

Diani Beach, Kenya

Africa's Most Beautiful Beach — Where the Indian Ocean Meets the Highest Standard of Living.

"There are beaches in the world that photograph beautifully. And then there is Diani a beach that photographs beautifully and then, when you arrive, exceeds every image. The sand is finer than you imagined. The water is warmer and clearer. The light is something the camera does not fully capture. And when you have been here for a day, you understand why the people who know Kenya's coast best the ones who have seen it all always come back to Diani." — Vard Africa, Destination Curators.

DESTINATION INTRODUCTION

Diani Beach, Kenya

Africa's Premier Beach Destination — Eight Years Running

There is a reason that Diani Beach has been voted **Africa's Leading Beach Destination** by the World Travel Awards for an extraordinary eight consecutive years. There is a reason that the world's most well-travelled people those who have walked the beaches of the Maldives, the Seychelles, Zanzibar and Thailand arrive at Diani and find themselves genuinely surprised by its beauty. And there is a reason that once guests have come here, they almost universally return.

The reason is simple: Diani is extraordinary. Not in the way of a branded resort or a manufactured tourist experience, but in the fundamental, irreducible way of a place that nature got perfectly right.

Located on Kenya's **South Coast**, approximately 30 kilometres south of Mombasa in **Kwale County**, Diani Beach stretches for **25 uninterrupted kilometres** from the mouth of the Mwachema River in the north to remote Gazi Bay in the south one of the longest continuous stretches of white sandy beach in East Africa. The sand is the colour and texture of fresh snow: powder-fine, brilliantly white, composed of the finest possible coral and shell fragments ground by millennia of Indian Ocean tides into something that feels, underfoot, almost impossibly soft. The water is warm, turquoise, bath-temperature throughout the year, protected from the open ocean by the **Kenyan Barrier Reef** the world's second longest fringing reef system which creates a shallow, calm, astonishingly clear lagoon of 500 metres to 2 kilometres in width, ideal for swimming, snorkelling and all watersports. Beyond the reef, the Indian Ocean opens in every shade of deep blue to the horizon.

Diani's geography is its signature: the beach is backed, not by roads or hotels, but by **dense coastal forest** one of the last remaining fragments of the ancient coastal tropical forest that once lined the entire East African seaboard. This forest, protected in part by the **Kaya Kinondo Sacred Forest** a living holy site of the Digo people, managed by the National Museum of Kenya is home to the rare and beautiful **Angola colobus monkey**, a large, dramatic primate in black and white that moves through the forest canopy with extraordinary grace. Sightings from beach villa gardens and resort grounds are a daily occurrence, and the **Colobus Conservation** centre at the northern end of Diani beach is one of the most respected primate conservation operations in East Africa.

Behind the coastal forest, the landscape opens into the hills and forests of the **Shimba Hills National Reserve** one of Kenya's most atmospheric and undervisited wildlife sanctuaries, just 20 to 30 minutes' drive from the beach. Shimba Hills is home to the **sable antelope** one of Africa's most magnificent and rarest large mammals, found in only a handful of locations on the continent along with **elephant, buffalo, leopard, giraffe, lion**, coastal rainforest species of extraordinary biodiversity, and the spectacular **Sheldrick Falls**. For guests who want the complete Kenya experience wildlife and beach in a single day Shimba Hills provides an accessible and genuinely rewarding game drive that contrasts powerfully with the pleasures of the shoreline.

The **marine environment** of Diani is among the finest accessible from any beach resort destination in Africa.

The Kenyan Barrier Reef, just offshore, hosts over **250 species of fish**, extensive living coral systems of multiple types, resident populations of **green and hawksbill turtles, bottlenose and spinner dolphins**, and seasonally some of the most extraordinary marine encounters available anywhere in the world.

Whale sharks the largest fish on earth, reaching up to 40 feet in length appear off Diani from **October to March**, attracted by the plankton-rich waters of the reef system. **Humpback whales** migrate past Diani from **July to October**, their vast, gentle presence visible from the water and occasionally from the beach. The **Kisite-Mpunguti Marine National Park**, located further south near Wasini Island, is one of East Africa's finest protected marine environments, offering world-class diving and snorkelling with dolphins, turtles and pristine coral gardens.

- ✓ The human history of the Diani coast runs deep.
- ✓ The **Digo people** one of the nine tribes of the Mijikenda group have inhabited this coastline for centuries, their sacred forests (*kayas*) scattered through the landscape as living repositories of spiritual authority, medicinal knowledge and ecological wisdom.
- ✓ The **Arab and Swahili trading history** of the south coast is recorded in the architecture and ruins of Mombasa, in the linguistic and culinary heritage of the Swahili language and cuisine, and in the dhow-building tradition that continues in the creek and harbour communities south of the city.
- ✓ The **Portuguese presence** of the 15th and 16th centuries left **Fort Jesus** one of the finest examples of Portuguese military architecture in the world as its most enduring monument, visible across the water on Mombasa Island and a rewarding half-day excursion from Diani.

The contemporary Diani scene is cosmopolitan, sophisticated and entirely comfortable with its identity as one of the finest beach destinations on earth.

The **Diani Beach Road** runs parallel to the shore for the full length of the beach, lined with boutique resorts, villa estates, dive centres, restaurants, galleries, art shops and beach bars enough variety and quality to sustain a two-week stay without repetition.

The social life of Diani is warm, international and genuinely convivial: the community of residents, returnees and regular visitors who choose this coast year after year have created something that feels like a shared enthusiasm for the finest things in life, and that energy is palpable from the moment of arrival.

