Introduction to GLTFCA

Getting Around

Mozambique: Limpopo National Park; Banhine National Park; Zinave National Park and the Greater Libombos Conservancy (GLC)

South Africa: Kruger National Park and the Greater Kruger area

Zimbabwe: Gonarezhou National Park and adjacent CAMPFIRE areas and conservancies

Cross-Border Adventures

Limpopo National Park
e-mail: pnlimpopo@gmail.com
Website: www.pnlimpopo.gov.mz
Call +258 (0) 84 3011 726

Kruger National Park
e-mail: reservations@sanparks.org
Website: https://www.sanparks.org
Call +27 (0) 12 428 9111

Gonarezhou National Park
e-mail: reservations@gonarezhou.org
Website: gonarezhou.org
Call +263 779788811

Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area
Website: www.greatlimpopo.org
Wild animals don’t see the lines on maps, they follow ancient migratory trails led by instinct in a wilderness that reminds all who pass through that everything is interconnected...

INTRODUCTION

A World Without Boundaries...

The ground-breaking Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) is a conservation collaboration between three countries – Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Measuring almost 10,000,000 hectares, the GLTFCA is an extensive area and encompasses the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, the Kruger National Park in South Africa and the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe. The region also includes the Banhine and Zinave National Parks in Mozambique, as well as various privately, community and state-owned conservation areas in all three countries.

The region is one of the few remaining parts of Southern Africa that still contains natural undeveloped areas with little human impact and influence. It is an extensive area of mostly flat savannah beached from north to south by the imposing Lebombo Mountains and drained by four river systems flowing from west to east: the Limpopo, Olifants, Save and Komati.

The evidence of iron-age implements and stone-age artefacts speaks to the presence of humans in the area – the San were early inhabitants, who left numerous rock-paintings scattered across the region, followed by Bantu tribes about 800 years ago. Visitors to the area can explore the history and heritage of the region at various sites and attractions.

Wildlife in Abundance

The region draws together vast conservation areas in Southern Africa and forms one of the largest protected areas in Africa. There is an abundance of wildlife in the GLTFCA, which is home to 147 species of mammal, 116 reptile species, 49 species of fish, 34 species of frogs, 500 or more bird species, in addition to at least 2,000 species of plants. It is possible to see all the iconic African big game, including elephant, black and white rhinoceros, lion, leopard, giraffe, zebra, buffalo and many antelope species.

Culture, Community and Living Heritage

In addition to incredible wildlife experiences and bush adventures, the GLTFCA has a fascinating cultural heritage, and traditional experiences and community-based activities are an added highlight for any traveller to the region. For those visiting the area, immersive cultural experiences provide insight into the traditional and contemporary cultures of the people who live in and around these wildlife areas.
Getting Around the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area

The GLTFCA is an exciting destination for any traveller, with a range of activities and options on offer but this is not a formulaic destination by any means – the real value of the destination lies in the massive biodiversity of the region: the fascinating living heritage of the area and an authentic African experience far from the madding crowd. Itineraries should be carefully planned to incorporate travelling times and the vast expanse of mileage that will be covered on any trip incorporating the three countries.

While there are some incredible market-ready excursions and attractions, tour operators and travellers should bear in mind that some of the attractions and experiences are currently being developed and fall into the future vision of the region. This brochure will give you the highlights of the different regions, but there are always the hidden gems worth exploring, the unexpected meetings and pleasures found along the way.

Traveller Highlights (At A Glance)

- Chilojo Cliffs – incredible sandstone mountains (landscape)
- Malilangwe Conservation Area – Kambako Living Museum (cultural)
- Samala Gorge (natural attraction)
- Zinave – route for 4x4 travellers to the beaches of Bazaruto (bush & beach)
- Banhine National Park – unique wetlands (prolific birdlife)
- The Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor – gateway to adventure - where three countries meet
- Thulamela – linked to the ancient Kingdom of Great Zimbabwe (cultural)
- Tsendze Rustic Campsite – 4x4 camp (accommodation)
- Immersive Cultural Experiences (community)
- Shingwedzi Cliffs – 4x4 route (natural attraction)
- Massingir Dam – Excellent tiger-fishing (activity)
- The magnificent beaches of Mozambique (bush & beach)
Limpopo National Park

The Limpopo National Park is a popular half-way stop for travellers on bush and beach excursions en route from South Africa to Mozambique. It is a source of national pride for the people of Mozambique. Situated strategically alongside the Kruger National Park, this massive trans-border conservation area allows for the large herbivores such as elephant and buffalo to roam freely as they did in the past.

