



EXCURSIONS

SNORKELLING



Snorkelling in Chole bay is a fantastic, colourfully exuberant experience accompanied by hoards of fish, all with different shapes, colours and sizes. The waters surrounding Mafia Island offer an extraordinary variety of marine life and provide some of the most spectacular coral reefs on the East African coast. The marine diversity is amongst the highest in the Indian Ocean with over 400 species of fish, 5 species of marine turtle and 48 general of hard corals.

Our primary snorkelling trip takes place around big rock, right on the edge of the bay. You are always accompanied by an experienced guide whom ensures safety and points out several creatures from below the turquoise waters. Snorkelling trips usually last for a couple of hours however for those mega enthusiasts it is possible to join on the dive boat to get 4 hours of snorkelling in. Wind allowing we sail back to the shore making the experience truly unforgettable.

All ages are welcome however children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a parent. Wary swimmers can join too, life jackets can be provided as well as private guides and life rings.

MARIMBANI SANDBANK



The Marimbani sandbank is a beautiful half moon shaped piece of sand which can be discovered only by low tide. This little patch of dreams is located within Chole bay only 20 minutes away from the dive centre.

The excursion starts with a departure from the dive centre for some snorkelling on one of Mafia's pristine reefs. After the snorkelling the boat will set off again taking you to the sandbank itself. Here you will be invited to acquaint yourselves whilst our staff prepare an area for you to lounge with a shade and some mats. From this moment on, it is completely up to you to decide what to get up to.

This is one of the most idyllic spots imaginable to catch up on some reading, to sunbathe, to have a snooze or to have a little walk in the inter-tidal area where it is possible to spot cowries, sea urchins, crabs and starfish. It is also possible to snorkel where one could be lucky enough to spot the elusive seahorses in the sea grass. Whilst you enjoy your relaxation time, our team will start to prepare your BBQ lunch, cooked in the simplest but most tantalizing way which is guaranteed to impress your taste buds. With a cool beverage in hand and hopefully a camera to capture the memories there is nothing more you could need.



EXCURSIONS

MANGE SANDBANK



For those of us who are looking for a full day adventure, Mange sandbank is the perfect option. A day lost at sea, on your own private patch of sand, surrounded by the Indian Ocean. A true Robinson Crusoe experience with a dose of barefoot luxury.

Mange is a sandbank located several kilometres south of Chole Bay, it is the most pristine patch of pure, white sand, exposed only on the low tide. This little patch of dreams is surrounded by tropical reefs teeming with colourful corals and fish. It is possible, if you look hard enough over the expanse of aquamarine water, to see the trees from mainland Tanzania.

This trip is planned for the whole day and usually departs around 08:00 am to return around 6:00 pm. The boat trip itself is approximately one and a half hours by dhow each way. Dolphin sightings are common and depending on the species and their behaviour, your guide may invite you to slip into the water and have a magnificent swim with one of the most beautiful species imaginable. Usually we plan to drop on some nearby reefs before heading to the sandbank to enjoy some snorkelling. Once you have arrived on the sandbank your guide will set up a shaded area and lay some mats for you to laze under. He will also set up the BBQ area and start to prepare your lunch.

Eventually, the sandbank will be swallowed up by the sea and the hours of daylight will be few. At this point our guide will invite you to board the boat and head back to Mafia's shores. Wind allowing, the captain will hoist the sail and you will quite possibly experience the most breath-taking journey of your life.

This excursion is tide and weather dependent and requires 6 participants to be planned. Food and beverages are provided by your respective hotels.

WHALE WATCHING



During the months of September and August we experience the Humpback Whale migration in the south of Mafia as they head for warm waters with their calves. These magical creatures can grow up to 14 metres long and weigh a whopping 40 tonnes!

Humpbacks are renowned for their magical songs which travel for great distances. These songs are complex and often continue for hours on end. They migrate annually from the cool polar waters to the warmer waters near the equator to mate and nurse. The most breath-taking moments with these whales is watching them breach, throwing themselves out of the water to land with a tremendous splash. They also slap their fins and tails in a playful manner putting on a super show. We usually combine the chance to spot these magical mammals with a Mange sandbank trip. After a couple of hours of whale watching we go for a quick snorkel and then a relaxing fish BBQ and picnic on the picturesque patch of sand.



