching, recording and preserving Malawian culture. It is here that one gains a very deep and profound understanding and insight into the history and culture of Malawi through the Chamare Museum, the Carving Centre and the new Research Centre/Library. From here we will drive to Kuti Wildlife Reserve, a game park that is fighting to protect local wildlife and prevent deforestation. We will take a game drive in the park and whilst there is no big cats in the area, we can still hope to see giraffe, wildebeest, zebra, kudu and large herds of Sable. Due to the lack of big cats the park offers great walking opportunities and is perfect for birdwatchers.



Accommodation: Kuti Wildlife Lodge (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Drive to South Luangwa National Park

This morning sees us up early for the drive across the Zambian border to South Luangwa National Park. Our camp at South Luangwa provides comfortable accommodation in chalets with private bathrooms and verandas even a small swimming pool.



Accommodation: Track and Trail River Camp (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Game viewing in South Luangwa

South Luangwa is Zambia's premier park and is widely noted for its large concentrations of game, with counts indicating 59 animal and over 400 bird species. The exact itinerary will depend on local conditions, but during our time at South Luangwa we include 4 half-day activities, be they game drives or walking safaris, and there is plenty of time for you to choose your own optional game viewing activities. Nestled within the Great Rift Valley, South Luangwa National Park covers a vast area of 9,050 sq. km and is bordered on its east side by the meandering Luangwa River. The park encompasses a wealth of habitats, including shaded mopane woodland, riverine forest, thickets, lagoons and grassland providing plenty of variety during morning or afternoon game drives. Walking safaris are a very popular activity in this remote wilderness area and are said to have originated in this park. Accompanied by an experienced park ranger or 'scout' and a guide, they permit us the rare privilege of walking among wild animals in their natural environment, whilst also learning about smaller aspects of the bush. This is a fantastic opportunity to discover and learn about the plant life and animal spoor. Night drives in search of nocturnal wildlife, such as leopard, genets, civets and honey badgers are also a popular activity in Luangwa and offer a different perspective of life in the bush.



Accommodation: Track and Trail River Camp (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - In South Luangwa NP

Today is a free day, where you may wish to relax and enjoy the facilities of our accommodation or take optional game drives or walking safaris. Alternatively, while we are here, there is an opportunity to take an optional visit to a nearby village and glimpse what life living like this might be like.



Accommodation: Track and Trail River Camp (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - In South Luangwa NP

South Luangwa is one of the finest parks in southern Africa and so we spend another day in search of wildlife as we continue with our game drives or walking safaris.



Accommodation: Track and Trail River Camp (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Drive Lilongwe

Today we re-trace our steps back to Lilongwe out of the bush out of Zambia and back to Malawi as we drive to Lilongwe. Your afternoon is free for personal exploration and sightseeing



Accommodation: Mafumu Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 12 - In Lilongwe where tour ends

Your African adventure comes to an end today, with the tour ending after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 11
Lunch: 8
Dinner: 9



Transport

4WD
Minibus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver
Safari Guide(s)



Accommodation

1 nights simple cabins
2 nights standard hotel
8 nights standard lodge

Trip information

Country information

Malawi

Climate

The main rainy season is from January to March. Rain is widespread and generally falls in the form of a thunderstorm in the late afternoon; grass tends to be long and there is more water about so game is more dispersed. Otherwise it is dry, with low humidity for most of the year. Temperatures reach around 29°C during the day with quite cold nights throughout the year. Early dry season is the most pleasant time for temperatures and the best for bird watching. For game viewing though the late dry season is better. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

3 Pin Flat

Religion

Protestant, Catholic, Islam

Language

English, Chichewa

Zambia

Climate

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Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

3 Pin Flat

Religion

Christian & Indigenous

Language

English, Bemba.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

South Luangwa N. Park - Additional Walking Safaris US\$ 75 & Game Drives US\$ 75 (minimum of 3 for both activities). Additional Park fees US\$ 25 for one day entry. Kawaza Village visit US\$ 40.

Lake Malawi - Snorkel and Fins US\$ 10; Boat Trips US\$ 25 for half day/US\$45 for full day (minimum of 3 for the boat trips); Island cruise US\$ 25; Canoeing US\$ 20. Please note that not all activities may be available.

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight, but a warm sweater and/or fleece jacket is advisable as nights can be cold as Zambia lies on an elevated plateau. Nights at Lake Malawi can also be cold. It can be particularly cold on early morning game drives until the sun has risen. Rainwear is useful in case of an unexpected downpour. A scarf is advisable for dusty drives. Do not wear bright colours whilst game viewing.

