



# Mozambique

## Introduction

Official Name: Republic of Mozambique  
Nationality: Mozambican  
Area: 801,590 square kilometers (309,496 square miles)  
Languages: Emakhuwa, Xichangana, Portuguese (official), Elomwe, Cisena, Echuwabo, other Mozambican languages  
Currency: metical (MZM)  
Location: Southeastern Africa, bordered by Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, with coastline on the Indian Ocean

## Statistical Information

Population	20.9 million
0-14 years	44.7 percent
15-64 years	52.5 percent
65+ years	2.8 percent
Birth rate	39 births/1,000
Death rate	21 deaths/1,000
Fertility rate	5.3 children/woman
Pop. growth rate	1.803 percent
Life expectancy	40.9 years
Literacy	47.8 percent
HIV/AIDS rate	12.2 percent
Below poverty line	70 percent
Ethnic groups	99.66 percent African 0.06 percent European 0.2 percent Euro-African 0.08 Indian
Religion	23.8 percent Roman Catholic 17.8 percent Muslim 17.5 percent Zionist Christian 17.8 percent other 23.1 percent none

## Economy

Upon its independence in 1975, Mozambique was one of the world's poorest countries. A prolonged civil war from 1977 to 1992 combined with

government mismanagement worsened the country's economic situation. In 1987, the government implemented a series of economic reforms which have significantly stabilized the economy. These reforms, in addition to foreign aid and political stability since 1994, have led to significant improvements in the growth rate of Mozambique's economy. Mozambique still remains dependent upon foreign aid for much of its annual budget, and the majority of its people live in poverty. Most Mozambicans are employed in subsistence agriculture. The country's foreign debt has been reduced to manageable levels through the International Monetary Fund's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative.

## Government

Capital: Maputo

Mozambique is a republic. The president serves as chief of state and is elected by popular vote to serve a five-year term. The prime minister is the head of government, and is appointed by the president. The legislature consists of the unicameral Assembly of the Republic, or Assembleia da Republica, whose 250 members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

## Climate

Mozambique has two main seasons, a wet season and a dry season. The wet season lasts from November through March. It is hot and humid, with temperatures averaging around 81° to 84° F; temperatures are cooler in the interior uplands. The dry season lasts from April to October; June and July temperatures average around 64° to 68° F.

## Environmental Concerns

The long civil war (1977-1992), combined with recurrent droughts in the hinterlands, resulted in mass migration of the population to urban and coastal areas; this migration has had adverse consequences

for the environment. Desertification and pollution of surface and coastal waters is a problem. Poachers in Mozambique kill elephants for their valuable ivory tusks.

### History

In the middle of the first millennium A.D., Bantu-speakers began to migrate into the area that is now Mozambique. Around 1000 A.D., Arab and Swahili traders established bases along the coastline at Sofala, Cuama, and Inhambane. The traders had trading relationships with the peoples of the Mozambican interior, and Sofala in particular was known as a gold- and ivory-exporting center.

In 1498, Vasco de Gama, a Portuguese explorer, sailed around Africa en route to India. He visited the Mozambican shore at Quelimane and Moçambique. Portuguese explorers Pedro Álvarez Cabral and Sancho de Tover visited Sofala and Maputo Bay between 1500 and 1502. By 1505, Portuguese under Francisco de Almeida controlled Moçambique, and Pedro de Anhaia established a Portuguese settlement at Sofala. The Portuguese also set up a few trading stations north of Cabo Delgado, by the mouth of the Ruvuma River, but their main sphere of influence was the area surrounding Moçambique.

António Fernandes visited the Mwanamutapa kingdom between 1509 and 1512. The Mwanamutapa kingdom controlled the Mozambican interior between the Zambezi and Save rivers. It also produced much of the gold exported by Swahili traders at Sofala. Threatened by Portuguese presence, Swahili traders began to redirect Mwanamutapa's gold trade northward, away from Portuguese-dominated Sofala. As a result, the Portuguese desired to exert more control over the interior. In 1531, they established inland posts at Sena and Tete, both on the Zambezi River; another post at Quelimane was founded in 1544.

