

ment Share

Tweet ¹

Nkwichi's on the cover of National Geographic Traveller! M'ganda and lots more!

NKWICHI Lodge MANDA Wilderness



**Recently on the cover of
National Geographic Traveller!**



Save the last M'ganda for me...

Last weekend five of the villages of Manda Wilderness and neighbouring Likoma Island (Malawi) held a men's traditional dance festival, known as M'ganda, beneath a towering palisade of baobabs, delighting locals and guests alike.

This military-style dance comes from the Tumbuka language meaning 'to march like soldiers' and originated after the First World War when returning African colonial troops brought back new military concepts and fused them to traditional beliefs.

Complete with humming calabashes, waving handkerchiefs, stamping feet and climactic caterwauling, the dance is an expression of community identity and a form of communication left over from a time before newspapers and media.

M'ganda is unfortunately no longer as popular as it once was amongst the Nyanja people and perhaps even, in danger of dying out but hopefully events like this, along with invited appearances at Nkwichi Lodge, will rekindle the tradition and ensure it thrives in the future.



Theories of squeaky sands...

Sitting under the star-strewn sky around a crackling Nkwichi fire, one topic which constantly crops up with guests is 'why Nkwichi has the softest sand on the lakeshore?' As part of the awe-inspiring Rift Valley and with such a rich geographical history complete with a myriad of mineral deposits, it's little wonder that theories have abounded as plentiful as the ice-cold G&Ts which often help fuel them.

Originally called 'Mchenga Nkwichi' (meaning 'Squeaking Sands') by local fishermen because of the noise it makes under the feet while walking, the Nkwichi beach is truly inimitable to any beach found on Lake Malawi, in Africa and possibly even the world. Indeed, one guest was so surprised by the uniqueness of the sand (compared to the

coarser sand on Nkwichi's other 7 private beaches), that they claimed it must have been shipped in from abroad...



One theory is that the two rivers that break the beach in the rainy season bring with them thousands of tiny white quartzite stones which have eroded over the ages to become the fine, white sand enjoyed by guests today. A second is that it is the beach has a unique angle with the prevailing 'Mwera' wind, causing enough turbulence to grind sediment into the tiny granules. A third theory, by geological expert David West, who recently spent his holiday here at Nkwichi, is that the natural rocky outcrops forming the Nkwichi landscape are the cause,

acting as a barrier to the migrating sands moving north along the lakeshore.

Although a definitive answer has yet to be found, and is probably a combination of the above factors, one thing is sure; Nkwichi's onomatopoeic phenomenon will continue to serenade and astonish guests for many years to come.

Chissindo Scores a Goal! (A pair in fact)

The furthest and most remote village in the Manda Wilderness Community Conservation Area, Chissindo, received some very welcome visitors in August this year when a group of guests accompanied Maaike, of the Manda Wilderness Community Trust, to see some of the Trust's community projects.

Set up in luxury camping complete with showers and toilets, the guests were keen to see the construction of the village's first school, and perhaps a sight of the elephants and other game which are in the area.



After braving blazing bushfires en-route, the visit was made even more of an occasion when a pair of football goals was handed over to the community leaders as a donation by Patrick Munroe, who funded and helped organise the very first Manda Wilderness Football League in 2006. The league has since grown in popularity in the area, and now has an organising committee, trained referees and new teams from the area joining, making a total of 16 teams. Chissindo is unfortunately too far away to participate in the league (3 days walk from Nkwichi), but this new addition to their football field will be sure to kick-start more home-grown talent for the Manda Wilderness Area. Goooooooooal Chissindo!

You say tomato....



In what looks like preparations for one of the world's most famous food-fights, Nkwichi is not preparing for 'La Tomatina' but instead is staging its own battle to think of as many uses for the deluge of

tomatoes which descend upon the lodge each September. From sun-dried and roasted garlic focaccia to the startlingly succulent Bloody Marys enjoyed at sunset drinks, Nkwichi's local chefs are constantly concocting fresh recipes to fulfil your inner wolf (*lycopersicon lycopersicum* is the latin name for the common tomato and actually means 'wolf-peach').

Much of the ingredients for recipes at Nkwichi are provided by the local villages, and with the help of the Manda Wilderness Agricultural Project, this produce has diversified so the lodge even receives salad leaves and herbs on a regular basis.

With this produce coming from villages as far as 6 hours walk, Nkwichi buys all that arrives, contributing over \$10,000 into the local area each year.



Oh! Happy Day in Cobue

The old, ruined church in Cobue, pock-marked with bullet-holes and roofless after the Civil War, was recently once again the site for the 2nd Manda Wilderness Choir Festival. 16 village choirs from an area larger than greater London, came together in a tonsil-tingling contest to decide on the best in Manda Wilderness.

This year's event proved even more popular than the last, with over 3000 vociferous supporters in attendance. The clamouring crowds were also treated to a performance by local Malawian legend Joe NKhoma and the Shepherd Band with guest star Bon Kavalasanza, who braved the 12 hour journey from Lilongwe to attend and judge the unique gospel event. They were so enamoured by the support they received and the talent of the singers that they offered the winning choir of Mataka village the chance to record a CD in their studio.

Over 30 guests from Nkwichi also experienced the event resplendent with candles and lanterns and a feast of local delicacy of roasted-goat under the stars. Continuing on until the wee, small hours of the morning, the festival continues to be one of the highlights of the year at Nkwichi.

Nkwichi received a score of 90% on a recent evaluation by 'Green Safari Africa', one of only 3 other lodges on the sub-continent to achieve this.

Recent sightings of **Pel's Fishing Owl** and the **Palm-Nut Vulture** near the Nkwichi beach delighted 2 recent guests from Holland.

Renovation of the roofless **Cobue Church** has just been started by the Catholic diocese, mirroring reconstruction efforts elsewhere in the country since the end of the civil war.

[follow on Twitter](#) | [friend on Facebook](#) | [forward to a friend](#)

Copyright © 2012 Nkwichi Lodge, All rights reserved.



[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)