

THINK UP SOUTH

Scenario



The Manhica Province is one of the higher areas of Mozambique. A lot of the rivers flowing east to the Indian Ocean have their sources in this province, with a number of high purity fountain waters in its mountains. The waters from the Vumba Sierra are commercialised, with an excellent acceptance in the entire country.

January and February there is usually very heavy rainfall, which can affect the road system of the country. Specifically, the rainfall in the early 2015 was exceptionally intense, and some of the main roads are cut off. Anyway, there is a public transport service, setting off around 4 to 5am (5am being the time that life starts, with a splendid sun shining), covering the route between the North (Manhica, Chimoio or Beira) and the capital, Maputo, finishing at the Vilanculos crossing. For shorter distances within the province, you can find pick-ups and small vans that will help you: They are called *chapas*, with capacity for 12 to 15 persons, usually around 30 jump in.

So early in the morning, you only come across with early rising people, on their way to study, work, or buying bread to later resell it in their neighbourhood. Everybody greets you, with no exception: “Bom dia, obrigado”. The official language is Portuguese, but, given the high number of tourists, they also speak English.

Manhica's population is around 42.000 people, 60% of them living in huts in the rural area. In the *Vila* (the name given to the central area of Manhica) or in the *Mato* (the country area), people move around either on foot, or cycling along the dune sand roads.

Half the population has access to electricity and waste collection, but only a quarter has water supply. Both water and electricity are dependent on private distributors, in a city living off the border commerce, being the second urban centre in the region. It's full of life, and, during the day, it presents no security risks.

Local inhabitants have been used to seeing *mungulus* (white people) for a while, thanks to the presence of the “Centro de Investigación en Salud de Manhica” (CISM), which has foreign personnel. This centre was founded in 1996 through a bilateral cooperation program between the governments of Mozambique and Spain, and has the goal of driving research on diseases such as VIH, tuberculosis or malaria, the last one causing the majority of the child mortality in the country. Therefore, the small health clinic in Manhica turned into a District Hospital, with 120 beds, and maternity, paediatric and general wards.



In the pavement, in front of the main entrance to the hospital, a small market is formed, where you can find from different refreshments (stored inside ice-boxes with no ice) to popcorn (carried in carts), or appetizers and home-made buns, brought in plastic buckets.

The *mamás*, women who wake up on sunrise to collect the daily production from their vegetable garden, also sell those vegetables in the market. Other women are responsible for going to the closest fish market each day, and walk around with the fresh fish buckets, selling them shouting “peixe! camarao! lulas!”. In a different corner of the market, men with a yellow vest try to sell you credit by Vodacom, Movitel or MCell, whichever mobile service provider you need.

The big retailers are also arriving to Manhica. In December 2014 a “Shoprite”, a quickly expanding South African supermarket chain inaugurated a mall where you can find any kind of products, but at a higher price, even higher than the same products in Spain.

That's why the daily grocery shopping is still done in the market. Boiled rice, or the *xima*, a paste made of wheat or rice flour, are present on the daily diet of the Mozambican people, since they are simple and cheap. They are usually accompanied of chard, coconut or peanut stews; or with yuca, beans, chicken, squid or shrimps. To season the recipes, they mainly use curry. Although there is not a lot of variety, the plates are carefully elaborated.

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- <http://www.ongawa.org/por-paises/mozambique2/>
- <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cartes/mozambique>
- <http://databank.worldbank.org/>
- <http://unhabitat.org/books/mozambique-cities-profile-maputo-nacala-and-manica/>