The climate is warm and tropical year-round, moderated by the Indian Ocean breeze. **January to March** is the finest beach season warm, sunny and calm. **July to October** brings the cooler Kusi season excellent for kitesurfing in the consistent trade winds, and the peak season for whale sightings. **December through March** is high season; book well in advance. The long rains of **April to May** are the one period to avoid.

THE VARD AFRICA PERSPECTIVE

Why We Love Diani & Its Sandy Beaches

We love Diani with the particular affection that comes from knowing somewhere well enough to understand why it deserves its reputation and knowing that, unlike many destinations that have won awards, Diani has earned every one of them.

We love it for **the sand**. The superlative is deserved: the beach at Diani is as fine and as white as any in Africa and is comparable with the very best in the world. To walk it at dawn when the light is gold and the tide has smoothed the surface to a perfect plane is one of the quietly extraordinary pleasures of East African travel.

We love it for **the water**. Warm, clear, reef-protected, sheltered from the open ocean Diani provides conditions for swimming, snorkelling and watersports that other beach destinations spend millions of dollars of infrastructure trying to replicate. Here, nature provides them freely.

We love it for **the marine world**. The whale sharks, the dolphins, the turtles, the reef fish, the living coral these are not just tourist offerings but genuine encounters with one of the planet's most biodiverse and intact marine ecosystems. The presence of **Whale Shark Adventures** Kenya's only dedicated whale shark operation, which uses microlight spotter aircraft to locate these extraordinary creatures elevates the Diani marine experience to something truly world-class.

We love it for **the forest and the colobus monkeys**. To look up from the pool of a cliff-top villa and see a family of Angola colobus moving through the canopy above their long black-and-white capes trailing through the branches, their alarm calls carrying across the forest is to understand why Diani is not just a beach destination but a genuine immersion in a living ecosystem.

We love it for **the quality of the properties**. From the Italian-African mastery of Alfajiri to the Swedish heart of Kinondo Kwetu, from the Inshallah estate's century of beach history to the private island perfection of Chale the accommodation available in Diani and along the South Coast represents some of the finest private villa and boutique resort hospitality in Africa.

And we love it because Diani takes its role seriously. The conservation work of the Colobus Trust, the turtle protection of the Diani Turtle Project, the marine research of Whale Shark Adventures, the community investment of Kinondo Kwetu Trust these are the expressions of a destination that understands that its natural wealth is its most precious asset and that protecting it is the foundation of everything else.

Why Our Guests Will Love Diani

Honeymooners will discover that Diani is one of the most romantically complete beach destinations in Africa not only because the setting is extraordinary, but because the properties available here (particularly the cliff-top villas, the Kinondo Kwetu ocean-view suites, the Chale Island overwater bungalow and the intimate cottages of Inshallah) provide the quality of seclusion, beauty and bespoke service that a honeymoon deserves.

Families will find that Diani is one of the most child-responsive beach destinations in Kenya the calm lagoon waters are safe for all ages, the marine encounters (dolphins, turtles, whale sharks in season) are genuinely unforgettable for children, the Shimba Hills game drive adds a safari dimension, and properties like the Alfajiri villas, Kinondo Kwetu, Chale Island and the Sands group all accommodate families with genuine warmth and practical excellence.

Adventure travellers will find that Diani is one of the most activity-rich coastal destinations in East Africa kitesurfing, scuba diving, jet skiing, deep-sea fishing, Subwing ocean gliding, whale shark snorkelling, dolphin encounters, glass-bottom boat tours, and the legendary Kisite Marine Park excursion provide a menu of experiences that could fill a month of days without repetition.

Wellness seekers will find in Diani a natural environment that supports the deepest kind of reset — the quality of the air and the sea, the extraordinary marine encounters, the dawn beach walks, the forest sounds at dusk, and the world-class wellness programming at properties like Kinondo Kwetu, Alfajiri and Almanara.

The gastronomes will be delighted: the restaurants and culinary programming at Diani's finest properties — Alfajiri's award-winning fusion kitchen, Kinondo's location-changing dinner service, Sails at Almanara, the seafood excellence of Msambweni, and the celebrated Ali Barbour's Cave Restaurant in a natural coral cavern make this one of the finest dining destinations on the Kenyan coast.

Why It Is a Vard Africa Essential Add-On

Diani is the definitive conclusion to a Kenyan safari journey the beach chapter that completes the story and ensures that guests return home having experienced the full spectrum of what Kenya offers.

The safari chapter whether in the Masai Mara, Amboseli, Samburu, Laikipia or Tsavo delivers the wildlife, the landscapes, the early mornings and the profound encounters with the natural world that define an East African journey. Diani delivers the rest: the warm ocean, the extraordinary marine life, the exceptional food, the flawless service of the finest villas, the pleasure of having absolutely nothing to do and every reason to simply be present in one of the most beautiful places on earth.

Logistically, the transition is seamless. Guests fly directly from any safari airstrip or Nairobi's Wilson Airport to Ukunda Airstrip in approximately one hour, landing within minutes of Diani's finest properties. For guests combining Diani with Lamu, the South Coast provides a beautiful complement to the island's Swahili intimacy a second coastal chapter of entirely different character and equal beauty.

Vard Africa recommends a minimum of **four nights** at Diani enough to settle into the beach, undertake the Kisite Marine Park excursion, experience the whale sharks (in season) and the sunset dhow cruise, explore the reef and have at least two days of pure, unscheduled beach time. Seven nights is ideal. And for guests who want the complete South Coast experience, extending to Msambweni, Shimba Hills and Chale Island adds extraordinary range and depth.