Known for amazing scenery, friendly people and beautiful beaches, Mozambique is also home to some incredible wilderness areas, including a number of notable national parks and conservation areas. Limpopo National Park (LNP), Banhine National Park, Zinave National Park and the Greater Libombo Conservancy (GLC) all form part of the GLTFCA.
When the park was first established, it was on a million-hectare hunting concession with very little infrastructure apart from a few hunting tracks and poor roads. Through a partnership between the Government of Mozambique via the National Administration for the Conservation Areas (ANAC) and the Peace Parks Foundation an ambitious plan was put in place to jointly develop the park. The Giriyondo Tourist Access Facility was established as the main artery from South Africa into the Limpopo National Park, and an important thoroughfare for visitors. Over the years advisors from Peace Parks Foundation have provided technical support to develop the basic infrastructure – creating an essential foundation for further development of the region and making it more attractive to tourists.

A Dream in the Making

Developing tourism in the park is part of the ambitious vision for the region. Tourism development based on key wildlife products will be very beneficial to the economy and the communities that live in and around the park. A community resettlement programme is currently underway and government has a long-term plan to attract visitors to the region and to make them stay and enjoy the range of tourism experiences and opportunities available from 4x4 and walking trails to fishing safaris and the best possible bush and beach experiences.

ANAC making great strides

Established in 2011, ANAC is a State institution responsible for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable development of the country’s ecotourism. Its main activities are the planning, coordination and execution of activities in the conservation areas, in partnership with local organisations and communities. The conservation areas administered by ANAC represent around 25% of the national territory including seven National Parks and 70 game-hunting areas divided into 20 official game reserves, nine hunting blocks, 13 community projects and 31 game farms.

“Where else in the world can you stand with one foot in South Africa, the other in Zimbabwe and have your shadow fall on the soil of Mozambique?”

Dr Bartolomeu Soto, World Bank
Landscape

The diversity of landscapes in this part of the world is unmatched, with large swathes of sandveld, covered by mopane, ironwood and broadleaf savannah making up this pristine wilderness. Limpopo National Park is bounded by both the Limpopo and Olifants Rivers, with the Shingwedzi flowing through its centre. In the south is the Massingir Dam, a popular area for tiger-fishing. The evocative landscape and vistas are a must for anyone with a keen eye for photography and travellers will enjoy driving through the imposing Shingwedzi River Valley with its incredible cliffs, varied topography and diverse vegetation.

Wildlife

With wildlife resources ravaged during the civil war and later by poachers an extensive restocking programme became necessary. As a result of this programme over 5000 animals were introduced to the area. To date, wildlife numbers are slowly but surely continuing to grow, and the park is home to elephant, leopard, rhinoceros, spotted hyena, Cape buffalo, kudu, zebra and antelope. There is also considerable birdlife and the region is known as a formidable crocodile breeding area.

Taking a Stand Against Wildlife Crime

Implementing effective anti-poaching strategies over the one million hectares of the Limpopo National Park is no mean feat. Leveraging limited resources continues to be a challenge. The conservation of wildlife resources is a priority, and Peace Parks Foundation has provided the support needed to stabilise the area. A number of anti-poaching milestones have been reached since 2015 including the introduction of improved communication systems; improved aerial surveillance and monitoring; skills development and training initiatives for staff; these and an increase in patrolling efforts have all shown great success in terms of wildlife conservation and will continue over the years to come.

Community Livelihoods

One of the key objectives of the Transfrontier Conservation Areas is to improve the lives of communities in and around wildlife areas, and find new ways to use natural resources in a sustainable manner to create alternative livelihood options and tackle poverty head-on. Dealing with wildlife and human conflict is key to this process.

“Our dream is to reconnect Africa’s wild spaces to create a future for man in harmony with nature.”

Peace Parks Foundation

A percentage of revenues – gate income, camping fees and all concession fees – are paid over to the government and are then repatriated to the communities for projects and development of infrastructure aimed at benefitting the community.
The Government of Mozambique and The Peace Parks Foundation have facilitated the resettlement process of eight villages, giving large benefits to the communities with limited agricultural opportunities. These include modern homes, training access to basic needs, and in the long term will provide job creation as well as access to markets for their produce and goods.

Tourism Experiences

The diversity of tourism experiences is currently limited, but there is great potential for the development of tourism activities. There are few places in the world where one can truly get away from it all and Limpopo National Park is one such place. The houseboats and tiger fishing at Massingir Dam are popular. 4x4 routes offer wild adventures and the scenic landscapes and sense of space in places that feel untouched are a drawcard. As different parts of the park begin to take shape, visitors will begin to spend more time there, thus creating jobs and opportunities for the local communities to play a major role in being part of the tourism product of the region.

