

Malawi



Malawi is a naturalists paradise, and boasts as rich a variety of large mammals as most African Countries; including the so called big five - buffalo, elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros. There are over 170 species of mammals and some 649 recorded species of bird.

As with everywhere, human population pressures have meant that most the big game species are now restricted to game reserves and national parks. Although these reserves are not as famous as some found in other East African countries, they offer comparable and excellent game viewing.

To get the most out of a game viewing expedition you will need to take into account the climate. The best times of the year for game viewing is during the dry season August to November. Some parks will be closed or impassable without a four wheel drive vehicle during the raining season, particularly Jan - March. To find out the latest situation at any of the parks enquire at the Wildlife Society Shop located in Blantyre or Limbe.

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Geography: Malawi is a landlocked country located in southeastern Africa. It is bordered in the North and East by Tanzania, on the east, south and southwest by Mozambique and to the west by Zambia.

To the north there are rugged highlands with rolling hills in the Nyika and Vwanza plateaux, whilst in the South, traversing the escarpment that forms part of the Great African Rift Valley, lie the lowlands of the Shire Valley. Lake Malawi is the county's centerpiece. Like an inland sea it has endless palm fringed beaches, enclosed by sheer mountains, making it undeniably the focal point for Malawi's tourists.

Climate: In general, the seasons may be divided into the cool (May to mid-August); the hot (mid August to November); the rainy (November to April), with rains continuing longer in the northern and eastern mountains, and the post-rainy (April-May), with temperatures falling in May. Zomba has extreme temperatures of 35°C and 7°C (95°F and 45°F) and considerable rainfall. Lilongwe, in central Malawi, at an elevation of 1,036 (3,400 ft) has a moderately warm climate with adequate rainfall and extreme temperatures of 36°C and -3.4°C (97°F and 26°F)

Currency: Credit and charge cards are accepted, in hotels and banks. Travellers cheques are widely accepted and exchanged. It's best to take some hard currency in either Pounds Sterling or US Dollar, South African Rand, Euro is also widely exchanged

Electricity : Electric Power is 230V running at 50Hz. The Plug type used is: Rectangular blade plug.

Banking: Banks are open from 8 am-5 pm on weekdays with a lunch break between 12 noon and 2 pm; 8 am-12 noon on Saturdays.

Money :

Current Exchange Rate: Today's Exchange Rate (<http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>)

Passport and Visa: A valid passport, with at least six months to expiry date from intended exit date, is required to enter Malawi. If your passport is likely to expire you should get a new one before arriving. Visas are not obtainable at points of entry must be organised prior to travelling through the nearest Malawian Embassy or High Commission. Visa are required by all but the following passport holders: Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Iceland, Israel, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, UK, USA, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Health: All travellers should visit either their personal physician or a travel health clinic 4-8 weeks before departure.

Malaria: Prophylaxis with Lariam, Malarone, or doxycycline is recommended for all areas.

Vaccinations:

Hepatitis A	Recommended for all travellers
Typhoid	Recommended for all travellers
Yellow fever	Required for all travellers arriving from a yellow-fever-infected area in Africa or the Americas
Polio	One-time booster recommended for any adult

	traveller who completed the childhood series but never had polio vaccine as an adult
Hepatitis B	For travellers who may have intimate contact with local residents, especially if visiting for more than 6 months
Rabies	For travellers who may have direct contact with animals and may not have access to medical care
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	Two doses recommended for all travellers born after 1956, if not previously given
Tetanus-diphtheria	Revaccination recommended every 10 years

National Parks & Game Reserves



- 1-Nyika National Park
- 2-Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve
- 3-Kasungu National Park
- 4-Nkhotakota Game Reserve
- 5-Lake Malawi Marine Park
- 6-Liwonde National Park
- 7-Majete Game Reserve
- 8-Lengwe National Park

Nyika National Park

In 1965 The Nyika National Park became the first certified Park in Malawi. It encompasses the majority of the Nyika Plateau area in the Northern Region. It is the largest (covering an area of over 3,000 sq. km) and highest (heights averaging 1,800m) of Malawi's parks bordering Zambia on the western side. The area is virtually uninhabited by man, with only a few settlements of Aphoka people. The Nyika is covered in moor-like, treeless grasslands, endless rolling hills, occasionally interrupted by pockets of evergreen forest in the ravines and valleys. There are numerous waterfalls on rivers flowing off the high plateau.



