



www.mozguide.com

FROM VILANKULO TO CHIMOIO (WEST) AND BEIRA (EAST) INCLUDING CAIA & GORONGOSA

Published: January 2006

1. NOVA MAMBONE	2
Hotel Jaime	2
2. VILA FRANCA DO SAVE	2
Rio Save Game Reserve (Coutada 5)	2
3. INCHOPE	3
Boitequim Tsakane	3
4. CAIA - VIA DONDO, MUANZA AND INHAMINGA	4
Complexo Bamboo do Savane	4
Chiniziua Forest	4
Inhamitanga	4
5. CAIA - VIA INCHOPE AND VILA DA GORONGOSA (Gorongosa Town)	5
Complexo Arco Iris	5
Parque Nacional da Gorongosa	5
Chitengo Camp	5
Vila da Gorongosa (Gorongosa Town)	6
Pousada Azul	6
Monte Gorongosa (Serra da Gorongosa)	6
Birding on Monte Gorongosa	6
M'Phingwe Camp	6
6. CHIMOIO	7
Pink Papaya Backpackers	7
Bed & Breakfasts	7
7. BEIRA	8
Boat Charter, Birding and Accommodation	8
Accommodation in Beira	8
Private Guest Houses	8
Bique's Campsite and Restaurant	8
Rio Savane	9
Hotel Tivoli	9
Hotel Savoy	9
Hotel Moçambique	10
Hotel Miramar	10
Hotel Embaixador	10
Motel Bispo-Kurt	10

1. NOVA MAMBONE

A pleasant, if somewhat run-down, riverside town about 50km from the main road on a new tarmac road. A mangrove estuary separates the town from the beach, but boats can be hired to take you 7km down the Rio Save to the beautiful and deserted coastline. Nova Mambone has long been famous for its prawns.

Hotel Jaime

A local fellow started building this courtyard hotel in the centre of town when the new tarred road to Nova Mambone was being built. He seems to have run out of money but will still try to make you as comfortable as possible. Stay a while and you may become enchanted by the friendly and tourist-free locals – a friend of mine married one. Note that if you wish to 'free' camp, you will have to ask permission from the administration and a fee will be payable.

2. VILA FRANCA DO SAVE.

A steaming little ramshackle town with a real frontier air about it. Prior to the construction in the mid-60's of the impressive suspension bridge, the main road crossed the Rio Save on a Pont at a place much further downstream, and Save Town did not yet exist. It almost doesn't today and the fuel pumps at the little 2M Service Station are usually dry, the drinks as warm as the tarmac and the incongruous 1200m long all-weather airstrip is just a place for the dogs to play. You will have to pay a Mt20 000 toll fee before (or after if coming south) crossing the bridge, and perhaps a fine if the transit police find something amiss with your car or your papers.

Rio Save Game Reserve (Coutada 5)

Tel: Pretoria, South Africa + 27 12 346 1507, mobile: + 27 82 796 3000.

Email: etgmoz@mweb.co.za Website: www.riosavevalley.co.za

An eccentric fellow called Gian Carlos has managed to get the rights to a concession stretching from deep inside the interior of Sofala Province all the way east to the balmy beaches of the Indian Ocean, some 7000km² in size, or about 140km long and 80km wide. Now that is one big space to have as a personal playground. Curious, or perhaps looking for a possible overnight stop along this lonely strip of the E.N.1 'highway'? Then watch out for the simple "ETGL Acampamentos / Camps" sign on the LHS (if going north) 29,5 km after crossing the imposing suspension bridge over the wide, braided, brown and beautiful Save River. There is a 1000m tarred landing strip at Vila Franca do Save for small aircraft suitable for aircraft such as Seneca II, Beech craft Baron, Cessna 410 and even DC3 and AN26 type airplanes. The Reserve is 800km north of Maputo and 380km south of Beira. Most of the game was (and still is?) poached heavily, but the birdlife is prolific and varied and the forests are dense and haunting.

Accommodation:

Rustic but comfortable canvas tents and traditional-design bungalows. Beds are fitted with mosquito nets and each unit has its own ablution facilities and linen. Ample camping space. Toilets and showers (hot/cold water facilities).