OUR ACCOMMODATION & TRADE PARTNERS IN DIANI

Best Places to Stay Along the Diani Private Beaches

Each property in this guide has been personally vetted and curated by the Vard Africa team. Our recommendations are based on quality, character, setting, service and the capacity of each property to deliver the kind of transformative experience that defines a Vard journey.

INSHALLAH KENYA

Diani Beach, North Diani | The Century Estate

Location: Inshallah occupies one of the most historically significant and naturally beautiful positions on the entire Diani beachfront directly on the northern stretch of Diani Beach, set within three acres of extraordinary gardens that include **1,000-year-old baobab trees**, ancient coconut palms and towering flamboyant trees. The estate faces the Indian Ocean with wide, sweeping lawns leading directly to the sand.

Introduction & History

Inshallah is, quite simply, one of the most charismatic private beach properties in Kenya. The estate was developed from one of the **earliest houses on Diani Beach — dated to approximately 1920** making it a living piece of the South Coast's social and architectural history. The three cottages that now constitute its accommodation offer grew organically from this original settlement, each designed in the **Swahili-Arab architectural tradition** with carved wooden doors, whitewashed arches, reclaimed wood finishes and the coastal aesthetic that characterizes this coast at its most authentic.

The property is named with both a religious and a philosophical intention — *Inshallah*, meaning "*if God wills*", the Arabic expression of faithful acceptance of the present moment, captures the spirit of a place that invites guests to release their plans and simply receive what each day offers. Guest reviews use words like "*unquestionably one of Kenya's most charismatic, private beach properties*" and describe it as "*blessed, pure and timeless*". These are not marketing phrases but the genuine responses of people who have experienced something rare.

Ownership & Management

Inshallah is **privately owned and managed by Nicole** a host of exceptional warmth, responsiveness and personal investment in each guest's experience, who is described consistently across reviews as one of the finest hosts on the Kenyan coast. Nicole's personal attention to the estate its gardens, its cottages, its service and its character ensures an experience of genuine intimacy and care that larger properties cannot replicate.

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Inshallah offers **three individually designed cottages**, each providing complete privacy within the shared gardens and beach estate.

Azhari Beach Villa — The most elevated of the three cottage experiences: an intimate and elegant retreat overlooking the Indian Ocean, designed for couples seeking to completely unwind. Wake to endless ocean views from the comfort of a beautifully appointed bed; enjoy the flexibility of Breakfast, Half Board or Self-Catering options. Private pool. A perfect romantic escape.

Melia Suite — A spacious, beautifully decorated suite with its own private pool, ocean views and the characteristic warmth of Inshallah's Swahili-coastal aesthetic. Designed for a couple or a solo traveller seeking privacy and style in direct proximity to one of Kenya's finest beaches.

Beach Cottage — The original cottage of the estate, a spacious and characterful retreat with its own private pool, an open-plan living space, a fully equipped kitchen and the feel of a genuine home rather than a managed property. Faces the sweeping lawn and the Indian Ocean beyond.

All three cottages feature **double ensuite bedrooms**, private pools, kitchen facilities, air conditioning, WiFi and charging points; private sun decks with ocean views; and direct access to the estate's beach.

Amenities & Facilities

- ✓ Three private pools within the estate one per cottage.
- ✓ Direct beachfront access across the estate's sweeping gardens.
- ✓ A fire pit and hardwood beach deck at the waterline for evening gatherings.
- ✓ Yoga and fitness sessions available on request.
- ✓ All watersports — boat trips, jet skiing, water sports, deep-sea fishing, kitesurfing, diving, SUP and more arranged through the estate's trusted local operator network.
- ✓ Full laundry service.
- ✓ WiFi throughout.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

- ✓ Inshallah offers flexible culinary options ranging from **Breakfast Only** to **Half Board** to **fully Self-Catering** accommodating guests who want the freedom of their own kitchen and those who want the pleasure of expert preparation.
- ✓ The breakfast offering is beautifully presented and locally sourced; Half Board dinners reflect the finest of the Swahili coastal kitchen.
- ✓ Several of Diani's best restaurants Ali Barbour's Cave, Sails at Almanara, Nomad Beach Bar are within easy reach by taxi for evenings out.

Health & Safety

- ✓ Inshallah's private estate format ensures 24-hour natural security the property is gated and managed.
- ✓ Nicole maintains close relationships with all local medical and emergency services.
- ✓ The beach at the northern end of Diani, away from the main resort strip, is among the most private and safest stretches on the coast.

Why We Love Inshallah

- ✓ We love Inshallah for its **irreplaceable sense of place**.
- ✓ The 1,000-year-old baobab trees in the garden, the coral-white cottages beneath the palms, the sweeping lawn to the sea, the colobus monkeys in the canopy above these are not amenities that can be constructed or purchased.
- ✓ They are the accumulated gifts of a specific history and a specific ecology, and they are available nowhere else.

Why Our Guests Will Love Inshallah

Guests who value **authenticity, privacy and the warmth of genuine personal hospitality** will find in Inshallah one of the most deeply satisfying accommodation experiences on the Kenyan coast.

The combination of the extraordinary garden setting, the private pools, the direct beach access and Nicole's exceptional hosting creates something that exceeds the standard hospitality formula.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Book the Azhari Beach Villa for the ultimate romantic experience waking to the Indian Ocean view from this position, with the garden and the ancient baobabs between you and the world, is one of Diani's most beautiful mornings.

