



Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate

Located on the southeast coast of Africa, Mozambique is slightly larger than Pakistan and nearly twice the size of the U.S. state of California. Coastal plains cover some 44 percent of the territory. High plains dominate the north and central regions. Mountains and very high plains above 3,000 feet cover 13 percent of the land. The highest peaks are Monte Binga (7,992 feet, or 2,436 meters), Monte Namuli (7,936 feet, or 2,419 meters), and Serra Zuira (7,470 feet, or 2,277 meters). Of the country's dozens of rivers, the largest include the Zambeze, Rovuma, Lúrio, and Save. The nation has more than 1,300 lakes, but most are relatively small. Mines are particularly common in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado, which has some of the world's largest deposits of rubies and graphite. Mozambique also has one of the world's largest gas fields, which lies off the coast of Cabo Delgado. Mozambique has a number of national parks and nature reserves. Common animals include elephants, hippos, crocodiles, zebras, giraffes, and wildebeest as well as many types of birds.

Mozambique has a tropical climate; the southern plains are the most humid. The Zambeze Valley is somewhat drier but

still has a tropical climate. The north and center tend to be hotter than the south, where temperatures average 75°F (24°C). Above 3,000 feet, the average temperature falls to 64°F (18°C). The vegetation is mostly dense forest and savanna. During the wet season (November to February), rains may result in flooding, leading to standing water and the spread of malaria and other diseases. The dry season extends from April to October.

History

Origins and Early Empires

Mozambique's first inhabitants were the Khoi-khoi and the San. Very little is known about them except that they were hunters and gatherers. Sometime around AD 300, Bantu tribes migrating to the area brought agriculture and iron with them. Arab and Asian traders made contact with local groups as early as the seventh century; Arab trading posts flourished along the coast for many centuries.

By the 11th century, the Shona Empire (centered in present-day Zimbabwe) had established regional dominance. Their trading empire lasted until about the 15th century. The Maravi from the Great Lakes region invaded in the 13th century, and the Karanga Empire was established in the 15th century. New waves of immigration in the 18th century brought Tsongas, Yao, and Nguni to Mozambique. The Nguni

came from the south and established the Gaza Empire. By the time Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama reached the coast in 1498, Mozambique was home to various peoples with complex political, social, and economic systems.

Portuguese Rule and Independence

By 1530, the Portuguese had expelled the Arabs from Sena and built various trading forts of their own; they made Mozambique a regular port of call for their ships. Most internal areas remained outside Portugal's control despite repeated incursions. Over time, Portuguese influence expanded to include political and economic control of these interior areas. In 1752, Portugal proclaimed Mozambique a colony and engaged in a flourishing slave trade. Many enslaved people, often sold by African tribal chiefs to Portuguese traders, were bound for plantations in Brazil. Though officially outlawed in 1842 by an Anglo-Portuguese agreement, slave trading continued until the early 20th century.

Beginning in the 1870s, the Portuguese shifted much of Mozambique's administration to private companies, mostly controlled by the British. These companies enacted a policy of forced labor called *chibalo*. Workers were paid low wages and forced to work in fields to generate exports for the Portuguese; these workers were also required to build roads and railways to service Portugal's trade links.

Portuguese settlements expanded in the 1900s, especially after World War II. In 1960, during a protest in the northern town of Mueda against *chibalo*, the provincial governor ordered soldiers to fire on the crowd. Six hundred people died, and the massacre galvanized opposition to Portuguese rule. Several political groups organized under the banner of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), led by Eduardo Mondlane. In 1964, FRELIMO began warring against Portuguese colonial rule. Mondlane was assassinated in 1969 but remains an important national hero.

Portugal suffered heavy financial and troop losses fighting FRELIMO, and the war was partly responsible for the fall of Portugal's government in 1974. Portugal's new government negotiated the Lusaka Accords in 1974 with FRELIMO, which paved the way for independence in 1975. Ninety percent of the approximately 200,000 Portuguese residents fled.

Civil War and Reform

FRELIMO declared one-party Marxist rule under President Samora Machel. The Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) opposed FRELIMO and was supported by Southern Rhodesia and later South Africa. By 1977, civil war had erupted between the two groups. Famine in the 1980s led to countless deaths and the destruction of Mozambique's economy. Machel died in 1986 and was succeeded by Joaquim Chissano. Peace talks led to amnesty (1988) for RENAMO fighters and a cease-fire in 1990. Further negotiations led to a peace accord in 1992 between President Chissano and the leader of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama. Multiparty elections in 1994 gave Chissano the presidency by a thin margin over Dhlakama, and FRELIMO gained a narrow majority in the legislature.

In 2013, RENAMO pulled out of the peace accord when government forces captured a base where the RENAMO

leader was staying. Months of violence between government and rebel forces followed. In 2014, FRELIMO and RENAMO agreed to a new peace deal that integrated RENAMO fighters into the national security forces and gave amnesty to those involved in the violence. However, later that year, RENAMO characterized the election of FRELIMO candidate Felipe Nyusi as fraudulent (though the vote was deemed largely free and fair by the international community), and tensions between the parties remain high.

In spite of recent political turmoil, Mozambique has been on a path of economic development since the end of its civil war. At that time, FRELIMO, which has maintained power through all of the elections that have followed, embraced a market economy. Foreign investment from South Africa and elsewhere has poured in. Despite economic reforms, challenges continuing to face the country include reducing poverty, growing the country's tourism industry, and improving mining and energy infrastructure.

