



Malawi INFO SHEET



About Malawi

Malawi is a small landlocked country in Africa, formerly known as Nyasaland. It falls into Southern Africa, although sometimes classes Southeastern Africa. A spectacularly scenic and unspoiled country, with diverse landscapes offering a variety of experiences: from a big five safari to exploring forest reserves, hiking Mt. Mulanje, visiting tea estates and of course, enjoying the lake!



Some Facts

Malawi means 'fire/flames'

Africa's newest big 5 destination

Neighboring Countries:

Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania

Capital City: Lilongwe

National Parks: 5

Wildlife Reserves: 4

Subtropical Climate

Key Attraction: Lake Malawi

Independence: 6th July 1964

Area: 118,480 km² / 46,000 miles²
(half the size of the UK)

Currency: Malawi Kwacha

Population: over 18 million

Official Language: English

Widely Spoken: Chichewa

Top Exports: Tobacco and Tea

National Bird: African Fish Eagle



Getting to Malawi:

Kamuzu International Airport (KIA) in Lilongwe is the closest airport to Blue Zebra Island Lodge: 2 hours drive. Work on 3 hours from your landing time to boat transfer time, allowing additional time to clear customs and stop for snacks along the way. Try to book an early arrival to ensure you can get to Blue Zebra on the same day as we do not operate boat transfers after dark. Find out more about airlines to use and the best routes for road travel.



Local Currency Malawi Kwacha:

There are ATMs, Banks/Bureaux de Change at the airport to obtain local currency. Major currencies are accepted at exchange desks (including US\$, Euro, GBP, ZAR). US\$ is widely accepted in Malawi but should generally be no smaller than \$5 and of 2009+ series. Cards can be used at most lodges but you will need cash for your arrival visa; shopping at local markets/curios stores; visiting other remote locations.



Visas:

As from 7 February 2024 and with immediate effect, Malawi has removed the requirement for visas to enter the country for nationalities of 79 countries, including many in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. Please see the separate Visa Guide for further information on visas for Malawi, including a link to the e-visa system for those that do still need it.



Insurance:

You must have comprehensive travel insurance with adequate cover for cancellation (unexpected illness/injury/hospitalization, flight delays, weather conditions etc), curtailment and all medical expenses with emergency air evacuation. Check that you are covered for boat transfers and all activities offered at Blue Zebra Island Lodge including motorized water sports.



Climate:

Subtropical, with a 7-8 month dry season and 4-5 month rainy season. Typically characterized as:

Hot and rainy: mid-November to April (with the peak rainy season being January -March)

Cool and dry: mid-May to mid-August (cool nights, warm days – occasional strong winds)

Hot and dry: mid-August to mid-November (the hottest/humid months are October and November)

Malawi is considered a year-round destination. There's never a bad time to visit, but there will be 'better' times depending on your interests and personal preferences. The climate will vary throughout Malawi. Many prefer to visit in the dry season, but November to April is usually best for birdwatching. We can assist you with the best time for you to visit.



Medical:

We recommend contacting your doctor or a travel clinic regarding the most up to date medical advice for traveling to Malawi from your country.

Vaccinations: Yellow fever certificates are only required if you have traveled from or through a yellow fever zone. If you are doing a Zambia/Malawi combo safari, you will need yellow fever immunization. It is recommended that you are up to date with your routine vaccines (Polio, Typhoid, Tetanus, Hepatitis A) and that you seek further medical advice for updated requirements.

Malaria: Malawi is a Malaria area. We recommend that you contact your doctor about the most suitable Malaria prophylaxis for you.

Bilharzia (Schistosomiasis): while there is a chance of contracting Bilharzia in areas of Lake Malawi, tests have been done around the Marelli Islands which have indicated the area to be Bilharzia free, although this cannot be guaranteed. Praziquantel is a medication widely used and easily accessible in Malawi for preventative measures.

Read here for more info - <http://bit.ly/44OaetZ>

For more information:

Malawi Tourism. (2024). Getting there – Visa and travel requirements. Retrieved from <https://www.malawitourism.com/getting-there>

Blue Zebra Island Lodge. (n.d.). Malawi travel info. Retrieved June 30, 2025, from <https://bluezebra.mw/malawi-travel-info/> tripadvisor.com+9bluezebra.mw+9go2africa.com+9