



DISCOVER

Malawi

LAKE | WILDLIFE | LANDSCAPE | CULTURE



Discover... The Warm Heart of Africa

Welcome to Malawi! Described as the 'Warm Heart Of Africa', this relatively little known gem has so much to offer: Wildlife, Culture, Landscape and Lake Malawi - the third largest in Africa. A year-round destination and relatively small, it is the combination of attractions and experiences Malawi has to offer in such a compact area that makes it so special, and one of Africa's most complete destinations.

The friendliness of the Malawians is renowned, which makes the cultural experiences second to none – opportunities to be warmly welcomed into real villages, interact with local people and discover what daily life is like in Africa.

Malawi has beautiful and varied scenery that seems to change round every bend. It is home to high mountains, vast high plateaux with limitless views, indigenous forests, rivers both energetic and serene, towering escarpments and wide open plains. Trekking, mountain biking and even horse riding are available for those wishing to explore these amazing landscapes.

For wildlife, the Big 5 are all here, but the excitement of safaris in Malawi comes from the thrill of discovering animals in unspoilt wilderness areas, with few other, if any, visitors alongside. Safaris by 4x4, boat and on foot are all on offer.

Lake Malawi has vast, shimmering, crystal clear-waters fringed by beaches of golden sand. But this is also a real-life aquarium, teeming tropical fish and its shore dotted with fascinating fishing villages. From kayaking and sailing to snorkelling and scuba diving, there is a wide range of activities. Or, just relax on a deserted beach!

Malawi's tourist infrastructure is good - lodges are mostly small scale and spread out but there is high quality accommodation wherever its needed. Malawi is very family-friendly with so much to keep everyone interested. It also benefits from a lovely climate of largely warm, sunny days with its range of altitudes offering variation when needed.

Despite having all that Africa has to offer in one compact, welcoming and easy to explore destination, remarkably, Malawi remains untouched and unspoilt by mass tourism. This is still real Africa where you will hardly see another visitor - allowing you to fully explore and enjoy all of its riches in Wildlife, Culture, Landscape and Lake.



Scotland enjoys a 160 year old friendship with Malawi, dating back to the travels of Dr David Livingstone.

The Scotland Malawi Partnership exists to coordinate, represent and support the many dignified two-way partnerships between our two nations. It represents more than 1,200 different civic links, including with: every Scottish university, 250+ Scottish schools, half Scotland's local authorities and hundreds of churches, businesses, hospitals, and community groups.

This unique partnership is arguably stronger and more vibrant today than ever before. It is now one of the world's strongest north-south people-to-people partnerships. The University of Edinburgh (2018) estimate that over 109,000 Scots and 208,000 Malawians are working together each year in active partnership. This work generates more than £49 million of civic activities and benefits more than 2.9 million Malawians and 300,000 Scots annually. Separate research from the University of Glasgow (2018) found that an astonishing 44.9% of Scots can name a friend or family member with a connection to Malawi, with the overwhelming majority of Scots supportive of these links.

More and more Scots are choosing to holiday in Malawi, and this in turn is supporting meaningful and sustainable economic development for this small African nation. There is no doubt that Malawi remains the 'warm heart of Africa' and no one gets a warmer welcome in Malawi than Scots.

Tours & Activities

A holiday in Malawi is not about staying in one place – it's about touring, seeing new places and enjoying new experiences. The beauty of Malawi's compact size and great variety is that no time is ever 'lost' to travel. Each destination is likely to be only a few hours from the next, and with a fascinating amount to see on the way. Even a visit of 10 days allows for a great variety of locations and activities and a chance to sample Wildlife, Culture, Landscape and Lake. Throughout the country there is a remarkable array of activities on offer - on land and on (and in) water. And for visitors wanting to do more, there are also plenty of well-run volunteer opportunities. Malawi is divided into 3 regions and its range of attractions can be found in each one of those.

With Blantyre as its capital, **South Malawi** is the most popular, with a compact concentration of places to visit and home to the country's two 'Big 5' wildlife reserves – Liwonde and Majete. Mount Mulanje has the country's highest peak and Zomba Plateau and the Thyolo tea estates offer more scenic beauty. As well as the Lake Malawi National Park at Cape Maclear, there is a concentration of hotels and lodges along the Mangochi Lakeshore.

Central Malawi is home to beautiful highlands at Ntchisi Forest Reserve, north of the country's capital, Lilongwe, and its main, emerging wildlife reserve, Nkhotakota is an area of stunning rugged wilderness, set on the escarpment of the Rift Valley itself. The shore of Lake Malawi runs the length of the region and includes the popular Senga Bay.

Least visited but as impressive as any other area, **North Malawi** is home to the wonderful Nyika Plateau – stunning and unique scenery as well as a wildlife reserve. With the Viphya Plateau providing more highland escapes and the Rift Valley Escarpment at its most impressive, this is a region of dramatic natural beauty, complemented by a number of hotspots on Lake Malawi including Chintheche, Nkhata Bay and Likoma Island.



