

## 5 must-see cultural spots in Maputo, Mozambique

One thing Mozambique definitely isn't short of is shimmering islands and tropical beaches. But, beyond that beautiful Indian Ocean coastline and Robin Crusoe adventure is a destination brimming with culture.

"Culture, of course, along with some seriously great peri-peri chicken," promises Natalie Tenzer-Silva, director of Dana Tours, a specialist tour operator based in Maputo.

"There are many places of unrivalled beauty in Mozambique one must see, but it's our rich culture that one simply *must* experience. With the variety of languages, ethnic groups and traditions, Mozambicans share a common culture in their love and expression of art, song, dynamic dance and performance," she says.



And the best place to experience it all? Tenzer-Silva insists Mozambique's cultural heart is Maputo, where north meets south and there is "history as colourful as the *capulunas* (sarongs) worn by Mozambican women."

A 45-minute flight from Johannesburg, and no visa required for South African passport-holders, Maputo is an easy, accessible holiday for South Africans, where the rand still has value. Located right on Mozambique's coast, internal domestic flights, helicopter and boat-transfers ferry travellers to the beach or island of their choice.

To discover what Mozambican culture is really all about, here are a few recommendations to add to your #AfricaMonth travel plans:

## Malangatana's House and Studio

The late Malangatana Ngwenya is one of Mozambique's (and Africa's) most celebrated contemporary painters and poets. "Known by his first name, Malangatana, his former home now serves as a gallery and archive of his astounding work which combined fantastical imagery with political themes," Tenzer-Silva explains.

## Xipamanine Market

Weekends are the ideal time to visit one of Maputo's oldest Saturday markets, Mercado Xipamanine on Avenida Roby Brothers Street. It is a great place to gain a sense of the cultural heritage of Maputo by meeting its people, says Tenzer-Silva. "The market sells everything from traditional spices, traditional Mozambican *capulana* wraps, and even Kalashnikov rifles left over from the War of Independence."

## The Ntsindya Cultural Centre

The Ntsindya Cultural Centre is recognised as a base for many of Maputo's most revolutionary minds. Tenzer-Silva reveals: "Intellectuals, musicians, and writers of the era before the end of Portuguese rule gathered to discuss and forge a way forward for an independent Mozambique." Another cultural centre of interest is the French-Mozambican Cultural Centre, she says, located in a splendid old colonial building at the heart of Maputo's historic district.

## Independence Day

"Mozambique's Independence Day festivities kick-off on 25 June, especially in Maputo. The blissful celebrations include traditional dancing and live performances at the national stadium, with a mix of live bands from across Mozambique performing too," says Tenzer-Silva. Even the president has been known to attend the event which commemorates Mozambique's independence from Portugal on 25 June 1975.

## The home of Walter Zand

Renowned artist Walter Zand is another of Mozambique's award-winning artists and has helped diversify the Mozambican art scene, using dance as a focal point to his work. This cultural experience also includes lunch at his home in Xipamanine, an area located in Maputo.

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