



Zanzibar Island

“Zanzibar is a marvel for the senses. Every sight and smell is provocative, a sense of the old and new.” ~ Jodi Balfour

The allure of Zanzibar is timeless. White sand beaches and turquoise waters ring the island. Here you can swim, snorkel, or just lounge the hours away, while shoals of luminous fish graze over nearby coral gardens and pods of dolphins frolic offshore. In the island’s capital, Zanzibar Town, sits the historic quarter of Stone Town, with a mesmerizing mix of influences from Africa, Arabia, India, and Europe forming a rich cultural backdrop.

Zanzibar Town

Zanzibar Town is the island’s main settlement, and the historical old Stone Town is at its heart and soul. It is also a wonderful spot to get immersed in island rhythms. Start exploring at Forodhani Gardens, a lively stretch of seafront where Zanzibaris of all ages gather in the early evening to watch the sun go down and enjoy the passing scene. Young men jump from the thick stone seawall into the harbor waters below, children play, and women in black shawls gather to chat. Food vendors hawk sizzling skewers of grilled octopus, steamy bowls of soup, and hot rice-flour bread.

Just opposite the gardens is the massive Old Fort, built by Omani Arabs when they seized Zanzibar from the Portuguese in 1698. Also here is the imposing House of Wonders, which boasts the largest carved doors in East Africa. Wind your way through Stone Town’s maze of narrow alleyways, stopping en route to see the Palace Museum, Aga Khan mosque, and the Anglican Cathedral with its moving Slave Memorial and Slave Trade Exhibit. Finish at lively Darajani Market, where sellers offer a colorful assortment of local crafts, textiles, fruits, and spices.

Beaches

Zanzibar’s beaches are justifiably famous. Fine white sands edge clear turquoise waters, traditional Arabic fishing dhows sail into the dawn, silhouetted against pastel-tinted skies. Coconut palms wave gently in the breeze. Whether as post-safari relaxation or as a stand-alone destination, the beaches on Zanzibar’s east coast and around its northern tip offer a quintessential tropical island paradise. Each beach has its own personality, and all are within a one to two-hour drive from Stone Town.

Source: Lonely Planet