Owing to it's altitude, the Nyika offers a welcome break from the tropical heat of the lakeshore. Summer temperatures rarely exceed 21.5°C and in the winter months (June, July & August) an evening by the logfire provides a relaxing distraction. The area is passable most of the year round but is best visited in a 4x4 vehicle during the rainy season. November to May is the best time for game viewing, October to December for bird watching, whilst January and February are the best months to visit to experience the spectacular flowering of indigenous orchids.



The plateau is remote, wild and beautiful providing dramatic scenery and panoramic views, especially to the north. The Nyika National Park is home to large herds of zebra, eland, roan antelope, sable antelope, lichtenstein's hartebeest, kudu reedbuck, bushbuck, duiker, and warthog. It houses the largest concentration of leopard in the country. The nocturnal family of

wild animals include hyena, jackal, civet cat, honey badger, porcupine and aardvark. Due to the absence of lion in the park, it is possible to go on a foot safari of up to 5 days but you must be escorted by a game scout.

More than 300 bird species have been recorded in the Nyika Plateau, including the Den Ham's bustard, the malachite sunbird and red winged francolin all found in the grassland area, whilst the cinnamon dove, bartailed trogon and starred robin are found high in the forest canopy, particularly the Chowo forest near the Zambian Resthouse. Four birds found on the Nyika plateau that have not been recorded anywhere else in Malawi, the yellow mountain warbler, churring cisticola, cracking cloud cisticola and mountain marsh widow. It also contains three butterfly species and one species each of chameleon , frog and toad which are found nowhere else.

The gamepark entrance is situated 129km from Mzuzu and 68km from Rumphu. Drive west from Rumphu for approx. 60km and take a right turn towards the gate. There is a daily entrance fee payable at the gate.

The Nyika is free from malaria.

Accommodation:

Approximately 56km from the entrance gate is Chilinda Camp where there a high luxury Lodge and a cheaper Camp with self catering units and a camp site.

Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve

Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve sees very few visitors , despite its easy access, inexpensive accommodation and rich diversity of animals and birds. It lies southwest of the Nyika Plateau, to the north of the floodplains of South Rukuru River and covers an area of 1,000 km². Road conditions are poor particularly in the raining season when a 4x4 vehicle is essential. The terrain is generally flat and the dominant vegetation type is mixed brachystegia and mopane woodland.

The populations of large animals vary from season to season as they cross the border from and to Zambia's Luangwa Game reserve. The reserve houses large herds of buffalo and elephants, and a great variety of antelope are present, including roan, greater kudu, Liechtenstein's hartebeest, eland and impala.

The birdlife include Goliath Herons, Openbill Storks, many birds of prey and the rare White-winged Starling. Lake Kazuni supports a good population of hippo and elephants can often be seen around the lake. Walking is permitted in this area (accompanied by a game scout).



A vast amount of wildlife can be seen around Kazuni camp and the lake, a truly spectacular sight.

A daily entrance fee is charged.

Accommodation:

Kazuni Safari Camp - This camp comprises four twin bedded rondavels made entirely of poles and grass with ensuite facilities and a main restaurant / bar under a secluded grove of Acacia trees.

Kazuni Camp - Self Catering - five grass huts with beds and mosquito nets and a central ablution block. Cooking places provided. All in a patch of evergreen trees.

Camping - Right next to the self-catering camp (and using the same ablution block) is a campsite for those with their own tents.

Kasungu National Park

The Kasungu National Park is Malawi's second largest (over 2,000km²) lying at approximately 1,000m above sea level. It is situated in the Central Region approximately 165km north of the capital city, Lilongwe and 289km south of Mzuzu. To the western side the Park borders with Zambia. Kasungu provides some of the best available game viewing in the country, particularly at the end of the dry season from August to November, a time when waters levels begin to dwindle forcing the animals to stay close to the remaining watering holes in the park.

The Park is warm from the months of September to May and cooler from June to August. Most years the park is closed during March, maybe earlier if the rains are heavy. The roads are in better condition at the start of the dry season and has a network of untarred roads. Depending on what you do the best time to visit the park is:- August to January for Game Viewing
November to December for bird watching
June to September for walking
August to September for the flora
November to February for the orchids and wild flowers. The best months for photography for August to February.



