

# MADZIMBABWE EXPLORER

The complete Zimbabwean story chronicler



Cashing in on forests



Special message from SPCA

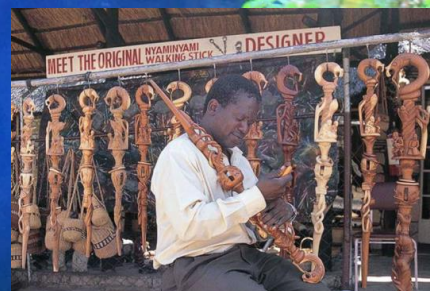
## Chinhoyi Caves dying?



Chinhoyi Caves debunking lion stigma



Kariba birds' mixed fortunes



Nyaminyami walking stick genius

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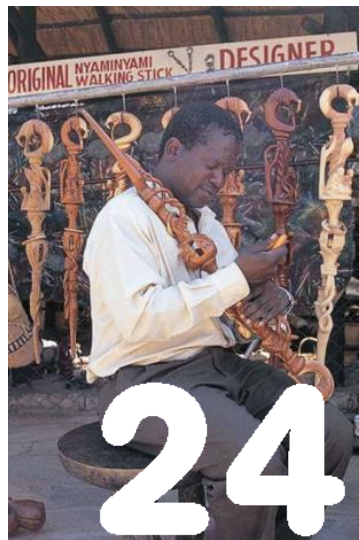
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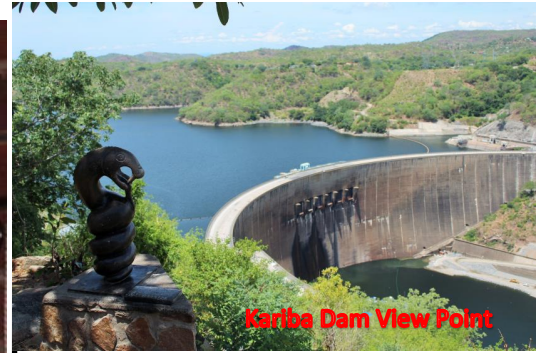
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## About us

*MaDzimbahwe Explorer* is a tourism portal with informative, upbeat and inspirational articles about Zimbabwe not only for the benefit of foreign nature lovers, thrill seekers and travellers but locals as well.

We hope to not tell this beautiful, gracious, upwardly mobile southern African country's story not through known stereotypes of stagnation and regression but through more objective lenses.

We seek to share the country's tourist attraction sites – both popular and less publicized, review its accommodation and meetings, conferencing and event facilities as well as profile its eating houses.

We hope to change Zimbabwe's tourism narrative from portraying its natural endowments as its most prized possession to its people as well. We will also do this by sharing its impressive and unique culture – both urban and traditional to include fashion and arts— visual and performance.



Caribbea Bay Resort

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norma.tsopo@gmail.com

## Welcome to the 3rd e-magazine issue of **MADZIMBAHWE** EXPLORER

**H**ello beautiful people!  
Welcome to our exceptional and historically blown third e-magazine issue of

Madzimbahwe Explorer E-magazine.

We have since adopted a destination theme approach and we herein explore Chinhoyi and Kariba.

We feature a profile of standout accommodation facilities that offer all the comforts you desire and deserve. For an unforgettable food experience this holiday we present to you the Orange groove restaurant in Chinhoyi, perfect for drive in guest too.

We also look at a premier clubs and resort areas that offer you a perfect and unique holiday experience this festive season. You may have heard of Chinhoyi caves and the famous Kariba dam and Zambezi River over and over again or encountered them in different visuals but trust us these places are never tiresome. There is more to learn and discover every day.

Our environmental pages continue with

their segmented look at plants, birdlife and wild animal profiles as they relate to our region of focus – Mashonaland West Province.

The cultural page explores the beautifully sculpted Nyaminyami walking stick which is embedded with the history, culture and beliefs of the Tonga people and the legend of the Zambezi river god. Our arts pages present women and crafts in the resort town of Kariba.

We also continue on our journey with Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) with the support of Chimanimani Tourist Association (CTA).

Madzimbahwe Explorer team wishes you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year!

For comments and more, visit our website: madzimbahwe-explorer.co.zw. Awesome readers please like our facebook page: Madzimbahwe Explorer. You can as well follow us on twitter - @zimexplorer.

Happy holidays!

Norma

## Tourism personality

# Gordon Addams

## An unheralded fearless advocate



**T**he Eastern Highlands escarpment has every activity a tourist who would enjoy an active outing would want from the best fly fishing spots, trout fishing, nature and mountain hiking trails, white water rafting, skywalk and zip line, numerous water sports and golf. Those that would love a more sedentary holiday break are equally spoilt for choice.

This is all in a setting of diverse world-class tourist destinations and the fairest climatic conditions in the land.

Right in the eastern border city of Mutare is Cecil Kop and Thompson's Vlei a 1700 hectare nature reserve. In the south-east of the city is the Vumba Mountains, steep green "mountains of the mist", clothed in indigenous forest and teeming with near endemic birds and rare wildlife. The awesome 760 m tall Mtarazi Falls connect Nyanga with Honde Valley with its scenic gorge view in which the iconic Mahwemasimike, meaning "planted rocks", stand majestically. Mt Inyangani, the tallest mountain in the country, is a few minutes' drive from the falls. The country's longest mountain range and only quartzite mountain in Africa – Chimanimani Mountains with its pools, waterfalls, caves, rock paintings and wildlife; the classy Bridal Veil Falls; and Makwaha Forest in Vimba all beckon further down the Eastern Highlands with Nyanyadzi Hot Springs and Chipinge's world famous big tree in Chirinda Forest at the tail end of the escarpment.

But tourists are an erratic trickle.

The region lack air connectivity and this has been the big elephant in the room. The nearest airport is almost 300 kilometres away in Harare leaving it only accessible by road – a big

disadvantage for tourists who would have limited time.

Or, as was the case over the past decade, police make road travel punitive.

This was the time that Gordon Addams, a veteran hotelier with four decades in the industry stood up to the authorities by demanding the demilitarization of Grand Reef Airport 22 kilometres from Mutare at a time that no one else had the guts to do so.

It is only recently and after the departure of former President Robert Mugabe that business groups have joined former Inns of Zimbabwe chairperson in calling for the establishment of a commercial airport in the city to unlock its full economic potential and bring it to parity with other major cities with airports like Harare, Gweru, Bulawayo, Masvingo and even Chiredzi.

He is one person who is not afraid to put his body on the line for the good of the tourism industry like Jane High whom we featured in the previous edition.

The airport has now been cleared for development for use but like any hero throughout history, his efforts are not being publicly acknowledged. He is not worried though "as long as we have a functional airport to connect us to the rest of the world."

Addams who currently owns and runs Gordon's Bed and Breakfast in Mutare and Grace's Cottage in the Vumba is continuing to advocate for a better legislative environment for hospitality industry players with a call for government to rationalise levies and taxes to make the sector regionally competitive.

## The Editor's Travel Guide

### Enchanting Chinhoyi caves, Kariba Dam

**T**ravelling can be a very rewarding exercise. It allows you an opportunity to break from your routine and refresh your mind as well as time with your loved ones in an increasingly hectic and impersonal world.

It therefore becomes important to plan one's journey carefully to get the best out of it – which is the main reason MaDzimbahwe Explorer is publishing this magazine.

Unless you're making a repeat visit there is need to always do a proper research of the places you will be visiting or get professional help in organising the trip.

Chinhoyi and Kariba are the country's finest holiday destinations and are also loved by thousands of international holiday makers who tour them each year but there is need for care in planning this particular trip.

