IBO ISLAND LODGE

Ibo Island Lodge Central Reservations:
C/O Journey In Style

Suite C6, Westlake Square
7966, Cape Town,
South Africa
Tel: 27 21 702 02 85
Fax: 27 21 702 06 92
reservations@iboisland.com
www.iboisland.com

History

Ibo Island is zoned for World Heritage Status and supports one of the oldest towns in Mozambique, and is definitely one of the most interesting and atmospheric towns in the whole country. Ibo Island is regarded as one of Africa's best-kept secrets, and many people say it was the highlight of their time spent in Mozambique.

Mozambique's recorded history goes back many centuries, and the country has been subject to conquest and exploitation since time immemorial. As early as AD600 Arab traders had established contact with Ibo Island and subsequently established fortified trading posts along the coastline. Via these trading posts slaves, gold and ivory were shipped to the Arab world.....
Ibo Island is part of the beautiful Quirimbas Archipelago. Ibo Island supports one of the oldest towns in Mozambique, and is definitely one of the most interesting and atmospheric towns in the whole country. Ibo Island is regarded as one of Africa's best-kept secrets, and many people tell us that Ibo Island was the highlight of their Mozambique holiday.

Mozambique's recorded history goes back many centuries and the country has been subject to conquest and exploitation since time immemorial. As early as AD600 Arab traders had established contact with the local inhabitants and subsequently established fortified trading posts along the coastline. Via these trading posts slaves, gold and ivory were shipped to the Arab world. Ibo Island is one of the most ancient settlements in Mozambique, after Ilha do Moçambique (usually just known as 'Ilha' in Mozambique) The specific history of Ibo can be dated back to at least the 1600 and on Ibo Chinese grave stones still bear their readable dates, although Arab influence dates earlier. The Fort of Forma de Cisterna was constructed by the Arabs on the same site even before the Portuguese occupation.

Ibo Island and all the Quirimbas islands that had water have always supported human habitation, and at the time of the first Portuguese contact these islands were called the Maluane Islands because the local population designed woven cloth - both in silk and cotton and dyed with local indigo. This cloth was called Maluane, and was much sought after on the mainland.

When the Portuguese first arrived in the Quirimbas, the main trading centre in the archipelago was on the large Quirimba Island (situated south of Ibo Island). The Portuguese attacked Quirimba Island in 1522, because the trading Muslims of Quirimba refused to trade with the Portuguese Christians who they probably intended to eliminate as trading rivals. The town was set alight and destroyed, dhows sunk, some 60 Muslims traders killed and much looting took place with large amounts of ivory and other trade goods seized.

By 1590 seven of the nine biggest islands were ruled by a Portuguese lord, and just two by the local Muslim traders. Ibo Island traded in amber, jet, ivory, ambergris and turtle shell. The locals had to pay 5% of their produce to the islands lord - as well as a contribution to the church. On Ibo the Portuguese built large rainwater cisterns that enabled them to raise cattle, pigs and goats. Meat, millet, rice, beans and palm products were all exported and even the mighty Ilha de Mozambique seems to have been supplied with goods from Ibo Island. By this time Ibo Island had become the most important trading centre of all the islands and in the mid 17th century the Archipelago was ruled by two main families - the Morues and the Meneses. At this time the slave trade also became significant, with the French needing labour for their plantations in Mauritius and Reunion. The Portuguese tried to control this trade, for monetary, not humanitarian, reasons but the Quirimbas Islands were ideal for clandestine pursuits and the trade brought more prosperity to Ibo even after the market switched to Brazil and indeed, even after it was illegal.

Ibo Island Lodge Central Reservations:
C/O Journey In Style

Suite C6, Westlake Square
7966, Cape Town,
South Africa
Tel: 27 21 702 02 85
Fax: 27 21 702 06 92
reservations@iboisland.com
www.iboisland.com

Of this period Newitt writes:

After the government of Mocambique was separated from that of Goa in 1752 the governor-general began building a fort at Ibo, which was raised to the status of municipality. In 1770 the new district of Cabo Delgado was created (on Ibo Island) with its own governor. A church and warehouses were built and in 1786 the island acquired a customs house. In 1791 Antonio de Melo e Castro began work on a new fort. This fine star shaped building rose on the mudflats guarding the narrow shipping channel through the reefs into Ibo Islands harbour. The slave trade bought Ibo great prosperity. Streets of houses were laid out and fine public buildings were erected around the plaza. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Ibo had become a very established trading centre .Ibo Island gained municipal status in 1763 and by the end of the 18th century, Ibo is regarded to have been the second most important Portuguese trading centre Ilha do Mozambique. Throughout the 18th and 19th century the population of Ibo Island and the adjacent regions were consistently under attack from Dutch and Madagascar forces. As a result of the attacks the Fort of São João Batista (St. John Baptist) was completed in 1791. The little chapel housed inside of the fort was built in 1795, followed by the Fort Santo Antonio (St. Anthony) and Fort of the Bairro de Rituto built in 1847.It wasn't until 1897, when Ibo Island was integrated into the administration of the Niassa Company that the island and population enjoyed relative safety and peace.

In 1902 the capital District of Cabo Delgado was transferred from Ibo Island to Port Amelia, currently the city of Pemba, which remains the capital until today. This signalled the slow demise of the island, which eventually led to is total abandonment as a formal trading centre some years later.