EXCURSIONS

SNORKELLING WITH WHALE SHARKS



In Mafia between the months of October and March one can indulge in a truly magical experience: swimming with Whale Sharks.

Whale sharks are not whales and are not your typical shark, they're the largest fish in the sea measuring up to 20m.

Little is known about these gentle giants by scientists which is what adds to the overwhelming feeling you have when you see them. The whale shark is a filter feeder and therefore has no teeth, they are completely

harmless. The majority of the time they're very shy although on occasion can be inquisitive making your encounter that much more spectacular.

We outsource all our whale shark tours to a company called Kitu Kiblu who offer responsible marine encounters with these gentle giants. The tour starts with a pick up early in the morning by car or bajaj which takes you over to the Western side of the Island to their base. Breakfast will be served and an informative briefing will be given to you and the chance to ask as many questions as needed.

You will then be invited on board their dhow and head out to start spotting sharks! Tea and coffee as well as some small snacks are served on board in between whale shark sightings. Wind allowing, you sail back to the Kitu Kiblu base and have a chance to buy T-shirts or your own Whale Shark video.

Clients usually return around 11:30 however this really depends on how long it takes to spot the whale sharks and how long you want to be out swimming with them! If your first trip was unsuccessful Kitu Kiblu have a special offer of 50% off for the next try.





EXCURSIONS

TURTLE HATCHING



Sea turtles have been nesting on Tanzanian beaches for over 150 million years. Between June and September hundreds of baby turtles make their instinctive scramble from the white sandy beaches to the warm Indian Ocean waters.

Here in Mafia we are fortunate enough to be able to witness this natural spectacle from the East facing beach of Juani, an island bursting with nature from the tiniest of butterflies to the giant, baobab trees. This experience is made possible for us by an NGO called Sea Sense. Set up in 2001, they have been working in partnership with the local communities to promote the importance

and protection of marine turtles and their habitats through various projects.

The adventure starts with a lovely dhow trip across Chole Bay, landing on the shielded Western side of Juani Island. On arrival, a 45 minute walk across the island passes through hundreds of trees, a quaint village and offers the chances to spot local wildlife such as monkeys. During this walk nature's true beauty becomes more apparent in the form of towering trees and acres and acres of green foliage up until the very last minute, where attention is turned to the turtle nest hidden below African sand. The little hatchlings emerge from the sand, scrambling out of their nest, flapping their fins vivaciously, racing to reach the surf and start the next step of their incredible journey.

With the image of baby turtles crawling across the beach still fresh in our minds, we make our own way back to the dhow. Wind allowing we sail back to Mafia's shores with a cup of tea or coffee in hand and incredible scenery all the way.

FISHERMAN ISLAND



Fisherman Island is a beautiful small islet found on the North Eastern side of Chole Bay. Named because of its periodic presence of Mafian Fisherman who stop over to dry their catch before returning to the mainland of Mafia.

This excursion is a high tide alternative for the BBQ on Marimbani Sandbank. First, guests will be taken out to one of Mafia's stunning snorkel sites followed by a small sail to the Island itself. Once here a shade and some mats will be set up for you to chill under and kick start your hours of complete relaxation.

On the Island itself it is possible to sunbathe, explore the mangroves, which hide one side of the Island or swim in the crystal clear water just in front of your camp. It is also possible to do some snorkelling here. Whilst you acquaint yourself with your own private island, our team will start to set up a traditional Mafian, fish BBQ and prepare your lunch.

This trip is tide dependent and unfortunately one can not hide away in peace for the whole day. The trip lasts around 4 hours and is a true Robinson Crusoe experience with a splash of Swahili culture.



EXCURSIONS

JUANI BLUE LAGOON & JELLY FISH POOLS



The blue lagoon is a long channel linking the huge inland bay with the open sea that bisects the southern point of Juani. At the end of the channel is an enormous natural swimming pool whose level varies according to the tides and also boasts a staggering number of upside down jellyfish.

After a short walk you can enjoy its clear waters, swimming in your own private, natural pool. The area can only be reached by boat during high tide for a few hours a day.