Footwear

Lightweight trail boots or shoes with grip for walking safaris plus trainers or sandals for general travelling.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage (a soft bag or holdall) plus day sack.

Equipment

Take a torch, water bottle, sunhat and sunblock. Binoculars are useful, as is a telephoto lens for keen photographers. Take a swimming costume and towel. Mosquito netscreening is provided locally in the rooms where necessary, although you may wish to take some insect repellent. Bring your mask and snorkel if you want to peek into another submarine world!

Tipping

Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 50 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Country Information

Malawi

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£10

Dinner price

£20

Beer price

£1.5

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Malawi Kwacha

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend taking your money in US\$ cash (only accept post 2006 US\$ notes) Avoid the lower and higher (US\$1, 5 & 100) denomination notes, as they are difficult to change. Please note that it is difficult to convert local currency back to US\$'s so please ask your Tour Leader for guidelines on how much to exchange

Where To Exchange

Your Tour leader will advise you.

ATM Availability

Available Lilongwe but they are unreliable.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very few places outside main cities will accept credit cards

Travellers Cheques

Unreliable, there is also at least 1% commission charged

Zambia

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices

given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£8

Dinner price

£20

Beer price

£1.5

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Zambian Kwacha

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend taking your money in US\$ cash (only accept post 2006 US\$ notes) Avoid the lower and higher (US\$1, 5 & 100) denomination notes, as they are difficult to change. Please note that it is difficult to convert local currency back to US\$'s so please ask your Tour Leader for guidelines on how much to exchange

Where To Exchange

Your Tour leader will advise you.

ATM Availability

In the cities and larger towns, the larger banks have ATMs.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards have limited use in Zambia, and incur a 5% bank charge.

Travellers Cheques

Can be difficult to exchange.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

4WD, Minibus

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

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\uc11 Malawi: It is possible to obtain Visas on arrival for UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian passport holders, which are chargeable. We have been advised a multiple entry visa will cost US\$150 per person on arrival. Alternatively, a multiple entry visa can be obtained prior to departure. All other nationalities, please consult your nearest Embassy for up to date advice on necessary visa requirements. Please be aware that visa information is subject to change, therefore please refer to your nearest Malawi embassy for up to date advice.

Zambia: Visas are required by UK, Canadian, US, Australian and New Zealand passport holders. Please note it is possible for UK passport holders to obtain their visa on arrival at all ports of entry. All other nationalities, please consult your nearest Embassy for up to date advice on necessary visa requirements. All passports must have a minimum of 6 months validity from date of return to your home country and also have two consecutive blank pages in their passports which lie side by side when the passport is open (i.e. a left and a right hand page).

Please refer to the Zambia Department of Immigration website for visa on arrival fees: <http://www.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm>

Travelling with Minors via South Africa (including transits) and entry into Botswana

Regulations affecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via South Africa are in place. The law states that parents and/or guardians are requested by the airline and/or South Africa immigration officers to provide additional documentation for each child they are travelling with. Please directly contact South African House and your airline for full requirements.

Please refer to the FCO website for information on travelling with minors to Botswana: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/botswana/entry-requirements>.

When travelling via South Africa a machine readable passport is required. All nationalities should consult their local South African embassy or consular office for any visa requirements.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance

cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Included activities

As part of our Responsible Tourism program, we would like to advise of the Donate a Mosquito Net Charity within Zambia. This scheme purchases mosquito nets from a local provider and donates the nets to the Mus Hospital in Dedza. The nets cost US\$13.00 each and your Tour Leader will advise fully during the trip on how anyone may partake within this charitable activity if they so wish.

Non refundable permits

Malawi

Vaccinations

We strongly recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, and polio. Malaria is present in the region so consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Yellow Fever: Please note you will need a Yellow Fever Certificate for border crossings between Zambia and Malawi. Bilharzia: The existence of bilharzia has been reported in certain areas of Lake Malawi. Please be aware that if you choose to swim there may be a risk of contracting bilharzia. However, certain medical advice indicates that it can be cured with tablets available through your Travel Clinic. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Zambia

Vaccinations

Yellow Fever is no longer compulsory for visits to Zambia, however please note that travellers that have previously travelled to or via countries that are endemic to Yellow Fever may be asked to present a Yellow Fever certificate at immigration/borders in Zambia. For a list of Yellow Fever affected countries please refer to: <http://www.who.int/ith/2015-ith-annex1.pdf?ua=1> We strongly recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, and polio. Malaria is present in the region so consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
