



MALAWI & ZIMBABWE

THE WARM HEART OF AFRICA AND THE MYSTERIOUS RUINS OF A LOST CIVILIZATION

May 11 - May 25, 2025

Led by Tour Manager, Michel Behar

Malawi, also affectionately known as "the warm heart of Africa," may be small in size but is large in diversity. Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa, offers remote islands, picturesque shorelines, and stunning sunrises and sunsets. The mountainous grasslands of Mulanje, Nyika, and Zomba plateaus afford spectacular photo options, and game-rich national parks and wildlife reserves provide exceptional wildlife viewing equal to those in East Africa. Malawi's greatest asset is her people – always ready for a laugh, a little chat, and an impromptu song and dance. Malawians' easy-going and warm nature makes this country one of the safest and most enjoyable places to travel in Africa.

Zimbabwe is well known for its amazing wildlife, but few know about its impressive ancient ruins or well-preserved cave art. This tour focuses on the historical and cultural side of Zimbabwe. Explore the Great Zimbabwe ruins, the largest and most significant stone archaeological complex in sub-Saharan Africa, thought to date back to the 11th century. It was built by the Karanga, ancestors of the Shona tribes, and for unknown reasons, the city was abandoned when the Portuguese arrived in 1552. Another fascinating highlight is the ancient cave paintings at Matobo Hills, home to some of the world's most extraordinary prehistoric bushman artwork. Some of the paintings feature wildlife such as giraffes, lions, and rhinos as well as humans, date back to 13,000 years.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Sunday, May 11

Arrive in Lilongwe (MALAWI)



Upon arrival in **Lilongwe**, meet the local representative and transfer to *Kumbali Country Lodge*, a private lodge on a 1600-acre forest reserve for check-in and overnight.

Note: Standard check-in time is 3:00 pm. If you arrive on May 10 or in the early morning of May 11, an extra hotel night needs to be booked.

Monday, May 12

Lilongwe



Spend the morning participating in the various activities offered at the *Lodge* such as a visit to **cultural sites**, enjoying **nature walks, biking, birdwatching**, or touring a **banana** or **coffee plantation**. For a more leisurely experience, relax by the pool or take advantage of the spa treatments offered at the *Lodge*. In the afternoon, head to visit the **Dedza Pottery shop**, founded by famous pottery maker Christopher Stevens in 1987. The center has a training program teaching pottery-making that plays a vital role in the welfare of the local communities. Enjoy a welcome group dinner & overnight at the *Lodge*. **(B,D)**

Tuesday, May 13

Lilongwe - Liwonde National Park (4 hrs.)



After breakfast, travel south to **Liwonde National Park**, founded in 1973 for wildlife conservation. This park has an electric fence around its 220-square-mile perimeter to ease conflicts between locals and wildlife and reduce poaching. Within the park there is an abundance of wildlife including baboons, elephants, black rhinos, hippos, antelopes, and warthogs. Cheetahs, wild dogs, and lions were recently re-introduced into the park. Liwonde is home to almost 400 bird species, including the threatened Lilian's lovebird and brown-breasted barbet, the only place in Malawi where these birds can be found. Check-in at *Mvuu Camp* or similar, which overlooks a broad stretch of the **Shire River** in Liwonde National Park. Enjoy dinner under the stars in a especially constructed **boma** (enclosure) and overnight at the *Camp*. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday-Thursday, May 14-15

Liwonde National Park



Spend the next two days participating in fun and exciting activities, such as **nature walks, classic game drives, or animal tracking** on foot. A **river safari** provides excellent **birding** opportunities and is a great way to see the wildlife from a different perspective. The guides are incredible birding experts who recognize bird calls, and the professional trackers will know where the cheetah cubs are hiding. Dinners & overnights at the *Camp*. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 16

