WELCOME TO ZANZIBAR

Zanzibar is an archipelago made up of Zanzibar and Pemba Islands, and several islets. It is located in the Indian Ocean, about 25 miles from the Tanzanian coast, and 6° south of the equator. Zanzibar Island (known locally as Unguja, but as Zanzibar internationally) is 60 miles long and 20 miles wide, occupying a total area of approximately 650 square miles. It is characterized by beautiful sandy beaches with fringing coral reefs, and the magic of historic Stone Town - said to be the only functioning ancient town in East Africa.

Government

Zanzibar is an island state within the United Republic of Tanzania, and has its own semi-autonomous government made up of a Revolutionary Council and House of Representatives. The present government is led by the island's President, Amani Karume. The government body responsible for tourism promotion is the Zanzibar Commission for Tourism.

Currency

1.00 USD = 1,574.00 TZS
1.00 EUR = 2,039.48 TZS
1.00 GBP = 2,537.09 TZS
1.00 CAD = 1,595.71 TZS
1.00 KES = 18.5196 TZS

Health/ Vaccination

Travellers from non-endemic countries travelling to Tanzania (including the Zanzibar islands of Unguja and Pemba) do not require a Yellow Fever Certificate. Please note,
however, that travelers from non-endemic countries that travel through an endemic country are subject to yellow fever vaccination only if they stay outside the Airport or have a long connection up to twelve hours.

The Tanzania health authority advises people to have a Yellow Fever vaccination for their own protection – however, please seek advice from your GP practice. People having a Yellow Fever vaccination need to have it at least 10 days prior to travel.

**Wildlife**

There are no large wild animals in Zanzibar, and forest areas such as Jozani are inhabited by monkeys, bush-pigs and small antelopes. Civets - and rumour has it, the elusive Zanzibar leopard! Various species of mongoose can also be found on the island. There is a wide variety of birdlife, and a large number of butterflies in rural areas. The coral reefs that surround the East Coast are rich in marine diversity, and make Zanzibar an ideal location for snorkeling and scuba diving.

**People, Religion and Language**

Zanzibar's local people are an incredible mixture of ethnic backgrounds, indicative of her colorful history. Islam is the dominant religion, and practiced by most Zanzibaris, although there are also followers of Christianity and Hinduism. Population is estimated at 800,000, with the largest concentration being Zanzibar City which has approximately 100,000 inhabitants. Zanzibaris speak Swahili (known locally as Kiswahili), a language which is spoken extensively in East Africa. Many believe that the purest form is spoken in Zanzibar as it is the birth place of the language.

**Culture and Festivals**
Zanzibar's most famous event is the Zanzibar International Film Festival, also known as the Festival of the Dhow Countries. Every July, this event showcases the best of the Swahili Coast arts scene, including Zanzibar's favourite music, Taarab.

**Economy**

Fishing and agriculture are the main economic activities of the local people. Zanzibar was once the world's largest producer of cloves, and her economy was based on large incomes thus derived. Although cloves are still a major export along with coconut products and spices, tourism has been ear-marked as the primary foreign exchange earner, with more visitors coming to Zanzibar each year. At this stage, the numbers are still low (less than 100,000 annually) and the potential for tourism is relatively untapped. Zanzibar's tourism private sector is represented by the Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors (ZATI).

**Travel**

At present, Ethiopian Airlines and Kenya Airways offer international scheduled flights to Zanzibar. Several large carriers fly into Dar es Salaam, which is only a short trip by air or sea from Zanzibar. Amongst them are British Airways, Qatar Airways, Emirates Airlines and Swiss.

**From the Rest of Africa**

Kenya Airways, Precision Air and Ethiopian Airlines have regular flights to Zanzibar. Dar es Salaam is also served by them, as well as Air Zimbabwe, Egypt Air, Air Malawi, South African Airways, 1Time, British Airways and others.

**Domestic Flights**

Precision Air and Coastal Aviation offer a range of scheduled flights between Zanzibar and Tanzania's main cities.
Getting to Zanzibar by Sea

There are several sea ferry companies that ply the waters between Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. The largest of these is Azam Marine. You can book ferry tickets through a local tour operator. Links to these companies can be found in the Touring Zanzibar section of this website.

Climate

Zanzibar experiences ideal holiday weather for most of the year. The heat of summer is seasonally often cooled by windy conditions, resulting in pleasant sea breezes, particularly on the North and East coasts. Being near to the equator, the islands are warm all year round, but officially, summer and winter peak in December and June respectively. Zanzibar is blessed with an average of 7-8 hours of sunshine daily.

Short rains can occur in November but are characterised by short showers which do not last long. The long rains normally occur in April and May although this is often referred to as the 'Green Season', and it typically doesn't rain every day during that time. During the month of November an average high of 32°C and an average low of 24 °C is the norm.

Travel Tips

It never gets really cold in Zanzibar and light clothes are advisable. We are located very close to the Equator, so you should bring a sunhat/cap, suntan lotion and good sunglasses.

Did you know?

At last count, there were 560 carved doors in Zanzibar. The oldest door discovered in Zanzibar is dated AD 1694. When a house was built in Zanzibar, the door was traditionally the first part to be erected. The greater the wealth and social position of
the owner of the house, the larger and more elaborately carved his front door. Many
doors are studded with brass spikes. This may be a modification of the Indian practice
of studding doors with sharp spikes of iron to prevent their being battered in by war
elephants. In 915 AD, an Arab traveler recorded that Zanzibar island abounded in
elephants, and around 1295 Marco Polo wrote that Zanzibar had 'elephants in plenty'.
However, there are no elephants here now, and the brass studs seen today are purely
for decoration!

The Shortest War in History was fought in Zanzibar in 1896. On 25 August, Sultan
Hamid bin Thuwaini died, and two hours later, an usurper broke into the Palace and
declared himself ruler. In a show of Victorian Gunboat Diplomacy, the Royal Navy was
asked to evict him. At precisely 9 o' clock on the 27th, three warships opened fire and
in 45 minutes reduced the Palace to rubble, and deposed the usurper. The
bombardment has since been called the "Shortest War in History" as verified by the
Guinness Book of Records.