Those more adventurous individuals amongst us could trek from Kua to the Blue lagoon through the lush green forests, inhabited by monkeys and tropical birds. By doing this on low tide one will witness a natural phenomenon only known to few people: the whole channel drains of water creating an extraordinary view of the ocean waves breaking on the reef in the background. A fantastic photo opportunity of nature at its best.

KUA RUINS



Across the bay from our beaches, on one of the largest and most characteristic islands in the archipelago, are the ruins of the ancient city of Kua. An identified archaeological site from the 12th century which still has no firm reasoning as to why all of a sudden the civilisation ceased to exist, although there are various legends.

This island is bursting with unusual fauna including wild pigs, monkeys and small antelopes (blue duiker) and is an important nesting site for Green turtles.

The city of Kua was established by settlers from Kilwa, and was heavily involved in trade. There are many giant baobab trees throughout the area and most of the ruins are covered in green, being smothered slowly by the surrounding nature. All over the ruins you can readily dig up pottery sherds, some dating hundreds of

years ago to Chinese and Persian origins.

As you wander between crumbling walls smothered by the roots of strangler figs, you will pass several mosques, a cemetery, a palace with large storeroom, a dispensary and a school, all which were funded by the then-lucrative trade in cowrie shells. Vervet monkeys scamper among the fallen buildings and plenty of haunting cries from surrounding birds will add to the mysterious atmosphere, letting your imagination run wild.



EXCURSIONS

CHOLE ISLAND



Chole Island is situated just 5 minutes East of Mafia Island by boat and is one of the most historical islands of the archipelago, once being the capital. This tour is one of our most popular as in a short amount of time one can experience a good dose of Chole's nature, culture and history.

The tour can be broken up into 4 sections.

Ruins: Chole boasts Arabic ruins from the 12th and German ruins from 19th Century, which were built during world war I. The ruins have surrendered to mother nature and are almost all smothered with

green foliage and brown vines.

Bats: Chole also boasts the worlds first dedicated fruit bat sanctuary. During they day these creatures hang in the trees asleep and fly over to Mafia by night to feed.

The Boatyard: Chole island is home to the skilled men who build the traditional Swahili dhows by hand and with minimal tools.

The Red herring: The Red Herring is Chole's beautiful bar, which is also the only Western facing bar on the Eastern side of the Island, allowing for truly magical sunsets and of course lovely cold beverages to go down with it.

BWEJUU ISLAND



Considered by many to be the most beautiful island in the archipelago, Bwejuu is situated South of Mafia, 3 hours navigation by boat.

Bwejuu is perfectly positioned halfway between the main island of Mafia and the delta of the Rufiji River. It boasts spectacular, white sandy beach and is less than 2 kms long and no more than 200 metres wide at its widest point.

Day trips can be offered to spend a day lost on a tropical island. Shades will be set up amongst the palm trees and BBQ'd fish

served in time for lunch in true Mafian style. Swimming in the turquoise waters just off the beach is not to be missed and some snorkelling can be made as well.

This excursion will be highlighted by the beautiful sail to and from the Island, one can day dream at the stunning Islands that surround the path or read a book under the shade of the sail.



EXCURSIONS

RAS MBISI: HIPPO TOUR



A series of Reed-lined lakes in central Mafia are probably the remnants of an old lagoon which was cut off from the ocean thousands of years ago, here live a small population of Hippopotamus.

Little is known about the population, but it is presumed that they crossed over from the Rufiji or were washed over to the island by floods in the river system.

They have been on Mafia for many years, their presence has been recorded here since 1895.

This particular population are very elusive and seldom spotted. In fact recent sightings are as a result of a local hippo whisperer, he

whistles and clicks various tunes to entice the hippos out of hiding.

RAS MKUMBI: THE LIGHTHOUSE



Mafia Island was historically purchased from the Arabs in 1890 by Germany. Mainland Tanzania and Mafia Island was colonised by the Germans until it was captured by British troops in World War I. The Germans erected the lighthouse and it has stood ever since, receiving restoration efforts some years ago.

The lighthouse is situated on the northern most tip of Mafia and is not only visited for its historical properties but more so for its incredible views.

