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Tour Notes

Malawi and Zambia Encompassed

Tour Duration – 15 Days



© Frank Weitzer

Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●○ | Culture ●●●○○ | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●●●●●

Tour Pace

Moderate

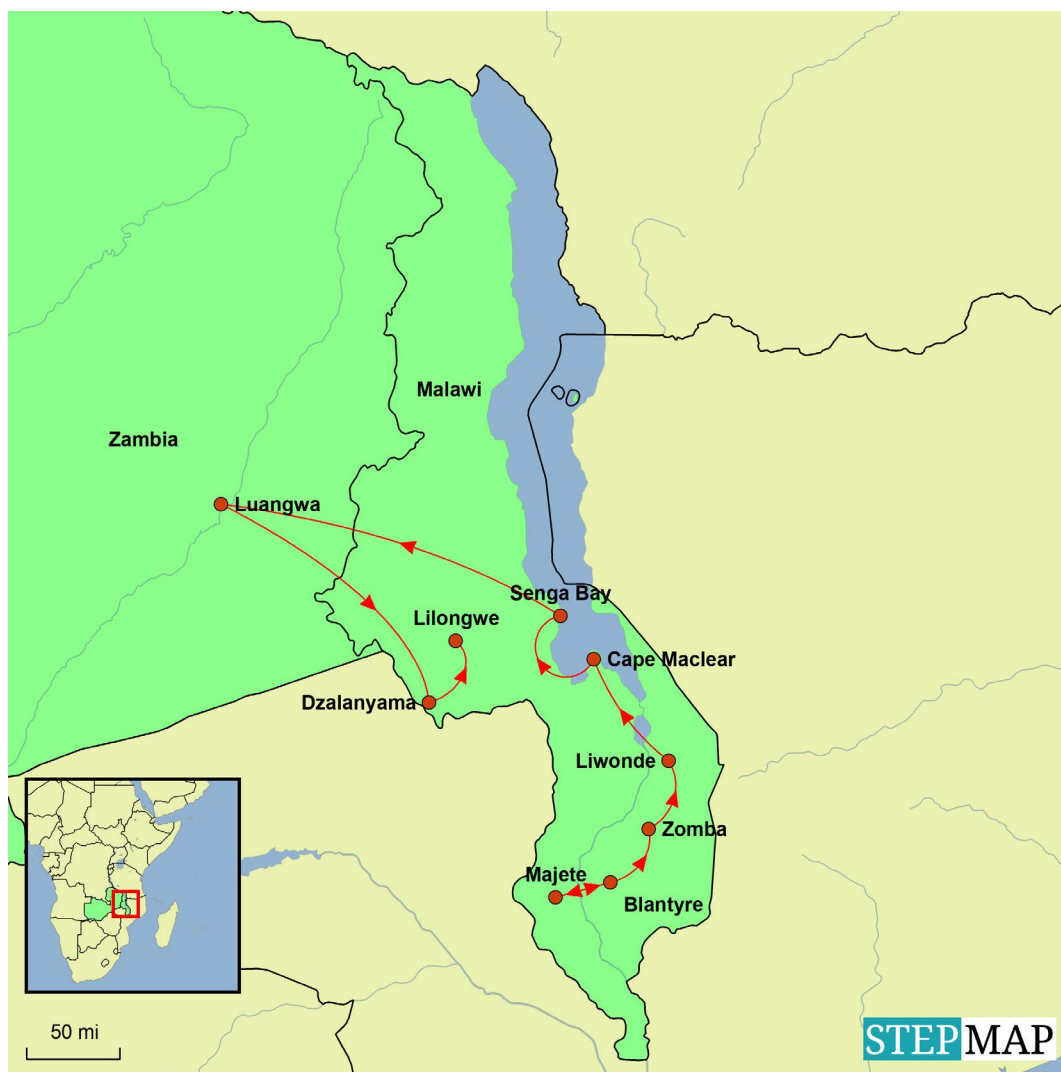
Tour Highlights

- ✓ A well-balanced, all-round tour, ideal for the first-time visitor
- ✓ Game viewing - in search of big game in one of Africa's most unspoilt and off-the-beaten-track destinations
- ✓ A tour with strong community involvement and interaction
- ✓ Optional hiking



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Tour Map



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of lodges
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum of 12
Start Point: Blantyre – please arrive before 15:00 on Day 1
End Point: Lilongwe – afternoon/evening flight on day 15
Transport: Minibus and safari vehicles
Countries Visited: Malawi and Zambia



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Best of Malawi and Zambia

This tour combines many of Malawi's unique and attractive areas and the strong community involvement and interaction is a key aspect of the tour. Game viewing in South Luangwa National Park, Zambia, one of Africa's best National Parks is an added attraction. There are opportunities for walking and hiking for more active travellers, on this well-balanced tour, suitable for families and individuals alike.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival Blantyre, Malawi

Arrive in Blantyre where you will be met and transferred from the airport to the lodge. Your guide will meet everyone at the lodge for introductions. Overnight at Leslie Lodge or similar. (D)

Day 2: Majete (approx. driving time 3-4 hours)

After breakfast depart south to Majete Park, arriving just before lunch. This afternoon take a game drive around the lodge and watering hole. Overnight Thawale Lodge or similar. (BLD)

Note – no WIFI at Thawale Lodge.