Rates:

(High/Low Season): Camping: R80/R60 per person plus R40 per tent. Tented Camp: R150/R120 per person. Lodge: R200/R150 per person. Meals can be supplied by prior arrangement.

3. INCHOPE

After the long haul along the E.N.1 from Quelimane (if coming from the north) or from Vilankulo (from the south), one would hope for some basic amenities to be on offer in Inchope, especially as it is at one of Mozambique's major crossroads. While construction of a new hotel (a branch of Chimoio's Executivo Manica) did begin, this appears to have been abandoned, and another called Inchope Lodge remains on the drawing board. I have found no evidence of plans to build a Service Station (apparently one is going to be built opposite Arco Iris, so you will have to purchase fuel in the 20 litre yellow drums on offer on the roadside. You should only pay about 20% more than the normal pump price, if you haggle a little. As Inchope is a major truck stop there are plenty of little 'barracas' offering cold drinks, and bread, fruit and veggies (seasonal) are available at the local stalls. Slow right down as you approach Inchope as the road is busy with kids, livestock, roadside sellers and dogs.

Boitequim Tsakane

If coming from the south, one of the first concrete buildings on the LHS is a pleasant enough little place (if you accept that prostitutes do hang around here) called Boitequim Tsakane where on a dark and stormy evening a few months ago I had the best darned fried chicken and chips that I have ever tasted. Basic rooms are on offer for Mt200 000 per person but don't expect to sleep much as there will be constant traffic both of the human and truck variety. Nice hand-carved curios are sold opposite Tsakane, so do at least your bit to support local enterprise.

4. CAIA - VIA DONDO, MUANZA AND INHAMINGA.

According to AIM, the Mozambique News Agency, construction on the US\$50 million bridge from Caia to Chimuara was due to begin on December 20, 2005.

Until three years ago, this was the only practical route to the provinces of Mozambique that lie to the north of the Beira – Mutare (Zimbabwe) ‘corridor’ – and then only in a 4x4 vehicle. Most traffic had to cross the Zambezi on the bridge at Tete, enter Malawi at Zobúè/Mwanza, and then travel through Malawi leaving either at either Mulanje/Milange (if going to Cuamba or Quelimane) or Namwera/Mandimba (if heading for Lichinga, Nampula, Nacala or Pemba). With the opening of the new stretch of the E.N.1 from Inchope via Gorongosa Town (Vila de Gorongosa) to Caia, northern Mozambique (i.e. across the Zambezi river) is now accessible in any hardy vehicle. Much roadwork remains to be done between Nicoadala and Alto Molocue and from Alto Molocue to Alto Ligonha (this 70km stretch is still 4x4 territory and does sometimes become impassable for days during the January to March rains).

Note that there is presently no fuel or vehicle repair facility between Dondo and Nicoadala (fuel is sold at the roadside on the way to the ferry just past Caia), and so fill up everything in Dondo.

While the Dondo to Matondo (where the road meets up with the tarred E.N.1) route is in better condition than it has been in for years, much of it can be flooded during prolonged heavy rain (January to March).

Complexo Bamboo do Savane

About 24km from Dondo there is the little village of Savane where basic accommodation and meals are available.

Chinizuia Forest

Keen birders must note that, about 15km north of Muanza, there is an easy to miss turn-off to Chinizuia village, after which you cross the Chinizuia River and arrive in the forest of the same name. Dave Rowell and Marion Welbourn from Beira are attempting to save this famous forest from illegal logging by having part of it declared as a forestry reserve and they are already building a camp for visitors to the area. Marion's mobile number is + 258 820 311 350, and Dave's is + 258 825 575 030. Landline is + 258 23 311 915. Their Email address is: kapensis@mango.zw

Inhamitanga

The most notable thing about Inhamitanga is that it marks the turn-off to Chupanga (where Mary Moffat Livingstone, wife of David was buried), and to Marromeu town and reserve where decent accommodation and excellent birding is on offer.