From the top of the tower, one can see for miles over the Open Indian Ocean, a truly exquisite site. If one turns South views of the Mlola forest come into sight, with towering trees and lush, green patches.

Our excursion to the North offers one the chance to bare witness to history and enjoy a small picnic on the edge of Mafia, with some of the most beautiful views imaginable.



EXCURSIONS

KANGA BEACH



All of the best beaches on Mafia are found in the North of the Island. Miles and miles of untouched coastline, with no fighting over space - just an endless sea of sand that slowly slips into the aquamarine, Indian Ocean.

This excursion offers guests to escape the touristy area of Utende and join a list of few others on the unbeaten track to Kanga beach in the North West. The journey can be done by car or bajaj and can take up to 2 hours and be a little bumpy depending on the state of the roads.

Once we have arrived and sink our toes into the warm African sand, you will have the chance to familiarise with your surroundings and have your breath taken away. During this time your guide will set up a shady area for you and place some mats for you to laze under. He will then discretely cook some fish and lobster in the traditional Swahili way and serve you with lunch and some coconuts, picked from anearby tree.

Here on your private, endless beach you can sunbathe, swim or just spend the day chilling. It is possible to venture up or down the beach and discover yet more unpopulated paradise or simply sit back and relax and enjoy the view.

DHOW SAILING



One of the simplest, most relaxing and picturesque excursions - a gentle sail around Chole Bay. The dhow is a traditional boat and the preferred vessel in East Africa for hundreds of years.

The wooden boat offers a most comfortable, smooth journey over the rippling water. There is a pleasant seating area offering you the chance to settle back, take in the sunshine and the view – pure relaxation. This is a unique trip, sailing around spectacular views of the islands but also appreciating the immense culture that the dhow represents.

If the wind is ample with easy conditions and at the discretion of the Captain himself, you may even have a try at sailing the boat yourself, adjusting the rudder to weave the boat left and right through the Indian Ocean.

It can be organised with your respective hotels to have a cool box accompany you on board with some cool beverages and light snacks.



EXCURSIONS

SUNSET CRUISE



The sunset cruise is a beautiful option for couples, families and friends to sit back and relax with a drink in hand and not a care in the world.

Being on the Eastern facing part of the island we are unable to see the sunset from the island. Because an African sunset is something never to be missed we offer a peaceful, relaxing cruise on the beautiful Chole Bay. After a busy day of adventuring or a lazy day of snoozing jump on board your private, traditional dhow, for a relaxing sail alongside a fantastic sunset. The boat will be waiting on the

shore ready to depart at 17:30, you will be accompanied by a guide to ensure your trip goes smooth and a captain who will man the rudder and ensure a smooth sail through the Indian Ocean with a first class view of the sun setting on the horizon. Even if it happens everyday, a sunset in Africa is a phenomenon that never ceases to amaze. The bursts of orange, red and pink on the horizon offer an inspirational feeling and a beautiful moment full of opportunities which should not be missed.

This excursion is perfect for families, couples, photographers and those individuals just looking for a good way to end their day. Beverages are provided by your respective hotels at your request. Coffee, tea and some light snacks are provided on the cruise.

MOONLIT CRUISE



A unique, special excursion that can only be offered periodically: a moonlit cruise. This is one of a kind and definitely breath-taking.

On Mafia the night sky is an attraction in itself, riddled with stars, no planes or pollution – just nature in all its perfection. No matter how many months or years someone has been here, they can always appreciate the unparalleled beauty of the Mafia night sky.

This excursion is obviously the perfect option for a romantic, night adventure for couples. It is also appropriate for groups of friends

who want to have a few drinks in a unique setting, accompanied by incredible beauty. We also recommend those budding photographers amongst us to join as the photo opportunities are incredible, with the moonlight shimmering in the water. Wind allowing the sail will be hoisted and your captain will carve his way gently through the clear water sparkling with the stars and moonlight.

The boat will be waiting for you on the shores of Mafia, with a captain and guide ready to show you some spectacular scenery. A cool box can be arranged with your beverages of choice from your respective hotel at your request.

A truly magical, water adventure that will be a lasting memory for any hopeless romantic.