Recent Events and Trends

- **Debt crisis and inflation:** In October 2016, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) confirmed that it would not renew IMF funds to Mozambique unless the country could demonstrate that its debt was sustainable. Mozambique admitted in April 2016 that it had kept secret US\$1.1 billion in loans from private London banks. The Mozambican economy has suffered since a widespread price crash for commodities in April 2016.

- **Cease-fire:** In May 2017, the opposition party and rebel movement RENAMO announced that it was indefinitely extending its cease-fire with the FRELIMO-led government. Before the announcement, RENAMO had been extending its cease-fire 60 days at a time during peace talks designed to end clashes that had periodically flared between the groups since the 2014 election.

- **Gemfields compensation:** In January 2019, Gemfields, a British mining group, paid US\$7.6 million to settle a class action lawsuit brought by nearly three hundred miners over accusations of torture and property destruction near a ruby mine in Mozambique. Mozambique is responsible for about 80 percent of the world's ruby production.

THE PEOPLE

Population

Nearly all Mozambicans are of African origin. The north is dominated by the Makwa-Lomwé, one of the largest ethnic groups and part of the larger Makhwua grouping. Between the Zambeze and Save rivers are the Shona-Caranga, divided into various subgroups. The Tsonga dominate southern Mozambique. Smaller groups include the Shangana, Chopi, Manyika, Sena, Nguni, and Makonde. Asians and Europeans make up less than 1 percent of the population but are overrepresented in the formal economy.

The population is young; roughly 45 percent is under age 15. Most people live in rural areas. Maputo, the capital, has over one million residents.

Language

Portuguese is Mozambique's official language and is used in government, education, and business, but less than a fifth of the population speaks it fluently. English is also used in the business world. The majority of Mozambicans communicate in their native languages, most of which are in the Bantu family. Some of the more commonly spoken languages of Mozambique include Emakhuwa, Xichangana, Cinyanja, Cisena, Elomwe, Echuwabo, Cindau, and Xitswa. Bantu languages are often expressive and melodic; words end in vowels. Many people speak more than one language to aid in cross-cultural communication.

Religion

More than half of Mozambicans are Christian, the two biggest groups being Catholics and Zionist Christians. Islam is common in the north and along the coast, and about 19 percent of the total population is Muslim. Much of the remainder exclusively follows traditional animist beliefs, though most Mozambicans adhere to such beliefs, even if they also practice Christianity or Islam.

Traditional beliefs usually include ancestor veneration, witchcraft, and the idea that all living (animate) and nonliving (inanimate) things have spirits. If a person becomes ill or has bad luck, the situation is often attributed to a lack of attention toward the ancestral spirits. *Regulos* (traditional chiefs) and *Nhangas* (also called *Mukulukhanas*, traditional healers or witch doctors) have great influence over people in local matters. A sizeable portion of the population claims to have no religion.

General Attitudes

Mozambicans are often described as peaceful and friendly. Mozambican culture tends to be calm and relaxed, with nothing happening too quickly. Most Mozambicans respect people who are hospitable and kind. Despite the country's ethnic diversity, different groups generally interact without conflict. Certain characteristics may be associated with each group. For example, the Chope are often characterized by others as aggressive and proud, while the Machangane are considered conservative and traditional.

Society is seen as a family, and the concerns and needs of the group are more important than individual desires. Most Mozambicans are willing to share what they have with others, and ideas are expressed respectfully, with the goal of bringing unity rather than discord.

As Western values and attitudes spread through formal education, music, and media, a generation gap has formed between the Western-oriented younger generations and the more traditionally minded older generations. Younger people may think of older people as too conservative, while the older generation sometimes feels the youth have become alienated from their traditional or national values. A similar gap exists between urban and rural Mozambicans.

Wealth is measured differently throughout the country. In urban areas, most people measure wealth according to property ownership and styles of homes. In rural areas, measures of wealth are related to agriculture. South of the Save River, the possession of cattle represents wealth, and those who own cattle are greatly respected and admired. In

the north, productive farmland is a symbol of wealth.

Personal Appearance

Mozambicans tend to be clean and well-groomed in public. Women wear skirts and blouses or dresses, as well as jewelry such as bracelets and earrings (especially in the north). Married women usually wear a *capulana* (wraparound skirt) tied about the waist and a headscarf. The *capulana* not only protects the legs from dirt and wind but is also a symbol of respect. In the north, a man who cannot provide his wife with at least one *capulana* each year is not considered deserving of her respect. Northern women typically wear two *capulanas* with a matching blouse. *Capulanas* tend to be more colorful in the north, while those in the south are usually found in neutral earth tones.

Urban men and women may wear T-shirts and pants or shorts. In large cities, government and office workers may wear a dress or pant suits. Men sometimes wear the more traditional *balalaica* (two-piece safari suit), *goiabeira* (square-cut, embroidered shirt that is not tucked in), or *bubu* (long, loose-fitting shirt with an open collar, worn over pants). Women may use *muciro* (a natural beauty cream from the trunk of the muciro tree) to protect their skin from the sun and to keep it moisturized.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings

Greetings in Mozambique are an important way of showing interest in others. When people join a group or enter a room, they first go around to greet each person and ask about his or her health or family. In southern areas, greetings include inquiries about family, work, and other matters, and they may last several minutes. Both men and women generally shake hands while placing left hands on right elbows to show respect. Close friends and women often kiss each other on the cheek.