5. CAIA - VIA INCHOPE AND VILA DA GORONGOSA (Gorongosa Town).

Two years ago, a 250km section of Mozambique's main road, the Estrada Nacional 1 (E.N.1) between Gorongosa Town and Caia was finally carved through virgin forests, 15 bridges were built and the whole lot was tarred and completed. Two other attempts at linking Mozambique's southern provinces to those north of the Zambezi River had failed. The first, during the mid 1960's was abandoned due to attacks and sabotage by the Frelimo rebels fighting Portuguese colonial rule, and the second, during the late '70's was stopped by interference from the Renamo group which had been formed by the then Rhodesian Secret Service in an attempt (a very successful one) to destabilize Mozambique.

Consequently the route from Inchope to Caia is now the finest road in Mozambique, and Gorongosa town has been transformed from an almost deserted backwater to a bustling agricultural centre. While the new road has precipitated an improvement in access to markets for thousands of small farmers, it has also allowed commercial traders, loggers and charcoal buyers in, and the forests in the area are disappearing at an alarming rate, mainly due to clearing to make way for cotton, tobacco, beans and maize crops.

Complexo Arco Iris

Mozambique mobile: + 258 (0) 82 5565200 or + 258 (0) 84 2354070.

About 15km north of Inchope on top of a ridge with good views of the surrounding (fast disappearing) forests. Has a restaurant, swimming pool, air-conditioned rooms, but the caged animals on display indicate management may not be very sensitive to the sensibilities of foreign visitors. In need of new management, but still a welcome refreshment stop, and truly wonderful when compared to what's on offer in Inchope.

Parque Nacional da Gorongosa.

Gorongosa National Park was considered in the '60's and '70's, to be one of Africa's finest reserves, mainly due to the wide range of habitat and huge herds of big game. When one considers that, since independence in 1976, Gorongosa has, during certain periods, been the base for the rebel Renamo group, the target of commercial poaching from Russian helicopters, and more recently, encroached on by small-scale farmers and illegal hunters, it is quite surprising that this Park survives today in any recognisable form.

During my last visit in September of 2005, we arrived in the evening and drove over to a viewpoint from where we could see lake Urema, and a large chunk of the park's grasslands. Fires raged from horizon to horizon and when we paid our entrance and camping fee I asked the ranger about the blazes and he said poachers who wanted to make their task easier started them.

The good news is that American philanthropist, Norman Carr: www.carrfoundation.org has taken on Gorongosa Park as one of his 'upliftment' projects, and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U) with the government, and installed a game management expert to oversee the complete rehabilitation of Gorongosa, from interacting with the local population and training anti-poaching units, to upgrading the infrastructure and re-introducing wildlife.

Chitengo Camp.

The rondawels here have been renovated and furnished and can now be hired out to visitors while the campsite boasts new ablutions which were finished but not functional when we visited. Entrance to the park and camping fees are each Mt200 000, with a further Mt200 000 for your vehicle. The rondawels go for around Mt1 200 000 per day. There is a small bar/restaurant where you can get a cold drink and a simple meal in the evenings. No bookings are as yet possible.

Vila da Gorongosa (Gorongosa Town).

When I first visited this hilltop village in 1998, it took us 7 hours of kidney-bruising driving in a tough 4x4 vehicle just to negotiate the 80km from Inchope to Gorongosa. The same trip took us well under an hour in September of 2005, and this route (all the way to Caia and beyond) is now well served by 'chapas', buses and various other forms of public transport. Gorongosa has a hospital, a Catholic Mission School, international phone office (no internet), good cell-phone reception, general dealers, roadside stalls and a bustling municipal market (mercado municipal). Despite the increasing traffic volumes trundling through, this town does not yet have a service station but fuel is sold from roadside 'bancas' on the LHS at the junction where a right (if going north) takes you to the *Pousada Azul* and the phone office, and a left takes you to the Mercado and *Complexo Paraíso*. I usually use 'Banco Fixa Luis' but there is another fellow who also sells fuel a little further down the same track.

Pousada Azul

A fairly large double-storey Inn on a gravel road leading past the phone office and the Administrator's Guesthouse. Under new management and a little improved with quite good en-suite rooms with comfortable beds and clean bedding for Mt400 000 per person. Excellent basic meals are served on the cool veranda and this is where the town's cream and colourful come out to drink at night. And do remember that, if heading north the next bed is at M'Phingwe 220km further on, and if going south, at Inhassoro, 400km further on.

Monte Gorongosa (Serra da Gorongosa).

