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## MAPUTO TO XAI-XAI

(Too shy - shy, hush, hush...)

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## 1. MARRACUENE

(28km north of Maputo on the E.N.1)

### **Marracuene Lodge**

Tel. Mozambique Mobile: 09258 827433840, Lodge office: 09258 823266250

Lodge fax: 09258 823266280, Email: [Marracuene@teledata.mz](mailto:Marracuene@teledata.mz), Website:

[www.marracuene.adviser.co.mz](http://www.marracuene.adviser.co.mz)

Although not right on the beach, the folk here are really getting it right (no T.V or noisy night entertainment) and their service and accommodating attitude alone make a visit well worthwhile. A good option if you have a 4x4 (last 2km heavy sand), get through the outskirts of Maputo late and you don't want to risk roads littered with people, livestock and unlit trucks and tractors at night. Enjoy this surprisingly unspoiled coastal forest setting (excellent birding) and use as a secure and well-managed base to get to the beaches of Macaneta. Volleyball, canoeing and boating, with an extremely easy boat launch for heading out into the sea. Ideal for groups or conferences - has dealt with a number of big groups from South Africa.

#### *Accommodation:*

The nearest campsite to Maputo - a huge shady camping area with very clean large ablutions: There are 2 x 2 bedroom chalets of brick & thatch that are huge. The bedrooms are very large and the sitting room has a large table with 6 chairs plus 2 large lounging chairs. These 2 large chalets have a kitchen and although not fully equipped, they do each have a kettle, mugs (tea and coffee supplied ) and small fridge. They sleep 6 as standard and can sleep 10 with ease because of the size. We also have 3 small one-bedroom chalets that sleep 2 and can sleep 3 if necessary. The small chalets do not have a kitchen. The 3 small chalets also have a kettle, mugs (tea and coffee supplied). All chalets have hot water by 'donkey boiler'.

#### *Rates:*

R350-00 pppn, dinner, bed & breakfast plus a trip to the beach by boat for every paid night.

Self-catering is R250-00 pppn. Camping is R50-00 pppn. Children under 10 are ½ price.

Children under 3 no charge. Fully functional restaurant & fully stocked bar with a small shop.

Medium sized sparkling clean swimming pool for use by day guests and residents.

## **2. MACANETA PENINSULA**

(Access through Marracuene and then over the Rio Incomati on the batelhão or vehicle ferry that operates during daylight hours.)

Better hope that no more Tropical Cyclones hit this part of Moz as Macaneta might just finally get washed into the sea. In the meantime it's well worth the trip.

### **Tsakane Resort**

Tel: (South Africa): Mrs. M Cornelius: + 27 11 917 7738, Fax: 917 2175 Mobile: 072 4411493 or 083 5192855.

A real bush camp on the Macaneta peninsula 45 km to the north of Maputo. 4x4 recommended but skillful drivers can make it in ordinary cars. Situated on the beach with plenty of shade for campers to make themselves comfortable under. The whole bush camp is situated on 5 acres of land. Facilities include hot water showers and flush toilets. A generator supplies electricity and bring a 20m (or longer) extension cable if campers would like the use of a plug point. Bring a small gas freezer as there are no communal fridges. Bring own drinking water and food - shopping can be done at the local bazaar near the ferry or in Maputo.

#### *Accommodation:*

Campsite and five reed bungalows on the same site all with a single and a double bed, but guests must provide their own linen, cutlery and crockery as well as their own mosquito nets and repellents. Each hut has a table and 6 chairs and a plug point and one light. There is a braai area and central wash-up area. Guests use the central ablutions in the campsite.

#### *Rates:*

Camping R70 pp, bungalows R310 – R410 per unit (3-5 sleeper).

### **Jays Beach Lodge**

Follow signs from Macaneta ferry. Last 4km of the access track through the dunes is 4x4 only (definitely!). Tel Jacqui (Mozambique) Mobile: + 258 82 300143, Fax: + 258 82 330 143. There is normally an answering service so leave a message as she does call back! A nice pool and an excellent restaurant, but no electricity or gas in the chalets. Cooking is done on open fires, and warm water is provided by a donkey boiler kept going by the staff. Lamps are provided and lit by the night-watchmen. Lovely stretch of beach (no shark nets or lifesavers as is the case with almost all beaches in Moz), normally deserted - nice for some ..... ahem.

#### *Accommodation:*

Campsite and 2 – 6 sleeper chalets.

