

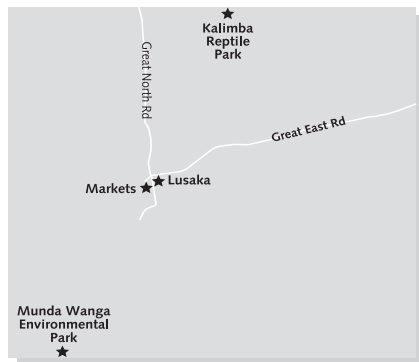
# Lusaka



In this part of the world, all roads lead to Lusaka. Like it or not there's no easy way of bypassing Zambia's capital and largest urban zone, with its mishmash of dusty tree-lined streets, bustling African markets, Soviet-looking high-rise blocks and modern commerce. If that doesn't sound appealing it's because Lusaka does not easily lend itself to superlatives. There are no real attractions, grand monuments to drool over or historical treasures to unearth. Lusaka, like the rest of the country, is not set up for independent tourism and you're more likely to find schoolkids than other tourists at the city's one museum. For some, this is an attraction in itself and it's certainly an easy enough place to spend time, with its genuine African feel, cosmopolitan populace, some excellent restaurants and quality accommodation options (including two of the few backpackers in the country, a smattering of midrange options and luxury hotels). It's a good spot to snoop around markets too, with the best range of woodcarvings and other artisanal goods in the country; and, if you feel like letting loose, expat bars and the home-grown nightclub scene will see you through to the wee hours.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Being enthralled by the pulse of Africa in Lusaka's chaotic **markets** (p70)
- Leaving behind urban grime and experiencing the country's extraordinary wildlife at **Munda Wanga Environmental Park** (p70) and **Kalimba Reptile Park** (p70)
- Indulging in the local brew and showing the locals your latest moves in the city's thumping **bars** and **clubs** (pp80–1)
- Finding that perfectly carved hippo while **shopping** (p81) for traditional arts and crafts
- Chowing down in the city's **restaurants** (p78), Zambia's most diverse culinary scene



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 0211

■ POPULATION: 1.2 MILLION

■ ELEVATION: 1300M

## ORIENTATION

The main street, Cairo Rd, is lined with shops, cafes, fast-food outlets, travel agencies, banks and bureaux de change. To the north is a major traffic circle and landmark, the North End Roundabout; to the south is the creatively named South End Roundabout. East of Cairo Rd, across the railway line and near the train station, is the Inter-City Bus Station. Further east are the wide jacaranda-lined streets of the smarter residential suburbs and the area officially called Embassy Triangle (not surprisingly, home to many embassies and high commissions). West of Cairo Rd are the busy streets of Chachacha Rd and Freedom Way, home to small shops selling everything from maize meal to auto spares. North and northwest of here is the industrial area, and beyond that are the poorer suburbs, generally called 'the compounds' (read 'townships').

See p83 for more information on getting around Lusaka.

## Maps

The dusty government-run **Map Sales Office** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 8.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri; maps ZK20,000-30,000) is beneath the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources building, southwest of the junction of Independence Ave and Nationalist Rd. Note that while the topographical maps can be very useful, most maps sold here are no newer than 1986 so many road networks are out of date. Many maps are out of print anyway – try your luck; we found an old moth-eaten map of South Luangwa, damaged but useable.

Modern commercial maps of Zambia (ZK70,000) and Southern Africa are available at bookshops and supermarkets at the **Manda Hill Shopping Centre** (Map pp72-3; Great East Road) and **Arcades Shopping Centre** (Map pp72-3; Great East Road).

## INFORMATION

Petrol stations are dotted around town – the Total petrol station located at the north end of Cairo Rd is open 24 hours.

## Bookshops

**Book Cellar** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 255475; Manda Hill Shopping Centre, Great East Road; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-2pm Sun) Great selection of regional travel guides, novels and some useful road maps of Zambia. Also decent selection of books on African and Zambian subjects.

**Bookworld** Downtown (Map pp72-3; ☎ 225282; Cairo Rd; ☎ 8.15am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.15am-1pm Sat); Manda Hill (Map pp72-3; ☎ 255470; Manda Hill Shopping Centre, Great East Road) Mainly stationery and educational books but a few titles on Zambia by Zambian writers – from the copper mines in the north to the scourge of AIDS.

**Planet Books** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 256714; Shop 12b, Arcades Shopping Centre, Great East Road; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 9am-2pm Sun) Interesting for its collection of books about Zambia and useful for its Zambian maps.

## Emergency

**Ambulance** (☎ 992)

**Police** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 991; Church Rd)

**Specialty Emergency Services** (☎ 273303; www.ses-zambia.com) For evacuations. Has bases in Lusaka, Livingstone and Kitwe but operates throughout the country. Also has ambulances and in-patient care.

### ON THE ROAD TO CAIRO

Lusaka started life as a dusty railway siding and storage depot on the new line that empire-builder Cecil Rhodes was constructing from South Africa. This was the first stage of his grand design for a Cape Town to Cairo railway that would pass through British territory all the way. The nearest village to the siding was called Lusaakas, after the name of its chief, and the title was simplified to Lusaka and attached to this point on the railway.

In the 1920s copper was discovered in the highlands north of Lusaka, and the railway became important for transporting goods to Southern Rhodesia (in present-day Zimbabwe), South Africa and the industrial markets of Europe and America. At Lusaka, a small station was built, and nearby a few shops were established to serve settlers farming in the surrounding area. Then came some houses, a ramshackle hotel and even a main street, running parallel to the railway line.

By the 1930s Lusaka had developed into a sizeable town, and in 1935 the capital was moved here from Livingstone, to take advantage of Lusaka's central position. The railway never reached Egypt, but Rhodes' dream was remembered when the name of the main street was formally changed to Cairo Rd – the name it still has today.