Rising out of the Urema flats, which are just 50metres above sea-level, to 1862 metres (Gogogo Peak), this massif supports a dozen different forest types and a few 'special' bird-species such as the green-headed Oriole, which is found nowhere else in southern Africa. Although originally the intention was to include the mountain in the Gorongosa National Park, unfortunately this was never done, although in theory anyway, areas above 700m are a designated forestry reserve. In practice local people are cultivating areas far above this altitude, and deforestation is occurring at an accelerating pace.

Birding on Monte Gorongosa.

About ten years ago acclaimed environmentalist Paul Dutton, then working for the WWF (World-Wide Fund for Nature), started a community eco-tourism project based as Vunduzi (also sometimes called Vanduzi), and this has long been the main departure point for walks into the mountain. However, due to severe deforestation, an increasing number of questionable 'conservation' and 'permit' fees, and other parts of the foothills becoming accessible, birders have been accessing the mountain via other routes such as the Morrombodze Falls, and the "Quarry route" which is near Canda. Note that, legally you are under no obligation to pay for any 'permit' (I confirmed this with the District Fauna and Flora people in Gorongosa Town), but as this has already been established as a formality by other birders, you may still find it expedient to pay. Other reasonable charges are for guide and for porters and I suggest that you pay no more than Mt300 000 (SAR80, US\$15) per day for a 'guide', and half of that for a porter. The green-headed Orioles are typically found in the canopies of the tall forests above 1200metres in altitude.

M'Phingwe Camp

Mozambique: Tel: +258 23 302 161 (Office hours only)

Email: tct.dalmann@teledata.mz Website: www.dalmann.com

Located near Matondo 211km from Gorongosa Town and 32km south of Caia in the 'Catapu' (which means to *'squat down and shit'* as owner James White told me) forestry concession, this small, comfortable and very well managed camp has an excellent restaurant (dinner and breakfast only) with a limited menu, but servings are generous and tasty. James has been in the vicinity since the late 1970's when he served with the Rhodesian Selous Scouts as a captain, and he knows (almost literally) every tree, pathway and stone in the area from Beira to Caia, including Gorongosa Mountain.

Accommodation and Rates:

2 bed roomed Cottage with 2 single beds in each room separated by a veranda, a private bathroom and a separate thatched lapa with braai: US\$41 for 4 people.

Rustic Cabins with 2 single beds, communal bathroom: US\$20 double.

6. CHIMOIO

After Inhambane and Mecula, this is one of my favourite Mozambican towns. Atop the *Planalto Moçambicana* (Mozambican Plateau), the climate is moderated by altitude and the revival of commercial farming has lent an air of industry and optimism to the area. Chimoio, the capital of Manica Province, is small enough to get to know in a couple of hours, but large enough to have most of the amenities needed by traveller and investor alike. There are service stations, motor-spares and repairs, hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, banks, exchange bureaux, hardware stores, pharmacies, supermarkets, international direct-dialling and internet at TDM next to the Shoprite Supermarket and many other useful services.

Banco Austral, BCM and Standard Bank accept VISA cards (with PIN loaded) at the tellers inside (long queues), as well as at outside ATM's. Informal forex 'touts' hang about all over the place and they seem to be able to smell a greenback or SA rand from a mile off as they will appear out of the alleys if you even so much as think about changing money. I have used them frequently, but beware, on every occasion they have given me a good rate, but have never given me the correct amount of money, so count slowly and be firm before handing over any cash. Note that the bank rate is often better than the street.

Pink Papaya Backpackers

Tel Moz mobile (Mauricio): + 258 82 237 2980.

Email: helenmlarge@hotmail.com

Website: www.hostelz.com/display.php/27960+The+Pink+Papaya.

For travellers from Zambia, Malawi or Zimbabwe, Chimoio is an unavoidable (and also recommended) stopover, particularly if using public transport. For years I have camped at Casa Msika when in this area - which is over 60km from Chimoio - and so I was very relieved when I met Helen and was introduced to her pink papaya. This is a real 'old school' backpackers, i.e. in a (former) family home close to all the amenities and the buses, and where everyone does things communally - making for a good opportunity to meet up with travelling companions or to swap notes. Helen is now starting up a forest retreat 100km from Chimoio, and the Pink Papaya will soon have a new owner called Steve Callas and probably a new name, but we will keep you posted. Parking available for 4 vehicles.