From 1560 to 1561, a Portuguese Jesuit missionary named Gonçalo da Silveira visited the kingdom of Mwanamutapa. He made a number of converts, including King Nogomo Mupunzagato. Worried by his success, resident Swahili traders persuaded Nogomo to have Silveira killed.

Between 1569 and 1572, Francisco Barreto led an army of around 1,000 Portuguese in an attempt to gain control of the interior. Barreto, along with most of his soldiers, died of disease in Sena. In 1574, Vasco Fernandes Homen took 400 men inland from Sofala, but most died fighting the Africans.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Portuguese presence in the interior was limited to small trading outposts along the Zambezi River. During this time, Portuguese explorers began to take control of large estates of land, called *prazos*. The *prazos* resembled the feudal kingdoms of medieval Europe; they were ruled absolutely and often harshly by their owners, called *prazeiros*. Africans were forced to work on the *prazos* as slaves, and a considerable slave trade sprang up, especially after 1650. Some *prazeiros* kept their own private armies, and most were only nominally subject to the Portuguese crown.

After 1628, Portuguese influence on Mwanamutapan trade began to increase. The Portuguese became deeply involved in the civil wars which led to the fall of Mwanamutapa by the end of the 17th century. Mozambique was administered as a part of Goa, in India, until 1752, when it was given its own colonial administration. The Portuguese introduced staple crops to Mozambique, namely corn and cashews, but their influence on the colony was primarily destructive.

From the mid-18th to the mid-19th century, large numbers of native Mozambicans were exported as slaves to the Mascarene Islands and to Brazil. Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, groups of Nguni-speaking people migrated north into Mozambique from South Africa. Most of the invaders continued north to Malawi and Tanzania, but one group, the Shangana, remained in southern Mozambique, which they controlled until the late 19th century.

The British strongly objected to Portuguese claims in Zimbabwe and Malawi. They issued an ultimatum to Portugal in 1890, demanding Portuguese withdrawal from Zimbabwe and Malawi. Portugal complied with British demands, and in 1891 the British and Portuguese negotiated a treaty which established the official boundary between British and Portuguese colonies in southeast Africa.

After establishing the border with British holdings, the Portuguese turned their attention to exerting control over Mozambique's interior. The Portuguese established their authority by force against determined resistance by the African peoples of the interior. Between 1895 and 1897 the Shangana were subdued, between 1897 and 1900 Portuguese troops conquered the Nyanja, in 1812 the Yao were defeated, and by 1917 the Portuguese had established control over the southernmost parts of Mozambique.

After the 1926 revolution in Portugal, the Portuguese government began to take a more direct role in the

administration of Mozambique. Private companies lost the right to administer their own regions, and the government began to construct railroads and force Africans to work on European-owned plantations. The Portuguese colonial policy was one of assimilation. Theoretically, Africans were to be given the same rights as Portuguese colonists if they learned Portuguese, became Christian, and had "good character." In practice, very few Africans attained this status due to extremely limited educational opportunities.

In 1951, Portugal changed Mozambique's status to "overseas province," indicating that the territory would have increased autonomy. In 1972, it became a "self-governing state." The name changes meant little for Portuguese colonial policy, and Portugal retained firm control over Mozambique. From 1961 to 1963, the Portuguese government passed several laws designed to improve the lives of Africans living in Mozambique, one of which abolished forced labor. Despite Portugal's minor reforms, nationalist sentiment continued to grow among Mozambicans, especially as more African nations gained independence.

In 1962, several nationalist groups joined together under Eduardo Mondlane to form the Mozambique Liberation Front, or Frelimo. The Portuguese continually refused to give Mozambique independence, so Frelimo initiated guerrilla warfare in northern Mozambique in 1964. By the early 1970s, Frelimo, with its force of around 7,000 men, controlled much of central and northern Mozambique and was engaged in fierce guerrilla fighting with Portuguese troops, who outnumbered them at least eight to one.