EXCURSIONS

MANGROVE WALK/SNORKELLING



There are 15.9 million hectares (over 60,000 square miles) of mangrove forests in the warm waters of tropical oceans all over the world. Tanzania is home to one of the largest mangrove systems in the world.

At the intersection of land and sea, mangrove forests provide a safe haven and support a wealth of life, from starfish to people, and may be more important to the health of the planet than we ever realized.

Mangroves live life on the edge. With one foot on land and one in the sea, these botanical amphibians occupy a zone of desiccating heat,

choking mud, and salt levels that would kill an ordinary plant within hours. Yet the forests mangroves form are among the most productive and biologically complex ecosystems on Earth due to their excellent adaptive skills. Birds roost in the canopy, shellfish attach themselves to the roots, they act as a nursery for a variety of fish as well as a number of small creatures that can be spotted around and amongst them.

This tour entails walking on the scenic, sandy beach on a low tide to explore the mangrove systems, looking in the small pools created and spotting a number of different animals and plants. Or you can opt to snorkel through the mangroves on the high tide where you can see small fish, crabs and several other species hiding out in their nursery. These tours are weather and tide dependent.

KILINDONI TOUR



Kilindoni is the capital of Mafia Island, the 'big city', the hustle and bustle of the Island. Visiting the main town is an exceptionally interesting and humbling experience.

Our guide will show you the true Mafia, by taking you through all the small pathways amongst the market, showing you the people going about their daily business. It is a truly humbling experience to see the modest epicentre of activity. You will have the opportunity to witness Mafians hard at work, making nails, selling fruits, vegetables and fish.

You will also be directed to see Mafia's port where all the dhows land after their trips through the perilous sea to the mainland or to Zanzibar. You will browse the various fabric stalls, mitumba shops and spice vendors. Our guide will direct you to several local food eateries should you wish to sample an authentic Mafian restaurant. This excursion invites you to make something different out of your holiday, not just staying in the confines of the hotel, really discovering Mafian culture and life.

At the end of the excursion, our guide will take you to the nearby Whale Shark Lodge to enjoy a cocktail or cold beverage accompanied by a stunning sunset over the Indian Ocean. This excursion is advised for the afternoon to avoid the sun and can only be done by car or bajaj. Men and women must dress moderately with women covering their knees and shoulders.



EXCURSIONS

UTENDE TOUR



Utende village is situated directly next to the Mafia Lodge and within close vicinity of all the other hotels.

We offer our clients the use of one of our local guides to accompany them on their visit to the village. This is a good alternative to going alone as our guides are residents and know all the points of interest and will be able to show you directly to where you wish to go. Our guides are also fluent in Swahili and can assist in the language barrier between guests and locals. In Utende, one can explore the different stalls which

sell a variety of different things such as traditional cloths, local food, artworks and Masai jewellery.

There is also the opportunity to buy material and have the local tailor make you a personalised piece of clothing such as trousers or dresses.

When walking through the local villages, guests must dress with decorum understanding that Mafia is primarily Islamic and therefore women must cover their shoulders and knee's. Drunken behaviour and profanities are not tolerated. If you wish to take a picture of someone, be sure to get their approval first.

MAFIA ISLAND TOUR



For those Individuals who want to see Mafia Island in its whole we designed an excursion which encompasses all the various interest points into one, creating the Mafia Island Tour.

This excursion will set off from your hotel at 08:00 am and head straight for the North of the Island where one will be able to see the lighthouse and the 'edge' of Mafia, with all its wonderful views. Next, you will find yourselves arrive just in time for lunch at Kanga beach. Our guide will set up the shade and mats for you to laze under. Feel free to jump in the crystal clear water and swim whilst he prepares some BBQ'd lobster and fish for your delicious beach picnic. Then after lunch – a quick stop to try spot the illusive hippos. Hopefully after seeing plenty of grunting hippos, you will be ready to jump into the busy main town of Kilindoni for a spot of shopping, dose of culture and a visit to the harbour, local artisans and eateries.

After all this action, you will end up at the Whale Shark Lodge and be invited to put your feet up, order a cool drink and watch the sun set.

In this tour one can remove the excursions less interesting to them to tailor fit the adventure as their own. This trip has been done by bajaj however is more comfortable by car.