Responsible Travel

Ask most Malawi lodge owners if they have a 'Responsible Tourism Policy' and it's unlikely you'll find many such formal documents. But ask if they work closely with communities, provide good employment opportunities and actively initiate sustainable projects of conservation and development in their local area, and they will be incredulous that you even had to ask! For many, it's the very reason they are there. Tourism has the potential to be a significant engine of economic growth for Malawi and already the vast majority of lodges are ensuring that it has a direct, positive effect on the country and on as many Malawians as possible, as well as being sustainable for future generations. One thing you can be sure of in Malawi is that your tourism Dollar, Euro or Pound (or Kwacha!) is one that is very well spent.

Lake

The jewel in the crown of the country's tourist attractions is Lake Malawi – the Rift Valley's 'Lake of Stars' and third largest in Africa. Home to the world's first freshwater National Park and covering a third of the country, it has a shoreline of idyllic golden sandy beaches lapped by gentle waves. Full of crystal clear fresh water, the lake is so vast that one side is rarely visible from the other. It is home to around 1000 species of brightly coloured tropical fish - more than all the lakes and rivers of Europe and North America put together! The fish will swim around you, and come up and boast their magnificence right in front of you. They can be studied even closer when snorkelling or scuba diving.

Lake Malawi is not only a scenic wonderland but it provides a wide range of water sports beyond sunbathing and swimming. There is everything from snorkelling to paddleboarding, windsurfing to sailing and kiteboarding to kayaking. Accommodation is dotted along its shore and islands, mainly small friendly lodges, but to suit all budgets. From luxury lodges to rustic camps on deserted islands, all have their own piece of paradise and offer plenty of activities to keep you occupied, or simply a relaxing, secluded beach experience. Journeys on the Lake range from the famous 'lake ferry', the mv Ilala, to exploring on a kayak expedition or even trying out a traditional dugout canoe from one of the numerous fishing villages that dot the shoreline.





Wildlife

Malawi's nine National Parks and Wildlife Reserves offer game viewing and tracking as it should be... intimate, exclusive and abundant. Each park has a maximum of just two lodges, so you can view the Big 5 without the crowds. The Parks and Reserves spread from the far north of the country to the deep south and cover a huge variety of landscape and vegetation types, including areas of genuine unspoilt wilderness.

A safari in Malawi is about memorable experiences, not just tick lists; plenty of wildlife in beautiful surroundings but no convoys of vehicles characteristic of some African game parks. Visitors are relatively few in number, giving everyone the opportunity to experience all types of safari: in a 4x4, by boat, or on foot, and even wildlife viewing from your balcony, in peaceful privacy.

Malawi is also an ornithologist's paradise. With its variety of habitats and geographical location, few countries in the whole of Africa can rival Malawi's range of bird species. But the greatest variety of animal species is to be found under water, with Lake Malawi home to around 1000 species of tropical fish – a number unsurpassed anywhere else in the world.

Previously perceived as lacking in predators, 3 of Malawi's reserves are now managed by African Parks, who have overseen a huge renaissance in Malawi's wildlife numbers to help the country emerge as a genuine safari gem.

