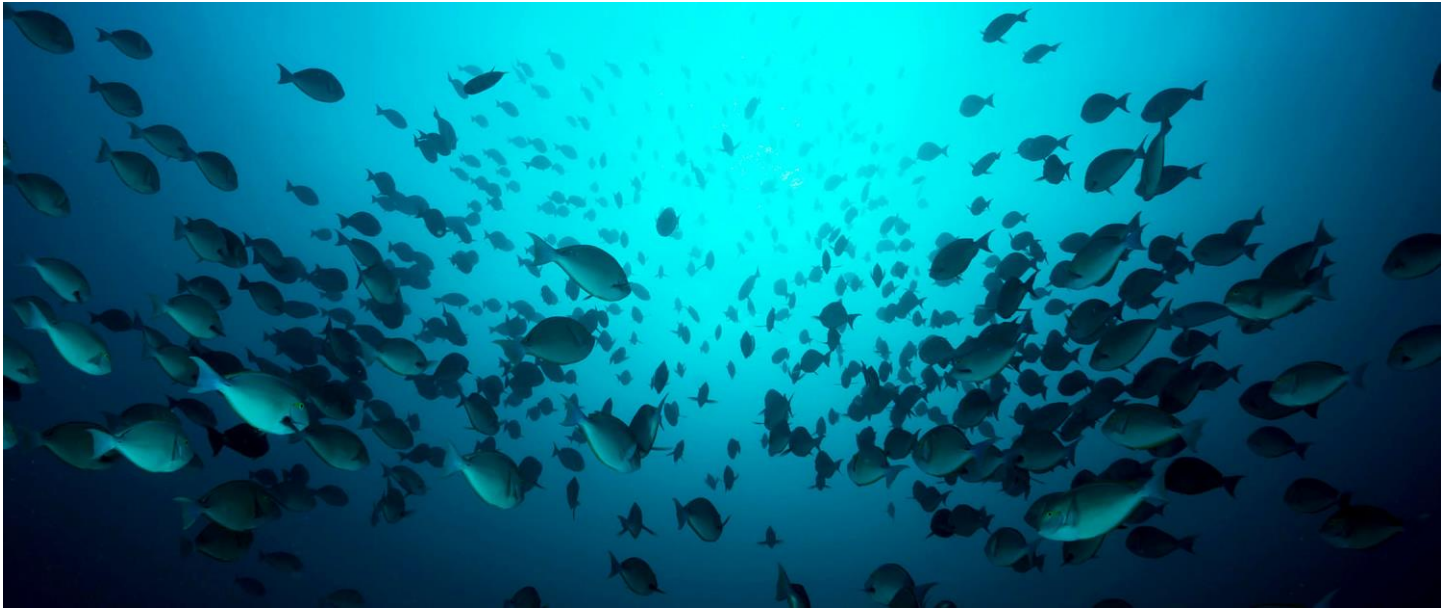


Into the Blue...

Diving and Snorkelling in Mozambique



With a spectacular Indian Ocean coastline spanning nearly 2,500kms, Mozambique offers some of the finest and most spectacular diving and snorkelling off the coast of Africa. Pristine islands, protected marine reserves, warm azure waters and unspoilt coral reefs with an abundance of exotic marine life makes this superb destination a paradise for both the novice and experienced scuba diver.



As it is impossible to feature every dive location along the coast this document has been designed to give you an idea of what can be expected in the way of diving and snorkelling at some of the most popular resorts.

Climate - General

The climate in Mozambique is tropical in the north and sub-tropical in the south with average day time coastal temperatures ranging between 25 and 34°C (77 - 93°F) in summer and 21 and 27°C (70 - 80°F) in winter.

Water temperature ranges from 28°C (82°F) in summer (November to February) to between 21 and 24°C (70°F - 75°F) in winter (June to August).

May to October are generally lovely months to visit. During the winter months the Inhambane region and Vilanculos may be affected by the occasional cold front from South Africa.

The summer rainy season, when the highest temperatures can be expected, runs from the end of October to March in the south and starts and ends almost four weeks later in the north. Days are hot and sunny with afternoon rain showers which bring welcome relief from the heat. Although there is still lots of sunshine, February is traditionally windy and there is a possibility of heavy rainfall, strong winds, big waves and swells. Cyclone season in the Indian Ocean lasts from early January until the end of March with February being its peak. Unlike Mauritius only two cyclones have hit Mozambique in the last 60 years.

Although the Quirimbas Archipelago lies just outside the Indian Ocean's cyclone belt this area is subject to the seasonal trade winds (Kusi and Kaskasi) that prevail along the east coast of Africa and change direction twice a year. Bringing a welcome cooling breeze the south-easterly Kusi blows during May - Sep and the north-easterly Kaskasi from Nov - Mar.



Luggage Allowance for Dive Equipment (subject to change)

SA Airlink (our preferred carrier)

- 20 kgs checked-in baggage plus 7 kgs hand luggage with maximum dimensions of 56cm x 34cm x 23cm and maximum weight 7kg
- Divers can carry an additional 15 kgs of dive equipment - won't apply if coming from MQP ex a lodge hop
- Dive equipment over and above the additional allowance will be charged at the standard excess baggage fee of 1.5% of the full one way Y class.
- Tanks must be empty
- SA Airlink must be advised in advance if passengers will be carrying dive equipment

LAM

- 20 kgs checked-in baggage plus 7 kgs hand luggage
- Divers can carry an additional 7 kgs of dive equipment on flights ex JNB
- The additional dive allowance only applies on direct flights from Johannesburg to Inhambane, Nampula, Pemba and Vilanculos. Due to aircraft size no dive allowance is permitted on flights that route via Maputo. Should a direct flight happen to be re-routed via Maputo and the flight is full all dive equipment will be off loaded and transferred on the next flight where there is capacity to carry extra baggage

Helicopter Transfers

Vilanculos to Bazaruto Archipelago

A strictly enforced luggage allowance of 20 kgs per person in a soft bag including hand luggage. An additional seat will need to be purchased to carry excess baggage.

