

Zanzibar

Since the first Arab traders first laid eyes on the tropical island of Zanzibar in the eighth century people have wanted to visit the famous spice island. The mystical allure of the name alone is enough, and that is before you even see the beautiful white sand beaches, lush forests and crystal clear blue water. The famously friendly Zanzibari people living in their palm thatched cottages can always be relied on to give a warm welcome and, having shown you the hospitality that Africans are famous for you'll never want to leave.

Zanzibar (or Unguja, as it is locally known) is an island with a very diverse and interesting history. The island, once the seat of the Omani empire, was a very important stopping point for spice merchants plying the trade routes between East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and China. It wasn't all spice though, hundreds of thousands of slaves were also bought and sold in the islands capital city of Stone Town, and you can still see the spots where this barbaric trade was carried out. A visit to Stone Town with its bustling markets, narrow winding streets and wooden dhows anchored in the harbour can provide a very atmospheric glimpse of what life may have been like over a hundred years ago.

Away from Stone Town and out on the coast you can see African fishermen out at sea using fishing techniques and boats that look like they haven't changed for hundreds of years. These skills which may look outdated to us must work though, as eating delicious fresh seafood is one of the highlights of any trip to the island! The dhows usually go out fishing in the evening, meaning that while you are sipping a cocktail and watching the sunset, a sea of white sails often appears on the horizon and adds to the feeling you are truly somewhere special.

For more information, visit our favourite Zanzibar website at www.zanzibar.net.