Day 3: Majete

Spend the day in Majete National Park, with morning and afternoon game drives. Overnight Thawale Lodge or similar. (BLD)

Day 4: Zomba

Today it is a 5-hour drive back through Blantyre, Limbe and onwards to Zombe. After a picnic lunch and visit to the colourful Zomba market we make the ascent to Ku Chawe Inn, atop of Zomba Mountain. This afternoon we take a walk to the dam along the stream and past the trout farm before returning to the hotel for the evening. Overnight Ku Chawe Inn or similar. (B, Picnic Lunch, D)

Zomba

Zomba is a historic city known for its cultural and natural attractions. It was once the capital of Malawi and carries a colonial legacy seen in its architecture, including the renowned Zomba Plateau Hotel (now the Ku Chawe Inn). The Zomba Plateau, a majestic mountain rising above the city, offers scenic hiking trails, waterfalls, and panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.





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The plateau's lush forests and diverse flora contribute to its ecological significance. Zomba is also home to Chancellor College, part of the University of Malawi, and its vibrant markets provide insight into local life. The city's rich history, coupled with its picturesque surroundings, makes Zomba a captivating destination in Malawi.

Day 5: Liwonde – Mvuu Camp

From the plateau it is a short 2-hour drive to Liwonde park. From the gate it's an hour's game drive to Mvuu Camp where we arrive in time for lunch. This afternoon head back into the park for game viewing before returning to the camp for dinner. Overnight Mvuu Camp or similar. (BLD)

Day 6: Liwonde

Spend today at Liwonde park with morning and afternoon game activities. Choice of boat safari or game drives. Overnight Mvuu Camp or similar. (BLD)

Day 7: Cape Maclear

Cross the river by boat and head towards Cape Maclear, stopping en route at fishing villages, historical sites, and local points of interest. On arrival check in to your lodge and the rest of the day is at leisure. Overnight Chembe Eagles Nest or similar. (BLD)

Day 8: Cape Maclear

Spend today exploring the lake. Boat trips, scuba diving, kayaking, and sailing are all available as optional extras. Overnight Chembe Eagles Nest or similar. (BD)

Day 9: Senga Bay

From the lake it is a 3-hour drive to Mua Mission where we stop for our picnic lunch and a visit to the cultural museum, before continuing to Senga Bay for an overnight stay (approx. 2 hours). Overnight Safari Beach Lodge or similar. (B, Picnic Lunch, D)

Day 10: South Luangwa National Park, Zambia

Depart the lake after an early breakfast and after a brief stop in Lilongwe to collect your picnic lunch, continue to Zambia. Cross the border and arrival in Mfuwe, South Luangwa late afternoon. Overnight at Flatdogs Lodge or similar. (B, Picnic Lunch, D)

South Luangwa National Park

South Luangwa National Park in Zambia is a wildlife haven renowned for its diverse ecosystem and intimate safari experiences. Nestled along the Luangwa River, the park is home to a plethora of wildlife, including elephants, lions, leopards, buffalo, and abundant bird species. Its pioneering walking safaris, led by knowledgeable guides, offer a unique perspective on the park's flora and fauna. Night drives provide glimpses into the nocturnal activities of predators. The park's picturesque landscapes, ranging from woodlands to riverine habitats, add to its allure. With over 400 bird species, it is a paradise for birdwatchers. South Luangwa offers a more secluded and authentic safari experience, supporting conservation initiatives and providing opportunities for cultural interactions with local communities.

Flatdogs

Flatdogs Camp is something of a Luangwa institution. Once a camp known for its overland trucks, backpackers, and lively bar, it has now changed direction slightly, offering accommodation for those looking for a more comfortable stay in the valley. The camp prides itself on offering this at a fraction of the price of the more upmarket lodges.





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It has a good-sized pool, plenty of space to relax under a tree with a book and guests can enjoy birdwatching between game drives. Walking and driving safaris with passionate guides explore the Mfuwe area of the South Luangwa National Park.