Pemba to Quirimbas Archipelago

A strictly enforced luggage allowance of 15 kgs per person in a soft bag including hand luggage. An additional seat will need to be purchased to carry excess baggage.

Maputo to White Pearl

A strictly enforced luggage allowance of 15 kgs per person in a soft bag including hand luggage. An additional seat or road transfer will need to be purchased to carry excess baggage.

Dive Equipment

Although dive centres are generally well stocked there may be a limited range of sizes, so if in doubt contact us prior to a guest's arrival so we can check the right size is available.

Dive Instructor vs Dive Master

If clients want to learn to dive make sure the resort you recommend has a resident dive instructor. A dive master is qualified to lead dives but he/she is not qualified to run a dive course and issue a dive certificate which can only be done by a dive instructor. To save time it's now possible to do the theory at home before leaving for Mozambique.

Documentation

Divers should carry their dive certification card as this needs to be produced prior to being allowed on a dive. Depending on internet access it may be possible for the resort PADI Dive Master/Instructor to check certification on the PADI website. (Dive card is always preferable, a log book is also great proof of when you last dived)

If it has been more than a year since your last dive, you will be required to complete a PADI refresher course. This includes a short theory session, a pool session where you refresh your emergency and buoyancy skills and a dive. A PADI Medical statement needs to be completed for this program.

Resorts that are a member of DAN (Divers Alert Network) Southern Africa's safety partner program, will only take you to the maximum depth allowed by your certification level. So if you are Open Water 1/1 star and would like to visit reefs that are deeper than 18m, you will need to complete the PADI Deep Adventure dive course or the PADI Advanced course.



Medical

Certain malaria prophylactics are a contra-indication to scuba diving and are therefore considered not safe. Divers should check with their medical practitioner or DAN (Divers Alert Network) for their recommendations.

Students enrolling on a PADI scuba diving course (including the refresher course) are required to complete a PADI Medical Questionnaire. All the different medical conditions that are affected by diving are listed. You need to read through each one, and if you find you can answer 'YES' to any question, then you will need to bring medical clearance signed by a doctor stating that you are 'fit to dive with no restrictions'. Without this it's not possible to do under water training until signed clearance is received.

Medical facilities are extremely limited in Mozambique and there are no recompression chambers. The closest recompression chamber to the southern resorts is in Richards Bay (SA) and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania for the northern resorts. As a result dive operators do not push the limits hence and won't permit more than two dives a day.

Diving Insurance

It is the diver's responsibility to be properly covered as they will be responsible for any medical bills and repatriation costs. There is no coast guard and medical facilities are very limited in Mozambique.

Flying After Diving

After a single dive it's necessary to wait at least 12 hours before flying. Repetitive Dives and/or Multi-Day Dives require a minimum pre-flight surface interval of between 18 and 24 hours.

Minimum Diving Age

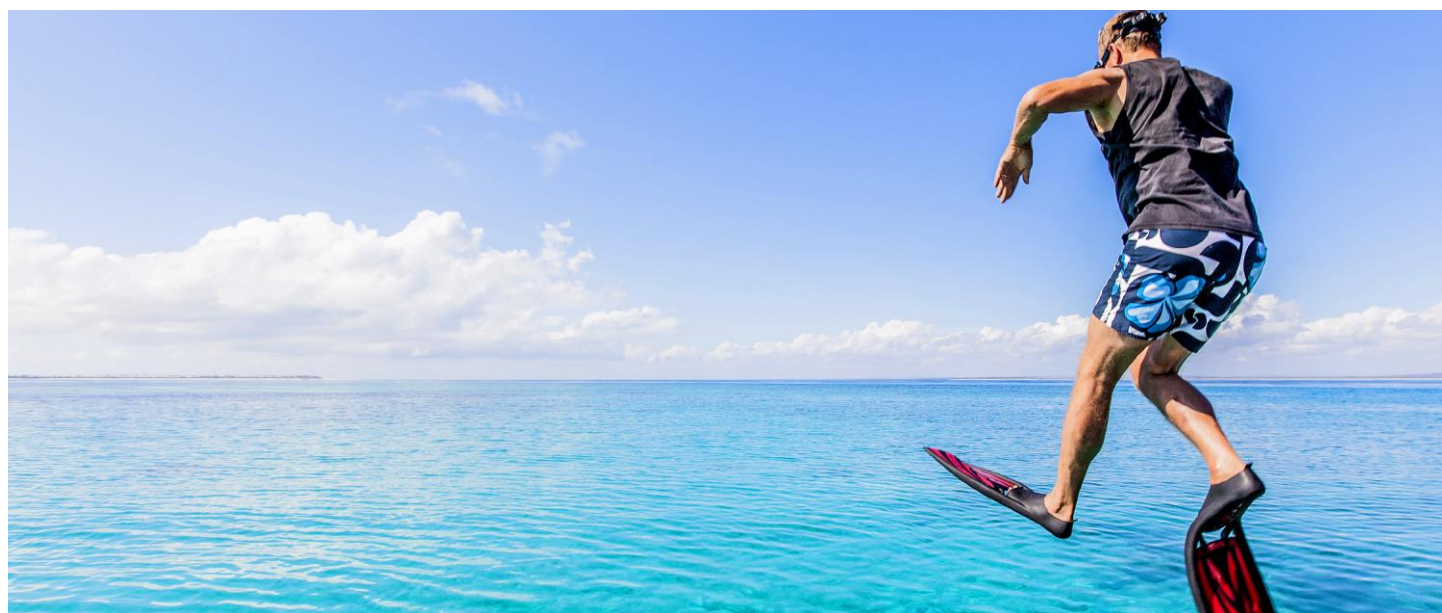
The minimum diving age is 10 years of age.

