

# Make your next Mozambique business trip count

Our exotic neighbour, perhaps best known for its Luso-African culture and beautiful coastline, Mozambique's allure as a business travel destination should not be underestimated. This is especially as international companies flock to set up shop and invest in its mining sector. "Following Mozambique's economic resurgence, we have noticed that over 50% of our business is driven from the corporate travel market," says Natalie Tenzer-Silva of Dana Tours, based in Maputo, Mozambique.



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Tenzer-Silva adds that Maputo is currently the prime business destination because it is the capital where most of the multinational businesses have established themselves. She adds that the destination's appeal as a business destination is largely due to its rich natural resources while at the same time upholding the highest-quality business standards.

As any modern-day road warrior will know, a trip to Mozambique's not all work and no play. "Mozambique's allure can be directly attributed to the many leisure activities that are unique to the destination. Whether travellers are looking for post-business ocean or safari excursions or immersing themselves in history or culture, Mozambique offers it all," says Tenzer-Silva.

Every country has its own customs and traditions. So, when travelling Mozambique for your next business venture, keep the following guidelines in mind:

## 1. Make a good first impression

Ensure you get your greeting right. How? It is customary for both men and women to shake hands. Men commonly use both hands when greeting someone, with the left hand placed on the upper arm of the other person. If you're meeting more than one person, make a point of acknowledging everyone with a nod until you are formally introduced. Don't be surprised if women look down when speaking with men – this is a sign of respect and also know that it is customary for the person who initiated the meeting to open business conversations, while the most senior person in the room closes discussions.

## 2. Titles carry weight

Always address acquaintances in Mozambique by their professional title. If you are not sure about the title, address men in the third person as O Senhor (Mr) and women as A Senhora (Mrs/Ms). It is frowned upon to address someone by their first

name unless they have indicated you are allowed to do so. If your business contact has a degree, it is polite to refer to them as Dr or Dra.

### **3. Plan ahead**

Always set up a meeting time and venue in advance, and arrive punctually. Even though meetings in Mozambique may not run as per scheduled, visiting business colleagues are still expected to be punctual. Ensure that you have allocated enough time between appointments as these have a tendency to overrun.

### **4. Keep it social**

Mozambican locals are quite social, so try to start any business meetings with small talk about families and health. You should keep in mind that it's all about relationships in Mozambique. Make a real effort to get to know your associates socially, as this will end up helping you professionally.

Also, take note of the following:

- It is seen as a sign of respect to give and receive something using both hands
- Don't worry if you find people hissing at each other or even at you. It is custom in Mozambican culture to make a hissing sound when someone wants to get your attention.

### **5. Dress**

Dress for success in Mozambique. Men are expected to wear a suit or dress pants with a button-up shirt and tie. Women can opt for a dress with a blazer or a business suit or a traditional dress.

### **6. Negotiation Tips**

Most business conversations are conducted in Portuguese. So, make use of translation facilities, which are readily available in Maputo. Or, if you really want to impress, get to know the language first-hand.

If at all possible, try not to schedule any business meetings in January. During this month, national holidays take precedence and many government employees take leave.

Also, keep in mind that business decisions are not made on the fly. Be prepared for ongoing back-and-forth discussions following your initial meeting. Be patient and do not try to rush a decision from your business partners in Mozambique – it could cost you the entire deal.

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