Arrange breakfast on the beach deck at least once a table set at the waterline, the dhows on the horizon, the garden behind you. It is the kind of morning that recalibrates everything.

Families & Children

Inshallah is best suited to **couples, solo travellers and small groups of friends** seeking complete privacy and the intimate character of a private estate. Families with older children who appreciate the setting's natural character are welcome; the property's nature is most fully appreciated by adults.

GALU BEACH VILLA

Galu Beach, South Diani | The Beachfront Classic

Location: Galu Beach Villa is situated on **Galu Beach** the quieter, more secluded southern stretch of the Diani Beach coastline, below the main resort area and characterised by wider, less-frequented sands and a quality of privacy and tranquility that the main Diani strip cannot match.

Galu Beach is widely regarded by those who know the South Coast as the finest stretch of the entire 25-kilometre coastline.

Introduction & History

Galu Beach has become, in recent years, the preferred address for Diani's most discerning guests the stretch of coast where the finest private villas are located, where the beach is widest and most private, and where the quality of the light and the air carries a particular quality of the undisturbed. Galu Beach Villa is one of the established addresses on this increasingly celebrated stretch a beautifully positioned private villa that offers the direct beachfront experience in a format of considerable elegance and comfort.

The villa has been designed and appointed with the South Coast tradition in mind: the architectural language of the Swahili coast thatch, coral stone, carved wood, high ceilings that capture the ocean breeze combined with the contemporary comforts of a luxury private retreat. The positioning on the beach is immediate: step off the veranda and the sand is underfoot.

Ownership & Management

Galu Beach Villa is **privately owned** and managed by a dedicated resident team, ensuring full-time professional hospitality for every guest group. The property is available for exclusive private hire.

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Galu Beach Villa accommodates multiple guests across well-appointed ensuite rooms with the Swahili-coastal aesthetic carried throughout four-poster beds, natural materials, excellent ventilation and the sound of the Indian Ocean as the constant ambient backdrop. The private pool provides the essential complement to the direct beach access; the veranda and terrace areas extend the living space into the warm Indian Ocean air.

Amenities & Facilities

Private pool with beachfront views. Direct beachfront accesses the sand begins at the garden's edge. Full concierge services for all Diani activities. Complete staff team including private chef, housekeeping and grounds maintenance. WiFi. All transfers and activity bookings arranged through Vard Africa's Diani concierge network.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

A private chef prepares menus in consultation with each guest group the fresh seafood traditions of the Galu coast, Swahili-inspired cuisine and international options, with the day's catch sourced from trusted local fishermen. Dining on the beach terrace with the Indian Ocean in front and the coastal forest behind is the defining Galu culinary experience.

Why We Love Galu Beach Villa

We love Galu Beach Villa for its **position on the finest stretch of Diani beach** the immediate, unmediated relationship between the villa and the sand is the essence of what beach accommodation should be.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Galu Beach at dawn before anyone else is up, when the tide is out and the reef flat is exposed and the light is gold and horizontal is one of the most beautiful stretches of East African coastline in its finest state. Take the beach walk north toward the kitesurfing area as the sun rises: it sets the tone for the entire day.

Families & Children

Galu Beach Villa is excellent for families and larger groups seeking the complete private villa experience directly on Diani's finest beach.

THE ADDRESS DIANI

Diani Beach | The Contemporary Statement

Location: The Address Diani is positioned on **Diani Beach** offering guests a contemporary luxury address on one of Africa's most celebrated stretches of coastline, with direct beach access and the full complement of Diani's social and activity scene within easy reach.

Introduction & History

The Address Diani represents the contemporary, design-forward evolution of the Diani luxury experience a property that brings the language of international boutique hotel design to the South Coast setting, combining the architectural vocabulary of the Swahili coastal tradition with the contemporary comfort and aesthetic precision that the world's most discerning guests expect. The property offers a refined, modern counterpoint to the classic colonial character of some of Diani's longer-established estates, attracting guests who want both the extraordinary natural setting of the South Coast and an accommodation experience that reflects the very best of contemporary design thinking.

Ownership & Management

The Address Diani is **privately owned** and managed by a professional hospitality team committed to delivering a seamless, personalised guest experience that matches the property's contemporary aesthetic ambition.

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

The Address offers beautifully appointed rooms and suites, each designed to maximise natural light, ocean views and the indoor-outdoor connection that is fundamental to the South Coast luxury experience. Air conditioning throughout. Premium bedding and ensuite facilities. Private outdoor spaces terraces, balconies or gardens connect each room to the coastal environment.

Amenities & Facilities

- ✓ Private pool. Direct beach access.
- ✓ Full staff services.
- ✓ Contemporary bar and lounge areas.
- ✓ WiFi throughout.
- ✓ Concierge for all Diani activities and excursions.
- ✓ Transfer services to and from Ukunda Airstrip.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

Contemporary coastal cuisine informed by the Swahili coastal tradition fresh seafood, locally sourced produce, creative menus developed in consultation with each guest group and served in the full range of indoor and outdoor settings that the property's design provides.

Why We Love the Address Diani

We love The Address for bringing a **contemporary design intelligence** to the Diani coastal experience providing guests who appreciate modern aesthetics with an accommodation experience that matches their sensibility without sacrificing the connection to the extraordinary natural environment that makes this coast exceptional.

Vard Africa Insider Note

The Address Diani is the ideal choice for guests who want the Diani experience in a contemporary format modern design, precise service and the full pleasure of one of Africa's finest beaches immediately outside.

