



It might *surprise* you to know, but the small, *stunning* tropical island of ZANZIBAR has played a part in *history* quite disproportionate to its size.

Situated just 32 miles off the east coast of Africa, the archipelago's history stretches back at least to the start of the first millennium, but it was between the 12th and 15th centuries the island came into its own. Economic links with Persia and the Arabian Gulf blossomed and along with trade from the east, came Islam and the Arabic architecture that still characterises the main towns today.



Long live Zanzibar



The famous spice island with EXOTIC landscape, outstanding BEACHES and friendly locals actually packs a fascinating history you've PROBABLY never heard before...



THE RESIDENCE

Cocooned among 32 hectares of tropical gardens, The Residence Zanzibar is unapologetically gorgeous. Serving up bespoke hospitality inspired by the island's African, Omani and European heritage, it's the perfect retreat.



► Zanzibar was the key point for highly profitable trade between Africa, India and the Middle East. Huge caravans would use the trade triangle to ship cloves, ivory, spices, tea, coffee and gold, fetching fortunes from the African interior to markets beyond.

It's the kind of history that can be picked out from the buildings, monuments, ancient cobbled streets and in the faces of the locals who still trade. However, today Zanzibar is far better known as an island destination for the travellers wanting ocean side adventure.

Endless coral beaches topped with white, powdery sand; a sea boasting all the shades of blue; and historical Stone Town where African and Omani cultures meet, Zanzibar has reason to boast.

It's an island of unconscious contradiction. A place where Prison Island, built in the late 1800s for slaves and violent prisoners, stands proud next to the posh atoll of Mnemba, where a one-night stay will see guests hand over more than \$2,000.

By the early 19th century, Oman held the power and in the 1840s the Sultan of Oman relocated his court here. However, with increasing European interest in East Africa and the end of the slave trade, Omani rule over Zanzibar began to weaken, and in 1862 Zanzibar became independent from Oman, with Omani sultans ruling under a British protectorate, an arrangement that lasted until Zanzibari independence on December 10, 1963 and the birth of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Omani influence can still be felt today, mostly in the winding alleyways of Stone Town, located in the Old Quarter of the main town of Zanzibar. It's just a 10-minute drive from Zanzibar International Airport, and can be easily reached by taxi or pre-arranged driver. There are many hotels located in the city, however, with its small acreage, the city is best explored in one day, or two if you would prefer to stay overnight. Made up of myriad winding streets, the region was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000 for its remaining Arab and colonial architecture.

Look out for the many Zanzibar Doors, famous the world over for their intricate carving and ornate decoration. While many were imported from India and Arabia during the Arabian rule, a number were also produced locally. Tours of the more famous and better preserved of these can be arranged (the guides will find you), but they are also easily located with a bit of exploration.

A lazy breakfast in Stone Town's Old Quarter is a must. ►

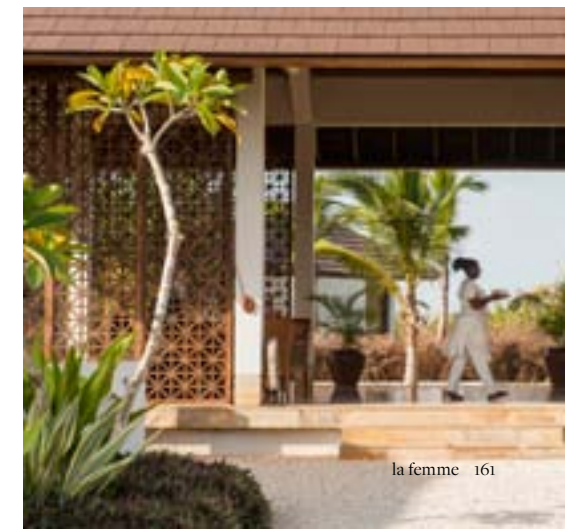


“No matter how fast *moonlight* runs, daylight *catches* up.”

-ZANZIBARI PROVERB

BEAUTIFUL COLOURS

The name Zanzibar is an Arabic word that translates to 'the coast of black people', and there are monolithic structures suggesting people have inhabited the area for the past 20,000 years.



Savoir Vivre

► Walk through the narrow streets and peer across a small city of rooftops housing the Slave Museum, Albino Shelter and local markets below. Ancient folklore states albino body parts protected against illness or ghosts and you don't have to enquire far before locals will spill stories from over the years.

The Africa House Hotel is home to the best rooftop terrace to watch the sunset and becomes a hive of activity as the sun begins to set in the African sky. Once the English Club in the 1880s, the building is a grand and elegant throwback to the days of western occupation and the cocktails are first class.

Other spots worth a look in Stone Town include the 16th century Old Arab Fort, which was built during the Omani occupation of the island and the House of Wonders built in 1883 as a ceremonial palace and the first building on the island to be powered by electricity. A weave of impressive balconies and balustrades spill from white-washed walls and a visit offers a fascinating glimpse into Swahili and Zanzibari culture.

The Stone Town Café, Bed & Breakfast is a true hidden gem for those who prefer something a little off the beaten track. Located within the UNESCO listed site, it is still owned by the Swahili family of the Arab merchant who built it 111 years ago and has been lovingly restored to maintain its original charm. There are just eight bedrooms and it offers the perfect base for exploring the Old Quarter ►



“Zanzibar is a MARVEL for the senses.”