Visitors can enter the park via South Africa (Kruger National Park), through either the Giriyondo or Pafuri border gates and from Mozambique via the Mapai or Massingir gates. The R71 from Phophiweni goes into Kruger National Park past the Giriyondo border post into Limpopo National Park.

Maputo International Airport, Mozambique (250km to Limpopo National Park).

© Ryan James

“The sense of space is incredible, when you drive here you really feel like you are in the wilderness.”
Peter Leitner, Project Manager, Parque Nacional do Limpopo
Zinave National Park

Situated in Inhambane province, Mozambique, Zinave National Park is a vast area of pristine bushveld. It was declared a protected area in 1972, but the civil war in Mozambique ravaged the region for 16 years, having a devastating effect on the wildlife and habitat. In 2015, a co-management agreement was signed with Peace Parks Foundation to jointly develop the region as part of the visionary GLTFCA. Covering an area of 400,000 hectares, Zinave extends to the south of the Save River – and offers visitors an extraordinary opportunity to explore roads less travelled.

Wildlife

This relatively unknown corner of the Universe is experiencing a rebirth. A rewilding strategy that was introduced in 2017 is well underway. The potential relocation of the Big 5 is being planned with carnivores from conservation areas in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, being introduced from 2020 onwards.

Tourism

A network of good 4x4 tracks have been opened, specifically on the eastern side; these are more accessible during the rainy season than those on the western side. Situated close to one of Mozambique’s tourism development nodes, the exquisite Vilanculos-Bazaruto Archipelago – known for its fantastic beaches – once developed, Zinave could become a sought-after tourist destination.

There are two self-sustainable campsites, one inside the sanctuary and one amongst large baobabs outside the sanctuary. There are also eight self-catering dome tents with very basic ablution facilities next to the Save River. Accommodation offerings are sparse at this stage but steady progress is being made and the big vision is that the area will attract travellers who will not only enjoy the spoils of this magnificent addition to the GLTFCA but will also uplift the local communities who live in the park.

“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

Arundhati Roy

© Trevor Landry

© Peace Parks Foundation
Greater Libomboks Conservancy

Mozambique has become the first country since the signing of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) Treaty in 2002 to add an area to the GLTFCA with the establishment of the Greater Libomboks Conservancy (GLC). The 240,000 hectare conservancy is the first privately managed area to be included as part of the GLTFCA and comprises a total of nine properties in Mozambique on the eastern boundary of the Kruger National Park.

Banhine National Park

Located in central southern Mozambique, the 700,000 hectare Banhine National Park is a unique wilderness area where thousands of migratory birds flock en masse during the rainy season. The expansive plains and crystal-clear lagoons make it unique as an important ecological pathway between the Limpopo and Zinave National Park within the GLTFCA.

Wildlife

In the early 1970s, abundant ostrich and giraffe populations roamed the area freely, but as with the other national parks, they were eradicated during the civil war and due to poaching in the region. However, as the park becomes more secure, there are plans for rewilding the region, which in turn will revitalise the entire ecosystem and attract travellers seeking adventure and experiences on their way to other attractions within the GLTFCA.

People and Parks

As with Limpopo National Park and Zinave National Park, uplifting communities through tourism development is high on the agenda. The communities living within and alongside Banhine National Park depend on subsistence farming to earn a living and tourism will bring much-needed economic activity into the region.

The tourism offering is currently very limited. The 4x4 tracks are in good condition, but the roads leading into the park (via Mapai) are difficult to navigate during the rainy season when campsites are accessible only from the south-east.

While Banhine has a long road ahead in terms of development, this national park is an unsung gem for the traveller looking for wide open spaces and a real sense of being at one with nature.

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The Kruger National Park was first proclaimed in 1898 as the Sabie Game Reserve by the then President of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger. In 1926, the Shingwedzi and Sabie Game Reserves were merged, and the Kruger National Park was born.

“One tourism has changed the lives of people in our community.”

Tintswalo ‘Melba’ Dlamini, Nourish Eco Village

The Kruger National Park

The Kruger National Park was first proclaimed in 1898 as the Sabie Game Reserve by the then President of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger. In 1926, the Shingwedzi and Sabie Game Reserves were merged, and the Kruger National Park was born.
Traversing nearly 2,000,000 hectares, the Kruger National Park is one of the world’s most famous parks, boasting diverse landscapes and wildlife, as well as a rich African cultural heritage. With mountain ranges and koppies (hills), savannah, and riverine forests, the Kruger teems with animal and birdlife. The vast landscape has enormous botanic biodiversity: mopane veld stretches for miles north of the Olifants River, while in the south, thornveld predominates. The flora supports myriad creatures and you will find Marula, Mopane, Baobab and Fever Trees in various sections of this national park. The waterways are hives of activity and include the Luvuvhu, Shingwedzi, Letaba, Timbavati, Olifants, Sabie and Sand Rivers.