In formal settings, people greet one another with the Portuguese expressions *Bom dia* (Good day), *Boa tarde* (Good afternoon), and *Boa noite* (Good evening). If asked *Como está?* (How are you?), a person typically replies *Estou bem*, *obrigado* (used by men) or *obrigada* (used by women), meaning "Fine, thank you." Otherwise, people greet in their local languages according to the situation and the relationship between speakers.

When northern men and women meet each other, they may clap hands three times before saying *Moni* (Hello). Urban youth may greet informally with *Tudo bem?* (How's it going?) or a colloquial version of "Hi" (*Olá*, *Oi*, or *Alo*). Rural dwellers and many urban residents greet elders respectfully with *Bom dia*, *Mama fulana* (Good morning, dear Mother) or *Bom dia*, *Papa fulano* (Good morning, dear Father).

Mozambicans address others as *Senhor* (Mr.) and *Senhora* (Mrs.). A younger person addresses an elder as *tio* (uncle) or *tia* (aunt), even if they are not related. Youth often call each other *mana* (sister) or *mano* (brother) or use first names or nicknames.

Gestures

Generally, it is impolite to use the index finger for pointing. People receive and pass objects with both hands or the right hand alone. When passing an item with the right hand, it is customary to place the left hand underneath the right elbow. During conversation, Mozambicans do not place their hands in their pockets or look elsewhere. It is poor manners to speak to seated adults while standing. Young people may greet or say good-bye with the “thumbs up” gesture. An extended arm with the palm facing up is used to indicate the height of a person; a palm turned down indicates the size of animals. To respectfully summon someone, hands are placed in a T shape, but it is not considered rude to summon someone by waving. People nod to agree and shake the head to disagree. Public displays of affection between couples are considered inappropriate. Friends of the same sex may hold hands while talking or walking.

Visiting

Most Mozambicans greatly value spending time together. A person who claims to be too busy to spend time with others may be looked down upon. Families visit each other on weekends, particularly on Sundays. Most casual visits are unannounced, and hosts are expected to welcome anyone who comes by. Occasionally, guests announce a visit in advance so the hosts can prepare; where phones are not available, a note or a child may be sent ahead to inform the hosts.

In northern rural areas, visitors approach a home and call out *Odi! Odi!* to ask permission to enter. They are welcomed with the answer *Héé!* The southern call is the same, but the answer is *Hoyo-hoyo!* (Welcome!). In cities, visitors knock on the door or ring the doorbell. Hosts offer their visitors something to eat and drink whenever possible. In rural areas, children are expected to fetch a chair for the guest as soon as he or she arrives in the *quintal* (the yard or property). Guests bring gifts only for birthdays, a new baby, or other festive occasions.

Eating

Rural dwellers generally eat two meals a day: one in the morning (*mata-bicho*) and one in the evening (*jantar*). In urban areas, people also eat lunch (*almoço*). The evening meal tends to be the largest. Mozambicans start the day with tea and bread, sweet potatoes, manioc (cassava), or tapioca. If this food is not available, they eat leftovers from the days before.

Families eat around a table or a mat. Rural people eat with the fingers of the right hand. Urban people generally prefer to eat with utensils, although they may also eat certain foods with the hand. *Xima*, a starchy food common in most meals, is almost exclusively eaten by hand. When working in the fields, men usually eat separately from women and are usually served first. If guests are present, they receive the first or best portions of food.

LIFESTYLE

Family

Structure

The family is considered society's most valuable institution. Family members rely on one another to share resources and provide aid in times of need, even when resources are limited. Extended families are large and usually live together or near one another. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has severely disrupted families, leaving many orphans and single parents, who struggle to make ends meet.

Family structure may be either matriarchal or patriarchal. In the north, family structure is largely matriarchal. In these families, children are seen as belonging to the mother and her family. Families are headed by women, who make most major decisions relating to the family. In southern and central Mozambique, families are usually patriarchal. A person's lineage is traced through the father's side of the family, and children are seen as belonging to the father and his family. The man is considered the head of the family, and when a father dies, the oldest son becomes responsible for the family's welfare. Family structure is generally more important and clearly defined in rural areas than in cities.

Though polygamy is illegal, about one-third of married women are estimated to be in polygamous marriages. Polygamy is more common in rural areas and among the older generations. Men who practice polygamy are expected to provide a separate hut for each wife and her children. However, some polygamous families share a single hut. In many cases, several wives have their houses close together and share household duties.

Parents and Children

Children are greatly valued, and parents frequently refer to their children as "my first fortune" (or "my first luck"), "my second fortune," and so on. With high infant mortality rates in Mozambique, giving birth to a healthy baby is widely viewed as a fortunate event. Children are taught to respect their elders and may be disciplined by any adult family member. From a young age, children are given responsibilities in the family. They may be assigned chores such as fetching water, cleaning, and cooking. In rural areas, they help on the farm. In urban areas, they may sell items on the street to help support the family. Parents support their children until they marry or become financially independent. Children often live with their parents indefinitely or for a few years after marriage, while they save for a home of their own.

Grown children generally expect to support their aging parents. Children are also expected to help their younger siblings. Traditionally, the elderly were viewed as a source of knowledge and wisdom. Many in the younger generation are less respectful of age, which sometimes leads to family conflicts.

