

Nkwichi Lodge



Highlights

- Remote location, peace and tranquility
- Excellent community projects and responsible tourism links
- Fantastic clear waters for snorkelling and swimming.
- Beach location
- Very comfortable and unique style of accommodation

Situation

On the Mozambique shore of northern Lake Malawi, just south of Likoma Island. 45 mins flight then 30 mins boat from Lilongwe.

Activities

swimming, snorkelling, kayaks, diving, walking, game reserve, sailing, trips to Likoma, bird watching, village projects.

Lake Niassa (known as Lake Malawi on the Malawi side), the 9th largest lake in the world, provides the setting for the lodge. At 560km long, 80km wide and 700m deep, it forms most of the eastern border between Malawi and Mozambique. The lake's fresh water is crystal clear and contains a greater variety of indigenous fish species of than any other lake in the world.

Nkwichi Lodge lies on the Mozambique shoreline at one of the most beautiful points on the lake. It has been carefully designed to provide comfort and privacy for guests. There are 6 chalets, all personally crafted and named, many having the natural rocks and trees incorporated into the design. There are also 2 private houses.

The beach on the shores of the lake with its fine, white sand is the central feature around which the lodge has been built. The main lodge building has a dining room raised high on a platform providing views out over the lake. The fig tree platform built amongst the enormous granite boulders on the lakeshore provides another popular spot for guests to dine or relax.

Nkwichi prides itself on practising responsible methods of tourism development. By coming to stay at the lodge guests are contributing to nature and the community development. Staying at the lodge provides wages for up to 50 local members of staff. Their salaries support up to 15 members of their direct families. This means that by staying at the lodge you will have an impact on the lives of 750 people.

The chalets are located far enough apart to provide privacy. Each one is designed differently with their own unique characteristics. Some are built around rocks and trees surrounding the chalet. All of them are spacious attracting the breezes that blow from the lake under the shady thatched roofs.

The central feature in each chalet is the enormous, sturdy 4-poster bed, made of old tree trunks and covered in a beautifully crafted white mosquito net. The sheets are freshly pressed as are your beach and bathrooms towels. Alongside bedside tables with flowers are carefully arranged by the lodge's staff. In the evenings there are electric lights in each room tastefully decorated with local lampshades. The lodge runs completely on solar power providing cold drinks and battery charging facilities.

Each chalet has its own en-suite bathroom with flushing loo, which has been cleverly designed so that you can bathe outside under the tree canopy in complete privacy. All of the bathrooms have showers hung from overhanging branches with hot and cold running water and bathtubs set in the rocks so that guests can lie back and relax as the sun goes down around them.

Out in front of the chalets is a veranda covered with a thatched roof to shade guests from the midday sun. Guests can either sit in the comfortable arm chairs or swing gently in a hammock reading a book or taking a siesta.

New in 2008 are two private houses - Makolo and Songea. The houses cater for guests in family groups or small groups of friends and offer a private escape ten minutes walk from the main lodge. Facilities at the main lodge can all be used but the houses have their own chef. **Makolo House** is amongst trees looking over the lake and designed using natural materials with two en-suite bedrooms and a high thatched roof with an upstairs platform, the ideal place for kids to hang out or for you to relax and watch the sunset over the water. Take walks into the bush or private access to the lake for swimming. **Songea House** has idyllic accommodation and is a great place for entertaining with luxurious outdoor dining, a secluded private beach and breath taking lake views. The main house has an open plan design with a domed thatched room and a large circular reception room with a sunken seating area. A staircase leads to the upstairs bedroom which has a balcony. There is a separate chalet a short distance from the main house with additional accomodation, making this great for small groups. The chalet has views of the lake and the en-suite has a double bath.

Activities

Nkwichi has a great variety of exciting and interesting activities. Whether you are visiting for the first time as a couple, as a family with children or in a small group there is plenty to get involved. For those people who have been on safari and are looking to relax for a few days the beach at Nkwichi rivals any on the Indian Ocean. Guests who want to explore the surrounding areas will find a fascinating 'trail' of local cultural and environmental interests.

