

On the Road



ALAN MURPHY *Coordinating Author*

I'm in my element here. Right in the midst of colossal Kafue National Park (p670) watching a bull elephant with huge tusks in the distance. (Yes, my foot hovers close to the accelerator.) In the foreground are pukus, impalas and some rather skittish baboons.

KATE ARMSTRONG The highlands (p134) of Lesotho don't see many visitors. These women were more than happy to have their photos taken; their surprise and joy at seeing themselves on a digital screen was unforgettable. We couldn't communicate in each other's languages – laughter was our international language.



JAMES BAINBRIDGE This rocky scene may look like a remote wilderness, but it's actually Lion's Head (p418), overlooking Cape Town. The only sounds I could hear, hundreds of metres above the Mother City, were the wind whistling through the grass and the call to prayer rising from a mosque in Bo-Kaap.

MATTHEW D FIRESTONE This picture was taken just before a somewhat ungraceful landing on the edge of the Namib Desert just outside Swakopmund (p346). As I quickly learned, jumping out of the plane and pulling the cord is the easy part; landing on your legs – not sorely on your bum – takes a bit of practice.



MARY FITZPATRICK This shot on Lake Niassa (p270) shows Mozambique's 'other' coast. Getting there – via boat or adventurous overland journey – is half the fun. It's a place where it's easy to stay for days, surrounded by the rhythms of traditional life, mesmerised by star-filled night skies and lapping waves.



NANA LUCKHAM This picture was taken by the Lingadzi River in the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre (p170), a beautiful, peaceful sanctuary in the heart of the city. I'd just finished a tour during which I learnt about the centre's rehabilitation programs for rescued, orphaned and injured wild animals, and caught a glimpse of Bella, the one-eyed lion.



NICOLA SIMMONDS It was a sublime African morning. The 'cubs' looked anything but cute and cuddly; more unfazed and unpredictable. Still, we walked through the long dry grass of the vleis, slightly running to keep up, hands gripping sticks, hearts in mouth...

For author biographies see p790.

Destination Southern Africa

Southern Africa's ambient rhythm swoons visitors into a blissful stupor – change down a gear and immerse yourself in the region's enchanting, at times otherworldly, offerings. This corner of the continent is one of the last bastions of accessible wilderness on the planet – whether it's the astonishing variety and density of wildlife, dreamy African landscapes, or world-class natural features such as thundering Victoria Falls, a visit to Southern Africa will sear itself in your mind. Enmeshed in this wilderness is a multitude of ethnic groups, many known for their hospitality and some with direct links to our Stone Age ancestors. If you're serious about the family tree, this is where it *all* began.

Incredibly rich in cultural diversity, Southern Africa constitutes a loose grouping of nations, each with a distinct heritage, although the countries share many common attributes. Some of these attributes, such as poverty, food insecurity and the spread of HIV/AIDS (p38) affect all the countries in the region and are challenges that need coordination, commitment and a long-term approach, both from countries within the region and the international community. This commitment came to fruition recently when the world's richest nations agreed to write off the debt owed by the world's poorest countries, which include Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi.

The establishment of transfrontier parks (p63), linking wildlife migration routes across borders in pursuit of sustainable development, is a very positive development; such conservation work can assist in helping local peoples when they benefit from the associated extra income, employment and development projects. The Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, taking in areas of Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia, is set to become the largest conservation area in the world.

The subject on everyone's tongue, in this football-mad region, however, is the 2010 World Cup, which will be held in South Africa. Improvements in infrastructure and new football stadiums are lasting benefits and can be seen all over the country. It's hoped that the cash windfall from hosting the event, especially the enormous boost expected from tourism, will help lessen the country's current economic woes.

Undoubtedly the 2008-09 economic downturn has had an impact across Southern Africa. Tourism numbers are down, petrol prices are fluctuating wildly and in some cases commodity prices are increasing faster than salaries. The hope is that the overflow from the World Cup will generate quite a bit of tourism revenue for neighbouring countries too.

Politics, corruption and presidential power are always hot topics for discussion and events seem to happen at a lightning pace compared with other parts of the world. In Zambia, ex-president Chiluba was recently cleared of embezzlement charges, although a conviction in a British court of robbing the public purse of almost US\$50 million is hanging over his head (p627). Botswana and Namibia continue to be beacons of political stability in the region, although landowners in Namibia are getting nervous because of that government's continued support of Mugabe. The subject of diamonds and when they'll run out is an issue in both countries, as is the fate of the San, an ancient nomadic hunter-gatherer group who has been relocated from its ancestral lands into government-sponsored settlements in the Central Kalahari (p74). The issue remains highly contentious.