#### *Rates:*

USD 75 - 140 per day for the two to six sleeper chalets. USD 20,00 per tent for Camping. USD 5 Entrance fee per vehicle for day visitors.

### **Macaneta Lodge**

(Complexo Turístico de Macaneta).

Tel: Mozambique Mobile + 258 82307019, Tel/fax + 258 21 309073.

Catering mainly to the local trade, I have always enjoyed it's authentic quirkiness. You will either love or hate this little unassuming resort on the dunes near to the mouth of the Incomati River, which by the way is the best boat launching point in the area. Get away from the tiresome tourists (by this I mainly mean certain brands of South African) and live with the people for a few days while you eat some of Moz's best food at the restaurant (order an hour in advance). Owner Kamelesh Ambaramo will really do his utmost to make your stay enjoyable and has recently (2004) completely renovated his lodge, right down to new beds and bedding.

#### *Accommodation:*

4-sleeper en-suite thatched rondawel (round) furnished chalets (bedding supplied). No camping.

#### *Rates:*

R140 per person per night, meals not included but available at the popular restaurant.

### **3. BOBOLE (48km north of Maputo)**

#### **Casa Lisa**

Tel: Mozambique Mobile: Tel: +258-82-304-199 Email: [buckland@teledata.mz](mailto:buckland@teledata.mz)

At the turn-off from the E.N.1 you will see 'Ultra City' (NOT a service station) bar and sign to Casa Lisa on the left.

Popular with folk who want to escape the chaos in Maputo and soak up the rural setting for a day or two or who have made it through the Lebombo/Ressano Garcia border late and need a place for the night.

Accommodation:

Basic level and grassed camping sites with clean and adequate ablutions. Comfortable en-suite double and family chalets with extra single bed and mossie net and fan. Breakfast and evening meals for guests or those who have made prior bookings. DSTV in the bar.

Rates:

Camping R70 per person, Chalets R130 to R180 per person.

#### **4. BILENE**

(Turn off right at Macia 145km to the north of Maputo on the main road or E.N.1) Note that Bilene is not on the coastal beach but along a 30km long, scenic lagoon called Lagoa Uembje.

##### **Praia do Sol**

Tel South Africa mobile: +27 (0) 82 570 4300, Email: [leo@pdsol.co.za](mailto:leo@pdsol.co.za)

Website: [www.pdsol.co.za](http://www.pdsol.co.za)

One of the first places to open in Bilene (now there are many), Praia do Sol went through something of an identity crisis as it struggled to decide whether to go the 'keep out the riff-raff' or the 'simple and friendly route'. Being one of the less advantaged in the monetary arena myself, I am glad that Leo now describes his spot in a patch of forest as . There is an independent water sports centre on site that offers scuba diving, snorkeling, deep sea fishing, water skiing, canoe rides etc

Accommodation:

Spacious en-suite double and family chalets on stilts with fan and mosquito net, hot showers. No camping due to the bizarre Gaza Province tourism regulations. Restaurant and bar overlooking the lagoon. Beach buffets (weather permitting). No self catering facilities. Secure parking.

Rates:

(All Dinner, Bed and Breakfast) Vary from R425.00p/p/n Low Season to R 495.00p/p/n in High Season (See South African School Holidays) and R650.00p/p/n in December.

##### **Complexo Palmeiras**

Tel Mozambique +258 (0) 22 59019, mobile: +258 (0) 82 304 372 (Bella) or +258 (0) 82 895 4990 (Joao), Email: [palmeira@bilene.virconn.com](mailto:palmeira@bilene.virconn.com) <http://palmeiras.no.ip.org>

Palmeiras has been there since the Portuguese colonial days and while the campsites could really do with a coating of lawn, the place is friendly, secure and well managed. The beaches are blindingly white and the calm, clear lagoon is a kids and watersport paradise.

Accommodation:

Camping/caravan sites with 5amp power point (3 pin S.A. plug); brick chalets/brick rondawels en-suite with hot running water - o towels, crockery or cutlery supplied. Reed 'casita' huts share the large ablution facility (hope they've replaced those shower roses!) that has hot running water. Restaurant/bar produces good Portuguese food - wide variety of drinks at the bar.

Rates: Mt150 000 pp camping. Casitas go for around Mt450 000 per day.

##### **Villa Dias**

Tel Mozambique: +285 (0) 84 3996080, Email: [info@mahalanelodge.co.za](mailto:info@mahalanelodge.co.za)

As you get to the lake road, turn right and then take the first sand road on the left opposite a school. Owned and operated by Colleen and Mark - ideal for family or small groups as the place is rented on a 'take all or nothing' basis (with exceptions).