Wildlife

The Kruger is a top game-watching destination with an estimated 1400 lion, 17,000 elephant, 48,000 buffalo and 1000 leopards. About 147 mammal species occur in the park and guests are bound to see hippopotamus, griffon vulture, elephant, giraffe, buffalo, warthog, wild dog, cheetah and spotted hyena.

The Little Five

There are a number of smaller species to be found in the Kruger National Park, including the Little 5 – Buffalo Weaver, Elephant Shrew, Leopard Tortoise, Ant Lion and Rhino Beetle.

“… I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

Wendell Berry, The Peace of Wild Things
GLTFCA Co-operative Partnership

In December 2018, a co-operative partnership agreement was signed by SANParks and various conservation areas located on the western border of the Kruger National Park, including private reserves and state and communal areas within the Greater Kruger area.

The collaborative agreement is aimed at addressing conservation matters and socio-economic benefits through creating an open system – connecting communities, the private sector and conservation partners to make a real difference to the lives of people who live outside the park.

The Letaba Elephant Hall gives visitors insight into the habits of these great creatures. For those who want to take Africa back with them, the community arts and crafters have their work on display at the Numbi, Hlanganani Phalaborwa and Skukuza outlets.

Highly sophisticated African cultures already existed by the 16th century, as evidenced by the ruins of Thulamela, Albasini and Masorini. There are also a number of community projects that celebrate local culture in and around the vast expanse of the Kruger.

For travellers visiting KNP by road, there are nine main gates: Crocodile Bridge; Kruger; Malelane; Numbi; Orpen; Pafuri; Phabeni; Phalaborwa; and Punda Maria. Travellers should check opening and closing times (these differ between seasons). There are daily flights from Johannesburg to Skukuza, Phalaborwa and Helderfontein, as well as daily flights to Skukuza from Cape Town. There is also a flight from Cape Town to Hoedspruit. The Kruger/Mpumalanga International Airport (KNP) has daily flights from Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

Activities and Experiences

The Kruger really is all about seeing the incredible wildlife: self-drives, game drives, guided walks and 4x4 eco-trails are all on offer. The main bush camps are well equipped with braai areas and some boast swimming pools, an ideal way to cool off after a day out viewing the animals.

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Gonarezhou National Park

Zimbabwe’s second largest national park, Gonarezhou, is located in a spectacular corner of Masvingo Province in the south-east of the country along the Mozambican border. It is connected to the Kruger through the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor in Zimbabwe.

Landscape

This is one of Zimbabwe’s most scenic parks, with rugged unspoilt landscapes that include alluvial flood plains, dense mopane woodlands, magnificent baobab trees and the iconic Chilojo Cliffs. These spectacular sandstone columns stand as ancient sentinels surveying a timeless landscape, offering incredible cliff top views over the Runde River and the plains below.
A Serene Wilderness

The peace and tranquillity found in this remote landscape are hard to beat. Most visitors access the park via self-drive 4x4s and its very remoteness speaks to how special it is that travellers can virtually have the place to themselves. They will, however, have to share their space with the elephants, leopard, wild dogs, antelope and over 453 species of birds.

The Gonarezhou Conservation Trust (GCT) is an innovative model for protected area management—a creative collaboration between the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and the Frankfurt Zoological Society. Since the 1st of March 2017, the trust has been directly responsible for the management of the park and will be for a period of 20 years.

Activities and Attractions

The main activities include game-viewing from vehicles and limited walking. Some of the main roads in the park, such as those around Mabalauta and the track down to the Chilojo Cliffs, are accessible for 2x4 vehicles but, for travellers who want to venture a bit further off the beaten path, a 4x4 vehicle is a requirement.

Fishing is available for overnight visitors at specifically designated campsites along the Runde and Mwenezi rivers. There are also a number of picnic sites and viewpoints throughout the park.

Gonarezhou offers a variety of accommodation options, from remote wilderness campsites with no facilities to the comfort of the chalets at Swimuwini. The park, however, remains onimmering oneself in the experience of being in nature through camping. The three developed campsites, (Chipinda Pools, Chinguli and Mbalabala) have multiple sites and are well equipped. There are three fully equipped Mongezi Camps available, sustainably built and decorated by women from the local community. For those who prefer bricks and mortar, the chalets at Swimuwini are a great option. The fully furnished tented camp at Chipinda Pools is also popular with those who enjoy a more comfortable stay. Chilo Gorge Safari Lodge is another option, elevated over the Save River with views for miles, and further afield in the Malalingwe Reserve, guests can stay at Singita Pamushana Lodge, a wonderful mix of exclusive luxury and wildest Africa.

