

# Excursions from Mafia Lodge



## ***MAWENI - SNORKELING***

Coral rocks emerging from the bay surrounded by an extremely interesting reef which can be reached even by less expert swimmers.

## ***MARIMBANI SAND BANK***

A strip of dazzling white sand which appears during low tide, surrounded by crystal-clear water.



## ***CHOLE ISLAND***

The oldest, still inhabited settlement in the archipelago, with the ruins of an old Arab fort used by the Germans during the World War I. The island is covered by varied lush vegetation. Visit a shipyard where traditional construction methods are still used to build dhows, the typical East African sailing boat. Among the island's curiosities are a number of trees containing colonies of Comoro bats, a protected species of fruit eating "flying foxes".



## ***JUANI ISLAND - KUA RUINS***

One of the largest and most untouched islands in the archipelago, the ruins of the ancient city of Kua, whose decline, as yet unexplained by archaeological and historical findings, is the object of many legends. The island's fauna is quite unusual and includes wild pigs, monkeys and small antelopes (blue duiker). Turtle hatchings can be seen on the East coast of Juani.



## ***JUANI CHANNEL & BLUE LAGOON***

The southern point of Juani Island is divided in two by a long shallow channel linking the big inland bay with the open sea. Sail up the emerald channel by Dhow , and take a short walk to the natural Blue Lagoon, whose water level varies according to the tide. The area can only be reached by boat during high tide for a few hours a day, but those who decide to trek from Kua, will witness a natural phenomenon known only to few people: during low tide the whole channel is drained of water creating an extraordinary sight with a view of the ocean waves breaking on the reef in the background. The entire area belongs to a special archipelago project for the protection of its wildlife and vegetation.

## ***JIBONDO ISLAND***

The island of Jibondo is about an hour boat trip from Utende village and is characterised by the unique conformation of the western tip and the surrounding emerald green waters. The village is mainly inhabited by fishermen whose fish and octopus drying and net mending activities are of great interest to tourists together with the traditional shipyard, one of the most famous in Tanzania. The trip includes a break for snorkelling and lunch on the beach.

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## Excursions cont.



### ***KITUTIA REEF***

Kitutia Reef is one of the archipelago's most beautiful coral reefs with two strips of fine white sand which stay above the water during the low tide. The trip includes snorkelling or diving activities and allows time for walking along the reef and swimming in the natural pools formed around the sandbanks. Depending on the tides, lunch is served on Kitutia Reef or on another beach en route to the reef.



### ***BWEJUU ISLAND***

Considered by many to be the most beautiful islands in the archipelago thanks to its position and its sand banks, Bwejuu Island is less than 2 kms long and no more than 200 meters wide at its widest point. Halfway between the main island of Mafia and the delta of the Rufiji river, makes it a handy base for diving and snorkelling on the nearby Mange Reef, as well as for trips along the Rufiji River which can sometimes go as far as Selous Game Reserve, a huge nature reserve covering over 50,000 sq.km. A small traditional fishing community lives on the island.



### ***CHUWIA BEACH***

An hour by car along a track passing through one of the most characteristic landscapes of the island and an easy trek through a stretch of virgin forest takes you to one of Chole Bay's most inaccessible beaches. You will be able to admire wildlife and vegetation untouched by human settlement and cultivation.



### ***RAS MKUMBI – THE LIGHTHOUSE***

On the northernmost point of Mafia Island, the lighthouse is reached by car. It is an exciting journey that takes you right across the island and its changing landscapes. Wide stretches of savannah studded by baobab trees, small seaside villages, bush populated by monkeys and birds. You can go right to the top of the lighthouse, which is still operational, for an all round view of the island.

The trip to the lighthouse or Chuwia beach can also include a short visit to places inhabited by a colony of hippopotamuses which are so small that they are known as "dwarf hippo". Their unexplained and unusual presence on the island, is said by some, to date back to ancient times when the conformation of the Rufiji river delta and the tides made it possible for them to cross the strip of sea separating Mafia from the mainland. Others claim that their arrival is due to a light-hearted or utilitarian gesture (fresh meat supply) on the part of the Portuguese who were frequent visitors to these coasts several centuries ago. When the small pools, where they live, dry up the hippopotamuses move to a zone where you need a good stroke of luck to find them. But the search for the hippo can provide the occasion for a visit to an area of incredible natural beauty reaching as far as the Tumbuyu beach.

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## **Whale Sharks**

The whale shark is the biggest shark and the biggest fish in the sea, it is not a shark, feeding only on plankton. During the day they spend most of their time feeding near the surface in tropical and warm seas.

Enjoy a once in a life time trip to see, swim and snorkel with these majestic creatures, generally around between the months of October to March.



## **Turtles**

Mafia and the surrounding islands are important nesting sites for green and hawksbill turtles, while leatherback, olive ridley and loggerheads also occur in Mafia waters. The on-going protection programme recorded over 150 nesting sites in 2002.

Trips to see the turtles hatching can be organised during the hatching season, usually between June - August.

## **Sport Fishing**

Fishing is offered outside of the Marine park and is done from traditional Dhow.

## **Market**

Visit the main village of Mafia and it's bustling market.



## **Sunset cruise**

Take a sunset cruise and enjoy a sun downer a sand bank.

## **Nature Trails**

Enjoy the mangrove trails around the coastline close to the lodge.

## **Bird Watching**

Don't forget your binoculars! There is an array of bird life in and around the Island and Marine Park, watch the fish eagles soaring and diving.

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