



*Africa meets Arabia meets the  
Indian Ocean in one fascinating  
cultural melting pot*

# Spice of LIFE

We head to *Zanzibar* in search of winter sun and some serious R&R at one of the spice island's newest resorts

Words **HELEN BROWN**



**M**ost people head to Zanzibar for its pristine white sand, calm waters and sensational sunsets. If that's what you're after, you won't be disappointed. It would be fairly plausible to add 'Zanzibar' into the dictionary definition of paradise, so perfect is the scene. In true island life style, the pace is slow and stress is minimal. "Hakuna matata", of Disney's *The Lion King* fame is commonplace, iterated by everyone from the flight attendant to the taxi drivers. You'll most definitely hear a song or two during your stay too, though not *that* song. Swahili is the native language and the locals love to welcome travellers with musical expressions from the island's rich heritage and culture. Here, Africa meets Arabia meets the Indian Ocean in what's got to be one of the world's most fascinating cultural melting pots. There's certainly much to be explored.

## SPICE HERITAGE

Zanzibar has quite the history. In the 19th century it was an important port for two of the world's most traded commodities: spices and slave, with spices being the island's main export for the last thousand years. A spice tour will teach you everything there is to know about this precious commodity, from the picking to the shipping, before treating you to a feast of island culinary specialties. You'll no doubt be inspired by the experience and vow to take home your new knowledge and put it to use. You'll have numerous opportunities during your trip to restock your spice cabinet as traders are plentiful.

## STONE TOWN

Stone Town is the island's main city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Portuguese invasion and control of the Swahili coast in the late 16th century ended the golden age of the archipelago, although the Omani Arabs returned to power less than a century later. Today, many of the winding streets and high townhouses of old Stone Town remain unchanged and visitors can walk between the Sultan's palace, the House of Wonders, the Portuguese fort and gardens, the merchants' houses and the Turkish baths of the old city. Allow time to get lost in its alleyways and admire its ancient doorways: majestic, tall and



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grand, they'll have you reaching for the camera in no time. While you're there, it's worth getting a snap of Mercury House, the once-family home of Queen frontman Freddie Mercury. His father worked for the British colonial service and the family lived in various locations in Stone Town, including this house which stands as a sight of pilgrimage for Mercury devotees.

### BEACHES

You'll find some of the world's best beaches on Zanzibar's coastline but sand and surf vary depending on what side of the island you're on. Up north, swimming conditions are more favourable as they are less affected by the tides; smooth beaches and white sand make for dreamy days in the sun. Top spots are the northern beaches of Nungwi and Kendwa, and if your visit falls on the full moon, you'll get the chance to party on the beach till the small hours. Don't worry, this is far from Thailand's party on Koh Phangan. Frequented by islanders and with a soundtrack of local African beats, prepare to put your dancing skills to the test against the talents of the locals.

### DESIGN DESTINATION

Kendwa has become something of a resort destination in recent years, thanks to its stretches of white sands and the archipelago's year-round sun, but none has a beach to beat Zuri Zanzibar's, the newest hotel on the block and the first Design Hotel member on the Tanzanian archipelago. Sustainability is at the heart of this newly finished, beach-side property comprising 55 stylish villas and bungalows which have been clustered into mini villages named after the spices that give Zanzibar its spice island moniker. A commanding and seemingly endless staircase stretching up from the beach to the reception area works as an axis around which the rest of the resort is staggered. With everything set on a west-facing slope, guests are afforded

direct sea views at all times, whether dining in one of Zuri's three restaurants or enjoying a morning meditation on the yoga deck.

For the interiors, Prague's Jestico + Whiles studio have combined modern design with traditional African and Asian pieces so that the finish is both ecologically and socially sensitive. Expect to find natural materials and traditional craftsmanship throughout, from thatched roofs and wooden beams to locally-curated furniture and East African artwork. Finished with hammocks, private sun decks and outdoor showers, it doesn't get more zen than this. Unless, that is, you take yourself to the spa which comprises three massage rooms and a salon offering a wide range of treatments, from manicures to hairdressing.

The final activity to be ticked off on the itinerary is snorkelling. Zuri's WIMBI Water Sports Centre offers all the rental equipment you'll need and the experienced instructors are more than happy to take you out on an expedition around nearby Tumbatu Island. The centre can also organise a brilliant sunset cruise on a traditional Dhow boat - a must - fishing trips and a Ngalawa boat trip. With its tropical tableaux, billowing sailing boats, smiling locals and fascinating culture, Zanzibar is a slice of paradise that must be explored. 🌴



### ZURI ZANZIBAR

Rooms at Zuri Zanzibar start from £349 per room, per night for a garden bungalow on a half board basis.

For further information, please visit [zurizanzibar.com](http://zurizanzibar.com).

Stay 7 nights at Zuri Zanzibar from £1,859 per person with Turquoise Holidays. This includes accommodation in a Garden Bungalow on a half board basis, international flights and transfers.

For more information visit [turquoiseholidays.co.uk](http://turquoiseholidays.co.uk)

Qatar Airways operates a daily flight to Zanzibar, with round-trip tickets starting from £670 for Economy Class. [qatarairways.com](http://qatarairways.com)