Bubblemaker (ages 8+)

This is a good way for children to experience scuba diving in the pool in less than six feet of water.

Junior Open Water Diver (ages 10 - 14)

Children between the ages of 10 and 14 can take the full PADI Open Water Diver scuba certification course and upon completion will become Junior Open Water Divers with certain age limitations for scuba diving. A Junior Open Water Diver aged 10 - 11 years must dive with a PADI Professional or certified parent/guardian. Dives must not exceed 12 metres/40 feet. Junior Open Water Divers aged 12 - 14 years must dive with a certified adult.





The Bazaruto Archipelago



Weather

Jan: Wet, hot and humid but with days of sunshine

Feb: Wettest and hottest month. Remote possibility of a cyclone

Mar: Rain subsiding. Hot days but beginning to cool down

Apr: Becoming settled with little rain. Humidity drops. Lovely beach weather

May: Start of dry season. Settled weather with hardly any rain

Jun: Dry. Mild days with cool evenings. There may be the odd cool day

Jul: Dry. Mild days with cool evenings. Max 25°C min 16°C (max 77°F min 57°F)

Aug: Dry days cool evenings. Some wind. Still warm enough to swim

Sep: Dry and warming up. Evenings maybe cool. Some wind.

Oct: Hot days, balmy evenings. Short showers may occur towards the end of the month

Nov: May be unpredictable but generally hot with possible short showers

Dec: Rain in the form of tropical showers. Hot and humid. Can be windy

Islands of the Bazaruto Archipelago



Protected as a conservation area and a National Marine Park. The Bazaruto Archipelago comprises five picturesque islands namely Bazaruto, Benguerra, Magaruque, Bangue and Santa Carolina, commonly known as Paradise Island. Pansy or Shell Island is sometimes referred to as a sixth island.

The warm tropical waters of the Bazaruto Archipelago are a diver's paradise, with the opportunity to see everything from dolphin to nudibranch all on a single dive! There are over 100 species of coral, 250 species of fish, 4 species of dolphin (most common are humpback and common dolphin and sometimes bottlenose), 4 species of marine turtles (mostly the



loggerhead and green turtles) and the magnificent humpback whales (from Jul-Oct but with the main action during Aug and Sept).

The dugong population in the area exceeds 230 individuals, with their home range extending quite far north of the protected marine area. Dugong are skittish and sightings are not common. Viewings are generally boat based but it's not unknown to encounter one when diving. There is also the possibility of a sighting when transferring to the islands by helicopter.

Tides

The islands of Bazaruto and Benguerra experience extreme tidal differences but generally speaking this does not affect the dive sites. It does however affect departure times of diving and snorkelling excursions which are scheduled around the tides. Diving generally doesn't take place between low and high tide due to strong currents and on an incoming tide during spring tide.

Depending on the phase of the moon the tide can go out between 500 - 800m which means swimming in the ocean is only possible for 3 hours before and 3 hours after high tide. Spring tides occur twice each month, during full and new moon, and this is when there is the greatest difference between high and low tide water levels.

&Beyond Benguerra Island Lodge has the advantage of having a deep water channel in front of the lodge which is unaffected by tidal extremes.

Snorkelling and Diving

All the resorts are situated on the landward (western) side of the islands, in order to be protected from the winds coming in off the ocean. As a result the transfer by speed boat to the dive reefs which, are all situated on seaward (eastern) side of the islands, takes between 30 – 45 minutes depending on ocean conditions and resort location. On the landward side of the islands there are sandbanks and a shallow system of channels. Due to the huge tidal movements between the islands, the visibility is never crystal clear but generally averages between 20-10m (66 to 33 feet) throughout the winter months.

Snorkelling is good year round. The best time to snorkel is at low tide and during spring tide.

Diving is weather dependant but is generally good year round. The best diving months are between April and September when visibility averages between 20-10m, there is less wind and the current is not as strong. October can be good but visibility is starting to change. From November to March there are times when plankton reduces visibility (10-7m). January to March may be affected by rain and tropical storms.

'Far' dives are generally only conducted with a minimum of 4 divers but can vary depending on the resort.

Although there are a number of dive and snorkelling sites the best known and most popular are:

Snorkelling



Aquarium (Low tide only)

A pool within Two Mile Reef, a barrier reef that protects a narrow channel between the islands of Bazaruto and Benguerra, where an amazing variety of fish and spectacular hard and soft coral may be found. This is the most popular snorkelling reef.

Paradise Island (Santa Carolina)

Home to a ruined hotel and church from the days of Portuguese rule, Paradise Island was named for its beautiful white beaches and fantastic snorkelling straight off the beach in shallow water with schools of reef fish in abundance. Transferring one way by helicopter is an exciting option – rate on request.