“...Africa’s epicentre of baobabs. There are thousands of these arboreal grandfathers near Tembwahata Pan, we counted 60 within sight of us.”

Scott Ramsay
Getaway Magazine
Community Engagement

A critical aspect of the Trust’s community engagement is the employment of people from communities directly adjacent to the park. Over 86% of GCT’s staff are employed from within the Chiredzi District (75% from communities around the Park).

There are numerous community projects to ensure that communities play a role in the vision of this great park. The Trust, along with the community established the Mphfuka Movement, a formal platform of communication that allows the Park and communities to find common ground and develop mutually beneficial solutions to issues.

Through the Mphfuka Programme, GCT engages with communities to find solutions to the most pressing problems. The collaborative programmes mean that key solutions are community-led. Mphfuka means “journey” in Shangaan and reflects the fact that communities and the Park need to walk this journey together to build a sustainable future for all.
At the heart of the vision for the GLTFC is the creation of a conservation area that not only benefits wildlife, but communities as well. We live in a time when collaboration and collective action are not only desirable but necessary, creating a situation in which everyone wins.

The traveller to this area is definitely on a winning streak, with a number of cross-border opportunities available that add to the layers of an exciting adventure in southern Africa.

The most popular cross-border regions include: Gonarezhou and beyond – to Zinave, Banhine and the beaches of Mozambique; the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor; the combination of Kruger National Park and Limpopo National Park en route to Maputo and/or the fantastic coastline of Mozambique.

This is a destination in progress, and the vision is to create a lot more activity and products as the existing cross-transfrontier tourism opportunities grow/mature and activities and attractions emerge to thrill the traveller in search of a layered and thrilling adventure.
Gonarezhou and beyond…

There are very few places one can go in the world that are unspoilt and untouched by over-tourism. Gonarezhou is quite the opposite. One of Zimbabwe’s best-kept secrets, the gift of Gonarezhou is its remote location. As one travel writer stated, it’s the kind of place where you get “that goosebump wilderness feeling…”.

The rugged south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe provides opportunities for developing unique tourism experiences. While the southern portion of the Gonarezhou National Park opens opportunities to visit the communal areas, the northern part focuses its richness on the magnificence of the Chilojo Cliffs, leading to the Chilo Gorge and its community-owned 5-star lodge.

Popular Route

Travellers need a 4x4 to navigate the roads. A popular route is through the far northern Kruger National Park, heading into Mozambique first (at Pafuri) and then crossing over into Zimbabwe. There are scheduled flight options to Buffalo Range for guests staying at Chilojo Bushcamps, Singita Pamushana Lodge and Chilo Gorge Safari Lodge.

Natural Bounty

The Chilojo Cliffs are a major highlight of a visit to Gonarezhou, and a defining signature of nature on this remote wilderness. The cliffs rise some 200 metres above the Runde River floodplain and the views are remarkable. From a lofty vantage point at the top of the cliffs, one can observe the terrain of the area, and of course it’s the ideal place for photographic safaris. The spectacular Tembwahata Pan lies near the confluence of the Runde and Save Rivers and attracts scores of wildlife, including antelope, buffalo and, of course, elephant. South of the Runde River, the Machaniwa Pan is a great spot for birders, with its abundance of fish eagles and saddle-billed storks. Travellers must take note that the pans are seasonal.

Accommodation

Gonarezhou offers a variety of accommodation options, from remote wilderness campsites to the comfort of chalets to luxury safari lodges. The camping option is a popular choice, offering an up-close and personal experience with nature. There are a limited number of wilderness campsites. For those who prefer a bit of extra comfort the chalets at Swimuwini are on offer.

“Gonarezhou is unique. The work we’ve been doing here has transformed it for everyone living here. It has turned conflict into co-operation and everyone has benefited. The Shangaan are happy, the park is happy, and the animals are happy.”

Clive Stockil, Conservationist
The fully furnished tented camp at Chipinda Pools is well established, and as with Swimuwini, all power is solar, and solar geysers supply hot water. The company also supplies the three solar-powered camps in the park. What is special about these camps is that the camp structures were built using the traditional techniques of mud-brick walls and natural floors and are decorated with natural paints, all made by women from the surrounding community. The thatching grass is also purchased from a locally empowered women’s group, which harvests the grass inside the park. Each of the camps has a central kitchen or dining / boma area, as well as four bedroom units that each accommodate two adults, either in a king- or twin-split-bed configuration.