You do not necessarily need to own your own vehicle or hire one for you to make this trip. The places are very accessible except when you get to Kariba where you would need either a taxi or a car hire or a tour operator to take you around.

If you are going to be hitch-hiking one needs to be careful of where you drop off and hitch rides from Makuti and what times one gets to specific areas in Kariba because this is tech-

nically all a game reserve with some of the most dangerous animals.

Makuti is particularly notorious for the roaming buffalo herds and attendant lion prides making any drop-offs after dark a little on the suicidal tip of the scales. So are some areas of Kariba that are effectively wildlife corridors where encounters with hippopotamuses, buffaloes and elephants might not always be enjoyable sights depending on your mode of transport and their moods.

But that's is for your safety. There is no need to be reckless anyway in interacting with the wild north.

Nature deserves respect if you're to enjoy it.

This region as the next pages show is a rich and diverse holiday destination with everything to help you relax and find yourself and your connections with family and friends.

It is no wonder they are so popular with locals who are generally considered local destination shy.

And Defu Travel and Tours are there to help you organise a tour to the iconic Chinhoyi Caves, their Lion Enclosure, Kariba Dam and the national park with its teeming wildlife which include the big five – African leopard, White and Black rhinoceros, African elephant, lion and Cape Buffalo.

In the right hands all can be seen with the probability only falling drastically with the secretive African leopard. But there is much more to this region beyond the big game as there are boat cruises and many other activities to engage in and enjoy.



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## Feature

# Chinhoyi Caves dying?

*The system of caves and caverns is collapsing on itself*

By Norma Tsopo

**C**hinhoyi Caves are a unique geological wonderment – one of the country's top five best tourist magnets.

But the gothic limestone caves may as well be dying.

The very factors and forces that created them dooms their existence to a finite lifespan – which should naturally be a fact of life everywhere.

Change is life's only constant.

There are concerns that the system of caves and caverns may be collapsing on themselves.

This landscape's most exciting spectacle, the sleeping pool's open roof is actually a sinkhole. It used to be a huge cave whose roof collapsed into the pool 46 metres below the ground level.

In their publication, Zimbabwe National Parks and National Monuments says there are noticeable collapses all around the caves.

"These collapses can be noticed by the sink holes and depression within the surrounding areas," the publication notes.

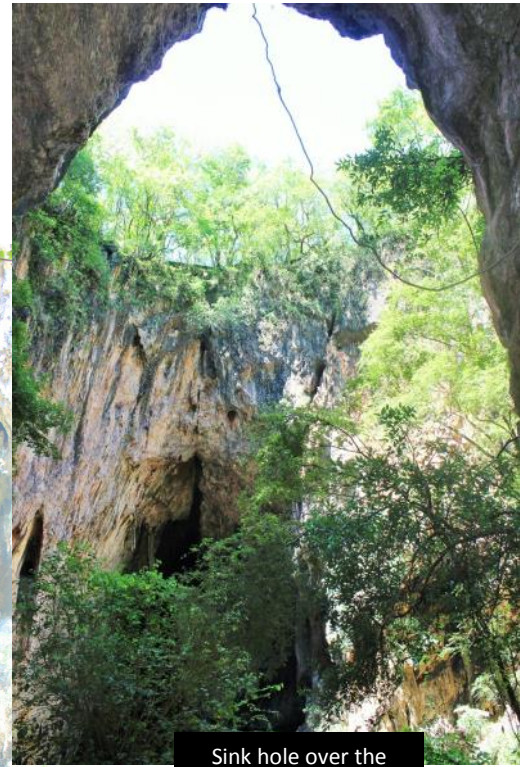
Petros Mwera, an Extension and Interpretation Officer told *MaDzimbahwe Explorer* crew that they had to fill up a swallow hole not far from the caves.

Even the features inside them – the roofs and floors, are in constant change.

They are however here for now and waiting to be explored. The caves have been known to be generally in the state



Sink hole over the Sleeping Pool



and crystal clear waters have earned it comparisons with the famous Blue Grotto Capri. Maintaining a constant temperature of 22 degrees Celsius, which is a quality of big water

bodies like seas and oceans, there are strong research suggestions that this water is connected to a bigger water body elsewhere.

This belief was recently further strengthened by the appearance of Tilapia breems which we didn't place there as Zimparks," Mwera said. There is no record of anyone being authorised to introduce fish in the pool.

The fish have however been a welcome solution of a problem weed that was choking the pool. "We used to have a challenge of weed and since we started seeing the fish the problem weeds disappeared," the Zimparks official said.



Another sink hole in the light cave

they are in their entire recorded history.

There is no sign that they would drastically change in an instant.

But this lack of permanence in their structure take away nothing from their splendour.

The caves are composed of the naturally lit Sleeping Pool and the Dark Caves which have artificial lighting.

The Sleeping Pool or Chirorodziva's blue



The depth of the water in the pool is estimated by Zimbabwe Sub-Aqua Speleological Research Group at between 80 and 91 metres.

The pool has a passageway that goes deeper though. A diver who came in 2004 managed to go as far deep as 160 metres but did not manage to return alive. His body was found four days later at 75 metres.

Mwera said this challenged a more experienced diver to come in 2011 with a diving-bike.

“He said he began to experience a huge force that was pulling him back up at between 170 and 180 metres deep. He could not bear the pressure at 191 metres and decided to test the force by releasing the bike but that is where they were separated with the bike being sucked in a flush and him being pushed back up.

“It was as if there is a force that didn’t want him to go beyond that point,” Mwera said.

Some of the water passages from the pool lead back into it – one connects from the Blind Cave which is near the end of the Dark Cave, another is 58 metres below the surface with the third being the one that is being explored by the divers.

The water level in the pool is not determined by the amount of rainfall in the area either having increased by more than five metres in 2004 a level it maintained for seven years before going down by the same height in 2011. This was not consistent with any rainfall patterns.

Historically the caves have been known to have been used as shelter by local Chiefs with the last ones having been the brutal Chief

Nyamakwere who would use the Sleeping Pool to execute any dissenting voices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

He was later dethroned by Headman Chinhoyi who then assumed chieftainship and took over control of the caves which were then named after

him.  
Ex-



cavations in and around the caves revealed that people have stayed in and near the cave from early times as some of the discovered pottery and human remains radio-carbon dated around AD 650.

Chinhoyi caves are easy to access as they lie along the Harare – Chirundu highway, about 120 km from the capital.





TOBACCO INDUSTRY AND MARKETING BOARD

## DESTRUCTION OF ALL TOBACCO SEEDBEDS

All tobacco growers are reminded that the Plant Pests and Diseases Act [Chapter 19:08] requires that all tobacco seedbeds be destroyed by 31 December.

Destruction of seedbeds helps to reduce carry-over of diseases and pests.

Tobacco growers who fail to destroy tobacco seedbeds should be reported to Department of Research and Specialist Services (Plant Quarantine Services Institute), AGRITEX, Tobacco Research Board (TRB) or TIMB.

Reports can be made at TIMB offices located in Bindura, Mvurwi, Mutare, Chinhoyi, Karoi, Marondera and Rusape.