Accommodation:

Comfortable rooms for up to 12 people in a house that sprawls around the leafy garden which has a swimming pool. Room for 8 tents

Rates:

Email not working, so please phone. But around R3500 per day gets you the whole lodge - R100 extra per tent.

### **Complexo Aquarius**

Tel Mozambique Mobile: + 258 (0) 82 301 900 or +258 (0) 22 59000 .

Located on the usually quiet main street overlooking the bay (could be a little noisy on weekends and during holidays if that sort of thing bothers you) popular with the Maputo crowd, easy access to the beach. Caged or chained exotic birds are displayed at restaurant area (if that sort of thing bothers you).

Accommodation:

12 Air conditioned en-suite rooms with hot running water. Restaurant and bar open from 07:00 to 23:00.

Rates:

Seem to vary according to how much they like you or the season or something so phone and ask.

### **Motel Bilene**

Tel Mozambique Mobile: + 258 (0) 82 4442 962 (Zabuna) or +258 (0) 82 46 4202 (Paula).

Overlooks the roundabout as you enter Bilene. Sick of beaches and loud white tourists? Then stay here and meet someone else for an hour or two or perhaps the night.

Accommodation:

'Casas' (annex) with 2 rooms (sleeping 4) fully equipped and Double rooms.

Rates:

Annex Casas: Mt1.000.000.00 (that's around USD40 or SAR300). Double rooms at Mt650.000 (do the maths). All rooms air-conditioned (if working). DSTV in many rooms, restaurant/bar with basic, but great Mozambican foods - good selection of local beer.

### **Complexo São Martinho**

(also called CFM) Tel Mozambique Mobile: + 258 (0) 82 3964590.

Take right at the beach road and the resort entrance is on the right hand side. Reception at the Beach restaurant across the road. Experience how people used to holiday during the 50's and 60's. So close to beauty and yet, no view of the lagoon. Still a good buy if you are a group of four or more.

Accommodation:

About fifteen four to six-sleeper self-catering chalets.

Rates:

R500 per chalet low season, R650 high season.

### **Carioca Inn, Praia do Bilene.**

See Mahelane Lodge (below) or Villa Dias (above) for contact details.

### **Complexo Lagoa Azul**

+ 258 (0) 22 59006 or +258 (0) 22 59026

At the end of the beach road. Restaurant and bar on site open from 07h00 to 23h00.

Accommodation:

Very basic and well kept complex with en-suite rooms and self-catering family units with hot running water, fully equipped kitchen and air conditioning.

Rates: Enquire by phoning.

### **Estrela do Mar - Pousada Sao Martinho.**

Tel Mozambique Mobile: + 258 (0) 82 490 1440 or + 258 (0) 82 7222390. Fixed line: + 258 (0) 22 59058.

Also along the main beach road. Pretty, quaint family owned place run along the lines of the homely Portuguese Inns or Pousadas.

Accommodation:

Simple rooms in the family home.

Rates:

Enquire by phoning.

### **Villa N'Banga**

Tel: South Africa Mobile + 27 (0) 82 450 3381 (Chaneen) or +258 (0) 82 382 129 (Anton and Lee). Email: [villanbanga@teledata.mz](mailto:villanbanga@teledata.mz) Website: [www.villanbanga.co.za](http://www.villanbanga.co.za)

On an isolated spot at the north end of Bilene away from the tourist traffic. Ideal getaway for groups or large families as the site is rented to groups rather than to individuals (backpackers get your \*\*ses to Palmeiras).

Accommodation:

16- Sleeper self-catering units equipped with large deep freeze, 2 fridges, bar freezer, gas stove/oven, gas braai, pizza oven, cutlery, crockery, bedding, mozzie-nets, hot water, electricity and servant. The Main House has 4 Bedrooms (each sleep 2), 3 Bathrooms, modern fully equipped kitchen, a spacious lounge and large dining area. Balcony perfect for sundowners and to enjoy the prolific bird life. The Tented Camp has 4 double tents with en-suite toilets and hot water showers.

Rates:

From R3500 to R4500 per night for 16 people (Minimum 8 people) – that works out at about R250 to R300 per head per day.

### **Mahalene Lodge**

Tel: Mozambique mobile: + 285 (0) 84 3996080, Email: [info@mahalanelodge.co.za](mailto:info@mahalanelodge.co.za) Website: [www.mahalanelodge.co.za](http://www.mahalanelodge.co.za)

(note that at time of writing both email and website were kaput). Not for those who don't like to sleep more than a few metres away from their beloved 4x4's as access is by boat only (secure parking at Carioca Inn).