Diving



Two Mile Reef (6-24m)

In the channel between Bazaruto Island and Benguerra Island Two Mile Reef offers excellent year round diving for all levels of divers. On the inside of the reef you can do a shallow dive that ranges from 6 to 13 metres, and on the outside you can dive as deep as 24 metres. It is possible to do five or six dives without covering the same area.

The flat-topped reef supports abundant hard and soft corals as well as schools of reef fish such as Fusilier, Snapper, Surgeon and Coachman. Bigger pelagic fish species are also often seen here: Potato bass, Barracuda, Kingfish, Devil ray, Manta ray, Ribbon ray, Hawksbill turtles, Grey reef sharks, Tiger sharks and occasionally Whale sharks.

Five Mile Reef (20m)

A beautiful site located southeast of Bazaruto with some magnificent coral formations and rocky caves and swim-throughs. Suitable for intermediate and advance divers it is at its most productive in the summer (Oct – mid Mar) when Mantas and Nurse Sharks visit.

Nine Mile Reef

This site has an inside drop off to 20 metres and an outside slope, down to 30 metres. Fish encountered here are white and black tip reef sharks, turtles, emperor angel fish, semi-circle angelfish, trumpet fish, blue spotted rays, porcupine rays, nudibranchs oriental sweet lips and game fish.

South Point Reef

This is a shallow, rocky reef on the southern tip of Bazaruto which is usually a snorkelling site and also ideal for resort courses. The rocky recesses are famous for harbouring moray eels. This area has lots of boulders, little caves, lionfish, green tree coral, a variety of different species of kingfish, fazilias, blue spotted rays, green turtles as well as white & black tip reef sharks. The depth of this dive is maximum 20 metres.

Fossil Reef

Sheltered by Benguerra Island, this unusual dive is named after an accumulation of fossilized trees rising from the sea floor at 13 meters. It is also a good site to photograph moray eels and lionfish. (3 – 13 meter dives).

Cabo San Sabastian

Situated on the southernmost extremity of the archipelago and attached to the Mozambican mainland, this is a rarely visited, long-distance site which offers conditions for experienced divers. The reefs are much deeper than the regular Archipelago sites (down to 30 meters) and have spectacular coral growth.

Schools of game fish, brindle bass, manta rays and sharks are regularly seen here. There is also a strong possibility of seeing whale sharks during the lengthy boat ride. (Azura won't take more than 4 divers to San Sabastian).

&Beyond Benguerra Island Lodge

&Beyond Benguerra Island has a fully equipped PADI Dive Resort which offers a full range of diving adventures. There are a number of dive sites within easy reach of the island and the Dive Instructor helps guests select the most appropriate one based on their diving experience and interests.



Snorkelling

- Aquarium - 30 minute transfer
- Paradise Island - 1 hour boat transfer

Diving

- Two Mile Reef - 30 minute transfer
- Five Mile Reef
- Nine Mile Reef
- San Sebastian

Azura Benguerra

Azura Benguerra is a 5 Star PADI Dive Resort with top of the range Scubapro equipment. The training pool is perfect for refreshing diving skills or even trying out snorkelling before heading off to the reefs. As a DAN (Diver's Alert Network) diving safety business member entry level students are entitled to basic dive insurance coverage.

Snorkelling

- Aquarium - 30 minute transfer
- Paradise Island - 1 hour boat transfer

Diving

- May visit anyone of the six sites featured above

Pestana Benguerra Lodge

The on-site dive centre is outsourced to Costa Norte. Resort course and full qualification courses are available. Max 6 divers are taken out at any one time.

Pestana Bazaruto Lodge benefits from being situated so close to the northern point of the island as the transfer time to dive and snorkelling sites is between 5 - 15 minutes.

Snorkelling

- Snorkelling is good all year round. The best time to go is on low tide and during spring tide
- There are 3 sites near the lodge on the northern side of the island with direct beach access - Coral Gardens, Lighthouse Bay and Venges Bay
- All 3 sites are within a 15 minute drive from the lodge
- Snorkelling is not necessarily included in the nightly rate

Diving

Near dive sites

- Manta Reef - max depth 18 m. 1 km long. Starts at 12m and drops to 18m. Need 2 dives to complete this reef. Good place to see green turtles, brindle bass, job fish, and fusiliers. Sightings of Mantas in summer are common.
- Turtle Ridge - max depth 14m. This is a very easy dive with weak current and flat coral reef. Big shoals of reef fish and lots of turtles. Good reef for beginners and photographers.
- Rainbow Runner - max depth 27m. This is an advanced dive. The current is very strong here and you need to get onto the reef very fast. Big schools of pelagic fish. Mostly Barracuda, rainbow runners and tuna. Good place for eagle rays and Zambezi sharks.
- The Potholes - max depth 12m. This a flat reef at 5m, and there is a set of 4 potholes in line along the reef, each more or less 35m in diameter. The dive is very scenic with lots of caves and overhangs in the potholes. Good area to find reef sharks and nurse sharks. This dive can only be done on low tide and is an advanced dive.
- Brindle Bass Ridge - max depth 17m. Strong current and best time to dive it is during the neap tide. Lots of caves and overhangs and due to the strong current lots of thistle soft corals. This is an advanced dive. Big schools of reef fish and kingfish to be seen.

Far dive sites – requires a minimum of 4 divers

- Greek Temple - max depth 18m. Very scenic with lots of caves and overhangs. Good place to take pictures. Good sightings of turtles and electric rays.