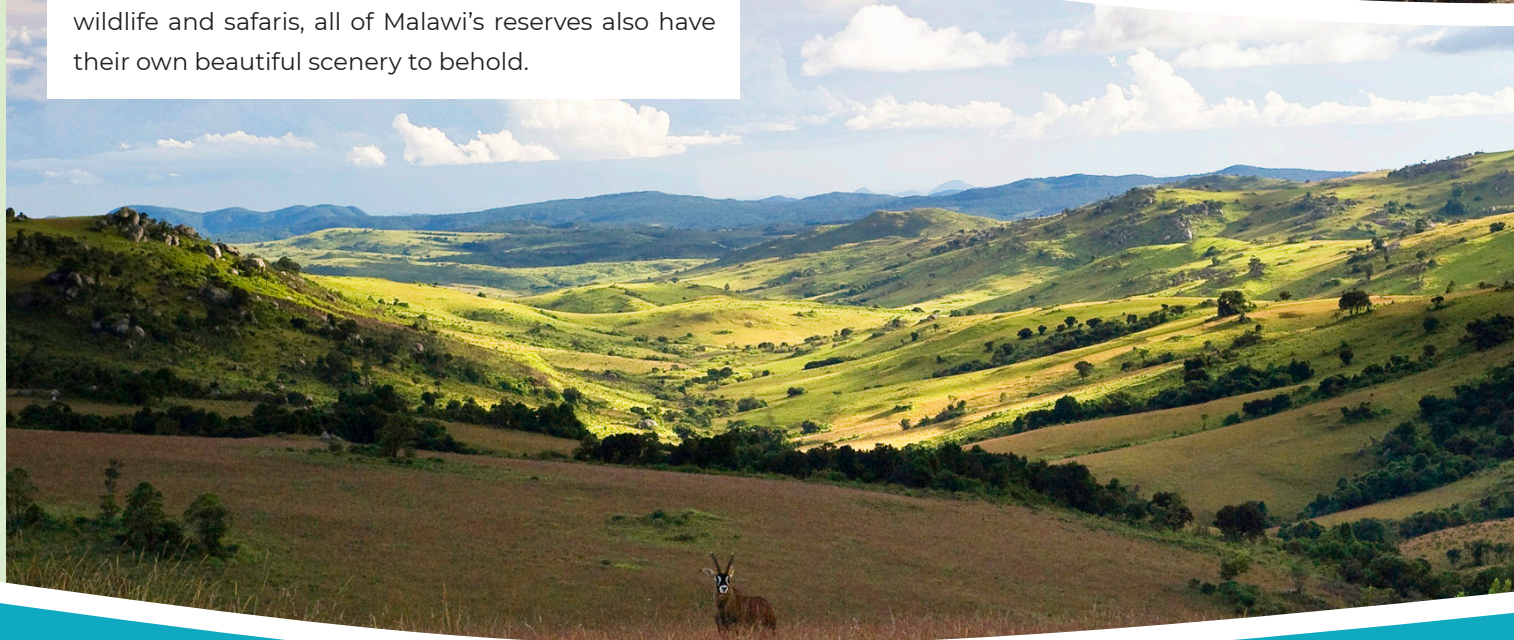


Landscape

Malawi's natural scenery is stunningly beautiful. The diversity of landscapes and vegetation is breathtaking and changes around every bend: untouched wilderness, high plateaux, mountain peaks, riverine lowlands, vast tracts of forest, grasslands, and plantations of sugar and tea. All of this in a country smaller than England.

Malawi's highest peaks touch 10000ft/3000m while the lowest points are barely above sea level. These great contrasts help to make its landscape one the most varied in Africa. As well as viewing points from which to see across countless miles of magnificent landscapes, the forest reserves and uplands offer activities from climbing to trekking, mountain biking to birdwatching, or simple cool tranquillity in surroundings of incredible natural beauty.

The peaks of the Mulanje Massif in the south offer hiking and climbing for days, even weeks, while nearby Zomba Plateau is easy to access, has a stables and boasts stunning views from its edge. The forests of the Viphya Highlands run up the spine of the country, giving way to the dramatic Rift Valley escarpment that descends, along with its rivers, to the shores of Lake Malawi. In the far north are the stunning and unique rolling grassland hills of the Nyika Plateau, which is also a wildlife reserve. Even though their focus is wildlife and safaris, all of Malawi's reserves also have their own beautiful scenery to behold.





Culture

'The Warm Heart of Africa' is not just a marketing slogan, it's a reality. Malawians are the most friendly people you could meet anywhere in the world. A warm, welcoming and safe nation, locals love to share their communities with visitors; and cultural experiences here are genuine and true to life. Even in the context of Malawi's great natural riches and attractions, its people are its greatest asset. Every visitor is met with a smile and the warmth of the welcome is genuine and long-lasting.

With a population of over 17 million, Malawi is one of the more densely populated countries in Africa. Most live in traditional rural villages that give visitors a wonderful opportunity to have a glimpse of real Africa – daily life as it is in real villages in the heart of the continent. The majority of Malawi's tourist lodges have strong links to their local communities and can easily arrange visits to villages who are pleased to welcome in respectful visitors and proud to show them round.

Although Malawi cultural experiences are primarily about interacting with local people, there are also a number of sites of historical (ancient and colonial) interest to visit, and a few traditional dances and ceremonies that can be seen. Malawi's modern festival and music scene is also fast expanding, with events throughout the year. The best known is the renowned Lake of Stars Festival, with artists and festival-goers travelling from every continent!



Discover Malawi

Brought to you by the
Malawi Travel Marketing Consortium
in association with the
Scotland Malawi Partnership

The Consortium comprises over 40 Malawian companies who represent the Best of Malawi. They cater for all the needs of international visitors, providing high quality accommodation and transport services and ensuring that all travellers have a trouble-free, memorable and highly enjoyable stay in the country.

Our website has further information on all of Malawi's experiences and regions, as well as detailed information on its main lodges and tour & safari companies: everything you might need to plan a holiday in Malawi.

If you have queries or need some particular information, our Tourist Information Office is based in the UK but responds to worldwide enquiries. Replies are prompt and we have the most up-to-date and accurate information available on any aspect of travel to and within Malawi. This service is free and without obligation.

www.malawitourism.com



Created by the Malawi Travel Marketing Consortium in association with the Scotland Malawi Partnership.

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