



An island RETREAT

Revel in some extraordinary experiences on the Bazaruto Archipelago, says Nastassja Petersen

Just 30 kilometres off the coast of Mozambique lies the Bazaruto Archipelago, a marine national park made up of six islands. This magical part of the globe is known for its white sandy beaches, never-ending dunes, magnificent coral reefs and jewel-like waters. Explore it all at the Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort. Named after the archipelago's largest island, it's a dream destination for couples seeking an African adventure like no other.

Check into paradise

All that stands between you and nirvana? A short flight from Joburg to Vilanculos on mainland Mozambique, followed by a 40-minute boat trip to the resort. On arrival, a singing-and-dancing welcome by staff sets the tone for a glorious stay.

The picturesque resort houses 44 unique villas couples will adore – choose one that opens onto a shoreline veranda, or opt for one with a plunge pool. For families, the Anantara Pool Villa is ideal with its two en-suite bedrooms, indoor and outdoor entertaining areas, pool and

Adventures on the Bazaruto Archipelago

Connect with nature on Bazaruto Island, where the wild beauty will dazzle you at every turn. Almost 200 bird species are found here, including some charming flamingos that gather at coastal lakes... where the crocodiles lurk! Take it all in on a guided 4x4 tour around the island.

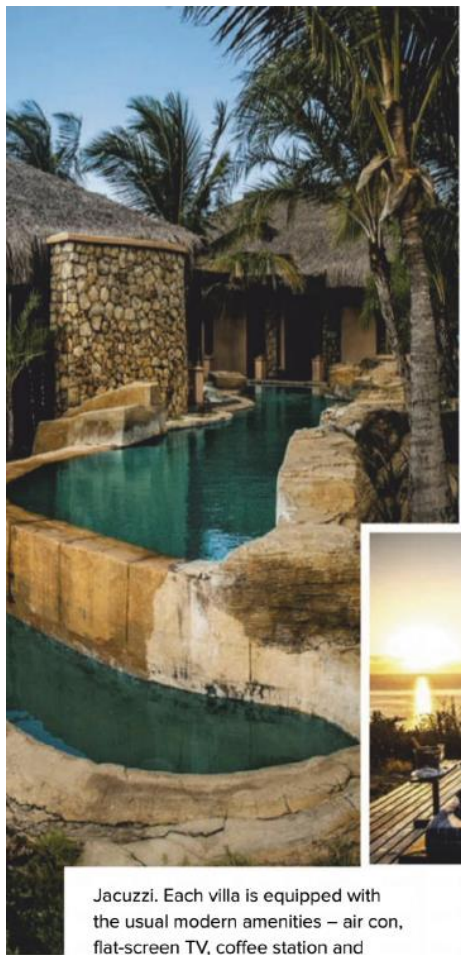
If it's a thrill you're after, be sure to give sandboarding a go. The island's spectacular dunes are the highest on the archipelago, allowing you to 'surf' them at exhilarating speeds to your heart's content. You can even book a lovely horse ride through the tropical forest or along the seashore; Anantara

has five SA boerperde, renowned for their gentle temperaments. Riding lessons are on offer if you need them.

If you'd rather explore the ocean, why not try deep-sea fishing, scuba diving or a spot of snorkelling? I signed up for an exciting snorkelling excursion, a 20-minute boat trip away. Nothing compares to seeing the underwater world up close – the crystal-clear water is teeming with soft coral formations and rainbow-coloured fish. Afterwards,

you get to enjoy a lobster picnic set up on nearby Pansy Island, where you can sunbathe in undisturbed seclusion.





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Jacuzzi. Each villa is equipped with the usual modern amenities – air con, flat-screen TV, coffee station and minibar – and you'll have a hard time deciding between a relaxing soak in the sunken bath or freshening up in the outdoor shower. The cherry on the top of your home away from home? Its private tropical-garden-feel veranda boasting unbeatable ocean views.

Signature tastes

Sampling local cuisine is part and parcel of your Anantara stay. My three-day trip was a culinary experience from start to finish, with a themed dinner each night at one of the three restaurants. On the first evening, I relished Asian-inspired flavours at Golfinho, its deck lined with hanging lanterns; while on my second night, I was bowled over by Mozambican dishes like Prawn Matapa and Grilled Peri-peri Tiger Prawns at Clube Naval.

The resort's Spice Spoons cooking class revealed the secrets to making these delicacies. First, you will be

encouraged to choose fresh produce from the on-site veggie and herb gardens. Then, you will prepare your own lunch, with some professional help, of course – the sincere passion of executive chef Donaldson Madubela and his team was really inspiring. I grilled the catch of the day, and made an easy prawn curry, following recipes I've since passed on to my family and friends. Our table was set up right where we cooked, overlooking the garden's seemingly endless greenery.

On my last night, I was whisked off for a Dinner by Design, a special treat that's perfect for couples. This candlelit fine-dining affair took place on a sandbank in the Indian Ocean! It also included a personal chef and butler – you feel like absolute royalty.

Laid-back life

In between all the feasting, sip on a cocktail while you disappear to the adults-only pool for a quiet dip. For something more tranquil, book into

the award-winning Anantara Spa. It was here that I indulged in a full-body massage, complete with an astonishing twilight view of my surroundings. End the day on a high with a romantic sunset cruise in a traditional dhow fishing boat, and keep an eye out for playful dolphins.

There's something for everyone at Anantara. Here, you're transported to a hideaway that seems far removed from the cares of the world; a place of wonder where you can renew your zest for life.

Nastassja's trip was organised by Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort.

Book your break

At Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort, you'll pay from R13 000pn for a two-sleeper Beach Villa, with return boat transfers, all meals, selected drinks, and non-motorised water-sport activities. Additional activities start from R450pp. Book the Bazaruto Honeymoon and Romance package, from R9 977pn, which also includes a spa treatment and dhow cruise for two when you stay for at least four nights; see bit.ly/2RLHRWB w&h