Growers should also take note of the following legislated dates:

Last day of destroying all seedbeds	-	31 December
Earliest date for sowing	-	1 June
Earliest date for transplanting	-	1 September

For contravention of regulations requiring the destruction of tobacco plants by a specified date or prohibiting the planting of tobacco plants between specified dates, a grower will be subjected to the following-

- a) For a first offence, to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars each hectare or part thereof in respect of which the offence is committed or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or to both such fine and such imprisonment:
- b) For a second or subsequent conviction, to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars for each hectare or part thereof in respect of which the offence is committed or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

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*P.O Box 10214 Harare, Zimbabwe.*

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# Lodgings . Restaurant . Club . Resorts

## Lodgings

CUT Hotels primed for excellence

## Restaurant

Orange Grove Restaurant — for exquisite dining experience

## Bar

Caribbea Bay Resort's Jacana Bar

## Resorts

Kariba's iconic St Barbara Chapel

Kariba's glamour

# CUT Hotels primed for excellence

## Lodgings

*The hotels are being established as strategic hospitality centres and business units by Chinhoyi University of Technology*

**By Norma Tsopo**

**S**itting elegantly in the verdant Manyame River bank, Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) Hotel – the flagship of CUT Hotels is a luxuriant expression of the aspirations of the relatively new hospitality group.

Its architectural splendour – a brilliant mix of circles and rectangles makes this hotel strikingly expressive, making it one of the finest structures in Chinhoyi.

It affords guests who check in to their top floors on the western end captivating views of the river, its acacia forest covered banks and its bridge.

Set on a beautifully lush-green manicured lawns, flower decorated pathways in a sloppy landscape the ambiance of the hotel is perfect for both relaxation and quite reflection by business travellers that it primarily targets.

The hotel has a rather simple but clever infrastructural design which separates its various business units which also allows for effective management of guest traffic.

Right at the entrance to the hotel, in a stand-alone building, is a drive-in restaurant for on-the-run clients which specialises in traditional cuisine. It also has sitting room at the back for those who would like to eat from restaurant—this has proven to be a hit with both locals and wayfarers.

The main building’s first section has conferencing facilities comprising of conference rooms, a banqueting room, a breakaway room and three board rooms as well as a beauty parlour.



CUT Hotel



Again, this is strategically positioned to protect the privacy of guests booked for accommodation— which is on the western end of the complex, from the often inconvenient of running into the nearly 900 guests it can accommodate if it decides to host a wedding as well as conferencing and offer boardroom facilities all at once.

The hotel has 34 en suite luxurious rooms broken down into four executive suites, 16 twin rooms and 14 single rooms all with DSTV and tea/coffee making facilities.

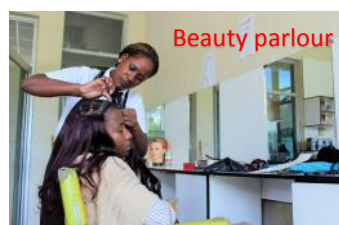


CUT’s restaurant is in a separate wing together with the bar Manyame Cocktail Bar. The restaurant which serves delectable African and international cuisine is superbly laid out with a section for a bigger group and a section where couples and smaller groups can dine privately.

Patrons to the bar can drive straight over and leave without interacting with other hotel guests unless they come to the bar. Its Thursday jazz sessions have now become a special feature of the sleepy town’s entertainment calendar.

The hotel is also disability compliant as all its facilities are accessible to differently abled people with at least a room specially designed for a wheel-chair bound guest.

Service – from reception to bar tenders, chefs, waitresses, caretakers to management as well as all the requisites of a modern hotel, makes this a model hotel.



Beauty parlour

The hotel was established as a strategic hospitality centre and business unit by CUT and falls under the university’s School of Hospitality and Tourism.

Its take-over of the iconic Orange Grove Motel made CUT Hotels a hotel group and also spread the quality to the motel which was in dire need of improvement.

The motel, like CUT Hotel, is now a two-star facility according to its grading by Zimbabwe Tourism Authority.

The name which incorporates motel has no bearing on the quality of the service as it is locally now just a remnant of the old accommodation classification. “Inns, hotels, lodges and motels among others are now competing at the same level,” CUT Hotels marketing executive Zororo Marangwanda noted.

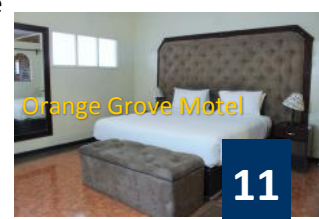


Orange Grove Bar is more leisurely

It also takes care of guests that desire a more leisurely ambience than the more formal CUT Hotel.

The group has now also opened a new self-catering lodge in Kariba with views of the lake that is being opened for a test run this festive season.

This evolving and growth in the face of growing competition and opportunities as tourism is on the rebound after years of flux speaks volumes of the groups’ ability to navigate the challenging local economic environment.



Orange Grove Motel

## Restaurant

# Orange Grove Restaurant — for exquisite dining experience

*It's set in conservative infrastructure but the ambience is relaxing and the food even better*

By Norma Tsopo

**A**ppearances can be deceptive. Orange Grove Restaurant is set in the humble aboard of a two-star motel.

The layout, furnishings and soft background music however create a relaxing ambience for a memorable fine dining experience.

If anything, the setting is perfectly set to exceed your banqueting.

Our expectations started to be exceeded by the waitresses' eager to please affectionate conduct, the very moment we walked in for lunch.

The ala carte menu appeared short for a hotel restaurant but this is not at all due to a lack of depth by the chefs but limited ingredients in the current economic climate.

"We wouldn't want to disappoint our guests by giving excuses on why we are unable to serve dishes they would have picked," a waitress explained.

Settling for local and western food, the restaurant has not chosen to specialise in any ethnic cuisine due to the rather reserved nature of Zimbabweans in experimenting with food.



They can prepare food to the taste of diners though, which is the key factor across ethnic cuisines.

We were also not down to some experiments and settled for the never disappointing delicacy of pork chops and fish fillet and chips. This was served in impressive turnaround time and gorgeously garnished and presented on a wooden platter.

The portions were very generous too. Much more than we had expected.

The texture and taste of the food matched the exquisite presentation. It was a show of professional proficiency and should clearly place pressure on the motel's management to improve the infrastructure to match its human capital.

By the end of the meal we were planning our next visit.

On a clear sky we would have had our lunch either by the pool or in the beautiful garden – a relaxing scenery and a favoured wedding venue in the resort town.

The restaurant however only serves English breakfast starting at 7am and a cut-off time of 9:30 am.

Although it prides itself in offering ala carte service the restaurant can serve more than 500 people during conferences, parties and weddings offering well prepared buffet meals.

But like I noted at the beginning, don't let appearances fool you—the setting may be conservative, but the food is fantastic.

This place is perfect for everyone from individuals, couples and groups who appreciate a laid back leisurely atmosphere.





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“a member of best of zimbabwe”

## Bar

# Caribbea Bay Resort's Jacana Bar

*Its kids' cocktail on its bar menu sets it apart as a premier resort bar*

**Ngoni Shumba**

**B**uilt in distinct Sardinian architecture with a distinct Mediterranean coastal ambience Caribbea Bay Resort's Jacana Bar is set in an environment that is hard to match anywhere else in the resort town.

Although it is difficult to think of children when discussing bars this child-friendly hotel's bar has non-alcoholic cocktails on its bar menu for kids.

There are three main cocktails like Bubble Gum, Masaisai and Play With Me all with at least four different ingredients for their making.

This is just a show of its class as there are at least seven other non-alcoholic cocktails they could choose from. These include regional favourites Malawi Shanty, Rock Shady, and Shirley Temple before adding to the hotel's own Matonga Spear, Musambangwena and the Tsanga.

The bar of course remains out of bounds for children who will have to enjoy their drinks and cocktails from the balcony just outside the bar as it remains re-

stricted to those under 18.

This is all meant to create memorable holiday experiences for the entire family in a setting from which they can enjoy the world-renowned magical sunsets over Lake Kariba.

The bar operates from 10am to 10pm in opulence as they offer a premium experience to their clients.