Families & Children

The Address Diani is suitable for couples, small groups and families who appreciate contemporary design and the full range of Diani's beach and marine activities.

THE ALFAJIRI BEACH VILLAS

Northern Diani Beach Cliffs | The Icon

Location: The Alfajiri Villas occupy a **coral cliff position** at the northern end of Diani Beach perched on the elevated edge of the coastline, they look directly out across the Indian Ocean while maintaining direct beach access below. The villas are located approximately 10 minutes' drive from Ukunda Airstrip and are among the most discreetly signposted properties on the coast there is, deliberately, no sign on the road. Alfajiri knows its guests will find it.

Introduction & History

Alfajiri means **dawn** in Kiswahili and watching the first light of a new day arrive across the Indian Ocean from the clifftop position of these extraordinary villas is the most eloquent justification of the name imaginable. But Alfajiri is far more than its location. It is, by the considered judgement of many of the world's most experienced luxury travel professionals, among the finest private villa experiences not just in Kenya or in Africa, but in the world.

The property's origin story is deeply personal. **Fabrizio and Marica Molinaro** an Italian couple with a profound love for Kenya built what was to become Alfajiri from a place of genuine passion. Marica was the **mastermind behind the design and curation** of each villa, creating interiors that represent a masterclass in the fusion of East African heritage influences, Mediterranean elegance and relaxed beach living. Fabrizio's hospitality vision absolute privacy, absolute personalization, the sense that the villa exists entirely for its guests set a standard that the property has maintained without compromise for more than 25 years.

Alfajiri welcomed its first guests in **July 1999**. In **2004**, the extension of the estate was completed as the Garden and Beach Villas were added. The furniture, throughout all three villas, is made **on site in the villa's own workshop** carved from local hardwoods by craftspeople trained to Marica's exacting specifications. The gardens are maintained from the estate's own nursery, their palms planted and raised on-site. The sense of total ownership and control of a property that has been built, staffed and maintained by people who love it is felt in every detail.

The villas' celebrity visitor list is a closely guarded secret the extraordinary privacy that Alfajiri provides is one of its most prized attributes but the property's reputation as the destination of choice for guests who most need and most deserve to be completely undisturbed speaks for itself.

Ownership & Management

Alfajiri is **owned and personally managed by Fabrizio and Marica Molinaro**, who are present at the property and personally involved in the experience of every guest group. This is not a managed property operating at arm's length from its owners; it is a family's home and a family's life's work.

Awards & Recognition

Alfajiri has won an extraordinary range of international recognition, including:

World Travel Awards: Africa's Leading Resort

World Travel Awards: Best Safari Cuisine (the culinary excellence of the kitchen recognised at continental level)

World Travel Awards: Best Marine Safari Experience

Consistent recognition by **Condé Nast Traveller**, **Travel + Leisure**, and the world's leading luxury safari operators as one of the finest villa experiences in Africa and globally

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Alfajiri comprises **three distinctly individual villas**, each available for exclusive private hire, each with its own character, perspective and sleeping configuration.

Cliff Villa — The most architecturally dramatic of the three: positioned on the coral cliff edge with sweeping views across the Indian Ocean. Accommodates **up to 10 guests** across **4 bedrooms** one twin on the ground floor, two doubles on the first floor, and the **turret room** at the summit, with its extraordinary **270-degree sea view**, which has become one of the most famous and most sought-after rooms on the entire Kenyan coast. All double rooms have private verandas. The Cliff Villa has exclusive use of an infinity pool that appears to merge with the ocean, and unlimited use of the nearby championship golf course. The Cliff Villa's turret room is, for honeymoon couples, a room of complete and utter romance.

Garden Villa — A gracious and spacious villa set within rolling gardens that sweep from the private infinity pool down toward the sea. Accommodates **up to 10 guests** across **4 bedrooms** (three doubles, one twin) all with lovely sea views and generous ensuite facilities. The veranda features an immense makuti roof and wooden beams over an okra floor. Interior artefacts from East Africa and the Far East give it an eclectic, intellectual character. Rolling lawns between the infinity pool and the sea make the Garden Villa exceptional for families with children.

Beach Villa — The closest of the three to the sea just steps from the sand. Accommodates **up to 8 guests** across **4 bedrooms** (two doubles on the ground floor; one double and one twin on the first floor). The lounge and dining areas are furnished with beautiful handmade pieces that give the sense of a refined home rather than a managed villa. The rustic beach chic character high Makuti roof, ivory Danish floors, wooden beams, Lamu doors and the direct beach access make this the most immediately sensual of the three villas.

All three villas include: exclusive use, a private pool, dedicated staff (private chef, butler, childminder, driver), air conditioning, mosquito nets, WiFi, laundry and private garden or beach access.

Amenities & Facilities

Every stay at Alfajiri includes, as part of the villa rate: daily **massage** for each guest; **snorkelling** in the lagoon and on the reef using Alfajiri's own traditional *ngalawa* outrigger canoes; **vehicle transport** anywhere along the Diani Beach strip; access to gym and sauna facilities at a nearby resort.

All of these are complimentary evidence of a hosting philosophy that gives rather than charges.

Additional activities available at supplementary cost include **scuba diving, kitesurfing, deep-sea fishing, excursions by dhow to Kisite Marine Park, day safaris to Shimba Hills and Tsavo East, quad biking in Shimba Hills** and **golf** at the nearby championship course. Cultural and community visits to local villages and the orphanage supported by Alfajiri are also offered at no charge, reflecting the family's deep investment in the communities of the South Coast.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

Alfajiri's kitchen is one of the most celebrated in East Africa and this is not simply because the ingredients are extraordinary (the fresh seafood, organic produce and imported delicacies are impeccable) but because **Marica Molinaro** herself is the creative force behind the culinary offering.