In 1974, the government of Portugal was overthrown by the military. The new Portuguese regime favored self-determination for all of Portugal's former colonies, and made a rapid effort to end hostilities in Mozambique. Negotiations between the new regime and Frelimo resulted in a cease-fire and an agreement that Mozambique would be given independence in June of 1975.

A group of white rebels, angered by the independence agreement, tried to seize control of the Mozambican government, but were stopped by Portuguese and Frelimo troops. As black majority rule of Mozambique became a reality, a mass exodus of Europeans began amid increasing racial violence. As the Portuguese left, they took their skills and machinery with them, which dealt a blow to the economy.

Upon independence, Frelimo established a single-party Marxist state. The new regime nationalized all industry and abolished private land ownership. It also introduced health and education reforms.

Mozambique soon became a refuge for members of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which angered Rhodesia and South Africa. Rhodesia invaded Mozambique in 1979 and destroyed communications facilities, agriculture, and transportation lines; many Mozambican civilians died in the attacks. After Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) gained majority black rule in 1980, the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Renamo) began to wage guerrilla warfare against Frelimo.

In addition to chaotic political conditions, Mozambique was saddled with a large, inefficient bureaucracy. In the 1980s, the president began to pare down the government and privatize industry. In 1984, Mozambique and South Africa signed the Incomati accord, a nonaggression pact which prohibited South African support of Renamo and Mozambican support of the African National Congress, South Africa's dissident group. Mozambique accused South Africa of violating the pact, and the Frelimo government and Renamo rebels continued to fight throughout the 1980s.

In 1992, Mozambique suffered from a terrible drought which caused widespread famine. Renamo rebels controlled many rural areas, and they blocked famine relief efforts. Starvation, on top of civil war, killed tens of thousands of Mozambicans. More than a million refugees fled the country. Finally, in 1992, Frelimo and Renamo signed a treaty ending the civil war.

Throughout the 1980s, the government had been turning away from Marxism toward a market-oriented economy. In the 1990s it privatized state-owned companies and worked to lower inflation, stabilize the currency, and stimulate economic growth. By the end of the decade, Mozambique had nearly recovered from the civil war, though widespread poverty remained a serious issue.

Elections in 1999 kept the Frelimo candidate in power, but Renamo claimed the election was rigged. International observers were unable to assist, as they had been denied access to the final vote tabulation. Renamo boycotted the National Assembly for much of 2000, and protests and demonstrations in November led to occasional violence in northern and central Mozambique.

In December 2004, elections were again won by the Frelimo candidate. Renamo again accused Frelimo of election fraud. This time, international observers admitted there were problems, including presumed fraudulent totals in some districts, but they did not believe the irregularities were enough to affect the final outcome of the election.

### **Ethnic Groups**

Mozambique's major ethnic groups encompass many smaller subgroups. The largest groups are the Makua, in northern Mozambique, the Sena and Shona in the Zambezi Valley, and the Shangaan in southern Mozambique. Other tribes include the Makonde, Yao, Swahili, Tonga, Chopi, and Nguni.

There are around four million Makua in northern Mozambique. Many Makua are Christian, with some Muslims and some who still follow traditional beliefs. Many still speak the Makua language, although they also speak Portuguese. Along the Mozambique-Tanzanian border, many Makua speak Swahili.

The Shona people are farmers; they grow beans, peanuts, corn, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and different types of grass. Their language is known as Shona; most also speak Portuguese. The Mwanamutapa kingdom encountered by early Portuguese explorers and traders was a Shona kingdom centered in what is now Zimbabwe.

The Shangaan people live in southern Mozambique. There are large numbers of Shangaan in Maputo and in Gaza Province. The Shangaan today are Christians. Their language is known as Tsonga.