Gender Roles

Regardless of family structure, gender roles tend to be rigidly defined. Men are responsible for supporting the family financially, looking after livestock, tending crops, and doing household repairs. Women care for the children and do household chores such as cooking, cleaning, gathering firewood, washing clothes, and hauling water. Children are taught from a young age the difference between women's work and men's work. In the past, it was considered demeaning for men to help with tasks defined as women's

work. In rural areas, such attitudes are still common, but in urban areas, tasks are becoming less closely associated with gender. In cities, men and women generally both work outside the home and more often share household chores and childcare responsibilities. Families usually give boys first priority in getting an education. Girls are much more likely to drop out of school if help is needed at home.

Domestic violence is common in Mozambique, and many people consider it normal for men to beat their wives, particularly in rural areas. It is difficult for women to press charges in cases of abuse, and many women are not aware of their legal rights. Women have traditionally had limited parental and financial rights. Despite the challenges facing Mozambican women, numerous gains have been made in recent years. Women now hold many positions that were previously reserved for men, such as business owners, truck drivers, and police officers. Mozambique also has one of world's highest percentages of women in government.

Housing

Rural

In rural areas, members of the extended family often share a home and a plot of land (called a *quintal*), which usually includes a yard area. Large families frequently occupy a small home. Because these homes can be crowded and air circulation is often poor, many families use their homes mainly for sleeping and spend most of the day outdoors, either working or relaxing in the yard on chairs or straw mats. Some families also use their yards for gardening, growing fruit trees, and raising animals such as ducks, chickens, and goats. Because most rural Mozambicans are subsistence farmers, they often live in plains near rivers, which makes their homes vulnerable to flooding. When rivers such as the Zambeze overflow their banks, tens of thousands of people can be displaced.

Rural building materials vary by availability and include homemade mud or clay bricks, cinder blocks, bamboo, palm fronds, and mud-covered beams. Such homes are rarely painted, but clay homes may be decorated with designs made with different colors of clay. Corrugated metal (zinc) roofs are becoming more common; however, thatched roofs are still most common, and floors are often dirt. A typical rural home is made up of a single room divided up by fabric walls. Most homes are divided into sleeping areas and an area for receiving guests and storing household items.

Rural families often lack access to electricity and running water. People collect water daily from wells, boreholes, streams, or communal pumps. During the rainy season, families and neighbors of people who have houses with metal roofs will capture rainwater from the roofs; doing so relieves the burden of collecting water during the rainy season. This water is sometimes stored in concrete tanks. At night, rural homes are lit with lanterns. Battery-powered lanterns are common, along with *xiphefu*, which are lanterns made from glass bottles filled with gasoline. A small cloth or wick is placed inside and lit. Inexpensive solar panels are used in rural areas to charge cellular phones and batteries. It is common for one family to buy a solar panel and allow other residents to charge their devices for a small fee. The kitchen

and bathroom are usually located in separate buildings from the main home. People cook over fires made with coal or wood. A pit latrine is dug some distance from the home and enclosed by walls but no ceiling. The stall may also be used to take bucket showers by covering the hole with a piece of wood or other material to stand on.

Urban

While the majority of the population lives in rural areas, many people migrate to cities in search of better economic opportunities. As a result, housing in urban areas can be hard to find and housing costs are always rising.

In big cities, most people live in apartment buildings. Foreigners and the wealthy are more likely to live in large homes in expensive neighborhoods. Urban homes are generally built with more substantial materials than homes in rural areas. Walls are usually cinder block, and roofs are corrugated metal or cement. The exteriors of homes are often painted; the most popular colors are yellow, white, and cream.

Urban residents also store rainwater that collects on their roofs, despite many being connected to a water supply (such as a tap in the yard or running water indoors). Most urban dwellers have access to electricity and indoor plumbing, though the poor in urban areas may not. Kitchens and bathrooms are often located within the main structure, though some families keep them separate, like in rural areas. Homes generally have gas or electric stoves.

A growing number of people choose to live in suburban areas because of the lower cost of living and to avoid the overcrowding in the cities. Houses here tend to be larger, and many have a small yard area for a garden.

Interiors

Mozambican homes may be decorated with flowers, traditional cloth, wooden handicrafts, vases, rugs, family photos, and paintings. Rural homes are sparsely furnished, often containing only beds and a table. Urban homes usually also include chairs and sofas.

Ownership

In rural areas, most people have access to ancestral land to build on. In this case, the main expense is the building materials, since family and friends usually help with the construction. Many urban dwellers rent their homes. In these areas, people generally must pay for land, building materials, and labor—all of which are relatively expensive in comparison to the average income. Mortgages are available but very difficult to obtain.

Dating and Marriage

Dating and Courtship

People begin dating around age 12 or 13. Couples usually meet at school, at church, at work, or within the community. A growing number of people meet online. People generally date one-on-one rather than in groups. In rural areas, dating is usually limited to home and family activities. In urban areas, a date may include watching a movie or play, going to the beach or a pool, eating at restaurants, going to clubs or bars, or attending religious activities.

In rural areas, casual dating is uncommon, and any courtship is expected to lead to marriage. Urban courtship is generally taken less seriously, and young people often date a

variety of partners before settling down. Arranged marriages, though once common in Mozambique, are becoming less common today.

Engagement

When a couple decides to marry, they arrange a meeting between their families. The man's family comes to the woman's family's home, where lunch is served and the two families discuss the engagement. That evening, the man may return to the woman's home with his friends to celebrate, generally bringing her a bouquet of flowers or an engagement ring.