Days 11-12: Luangwa – Flatdogs

Spend two days exploring the park with morning and afternoon/evening game drives Overnight Flatdogs Lodge or similar. (BLD)

Day 13: Dzalanyama Forest, Malawi

Return back through Chipata and re-enter Malawi, then it is a 2-hour drive to Dzalanyama reserve. Arrival at the lodge is late afternoon. Spend the evening at leisure. Overnight Dzalanyama Lodge or similar. (B, Picnic Lunch, D)

Day 14: Dzalanyama Forest

A day to explore the forest - walking or cycling is included or we can arrange a cultural program for the morning. Overnight Dzalanyama Lodge or similar. (BLD)

Day 15: Dzalanyama Forest – Lilongwe Departure

From Dzalanyama it is a 2-hour drive to Lilongwe and the airport for your departure flight. (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
All accommodation
Transport throughout
Game drives
National Park Fees
Services of an English-speaking guide
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees listed as part of the itinerary
Flight from Mfuwe to Lusaka or Lilongwe

Excluded:

International flights
Items of a personal nature
Any airport taxes (except when included from Mfuwe to Lusaka or Lilongwe)
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks
Tips (discretionary)



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Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office (FCDO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

At the time of writing the FCDO does not have any warnings in place against travel to the areas we visit on this tour.

Non-UK nationals should check with their own government, as the information and advice may differ to that provided by British authorities.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis, please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

The accommodation on this tour is mostly in comfortable lodges. With the exception of Dzalanyama Forest, where there are two rooms with shared bathroom and toilet facilities, you can expect your rooms to be en suite with private facilities. In general, you will find your lodge has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements, you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.



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Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs, and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Malawi

Lunch £10.00 / Dinner £20.00

Zambia

Lunch £8.00 / Dinner £20.00

Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Malawi

Bottle of Beer £1.50 / Water £1.00

Zambia

Bottle of Beer £1.50 / Water £1.00

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 100 for tipping.

Foreign Exchange

Malawi

ATM Availability: Available Lilongwe but only limited amounts of local currency can be withdrawn at one time

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Very few places outside main cities will accept cards

Local Currency: Malawi Kwacha

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend taking your money in US\$ cash (only accept post 2006 US\$ notes). Avoid the lower and higher (US\$1, 5 & 100) denomination notes, as they are difficult to change. Please note that it is difficult to convert local currency back to US\$'s so please ask your guide for guidelines on how much to exchange.

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you.

Zambia

ATM Availability: In the cities and larger towns, the larger banks have ATMs

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards have limited use in Zambia and incur a 5% bank charge.

Local Currency: Zambian Kwacha



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Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend taking your money in US\$ cash (only accept post 2006 US\$ notes). Avoid the lower and higher (US\$1, 5 & 100) denomination notes, as they are difficult to change. Please note that it is difficult to convert local currency back to US\$'s so please ask your guide for guidelines on how much to exchange.

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time, and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour. Please meet your guide in the bar/restaurant area of the Mafumu Lodge at 18:00.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals require a visa for a tourist visit to Malawi & Zambia. For further details please visit the applicable website shown below.

British Nationals - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - www.smartraveller.gov.au/

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destinations nearest embassy or consulate.

Should you require any documentation to support a visa application, such as a letter of invitation, upon request this will be provided by Undiscovered Destinations after receipt of your balance payment.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance.



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Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Vaccinations & Protection

Malawi

We strongly recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, and polio. Malaria is present in the region so consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Yellow Fever: Please note you will need a Yellow Fever Certificate for border crossings between Zambia and Malawi. Bilharzia: The existence of bilharzia has been reported in certain areas of Lake Malawi. Please be aware that if you choose to swim there may be a risk of contracting bilharzia.

Zambia

Yellow Fever is no longer compulsory for visits to Zambia; however, please note that travellers who have previously travelled to or via countries that are endemic to Yellow Fever on the way to Zambia, may be asked to present a Yellow Fever certificate at immigration/borders in Zambia.

We strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, where you likely be advised to take protection against malaria, hepatitis A, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, and polio.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you are travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you will need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory to which you are travelling.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

The main rainy season is from January to March. Rain is widespread and generally falls in the form of a thunderstorm in the late afternoon; grass tends to be long and there is more water about so game is more dispersed. Otherwise, it is dry, with low humidity for most of the year. Temperatures reach around 29°C during the day with quite cold nights throughout the year. Early dry season is the most pleasant time for temperatures and the best for bird watching. For game viewing though the late dry season is better.



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Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight, but a warm sweater and/or fleece jacket is advisable as nights can be cold as Zambia lies on an elevated plateau. Nights at Lake Malawi can also be cold. It can be particularly cold on early morning game drives until the sun has risen. Rainwear is useful in case of an unexpected downpour. A scarf is advisable for dusty drives. Do not wear bright colours whilst game viewing.

Equipment

Take a torch, water bottle, sunhat, and sunblock. Binoculars are useful, as is a telephoto lens for keen photographers. Take a swimming costume and towel. Mosquito nets/screening is provided locally in the rooms where necessary, although you may wish to take some insect repellent. Bring your mask and snorkel if you want to peek into an alternative sub marine world!

Footwear

Lightweight trail boots or shoes with grip for walking safaris plus trainers or sandals for general travelling.

Luggage on tour

One main piece of luggage (we recommend a soft bag or holdall) plus day sack.
Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg (please note airline allowances may vary)

Electric Supply & Plugs

Malawi and Zambia - 3 Pin Flat

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour, but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were prepared 19 January 2024.