### **Religion**

Roman Catholicism is the religion of nearly a quarter of Mozambique's population. Catholicism was introduced to Mozambique during the Portuguese colonial period, when Jesuit missionaries from Portugal came to the country. There are twelve Roman Catholic dioceses in Mozambique. Catholicism predominates in some regions of Mozambique; in the region of Quelimane, 87.5 percent of the inhabitants are Catholic.

The majority of Mozambican Muslims are Sunni, although there are small numbers of Ismaili Muslims, a branch of Shi'a Islam. Around 17.8 percent of Mozambicans are Muslims. The northern areas of Mozambique have a particularly large Muslim presence.

Another large percentage of Mozambicans identify with the Zionist church, an African Independent Church. There are several different branches of Zionist churches in Mozambique; together they comprise around 17.5 percent of the population. Zionist Christianity is characterized by the traditional African beliefs that still influence the church.

Around 17.8 percent of Mozambicans still practice their traditional religions, and 23.1 percent claim to have no religious affiliation. There are also Protestant believers in Mozambique.

### **Culture**

**Food**—The diet of rural Mozambicans is based on the cassava root, called *mandioca* in Portuguese. Cassava root can be baked, sun-dried, or mashed with water to form porridge. Cassava is often ground into flour along with corn then mixed with cassava leaves and water; the dough is then served in calabashes (hollowed gourds). Corn is another staple. Cashews, pineapples, and peanuts are other commonly-grown Mozambican crops. Along the coast, the cuisine is more varied and shows Portuguese influence. Coastal diets include more fruit and rice, as well as seafood dishes such as *macaza*, or grilled shellfish kabobs, *bacalhão*, or dried salted cod, and *chocos*, or squid cooked in its own ink. Peppers, onions, and coconuts are common seasonings. Palm wine, known as *shema*, is a popular drink.

**Social status**—During the time of Portuguese rule, the *prazeiros* formed the wealthiest class. Below them were mestizos (with mixed African and Portuguese descent), then Africans at the bottom of the hierarchy. Since independence, most Portuguese have left the country. Today, most of the population is poor, with the exception of a tiny group of wealthy elite.

**Marriage**—Polygamy was traditional, but is no longer widely practiced. Marriage celebrations involve music, feasting, and dancing.

**Education**—Because of the Portuguese practice of suppressing education in its colonies, Mozambique was estimated to have a literacy rate of only ten percent at the time of its independence in 1975. Since then, the country has succeeded in raising primary and secondary school attendance rates, resulting in higher literacy rates. When the war ended in 1995, the destruction of many school buildings and a lack of trained teachers left

Mozambique's educational system at a serious disadvantage.

**Etiquette**—People in Mozambique generally stand close to one another and are physically affectionate. Greetings are lengthy and involve inquiries as to the health of one's family.

### **Dress**

In urban areas, men wear Western-style suits to work. Women wear Western-style dresses made from fabric with brightly-colored African patterns. Nearly all young people wear Western clothing. Western styles of blue jeans and short skirts have not been adopted. Throughout Mozambique, men have mostly replaced the traditional loincloth with T-shirts and *dashikis*, brightly colored loose-fitting pullover shirts which often have embroidered v-neck collars and hems. Women in rural areas have mostly kept their traditional style of clothing: long strips of brightly-colored fabric wrapped around the body, under the arms, and over one shoulder. They also wear a traditional head scarf or turban.

Muslims in the north wear traditional long white robes and head coverings.

### **Travel/Transportation**

The main north-south road through Mozambique is passable until the city of Caia in Sofala province, where passengers must exit their vehicle and cross the Zambezi River by ferryboat. Roads connecting larger cities in Mozambique are in fair condition, but drivers may encounter potholes and other obstacles. The EN4 toll road between Maputo and South Africa is in very good condition.

Travel outside Maputo may require a four-wheel-drive vehicle for difficult terrain. Traveling outside cities after dark can be risky, since many vehicles in Mozambique do not have functioning headlights. Instances of carjacking are more prevalent during the night hours.