- ✓ The menus reflect the deep Italian-East African fusion that characterizes Alfajiri's entire aesthetic: fresh yellowfin tuna, dorado and snapper prepared in the tradition of the Swahili coast alongside Mediterranean techniques; imported cheeses, olives and wines from some of the world's finest producers; daily tropical fruits and vegetables from local farms; and the bespoke, menu-designing conversation between Marica, the chef and each guest group that ensures every meal is exactly what is wanted.
- ✓ Meals are taken wherever guests choose: on the villa's veranda, by the pool, on the beach, at the clifftop table as the sun sets over the Indian Ocean. The menu, the timing and the setting are determined entirely by the guests' wishes.

Health & Safety

- ✓ Alfajiri maintains all safety certifications for its pools, beach areas and activities.
- ✓ The property has comprehensive health and emergency protocols in place, supported by Fabrizio's deep knowledge of the South Coast's medical infrastructure. All activities are conducted with appropriate safety equipment and supervised by qualified operators.
- ✓ The villa's private, gated position ensures security of the highest standard.

Why We Love Alfajiri

- ✓ We love Alfajiri for being, simply, **the benchmark**. There are many fine private villas in Kenya.
- ✓ There are properties with better views and properties with larger pools and properties with more sophisticated interiors.
- ✓ But there is nowhere on the Kenyan coast and very few places in the world where the combination of setting, service, culinary excellence, personal ownership and the specific quality of Italian-African warmth that Fabrizio and Marica bring to every interaction produces an experience of the depth and completeness that Alfajiri delivers.
- ✓ It is the standard against which everything else on the South Coast is measured.

Why Our Guests Will Love Alfajiri

- ✓ Guests who want the **absolute pinnacle** of the private villa experience in Kenya for a honeymoon, a significant anniversary, a family celebration, a group of close friends who have decided that this is the moment for something extraordinary will find at Alfajiri a property that rises to every occasion.
- ✓ The Cliff Villa turret suite for a honeymoon couple is one of the most romantic rooms in Africa.
- ✓ The Garden Villa for a family with children, with its rolling lawns and team of childminders and chefs, is one of the most comprehensively welcoming family experiences on the coast.

Vard Africa Insider Note

The turret suite at Cliff Villa is the non-negotiable choice for honeymooners book it well in advance, as it is the most sought-after single room on the South Coast. Do not leave Alfajiri without a sunset snorkel from the ngalawa canoe the reef just offshore from Alfajiri is spectacular at low tide, and the experience of floating above living coral in the late afternoon light, with the villa's cliff visible above, is one of the images that stays with guests longest. And join Fabrizio for a beer on the beach at some point during the stay his stories of Diani, of the property, of Kenya, are among the pleasures of the experience.

Families & Children

Alfajiri is exceptional for families the dedicated childminders, the rolling gardens of the Garden Villa, the beach access, the ngalawa snorkelling and the comprehensive driver service make it one of the most practically well-organized family experiences in Diani. All ages welcome.

KINONDO KWETU

Galu Beach, South Diani | The Home Away from Home

Location: Kinondo Kwetu sits in a **secluded, shady 16-acre plot** on the quiet southern portion of **Galu Beach** approximately 12 kilometres south of central Diani and the Ukunda Airstrip, and 40 kilometres south of Mombasa Island. The property has no immediate neighbors.

A rocky cliff separates it from the main stretch of Diani Beach, creating complete natural seclusion. The property enjoys **250 metres of virtually private beach** on one of the finest and least-crowded stretches of the South Coast.

The surrounding land is classified as a **Kaya area** sacred land protected by the National Museums of Kenya, including the holy coastal forest that borders the property. This sacred designation ensures that no further development can occur adjacent to Kinondo Kwetu, guaranteeing permanent seclusion.

Introduction & History

The name means "*Our Home at Kinondo*" in Kiswahili and it is the most honest possible description of the experience that this extraordinary property provides. Kinondo Kwetu is not a hotel in the conventional sense. It is the family home of **Ida and Filip Andersson** a Swedish couple whose family connection to Kenya runs deep (they are related to the renowned **Baron Blixen** of *Out of Africa* fame) their three children, their horses, their trusted team of staff and their clear, uncompromising vision of what the finest hospitality looks like.

Guests at Kinondo Kwetu are not checking into a resort. They are being received into a family's home a home on one of the world's most beautiful beaches, surrounded by a sacred coastal forest, staffed by a team whose warmth and professionalism are the product of genuine personal investment in every guest's wellbeing. The Andersson family's commitment extends far beyond the boundaries of the property.

In **2008**, they founded the **Kinondo Kwetu Health Centre**, which has since grown into a registered hospital that serves over **120,000 patient visits annually** and delivers approximately **1,700 births per year** making it one of the most significant community health institutions in the region.

The family also supports the **village kindergarten and primary school**, sponsors additional teachers, provides school uniforms and bursaries for secondary education, and is a member of both the **Colobus Trust** and the **Whale Shark Trust**.

This level of community investment is not a marketing position; it is the natural expression of a family that has chosen to make this place their home and to take that responsibility seriously.

Ownership & Management

Kinondo Kwetu is **owned and managed by Ida and Filip Andersson**, who live on the property with their children. The family is present and involved in the daily experience of every guest group joining guests for sundowners, walking the beach, sharing meals. Ida personally curates the property's shop of ceramics, hand-made carvings, tailored caftans and jewellery; Filip is involved in the property's sustainability and conservation programming.