Chilo Gorge Safari Lodge

On the edge of Gonarezhou National Park, this elegant and spacious lodge offers every home comfort and spectacular views. Travellers can also enjoy other accommodation options.

Chilo Gorge Tented Camp

Chilo Gorge Tent Camp (semi-luxury seasonal camping): Nhamo, a self-catering product for the self-drive market and Ivory Trail Adventure - a mobile camping experience where adventurous travellers can enjoy some of the less visited areas of the park.

Tsoseli Women’s Group

Since 2012, a programme of supervised grass harvest by community members has been run in the north-western sector of the park. A special feature of the programme has been the formation of the Tsoseli Women’s Group – a group of 25 disadvantaged women from the Chitsa community.

Chilojo Bushcamp

A tented camp nestled on the banks of the Runde River, with vistas of the Chilojo Cliffs. The camp is unique in that it is marketed and sold through a select group of private guides who offer stripped-back luxury, with a steadfast focus on creating once-in-a-lifetime experiences and etching memories in the minds of their guests.

Kambiko Living Museum

The Kambiko Living Museum is adjacent to accommodation in a unique setting. The Living Museum is aimed at teaching the youth traditional bush skills and knowledge, and is a popular excursion for visitors.

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Singita Pamushana Lodge and Malilangwe House

Located on the 130,000 hectare Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve in the remote southeast of Zimbabwe, Singita boasts ultra-luxury accommodation in a unique setting. The area is rich in heritage and wildlife with over 100 rock art sites as well as being home to the Big 5 (including black and white rhino).

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The Malilangwe Trust

The Malilangwe Trust is a wholly Zimbabwean non-profit organisation that focuses on harmonising conservation activities, community development programs, tourism and anti-poaching roles.

Mwange Private Nature Reserve

The Mwange Private Nature Reserve is located on the edge of Gonarezhou National Park. The GLTCA team is working hard to incorporate Mwange Private Nature Reserve into the bigger picture. Mwange Private Nature Reserve is situated on Mozambique’s northern border with Gonarezhou, Zimbabwe. It is an area that is being rehabilitated and restored to a natural wilderness through serious conservation work.

Shingwedzi Cliffs to Gonarezhou

The Shingwedzi Cliffs are a must-see for travellers going from Limpopo National Park to Gonarezhou. There is a waterfall and beautiful views in an area rich in wildlife, community and conservation. There is a basic campsite for visitors and there are plans to expand the accommodation offerings.

CAMPFIRE

The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) was initiated in 1997 by the Zimbabwe Government to support community-led development and sustainability. The programme allows community members to earn income on communal land through the sustainable use of the environment and wildlife through various tourism-led initiatives. CAMPFIRE has been implemented widely across Zimbabwe with indirect benefits for communities including the building of schools and clinics and the creation of local-entrepreneurial opportunities. The first CAMPFIRE Programme was started in the Phalabora area, where Chilo Gorge Safar Lodge is located and its principles have since been replicated across Africa and the rest of the world.
The region around Pafuri offers ever-changing landscapes, where riverine forests transform into bushveld; where mountains fall to floodplains; where baobabs stand strong in an area also known for fever trees. No wonder the area is rich in bird and animal life. Highlights of the region include a visit to the famous Crooks’ Corner where the Luvuvhu and Limpopo Rivers converge – a place where three countries meet.

There are plans to create annual adventure-sporting events to attract visitors to the area. This is the region that connects northern Limpopo National Park, northern Kruger National Park (including the Makuleke Area) and the Sengwe Area in Zimbabwe. The Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor links the far northern Kruger to Gonarezhou National Park, sometimes known as the “Pafuri Triangle”.

This is authentic Africa, with its big-game hunters and legendary adventurers of the bush that the author T.V. Bulpin wrote about in his book, “The Ivory Trail”. The region attracts a special kind of traveller - lovers of nature and the environment seeking authentic adventures.

Currently the only places to stay in the corridor are the Manjinji Pan that is still in development and the Boorman’s Tented Camp on the boundary of the Park.

Awe-Inspiring Natural Features

The region around Pafuri offers ever-changing landscapes, where riverine forests transform into bushveld where mountains fall to floodplains, where baobabs stand strong in an area also known for fever trees. No wonder the area is rich in bird and animal life. Highlights of the region include a visit to the famous Crooks’ Corner where the Luvuvhu and Limpopo Rivers converge – a place where three countries meet.

Places to Stay

There is a variety of accommodation, including award-winning luxury lodges, family bush-style accommodation, 4x4 camps and various campsites.

