



Central Malawi

This small corner of Malawi packs a lot into a small space. First off there are the beaches. Backpackers' Mecca, Cape Maclear, is the first to spring to mind – a sunny peninsula where travellers slip into a daze of snorkelling, sunbathing and laid-back village life. But it's not just backpackers who are seduced by the lake's warm waters – family-friendly resorts dot the coastline and luxury seekers will be rewarded by gorgeous resorts straight out of the pages of a magazine.

A world away in feel, but just a short drive up from the lake, is the Viphya Plateau, a haunting wilderness of mountains, grasslands and mist-shrouded pines that's so beautiful it'll make you forget all about the beach. That not enough for you? Then check out the parks. Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve and Kasungu National Park had been neglected for many years but now have fine lodges and improved access, and are making strides to increase wildlife stocks and decrease poaching.

To discover more about Malawian culture and history, head for the excellent museum, workshop and gallery at Mua, or visit Nkhotakota and feel a shiver down your spine as you hear tales of the town's involvement in the slave trade.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Make like a beach bum in the country's most laid-back lakeside resort: **Cape Maclear** (p253)
- Hike through cool pine forests and past whaleback boulders on the stunning **Viphya Plateau** (opposite)
- Go hippo-spotting without the crowds at **Kasungu National Park** (p243)
- Throw a pot or two by a beautiful beach at **Nkhotakota Pottery** (p246)
- Delve into Malawi's cultural history at the fascinating **Chamare Museum, Mua** (p252)
- Explore untouched wilderness on foot at the **Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve** (p247)