Accommodation:

Large en-suite log cabins with own spacious veranda overlooking the lagoon. Honeymoon suites and family units available. With hot running water, fan and mosquito net. Room service (now there's a novelty in this part of Mozambique). Restaurant and bar overlooking the swimming pool and the lagoon.

Rates:

Phone and ask. (Also ask why their email and website don't work.)

### **Laguna Camp**

Tel: Bilene, Mozambique + 264 61 254606 Fax: 223421, Mobile: + 258 826377510 or (0) 82 442 4546. Email: [laguna@mweb.com.za](mailto:laguna@mweb.com.za) Website: <http://www.laguna-camp.com/> Note that Laguna is 20km out of Bilene - take a right at the roundabout and a left at the main (beach) road. Follow the main road past the service station and market on the left after which there are signs indicating the turn off to the Laguna camp on the left.

Accommodation:

Camping only in 6 and 15 person Bomas (enclosed site with own ablutions and cooking/washing area. Pretty rustic at present but the prospect of having this isolated little plot to yourself is enticing.

Rates:

R300 per day for the 6 person Boma, R620 per day for the 15 person Boma. Extra heads at R30 per day.

## 5. CHICUMBANE

The last town reached before crossing the 17km wide Limpopo floodplain 220km north of Maputo. Stop overlooking the endless floodplain and imagine what I saw in March of 2000 – water from horizon to horizon and the bridges and berm across the valley breach in dozens of places. Turn right here and it's a further 25km to Zongoene Lodge – 4x4 could be a good idea in wet weather.

### Zongoene Lodge

Tel Pretoria, South Africa: + 27 (0) 12 346 8868 or + 27 (0) 12 460 1995. Maputo, Mozambique mobile: + 258 (0) 82 391 194. Email: [info@zongoene.com](mailto:info@zongoene.com)  
Website: [www.zongoene.com](http://www.zongoene.com)

The lodge overlooks the mouth of the Limpopo and was partially destroyed during the floods of 2000 but is now completely rebuilt and revamped with an excellent beach bar and restaurant – this is one of Mozambique's best. A grassed 1 350m airstrip - negotiations are underway to allow direct international flights.

Accommodation:

Family and Pool Chalets : two bedroom family units (accommodating four) or pool chalets (accommodating two) – all en-suite and sliding doors opening out onto wooden balconies.

Dunes Camp: 5 en-suite, fully serviced, rustic chalets surrounding a private fresh water swimming pool. A real butler is thrown in and your meals are prepared for you over the fires or in a fully equipped kitchen. Casarao: This is a 'Big House', which accommodates 4 to 6 people. With 2 en-suite rooms, a kitchenette with kitchen helper and a dining area and large veranda. Plus a camping area accessible by 4x4 that accommodates 12 tents.

Rates:

Chalets: Dinner. Bed and breakfast - includes all teas and coffees.

Week-end, Public Holidays & School Holidays. Rate: **Friday & Saturday**

Per Adult Double Room, Sharing: R650.00. Single: R975.00

Children between 6 and 12: R325.00. Children under 6: no charge

Conference: Full board Sharing: R650.00. Single: R975.00

Mid-week Rate: **Sunday - Thursday**

Per Adult Double Room, Sharing: R585.00. Single: R878.00

Children between 6 and 12: R292.50. Children under 6: no charge

Conference: Full board Sharing: R585.00. Single: R878.00

The Dunes: R 3850.00 per day self-catering.

## **6. XAI-XAI TOWN AND PRAIA DO XAI-XAI**

Might as well make it clear right here that Xai-Xai town is 10km away from the beach (Praia). Xai-Xai town was foolishly located on the outside of a meander in the usually quite tame Limpopo river, but the floods of 2000 extended the meander right into town and threatened to break through the neck and turn half of Xai-Xai into an island. Geography lesson over, quite why this sprawling chaotic town was a favourite with South African and Rhodesian (then – now Rhodesia is Zimbabwe) tourists will not be evident to present travelers. Even the beach is rather a poor cousin compared with those at locations just a little to the south or to the north. And it is perhaps herein that lies its present allure – far fewer tourists than just up or down the coast and that always sounds good to me. And allow me to add in here a little diatribe on quad bikes and those who take glee in using them; Much mention has been made of the possibility of the H5N1 strain mutating and becoming easily transmissible human to human. Now, please won't the good lord make H5N1 transmissible from seagull to quad-bike (also to jet-ski if you can find the time) as I now have to go 2000km up the coast and 350km inland to be sure to be out of range of these pointless pieces of mobile misery.