Awards & Recognition

- ✓ Kinondo Kwetu is a **multi-award-winning property**, recognised internationally as one of the finest boutique beach retreats in Africa.
- ✓ The hospital it founded has been awarded **Best Clinic in the District**.
- ✓ The property is listed by multiple leading luxury travel operators including **Kuoni, Scott Dunn, East African Retreats** and **Inspiring Travel** as among their highest-rated Kenya coast properties.
- ✓ The Kinondo Kwetu Trust Fund has received international recognition for its community development work.

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Kinondo Kwetu offers **15 exquisitely appointed rooms** across a range of categories, accommodating a maximum of **50 guests** at any time a deliberate choice that ensures the intimate, uncrowded atmosphere for which the property is celebrated. Each room is individually decorated with indigenous coastal treasures and traditional Swahili craftsmanship.

- ✓ **Garden Rooms** — Set within the lush shaded gardens of the property, these rooms provide the quintessential Kinondo experience: not all are air-conditioned (the natural ventilation of the property's garden setting is often sufficient), and each carries its own individual character and aspect.
- ✓ **Cottages** — Standalone or semi-detached individual cottages within the 16-acre gardens, each with their own veranda and garden space, providing a greater degree of privacy and self-contained comfort. Available as couples' retreats or family configurations.
- ✓ **Suites** — The most spacious and luxuriously appointed options at the property, with larger living areas, enhanced ocean or garden views, upgraded bedding and amenities, and in some cases two full bathrooms.
- ✓ **Mama Tina Villa** — The property's private villa option: a larger, more self-contained accommodation unit with its own living areas and private outdoor space, ideal for groups who want both the Kinondo Kwetu experience and the independence of a private home.

All rooms are adorned with locally crafted furniture, indigenous artefacts and the carefully considered aesthetic of a property that has been building its character for decades. Mosquito nets. Fans. The sound of the Indian Ocean as the natural soundtrack of every room.

Amenities & Facilities

Kinondo Kwetu provides one of the most comprehensive activity and amenity menus of any boutique property on the South Coast without ever feeling like a resort. **Two swimming pools:** a large, family-beloved main pool and a smaller, more intimate secondary pool in a shaded garden

corner. A **yoga shala and gym** with guided sessions, perched on the edge of the cliff overlooking the Indian Ocean one of the finest yoga settings in Kenya. A **wood-fired sauna** for the post-activity or end-of-day indulgence.

- ✓ The property maintains its **own stables with four horses** experienced and young riders can explore the holy Kinondo forest or canter along Galu Beach; beginners can practice in the riding paddock.
- ✓ A **tennis court** with coaching available on request. A **PADI dive centre** on site for everything from beginner's first dives to advanced reef explorations the reef, just 5 minutes by boat, is exceptional between September and March.
- ✓ **Kitesurfing, stand-up paddleboarding, catamaran sailing, canoeing, water-skiing and kayaking** all available.
- ✓ Wildlife and cultural excursions: day trips to **Shimba Hills National Reserve** for elephant, sable antelope and giraffe; visits to **Kinondo Village** and the sacred **Kaya Forest**; boat excursions to **Paradise Lost Island**; the **Kisite Marine Park** full-day dhow adventure.
- ✓ The property's beloved **library** filled with books and vintage Africana is the ideal pre-dinner companion. The **on-site boutique**, curated by Ida, offers genuinely beautiful artisan pieces.
- ✓ **Exclusive yoga weeks** with masters invited from around the world are held several times per year a uniquely sophisticated wellness programming commitment.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

- ✓ Kinondo Kwetu's dining philosophy is one of the property's most distinctive and celebrated features. **There is no fixed dining area.**
- ✓ Each day, lunch is set in a different location: on the beach under a shady tree; in the boathouse overlooking the ocean; in the garden; in the water tower; on the cliff edge at sunset.
- ✓ Dinner follows the same logic every evening in a different setting, always surprising, always beautiful.
- ✓ The menus reflect the finest local ingredients in ever-changing combinations: fresh seafood from trusted local fishermen, locally grown vegetables, the full range of Swahili-coastal cuisine accompanied by a fine selection of South African wines.
- ✓ Dietary requirements are accommodated with warmth and expertise; children's menus are designed with equal care to the adult offering.
- ✓ The bartender who will pick a pineapple from the garden to make a mai tai if that is what a guest desires sets the tone for service that is simultaneously precise and thoroughly human.

Health & Safety

- ✓ Kinondo Kwetu maintains comprehensive health and safety protocols at all facilities.
- ✓ The hospital founded by the Andersson family is just minutes away, providing one of the finest medical resources available to any South Coast property.
- ✓ Swimming pool safety protocols and supervised children's areas ensure family safety.
- ✓ All diving and watersport activities are operated by certified instructors. Security is maintained continuously throughout the property.

Why We Love Kinondo Kwetu

- ✓ We love Kinondo Kwetu for the **quality of its human centre.**
- ✓ There are properties in Kenya with larger pools, higher thread-count sheets, more contemporary interiors.
- ✓ There is no property on the South Coast that produces the quality of *belonging* that Kinondo Kwetu creates the sense, confirmed by review after review from returning guests, that you are not visiting a hotel but returning to a home that is waiting for you.
- ✓ The Andersson family has built something that is simultaneously one of the finest boutique hotels in East Africa and one of the most genuinely warm and human hospitality experiences anywhere.

