

## **GENERAL INFO**

Zanzibar is an island partner within the United Republic of Tanzania, located in the Indian Ocean about 35 km off the coast of mainland Tanzania at six degrees south of the Equator. Zanzibar is made up of many islands, the main two being Unguja (sometimes called Zanzibar) and Pemba. The highest point is 390 feet above sea level. The combined population of Zanzibar including Pemba is approx 1,000,000.

### **Language and religion**

The main language is Kiswahili. Even if you only use a few words whilst you are in Zanzibar you will make many friends. English is widely spoken and many people also speak Arabic. Other European languages such as French and Italian are known by some local people, especially around the tourist areas.

About 95% of the local population is Muslim. The remainder are Hindu or Christian and some with traditional beliefs. As well as many many mosques, Stone Town hosts an Anglican and a Catholic Cathedral and a Hindu Temple.

### **Communications and electricity**

There is one land line telephone company, the Tanzania Telecommunications Company (TTCL). There are four mobile telephone companies in operation: TIGO (071), CELTEL (078) and ZANTEL (077) and VODACOM (075 ). There are now many local internet cafés offering the use of international telephone, fax and internet services. For international calls prefix the country code with 00. Zanzibar is 3 hours ahead of GMT. The power system is 220-240 volts ac, plugs 13amp usually square pin.

### **Climate**

Long rains are March to May, cool dry season is June to October, short rains October to November and hot dry season December to March. Average daily temperature is about 80F / 26C, with 7-8 hours of sunshine.

### **Money matters**

The unit of local currency is the Tanzania Shilling (T Sh).

Coins:

- 10 TSh
- 20 TSh
- 50 TSh
- 100 TSh
- 200 TSh

Notes:

- 500 TSh

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- 1,000 TSh
- 2,000 TSh
- 5,000 TSh
- 10,000 TSh

American dollars in cash or travelers' cheques are acceptable in many places around town. There are many Bureaux de Change around Stone Town, which offer reasonable rates and are usually faster than banks. Recommended bureaux for changing money are located in Malindi, Shangani, or ask Festival Staff for help and directions. Credit cards are still almost unknown in Zanzibar, and if you do manage to find a place to use them there will usually be a surcharge of at least 10%. Bartering about prices is common in Zanzibar marketplaces. Hotel, restaurant and tour operator prices are generally non-negotiable.

### Shopping

A variety of locally produced crafts can be found in the shops and bazaars of Stone Town. Buying such goods benefits the local community so we encourage you to look out for such goodies as:

- wood carved doors and chests
- embroidered kofia, hats as worn traditionally by Muslim men
- kanga cloths (women) and kikoi (men) worn as a skirt or wrap
- tie and dye and batik materials and tablecloths
- 'tinga tinga' paintings
- 'mkeka' woven mats
- incense ('udi') and candle pottery
- Zanzibar spice baskets
- soaps, scented oils
- women's henna body painting - available in boutiques around Stone Town
- woven baskets ('mkoba')
- recordings of local music, eg taarab.

### HEALTH & SAFETY

#### Do's and Dont's in Zanzibar

The population of Zanzibar is predominantly Muslim with a rich Swahili culture. Because of religious and cultural traditions dress code is important, and men and women should dress appropriately when away from the beach, ie covering shoulders and legs to below the knees. Beachwear on the beach is fine, although nude or topless bathing is not tolerated. When in villages or in Stone Town wearing beach wear would (and does) cause offence. Try to wear loose-fitting, non-transparent clothing when in public.

Zanzibari people are generally very warm, open and hospitable, and your respect for permission before taking photographs or filming local people is appreciated. Do not take photos or film at sensitive government sites including the State House, seaport, airport or military sites. If uncertain, it is always better to ask.

Public consumption of alcohol is not permissible, except in hotels and tourist

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areas, bars and some restaurants, where it is no problem. Public displays of affection such as kissing are not customary and generally considered offensive, unless behind closed doors.

Local customs should be respected. Mosques are sacred places and there is generally no entry to non-Muslims, unless accompanied by a person of the faith who can show you around except during the times for congregational prayer, which are five times daily.

When offering or accepting things, try and remember to offer and receive with your right hand. This is the hand which should also be used for eating.