In South Africa, a controversial figure, Jacob Zuma (also known as JZ) was assured of victory in the 2009 elections when charges against him, relating to a US\$4.8 billion arms deal, were dropped just weeks before the polls opened. He promised in his first state of the nation speech to create 500,000 new jobs by the end of 2009, although the *Sowetan* newspaper responded with a mocking headline: '2380 jobs a day for the rest of the year!' In July 2009, rubber bullets flew as union strikes sparked violent expressions of general discontent with continuing deprivation in the townships. Crime continues to grab headlines too and undermine South Africa's reputation as a tourism destination (p396), although these figures should be seen in perspective because as a tourist you'd be either foolhardy or extremely unlucky to become a victim of serious crime in this country.

In February 2009, the ruling party in Zimbabwe, Zanu-PF, formed a unity government with the opposition MDC, led by Morgan Tsvangirai (p690). Whether real change will follow remains to be seen. Everyone in that country talks about money – or prices. From the end of 2007 to the end of 2008, the real rate of inflation was seven sextillion percent! Then the economy finally collapsed. 'Dollarisation' happened at the beginning of 2009, which means the US\$ is now legal tender and prices have stabilised (p691).

The political situation in Mozambique is fairly steady, with the government leading an anti-corruption campaign that is getting a lot of press. Arrests have been made, although these actions have not yet affected the lives of ordinary people – corruption is very ingrained in the culture as it is in many Southern African countries. The north of Mozambique is getting a much needed boost to its infrastructure with a slowly improving road network in the north (such as soon-to-open bridge links over the Rovuma and Zambezi rivers).

Unfortunately political infighting and corruption have tended to be the 'normal' state of affairs in Malawi. President Mutharika was returned to power in 2009 in a decisive victory, and although he has also led an anti-corruption campaign, fighting between himself and his predecessor, ex-president Muluzi, has curtailed the effectiveness of the government, especially in responding to food shortages in recent years.

The political situation is currently calm in Lesotho, following violence, intimidation and torture in the controversial 2007 elections, although the elections of 2012 may bring tensions to the fore once again. There have been allegations of corruption in relation to Lesotho's dam projects (p134); selling water to South Africa and, in the process, displacing villages and causing environmental concerns.

In September 2008 the king and government in Swaziland were criticised over the country's lavish 40:40 celebrations, which jointly marked the King's 40th birthday and the Swazi Nation's 40 years of Independence from Britain. However, it seems there are more people outside of, rather than inside, Swaziland who would like to see the pace of democratic reform increase.

If you're wondering where to start your Southern Africa journey, South Africa – one of the most inspiring and hope-filled places on the continent – makes a great launching pad for the region. A region that you could easily spend a lifetime exploring. You could tour Botswana's wildlife-rich savanna grasslands; trek around Namibia's quintessential African landscapes – rust-red desert and vast open horizons; put a toe into Zimbabwe, one of the region's most beautiful and untouristed countries; swim along the uncrowded beaches and romantic offshore islands of Mozambique; discover a piece of heaven on earth under the waters of sparkling Lake Malawi; romp around some of the continent's most majestic national parks in Zambia; explore mountains and big sky country in Lesotho; discover one of the continent's last

remaining monarchies in gorgeous Swaziland; or just revel in the multitude of African pleasures and treasures at your fingertips in South Africa.

Wherever you decide to go, this is home for adventure seekers, but adventure comes in many forms. Want to bungee jump? Sure, no problem. Fly over mighty Victoria Falls? Absolutely. White-water raft raging rapids? Of course. But do you really want a rush? Then go step onto the streets, catch a local bus, duck into a village, have a drink at a *shebeen* (unlicensed bar), or track lions in the African wilderness. Southern Africa will fill that part of your heart that yearns for adventure. This is where humanity kicked off – it's about time you came home.

Getting Started

Southern Africa varies tremendously: it's suitable for backpackers getting by on packets of chew biltong, right through to those who prefer crisp linen and cocktails in the bush. It all depends on the country you want to spend time in and the activities you pursue.

