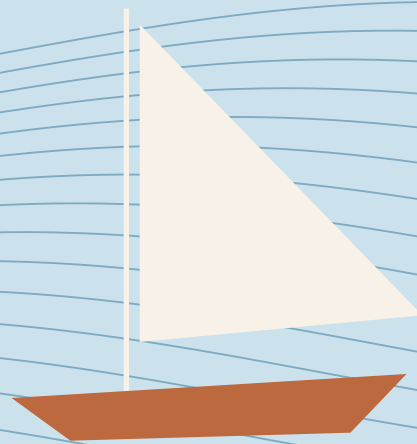


A GUIDE FOR TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS

MAFIA ISLAND

Destination Guide

The Indian Ocean side of Tanzania,
seen from the island.



**Tanzania is our destination.
Mafia is our home.**

TAITA Company Ltd

Your Trusted Partner on Mafia Island.

01 / WELCOME

An island with its own rhythm.

Mafia lies off mainland Tanzania, south of Dar es Salaam. Life here is shaped by fishing, village routines and the sea. Tourism is still relatively small in scale, with a limited collection of lodges and a pace that leaves room for the island itself.

With TAITA, your clients have a partner here on the island. We shape each stay around their interests and needs, provide a local point of contact and assist them in person throughout their time on Mafia. Our knowledge becomes personal attention on the ground.

**Mafia is not an alternative to Zanzibar.
It is a different destination.**

Present it through its marine life, Swahili communities and quieter way of travelling. Guests should arrive curious about a living island, with realistic expectations of its beaches, services and infrastructure.

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02 / THE DESTINATION

Why put Mafia in the itinerary?

A distinctive island experience for guests who value nature, a sense of place and time to slow down.

01 A marine focus

Reefs, seagrass and mangroves give the island a strong natural identity. Diving and snorkelling can be central to the stay.

02 Wildlife with a season

Whale shark encounters add a specific reason to travel. Plan around the seasonal window and allow more than one opportunity.

03 Tourism on a human scale

Small properties and local guides can make a stay feel personal. Choose the service level carefully; small does not always mean simple.

04 An island beyond the lodge

Fishing settlements, boatbuilding and island walks offer context. Arrange visits with local guides and respect everyday life.

05 A different ending to a safari

Mafia changes the pace after the mainland. The combination works best when the island receives enough time in its own right.

03 / GETTING HERE

Next stop: Mafia.

Dar es Salaam is the main gateway, with **up to five daily flights spread throughout the day** and private charters available on request. The direct flight to Mafia takes around 30-35 minutes. Frequency varies by date and season; confirm schedules and charter availability when booking.



From mainland Tanzania, via Dar es Salaam, to Mafia Island. Illustrative route.

Arriving on the island

TAITA coordinates the arrival transfer and gives guests a local contact for their stay. Mafia Airport is at Kilindoni, commonly around 30 minutes from Utende and Chole Bay; northern stays need more travel time.

Connecting from safari

Nyerere and Ruaha fit the southern flying network. Northern Circuit connections are also possible. Confirm each sector, intermediate stops and whether an overnight in Dar suits the journey.

Before ticketing: check baggage limits, dive equipment, terminal transfers and connection margins. Allow comfortable time before an international departure.

Source: Flights: TAITA local guidance; Coastal Aviation schedules and charters

04 / UNDERSTANDING MAFIA

Find your side of Mafia.



Map supplied by TAITA. Explore the four areas on the following page.

04 / UNDERSTANDING MAFIA

Four areas. Different stays.

01 / Utende & Chole Bay

The main base for marine-park diving and snorkelling, with access to Chole Island and excursions farther into the archipelago. A natural starting point for reef-focused guests. Check park charges and explain the tidal shoreline before booking.

02 / Kilindoni

Mafia's main town and airport gateway, with shops, everyday commerce and access to western departure points. Useful for guests interested in local life and whale shark outings. A town stay and a beachfront lodge nearby offer very different experiences.

03 / Western Coast

West-facing stays bring sunset views and access to the whale shark side of the island in season. Beach character and swimming conditions vary by property and tide. Confirm the actual departure point, transfer and shoreline rather than relying on the area name.