Liwonde National Park - Nankhoma Island



Begin the day with a drive to **Nankhoma Island** at **Lake Malawi National Park**, the first freshwater national park to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage site worldwide. This status protects the diversity of the endemic fish and aquatic habitats including over 600 species of Cichlid and other species of fish not found anywhere else on earth. The transparent waters of **Lake Malawi** are a sanctuary for the birdlife - from the darting cormorant to the regal fish eagle. Transfer to *Blue Zebra Island Lodge (luxury tents)* or similar for check-in and have some rest. The *Lodge* is located on the private island of **Nankoma**, a stunning piece of paradise on the southern edge of Lake Malawi National Park. The island is teeming with wildlife such as antelopes, tortoises, chameleons, monitor lizards, and otters. Dinner and overnight at the *Lodge*. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 17

Nankhoma Island



Spend the day participating in activities of choice such as **hiking** the nature trails to spot wildlife and take in the panoramic views or **kayaking** around **islands**. Other activities include **scuba diving** or **snorkeling** or participating in one of the many water sports available such as **wakeboarding, waterskiing, or tubing**. Dinner and overnight at the *Lodge*. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Motorized water sports are at an additional cost.

Sunday, May 18

Nankhoma Island - Lilongwe (2 hrs. 15 min.) 

Begin the drive back to **Lilongwe** and head to visit **Mua Mission**, well known for its high quality woodcarving produced & sold. Missionary Fr. Claude Boucher Chisale established this Culture and Art Center in 1976 to aid in preserving Malawian culture. Learn about the history and culture of Malawi, particularly the Chewa, Ngoni, and Yao, and admire the Gule Wamkula masks on display at the **museum**. Transfer to *Kumbali Country Lodge or similar* for check-in, dinner & overnight. **(B,D)**

Monday, May 19

Lilongwe - Harare (ZIMBABWE)  

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our morning flight to the capital city of **Harare**. After a light lunch at a local café, transfer to the charming *Highlands House or similar* for check-in, the rest of the day free at leisure and overnight. **(B,L)**

Tuesday, May 20

Harare - Great Zimbabwe (5 hrs.) 

The highlight of any visit to Zimbabwe is the ancient city of **Great Zimbabwe**. Begin the drive to the ancient city and upon arrival, transfer to the *Lodge* for check-in, an excellent place to take a step back to the era of the Kingdom of Zimbabwe. The *Lodge* is built atop a granite outcrop with sweeping views of a tree-filled valley facing the direction of Great Zimbabwe. The rest of the afternoon will be free afternoon at leisure to enjoy the firelight and soft mbira music. Dinner and overnight at the *Lodge*. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 21

Great Zimbabwe Ruins 

Once the capital of Zimbabwe, **Great Zimbabwe** is the largest and most significant stone archaeological complex in sub-Saharan Africa. It is also one of the oldest, thought to date back to the 11th century, only second to South Africa's **Mapungwe**. Composed entirely of rectangular granite blocks stacked on top of one another without using mortar, the walls and towers of this World Heritage Site measure up to 40 feet high in sections. The ancient City was built and occupied between the 12th & 15th centuries by the Karenga, ancestors of the Shona tribes, who constitute much of the population of Zimbabwe today. For unknown reasons, the city was abandoned when the Portuguese arrived in 1552. Spend the day exploring this incredible site, then return to the *Lodge* for a free afternoon at leisure, dinner, & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 22

Great Zimbabwe - Matobo Hills (5 hrs.) 

After breakfast, begin the journey west towards spectacular **Matobo Hills**, known for its rich cultural history, diverse flora and fauna, and magnificent rugged terrain. Its unspoiled wilderness features red-tinged granite boulders and wooded valleys, making it a dream destination for nature enthusiasts and hikers. **Matobo National Park** is home to an impressive range of African wildlife, including the highly endangered black and white rhino, and has one of the highest concentrations of

leopards and black eagles in Africa. Ancient people have found shelter in the caves of Matobo Hills, leaving behind a legacy of rock art featuring some of the world's best-preserved San Bushman rock art paintings. Upon arrival, transfer to *Amalinda Lodge or similar*, an amazing thatched-roof home-turned-lodge for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 23