- 12 Mile Reef - 19.9km due north of the island. It is 4km long and starts at a depth of 19m and goes down to 40m. This is only for advanced divers. Best time to dive this reef is on low tide. Flat on the top and drops down to 40m with lots of caves and overhangs on the way down. Good area for big game fish and sharks. Oceanic white tip sharks have been seen here and tiger sharks are also seen here.

2 Mile Reef: max depth 24m. Located on the southern tip of the island 1 hour boat ride away. Needs two dives to cover the whole reef. Overhangs are common. Good place to see turtles and reef sharks. *(Will be too far and too expensive to be done realistically but is available)*

Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort & Spa

Has a well-equipped on-site activities and dive centre that offers a choice of PADI certification courses from discovery level up to advanced. Depths and dive times are planned according to experience levels. Maximum depth for any dive is 30m. All dives are guided by a PADI-certified Dive Master or Instructor. Groups are limited to 6 divers.

Single and double-tank dive trips are available and packages can be arranged to suit individual needs. The dive centre provides full-length wetsuits and closed heel fins. Cylinders are 10l steel at 200bar. Dive computers are not supplied.

Snorkelling

- Neptune's Nursery - a 5 minute boat ride from shore (included in the nightly rate weather permitting)
- Aquarium - 40 minute boat transfer
- Paradise Island - 40 min boat transfer depending on ocean conditions

Diving

Three of the best local dive sites are:

- Two Mile Reef - is the most popular location with plenty of sites to explore. As it's a 45 min - 1 hr boat transfer away its best to do it as a double dive
- Neptune's Reef - is a haven for trigger, lion and crocodile fish, alongside octopus and honeycomb eel, with a maximum depth of five metres making it ideal for beginners
- Zengalema - a 15 minute boat trip away this site has a maximum depth of 18 metres and is only available at low tide due to currents. It features a sloping wall that is home to large clams, reef fish and dazzling coral

Details of other sites both near and far are available on request.

Magaruque Island

Doesn't have an on-site dive centre. There are however a selection of fins and masks available for use by guests.

Snorkelling

- Great snorkelling reef right in front of the lodge literally steps away from the villas
- Depending on the time of day and tide the current will be strong

Diving

- Can easily be arranged through one of the dive centres based in Vilanculos



The Quirimbas Archipelago



The remote tropical paradise known as the Quirimbas Archipelago lies in the Indian Ocean in the far north of Mozambique. Stretching for 200 km from the town of Pemba up to the border with Tanzania is a chain of about 32 islands of which only a handful are developed. Eleven of the southernmost islands and a vast area of mainland coastal forest, mangroves and coral reefs fall within a marine sanctuary protected by the 750,000 hectare Quirimbas National Park.

The numerous pristine reefs of the Quirimbas Archipelago offer some of the most spectacular scuba diving in the world. Warm, crystal clear water and healthy coral formations provide a habitat for an astounding array of marine life as well as spectacular sightings of dolphins (year round), turtles (nesting season Oct to Apr) and seasonally migrating humpback whales with their calves (Jul to Oct).

Weather

Temperatures rarely dip below 25°C (77°F) with the water temperature at its warmest between Jan - Mar 28°C - 32°C (82°F - 90°F) and at its coolest from Jun - Aug 24°C - 25 °C (75°F - 77°F)

Jan-Feb: Rainy, hot and humid. Temperature can be as high as 32°C.

Mar: Rain subsiding, hot days

Apr: Becoming settled with little rain. Humidity drops

May: Start of dry season. Lovely settled weather with hardly any rain

Jun: Fine, sunny days. Cooling down at night. Occasional short showers, windy

Jul: Warm, largely dry days. Cool evenings. Windy

Aug: Lovely, largely dry days. Windy

Sep: Warming up. Evenings can still be cool. Driest month with little rain

Oct: Becoming hot with occasional rain showers

Nov: Can be unpredictable but generally hot with some rain

Dec: Rain in the form of afternoon or overnight tropical showers. Hot and humid

Although diving and snorkelling is good year round the best diving months are between Apr to Sept when visibility averages between 30 - 10 m. October can be good but visibility drops to 20 - 10m. From November to March visibility maybe affected by rains, fresh water sitting on the surface. When it's windy surface conditions can be affected.

Tides

There can be a difference of up to four metres between high and low tide at certain times of the month. The only impact this has is on the time of day snorkeling takes place as the best time is at low tide when plenty of light penetrates the reef thus enhancing the vibrant colours of the fish and coral. The tidal difference can affect diving but only in that there may be some current in between the tides, but it is very slight. Medjumbe Island does not experience strong currents.



Azura Quilalea

PADI Scuba courses at Azura Quilalea range from those designed for children and beginners through to full certification up to Dive Master level. Bubblemaker, Discover Suba, Discover Scuba Diving, Scuba Diver, Open Water Diver and Advanced Open Water Diver courses are all on offer.

A full range of professional Mares dive equipment with Scubapro regulators is available. Diving is usually restricted to small groups of not more than six divers.

Snorkelling

- There are 2 main snorkelling sites - the house reef and the Canyon.
- The house reef which is accessed directly from the main beach is located on the west side of the island and has an 18m drop. Turtles are one of the main attractions of this reef. It is possible to snorkel throughout the day but the best time is at low tide. Reef shoes must be worn.
- The Canyon is on the southern side of the island. Features lots of colourful soft corals. There are lots of small pinnacles each one is its own aquarium.
- Guided night snorkelling is a must for keen snorkelers. Guests are guided out onto the house reef with underwater torches to see how different everything looks at night. As the shrimp and lionfish emerge from their daytime slumber a whole new underwater world comes to life. Optional activity at additional cost.

