

# Travel feature – planning and dreaming of Malawi

While lockdown continues we can only dream and plan of our next foreign trip. Here we think about somewhere we have not been, but which has many links to Scotland.

## Malawi's Top Tourist Attractions

Malawi is a beautiful country full of incredible natural sights, friendly people, and a rich cultural history. Everybody who lives in Malawi knows it, but to the outside world, it's a secret. Tourism from Europe and the United States of America to Africa has been increasing steadily for several years, but Malawi has largely been left out of the equation. Trusted international news sources like America's CNN [have done their best](#) to persuade their readers to give Malawi a try, but so far, the appeals have fallen on deaf ears. There's clearly more work to do if Malawi is to become the tourist destination that it could be and deserves to be.

The low tourist numbers clearly have nothing to do with the range of amenities and attractions that Malawi has to offer – there's nothing lacking in the 'places or go' or 'things to do' department.

In this article, we're going to look at some of the Malawian attractions that have been the most popular with international visitors. These are the things that we want the people of the world to picture when they think about Malawi!

## Lake Malawi



Photo courtesy of Malawi Tourism

Let's start with the most obvious of all of Malawi's natural features. Even though the country is landlocked, it has coastlines and a stunning body of water to offer in the shape of Lake Malawi. This isn't just the most amazing lake in Africa – it's possibly the most amazing in the whole world. UNESCO clearly agree with us, because they've declared it a World Heritage Site, in much the same way as Edinburgh has the same accolade for the Old Town and the New Town. The lake is believed to contain more species of fish than any other body of water in the world, and how they all came to be in there at the same time is a mystery so great that even the combined minds of those who write the Smithsonian [couldn't figure it out](#). The lake is clear, and so it's perfect for snorkeling. In some places, tourists can even swim close to elephants and hippos – although obviously they're advised to keep to a safe distance. Experienced world travelers may have swum in many lakes in many different countries, but none like this.

## **Safari**



Photo Tom Neff

There are many safari companies or tour guides to choose from, as Malawi has one of the most vibrant and attractive safari offerings in Africa, and is usually less expensive than a safari trip in Kenya or Uganda. Malawi's plains and wildlife are notoriously beautiful – they've even been used as the backdrop for games on online slots websites, like 'Safari King,' and 'Africa Goes Wild.' While Malawi isn't explicitly named in any of the online slots, there's no mistaking that scenery! You won't have to win the jackpot of one of the [online UK slots](#) to buy a ticket to the majority of the professional tours offered within the country, and a Malawian

safari is generally considered a good deal.

## **The Chongoni Rocks**

In the west, we are taught that modern civilisation began with the Ancient Romans or the Ancient Greeks, with a strong contribution from the Ancient Egyptians. Malawians know better. With a single visit to the Chongoni Rocks, you can find evidence of a civilisation that existed long before the Romans ever built their empire. Find yourself a map, and explore more than one hundred pieces of pre-historic rock art scattered all across the Lilongwe area, some of which are so old that they're thought to have been painted by primitive hunter-gatherers long before written language was even invented. The Stone Age carvings are, in the same way as Lake Malawi, designated a World Heritage Site, and they demonstrate that people have lived on Malawi's land since almost the dawn of time. This is also a great place for Malawians to visit too.

## **Chintheche**





Photo courtesy of Malawi Tourism

For someone looking for the perfect beach vacation, Chintheche is as good as anywhere in the world. Sitting on the pure white beach looking out to the blue sea, surrounded by trees, anyone who spends a moment there could be forgiven for thinking that they'd gone to the Caribbean instead of Africa. Chintheche offers visitors the best of Caribbean-style scenery and temperatures combined with Malawian culture and hospitality – and that's a winning package. If visitors want to fit a few activities into their vacation, such as climbing and camping or water sports, they can head a little further south to Kande Beach, where the scenery is the same, but there's a little more to do.

## **Mount Mulanje**

Why not take on a challenge while you're on vacation? If you're fit enough and you enjoy recreational climbing, Mount Mulanje is just waiting to be conquered. Standing 10,000 feet above sea level, this is the highest mountain in south-central Africa and dominates the skyline for miles around. A visit to the mountain isn't all about climbing, though. There's a golf club nearby, and an array of high-class hotels and restaurants in Mulanje Town. That means you can look at the mountain and admire the view in comfort even if you don't feel like trying to climb it! Malawi is a largely unspoiled country, and so there are areas of natural beauty all over it, but Mount Mulanje and its towering Sapitwa Peak are particular highlights.

There's a lot more like the lively markets, and the unique appeal of Livingstonia, named after the Scottish explorer and the Zomba Plateau. All of these places are well known to the people who live nearby, but their tales need to be told to a wider audience if Malawi is to persuade more people to come to see them. Many jobs have been lost within the tourism industry recently, and there are obvious possibly short-term reasons for that, but the industry will need help to get back on its

feet.

The next time you're thinking about travel, think about what Malawi has to offer.

*Promotional feature*