Visitors who remain in Mozambique for longer than 90 days must obtain either a Mozambican driver's license or an international driving permit (IDP). An IDP is a document which allows a motorist to operate a vehicle in another nation when accompanied by a valid driver's license from his or her own country.

You can apply for an IDP in the United States or Canada before you travel. The American Automobile Association (AAA) and the American Automobile Touring Alliance are the only organizations in the U.S. authorized by the State Department to issue

IDPs. The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) is authorized to issue IDPs to Canadian citizens. The cost of an IDP is under \$20; the application will need to be accompanied by two passport-sized photos.

### **Illness/Injury**

Medical facilities in Maputo are fairly rudimentary. Many physicians and nurses do not speak fluent English, and medicines are not always available. The city of Maputo and other provincial capitals have both public and private health facilities. Outside larger cities, medical care ranges from very basic to non-existent.

All health care facilities in Mozambique, public and private, will expect payment at the time of service. Some may even require payment before care is given. Some private clinics may accept major credit cards, but most will not. Doctors and hospitals outside Maputo generally expect immediate cash payment for services.

### **Crime**

Street crimes, such as pickpocketing and petty theft, are fairly common in Maputo and other cities. Visitors should take care not to wear obviously expensive jewelry or clothing, or flash large amounts of cash. Carjacking is becoming more common in Maputo.

### **Safety and Security**

Mozambique has not experienced terrorist threats or activity in recent times. Travelers should take care to remain on marked roads due to the possibility of encountering residual landmines off roads.

### **Entry/Exit Requirements**

A valid passport and visa are required to enter Mozambique. It is best to obtain a visa prior to travel, although single-entry visas can be obtained at ports of entry. Passports must be valid for at least six months past the date of initial entry, and must have at least three unstamped visa pages.

For more information concerning Mozambican visas, contact the Embassy of Mozambique at 1525 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

### **Immunizations**

All travelers entering Mozambique from a country where yellow fever is endemic must present proof of yellow fever inoculation. The CDC recommends that all travelers to Mozambique consider obtaining the yellow fever vaccine.

Malaria is a risk in all areas of Mozambique. Consult a travel health professional at least four to six weeks before traveling to determine a course of antimalarial drugs such as atovaquone, doxycycline, or mefloquine. Chloroquine is not an effective antimalarial for Mozambique.

Other vaccines travelers to Mozambique may wish to consider include hepatitis A, hepatitis B, polio, and typhoid.

Mozambique has a high level of risk for insect-borne diseases such as African trypanosomiasis (African sleeping sickness) and dengue fever. Use insect repellent to help reduce the risk of contracting an insect-borne disease.

### **Special Circumstances**

Mozambican law requires that all persons carry an identity document, such as a passport, when out in public. Police may ask to see an identity document. Usually, notarized copies of both the biographic page of a passport and a valid Mozambican visa are sufficient forms of identification, but police will occasionally demand to see originals.

Pedestrian traffic is prohibited in some areas of Mozambique. This ban is strictly enforced by Mozambican police. Areas off-limits to pedestrians in the city of Maputo include the front of the presidential offices north of the Hotel Polana on the seaside of Avenida Julius Nyerere and the Praça dos Heróis on Avenida Acordos de Lusaka near the airport.

It is illegal to destroy Mozambican currency. Some travelers have had difficulty cashing traveler's checks. Outside major hotels and restaurants, credit cards are not generally accepted in Mozambique. The South African rand and the United States dollar are sometimes accepted as legal tender in tourist areas and in southern Mozambique.

### **Electricity**

Mozambique uses 220V/50Hz power, which means a power converter will be necessary to use most American appliances in Mozambique. Most recently-made cell-phone chargers and laptop computers are designed to run on multiple types of power and will not require a power converter. Mozambique uses plug types C, F, and M, with type M being the most common near South Africa and in Maputo. A set of plug adapters will be necessary to convert American types A and B plugs to fit Mozambican outlets.