They boast of always stocking the finest wines like the expensive Blue Label Whiskey but their signature alcoholic cocktail is Kariba Water – a colourful mélange, among over a dozen other cocktails.

Livhas Zinyuke, the hotel's food and beverages manager said they are however not limited to the menu as they can make many other world famous cocktails like the Margarita and Manhattan as well as any that their clients may request.

"We however

can't say we know all the cocktails and we are

willing to learn from our well-travelled clients who may want something specific that we may not be competent to deliver," Zinyuke said.

To add flair to the leisure experience the bar hosts Jacana nights on Fridays where there is either disco or various artists perform for guests.

Located only 15 km from the local airport and just 3 km from the Kariba Dam wall, the bar may be open to walk in guests but they would either need to have their own vehicles or hire, which in itself screens who patronizes the bar.

Beyond the bar the resort offers exquisite hospitality and dining experiences as well as organised Sunset Cruises, Game drives, Guided walks, Kariba highlights tours, Cruise dinners; Bush dinners, Canoe safaris, Fishing and Houseboat hire, as well as day trips across the lake.'



# Kariba's iconic St Barbara Chapel

# Resort



Ralph Chingwena at St Barbara Chapel



The church's crucifix is sitting atop a curving wall that is broad at the bottom and tapers high up in symbolic resemblance to the dam wall.

*The dedication of a church to the iconic Kariba Dam employees is an honour that has not been matched by any other institution in Zimbabwe*

**R**oman Catholic Church in Kariba – St Barbara Chapel, is an iconic landmark on the resort town's infrastructure.

It is the only building whose architectural design was carefully modelled in tribute Kariba Dam—is a double curvature concrete arch dam in the Kariba Gorge of the Zambezi river basin between Zambia and Zimbabwe, complete with a plaque to honour people who died constructing the dam in 1957.

During construction of the dam, there were heavy rains which led to the coffer dam being destroyed, sweeping away many workers with 11 Italians having their bodies thrown against the wet dam wall concrete. The chief engineer decided against trying to pluck their bodies out and went for the bold but practical option of plastering them into the wall where they remain up to now.

The dam's first phase was constructed from 1955 to 1959 but it was to be fully completed in 1977 due to economic and political factors.

The chapel which is located in Kariba Heights bellies no secrets and is an important reminder of the story of the dam's construction.

It has seven black gates which Ralph Chingwena, a local tour guide, said shows that construction of the dam went on throughout all seven days of the week without respite.

There are six pillars around it's alter which represent the six flood gates on the dam wall.

To remove any doubt that it is designed and built to honour the magnificent dam there is a plaque that has a list of all the people who died during construction of the dam.

The dam was built by Italian company Impresit which employed Zimbabweans, Zambians and Malawians. It is 617 metres long, 13 metres wide at the top from 24 metres at the bottom.

From the top of the dam to the water level below there is 12metres and an 80 metre deep pool below.



## CAKES *By* LAURA

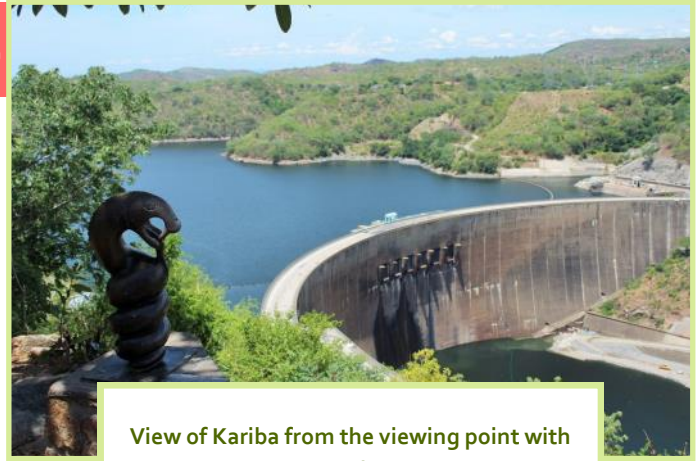
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**CHIGGZ**  
 Graphics

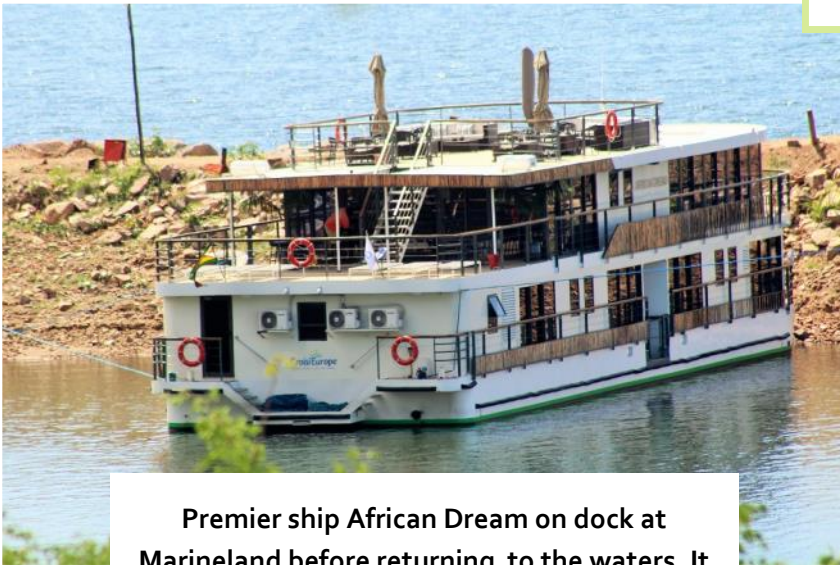
## Resorts

### Kariba's glamour

*Kariba is a picturesque resort with spectacular views and diverse wildlife that will not cease to sizzle even repeat visitors*



View of Kariba from the viewing point with the iconic curving of the Nyaminyami



Premier ship African Dream on dock at Marineland before returning to the waters. It is reportedly fully booked up to 1922



Kariba has over 300 registered boats and boat houses offering visitors a diverse range to choose from

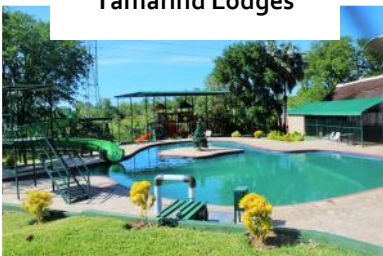


Curio vending is a major economic activity in Kariba



Zebras on the highway near Nyamhuka township

#### Tamarind Lodges



ZTA official at Kariba Heights



# Environment

Plant Life . Animal Life . Bird Life

Animal Life

Debunking lion stigma

Bird Life

Kariba birds' mixed fortunes

Plant Life

Cashing in on forests

# Debunking lion stigma

***It is safer to be with wild animals than with people.  
People are much more dangerous than lions!***

By Norma Tsopo

Lions are imposing predators whose hunting prowess is eulogised by some wildlife researchers with a fanatical fascination at their highly refined prey instinct and adapted physiology.

Emphasis on their being efficient killing machines brings images of blood and death at their mention so much so that they are now heavily stigmatised as unbridled monsters that will attack or hunt humans on sight.

It was interesting to hear such a beast being described as lazy and even shy.

Their imposing stature and tens of hours of footage of lions taking down everything from elephants to giraffes and rule other fierce predators in the savanna still makes this a rather tough sale.

But then, behavioural experts of these apex predators would not set up camp to mislead the nation and bring them directly in harm's way by lying to people that they are predictable and encountering them even in the wild could be managed by understanding their behaviour.

Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife (Zimparks) is trying to cure this bad press lions have been having by educating people on lions, the introduction of a Lion Enclosure at Chinhoyi Caves to disabuse the public of their stereotypical portrayal as eternally hungry and after perpetually on the hunt.