Walking: the lodge is located at the foot of the escarpment in the Rift Valley. This means it only takes a few minutes to walk up behind the lodge, gain some height and look out over the lake towards Malawi. There are a number of walks with varying lengths according to your needs. A guide who is able to identify the vast range of bird species can either accompany guests or you can take a map and explore the local area on your own.

Bird watching: the lake attracts a vast range of bird species. Some of these are indigenous to this part of Africa whilst numerous species pass through on their migration flights north and south each year. The

lodge has several guides who are highly knowledgeable about finding and identifying the local bird species.

Likoma Island Tour: after breakfast guests take a launch or dhow across to Likoma Island which remains part of Malawi despite being on the Mozambique side of the lake. A guide will lead you around this interesting community showing you several places of local importance. This includes the historic St Peter's Cathedral which was built over 100 years ago and plays a central role in the people's community life. Trips are planned as far as possible to coincide with services to allow guests the chance to enjoy the amazing atmosphere and hear the choir sing.

Swimming: there can't be a more inviting place to swim than the Nkwichi beach. Mchenga Nkwichi means 'the sand that squeaks' - its true. The sand is so fine underfoot and as white as you can imagine. One of the drawbacks from swimming in the seas and oceans is the bitter taste of saltwater. This isn't a problem at Nkwichi as Lake Niassa is one of the world's cleanest lakes.

Snorkelling: Guests spend hours exploring the underwater world which opens up to them as they gaze below the surface and meander through the rock pools along the lakeshore. It's an enormous natural aquarium with hundreds of beautifully coloured species of fish known as cichlids. Lake Niassa has over half the world's cichlids swimming in its clear waters.

Sailing: the lodge has its own private catamaran for guests who want to take advantage of the daytime breezes that blow onshore. Miss Nkwichi is the aptly named lodge dhow. This can be used for day trips up and down the lake visiting local communities along the shoreline. There are several deserted sandy beaches where you can stop off for a quiet picnic and sunbathe.

Canoeing: this has to be one of the most peaceful ways of exploring the local lakeshores. The lodge has its own Canadian style canoes which are sturdy and comfortable. Either you can be paddled by one of the lodges guides or take out a canoe with a friend and try to spot a pair of otters playing around on the rocks or diving underwater. This is also the best way to see the lakes bird species. You are able to get far closer in a canoe especially whilst drifting at dawn or dusk.

Manda Wilderness Reserve: A 600square km game reserve has been created in alliance with the local communities to protect the wildlife in this wilderness area. The scenery varies enormously as you move inland from the lakeshore through acacia woodland, grassy plains bordered by streams and rivers and past deep rocky gorges. Species include sable, elephant, reedbuck, leopard and over 300 species of birds.

Camping trips into this wilderness area can be arranged from the lodge. Each morning your guide will lead you out on foot on a gentle walk pointing out the fascinating variety of flora and fauna. After a few hours you will break for a picnic lunch under an acacia tree. Continue walking in the afternoon until you reach your new campsite beside the Rio Messinge or overlooking a stunning gorge. Dine out under the stars before retiring to your 2 man spacious 'A' frame tent equipped with a comfortable mattress and sleeping bag.

Lake Niassa: The lodge dhow, Miss Nkwichi, is ideal for expeditions on the lake north or south of Nkwichi. Accompanied by an experienced guide you will sail along the lakes stunning shoreline. There are several islands including Likoma and Chisumulu with deserted sandy beaches to stop and camp on.

All camping equipment is provided along with food and a chef to cook the fish that can be caught fresh from the lake on to a bush barbecue. Livingstone named Lake Niassa the 'Lake of Stars' after spending

time exploring its shores. There are few better ways of experiencing traditional African ways of life than spending time on this spectacular lake.



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