The Outpost and Pel’s Post

The stylish Outpost is something of an architectural stunner and accommodates 24 guests in 12 open-plan, en-suite luxury spaces beautifully appointed on a hill overlooking the Luvuvhu River. The eco-luxe Pel’s Post is also part of the Rare Earth portfolio at Pafuri. With four exclusive suites and views extending as far as the eye can see over the Luvuvhu River, guests can truly experience the solitude of the region in ultimate comfort and luxury.

“Where else in the world can you visit three countries in just one day?”

Godfrey Baloyi, Makuleke Contract Park
Alongside the socio-economic history of the region, the evolution of conservation practices is narrated by the landscape across the two major natural divides - the Lubombo Mountains and the Limpopo River.

Ancient Kingdoms Collide, Thulamela
Visitors can book a place on the SANParks Thulamela Trail, a fascinating adventure into the incredible history and heritage of the far-north region of the Kruger National Park. The stone-walled late Iron Age site of Thulamela dates back about 450–500 years before present (BP). Thulamela forms part of what is known as the Zimbabwe culture believed to have started at Mapungubwe. It is said that the decline of Mapungubwe coincided with the growth of Great Zimbabwe. When Great Zimbabwe was abandoned some 300 years later, a number of groups migrated south across the Limpopo river into South Africa (and northern Kruger) and established new smaller chiefdoms. It is believed that Thulamela was one of these chiefdoms.

A Strong Cultural Heritage
The Pafuri/Sengwe region is rich in history and heritage sites are scattered in the natural landscape from Kruger National Park into the communal areas of Mozambique and Zimbabwe.
The Kruger/Limpopo National Park Combo

The Giriyondo Tourist Access Facility, which was opened in December 2005, allows visitors easy access from Limpopo National Park to Kruger National Park and the surrounding lowveld with its many tourist attractions. Visitors to Kruger now have direct access to the tourism facilities of Limpopo National Park, as well as a shorter route to the magnificent Mozambican coastline.

Community Tourism

While both Limpopo National Park and the Kruger National Park have dedicated community upliftment programmes, the initiatives in Mozambique are still in progress as communities are currently being relocated to new living areas within the park.

For those visiting central Kruger National Park, there are some good opportunities to not only get to learn more about local cultures, but also to make a difference in the lives of the numerous communities who live in and around the park. Many of the upmarket lodges near the park have dedicated community initiatives, which mean the tourist rand or dollar goes a long way in contributing to permaculture gardens, creches, clinics and livelihoods in these communities.

Hoedspruit with Heart

In and around Hoedspruit, there are some excellent community projects, and visitors are invited on educational tours, including:

The Nourish Eco Village Immersion Tour: participants visit a permaculture project, a sewing initiative, a cooking scheme (feeding kids at the local creche) and various recycling projects. There is also the Shick Shack Village Walking Tour run by Shik Shack Backpackers & Tours which supports households in the area as well as Nourish Eco Village. On this tour guests learn about Shangaan culture, visit beading and mat-weaving projects, learn how peanut butter is made - the organic way - and visit the village sangoma.

Hlokomela is a local non-profit healthcare organisation that looks after the health and wellbeing of farmers and hospitality staff in the Kruger to Canyons area. Tours with Hlokomela offer visitors insights into social change and development driven through sustainable community projects.

Guests can also book a tour with the Timbavati Bush School to find out more about the incredible work done in the area by the Timbavati Foundation.

© Ryan James
Places to Stay – Central Kruger

In the Kruger National Park there are different types of accommodation. For travellers going through the central section of the GLTCA – enter the Kruger National Park at Phalaborwa gate and head to Shimuwini Bushveld Camp. Shimuwini is the Shangan word for “Place of the Baobab Tree”. The camp is so named because the nearby Letaba River, which fronts the cottages, is lined with these huge trees, one of them estimated to be between 2 000 and 3 000 years old.

Letaba Rest Camp is another favourite for those making their way to Limpopo National Park. This idyllic camp is situated on a sweeping bend of the Letaba River, midway between the southern and northern boundaries of the Kruger National Park. The name means “river of sand”, and the sandy riverbed is an excellent location for game-viewing, particularly elephant, which thrive in the area. Letaba is a green oasis amidst the surrounding mopane veld, and is a firm favourite with visitors. At night, nature takes part in a rousing symphony - where owls, frogs, nightjars, crickets, cicadas (and the odd roar of a lion) join together in a pleasing harmony.

Tsandze Rustic Camp Site

The Tsonga word for “tsendzeleka” or “to ramble around like someone lost in the bush”. This relatively new accommodation offering in the Kruger National Park. Located south of Mopani Rest Camp this is a rustic camp, a favourite with self-drive tourists and a fantastic camp for birdwatchers. The owls in the area are a sight to behold, according to local camp manager Rodgers Hobyane.