Interestingly, hippopotamus kill much more people than lions in Africa annually but they hardly suffer any stigma.

Zimparks said the facility which has a seven-year-old lion and nine-year-old lioness was aimed at educating people about the possible relationship between humans and wildlife.

"It is safer to be with wild animals than with people. People are much more dangerous than lions and we feel safer around them than around people," Petros Mwera Zimparks Extension and Interpretation Officer joked as he introduced the two lions to *Madzimbahwe Explorer* crew.

"The main purpose for the project is not for tourism purposes but to educate people especially the locals about what a lion is about and the need to respect wildlife.



"Most people think lions are cold-blooded predators that will take down anything and everything they come across but there is a lot to learn about them which will make both people and lions safer around each other. Lions have well defined behaviour with which we make use of in managing them," Mwera said.

Mwera described lions as shy, explaining that they would not make a frontal attack even if they are tempted to attack a human out of hunger.



"Lions are shy and will not attack you when you are staring at them. They will always attack from behind but they may make a false charge in which they run at you to force you to turn and run but they will break at about six metres if you are not moved. They will then try to move around to come from behind and will go away if you stand your ground," Mwera

said.

He said the feared predators are amazingly lazy spending up to 20 hours sleeping and only eating 15 percent of their weight after about a week making the risk of their attacks very minimal.

"They spend most hours of the day sleeping and males hardly hunt if they are in a pride as the lionesses do most of the hunting but it's always the male that eats first," he said.

Living in the grasslands, scrub, and open woodlands of sub-Saharan Africa, the lion is the second largest cat in the world after the tiger.

Unlike other cats, lions are very social animals. They live in groups, called prides, of around 30 lions. The size of the pride is determined by the availability of food and water.

African lions are considered vulnerable of extinction by the IUCN Red List. They are threatened by loss and fragmentation of habitat. They are also killed by humans in bravery rituals, as hunting trophies, for medicinal powers, or by ranchers protecting their livestock. Furthermore, they are susceptible to tick-borne diseases like canine distemper and babesia. Distemper often comes from dogs and hyenas with babesia striking during droughts, when they are malnourished.

# Kariba birds' mixed fortunes

*Birding here is more rewarding when combined with boat cruising as it would allow for viewing a wide variety of waders among other water birds*

By Ngoni Shumba

**M**atusadona National Park and the vast Lake Kariba – a manmade 'inland sea' is a prime birding hotspot for its rich aquatic and terrestrial catalogue of birds.

Although Zimbabwe has no endemic bird species because of its landlocked nature it has many prime birding hotspots of which Kariba is one of the finest.

There are over 240 bird species in this area whose index of water birds, particularly waders, exciting for both novices and seasoned birders.

This makes birdwatching more rewarding when combined with boat cruising as it

offers opportunities to encounter the rare Pel's Fishing Owl among other fascinating water birds like herons and egret which fish the lake's shorelines.

African Fish Eagles, Ospreys and Darters are a common sight on the dead mopane trees that stand along the lake shore and on the tens of islands that litter Kariba.

The many kingfisher species like the Giant Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher and brightly coloured Malachite Kingfisher among others are always a savoury sight.

Grey Crowned Crane, Black-bellied Bustards, Water Thick-knee and strident White-crowned Lapwings are all com-



Marabou Stock and White-back Vultures

mon along the waterlines. So are geese, ducks and plovers.

Marabou stocks might not be beautiful birds but their graceful glides in the sweltering Zambezi valley heat are a marvel to watch.

Related to these seemingly ugly birds are vultures which as scavengers always suffer bad press but are an increasingly vulnerable group of birds which are however still relatively easy to see in this region especially around kills in the game reserve.

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They are nature's sanitizers and prevent the spread of disease as they are gifted with exceptionally corrosive stomach acid which allow them to safely digest decomposing carcasses infected with various types of bacteria like botulinum toxin, hog cholera bacteria, and anthrax bacteria that are lethal to others.



**Hooded Vulture**

**Pic: [www.ukbirds.net](http://www.ukbirds.net)**

This region has six main vulture species of 11 that are found on the African continent.

The commonest is the White-backed Vulture which is listed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as Critically Endangered, along with the White-headed and Hooded Vulture. It's also home to the Lappet-faced and Cape Vultures which are categorised as Endangered as well as

the Palmnut Vulture which is specific to palm habitats.

The common place Cape buffalo herds are always accompanied by Red and Yellow-billed Oxpeckers with many more diverse terrestrial birds.

Birdlife Zimbabwe lists a variety of birds to look out for in this section of the Zambezi valley as among others Grey-headed and Lesser Black-backed White-backed Night-heron, African Finfoot, Arnot's Chats, Western Banded Snake-eagles, Trumpeter Hornbills, Orange-winged Pytilia and Broad-tailed Paradise-whydahs as well as a variety of Widowfinches among others.

Tamarind Lodges which lies along a wildlife corridor can offer an interesting starting point for terrestrial birdwatching as its thicket has an amazingly rich concentration of birds that can be enjoyed from right at one's door-step.



**Pel's Fishing Owl**

**Pic: Wikipedia**



**Yellow-billed Oxpeckers**

Some of the birds that were photographed at Tamarind Lodge in a few minutes' walk about by *MaDzimbahwe Explorer*





## Cashing in on forests

*As tobacco farming awakens to environmental concerns*

Pic: The Herald

By Norma Tsopo

**T**he success of tobacco farming in Zimbabwe has often been dampened by its negative impact on indigenous forests.

Mashonaland West Province, like most tobacco growing regions, has been losing huge tracts of its native woodlands to the duel between environmental conservation and commercial exploitation of the forests.

An increasingly balding landscape pointed to the triumph of the later.

Tobacco farming has been on a growth path and surpasses an annual production of 200 million tonnes making Zimbabwe the largest tobacco producer in Africa.

It has been a major foreign currency earner for the country.

But this comes at an undeniable cost to the environment. The upset ecological balance has begun sending feedback with an unusual backlash – intelligent and highly adaptable, baboons, facing depleting food sources, began experimenting with tobacco as a new food – an expensive taste for farmers to bear.

Chief Chundu feels that this was an expression of displeasure by the ancestral spirits on the conduct of tobacco farm-

ers.

Tobacco farming is clearly one of the country's biggest threats to its indigenous forests as they account for 20 percent of its annual 350 000 hectare loss of forests according to Forestry Commission statistics.

The industry has often been condemned as being done unsustainably

To mitigate against the negative impact on the environment Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB) and tobacco merchants established a Sustainable Afforestation Association (SAA) in 2013 to spearhead reforestation across the country.

The programme is meant to counter massive deforestation that is taking place as a result of the increased number of small scale tobacco farmers.

The merchants were expected to contribute an amount equivalent to 1,5 percent of total tobacco sales for the whole season.

The initiative will provide a sustainable source of timber for use in the tobacco industry in Zimbabwe; investigate and implement strategies for the conservation and rejuvenation of existing indige-

nous and commercial forests; and undertake activities and projects directly or indirectly relating to the provision of sustainable sources of timber and the conservation and rejuvenation of existing timber resources.

Through this commercial-scale eucalyptus plantations have been established in tobacco curing districts.

"Eucalypts have been selected for initial establishment because they are fast-growing, their management requirements are well understood, they provide good-quality firewood and seed is readily available. Since January 2013, SAA has established over 11 000 ha of fuelwood plantations nationwide," Isheanesu Moyo TIMB's public relations official told this publication.

This has allowed local communities to have a practical balance between tobacco farming and conservation efforts allowing for them to even make money from preserving their forests.