04 / Northern Mafia

A less visited landscape of villages, coastal vegetation and the Bweni lighthouse area. Consider it for guests who enjoy exploring or want a quieter base. Plan road time, meals and services in advance; excursions from the south need a realistic day schedule.

05 / SEASONS

Start with the experience.

Seasonal patterns are a planning guide. Wind, rainfall, visibility and wildlife vary from year to year.

JAN-FEB**Kaskasi / warmer marine days**

The northeast wind season. A useful window for whale shark trips; diving depends on the site and daily sea conditions.

MAR-MAY**From Kaskasi towards Kusi**

Winds shift towards the southeast as the long rains arrive. April-May are generally wettest; some properties close. Confirm operations.

JUN-SEP**Kusi / cooler island days**

Southeast winds can affect exposed waters. Conservation-led turtle hatching visits may be possible, often June-September.

OCT-DEC**From Kusi towards Kaskasi**

Winds ease and shift towards the northeast, typically by December. Whale shark season builds; short rains may occur, especially November-December.

WHALE SHARKS

Plan primarily for October-February; encounters can extend into March. Sightings are never guaranteed. Humpback whale sightings are an occasional seasonal possibility, broadly August-October, rather than an itinerary promise.

Kaskasi: northeast wind. **Kusi:** southeast wind. Seasonal transitions are gradual and vary each year. Keep boat days and dive-site selection flexible.

Source: Seasonal guidance: Pole Pole; Tanzania Tourism; Mafia Island whale sharks

06 / EXPERIENCES

Make space for the sea. And for the island.

Build a varied stay, with room to adapt boat days to the tides and weather.

Diving & snorkelling

Explore reef habitats with a qualified team. Match sites to experience, swimming confidence and current conditions.

Whale shark encounters

A seasonal west-coast outing. Choose responsible operators; follow the briefing and never chase or touch wildlife.

Sandbanks & boat days

Plan time on the water, a picnic and a changing tidal landscape. Access and timing follow the sea.

Chole & island heritage

Walk with a local guide among village paths and historic remains. Let the visit explain how people live here today.

Juani & the Blue Lagoon

Explore the southern archipelago when tides and conditions allow. Confirm the route and water access locally.

Life on land

Village visits, coastal walks, birdwatching and a northern island excursion add perspective beyond the beach.

Ask about conservation-led turtle hatching when available, sunset trips and specialist fishing options subject to local rules and conditions. Leave some time without a scheduled activity.

Coming next: **Experiences on Mafia Island**
A separate TAITA guide with detailed activity descriptions.

07 / ACCOMMODATION

The right stay starts with the guest.

TAITA matches each guest with the right area and property, from small lodges to boutique stays. Share their preferences and practical needs; our personal assistance continues on the island.

Marine Park stays

Consider Utende and Chole Bay for a programme built around reef diving, snorkelling and archipelago excursions. Clarify park charges, activity departures and the beach at low tide.

Western beach stays

Useful for sunsets, a relaxed coastal base and seasonal whale shark outings. Check the property's exact location, swimming access and road time to the Marine Park.

Boutique & more secluded stays

Prioritise atmosphere, privacy and the style of hospitality. Confirm the essentials individually: cooling, pool, boat access, meal plan and suitability for children.

Simple local accommodation

A different proposition for independent-minded guests who value local surroundings. Explain bathroom arrangements, food options and the level of support included.

CONSIDER A SPLIT STAY

For a longer visit, combining west-coast time with Chole Bay can reduce repeated transfers. For a short stay, one well-chosen base is often more restful.

08 / GUEST FIT

Sell it to the right traveller.

The strongest match is a guest who values marine nature and island character, and can enjoy a less developed destination.

Divers & marine-life enthusiasts

Allow enough time for multiple outings, changing conditions and a suitable no-fly interval after diving.

Couples & honeymooners

Choose the setting, privacy and comfort carefully. A quiet island stay benefits from thoughtful details.

Families interested in nature

Check ages, swimming confidence, boat boarding, shade, room layout and the operator's activity rules.

Slow travellers & repeat visitors

Make room for village life, walks and unscheduled time. Mafia can bring a fresh perspective to Tanzania.

