



The best hotels for honeymoons

MOZAMBIQUE

Vamizi Mozambique

If you're looking to escape to a paradise far, far away, head straight to Vamizi. This sizeable island is located a few miles off the coast of Mozambique, amid pristine coral reefs (one of which, Neptune's Arm, regularly features in top 10 lists of the best dive sites in the world) and perfectly turquoise water.

Vamizi is a conservationist project snapped up by idealistic British investors as Mozambique's vicious civil war came to an end in the 1990s and is still owned and managed by the Maluane Project, which aims to protect the ocean basin and coral reefs, home to vast fish stocks, abundant marine life and whale, dolphin and turtle populations. So it makes sense that the design ethos and aesthetic on the island is 'rustic chic' - guests stay in large Robinson Crusoe-style villas set back from the beach with exterior walls made of carved wood and big open-air verandas. There are no pools or baths - large marble showers offer the only splashing outside of the Indian Ocean - but plenty of Africology products and fresh flowers give an air of exclusivity. You'll spend most of your days outdoors - kayaking, birdwatching, fishing, snorkelling, diving or whale-watching - but no one will mind if you prefer to just laze about in the warmth of the ocean or on the beach. After all, the white sand deserves some sort of award - it's thick, soft, finer than icing sugar and the best we've ever seen.

In the evening, flickering lights from torches on the beach signal that guests are on their way to the main lodge to mingle with staff and plan activities for the next day over pre-dinner cocktails. Food consists mostly of fresh fish and seafood served alongside a small selection of wines, and it is the food that will remind you of the island's isolation and the poverty and transportation issues that plague Mozambique. The war has taken its toll on both production and communications, but the island's management are doing what they can to expand their network of suppliers, which will ultimately lead to a wider range of produce. Having said that, we were served some very memorable treats - including an amazing crab curry, fine surf and turf, and crayfish the size of lobsters.

In fact, part of the island's appeal lies in that it feels so far away. After an overnight flight from Heathrow to Dar es Salaam, a two-hour journey onboard Vamizi's single-propeller charter plane and a touchdown at the airfield of Mocimba de Praia - where passports are stamped and visas issued for entry into Mozambique - you'll be a 10-minute flight away from the island itself. Once you land, you can look forward to a 45-minute Land Rover drive across bumpy roads to the lodge. The thrilling journey, the glorious nature and the stunning silence means that on returning home, Vamizi seems to belong to a dream. And isn't that the best souvenir you could possibly bring back from a holiday?

Vamizi offers six nights accommodation at Vamizi and one at Oyster Bay in Dar Es Salaam on a fully inclusive basis - including internal flights, transfers and taxes - from £2,384 per person, based on two sharing. Flights with British Airways to Dar es Salaam cost