Preservation of the vegetation also has potential to earn community money on the side-lines of sustainable tobacco farming practices through a climate change mitigation carbon sink initiative.

The relief the education and intervention TIMB and SAA is having on the conversation of indigenous forests communities in Mashonaland West is boosting the success of a Carbon Green Africa's Kariba REDD+ project which is being run in four districts in the province – Binga, Nyaminyami, Hurungwe and Mbire.

Through the project, locals now fully appreciate that they do not need to cut down a tree to realise its value.



Carbon credits allow communities to earn from their standing trees

REDD, an acronym for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, according to the United Nation is an effort to create financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low carbon paths to sustainable development.

This is achieved by rewarding appropri-



**Carbon Green Africa Director Charles Ndondo**

ate management of forests by reducing deforestation and degradation of the forests by paying local communities for their standing trees through carbon credit system that is overseen by the UN and which is reviewed periodically with the money increasing with increasing foliage and reducing with loss of vegetation.



**Conservation farming in Hurungwe**

Since the inception of Kariba REDD+ in 2011, local communities have earned hundreds of thousands of dollars which has been

channelled towards community development and conservation farming training which has seen about 1 200 Farmers being trained annually.

To date more than 7 000 farmers have benefited from the training programme, where necessary, material inputs have been provided to

them.

Carbon Green Africa CEO, Charles Ndondo said the project maintains two Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards Gold Level criteria which are the Climate Change Adaptation Benefits and Exceptional Biodiversity benefits.

Gold Level criteria from the Community, Climate and Biodiversity Standard is awarded to projects that mitigate climate change, contribute to the sustainable development of local communities and biodiversity conservation.

Ndondo says their projects are covering over 785 000 hectares of forest ecosystems and benefitting up to 200 000 people from some of the country's poorest communities.

"Conservation farming techniques are more drought-adapted than convention-



al agriculture," Ndondo said.

Beyond the initiative by TIMB through SAA, Carbon Green is also promoting cassava farming as a potential answer to the country's interlocked energy and food security requirements with the roots being a rich source of carbohydrates while the woody stems have potential as fuel for tobacco curing.



Carbon Green runs sports tournaments to promote reforestation and conservation of trees

The province has been leading an experimental project to provide food and fuel for the curing of the cash crop.

Clearly, agricultural practice is showing concern for ecological balance with key stakeholders in the growth and marketing of the golden leaf now coming on board the conservation bandwagon.

***This section is sponsored by Tobacco Industry Marketing Board (TIMB) as part of its efforts to promote forest conservation and responsible farming practices.***



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# ARTS . CRAFTS . RECIPE . CULTURE

**Art**

**Nyaminyami walking stick genius**

**Crafts**

Handcrafts business slow in Kariba

**Recipe**

Homemade Lemonade

**Culture**

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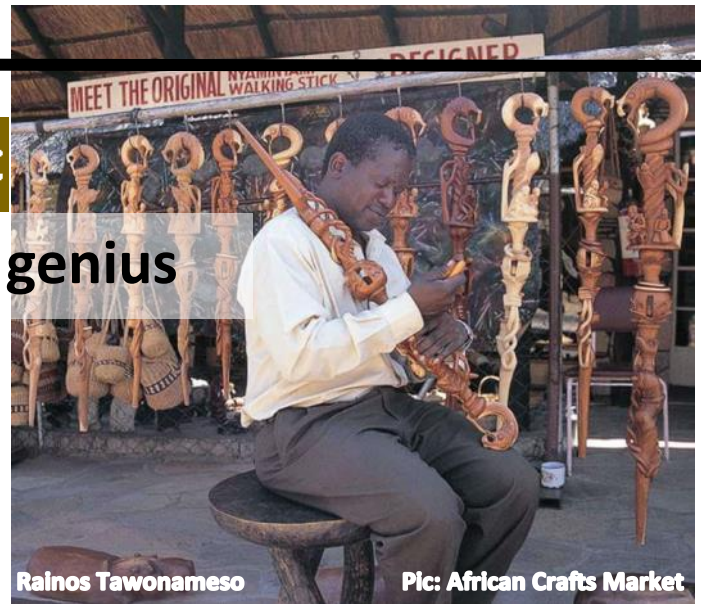
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# Nyaminyami walking stick genius

*Portrayal of the Nyaminyami as a god and as a dragon-like creature is however considered as debasing the Tonga's spirit medium by some critics*

By Ngoni Shumba



Rainos Tawonameso

Pic: African Crafts Market

Ubiquitous to all curio shops in and around Kariba, the Nyaminyami walking stick's commercial success is the first testimony for its perfection as an artistic expression of the Tonga's beliefs, culture and lifestyle.



It is a work of genius by sculptor Rainos Tawonameso. He created it in 1986 and registered it with the Patents and Designed Office in Harare.

Being so on point in capturing all the interesting details of the Tonga people who lived along and depended on the Zambezi River for their livelihoods it is hard to believe that it is only a piece of art and not a historical relic.

According to Laiton Kandawire the depiction of the Nyaminyami as a dragon-like creature that the Tongas worshipped is an assault on their religion as they believed in "Leza", the Creator (Chilenga).

"How the Nyaminyami, a spirit medium, an intercessor, ended up being described as dragon-like is also obscure," as he contends that no one has ever seen it in its full glamour.

Kandawire believes that the view which was popularised by Anthony M. Williams, Editor of the African Fisherman magazine that its graphic impression was projected into the visual thoughts of local artists



through the symbol of the Italian car model – the Alpha-Romeo, which was being driven by Italians who built the Kariba Dam in the 1950s.

This, they contend, even debases the Tonga's concept of God.

Tawonameso is not even Tonga as he comes from Bikita in distant Masvingo

province and the stick is only his expression of his understanding of the Tonga's faith and customs.

His elaborate traditionally carved walking stick from iron wood depicting the Nyaminyami – Zambezi snake spirit which was believed by locals to be their interceding medium with God, as it is commonly understood visually and its relationship with the valley's inhabitants is brilliant artistic expression all the same.

Its popularity has transcended the border into neighbouring Zambia.

It is however disheartening that he is not earning much from the sale of the walking stick because of piracy on both sides of the Zambezi.

Each part of the Nyaminyami walking stick represents something...

**The Handle:** represents "Nyaminyami" who the Tonga people believe is their spirit medium (mudzimu) and that the occasional earth tremor felt in the lake surroundings is

caused by this spirit.

**The Tree:** is a Mopani tree which is found in the Zambezi Valley and is sacred to the Tonga who would perform their rituals under it.

**The Spirals:** represent the waves on the Zambezi River.

**The Fish:** is representative of the staple food of the Tonga people, who prior to the building of Kariba Dam, fished daily on the Zambezi River.

**The Figures:** represents people on the Zambezi River banks during their ceremonial dances.

**The Wooden Rings:** represents the bangles worn by the Tonga woman as a decoration which remains the culture to date.

**The Magical Ball:** used by the Tonga fortune tellers in casting lots as well as guarding against evil spirits .

**The sign of the Hand:** represents the diviner holding the "Magical Ball".

**Women's Bubble Pipe (incelwa):** is normally a long pipe made from a calabash and is used by the Tonga people for smoking tobacco. In the past these pipes were used for smoking "dagga" - Tonga tradition.



Martha Martin, a craft vendor, explains the symbolism of all the features of the walking stick



# Handcrafts business slow in Kariba

## Crafts

*The sector has an estimated worth of \$100 billion globally with India earning \$4 billion contributing to 25 percent of the country's GDP*

By Norma Tsopo

**B**usiness is slow for Kariba Heights Crotchet Works, an association of 32 female craftswomen who operate from a strategic vantage point for viewing the spectacle of the beautiful lake and its numerous islands.