The park's vegetation consists mainly of Miombo woodland broken up by grassy river channels, known locally as Dambos. A number of rivers flow through the park, the most important of which are the Dwanga and the Lingadzi, A tributary of the Lingadzi, the Lifupa, dams as Lifupa Lodge which creates the spot for game viewing within the park, especially to see the resident hippos. Kasungu is famed for it's population of elephants, though poaching is, even today, a big problem. A well as elephants it boasts a large variety of buck, including sable, roan, kudu,

impala and Hartebeest as well as buffalo and zebra. Predators in the Park include, hyena, wild dog and serval. (I have even been lucky to see a leopard, but was many years ago).

Accommodation:

Lifupa Lodge is an upmarket, ideally located, approximately 14km from the main entrance gate and overlooking the dam. It is a 40 bed luxury lodge, includes four suites, all overlooking the dam. It also has a further 16 superior en suite rondavels. I don't have up to date prices but it is definitely not cheap. Adjacent to the Lodge there is a 24 bed self catering tented camp. There is a swimming pool at the lodge, facilities include an information centre and museum, shop, and petrol can be purchased. Activities provided by the lodge include open vehicle game drives, guided wilderness trails, sundowner cruises and visits to archaeological sites.

Nkhotakota Game Reserve

Nkhotakota Reserve is situated 115km to the North East of Lilongwe, on top of the Rift Valley escarpment above the lake. It is the oldest established reserve in Malawi. The Bua River cuts through the middle on route to the lake. and provides a excellent spot for a bit of fishing for *mpasa* and Lake Salmon (permits are required). There are no open plains but elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard and hyaena can all be found in this area.



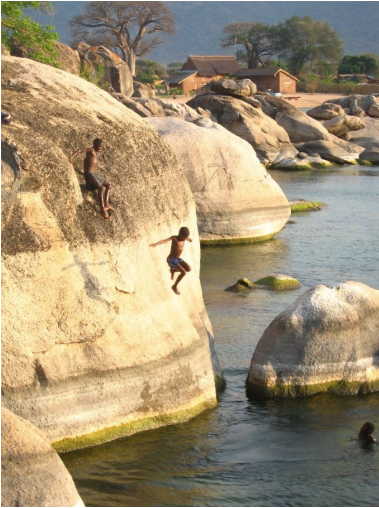
Birdwatching is especially rewarding with more than 300 species being recorded, including Pel's Fishing Owl and Palmnut Vulture.

Accommodation:

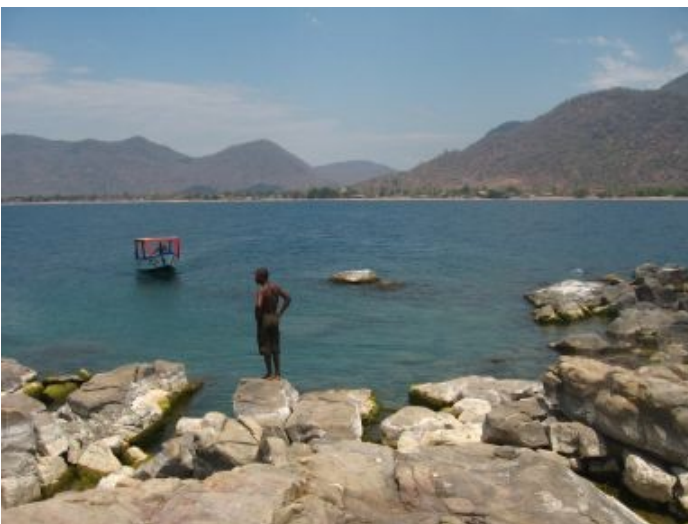
There is a basic campsite at Bua

Lake Malawi Marine Park

Lake Malawi National Park was only designated a National Park in 1980 was established at the southern end of the Lake to protect the unique diversity of tropical fish living there, some not found anywhere else on earth. The National Park is the most important freshwater fish sanctuary in Africa and it was the first park in the world to give protection to the marine life of a tropical deep water, Rift Valley Lake.



The Nankhumba Peninsula, forms the centrepiece of a miniature archipelago of twelve islands, and encompasses Cape Maclear, where scuba diving and snorkeling are popular activities. The underwater game viewing experience matches anything that the land has to offer. The natural habitats has resulted in an extraordinary concentration of different species of plants, animals and birds, quite asides from the hundreds of species of fish that can be found in the region, the most famous of which is the Mbuna Chichlids.



Accommodation:

The is a variety of lakeshore accommodation in this area.

Liwonde National Park

Liwonde National Park lies on the banks of the Upper Shire River, south of Lake Malawi, bordering Lake Malombe to the north and encompassing a large area east of the river. It is situated 120km north of Blantyre, and about 60km north of Zomba and is 236 kms away from Lilongwe.