Diving

- In addition to the house reef, there are another 17 dive sites that can be visited both inside and outside of the Quilalea Marine Sanctuary.

Anantara Medjumbe Island Resort & Spa

An accredited PADI dive resort offers a choice of courses.

Diving

Massive drop-offs on the east side of the island into the Mozambique Channel offer the opportunity to experience some great wall dives and an incredible diversity of marine species. For less experienced divers, shallow reefs surround the island where some of the best soft and hard corals in the world can be viewed.

The type of diving on Medjumbe is drift diving. Although divers have the option of doing single dives or double tank dives most opt for single dives as Medjumbe's dive sites are mostly within a 15 minute boat ride from the resort.

There are at least 12 dive sites waiting to be explored and many more waiting to be discovered. Some of the best dive sites are:

- Joe's Ridge (Fringing Reef 9m - 14m)
- Shallow Hal's (Fringing Reef 8m - 12m)
- Sita's Hollow (Coral Bank 10m - 18m)
- Dusky Pinnacle (Coral Bank 8m - 15m)
- Neptune's Nursery (Coral Bank 8m - 15m)
- Quarumby Reef (Coral Bank 16m Intermediate)
- Dolphins are often encountered and there are Humpback whales in good numbers in the winter months of Aug - Oct.

Ibo Island

Ibo Island Lodge has a resident PADI Dive Instructor and offers scuba diving to accredited divers as well as the opportunity to complete your DSD, Open Water and Advanced Dive training courses.

One of the most unique dive and adventure experiences in Africa is a mobile island hopping dive safari camping under the stars in eco mobile camps on islands and beaches.

Snorkelling

Guests receive one complimentary daily transfer to the Sand Bank from where it's possible to snorkel. Time of day depends on winds and the tide.

On a mobile dhow safari guests can snorkel off deserted white sand banks and into turquoise sea.



Diving

The closest site to Ibo Island Lodge and the site most frequently used is the Lighthouse. It is a long wall dive that covers an area of 1 km². Starting at 10 m of depth there are large gardens of coral tables, soft corals, bucket corals, green tree corals and at the wall side it falls away to a coral bottom at 21 m where divers are likely to see a good range of tropical fish.

Highlights on the Lighthouse dive are angel fish, massive napoleon wrasse, trumpet fish, damsel fishes, leaf fish, praying mantis shrimp, ribbon eels and garden eels. On the wall side there are overhangs where divers can see potato bass. In the caves on this dive you can also see white banded cleaner shrimp and ghost shrimps. Just off the wall sightings of green turtle are very common.

Other dive sites that can be easily accessed from Ibo Island are:

- Matemo Island - offers some stunning slowly sloping shallow reefs
- Kingfish Alley (Matemo) - is a great drift dive for experienced divers
- Juwa - a new site on the eastern side of Ibo Island
- Pachamba - starting a 5m and slowly dropping down to 18m
- Maria Manuel D'Silva - starts at 5m and gently slopes down to a wall that begins at 11m Rolas - a small un-inhabited island north of Ibo and Matemo. It's an easy, shallow and pretty dive site



Memba Bay, Nampula Province



Weather

- Jan:** Tropical showers, hot and humid
- Feb:** Rainy, hot and humid. Nuarro is closed during this period
- Mar:** Tropical showers subside towards the end of the month. Days are hot
- Apr:** Becoming settled with little rain. Humidity drops
- May:** Start of dry season. Lovely settled weather with hardly any rain
- Jun:** Fine, sunny days. Cooling down at night. Very occasional shower. Wind from the land
- Jul:** Very pleasant with warm, largely dry days. Cool evenings. May be windy from the land
- Aug:** Lovely, largely dry days. Still warm enough to swim. Afternoons can be windy
- Sep:** Warming up. Wind from the land
- Oct:** Becoming hot with very occasional rain showers
- Nov:** Unpredictable with the occasional rain shower. Generally hot. The wind is picking up
- Dec:** Rain in the form of tropical showers. Hot and humid and windy

Nuarro

With direct beach access, proximity to the continental shelf, a diverse range of species and undiscovered sites makes Nuarro a fantastic diving location for all levels of divers.

Nuarro is situated in the Nanatha Half Moon Bay at the southern point of the larger Memba Bay on the Baixo do Pinda Peninsula. The Peninsula is almost an island connected to the mainland by a spit 5km wide and around 1km long. Jutting out into the Mozambican Channel and is very close to the continental shelf. This means the prevalent type of diving is wall diving and its location out into the channel exposes it to currents which constantly bring fresh nutrients. The peninsula has a circumference greater than 20km and is situated between Nacala and Memba bays both of which have dive sites and also support mangrove systems. This extensive area of reef provides the diver with some wonderful opportunities for underwater exploration.

Nanatha Bay is ideal for all levels of diving because it offers the diver entry from the shore, with a natural buffer to the prevailing currents and has a gradual sloping bottom topography that slowly slips away towards the start of the shelf which sits just 200m from the beach. The characteristics of the reef are those typical of a fringing reef that are common in the Red Sea and Caribbean.