"Very few people are coming here and often they appear to be in a hurry," Judith Simbi, 63, who has been vending ornaments from here since 1987 says.

They feel particularly let down by local tour guides whom they feel could direct more traffic to this viewing area and when they do, they don't seem to allow them enough time to fan through their curio stalls.

"We feel that they are not making an effort to support our business. We have no other means of selling our works but waiting here for visitors to come and buy souvenirs in memory of their visit to our resort town," Simbi said.

Allocated the land by the local authority, the women also carry the financial aspirations of other craftsmen and artists as they sale a diverse array of products at their open air curio shop beyond their crotchet works.

There are metal, wood and Shona stone sculpts, the enigmatic Nyaminyami walking sticks, hats, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, table clothes, bags, candle stands and various other items as this platforms benefits more than hundred different artists.

Ralph Chingwena a local tour guide however feels that it was rather competition from curio vendors in other view points and elsewhere in the resort town that was making it harder for them to make sales.

"Usually tourists get excited by the artefacts that they see on their first exposure to them so much so that when they visit other places they would have already bought what they want," Chingwena said.

He said their only salvation was on increased tourist traffic to the resort town which still largely depend on domestic tourists who have a smaller appetite for their wares.



Simbi, like most of the women here, has managed

to take care of her family through crafts as the trade depends largely on the performance of the tourism industry. Her prayer is that the industry will bounce back to its glory and afford all of them dissent earnings once more.

Martha Martin, 52, who has been selling her wares in the area for the past 19 years said they are however encouraged by the improved fortunes of their colleagues in the Victoria Falls.

"Tourist arrivals in Victoria Falls have been improving and our colleagues there are surviving," Martin said.

Handcrafts offer rich pickings for marginalised populations – women and the poor, if the sector is adequately supported.

The sector has an estimated worth of \$100 billion globally and contributes between five and 30 percent in 26 Coordination Committee for Development and Promotion of African Handicraft (CODEPA) member states in Africa.



Fides Nhanda, 64, working on her crotchet

Zimbabwe Applied Arts in Crafts Association's research entitled The Crafts and Applied Arts Sub-sector in Zimbabwe: Strategies and Policies to Grow the Sub-Sector, the handicrafts sector contributes to household incomes amounts ranging from US\$500 to US\$15 000 per annum depending on region.

Masvingo is at the low end, while Harare is the higher of that income continuum.

India was cashing in \$4 billion annually while the sector was contributing 25 percent of the country's GDP and Zimbabwe could also reap huge rewards from the sector if Simbi, Martin and their colleagues are supported adequately by channelling tourists to their stalls where possible.



Judith Simbi selling her wares at Kariba Heights crafts vending area

# Homemade Lemonade

## How to make it

Learn how to make old fashioned, freshly squeeze homemade lemonade using real lemons.

**Prep Time:** 15 mins

**Servings:** 8 cups

## Ingredients

- \* 2.27 kg lemons
- \* 500 g water
- \* 400 g sugar\*

## Instructions

Cut lemons in half. Juice each lemon through a strainer into a large measuring cup. Keep juicing until you have 2 cups of lemon juice.

Pour water into a medium-size saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir in sugar. Continue cooking over heat until sugar is dissolved and liquid looks clear again.

Combine sugar solution with lemon juice. This is a lemonade concentrate. When ready to serve, add water to taste.

## Notes

The lemonade concentrate can be frozen for later use. Just pour it into a gallon-sized Ziploc bag and lay flat in the freezer. When ready to serve, thaw, and add water to taste.

For lemonade using honey in place of sugar, simply replace the sugar with 2 cups of honey.

\*For sugar-free lemonade, replace the sugar in this recipe with 1/4 cup stevia powder.

## Nutritional Value

Calories: 275kcal, Carbohydrates: 76g, Protein: 3g, Sodium: 9mg, Potassium: 391mg, Fiber: 7g , Sugar: 56g, Vitamin A: 1.2%, Vitamin C: 182.1%, Calcium: 7.6% , Iron: 9.6%



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## Dark caves—a portal to a mystic spiritual world

*It is however contested space with different religious groups laying claim to it*



A Zimparks official shows *MaDzimbahwe Explorer* crew ritual sites

By Ngoni Shumba

**C**hinhoyi's dark caves belly a dark otherworldly secret. They are a portal to some mystic spiritual underworld.

Unlike most heritage sites this dark tapestry of grottos is still alive. And a largely contested sacred space.

Unless it has as many passageways to different spiritual realms as the groups that claim the caves suggest then the various groupings have the same spiritual source.

Traditional healers, spirit mediums, apostolic sects and Pentecostal Christian prophets frequent this place in clear testimony that they are used as an access point to another world – its caves and caverns are always littered with different religious artefacts from clay pots, religious clothes and devious strange objects.

These appear and disappear as the Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife (Zimparks) which manages the national heritage site has a policy of non-interference by not removing anything they see except litter.

They however also do not allow people to bring items into the place.

"We don't allow anyone to bring anything into the caves or take anything away and all the things which we see and the rituals that go on in them are unsanctioned and may be done under the guise

of tours as we don't accompany everyone who going in," Mwera an official at the site said.

The most frequent visitor to the dark caves is a self-proclaimed Chaminuka spirit medium who sometimes spends up to two weeks without leaving even for fresh air.

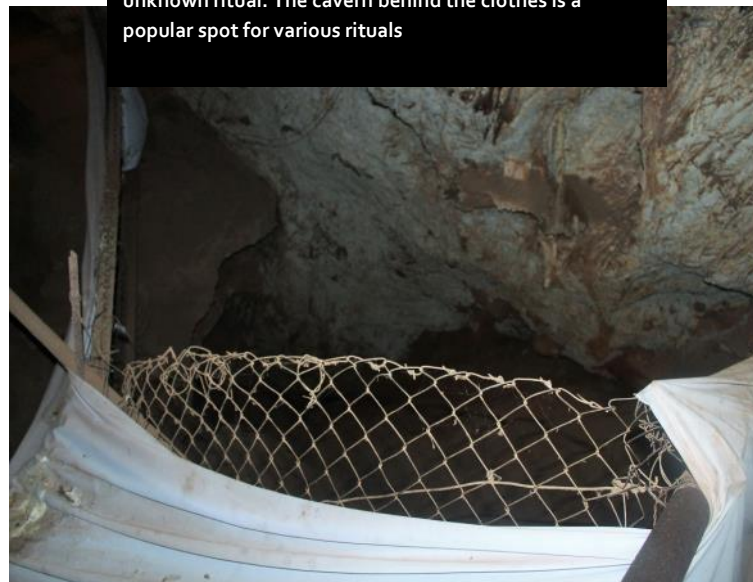
"He has been cleared to access the caves but we once arrested him after he came and tried to force entry without the req-

ever to take them in one of the most bizarre incidents.

"One of the cattle turn back and they allowed it saying there was no need to force any of the cattle but the next morning they released the animals for whoever wanted to take them as they were done with them," Mwera said.

The Zimparks official said he has also seen some popular Pentecostal Christian leaders coming to spend nights in the dark caves.

White clothes that were left either as part of or after an unknown ritual. The cavern behind the clothes is a popular spot for various rituals



When the *MaDzimbahwe Explorer* crew toured the caves they were lined with yellow clothes which according to the official is not a colour commonly associated with either the white garment church or tradition.

"We're sure that after some time this will disappear as well," Mwera said during the tour.

He said they got a hint of what actually happens after a certain fam-

uisite clearance," he said.

