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**ttg**LUXURY

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## POLE POSITION

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## Zuri Zanzibar, Tanzania



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Emerging from a suspended state somewhere between sleep and wakefulness, warm wood beneath my back and the sound of the ocean in the distance, it took me a few seconds to remember I was actually in a meditation class on a yoga deck.

Having planned an intensive safari in Kenya for my honeymoon, I was keen to book a few days at a beach resort to follow up and relax – and the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar seemed to fit the bill. It had always been one of those destinations so exotic-sounding it felt almost mythical, but now it was a reality – just a 1.5-hour flight from Nairobi and offering the impossibly white beaches and azure hues of the Indian Ocean. Even better, it's home to Zuri, a new eco-friendly 55-key resort.

One-year-old Zuri's Design Hotel status was apparent from the off, with large woven lampshades and seats swaying in the breeze and books on topics ranging

### GOOD TO KNOW

■ Zuri is located in Kendwa, 33 miles from Stone Town airport, on the northern tip of Zanzibar. The hotel can arrange transfers for \$90 one way; local tour and taxi companies are also available.

■ Wildlife in Zanzibar includes the endangered Pemba flying fox, vervet monkeys, Mozambique cobras, tortoises, bush crabs, sea turtles, red-eyed doves and mangrove kingfishers.

■ Excursions bookable with the hotel include visits to the Jozani Forest, Prison Island and Stone Town; a sunset dhow boat cruise; and signature tours to see mangrove trees, go fishing with locals, visit the Paje seaweed farm and "Zanzibar undiscovered" tours.



from designer Tom Ford to Czech Cubism – perhaps a nod to the entrepreneur behind the hotel. Vaclav Dejcmar – adorning the shelves of the little library in reception. The 13-acre Jestico + Whiles-designed hotel sets out to offer a blend of contemporary design, sustainable architecture and African influences, with first-rate gastronomy, wellness and responsible tourism woven throughout.

The cuisine, I can certainly vouch for. Staying half-board, for breakfast you can peruse an extensive buffet at the large, main restaurant, Upendo – with its show kitchen, European, African, Arabian and Indian dishes and relaxing soundtrack – or enjoy an à la carte experience at the Middle Eastern and Asian-inspired Maisha by the pool.

Half-board be damned, we also occasionally caved in to our lunchtime stomach grumbles and ordered at the beach bar – whose relaxed service sometimes bordered on slow – while our inclusive dinner back at Upendo was always a delight. A pre-dinner cocktail at Peponi bar underneath a canopy of multi-coloured glass lights also comes highly recommended, as does finishing off

the night with a cocktail at beach bar Bahari – all a short wander from one another through Zuri's luscious gardens. It's also worth noting that guests staying in deluxe suites and villas will have access to the intimate Dhow Bar, offering drinks and complimentary small bites.

Even better, guests who choose Zuri for their honeymoon for five nights or more will qualify for special extras such as sun doublers at Bahari, a spa discount and secluded seafood lunch on the beach – mine and my husband's highlight of the stay. We happily chomped down on freshly caught prawns, langoustines and enormous pieces of calamari all washed down with large glasses of sangria, no one else around and the Indian Ocean as a backdrop. To walk off a bit of that lunch, I headed off for a tour of Zuri's spice garden, which is one of many complimentary activities available. There is also a range of paid-for activities such as stand-up paddle yoga and fitness sessions.

*Romantic bliss*

Earlier this year Zuri became the first hotel in the world to be awarded EarthCheck's Sustainable Design Gold certification, thanks to its environmentally friendly architecture, energy-saving initiatives and strong focus on organic and locally sourced produce. Initiatives include the hotel's own desalination plant and a feature we couldn't stop raving about – an Evening Breeze system that creates a microclimate around the bed and uses 75% less energy than a conventional air-conditioning system.

Local community programmes include working with recycling company Zanrec to improve waste management on the island, the provision of wells around Kendwa, construction of local schools and a tourism training project designed to give locals the opportunity to be trained and find work in the hotel and hospitality sectors.

Tel: 00 255 245 500 111,  
[zurizanzibar.com](http://zurizanzibar.com)

### How to book it

Hayes & Jarvis offers seven nights half-board from £2,299pp, including one bonus night in Zanzibar and flights from Gatwick with Emirates (offer based on a 3 February 2020 departure).  
Tel: 01293 762456,

[hayesandjarvis.co.uk](http://hayesandjarvis.co.uk)