Accommodation.

Two double rooms and a dorm that sleeps 8. Shared bathroom.

Rates.

Mt200 000 pp in the dorm, the doubles are Mt600 000 for two.

Bed & Breakfasts

Tel: Chimoio: + 09 251 22808. Moz mobile: + 09 258 82 586 0930.

A good contact in Chimoio is Ian Adamson who can arrange rooms in very good B&B'S.

7. BEIRA

During 1992, I spent 5 weeks in Beira waiting for a couple of would-be smugglers to re-float their little boat and give me a lift up to Pemba. Beira then was a dilapidated, dirty but intriguing place where pirates, prostitutes, politicians and poachers rubbed shoulders with aid workers, sailors, truck drivers and fugitives from justice. It was also a time where the thriving currency black market allowed US\$40 to last me over a month, and I met up with just two other travelers during my entire stay in Mozambique that eventually stretched to four fascinating and life-changing months.

Over the last thirteen years I have been in Beira on half a dozen occasions, and it certainly seemed to have been left behind by the frantic post-1994 democratic election reconstruction frenzy, and in fact seemed to be deteriorating even further. My latest visit was in September of 2005, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that Beira had turned that proverbial corner and was suddenly quite a nice little port city (the second largest in Mozambique) and is presently well worth a visit. And you can play spot the tourist...

Boat Charter, Birding and Accommodation

Contact Chris and Marion Myers of **Venture Far** based at Clube Nautico da Beira which is right on the beach, has a huge pool, a pub and restaurant and is a favourite haunt of the expat crowd. Chris's mobile number is + 258 846 820 200, Marion's is + 258 846 820 210. Their Email is venturefar@teledata.mz

Accommodation in Beira

Private Guest Houses

Some residents of Beira do sometimes have space for visitors and I suggest that you contact **Amigos Lda (Limitada)**, a management and technical consultancy run by Dave Rowell and Marion Welbourn. Marion's mobile number is + 258 820 311 350, and Dave's is + 258 825 575 030. Landline is + 258 23 311 915. Their Email address is: kapensis@mango.zw

Bique's Campsite and Restaurant.

It was 1994 and South Africa was about to take on New Zealand's "All Blacks" in the World Rugby Cup Final. I was in my trusty '72 VW Kombi (bus) with a few friends weaving our way around the potholes and trenches along the E.N.1 towards Chimoio. The forests on the roadside were untouched and there were as yet no villages carved into the bush, but the condition of the road was so bad that it had taken us two days from Inhambane, and we were not yet at Inchope. We were heading for Pemba, and I had told my fellow travellers that I knew of a place in Beira where we could watch the rugby via satellite, although this was just a hunch, and perhaps we would get there to find the screen bare.

On the night before the big match, and just 100km from Beira, the VW's headlights flickered and faded and I wonder how many people could have found a worse place to break down than the Pungoe flats where most of the world's mosquitoes come from. I by-passed various fuses and with Piers holding various wires together we eventually ploughed to a standstill on the beach next to Biques (Beeks or sometimes beekys), piled out and went for a beer in the great pub and there it was – a big screen T.V securely locked onto a satellite somewhere out there that beamed the good stuff down to the right place.

Bique's was already starting to fill up with South Africans who had made the pilgrimage to see the final from as far afield as Tete, Quelimane, Nova Mambone, Chimoio and Johannesburg (us). The following evening it was standing room only and I would not have been surprised if the racket emanating from that thatched structure as South Africa took the coveted cup had caused confusion in the shipping lanes of the Mozambique Channel, and perhaps even a few hasty changes in heading to Beira.

Up until five years ago, Bique's had the best camping ablutions in Sofala, but sadly with Zimbabweans no longer coming this way, and Beira becoming even more isolated due to the opening of the Inchope – Caia stretch of the E.N.1, the campsite and bathrooms are now almost derelict, but the bar and restaurant remain ever popular. It's worth the detour just to get a plate of the prawn curry.

Accommodation.

It is still possible to camp next to the restaurant, but when the wind blows this has got to be one of the most unpleasant places in Mozambique, and the facilities need serious attention.

Rates.