Anyone with limited time will want to plan their trip carefully, while those not watching the clock may prefer to just follow their whims and take life at a leisurely pace. Note though, travel in countries such as Zambia will always benefit from a bit of forward planning. The right attitude is what's most important – take precautions, but don't be paranoid, whether in Johannesburg or sunning yourself by Lake Malawi.

Don't run around trying to fit too much into your time – Africa needs to be approached with a sense of fun and patience. Before long you'll find yourself in tune with the rhythm of its friendly people, wild landscapes and majestic wildlife.

WHEN TO GO

High season is from April to August (winter), when most of Southern Africa is basking in temperate sunshine, with comfortable (but often very chilly) nights. The shoulder seasons of February to March and September to October are also usually quite comfortable in the central part of the region.

In the north, you can plan on inclement weather from November to March; the heat can be oppressive and travel can be more difficult due to flooded rivers and washed-out roads. Wildlife viewing is also less rewarding during these months than in the winter (and some parks close completely), but birdwatching is at its best, and you're likely to see the most dramatic skies and thunderstorms imaginable.

The Cape area, however, experiences a Mediterranean climate with winter rain, which means that the high season is the opposite of the rest of Southern Africa. The high season in Cape Town runs from October to March, while May to August is characterised by rains and blustery winds. April and September can go either way.

Keep in mind the South African school holidays, too, when vast numbers of people head for the coast and national parks of South Africa and neighbouring countries. Hotels and campsites can fill completely, and prices skyrocket.

Another factor to consider is large events in the region – such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa – when accommodation is more difficult (and pricey) to find.

See the Climate and When to Go sections at the beginning of each chapter for country-specific details.

COSTS & MONEY

Generally speaking, prices in Southern Africa are around 50% to 75% of what they are in Europe, Australasia or North America. The rand has softened recently, meaning South Africa still remains very good value, and the crisis in Zimbabwe (see p687 for some background) brought about the dollarisation of the currency in 2009, bringing some much-needed stability to prices. Botswana is always considerably more expensive than these countries, while Malawi and Mozambique offer a wide range of options, from dirt cheap to exceptionally expensive. Tourism in Zambia is mainly locked into the top-end safari market, but there are options for budget and, especially, midrange travellers. In general, locally produced items will be good value wherever you

See Climate Charts (p745) for more information.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT

- A sense of fun and a relaxed attitude towards African travel.
- Binoculars for wildlife viewing and a snazzy camera for taking great wildlife shots.
- An appetite for biltong, *boerewors* and *mielie pap* (see p45).
- Your yellow fever vaccination card, if you've been travelling in affected countries (see p773).
- A basic medical kit that includes ointment to relieve itchy bites; and *anything* to repel pesky tsetse flies
- A GPS if you're going bush in your own vehicle.
- Reading a few books (see p22), or bringing one along for long, bumpy bus rides.
- A tent, sleeping bag and sheet liner (which may also come in handy at budget hotels) for camping. A camping stove is also essential for overnight hiking, as fires are not allowed in many areas – one that runs on petrol will be the least hassle.

go, while imported goods may be twice what they cost in the West (thanks to import duties).

Serious backpackers may get by on an average of US\$15 per day, including accommodation, food and transport, although US\$20 allows more flexibility. For a bit more comfort, US\$25 to US\$35 per day is a reasonable budget for day-to-day living expenses. To stay in midrange hotels, eat well and travel in comfort when possible, you're looking at around US\$50 per day or more. Top-end travellers should expect to pay at least US\$75 per day, but US\$100 upward is more realistic (note that your budget will skyrocket if you're staying in private game reserves or even some national parks).

Along with these basic costs, you'll have to consider visa and national park fees, plus the cost of any tours or activities (such as wildlife safaris or white-water rafting). To hire a car, you'll find the cheapest deals in South Africa (p579), where some companies will allow you to take the vehicle into neighbouring countries for a minimal extra charge.

See the Transport sections of individual country chapters, and the Money sections in country-specific Directories, for more information on costs.

TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Tourism has a substantial effect on the destinations most frequented by foreign visitors. While some of these effects are absolutely beneficial, providing local income and incentive for environmental conservation, other aspects of tourism can seriously disrupt local economies and ecologies. Seek out entities that promote sustainable, community-oriented tourism – the list on the website of **Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa** (www.fairtourismsa.org.za) is a good place to start. Please take note of the following guidelines and help minimise the negative aspects of tourism while reinforcing its benefits to local communities:

- Many businesses are run by Europeans and white South Africans: take note of how they treat their local staff, and channel your money accordingly.
- If you're travelling independently, be upfront about asking at the accommodation and other businesses you deal with about their 'green' credentials.
- Save water; it's a precious resource, especially in Namibia, where you should be extra careful about water conservation – particularly during the dry season.
- Support local enterprise. But when buying locally made souvenirs, avoid items made from natural material – wood, skin, ivory etc – un-

HOW MUCH?