When asked to compare their sites to those in southern Mozambique and South Africa the owners of Nuarro responded...
"Our coral life is most definitely more extensive and in better condition and offers a much greater diversity of life. The ability to make beach entrances is very unusual for this coastline and the natural protection of the reef and our protection from the prevailing winds means that conditions are usually excellent. One element we are blessed with is the amount of visibility generally available. Due to the peninsula's location out in the channel it is constantly cleaned by the Mozambican current.



There is also no river run off into the sea, so visibility can be 40m+ and never drops below 10m. The shrimp life is on a similar par, but schooling reef fish is better here. Certainly what Southern Africa does have a lot of is, sharks, if you go to the right locations like; Cape Town, Protea Banks, Sodwana and Ponto do Ouro. But, most of the time this is all you see and it can be disappointing to go out, especially for one sighting and not see anything at all. So, we feel our diverse range of species is of greater appeal. Barra and Tofo in Inhambane can offer the whale shark and manta ray dives and this is very special."

The humpback whales arrive in July with almost guaranteed daily sightings between Aug - Oct. By mid-November they have usually moved on.

Tides & Visibility

Tidal differences are minimal which means diving and snorkelling can take place at both low and high tide.

The natural protection of the reef and protection from the prevailing winds means conditions are usually excellent. Visibility can be 40m+ and never drops below 10m. This is due to the peninsula's location out in the channel which is constantly being cleaned by the current.

Dive Centre

The Marine Activity Centre is a fully equipped PADI Resort catering for all levels of recreational divers. It is equipped with emergency Medic First Aid equipment as well as diver trained MFA personnel and is DAN (Divers Alert Network) insured.

Nuarro is the only lodge to offer NITROX diving in northern Mozambique.

Snorkelling

The beautiful coral home-reef is just a short swim from the beach and offers fabulous snorkelling opportunities.

Dive Sites

Situated at the southern point of Memba Bay on the Baixo do Pinda Peninsula, Nuarro Bay is suited to all levels of diving because it offers the diver entry from the shore, with a natural buffer to the prevailing currents and has a gradual sloping bottom topography that slowly slips away towards the start of the shelf which sits just 200m from the beach. The ability to make beach entrances is very unusual for this coastline and the natural protection of the reef from the prevailing winds means that conditions are usually excellent.

For the learner or diver looking for a mellow experience, the shallow areas (10 to 15 metres) of Nuarro's home-reef are full of coral bommies, sandy stretches and sea grasses. The proximity to the mangrove, optimal water temperature and visibility is reflected in the great diversity of coral and coral dependent species.

Eighteen sites offer a wonderful variety of dive experiences from wreck to night dives and the only divers on the reefs are guests from Nuarro. The more challenging dives are along the stunning Baixo do Pinda walls which can be reached by boat (25 to 60 min). The bottom topography in Nanatha Bay is very dramatic, with sections of vertical drop-offs, shallow caves and colourful pinnacles.

Descriptions of the different dive sites are available on request.

Coral Lodge 15.41

Diving is limited as there are no coral reefs in the immediate vicinity of the lodge. Snorkelling takes place in the lagoon next to the lodge.



Inhambane Region (Barra Peninsula & Tofo)



General

Due to Inhambanes proximity to South Africa the resorts can be very busy during 15 December - 15 January and Easter school holidays.

Weather

Jan-Feb: Hot, humid and rainy

Mar-Jun: Days are hot but evenings are getting cooler. Some rain

Jul-Sep: Sunny & warm during the day with cool evenings. This is the main windy season so sea conditions can be choppy

Oct-Nov: Starting to get a little warmer at night. Water temperature is rising steadily from 23 - 29°C. (73 - 84°F)

Dec: Hot, humid and rainy

Water temperature ranges from 25 - 29°C (77 - 84°F) in the summer months (October - April) and from 20 - 25°C (68 - 77°F) during the winter months (May - October). Upwelling's sometimes result in unseasonal drops in the water temperature, as nutrient-rich water is pushed up to the surface from deeper water.

Launching of Dive Boats

At Barra and Tofo boats launch through the surf from the beach which can prove to be a challenge for the less fit especially when there is a swell or strong current. Divers need to act as crew to assist pushing the boat into the water through the surf. Once the boat is deep enough, the skipper will jump aboard the boat to start the engines. All divers need to ensure that they hold the boat steady with the bow facing into the waves. When the skipper has ensured that both motors are started, he will ask everyone to jump into the boat. This requires a certain amount of strength and dexterity as launch conditions range from very calm to quite adventurous, depending on the sea conditions.

Tides

Tidal differences are minimal which means diving and snorkelling can take place at both low and high tide.

Visibility, Wind & Currents

Ocean conditions can range from lake-like to very rough with swells sometimes reaching over 5m and wind speeds up to 30 knots. Wind and the strength of wind are not seasonal and cannot be predicted. As the wind affects surface conditions and can make the trip to and from dive sites bumpy boats will not be launched if sea conditions are too rough (decided by



experienced dive and boat staff) or unsafe. You will find, that if you have never dived here, or along the south-east coast of Africa, that the conditions can be quite challenging one day, and very easy the next.

Average visibility is around 15 metres, but ranges anywhere between 5 - 35 metres. The reason that the Tofo and Barra areas have such an abundance of large marine life such as Manta Rays and Whale sharks is the very high plankton levels in the water. The waters here are nutrient rich and contain both Zooplankton as well as Phytoplankton. Plankton blooms can drastically reduce the visibility, but it is a small price to pay for consistent sightings of Manta Rays, Whale sharks and Devil Rays.