### **Health**

Vaccination certificates must be produced on arrival in Zanzibar. Without a certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever you may be refused entry. Visitors should take precautions with regard to malaria, a blood-borne parasite which is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes are more prevalent at dusk and during the evening. Preventative tactics include | use anti-malarial prophylactics as recommended by your doctor | Cover your arms, wear light coloured clothing and use insect repellent, e.g.. lemongrass oil or citronella | if possible, sleep under a mosquito net Early diagnosis assists in more effective treatment. If treated early malaria is not dangerous, but left untreated malaria kills. If you have any suspicious symptoms, e.g.. fever, vomiting, diarrhea, aching joints and headache, we urge you to get your blood checked or seek medical advice.

### **Safety**

Crime of any sort is rare in Zanzibar, but unfortunately alongside the recent growth of tourism, local people have noticed proportionate rises in criminal activity, including theft and drug use. As in any part of the world, take care when walking, especially at night and please be careful with expensive items such as handbags and cameras. Theft from hotel rooms is unusual. Most hotels have a safe, where valuables can be stored.

When walking in Stone Town please be aware of traffic. Even some of the narrowest streets are in fact public roads. There are no cars but motorbikes and bicycles move fast so keep close to the side of the street and be ready to make way for local traffic. Possession and use of illegal drugs is not tolerated in Zanzibar. Legal penalties, even for cannabis, include lengthy prison sentences and fines. In spite of international media reports about political occurrences, the day to day social atmosphere in Zanzibar is calm.

## **TOURISM INFO**

### **Stone Town**

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Stone Town holds magic and mystery. Shafts of bright light joust with deep shadows creating a fascinating world within its narrow streets, built for pedestrian traffic. The streets wind between tall buildings, opening unexpectedly into ornamental squares that endow the town with gathering points for local people as well as atmosphere of Arabian Nights charm.

Stone Town was declared a Conservation area in 1988, although several individual buildings had already been declared national monuments well before then. These sights included the Turkish Bath (Hamamni) built by Persians in the 1870s and the Omani Fort (Ngome Kongwe), where the Festival Office is housed, which was built on the site of a Portuguese Fort destroyed in 1753. Other national monuments include the House of Wonders and the Cathedrals as mentioned above.

The old town of Stone Town is roughly the shape of a triangle, bordered on two sides by the Indian Ocean and the eastern side by Creek Road. Walking from one side of the old city to the other takes about 15 minutes, unless you are a beginner in which case it could easily take several hours. Maps are available at any tourist shop.

Main Festival venues are centered around The Old Fort, House of Wonders and Forodhani Gardens, whose waterfront make a pleasant place to spend hours of an evening at any time of year, with the local traders selling freshly cooked kebabs, seafood, breads, chai and sugar cane juice.

### **Places to visit in and around Stone Town**

#### *Beit el Ajaib (House of Wonders)*

Formerly the Sultan's Palace, built in the nineteenth century by Sultan Barghash, the Festival is proud to be using this venue for exhibitions, film screenings, seminars and workshops.

#### *People's Palace Museum*

Located adjacent to the House of Wonders is another fine building, that served as the residence of the Al Busaid Sultans of Zanzibar until the Revolution in 1964. It now serves as a museum, where for a few shillings you can hire a guide to show you round and talk you through local history.

#### *Livingstone House*

David Livingstone, the famous explorer (we presume), stayed in this house before sailing to the mainland in a dhow to begin his last expedition in 1866. The building is now the main office of the Zanzibar Tourist Corporation (ZTC). Located in the north east side of town on the Malawi Road, leading to Bububu.

#### *Prison Island*

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One of the three small islands visible from the seafront, the island used to house a prison which was actually used for quarantine. There is a small fee payable to ZTC on landing at the island, which hosts a sandy beach, coral reef with good snorkeling, peacocks and the famous giant tortoises.

### *Spice Tour*

A visit to Zanzibar would not be complete without a Spice Tour, which will take you through much of the countryside and if you have an 'official tour' you can get good information about a whole heap of spices, tropical fruits and rare plants - see how they grow and get some good cookery tips. If you are interested in this one let the Festival Office know.