2WD car hire US\$50–100

Box of fruit at roadside
US\$1–3

Wildlife safari US\$100
and up

Hourly internet access
US\$1–3

Traditional dance
performance US\$10–25

less they come from a sustainable source (admittedly, this is difficult to check).

- Ask for permission before you take any close-up photographs of people and, if payment is requested, either pay up or put the camera away.
- Don't give money or sweets as gifts for children. If you want to help them, find the village school and donate some pens or schoolbooks, or seek out the clinic and donate unwanted first-aid items. Don't allow schoolkids to guide you during school hours as this encourages them to play truant.
- Budget your trip, and devote 10% (or more) before you go to donate to charities that will directly help the areas you visit.

TOP 10



MUST-SEE MOVIES

These are some of the most insightful and revealing films about Southern Africa to have been produced in recent years.

- 1 *District 9* (Director Neill Blomkamp, 2009)
- 2 *Hansie* (Director Regardt van den Bergh, 2008)
- 3 *Tsotsi* (Director Gavin Hood, 2006)
- 4 *Yesterday* (Director Darrell James Roodt, 2005)
- 5 *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony* (Director Lee Hirsch, 2003)
- 6 *Drum* (Director Zola Maseko, 2005)
- 7 *Zulu Love Letter* (Director Ramadan Suleman, 2004)
- 8 *Wah-Wah* (Director Richard E Grant, 2005)
- 9 *In My Country* (Director John Boorman, 2005)
- 10 *Red Dust* (Director Tom Hooper, 2005)

FAVOURITE FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Seeing a local festival can be a highlight of your trip to Southern Africa and a window into the local culture. There are plenty of traditional celebrations throughout the year – here's a list of our favourites:

- 1 Harare International Festival of the Arts, Zimbabwe, late April (p700)
- 2 Incwala ceremony, Swaziland, late December/early January (p593)
- 3 Kuomboka ceremony, Zambia, late March/early April (p669)
- 4 Lake of Stars, Malawi, October (p211)
- 5 Maitisong Festival, Botswana, March or April (p113)
- 6 Morija Arts & Cultural Festival, Lesotho, early October (p137)
- 7 Afrika Burns, South Africa, November (p570)
- 8 Oktoberfest, Namibia, October (p310)
- 9 Timbilas Festival, Mozambique, around August (p285)
- 10 Umhlanga (Reed) Dance, Swaziland, August/September (p593)

CONDUCT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

A few straightforward courtesies may greatly improve a foreigner's chances of acceptance by the local community, especially in rural areas. In Southern Africa, pleasantries are taken quite seriously, and it's essential to greet or say goodbye to someone entering or leaving a room. Learn the local words for hello and goodbye and use them unsparingly; it's also good form to enquire about someone's wellbeing. Emphasis is placed on handshakes all over the region. The Batswana (in Botswana) are particularly sensitive to proper greetings (always be polite) and handshakes (grab your right elbow with your left hand while shaking). The African handshake consists of three parts: the normal Western handshake, followed by the linking of bent fingers while touching the ends of upward-pointing thumbs, and then a repeat of the conventional handshake.

As in most traditional societies, the achievement of old age is an accomplishment worthy of respect, and elders are treated with deference – they should be accorded utmost courtesy. Teachers, doctors and other professionals often receive similar treatment.

When visiting rural settlements, it's a good idea to request to see the chief to announce your presence and ask permission before setting up camp or wandering through.

If you're offered a gift, don't feel guilty about accepting it, as refusal may bring shame on the giver. To receive a gift politely, accept it with both hands and perhaps bow slightly.

At beach resorts throughout the region it's fine to dress in shorts and sleeveless tops. Elsewhere, you'll have an easier time if you wear more conservative garb.

