



[www.mozguide.com](http://www.mozguide.com)

## **BAIXA WALK (LOWER CITY): 8KM; 5 MILES**

Starting and finishing on the Rua da Sé at the Hotel Rovuma (which was being renovated at the time of writing), this route takes in historic old Maputo, and includes a very cheap government ferry ride (the terminal is a 15-minute walk from the hotel) across the bay to Catembe and back. The hotel is situated opposite the huge, white Catholic Cathedral of Nossa Senhora da Conceição off Praça da Independência. If you get lost, look for the towering, blindingly white spire of the cathedral, which is one of the city's most unmistakable landmarks.

**Directions:** Stand with your back to the Hotel Rovuma lobby, turn right and walk a short distance uphill to Av. Ho Chi Minh. Now swing left (around the back of the cathedral) to the rear of the City Hall and **Civic Centre (Conselho Executivo)**, which was completed in 1945. For permission to enter the Civic Centre, apply at the reception off Av. Ho Chi Min.

Next from the front of the City Hall, walk down the stairs to the **Praça da Independência**, and turn right off the square onto Av. Josina Machel, named after Mozambique's former first lady. Four blocks further along lies the meticulously maintained **Louis Tregardt Trek Memorial Garden** which commemorates the disastrous attempts by the Transvaal Boers to secure a seaport in the 19th century. The incredible journey of the pioneers is depicted in relief on marble mosaic maps on the boundary walls, as well as on the floor of the pond.

From the monument retrace your steps along Av. Josina Machel to the circle, cross to the newly restored, original LM Club (now the **French Cultural Centre**) and walk down to **Casa do Ferro** designed by French engineer Alexandre Eiffel. Across from this prefabricated steel edifice stands the imposing statue of Samora Machel, to the side of which is the entrance to the peaceful **Jardim Tunduru Botanical Gardens**. You are now on the wide avenue named after Samora Machel, which runs uphill from the baixa to the City Hall.

Continue downhill to Av. 25 de Setembro (referring to the first day of the revolution) with its high-rise office blocks and shady sidewalk cafés like the **Scala or Café Continental**. Turn right at this intersection and continue for two blocks to the **Mercado Municipal** on your right. The market offers a maze of stalls that carry anything from fresh and frozen seafood, colourful tropical fruit and odorous traditional medicines to handicraft, cloth, curios and spices. Watch out for con artists and pickpockets.

Leave the Mercado Municipal via its main entrance and cross Av. 25 de Setembro to the Rua da Mesquita. Now walk towards the docks and you will pass **Maputo's first mosque** on your left, before reaching an unmistakable landmark, the **Victorian Hotel Central** on the corner of Mesquita and Bagamoio streets. You are now right in the heart of the baixa, or downtown Maputo.

New York may have its Lady Liberty, but the statue that dominates Maputo's **Praça dos Trabalhadores** could hold a candle to it anytime. An intimidating 10m (33ft) stone statue of the Greek goddess Athena, sculpted from Portuguese granite after the Great War of 1914–18 by Rui Gameiro, is represented staring sternly towards the entrance of the railway station, sword and shield in hand. Local legend tells of a formidable woman who rid the area of a snake by boiling it in a pot of water balanced on her head.

Almost 90 years after it was constructed, Maputo's **CFM Railway Station** (Caminho de Ferro de Moçambique) looks a little dusty and rusty even though extensive renovations were completed in 1995. From the station, return to Hotel Central and carry on down Rua do Bagamoio past the **Dance Academy** on your right and the Luso nightclub on your left, towards the leafy Praça 25 de Junho (a square named in honour of Mozambique's Day of Independence). One street before the Praça you will see the big and opulent **Cinema 333**.

The **Museu da Moeda** and the **Fortaleza da Nossa Senhora da Conceição** (1781) gird the Praça 25 de Junho, which hosts a wonderful craft market (**Mercado Artesanato**) on Saturday mornings. Once the museum of military history, the fortress is now being transformed into the State Historical Archive. Open 07:00–17:00 weekends only.

From the fort stroll along Av. Mártires de Inhamitanga, which runs parallel to the docks, past an open field on the left to the new Ministry of Finance building. Here, turn towards the bay and board the **rusty vehicle ferry** at the jetty opposite the corner of Rua da Imprensa and Av. 10 de Novembro. The ferry will take you across Maputo Bay to the suburb of **Catembe**, a 15-minute journey costing the price of a loaf of bread. The service begins at 06:00 and ends at 20:00, with departures approximately every hour. Vehicles are charged Mt170 000 or US\$8).

In Catembe you could have lunch either at the simple but delightful **Restaurante Diogo**, or the more reliable and clean **Catembe Gallery Hotel**, both a 20 minute walk left from the ferry terminal. Restaurant Marisol at the Gallery Hotel has been famous for its prawns for fifty years.

After taking the ferry back to Maputo, turn right along Av. 10 de Novembro which runs along the bay. After a few hundred metres turn left into Rua António Fernandes (**Complexo Zambé** is on the corner) and one block up walk left into the **Feira Popular** complex. Wander among the pubs, clubs and funfair rides (open in the evenings) and exit away from the bay onto Av. 25 de Setembro. Turn left and make your way back towards the central market. After one block turn right into Av. Vladimir Lenine on the corner of which stands a **33-storey building** (*trinte-tres andares*). Climb the stairs (lifts are often out of order) to the top if you are still energetic enough and wish to see the best views of Maputo. There is refreshment at Café Ma Stop on the ground floor.

One block up on Av. Vladimir Lenine, keep to your left to enter the Jardim Tunduru Botanical Gardens and take the diagonal path up to Av. Patrice Lumumba. Diagonally opposite the former LM Radio Station (now Radio Moçambique Studio), the British embassy was the first in the country and is still housed in the beautiful building. Turn left, then right, back up to **Hotel Rovuma** for a well-deserved pot of tea (OK you can have a beer too).