



The Makambale Brothers performing at Lake of Malawi

SHON BROUGHTON

The Lake of Stars Festival

Malawi

10 days – October 13-22 2010 (ex-London)

The 'lake of stars' was David Livingstone's description of Lake Malawi when he first set eyes on it in 1859. It's the third largest lake in Africa, covering an area larger than Wales, and it gives the country a luxuriant lushness. With a laid-back atmosphere and friendly people, Malawi is known as the 'warm heart of Africa.' Although not as well known as neighbouring countries like Zambia and Tanzania, Malawi is in many ways a more manageable destination and a great introduction to southern Africa.

The Lake of Stars festival has developed a reputation since it started in 2004 for an innovative mixture of visiting artists and DJs alongside local acts. The international DJs have included Radio 1's Annie Mac, Basement Jaxx's Felix B and Groove Armada's Andy Cato. Malawian music has an international profile about as flat as the lake itself, so the festival represents a great chance to get a taste of the local music. Recent headliners

have included Lucius Banda, Joseph Tembo and Black Missionaries, playing to an enthusiastic crowd of locals and visitors alike. The biggest star is probably the lake itself, and you can party on the shore until dawn. It is one of the most beautiful and relaxed settings for a festival anywhere in the world.

This trip flies straight into the heart of Africa, and after a brief break in Lilongwe, heads for the lakeshore and the music. When the festival is over there's time to relax for a day or so beside the lake in the Lake Malawi National Park before returning to Lilongwe for the flight home.

Or why not stay a little longer and enjoy the Liwonde National Park. Lying in the south of Malawi on the Shire River, Liwonde is one of the most atmospheric reserves in Africa and famous for its elephants, hippos and crocodiles.

Malawi – 8 days

Itinerary

Day 1 Thu Arriving in Lilongwe, today we meet our *Songlines* Travel Leader at the hotel. The day is left free to relax after perhaps a long overnight flight, but if you want to explore a little, the city lends itself to a leisurely wander. Lilongwe is split into two major areas, 'old town' and 'city centre,' the main focus being the old town. With a population of just under one million, this is the second city of Malawi and its capital since 1975. In the evening we have a briefing on plans for the days ahead. Those who wish to can head into town to check out any of the live music happening in the city.

Day 2 Fri After breakfast, we are joined by our local guide for a morning walking tour of the city before we drive out of town, heading for the lakeshore. The journey takes just a few hours and by late afternoon we should be at the Lake of Stars Festival. Time to settle in at our accommodation and have a walk by the lake before the music gets under way.

Days 3-4 Sat-Sun Two days of music. Your *Songlines* Travel Leader will be on hand, to advise where to be and when, so as not to miss the best of what's on offer. Lake of Stars does much to promote Malawian music but also has a diverse musical policy with Afro-pop, reggae, folk and beatboxing all on the menu. Running since 2004, the festival helps to promote Malawi as a tourist destination and is also a charitable event, with proceeds being donated to a range of projects in Malawi.

Day 5 Mon With the music over, we transfer to Lake Malawi National Park on Cape Maclear, a long promontory reaching into the lake. It is one of the world's most important sanctuaries for freshwater fish famous for its colourful cichlids. There are great snorkeling and scuba diving opportunities, but it's also wonderful just relaxing in beautiful surroundings on the beach.

Day 6 Tues A second day in Lake Malawi National Park. As well as diving, enjoying the beaches and exploring the fishing villages, there are also island trips available.

Day 7 Wed After breakfast we have time for a morning relaxing by the lake, before we make the half-day drive back to Lilongwe, arriving in the late afternoon.

Day 8 Thu After breakfast our tour ends. Time to head for the airport for the flight home.

Malawi – 11 days

Day 1-6 As above

Days 7-9 Wed-Fri If you've got a little more time, why not go on to Liwonde National Park, one of the prettiest in the region with excellent opportunities to see elephants, hippos, crocodiles and impala. You'll stay in a tented camp and have a range of optional safaris to get closer to the animals, either on foot, by canoe or boat and both day and night drives.

Day 10 Sat Departing Liwonde National Park, we drive to Lilongwe, arriving back in the capital in the late afternoon.

Day 11 Sun After breakfast our tour ends. Time to head for the airport for the flight home.

Tour costs

We have designed these tours to give you the option of taking up an all-inclusive package which includes your flights, or the option of making your own way there and then meeting up with the rest of your party at the first hotel.

Malawi 8-day trip

(Ex-Lilongwe) October 14-21 2010

Tour Price £849 per person

Tour includes:

- seven nights accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis
- entrance to the festival
- the transfers and sightseeing as detailed
- services of our *Songlines* Travel Leader

Items not included: Single room supplement, travel insurance, visas, all meals with the exception of breakfast, gratuities and any items of a personal nature.

Single room supplement: £149 per person

(Ex-London: 10- day trip) October 13-22 2010

Flights from London are available from £585 per person in conjunction with this tour. Overnight flights both from and to the UK make this an 11-day tour. Transfers from and to the airport in Lilongwe are included with flights purchased through *Songlines Music Travel*.

Malawi 11-day trip

(Ex-Lilongwe) October 14-24 2010

Tour Price £1,349 per person

Tour includes:

- seven nights accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis
- three nights accommodation in tents on a full-board basis
- entrance to the festival and Liwonde National Park
- the transfers and sightseeing as detailed
- services of our *Songlines* Travel Leader

Items not included: Single room supplement, travel insurance, visas, all meals with the exception of breakfast, gratuities and any items of a personal nature.

Single room supplement: 215 per person

(Ex-London: 13-day trip) October 13-25 2010

Flights from London are available from £585 per person in conjunction with this tour. Overnight flights both from and to the UK make this an 13-day tour. Transfers from and to the airport in Lilongwe are included with flights purchased through *Songlines Music Travel*.

To reserve your place

Please read the booking conditions on the website and contact the reservations office on:

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 or email:
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