Two prominent seasonal water courses, the Tsandze River and Nshawu Creek, run through this area, which is known for the large buffalo herds and many elephant bulls that occur here. Guests can also look out for “Alexander”, a big tusker who sometimes visits the area.

Visit the Tropic of Capricorn

The Tropic of Capricorn is a parallel line of latitude at 23 degrees and 30 minutes and is the southernmost point where the sun can be directly overhead. This occurs at noon on 21 December, Summer Solstice, the longest day in southern Africa. The Tropic of Capricorn can be crossed north of Mopani Camp and is a fun place for visitors to take photographs.

Through the Limpopo National Park

Visitors are advised to book accommodation in advance before driving through the Giriyondo Tourist Access Facility between the Kruger and Limpopo National Parks.

Accommodation

While accommodation offerings are currently limited, guests can stay over at Campismo Albufeira close to the Massingir Entrance Gate, as well as the Massingir Dam wall. LNP is still in the process of developing accommodation products. Machampane used to be a popular choice but new ownership is currently under discussion.

At Agua Pescaria there are chalets and camping and the site has great potential for houseboats, but this is dependent on the successful resettlement of communities. Albufeira Chalets and Camping is close to Massingir town and a good pit-stop for those commuting to the coast. Excellent for groups and those on self-drive trips. Once the tourism product in the area has been developed further, visitors will be encouraged to stay longer than the current one-night.

“Listen and you will realise that we are not made from cells or atoms; we are made from stories.”

Mia Couto
Covane Community Lodge –
A Responsible Tourism Success Story

The lodge in Canhane, Gaza, offers lake-view chalets overlooking the Massingir Dam. Also on offer are traditional rustic huts, which are built from wood and thatch and have shade-cloth windows. Covane is all about community and a percentage of all accommodation fees go to the local residents; members of the nearby villages are employed by the lodge. There is also a programme in place that ensures that Covane Lodge is responsible for providing water to the nearby village. With every tourist dollar spent, local villagers benefit.

Bush and Beach Tourism

From LNP, travellers can head off to any of the great beaches of Mozambique including Bazaruto, Vilanculos and Inhambane or opt for time in Maputo to feast on prawns, drink cerveza, visit the local nightspots and food markets. Further afield, visitors can enjoy world-class game viewing in the Kruger National Park, Limpopo National Park and Gonarezhou National Park and then explore the best of marine eco-tourism by taking the roads less travelled through the Bhanine National Park and the Banamana Wetland to visit the beautiful coastal resorts of the Gaza and Inhambane Provinces.

"Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Ralph Waldo Emerson
For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

— Nelson Mandela

Karingani

Extending over an area of 150,000 hectares, Karingani represents the largest privately managed tract of land in the GLC with a goal to restore, enhance and maintain the natural ecological processes and biodiversity through an effective and sustainable partnership between the Mozambican Government, private investors and participating communities. Through strategic ecological management, Karingani already displays wildlife carrying capacities comparable to well established, long standing reserves. The Xinghana Community Lodge will be opening in December 2020 as the first ‘open to public’ tourism destination within Karingani. Libombos and KNP

Bush-lovers can spend time in and around the well established lodges of the Sabi Sand Reserve and then make their way through some of the popular Kruger National Park camps before heading towards the Greater Libombos Conservancy for a few nights of rugged adventure. The beautiful beaches of Vilanculos, Bazaruto and beyond await, or for those who want to explore further; they can drive through Limpopo National Park heading towards Gonarezhou.

The Greater Libombos Conservancy

In March 2017 the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park Ministerial Committee Meeting held in Maputo made several decisions which included the incorporation of the Greater Libombos Conservancy (GLC) as part of the GLTFCA to enhance biodiversity conservation and community development.

The GLC brings private concession land in the southern part of Mozambique into the whole GLTFCA project.

The area gives travellers direct access to Maputo, and there are various options for accommodation on offer. The region is in the early development stages in terms of its tourism offering, but Sabie Game Park and Karingani show great potential. Sabie Game Park is a 30,000 hectare wilderness region that borders the Lower Sabie section of the Kruger Park. It takes its name from the Sabie River which forms the reserve’s southern-most boundary.

The area has huge biodiversity with excellent game viewing and birding opportunities.

© Karingani

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There are so many wonderful opportunities for visitors to explore the expansive GLTFCA, and there are big plans ahead to grow the destination into a sought-after journey for the more conscious traveller who aims to make a difference to the conservation and preservation of wildlife, the upliftment of families surrounding the wildlife areas – and of course as a gift to themselves. Like the herds of elephant and buffalo who traverse these plains unhindered, here travellers too will explore the region and find their own sense of freedom.