- Don't watch sacred dances staged solely for tourists, and don't go to sacred sites that offend local beliefs. Make an effort to learn about the culture that you are interacting with and respect the fragility and cultural importance of rock paintings throughout the region.
- Respect local protocol with regard to clothing – avoid very skimpy and ripped/dirty clothes as well as topless sunbathing.
- Don't drive 4WDs off road or on sand dunes and especially don't drive on beaches in Mozambique, where it's harmful to the environment – and illegal.
- Be aware of the source of your seafood. Overfishing and inappropriate fishing methods mean that, although Southern Africa's waters are bountiful, many species are over-exploited and some stocks are running dangerously low.

Organisations with information on responsible travel and sustainable environmental practices include **Tourism Concern** (☎ 020-7133 3800; www.tourismconcern.org.uk; Stapleton House, 277-281 Holloway Rd, London N7 8HN); and **Action for Southern Africa** (☎ 020-3263 2001; www.actsa.org; 231 Vauxhall Bridge Rd, London SW1V 1EH), which campaigns for (among other things) sustainable tourism throughout the region.

For further information on responsible tourism, see p64.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

The Ukimwi Road by Dervla Murphy recounts the adventures of the famously eccentric 60-year-old Irish grandmother as she cycles through Africa, from Kenya to Zimbabwe, along the way downing numerous beers and observing life at a human scale – most notably the harrowing effects of HIV/AIDS.

A fun and fascinating collection of stories about cars, bars, parties, rebellions, relationships and other diverse subjects in several African countries, *Mr Bigstuff & the Goddess of Charm* by Fiona Sax Ledger includes some insightful conversations with Zambian politicians.

Drawn from the Plains: Life in the Wilds of Namibia & Mozambique by Lynne Tinley has lovely descriptions of life in the bush in Etosha and Gorongosa National Parks.

No Place Like & Other Stories by Southern African Women Writers, edited by Robin Malan, is a compelling collection of short stories that focus on the women of Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. The tone varies between ironic, intimate and emotionally charged, with stories often set within the larger political landscape.

Mukiwa by Peter Goodwin is a book that grabs your heart and stays in your head. It is the story of a small Rhodesian boy who witnesses the murder by guerrillas of a neighbour...and then the tumultuous end of white rule. *Mukiwa* captures much of the beauty and mystery of Zimbabwe and Southern Africa.

Lost World of the Kalahari by Laurens van der Post is a captivating account of the author's rediscovery of the San at a time when Southern Africa was under colonial rule. The book details the author's arduous expedition deep into the wild Kalahari and reveals the unique indigenous culture of Africa's last Stone Age people.

Scribbling the Cat: Travels with an African Soldier by Alexandra Fuller winds its way through Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Fuller travels into a war-scarred past with her companion, revealing a legacy of conflict and its effects on them and the region's indigenous peoples.

One of the most prominent contemporary South African authors is Zakes Mda, who – with the publication of *Ways of Dying* in 1995 – made a successful transition from poet and playwright to acclaimed novelist. *The Whale Caller* (2005) takes a somewhat sceptical look at the optimism surrounding the new South Africa.

INTERNET RESOURCES

African Encounter (www.africanencounter.com) This site is run by a travel agent who specialises in itineraries of Southern Africa. It's good for information on getting around Zimbabwe.

All Africa (<http://allafrica.com>) A gateway to all things African, this website posts around 1000 articles a day, collated from over 125 different news organisations.

iafrica.com (www.iafrica.com) This diverse South African-dominated site includes travel, news and lifestyle sections, plus links to sites on other Southern African countries.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Here you will find several pages of information on each country in Southern Africa and the Thorn Tree notice board, where you can ask questions before you go or dispense advice when you get back.

Open Africa (www.openafrica.org) This excellent site details off-the-beaten track tourism routes supporting job creation and conservation through Southern Africa.

Political Africa (www.politicalafrica.com) This website features the latest stories on Africa, from various news services around the world, and links to sport, economics and the UN in Africa, among many others.

Itineraries

CLASSIC ROUTES

NATURE & FUN IN THE SUN

Three Weeks to One Month/ Kruger to Southern Mozambique

Using **Johannesburg** (p527) as a gateway, head east via **Nelspruit** (p518) to world-renowned **Kruger National Park** (p513). The teeming wildlife will undoubtedly mesmerise you for several days.

If you've time, duck out of Orpen Gate for a look at **Blyde River Canyon** (p522). From Kruger, continue south into Swaziland, where you can spend a few days hiking through the grasslands and forests of **Malolotja Nature Reserve** (p596) before heading on via **Mbabane** (p589) to the tiny, but brilliant **Mkhaya Game Reserve** (p598), noted for its black rhinos.