Among groups in the south, a groom pays a *lobolo* (bride-price) to the parents of the bride to compensate them for raising her. The two families meet to negotiate the *lobolo*, which may include such items as money, cattle, drinks (often wine, beer, and soda), and clothing. Items may be designated for certain family members, such as parents, grandparents, and aunts. Negotiations can take hours. If a *lobolo* is too high, a couple might live together without a formal wedding ceremony, but such a union is not the preferred situation. Among groups that do not require a *lobolo*, women usually wear engagement rings. After marriage, both men and women wear wedding rings, regardless of whether or not a *lobolo* was exchanged.

Marriage in Society

Young people are expected to marry by age 25. People who are not married by this age are often pressured by their family and friends to marry. Most women marry much younger, especially in rural areas; many girls and women ages 15 to 19 are married, divorced, or widowed. Men are usually at least a few years older than their wives.

Though same-sex marriage is not legally recognized in Mozambique, in 2015, it became one of the first African nations to decriminalize sexual relations between same-sex partners.

Weddings

Weddings may be traditional, civil, or religious. All three types are legally recognized, as long as a government representative is present and the couple signs the required forms. However, the majority of weddings are not legalized, as many couples see little value in making a marriage legal. Some couples hold more than one wedding ceremony. In the south, where grooms pay the *lobolo*, the traditional wedding must take place before a religious or civil wedding can be held. In the north, many couples hold only a civil or religious wedding.

Traditional wedding celebrations take place at the bride's home and include the exchange of the *lobolo*, followed by singing, dancing, and feasting. Christians often marry in a church, where a religious leader gives a short sermon and then pronounces the couple married. Muslims marriages are viewed as a contract between the bride, the groom, and their guardians. The groom gives the bride an agreed-upon amount of money, which is meant to be used to support her in the event of a divorce. A civil marriage requires a license and is performed by a *conservador* (a designated government official) at a government office or a venue of the couple's choice.

Polygamy and Divorce

Although polygamy is illegal, polygamous marriages are common in rural areas. This is particularly true in the north, where polygamy is practiced fairly openly and is often seen as a sign of wealth. In a polygamous marriage, only the marriage to the first wife can be registered with the government. Subsequent wives have no legal standing. Men with multiple wives command more respect in the community, and it is socially expected that men will marry as many wives as they can afford to pay the *lobolo* for (if applicable) and support.

Many married men have *pitás* (girlfriends), whom they often support financially and have children with. The term *casa dois* (second house) refers to a married man's second home or family. Women may also have extramarital relationships, but unlike men, they are expected to do so discreetly. Divorce rates are rising, particularly in cities. However, many people find it difficult to remarry after a divorce.

Life Cycle

Birth

During pregnancy, women are advised to avoid certain foods. For example, eating eggs is believed to lead to a difficult labor and to cause the baby to be born without hair. Expecting mothers also avoid eating chicken intestines because of a belief that this will cause the baby's umbilical cord to get tangled.

Mozambique has some of the world's highest rates of infant and maternal mortality, so a birth without complications is a welcome event. Babies are kept inside for the first 30 days. After this time, a party is held to announce the child's name. Children are often named after family members. Relatives and friends bring gifts to congratulate the mother.

In southern and central Mozambique, babies are given traditional medicines believed to prevent disease. A button on a string may be tied around the baby's wrist to prevent vision problems. In the north, a piece of gold is placed in a baby's bath water in the belief that doing so will bring riches. A special ceremony may be held for a baby with a persistent cry.

A *Nhanga* (witch doctor) calls upon the spirits of the child's ancestors and chooses the name of one ancestor. The name is given to the child in the belief that doing so will heal the ailment causing the child to cry. The child may sometimes be called by this new name, particularly by the grandparents.

Milestones

Young people, especially those in rural families, assume many adult responsibilities by early adolescence. Girls in rural areas may be promised in marriage as early as age 12 and can be married soon after that; however, this rarely occurs in cities. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS has also shifted adult responsibilities onto young people. Children orphaned by the disease are typically cared for by their grandparents or oldest uncle, but an increasing number of adolescents are required to be the head of a household of younger siblings.

In the past, many ethnic groups required adolescents to enter adulthood through initiation rituals. Today, these rituals are less widely practiced, but they remain common in the north. Boys age eight and older may spend 30 days in the

jungle, where they undergo circumcision and learn to be courageous, to respect the norms of society, and to care for their future wives and children. After their first menstruation, groups of girls learn skills related to housekeeping, cooking, and marriage. In the north, girls are sometimes kept inside their home for about one month during this initiation ritual. There is usually a big celebration when a girl leaves the house for the first time following her initiation.

Death

After a death, the deceased's family may hold a wake, where people come to pay respects to the body. The dead may be buried or cremated. Muslims often cremate their dead in the yard of the family home or at the cemetery. Funerals are extremely important events, and it is considered vital for everyone in the community to attend. Relatives and friends give money to the bereaved family to help with expenses. Funerals usually take place the day after death. If the deceased was cremated, the ashes may be buried in a grave or scattered over the ocean. In rural areas, children do not attend funerals, because of a belief that doing so will make them ill; in cities, they attend with their families.

Ceremonies are performed eight days and then six months after the death; mourners place flowers on the grave, say prayers, give money to the family, and gather at the home of the deceased for a meal. In central Mozambique, on the sixth night after death, mourners may beat drums and dance around a fire at the house of the deceased. This ritual is believed to bring happiness to the soul of the deceased.