Safari guests

Suggest an island extension with time to settle in. Four or five nights is a useful starting point, adjusted to priorities.

SET EXPECTATIONS EARLY

Mafia is less suited to guests seeking nightlife, extensive shopping, large resorts or organised entertainment throughout the day. Avoid promising an all-tide swimming beach without checking the property.

09 / TANZANIA ITINERARIES

From safari to island life.

TAITA can design and organise the full Tanzania journey, across both the Southern and Northern Circuits.

A NATURAL SOUTHERN COMBINATION

Nyerere + Mafia

Ruaha + Mafia

Nyerere + Ruaha + Mafia

Illustrative combinations / flight routing confirmed for each itinerary

Why we often start with the south

Dar es Salaam and the southern safari flying network provide a practical framework for combining the bush with Mafia. Nyerere is a particularly natural pairing; Ruaha can add another safari setting when time allows.

The north belongs in the picture too

Serengeti, Ngorongoro and Tarangire can also be combined with Mafia. Plan the flight sequence and connection time carefully, potentially via Dar es Salaam. Compare the total travel day, not just the map distance.

PLAN THE WHOLE JOURNEY

Agree the safari priorities first, then protect meaningful island time. TAITA can arrange the entire itinerary or work with an agent on the Mafia component within an existing Tanzania programme.

Source: Flight-network reference: Coastal Aviation - Mafia Island

10 / PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Brief guests before they arrive.

Money & payments

Tanzanian shillings are the local currency. Confirm cards and payment methods with each supplier; carry a practical cash reserve for small local purchases.

Language & local etiquette

Swahili is the main local language; English is used in tourism. Dress modestly in villages and ask before photographing people.

Power & connectivity

Bring a suitable travel adaptor; Type G sockets are common. Check the lodge's charging arrangements. Mobile coverage and Wi-Fi can vary.

Marine Park & other charges

Park entry or conservation charges may apply according to the stay and activities, including for non-divers. Confirm any applicable local or accommodation levies and state inclusions clearly. Fees are subject to change.

Documents, health & cover

Check current entry rules through Tanzania Immigration. Seek personalised travel-health advice before departure. Arrange insurance suitable for the activities and medical evacuation needs.

Packing & time on the water

Bring sun protection, a refillable bottle, suitable footwear and a dry bag. Pack within the airline's allowance. Divers should agree a no-fly interval with their dive professional before flights are booked.

LEAVE A LIGHTER FOOTPRINT

Do not stand on coral, collect marine life or disturb wildlife. Follow guides and conservation teams. Use water thoughtfully and reduce disposable packaging where possible.

Source: Official entry guidance: Tanzania Immigration

11 / YOUR PARTNER

Your partner on the island. Personal care for your guests.

When you send clients to Mafia, your partner is already here. TAITA provides a local point of contact and personalised, in-person assistance throughout their stay, helping you look after your guests from a distance.

A stay shaped around the individual

We listen to each guest's interests, pace and practical needs, then tailor the accommodation, activities and daily arrangements to suit.

A local person to turn to

Your clients have a TAITA contact on Mafia for guidance, requests and help during their stay, backed by our presence on the island.

Personal attention as the stay unfolds

We coordinate with lodges, guides and transfer teams, help with changes and keep you informed when something needs your attention.

Your partner across Tanzania

Work with us on Mafia or a complete itinerary through northern and southern Tanzania. Local care on the island is part of our wider service.

**Tanzania is our destination.
Mafia is our home.**

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Your guests. Our personal attention.

Tell us who your guests are and what matters to them. We will shape their journey and be their local point of contact on Mafia, with personal assistance throughout the stay.

TAITA Company Ltd

Your Trusted Partner on Mafia Island.

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PLANNING REFERENCES

Marine Parks Tanzania

Marine Megafauna Foundation

Tanzania Tourism: turtle hatching

Mafia Island: whale shark season

Coastal Aviation

Sea Sense

Pole Pole: seasons & activities

Tanzania Immigration

September 2026 edition. Seasonal windows are indicative; reconfirm schedules, access, availability and applicable charges when booking. Planning advice reflects the guide's intended travel profiles, not fixed packages.