Then head to culturally intriguing **Maputo** (p226) via the Mozambican border town of **Namaacha** (p239). Head north on the EN1 and, if you're getting desperate for a dip, stop at **Xai-Xai's** (p240) quiet beaches. Continue up the EN1 to **Inhambane** (p241), one of the country's oldest and most charming towns. Beaches close by include legendary **Tofo** (p243), with azure waters, and the more sedate **Barra** (p245). If you've more steam, trundle a bit further north to **Vilankulo** (p246), the gateway to the tropical paradise of Bazaruto Archipelago.

This 2000km-plus route serves up delightful variety, and with a month up your sleeve you can get a good sampling of wildlife and local culture and still have time to laze on the beach. Short on time? Whiz through Swaziland and stick to motorways where possible.



NATURAL WONDER & SENSATIONAL SAFARIS **One Week/Victoria Falls to the Okavango Delta**

Start your trip at one of the great natural wonders of the world, **Victoria Falls** (p604), whose mighty spray can be seen from 50km away. For the best perspectives, visit from both **Livingstone** (Zambia; p608) and the town of **Victoria Falls** (Zimbabwe; p616). There's a plethora of activities on offer, including serene canoe trips on top of the falls and, for those after an adrenaline rush, rafting below the falls down the churning Zambezi. Also be sure to check out **Mosi-oa-Tunya Game Park** (p615) and the rainforests of Victoria Falls National Park.

From the Zambian side, cross the nearby border at Kazungula and head for **Kasane** (p92) in Botswana, the gateway town to the stunning, wildlife-rich **Chobe National Park** (p92). Here you can organise wildlife drives and river cruises along the Chobe riverfront, where nearly every Southern African mammal species is represented.

From Chobe it's an easy hop, skip and jump southwest to **Maun** (p98) and Botswana's tourist magnet, the vast **Okavango Delta** (p98), where one of the world's most impressive ecosystems breathes life into the Kalahari sands and attracts astonishing amounts of wildlife and incalculable numbers of birds.

Once in Maun, you can do a mokoro (dugout canoe) trip in the **Eastern Delta** (p103), take a safari in **Moremi Game Reserve** (p105), or splash out on a fly-in trip into the **Inner Delta** (p104). From Maun, take a minibus clockwise around the delta towards Namibia, perhaps stopping in Sepupa to take a boat to **Seronga** (p107) and do a mokoro trip in the **Okavango Panhandle** (p107).

This 700km itinerary will take you through some of Southern Africa's biggest draws. When viewing wildlife, try not to squeeze too much in – take a break here and there. You could whiz through in seven days, or have a more relaxed 10 days or two weeks.



ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

DUSTY ROADS & SHIMMERING WATERS **Three Weeks to One Month/ Lusaka to Nkhata Bay**

Start with a few days in Zambia's cosmopolitan capital, **Lusaka** (p631), with its genuine African feel and the country's best nightlife. Then head out on the highway to the stunning **Lower Zambezi National Park** (p663), with its beautiful flood plain that's dotted with acacias and other large trees. There's no public transport to the park, so you'll need your own car to get there, or go on an organised tour. Hook up with the Great East Rd and head to chaotic **Chipata** (p651). Here you can organise a trip to **South Luangwa National Park** (p652), one of the most majestic parks on the continent. Make sure that you do a walking safari when you're here. From Chipata you can drive to **Mfuwe Gate** (p652), or take one of the minibuses that make the trip to Mfuwe village. The really adventurous could try to reach the wild and spectacular **North Luangwa National Park** (p657), but it's important that you seek local advice before doing this.

Then it's on to Malawi and the town of **Lilongwe** (p167), which is worth a day or two to check out the old town and the local Nature Sanctuary. From Lilongwe strike out north along the M1 to **Nkhata Bay** (p181) on Lake Malawi, which is perfect for swimming, kayaking or just lazing about after some hard weeks on the road. Possible detours on the way to Nkhata include the gently rolling hills of **Kasungu National Park** (p186) and historic **Nkhotakota** (p186) from where you can organise a trip to the wild **Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve** (p187), where you have a good chance of seeing elephants.

A 2000km route through the Southern African outback. Travelling in Zambia offers a taste of the real Africa, and the dusty roads will become a distant memory once you're lazing by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Malawi. Allow at least three weeks.