Children and siblings of the deceased wear a small rectangular piece of black cloth on their clothing for six months. While men follow few traditions after the death of their wives, many customs are associated with widowhood. A widow dresses completely in black for one to two years after her husband's death; after this time, it is socially acceptable for her to marry again. An older widow may wear a veil for the rest of her life. In northern Mozambique, a young widow does not leave her home for 40 days. During this time, she applies *muciro* (a natural cosmetic from the trunk of the muciro tree) in the belief that her old skin will be replaced with new skin in preparation to remarry.

Diet

Staple foods include rice and a paste (called *xima*) made from sun-dried cereals, usually cornmeal. Some people eat manioc (cassava) meal as well, particularly in northern Mozambique. When possible, people include beef, goat, fowl, fish, and seafood in their diet. Pork is fairly common throughout the country, though many observant Muslims abstain from eating pork or drinking alcohol. However, some Mozambican Muslims interpret this Islamic prohibition more loosely and may consume both. In the north, beef and fish are often eaten dried. In rural areas, people often eat *bushmeat* (wildlife such as gazelles, monkeys, baboons, and hippopotamuses). Tropical fruits are abundant and are eaten as snacks or desserts.

Alcohol consumption is fairly common in Mozambique (especially among non-Muslims), as alcohol is relatively affordable, and alcoholism is a problem in many households. Males tend to drink alcohol sold commercially (beer and hard

liquors), while women (particularly in rural areas) tend to make their own *kabanga* (fermented maize) and drink almost exclusively with other women. Traditional drinks are made with a fruit base, cornmeal, and fermented sugarcane molasses.

The country is rich in vegetables, which are eaten every day. Favorites include *cacana mboa* (pumpkin leaves), *nhangana* (leaves of nhemba beans), and cassava leaves. A popular dish called *matapa* can be made using one of a variety of leaves, including cassava leaves, pumpkin leaves, bean leaves, or cabbage. In some areas (like the north), *matapa* is made with moringa leaves. Moringa leaves have high nutritional value but are often seen as a "poor man's food," thus making it hard for nutritional advocates to promote their consumption. Ilha de Mocambique and a few coastal towns nearby in Nampula province are known for their *matapa siri siri*, which is a variety of *matapa* made from seaweed, cashew flour, coconut milk, and raw cashews, served with coconut rice. Peanuts and coconuts are often served with vegetables.

Recreation

Sports

Both men and women enjoy sports, and soccer is by far the most popular. Many smaller, rural towns have a central soccer field close to the middle of town, and weekend games between local teams or other teams from nearby villages are common. Rural children frequently lack access to a real soccer ball, so they may play with a *xingufu* (a makeshift soccer ball made from plastic material, sand, and/or old clothing). People often gather to watch soccer matches, whether televised or at a stadium or local field. Many Mozambicans enjoy basketball, handball, volleyball, and swimming. The wealthy may play other sports, such as tennis.

Leisure

Because most families cannot afford toys, children often make their own toys. For example, stray wires and soda cans can become a toy car, and old clothing may be made into a doll. Boys play games like marbles, cards, hide-and-seek, tag, or *xindiri* (also called *topo*, a game in which players try to keep a top spinning for as long as possible). They also enjoy flying kites, hunting small game with slingshots, and running races. Girls often play hopscotch and jump rope; they also dance and build statues out of dirt and clay. A popular game for girls is *pidjonson*, in which two girls stand opposite one another and stretch an elastic cord around their ankles. A third girl performs a series of jumps around the cord. As the game goes on, the cord is raised higher, making the game more difficult. Children in urban areas may also use the internet, roller-skate, skateboard, and play videogames.

Teenagers play checkers, draughts, pool, and foosball. They also enjoy going to dance clubs, concerts, public swimming pools, and movies. Most people like to go to the beach, where they swim, play soccer or volleyball, run, relax, read books, and picnic. People also enjoy watching television, though televisions are rare in rural areas. Theater is also popular. *Ntchuva* and *murawarawa* are common strategy games played on a board with 18 to 32 holes and two seeds in each. Rules vary, but the overall object of the games is to

collect the most seeds.

Men get together to drink at someone's home or a public bar. Women like to sing and dance; they may sing together while they do chores or cook. People enjoy watching and participating in traditional dances, and dance competitions are popular.

Vacations

Families may travel when their children have breaks from school. Depending on what they can afford, families visit relatives, go to the beach, visit sights within the country, or travel to neighboring countries.

The Arts

Traditional arts vary by region and ethnic group. Music and dance are integral parts of most religious observances, festivals, celebrations, and entertainment. Artisans create ancestral masks and statuettes, often carved in ebony, for both decorative and religious purposes. The Makonde in northern Mozambique are well known for their ebony carvings. Other folk arts include making clay sculptures and jewelry, body tattooing, weaving, and basket making.

The nation has produced a number of renowned artists. Painter Malangatana Valente Ngwenya helped preserve Mozambique's cultural identity throughout the struggle for independence and the civil war. He was instrumental in the establishment of the National Museum of Art and the Center for Cultural Studies. Poet José Craveirinha is regarded as a national hero for his support of the independence movement and his efforts to promote African values and culture.

Holidays

Holidays are very important to Mozambicans. Though not all public holidays are widely celebrated, Mozambicans at least acknowledge each holiday as it passes. Public holidays include New Year's Day (1 January), Heroes' Day (3 February), Women's Day (7 April), Workers' Day (1 May), Independence Day (25 June), Victory Day (7 September, commemorating the Lusaka Accords, which led to Mozambique's independence), Armed Forces Day (25 September), Day of Peace and Reconciliation (4 October, commemorating the 1992 peace agreement that ended the civil war), Family Day (25 December), and Christmas Day (25 December).