The vegetation is diverse ranging from the swamps, lagoons and reed-beds along the river edge, grassland in the better drained areas where palm, sausage and baobab trees grow, whilst elsewhere there is Mopane woodland, and some dense woodland.



Liwonde boasts having one of Malawi's largest elephant population, which can often be seen bathing on the rivers edge along with the Hippos. Large concentrations of sable antelope, as well as kudu, duiker and oribi can be found in the Mopane bush. The plains are home to waterbuck, reedbuck, other antelope as well as lion. Birds are abundant, including the more common species such as fish eagle, jacana, white bellied cormorant and the rarer Lilian's lovebird.



The best time to visit this park is in the dry season, during the rains the park is often closed and if it is open you will need a 4x4 and even then many roads could be impassable. The park can be reached by boat from Liwonde barrage throughout the year.

Accommodation:

Mvuu Lodge & Camp

The main camp in this riverine park, and is ideally situation on the bank of the Shire River in the northern park of the park. Various forms of semi-luxury accommodation are on offer, ranging from chalets, walk-in tents, small dome tents, or you can camp in your own tent. There are facilities for self catering and a camp restaurant where breakfast, lunch and dinner

are served.

Near the park entrance is Chiunguni Cottage run by the National Park and there are several other places around Liwonde offering basic accommodation.

Majete Game Reserve

The Majete Game Reserve lies in the South Western area of the country, to the west of the Shire River. It spans an area of approximately 691km², with low hills mainly covered with brachystegia woodland, with denser patches of forest along the river.

It is not the wildlife that this park is appreciated for, but the Shire River, especially the Kapichira Falls, which are situated close to the park entrance. It is a wilderness area where bird watching is very favourable and, provided you are escorted by a game scout, you are allowed to walk around.



Accommodation:

Thawale Camp is situated inside the park, with a view on the water pool. The camp has luxury bush tents with own bathroom and can accommodate 8 persons. Camping is possible at the newly build community camp site. Facilities include communal area with bar, but only self-catering.

Lengwe National Park

Lengwe National Park lies within the lower Shire Valley about 50kms south of Blantyre and bordering to the west with Mozambique. The natural vegetation of the area is mixed woodland and grassy *dambo* although much of the surrounding area has been turned into a sugarcane plantation.



It is probably most famed for the nyala antelope, not found in the other northern parks of Malawi. Other antelope, such as bushbuck, impala, duiker and kudu are found here as well as warthogs, monkeys and baboons. Unfortunately, poaching has taken its toll in this park and along with the dense vegetation sightings of animals is harder than in some other parks.

Accommodation:

The only place to stay in the park is the main camp situated about 1km from the entrance gate, where you can either stay in a chalet or pitch your own tent. Self catering facilities and cooks, if required, are provided. Although there is a small grocery store, supplies can often be low so it's advisable to bring supplies with you.

Mwabvi Game Reserve

Mwabvi Game Reserve covers an area of only 350km² and is Malawi's smallest park. It is located on Malawi's southernmost tip and borders with Mozambique. It is the country's least visited game reserve and is rugged, isolated with a terrain of low hills supporting a mixture of brachystegia, mopane and acacia woodland.

This is another park to have suffered greatly at the hands of poachers, large game is rarely seen, but various kinds of antelope, and lion, baboon, monkey, and a variety of birdlife can be found. There are no elephants found here but to make up for it the scenery is spectacular with views over the Shire and Zambezi rivers.



Access can be restricted due to poor road conditions and a 4x4 is advisable particularly in the raining season.

Accommodation:

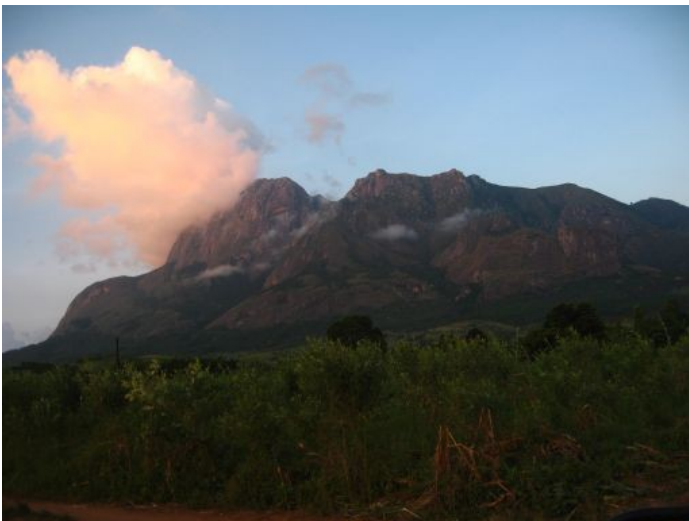
Mwabvi Camp lies about 10kms from the entrance gate on the north bank of the Mwabi River . It has a couple of basic rondavels but you needs bring your own bedding as well as full food supplies. Camping is allowed at the camp and water and firewood are provided.