Such traditionalists often come with government clearance to perform their rituals.

A few years ago some traditionalists herded four cattle and four goats down a steep incline into the caves for the night and released them the next day for who-

ily came intending to collect a clay pot that which they said they had been directed to collect by a traditional healer for the cure of their sick daughter.

"We couldn't allow them to take it but it disappeared after several days. They probably sneaked in and took it so maybe it's these traditional healers who bring these things and then send their patients to collect," he said.



## Christmas time at Mutare SPCA

*We do not condone captive wildlife in any shape or form, BUT captive wildlife is being forced upon us and we felt they should attend so we could understand current thinking in Zimbabwe, and voice our concerns where necessary*

By Jane Clegg

**S**PCA Mutare has five employed men, and a group of unpaid volunteers that back them up in our team endeavour to provide Mutare community with a place that animals in distress can be brought to for shelter.

Luckily, people usually do notify us when they hear of or see an animal needing intervention. Also, people are coming more often to look at adopting from us. By doing this, you get a neutered and vaccinated animal rearing to be your friend and guardian.

Your GUARDIAN, not your guard. A guard dog is a service animal, working with a human partner. Your dog as your guardian is a part of the family, a necessary connection to have, as they know who to protect and who to alert the family to.

As the pet owner, the family members should never neglect or abandon that pet. It is against Zimbabwe's law. It is a true adoption.

The Five Freedoms that are a RIGHT TO HAVE, and if you have a pet, this is what you are expected to provide.

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst by feeding animals with the correct amount and type of food and ALWAYS having fresh, potable water available.
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing good shelter and bedding for the animals
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by making sure their area is free from things that can hurt (e.g. barbed wire/ glass etc.), if the animal requires any injections (e.g. rabies) and if the animal looks or seems ill, take it to a qualified vet immediately or get the vet to come to you.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour by providing enough space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
5. Freedom from fear and distress by making sure that conditions and treatment are such that mental suffering is avoided.

SPCA will take action against pet owners that starve, abandon, excessively breed from or abuse their animals, like this beautiful dog.



### Staff empowerment

We, the volunteers at Mutare SPCA, have made it our purpose to encourage and develop our staff, giving them more command and confidence in their very important role in the community.

To this end, we have sent two of our Inspectors to Imire Game Park near Harare where they attended a course on Strategy for Captive Elephant Management.

### Position on captive animals

We do not condone captive wildlife in any shape or form, BUT captive wildlife is being forced upon us and we felt they should attend so we could understand current thinking in Zimbabwe, and voice our concerns where necessary.

More and more we are seeing our beautiful wildlife, e.g. lions that should be ranging the savannas and forests, but are now in cages for the amusement, even taunting, of the general public, who do not understand the stress those animals are being placed under.

Also, we feel extremely strongly that the decimation of herds of elephants, to capture their very young to send to zoos in China is off the charts cruel, and yet it continues to happen as corruption reaches proportions we could never have imagined.

SPCA Mutare sometimes feels like that 'lone voice in the wilderness' in these cases.



## More trainings, more ideas

More recently, the same Inspectors attended a Dogs Trust Worldwide Behaviour Course in Harare. They have come back full of wonderful new ideas for how we can better ourselves and the lives of our shelter animals. The first thing they want is for us to design and implement an enrichment area for play. Keep up the great ideas, Inspectors William Nyawengu and Simba Karumbidza! We are all behind you.

Here I include Inspector William's report. It's long, I know, but the last few lines are worth their weight in gold to the volunteers of Mutare SPCA:

*We attended the Dogs Trust Workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25 November which empowered us with vast knowledge of dealing with dog behaviour, shaping and assessment, confidence building on nervous dogs and observational learning, touch acceptance, how to approach new dogs, and aggressive dogs. We learned that best practice at the shelters is about standards. We did a general overview of training, learning theory of training dogs, based on positive reward only, and the effects of negative training and how that results in other issues, which will be difficult to correct. Training helps with matching the dog with new owners and homes, and good organizational reputations. Safety at home promotes welfare since dogs will stay in their homes, since there will grow trust, respect, empathy and communication. It also makes for easy handling at Vet Doctors. For us at Mutare SPCA, shelter enrichment will improve animal behaviour, e.g. life rooms, elevated areas, sensory gardens, sand boxes, raised areas, interactive toys. We must consider the design from dogs perspective, defensive handling is important to provide safety, and reduce costs and work load. We learned to study dog body language, signs*

*of fear in eyes and tails and high stress triggers. We were taught about types of bites e.g. snapping, ragging, grabbing and crushing. We need improvements to our shelter but it's a process which includes long and short term planning, Quality care reduces stress to our dogs. We learned of record keeping, and hygiene, and education of the public is as important.*

*So we have lots of plans to implement here. In short I salute all our Instructors who travelled all the way from UK to come and anoint us with such vast and rich knowledge. I will never forget the organizers, and everyone who contributed in making the workshop a success. I give a big thank you as it was a great eye-opener. I am prepared to share the knowledge with my fellow workmates and I hope to raise the standard of our dog welfare at Mutare SPCA and the community at large. I feel greatly humbled by your effort at empowering us.*

*Yours Sincerely, Inspector William Nyawengu.*

Lately, our shelter has been flooded with animals in need.

We are thankful that people in our community do inform us of animals in distress. Now to show these animals that they matter, to give them the love and sanctuary they should have known forever, and above all..... to find good homes.

One cat, no more than a kitten herself was found in a bad state in a nearby factory. We gave her that sanctuary and helped her through her delivery of 5 exquisite kittens, each one shaded with pale heads to dark tails in the loveliest silvery greys. We have never seen this coloration before. Talk about 50 Shades of Grey!

Another miniscule tabby kitten was brought in, and (the generosity of stray animals!) a feeding mother cat took her over as if she

was her own immediately. We have 5 litters to care for at the moment, including 4 delightful X-Siamese female kittens, little SPCA celebs, so we have called them "The Katashians."

We have been lucky to find some good homes of late for dogs. Mutare is surrounded by purple hills and mountains. From the Bonda area, known for its superb rural hospital and beauty, we recently had a visit.

A couple came by to choose two character filled dogs from us, and they kindly adopted a kitten at the same time. Celebration day for Mutare SPCA. Two other dogs have been chosen to go and live in Chimanimani Mountains, one of Zimbabwe's most beautiful locations, second only to Victoria Falls for popularity. And to end, three wonderful dogs have been homed locally this month. Thank you!

Our kennels and cattery are filled to bursting, so our next plan is an extension to the cattery that will give each unit access to an outdoor space.

If you could, we would be very, very grateful for a helping hand to get this project underway. We have purchased some of the metal ware for the frames, but now need the mesh for the walls and rooves, and labour costs.

We will be posting our progress on our Facebook page (SPCA-Mutare), but have now discovered our electrical supply box is dangerous. Doesn't life feel at times like its one step forward and two steps back?

So thank you all, and have a Happy Christmas Season, and treasured family time.

*In life, if you can make a difference, it really matters. Take this recent Facebook post featuring my hero of the month! #Share !*



The Chimanimani Tourist Association is happy to sponsor the SPCA page to show that Tourist Operators appreciate the important and difficult work carried out by SPCA Mutare and SPCA nationwide in keeping our population and our Tourists safe from risk of rabies.

All Tourism Operators know too that the majority of our Tourists are highly disturbed when seeing suffering animals, be it starving dogs searching through trash, donkeys hauling loads which are too heavy or injured animals on the road. IT is the SPCA which is the first respondent in all these cases.

The CTA would like to give the SPCA Mutare the recognition they so highly deserve.  
**Jane High, CTA Secretary**

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