

10-Day Safari to Malawi

Join us for an exceptional African Safari to Malaŵi. With a varied topography and range of habitats, Malaŵi has a rich wildlife heritage. The country is a biological hotspot and unknown to most Americans.

Our safari will visit the iconic Liwonde National Park and Zomba Plateau. Liwonde National Park is dominated by the languid Shire River and evokes every notion of authentic untrammelled Africa. The park lies at the southern end of Africa's Great Rift Valley. In fall 2016, Prince Harry was inside the park to assist in the largest translocation of elephants in history. In May 2017, several cheetahs were reintroduced to the park. On our safari, we will expect to see elephants, hyenas, buffalos, hippos, crocodiles, elands, kudus, sables, impalas, zebra, roans, waterbucks, hartebeests, bushbucks, warthogs, bushpigs, porcupines, bush babies, servals, civets, mongooses, genets, vervet monkeys, and yellow baboons. Leopards, lions, and black rhinos are occasionally spotted.

The Afro-montane Zomba Plateau is a completely different experience. This forested inselberg in southern Malawi has indigenous forests and hiking trails.

There will be an opportunity to meet rural elementary school students near Liwonde National Park. Prior to our departure, we can collect school and/or medical supplies and donate them to the school.

Cost Includes:

All lodging, meals, tips, guiding, group airport transfers, ground transportation, boat transfers, emergency medical evacuation insurance, and park fees.

Cost Excludes:

International flights, visa, beverages, bottled water, laundry, snacks, and items of a personal nature.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Lilongwe

Arrive in Lilongwe, Malawi. A driver will pick us up from Kamuzu International Airport and drive us to Kumbali Country Lodge. The lodge is approximately 30 minutes from airport. After settling in, we can relax at the lodge. In the evening, we will have dinner together.

Kumbali Country Lodge

The lodge is situated on a 1,606 acre forest preserve on the outskirts of Lilongwe, Malawi's capital city. With 16 individually thatched suites, the lodge offers comfortable and spacious accommodation, with running water, a shower, flushing toilets, and private veranda.

This is a working farm and the food, including fresh vegetables from the gardens and delicious homemade yogurts and cheese, is the best in the country. There are also nature trails. When Madonna visits Malawi, she stays at here.

Day 2-6 – Liwonde National Park

After enjoying a delicious breakfast at Kumbali Country Lodge, we will be driven south to the colorful riverside town of Liwonde in Malawi's Upper Shire River Valley. The approximate travel time is 4 hours (167 miles). During this scenic drive alongside mountains and farmland, chilled bottled water will be available inside the vehicle. While on this drive, we will stop at a bank to exchange currency.

Upon reaching Liwonde town, we will board speedboats and travel 20+ miles up the Shire River to Mvuu Camp. We will see many birds and mammals on the journey. After arriving at the safari camp, we will enjoy lunch, go swimming, and relax until the late afternoon. We will then visit the interior of the park for an evening safari and sundowner. We will end the day back at the lodge with a delicious meal and a night spent in thatched canvas chalets with hippos and elephants serenading us to sleep.

Our daily schedule at Mvuu Camp (activities are always optional):

Rise early for a guided morning bush and bird walk, taking in the park's wildlife as they start the day. This is also a perfect opportunity to see little critters and plants up close. We will return for a well-earned breakfast at the thatch-roofed lodge before heading out onto the Shire River for a 2-hour boat safari. After lunch and a relaxed afternoon siesta (or swim in the pool), we will use open 4x4 Land Rovers and Land Cruisers to explore the interior of the park. After a sundowner drink at a scenic location, we will continue the safari after dark. A national parks scout will be positioned on the hood of the 4x4 with a spotlight to help identify nocturnal creatures. Upon returning to the lodge, we will have dinner.

The park is home to a dozen critically endangered black rhinoceroses. If approved by park management, we may be allowed access to the sanctuary. Walks are available for an additional fee and they have a 90% success rate. The fee directly supports this unique conservation and research program.

Mvuu Camp

The accommodation at Mvuu Camp is in thatch and canvas chalets. Each chalet has electricity, indoor hot and cold running water, a sink, flushing toilet, and shower.

African Parks Network

Liwonde National Park is managed by African Parks Network. African Parks is a non-profit conservation organization that assumes complete responsibility for the rehabilitation and long-term management of national parks and protected areas in partnership with governments and local communities.

Day 7-8 – Zomba Plateau

After our last breakfast at Mvuu Camp, we will board speedboats for our transfer down the Shire River to Liwonde town. From this colorful town, our driver will take us to Zomba, the former capital of British Central Africa and Nyasaland. Zomba is a scenic 1.5 hours south of Liwonde (118 miles). During this drive, chilled bottled water will be available inside the vehicle.

During our time in Zomba and the Zomba Plateau, we will have some flexibility. Depending on local conditions, we will explore the National Herbarium & Botanical Garden (est. 1891) and trails on and near the Zomba Plateau.

Ku Chawe Inn

Our accommodation on the rim of the Zomba Plateau is at Ku Chawe Inn. Each room has running water, a shower, flushing toilets, and a fireplace. Daily dinners and breakfasts will be taken at the hotel. We will lunch in town or at the hotel. Ku Chawe Inn is surrounded by a gorgeous landscape and terraced gardens. Queen Elizabeth visited the plateau in 1957 and Emperor Haile Selassie visited several years later. While gazing at the distant horizon from the plateau, Queen Elizabeth said, "It offers the best view in the whole of the British Empire."

Day 9 - Blantyre

After breakfast at Ku Chawe Inn, we will travel to Blantyre and Game Haven Lodge. It will take us about two hours and chilled bottled water will be in the vehicle.

We may explore Blantyre and visit the National Museum, Mandala House, Central Africana Bookstore, or other areas of interest before settling in at Game Haven Lodge.

Game Haven Lodge

Established in 2006, this lodge is situated within the private Chimwenya Game Park. Rooms are comfortable and have running water, a shower, and flushing toilet. The founders created a unique retreat to combine tourism and wildlife conservation while supporting surrounding communities in Bvumbwe. In addition to birdlife, the small game park also has an assortment of antelope and giraffe.

Day 10 – Return Home

After breakfast at Game Haven Lodge, we will depart mid-morning. Our driver will drop us off at Blantyre's Chileka Airport for our flights back to the US.