Matobo Hills (Ancient Rock Art) 

Spend the day exploring **Matobo Hills** and its impressive ancient rock art, mostly depicting human figures and animals such as giraffes, zebras, ostriches, monkeys, and rhinos. The paintings are illustrated using various colors, including reds, purples, oranges, browns, yellows, blacks, and greys. Visit the World's View **Whaleback Granite Rock** and the **Grave of Cecil John Rhodes**, both ideal places to enjoy a refreshing drink and the sunset after exploring this beautiful park. Return to the *Lodge* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 24

Matobo Hills (Cultural Village) 

Today will be an excellent opportunity to learn about **Matabele culture**. Appreciate their gracious hospitality as they show us around their "**pole and dagga**" homesteads. Visit the **local clinic** and **primary school** and meet its traditional healer for a fascinating insight into their lives. Learn about **traditional hut painting** and **Mother Africa Trust**, established in 2006 during a dark period in Zimbabwe's most recent history. Return to the *Lodge* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 25

Matobo - Bulawayo - USA 
OR continue to MOZAMBIQUE

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

OR join us on the exciting journey to **Mozambique, Eswatini, & Lesotho.**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients."

Special Tour Remarks:

- *Hotels may change at the last minute without prior notice due to reasons beyond our control.*
- *Routings may change unexpectedly due to weather conditions such as flooding.*
- *There may be limited electricity in some hotels.*
- *Flights in-between countries can change without notice and may require amending the itinerary.*
- *A high level of flexibility, tolerance, respect, open-mindedness, sense of adventure, and willingness to go with the flow if things change is expected while visiting these countries.*

Tour Cost (Land Only): \$10,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$1,395.00

Price based on group size minimum of 8 participants and maximum of 14 participants

Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: ****

About your Lecturer, Michel Behar... boasts an impressive list of credentials that will pique your interest and want to share the road with him. A Dutch citizen, after his studies of Russian and Arabic in the Netherlands he took a course of advanced Arabic at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. Fluent in 12 languages including Farsi, English, Turkish, and Hebrew, he understands seven others. He has been a tour manager since 1987 leading groups for US, Dutch, Swiss, German, and British companies. Michel has accompanied custom



tours as a leader/photographer for many prestigious museums, universities, and other institutions. He has traveled extensively throughout the world and visited all 21 Arab countries and for the last 20 years has turned his passion for photography into a second career. In addition, he has dabbled in journalism and has done freelance work for travel guides. Michel is also an expert in Sahara led tours such as Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa, and West, Central, and Southern Africa. His tour leading skills are the perfect mix that allows him to share this special tour with you.

Tour Includes:

- Airport/Hotel/Airport transfers in a/c vehicles.
- Accommodation in standard first-class hotels, lodges, and luxury tents as mentioned or similar.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Flight Lilongwe - Harare.
- Transportation by 4-WD Land cruiser.
- Bottled water while on tours and safaris, local and non-premium beverages at Blue Zebra Island Lodge.
- Senga Bay to Blue Zebra Island lodge boat transfers.
- English-speaking guide or naturalist/assistant during all tours and safaris.
- All entrance fees to mentioned sites, game drive activities, and national parks.
- Escort of a lecturer (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Gratuities to guides, drivers, rangers, etc. (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA - Lilongwe / Bulawayo - USA.
- For those continuing to **Mozambique**, the flight cost is approx. \$250.00 to \$450.00.
- **Visas: Zimbabwe** (upon arrival for \$30); **Malawi** (No visa required) - subject to change.
- Vaccinations (Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required if coming from an infected area).
- Meals not mentioned or beverages with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Motorized water sports at Nankhoma Island.
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Gratuity to your Tour Lecturer.
- Travel insurance (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED).

Trip Grade:

II Active: Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides.

Lodging Level:

****** Luxury:** Regular style- usually large- hotels, typical western standard with ample venues, and full amenities (4 or 5 stars).