### ***Xai-Xai Town.***

(Vila do Xai-Xai).

Question: Why stay in town when the beach is just a stumble, a slip and a stagger away?  
Well, real people live in Xai-Xai and they like to party too - and beer is MUCH cheaper.

### **Hotel Kaya Kahina**

on Samora Machel Av. in front the Municipal Gardens above Restaurant Bar Ponto Final which is probably your best option for food too. Tel Xai-Xai + 258 (0)22 22391.

Accommodation:

Somewhat threadbare but quite clean and comfy.

Rates:

Suite (double): Mt800 000 a night, doubles: from Mt550000 - 700.000.0 a night.

Twin Rooms: with toilet/shower Mt480 000 - Mt450 000 per night. Single room: Mt300 000with communal toilets/shower. Breakfast Mt70 000 and if you have children they can sleep with you at no extra charge.

### **Motel Concha**

No contact details, but if coming from the south, carry on through town and up the hill watching your LHS for the (2nd or 3rd?) BP service station behind which is Concha.

Unpretentious and cheap - lot's of noise from trucks pulling in and out of the BP.

Accommodation:

Very basic en-suite rooms.

Rates:

Negotiable but be prepared to pay around Mt300 000 per person.

### **Xai-Xai Beach**

Listed below in the order reached from the traffic circle or praça reached as you arrive at the beach, heading north. In case your car breaks down in or near to Xai-Xai, look out for Mr. Paixão Oficina (Garage) on Samora Machel Ave near the old market, or a Mr. Baixia - get hold of him by asking at the restaurants or hotels.

### **Complexo Turístico Halley**

Tel: Xai-Xai, Mozambique: + 258 (0) 22 35003, mobile: + 258 (0) 82 132225, Email: [complexohalley@yahoo.co.br](mailto:complexohalley@yahoo.co.br)

One of the old original hotels that somehow survived the civil war intact (look around you here and you will see other dilapidated monuments to the victims of Cold War expediency. Jose Manuel has been running this hotel for 14 years and can tell one or two interesting stories about Xai-Xai and Mozambique. I like Halley as it represents a link to the old, more innocent, less expensive Mozambique that I knew and loved before you, dear tourist, arrived and changed things.

Accommodation:

Go for one of the front rooms that have a sea view and a balcony from which you can wait for your Romeo or for the sun (or Son) to rise (again).

Rates:

Double bed (with sea view) Mt800 000, double (without a view) Mt700 000.00 including a basic breakfast).

### **Golfinho Azul Restaurant**

(which I do recommend, is a little down the beach or south from Halley) has a campsite now but man do I hope that they have done something about their toilets. Their prices are reasonable and negotiable, but don't pay in advance as this area is quite busy and therefore noisy and you may just want to leave at short notice. They have bungalows and camping somewhere nearby to the restaurant, but with basic facilities. Just ask at the restaurant at the beachfront for more info.

The road next to the campsite going north is the right place if you are looking for a nice walk, it will take you to Chonguene beach where the remains of a once magnificent hotel which has been abandoned since the war – something going on here now.

### **Parque de Campismo de Xai-Xai**

(Also called Xai-Xai camping site). Tel: Mozambique + 258 (0) 22 35022 or Mozambique Mobile + 258 (0) 82 7126520 (Nuno)

This is the old original municipal camping site just metres from the beach and the breakers (technically each town has a camping site and it may start many a lodge owner a shaking in its boots, but 'technically' no camping is allowed outside of these municipal sites, but don't say a word...). The owner also has a restaurant in town called Kapulana that serves good Mozambican dishes.

Accommodation:

Simple wooden barracas (chalets) which have basic en-suite bathrooms. The Camp Site has two basic but clean ablution blocks.

Rates:

Barracas go for Mt400 000 for two, camping is Mt100 000 per person.

### **Xai-Xai Beach Resort**

Tel: Mozambique mobile + 258 22 35030, + 258 22 35031. Mobile: Kevin Wilson: + 258 82 304 6730. Email: [kevin@xaixaibeachresort.co.za](mailto:kevin@xaixaibeachresort.co.za) Website: [www.xaixaibeachresort.co.za](http://www.xaixaibeachresort.co.za)  
I visited when it was being built and it now looks fairly impressive on their website, but as they do not reply to emails, I have my doubts about this place.