LAKESHORE TO SEASHORE

Three Weeks to One Month/ Nkhata Bay to Pemba

Drag yourself out of the crystal waters at **Nkhata Bay** (p181) and hop onto the *Ilala* ferry for the blissful **Likoma Island** (p183), where swimming, snorkelling and local cultures are the star attractions. Splash out for a night at Kaya Mawa if you've the pennies – it's one of Africa's finest paradise retreats. Take the ferry over to the Mediterranean-esque **Chizumulu Island** (p184), with its idyllic beaches, and return by dhow (if the waters are calm enough).

From Likoma hop back on the ferry to Metangula and from there take the Dangelila up towards **Cóbuè** (p271), on the other side of the lakeshore in Mozambique. (Or, take a dhow direct from Likoma to Cóbuè.) Stay the night just south of Cóbuè at Nkwichi Lodge, a magnificent bush retreat that is part of an important development and conservation project; it's well worth a splurge. If your budget isn't up to Nkwichi, try one of several backpacker-friendly places in Cóbuè itself. After exploring the lake area, head south to cool **Lichinga** (p269); surrounded by scenic, rugged terrain, it is the capital of remote Niassa province. Carry on through to **Mandimba** (p269) and on to bustling **Cuamba** (p268), where you can pick up a train all the way through to **Nampula** (p261). Then jump on a bus to magnificent **Mozambique Island** (p263), with its intriguing architecture and time-warp atmosphere. If you need a beach break after exploring the island, hire a dhow to take you over to **Chocas** (p267) and the lovely nearby beach at **Cabaceira Pequena** (p267). The trip finishes up a bit further north at **Pemba** (p273), which is the gateway to the superb Quirimbas Archipelago.

This 1500km Mozambican bush adventure could be tacked onto 'Dusty Roads & Shimmering Waters', but it also stands well alone. Mozambique Island makes a wonderful contrast to the bush, and you can finish on the beach in the tropical island paradise of Quirimbas Archipelago.



MESMERISING WILDERNESS & CULTURE Three Weeks/Skeleton Coast to the Kalahari

Starting on Namibia's Skeleton Coast, a treacherous coastline with rusting shipwrecks and desert wilderness, check out the **Cape Cross Seal Reserve** (p344). Track north along the coast to **Torra Bay** (p345), where you can camp, or head for **Terrace Bay** (p345) for more luxurious accommodation. Then travel west into the wonders of **Damaraland** (p336), with its wild, open spaces, and make a beeline for **Twyfelfontein** (p336), one of the most extensive galleries of rock art in Africa. Then journey further east to **Outjo** (p317), which is a staging post for visits to **Etosha National Park** (p321), teeming with animals and one of the continent's great wildlife-viewing sites.

Exit Etosha via von Linquist Gate and proceed to **Tsumeb** (p320), one of the country's prettiest towns with its vivid jacarandas and flame trees. Track northeast along the B8 into Botswana at the border town of Molembo. Drive down the west side of the **Okavango Delta** (p98), perhaps stopping in Sepupa to take a boat to **Seronga** (p107) to do a mokoro trip in the Okavango Panhandle.

The last leg of this ambitious trip is the gigantic **Central Kalahari Game Reserve** (p108) to the southeast, lying at the heart of Botswana. Enter at the Matswere Gate at the northeastern end of the reserve: wildlife includes lions and brown hyenas. You can finish your trip by exiting the same gate and travelling east to **Francistown** (p85).



This 3000km-plus trip into some of Southern Africa's most inhospitable and magnificent terrain is challenging – much of it is 4WD territory and you'll need your own car. You could push through in three weeks, but take a month and spend time in the Kalahari.

The Authors



ALAN MURPHY

Coordinating Author, Zambia

Alan remembers falling under Southern Africa's spell after bouncing around in the rear of a *bakkie* from Jo'burg airport in 1999. Since then he's been back four times for Lonely Planet, including this trip to Zambia, during which the logistical challenges of getting around hit home when he was told: 'go down the track and then take a right at the turn-off where the sign has fallen down...' Whether watching elephants cross a river, tracking lions, glimpsing elusive wild dogs or chuckling at the clownish behaviour of baboons, he finds wildlife watching exhilarating. This trip was one big adventure, made even more enjoyable by a 4WD named Bessie and a travelling companion named Smitzzy.