Patriotic Holidays

The most important patriotic holidays are Heroes' Day and Independence Day. Heroes' Day commemorates the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane, the first president of FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique). Independence Day celebrates Mozambique's independence from Portugal, achieved in 1975. Mozambicans celebrate both holidays by placing flowers at the Square of the Mozambican Heroes in Maputo, listening to a speech by the president, and practicing *kuphahla* (pouring drinks onto the ground to call upon ancestral spirits). Various cultural activities are also held on these days, including traditional dancing, music, theater, and parades.

Christmas and Family Day

Christmas is celebrated only by Christians. Church meetings are held in the morning; the afternoon is spent with family. A

special meal is served and usually includes meat, fish, fried potatoes, rice, and cake. People celebrate with music and dancing. Some families exchange presents, but this is not a major part of the holiday. Family Day falls on the same day as Christmas and is celebrated by all Mozambicans. Celebrations intertwine with Christmas celebrations; the main difference is that non-Christians do not attend church on this day.

Harvest Festivals

In addition to official holidays, people also celebrate local harvest festivals, at which the presiding elder calls on the ancestral spirits to bless all in attendance. Food and drink are symbolically offered to the spirits, and then everyone joins in a feast. Song and dance are always part of the event. A farmer may also host a *dima*, in which neighbors and friends come to help harvest crops in exchange for a meal.

SOCIETY

Government

Structure

Most executive power is held by the president, who is head of state and head of government. The president is elected directly by popular vote to a five-year term and cannot serve more than two terms consecutively. The president must receive a majority of votes in order to be elected, which means that a second-round runoff election may be held between the two candidates who receive the most votes in the initial election. The president appoints the prime minister from among members of the Assembly of the Republic, the country's legislature. Members of the 250-seat Assembly of the Republic are elected to serve five-year terms using a proportional representation system. The judicial branch consists of a Supreme Court and several subordinate courts. Village heads and appointed district administrators serve as local leaders. Many cities also directly elect mayors.

Political Landscape

Since its beginnings as an anti-colonial armed movement, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO, now called the Mozambican Liberation Front) has dominated Mozambican politics. Initially the only legal party, FRELIMO maintained power following the introduction of a multiparty system in 1990. FRELIMO candidates have won the presidency and the majority of seats in the Assembly of the Republic since independence. The Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) has consistently been the major opposition party to FRELIMO. Conflict between FRELIMO and RENAMO remains high.

Many other parties exist, but because parties must meet a minimum requirement of 5 percent of the national vote to send delegates to the Assembly of the Republic, few are represented. Parties are legally forbidden from identifying with a particular ethnic or religious group. In 2009, members of RENAMO broke away to form the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM), which has earned some seats in the Assembly of the Republic and has created some diversity in Mozambican politics, but FRELIMO remains dominant.

Government and the People

The continuity of FRELIMO power in Mozambican politics has allowed FRELIMO to continue to adopt reforms that have produced remarkable economic growth. However, economic growth remains highly unequal, and poverty remains widespread. Even though Mozambique holds regular elections and all citizens are eligible to vote beginning at age 18, many do not consider Mozambique to be an electoral democracy. FRELIMO is often accused by RENAMO, in addition to many outside observers, of tampering with elections.

Corruption is also reportedly a major problem in Mozambique. Because of this, many Mozambicans feel that they lack an adequate way to express their grievances, a perception that has led to low voter turnout and occasional violent protests. The government has promised measures to reform the electoral system and reduce corruption in general. Despite these issues, religious, individual, and press freedoms are protected by law. In practice, the press experiences a fair amount of censorship (including self-censorship), but the other protections are generally respected.

Economy

About 75 percent of Mozambicans are engaged in agriculture, especially farming and herding cattle. Fishing is also an important industry. Exports include cotton, cashews, sugarcane, tea, cassava, corn, and coconuts. Much industry centers on the processing of raw materials such as aluminum, petroleum, cement, and glass. Sales of electric power generated by the Cabora Bassa Dam (one of the world's largest) are growing. Tourism, titanium and natural gas mining, and more hydroelectric projects are being developed. After 1994, the government privatized more than nine hundred state institutions and encouraged more private investment and foreign aid. In recent years, coal and natural gas projects have boosted the economy, but this growth has not improved the lives of those in poverty.

While growth has at times been strong, the economy's reliance on aluminum exports makes it sensitive to fluctuations in price. Challenges include expanding economic prosperity to areas other than around Maputo, relieving poverty, and curbing malaria and HIV/AIDS.

Many Mozambicans obtain informal loans through *xitique* (a system in which groups of people pool their money to extend loans to one another on a rotating basis). These loans are often used to start small businesses. Mozambique's currency is the *metical* (MZM), a name derived from a gold measure used by Arabs before the colonial era.

Transportation and Communications

The average person travels on foot or by various forms of public transportation (buses, taxis, etc.). *Chapas* (minibuses) are the most popular. However, public transportation is not very safe. Accidents with buses and *chapas* occur frequently and often result in deaths. Only the wealthy own private cars. Traffic moves on the left. A major highway runs from Maputo, in the south, up to Palma, in the very north of Cabo Delgado province. Many roads become impassable during the rainy season. The best roads extend out from Maputo. Like the main roads, rail connections do not connect all regions of

the country. Although the country has a long coastline with three major ports (Maputo, Beira, and Nacala) and rich river basins, maritime and river transport are not well developed. Significant investment is aimed at developing Mozambique's port infrastructure, however.