Other attractive :

Mt.Mulanje

Mt. Mulanje is located 65 km east of Blantyre, Malawi’s commercial city.

Malawi’s highest peak, this spectacular mountain rises majestically from the grassy plateau. Named after the unique Mulanje cedar tree which grows abundantly on the steep slopes, Mt Mulanje offers a relatively easy climb up through tea plantations to steep gorges which hide numerous spectacular waterfalls and crystal clear streams. Forestry huts provide basic accommodation along the trail and experienced guides and porters assist in making the trek a most enjoyable experience.



Viphya Plateau :

Viphya North areas is occupying part of North Viphya Plateau separated from Nkhata Bay Highlands by deep valley of Lizunghumi River. The general altitude range between 1200 - 1500m above sea level. In some places this rises to 1800m above sea level. It is located 80km from Mzuzu City.



There are over 600 species of birds, although very few are endemic. At Viphya Plateau birds to see include: the bronze sunbird, Schalow's louries, black duck, malachite kingfisher, Crowned eagle, Miombo rock thrush, African citril and cinnamon bracken warbler.

Accommodation :

- Luwawa forest lodge www.luwawaforestlodge.com

The lodge is situated in the beautiful and tranquil Luwawa Valley overlooking Luwawa Dam which is well stocked with a variety of fish including chambo and black bass. As well as fishing, the lodge is an ideal base for early morning birdwatching with professionally trained guides, or long walks in the pine forests. For the more active members of the group kayaking and mountain biking can easily be arranged, made all the more worthwhile by the draw of the log-fire and cosy lounge waiting on your on return.



Zomba Plateau

Zomba plateau offers a pleasant variety of walks through forest, beside streams or across open grassland. Many of the walks are fairly short but there are opportunities for longer walks if time and energy permit. Due to the higher altitude the plateau often feels pleasantly cool compared to other parts of the country.



The plateau has a lot to offer like accommodation in the Ku-Chawe Inn, fishing in the magnificent Mulunguzi dam which supplies water to the Zomba town through gravity, the famous Chingwe's Hole which is believed to have been connected to the Shire river over 20km down the plateau, the view of the Mulanje mountain-the highest mountain in Central Africa, the view of Lake Chilwa with the Phalombe plain to the East and the Zomba town itself down the plateau.



Getting There :

The main access to the plateau is well signposted from the centre of Zomba. This is a tarred road to Kuchawe Inn. It is one way from just beyond Khola forestry village to where it joins the other roads near Kuchawe inn. Before the down road was built in 1968 movement of cars was limited on this stretch so that cars were only allowed up between the hour and quarter past, and down between the half hour and quarter to.

Accommodation :

Campsites:

There are two campsites on the plateau. The main campsite is the one near the Kuchawe Inn. This is a well organised campsite with running water and hot showers are usually available. It is often busy, especially on holiday weekends.

The Chitini campsite on the west of the plateau is much less used and is more basic. There is a latrine provided and water comes from the nearby stream. It is a good site for those who wish to get away from everything.

Car Hire :

Malawi Car Rental – Pick Up at Lilongwe

Car Model	Vehicle Type	Minimum Rate per Day
Toyota Hiace	Mini Bus Vehicle	US\$ 116
Toyota Corolla	Standard Saloon Car	US\$ 58
Toyota Land Cruiser	Standard 4WD Car	US\$ 175
Suzuki Vitara	Small 4WD Car	US\$ 116

Links :

www.malawi.gov.mw

www.mountmulanje.org.mw/visit.htm

www.cholemalawi.com/likhubula.htm

www.chinguni.com

www.malawitourism.com

www.sdn.org.mw/enviro/

www.airmalawi.com

www.rbm.mw/general_info/index.asp

www.guide2malawi.com/

www.wildlifemalawi.org

Contact us

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