KATE ARMSTRONG

Lesotho, Swaziland

Kate was bitten by the African bug when she lived and worked in Mozambique and has returned to Southern Africa frequently. For this edition she coaxed her 2WD wheels for hundreds of kilometres over Lesotho's remote mountainous passes (and learnt more about catalytic converters than she ever intended) and danced her way through Swaziland. Kate is continually humbled by the generosity of the local Swazi and Basotho people. When Kate's not eating, hiking and talking her way around parts of Africa, Europe and South America, her itchy feet are grounded in Sydney where she is a freelance writer.



JAMES BAINBRIDGE

South Africa

A fan of all things African, James was lucky enough to research South Africa twice in the space of six months for Lonely Planet. He explored Limpopo while coordinating *South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland*, then returned for a pre-2010 World Cup poke-around, arriving just in time to watch President Zuma's inauguration. The London-based journalist's writing about Africa has appeared in publications including the *Guardian*, *Songlines* world-music magazine, and LP's *Africa* and *West Africa* guides. His favourite South African journeys are the drive along the Zimbabwean border to Mapungubwe National Park and the train from Jo'burg to Cape Town.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

Why is our travel information the best in the world? It's simple: our authors are passionate, dedicated travellers. They don't take freebies in exchange for positive coverage so you can be sure the advice you're given is impartial. They travel widely to all the popular spots, and off the beaten track. They don't research using just the internet or phone. They discover new places not included in any other guidebook. They personally visit thousands of hotels, restaurants, palaces, trails, galleries, temples and more. They speak with dozens of locals every day to make sure you get the kind of insider knowledge only a local could tell you. They take pride in getting all the details right, and in telling it how it is. Think you can do it? Find out how at lonelyplanet.com.



MATTHEW D FIRESTONE

Botswana, Namibia

Matt is a trained biological anthropologist and epidemiologist who is particularly interested in the health and nutrition of indigenous populations. His first visit to Botswana and Namibia in 2001 brought him deep into the Kalahari, where he performed a field study on the traditional diet of the San. Unfortunately, Matt's promising academic career was postponed due to a severe case of wanderlust, though he has relentlessly travelled to more than 50 different countries in search of a cure. Matt is hoping that this book will help ease the pain of other individuals bitten by the travel bug, though he fears that there is a growing epidemic on the horizon.



MARY FITZPATRICK

Mozambique

Mary is from the USA, where she spent her early years in Washington, DC – dreaming, more often than not, of how to get across an ocean or two to more exotic locales. After finishing graduate studies, she set off for several years in Europe. Her fascination with languages and cultures soon led her further south to Africa, where she has spent the past 15 years living and working all around the continent, including almost four years in Mozambique. She has authored and coauthored numerous other guidebooks on various destinations in Africa and heads off to Mozambique's beaches at every opportunity.



NANA LUCKHAM

Malawi

Born in Tanzania to a Ghanaian mother and an English father, Nana started life criss-crossing Africa by plane and bumping along the roughest of roads. She first made it to Southern Africa in 1994 when she spent six months living in Zimbabwe. After several years as an editor and a UN press officer she got into travel writing full-time, and has hauled her backpack all over Africa researching guidebooks to destinations such as Algeria, Kenya, South Africa and Benin. She was thrilled to return to Malawi (the scene of her very first Lonely Planet assignment) for this book.



NICOLA SIMMONDS

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Nicola Simmonds has worked in and backpacked around Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Europe, Japan, and Central and South America. Having then lived in Angola and Zimbabwe for seven years (with her husband and, eventually, three kids), mastering water shortages, African bureaucracy and out-of-control economies, covering Zimbabwe post-'dollarisation' was nothing but joy. She has just spent a year in Sri Lanka and is currently figuring out where to go next...

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

David Lukas wrote the Wildlife & Habitat chapter. David teaches and writes about the natural world from his home on the edge of Yosemite National Park. He has contributed Environment and Wildlife chapters for more than 25 Lonely Planet guides, including *Tanzania*, *East Africa*, *South Africa*, *Botswana & Namibia* and *Ethiopia & Eritrea*.

Jane Cornwell wrote the Music in Southern Africa chapter. Jane is a London-based, Australian-born writer, broadcaster and journalist with a long-time interest in African music. She is world music critic for the London *Evening Standard*, a contributing editor on the world-music magazine *Songlines*, a writer for Peter Gabriel's Real World Records and for newspapers including the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, the *Guardian* and the *Australian*.

© Lonely Planet. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'