The country's one public television station reaches nearly every provincial capital, though this is not always the case with private stations. All television broadcasts are in Portuguese. Radio broadcasts reach more people and use nearly all major languages as well as Portuguese. Provincial capitals and the main districts are connected by telephone via satellite. Less than half of the population uses cellular phones, but usage continues to grow. Basic cellular phones are more prevalent than smartphones. Reception is available in nearly all areas of the country. High-speed internet connections are available in most cities and have expanded to many rural areas of Mozambique. However, only a small percentage of the population has regular access to the internet from their homes. People also pass news via radio, letters, and word-of-mouth. Newspaper circulation is low because papers are only published in Portuguese, which is not spoken by most of the population. The state dominates the media industry, though a free and independent press is growing.

Education

Structure

Some cities and towns have *escolinhas* (preschools), which charge tuition. Students are intended to begin primary school at the age of six. Many students start later, depending on when their families can afford to send them to school. Primary school (grades 1–7) lasts seven years. Secondary school (grades 8–12) lasts five years. Nearly all of primary school-age children attend, but the completion rate is a little more than 40 percent. Of those who finish, only 19 percent go on to secondary school. Older children who have missed years of schooling often attend classes with younger children who are at the same level.

Public schools outnumber private schools, which are too expensive for the average family. A growing number of private schools operate, mostly in Maputo. These schools often teach in English and may be religious (mainly Catholic, Muslim, or Methodist).

Access

Public primary schools are free, but students must still buy their own uniforms and supplies. In secondary school, students must also pay tuition and buy textbooks, which can be prohibitively expensive for many families. Orphans and the poorest students may attend without paying tuition.

Primary school enrollment rates are roughly the same for girls and boys. However, boys outnumber girls at the secondary level, when many girls drop out due to various pressures. Girls are often kept at home to help with household chores and learn domestic skills, which are sometimes considered more important than formal education. Many children drop out of school to work to help support their families. Teenagers who become pregnant usually discontinue their studies because of social disapproval. Many rural women have no formal education. Adult women have a much lower literacy rate than do the men in the country.

School Life

There are not enough schools or teachers to accommodate all students, particularly in rural areas, so classes may be held in shifts. Students of varying ages and levels may be placed in the same class if there is a shortage of teachers or classrooms. Class sizes are large, with one teacher teaching more than 50 students at a time. Many schools lack supplies and classrooms, so lessons may be held outside under a tree or students may sit on the floor if there are not enough desks. Schools are not generally effective, and even students in upper primary grades may be unable to read.

Many schools celebrate every one-hundredth lesson with parties that include poetry, dances, songs, theater, and food. Students wear uniforms, which vary in color and symbols. Each school has its own uniform. Boys wear pants or shorts with a shirt and tie; girls wear skirts, dresses, pants, or shorts with a blouse and tie.

Portuguese is the language of instruction in public schools. Since most rural children do not speak Portuguese when they begin school, it is difficult for them to keep up in the first years of schooling. In villages, teachers may use a local language in addition to Portuguese, especially with younger students, but the policy is to teach in Portuguese.

Teaching relies heavily on memorization. Students are graded on a scale from 0 to 20; a score lower than 10 is considered failing, while a score higher than 10 is passing. Teachers are expected to maintain a professional relationship with their students and refrain from interacting with students outside of class. Corruption is a serious problem in many Mozambican schools, with money and other things sometimes exchanged for high grades.

Higher Education

After secondary school, students may attend a university (public or private) or technical school, but very few continue with post-secondary education. There are a number of universities and institutes, most of which are concentrated in Maputo. In order to be accepted, students must pass an entrance exam. Admission to public universities is competitive, with more students applying than spaces available. Private university admission is often less competitive, but tuition is higher than most people can afford.

Health

Mozambique has one of the world's lowest life expectancies. Almost half the population has no access to clean drinking water. Malaria, intestinal diseases, malnutrition, and tuberculosis are common. Leprosy, meningitis, and cholera threaten many people. Mozambique has one of the world's highest rates of HIV/AIDS infection, at over 10 percent of people aged 15 to 49. Antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS patients are free for everyone in Mozambique.

Mozambique's healthcare system has improved in recent years, largely as a result of foreign aid. A small fee is needed to access public health services, and mothers and children receive free preventive care. However, much of the population does not receive adequate health care as a result of poverty, lack of information, uneven distribution of facilities, and a severe shortage of healthcare personnel and medical supplies. Poor infrastructure also prevents many from

receiving care, as many Mozambicans live dozens of miles away from the nearest health center, and roads are often poorly maintained. For those who can afford it, private service is available in public hospitals and at private clinics. For minor ailments, many people turn to traditional healers, only visiting formal healthcare providers in the event of serious health problems.

AT A GLANCE

Contact Information

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Country and Development Data

Capital	Maputo
Population	31,693,239 (rank=46)
Area (sq. mi.)	308,642 (rank=34)
Area (sq. km.)	799,380
Human Development Index	184 of 189 countries
Gender Inequality Index	136 of 162 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$1,200
Adult Literacy	74% (male); 54% (female)
Infant Mortality	61.38 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	58 (male); 64 (female)
Currency	Mozambique Metical

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