Currents affect the reefs and can range from 6 knots to no current at all. The direction and strength of the currents can change very quickly and it is virtually impossible to predict them. The deeper, off-shore reefs are more exposed to the currents and for this reason all deep dives are considered drift dives.

Whale Sharks, Manta Rays, Dolphins & Whales



The waters off the Mozambican coastline offer some of the most nutrient rich and diverse marine environments. The Inhambane area in particular boasts a wealth of marine life from the largest fish in the sea, to the smallest crustaceans.

The cooler waters in the Barra Peninsula/Tofo region of Mozambique has become world-renowned for the large number of both Manta Rays and Whale Sharks. They may be seen as far north as the Bazaruto Archipelago but sightings are few and far between when compared to Barra/Tofo. North of the Bazaruto Archipelago they are seldom seen.

Whale sharks: visit the Inhambane area as a result of the high concentration of plankton. They can be seen in the area all year round but in they are here in far greater numbers from around November to April/May. When they are here, they are predominantly at the surface feeding. By far the best chance to see whale sharks is actually not while scuba diving, but on an ocean safaris. The sharks tend to hang close to the surface where they feed and we go for a 2 hour boat trip with snorkel gear and swim with the sharks. If winds and currents are unfavourable there may a few days at a time when they are not around.

Manta Rays: the Inhambane area has the highest number of recorded Manta Rays in the world. Furthermore, this is one of the few places in the world where both species of Manta Ray can be seen on the same reef and even on the same dive! The Manta rays are here all year round but sightings can be affected by environmental conditions that are not seasonal. The best chance to see mantas is in general on the deeper reefs where there are cleaning stations that the rays visit.

Humpback Whales: pass by every year on their migratory route from mid-June until October, during this time on almost every dive you will hear their haunting song, and boat rides to dives sites can take a little longer as you stop to watch them leaping and jumping with their babies or just gently cruising up or down the coast!

Ocean Safaris

For visitors who do not wish to dive, as well as for divers, the dive centres offer ocean safaris. These are trips on RIBs (Semi-Rigid Inflatable Boats) which provide excellent opportunities to snorkel with whale sharks and dolphins and to witness the spectacular Humpback Whale migration (Jul - Oct).

Snorkelling

There are no shore entry reefs in this area. On calm days, there is a reef close to shore on the beach in front of Blue Footprints Eco Lodge, but better snorkelling can be found on a shallow reef about 1 kilometre off-shore. This reef can be accessed by boat when the swells are not excessive. Snorkelers need to be relatively fit and comfortable in water.



Diving

What makes the scuba diving here even more exciting is the extremely variable and unpredictable dive conditions. Some of the scuba diving here can be challenging depending on the conditions and there is more to offer the advanced diver. There are 14 diving reefs in the area - the most well-known being Manta Reef.

Barra Dive Centre offers nitrox (subject to availability) and if you are not a nitrox diver they offer the PADI Enriched Air specialty course.

Blue Footprints Eco Lodge

From Blue Footprint a walkway leads down to the beach in front of the lodge. One can swim here at high tide but not at low tide as it's fairly rocky.

Diving

Blue Footprints Eco Lodge does not have its own activity or dive centre. They work closely with Barra Lodge Dive Centre as well as Tofo Scuba and Peri Peri Divers.

Tofo beach is located 5km to their south, it takes an hour to walk there along the beach and about 30 minutes in a vehicle.

Barra beach is located 2km to the north - it takes 20 minutes to walk there and around 10 minutes by vehicle.

Massinga Beach

Snorkelling

Fingers Beach has a small reef which is a 1.8km beach walk from the lodge.

Diving

Is currently outsourced to Cassinga Charters.

Diving is offered off numerous reefs featuring soft and hard corals. Visibility average 10 - 15 metres, but can be as good as 30 metres.



Southern Mozambique



White Pearl, Ponta Mamoli

White Pearl has a PADI dive centre which offers a variety of courses. Due to being considered a remote diving area White Pearl practices very conservative diving practices in terms of depth, dive times and surface interval. Divers are never taken to any depth beyond their certification. The recommended level of certification is Advanced or higher. Full dive gear is included in all diving options, but divers have to bring their own dive computers if they prefer to dive with a computer.

Snorkelling

- Guests enjoy snorkelling whilst out on a 2hr Ocean Safari to a nearby reef, alternatively they can book a one hour snorkelling excursion.
- Between July and November Humpback whale watching is conducted from the comfort of the snorkelling boat.

Diving

- 10 easily accessed dive sites are available to White Pearl.

Launching of Dive Boats

Boats launch through the surf from the beach, White Pearl crew and staff assist with launching.

Machangulo Beach Lodge, Santa Maria Peninsula

Offering a selection of dive courses Machangulo's PADI dive center is equipped with compressor, cylinders and all other necessary equipment (no Nitrox however). The main dive boat is a big, 250HP 30ft boat with low gunnels, stairs and ample space.

Snorkelling

- The Inhaca Island Marine reserve has 2 km of pristine snorkeling
- During neap tide days (please check tides at the activities centre) there is also great snorkelling right in front of the lodge

Diving

- The Marine reserves surrounding the Machangulo Peninsula provides some excellent diving
- There are 10 dive sites on three reefs with new sites being discovered all the time
- There is a shore entry reef literally metres from the lodge. This reef doesn't offer much in the way of coral but is rich in fish life. The other shore entry reefs are on Inhaca Island a five minute boat ride away

Tides

Tidal differences are not extreme and visibility is generally excellent.