During 2004 we paid Mt150 000 pp for camping.

Rio Savane

Tel Beira: + 258 (0) 23 323555, mobile: + 258 (0) 82 3857660.

Just 30km north of Beira, at the mouth of the Savane river where there are extensive mangrove swamps, Rio Savane is visited by elephants and lion, and the beaches to the north are some of the most remote in Mozambique. Due to the muddy waters pushed far out into the sea by the Zambezi and Pungué rivers, the seas here are not clear, and the closest reefs are 200km to the south, but birders, seekers of solitude, surf fishermen and beach walkers will really enjoy this spot. Visitors park their vehicles on the south bank of the estuary and are transferred by boat to the campsite and chalets. Basically a self-catering resort, but a restaurant does do evening meals, and other meals by prior arrangement. Get to Biques either on the Estoril *chapa* from Beira central or on the beach road, turning onto the sand track at Clube Nautico.

Accommodation:

Shady campsites 100m from the beach with thatched and mozzie-proofed shelters (barracas). One self-catering chalets sleeps 5.

Rates:

Camping adults: US\$8.50, children (U12) US\$4. Barraca US\$18 per day.

Hotel Tivoli

363 Avenida Bagamoio. Tel: + 258 (0) 23 320300, Fax: 320 301.

Email: h.tivoli-beira@teledata.mz Website: www.tivoli-beira.tdhotels.pt/tivoli/en

This is certainly one of Beira's better hotels and as it is centrally located, is ideal for the business traveller. There is 24-hour room service and a good restaurant.

Accommodation.

Fairly small en-suite rooms with twin beds, air conditioning, TV, phone and balcony.

Rates.

(A buffet breakfast is included). Single US\$93 pp. Double \$156 pp. Special group rates available.

Hotel Savoy

297 Avenida Pedro Álvares Cabral. Tel: + 258 (0) 23 349302/3.

When you reach the large traffic circle (*Praça*) as you enter downtown Beira, look to your left after passing one exit road. This was the first place that I stayed in on arriving in Beira for the first time in April 1992. There was no electricity anywhere in town, but the little oil lamps made from tin cans flickered from doorways and underneath trees everywhere making for a somewhat strange and maybe magical atmosphere. Here I learned my first word of Portuguese when the waitress asked something about '*galinha*' and pointed to her mouth. I nodded and half an hour later a huge platter of *piri-piri* fried chicken arrived complete with salads and freshly baked 'Portuguese' rolls – and this in a country where, apparently, millions were starving. I sold the 20kg bag of maize meal that I had been lugging around on the back of my bicycle the very next day.

Accommodation.

Small rooms with twin beds (find one that doesn't sag too much). Shared ablutions.

Rates.

Mt 350 000 per person.

Hotel Moçambique

Tel: +258 (0) 23 325011.

Email: mozambhotel@teledata.mz

On Bagamoio Street, downtown – in front of the Hotel Tivoli. Certainly one of Beira's better hotels.

Accommodation.

Recently refurbished en-suite rooms with TV, phone and room service.

Rates:

Enquire when booking.

Hotel Miramar

Tel: + 258 (0) 23 322 283 or 323 471

On the Marginal (Beach road) in the Ponta Gea part of town. Basic rooms with fan, secure parking available. Attached to the restaurant with the same name. Just over the road from the beach (not suitable for swimming).

Accommodation and Rates:

Enquire when booking.

Hotel Embaixador

203 Rua Major Serba Pinto. Tel: + 258 (0) 3 323 121. Fax: 323 788.

Possibly Beira's best-run hotel, offering free airport transfers, room service, secure parking, conference facilities and a restaurant.

Accommodation.

Apartments, suites and single rooms, all air conditioned with en-suite bathroom.

Rates.

(Includes a continental breakfast). Standard room: US\$64 pp. Suite (max 2 persons): \$85 and Apartment (max 2 persons): \$98.

Motel Bispo-Kurt

Tel: + 258 23 302 574, fax: 302 655.

Comfortable and roomy self-contained air conditioned chalets just off the main road 22km before Beira (RHS if coming into Beira). In a pretty busy part of town, but actually very nice with a great pool and restaurant/bar.

Accommodation and Rates:

Enquire when booking.