- JODI BALFOUR, ACTRESS

ISLAND TOWN

Zanzibar comprises several islands, with two larger ones. Ugunja is the biggest and is erroneously called Zanzibar. The other is Pemba. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous region in the country of Tanzania.



► whether for an overnight stay or to simply pick the brains of the local family who run it.

A short boat ride away is Prison Island, which, slightly oddly, is now a turtle sanctuary, and is easy to visit. Another nearby remote island, called the Kingdom of Sultan, has a muddled and mysterious history. A stone's throw from Stone Town, the tiny island is still home to the Watumbatu tribe, who claim to descend from Shiraz kings who left Persia in 10th century. Sultan is said to have ruled Zanzibar until the mid 13th century, when the monarchy was terminated by rebel groups. The Watumbatu have tense relations with their neighbours and are not huge supporters of the tourism that flanks Zanzibar today, hence the island has remained authentic and undiscovered.

Pluck up the courage to cross the frosty faces and be towered by enormous baobab trees before strolling the ruins of Sultan's palace with oldest operational mosque in Africa with its visible Persian influence.

The pace of life slows down as you leave the city behind and there's a rhythmic beat keeping time with the tropical vibe of island life.

Five-star beach resorts span from the northern tip to the more rugged, secluded and less populated southerly coast, and airport transfers from the island's main landing strip, just outside Stone Town, are big business for local drivers. Uber, however, is still a way off.

Zanzibar will steal your heart and the best exists outside of the cities in remote locations, so be sure to limit your time in the city and prepare to hit the coast roads.

Picture postcard views, restaurants that appear floating out at sea, intense colours and friendly Zanzi faces urge you to delve deep and discover a unique culture laced with unique beauty and decades of organic growth.

Nature captivates, whether lost in the acres of forest, wandering banana plantations and spice farms, or exploring the big blue and its abundance of marine life.

From a random, wild animal shelter, home to a number of African predators including pumas, cheetahs, lions, to a secluded and little known aquarium where you can swim with hundreds of turtles, rules and regulations are few in Zanzibar meaning life can be what you make it.

Hop on a bike to cycle through rural villages, explore ruins and swim among hidden caves — often filled with crystal stalagmites and stalactites — in clear blue waters.

Many beach roads — sometimes the beaches themselves — are flat and follow natural lines of the rice plantations and local tropical fruit and vegetable farms. Call in at local markets and strike up conversation with the locals, who are usually more than happy to chat, even more so if said friendly chat results in a sale!

The diving and snorkeling spots are some of the best on the

planet, ranging from underwater island exploration, coral reefs, or simply chilling on a sand bar (before taking a dip) hundreds of kilometres from the mainland.

Hidden amongst towering palm trees and fringed by private shores, the spectacular If it's true isolation you're looking for then The Residence Zanzibar is set in isolated splendour on the South West coast of the island. Located just 55 minutes from the capital Stone Town, the hotel sits outside village of Kizimkazi, an area famous for its dolphin Safaris.

It's a 10-minute off road trek from the main road, meaning it's not the kind of place you stumble across. Perfect for couples, friends and families, the resort's 66 luxurious stand-alone villas all feature modern amenities, outdoor showers, as well as a private swimming pool and deck, offering total privacy.

Guests are given bikes on arrival to get around the two hectares of tropical grounds. From the Ila Spa, with its six pavilions, to the The Dining Room offering a range of international dishes with some Zanzibari twists, overlooking the ocean, it's paradise.

There's a plethora of places to visit from here, even if relaxation is all you had in mind.

The Jozani Forest is one of the most popular places to visit in Zanzibar and is the last sanctuary in the world to see the Zanzibar red colobus monkey. The forest is located in the Eastern part of the island and acts as a staunch reminder of what we have done to our environment over the centuries.

The Seaweed Centre is in Paje — popular with backpackers — and is a women's initiative that employees local women to make products from the abundance of seaweed around the island. You mustn't leave without sampling a glass of seaweed fruit juice!

And no trip to Zanzibar would be complete without a trip to The Rock, probably one of the most photographed

restaurants of all time. Located on the shores of the beautiful Michanwi Pingwe beach, as the name suggests, it sits on a giant rock in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Originally a basic structure used as a local fisherman's post, there are only 12 tables inside and narrow balconies on either side leading to a small terrace at the back. It's an extraordinary location and the food (the fish curry is a popular choice) is inspired by the natural resources of the region and is simple cuisine with a twist of Zanzibar.

The best time to visit Zanzibar is from June to October during the cool, dry months of spring, although from December to February is also a popular time when it's hot and dry.

Stay with The Residence Zanzibar for four nights or longer and receive 25 per cent off your stay until January 6, 2019.

Fly Dubai operates daily flights to Zanzibar from Dubai International Airport and prices start from a reasonable AED 800 per person return. ■

“At one point it hit the GROUND so hard, it bounced back up two feet and fell a second TIME.”

- KRISTINE K. STEVENS, AUTHOR, ON THE RAIN IN ZANZIBAR



“Every sight and *smell* is provocative, inspiring a sense of the old *and new*.”

- JODI BALFOUR, ACTRESS

WILD AND ALIVE

The island is home to the almost extinct Zanzibar Red Columbus Monkey, the Zanzibar Servaline Genet, and the Zanzibar Leopard. Due to its proximity to the Equator, Zanzibar is warm throughout the year and has equal day and nights (12 hours each) like most East African countries.