Why Our Guests Will Love Kinondo Kwetu

Guests who want **the fullest possible version of the South Coast experience** the beach, the marine activities, the horse riding, the diving, the community connection, the sacred forest, the extraordinary location-changing dinners and the feeling of being genuinely cared for by people who love where they are and love what they do will find at Kinondo Kwetu a property that answers every one of those desires.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Book the morning horse ride along Galu Beach at low tide there are very few more exhilarating ways to begin a South Coast Day than cantering along a deserted white beach with the Indian Ocean to your left and the sacred forest to your right. Visit the hospital and the school during your stay it transforms the experience from a beach holiday into something with genuine meaning. And ask for the sunset dinner on the cliff edge on at least one evening: the view from that specific table, at that specific hour, is Kinondo Kwetu at its most extraordinary.

Families & Children

Kinondo Kwetu is outstanding for families in every configuration. The family cottages, the stables, the dive centre, the tennis court, the community visits, the storytelling potential of the sacred Kaya forest and the warmth with which the team receives children of all ages make this one of the most genuinely family-responsive boutique properties in Kenya. The Anderssons live here with their own children; the family energy of the place is not manufactured.

CASABELLA BY ALMANARA

Galu Beach, South Diani | The Boutique Sanctuary

Location: Casa Bella by Almanara is nestled within the **Almanara coastal estate** on **Galu Beach** the quieter, southern end of the Diani coastline tucked within the property's lush tropical gardens and overlooking the white sands and the Indian Ocean beyond. It is approximately 7 kilometres south of the main Diani Beach resort area, close enough for accessibility and far enough for genuine seclusion.

Introduction & History

Casa Bella is Almanara's answer to a question that the world's most discerning travellers frequently ask: *what if there were a boutique hotel with only five rooms the intimacy and personalization of a private villa, combined with the service infrastructure and culinary excellence of a full-service resort?* The answer, at Diani's most celebrated luxury address, is Casa Bella.

The **Almanara Resort** has been one of the South Coast's most significant luxury properties since its establishment a collection of private garden villas, a boutique hotel and (the newest addition) the **Residence by Almanara** luxury beachfront villas, all within the same beautifully managed coastal estate. The estate was designed to combine the heritage vocabulary of the Swahili coast makuti thatch, carved wood, coral stone with the precision and elegance of the best international luxury hospitality.

The result, described by guests as combining *"Italian marble, Arab-inspired architecture and African warmth"* in a uniquely coherent aesthetic, has made Almanara one of the most-awarded addresses on the South Coast.

Casa Bella specifically was designed for guests who want the intimate, personalised experience of a private boutique hotel maximum ten guests, minimum intrusion, maximum care. Its ocean-view rooms and suites are among the most beautifully appointed on the Galu Beach coastline.

Ownership & Management

The Almanara estate, including Casa Bella, is **privately owned and managed by a visionary family** whose investment in the property's design, culinary offering and community connection has established it as one of the defining addresses of the South Coast. The management team is deeply professional and the staff-to-guest ratio a hallmark of Almanara's service philosophy ensures an attention to detail that is consistently cited in guest reviews as exceptional.

Awards & Recognition

Almanara and its properties have received multiple awards from the **World Travel Awards**, **TripAdvisor** and leading luxury travel operators. The **Sails Restaurant** at the estate an iconic architectural statement of steel and canvas overlooking the beach has been awarded specifically for its culinary excellence and is widely regarded as one of the finest beachfront dining experiences on the South Coast.

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Casa Bella accommodates a maximum of **10 guests** across **5 individually designed rooms and suites**:

- ✓ **3 Ocean View Rooms** — Each with a private veranda or balcony facing the Indian Ocean, allowing the sound of the waves and the sea breeze to flow through the space. Soft linens, locally crafted furnishings, subtle coastal details. Perfect for couples or solo travellers.
- ✓ **2 Ocean View Luxury Suites** — The most elevated Casa Bella experience: expansive living areas opening onto wide terraces with panoramic ocean views. King-sized beds, spacious ensuite bathrooms, lounge areas designed for comfort and privacy. The ideal honeymoon or anniversary accommodation.
- ✓ All rooms and suites are ensuite and fully air-conditioned, decorated throughout with **Italian marble and mosaic** alongside traditional Swahili-influenced finishes. The generous open-plan layout of the shared spaces provides ample room without crowding.
- ✓ The property's **TV lounge with pool table, library, bar and gym** are available to all Casa Bella guests, alongside access to the Almanara estate's full-service spa and restaurant.
- ✓ **Casa Bella is available for exclusive hire** — the entire property can be booked for larger groups or private events, accommodating up to ten guests with full use of all shared spaces, the infinity pool and the ocean terrace.
- ✓ **Amenities & Facilities**
- ✓ **Infinity pool** with views across the beach and ocean. Access to the **Cloud Nine Health Spa** one of Diani's most celebrated wellness facilities, offering treatments inspired by local traditions alongside yoga, pilates and meditation.
- ✓ The **Sails Restaurant and Bar** the iconic beachfront dining venue of the Almanara estate, Diani's most photographed restaurant. A dedicated **sports centre** offering kitesurfing, windsurfing, snorkelling and scuba diving.
- ✓ Deep-sea fishing trips, traditional dhow excursions to **Kisite Marine Park**, whale shark and dolphin-spotting adventures all arranged through the estate's activity concierge.
- ✓ The **Residence by Almanara** the newest addition to the estate, comprising three luxury beachfront villas with private plunge pools and rooftop terraces is available for guests requiring even greater privacy.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

Casa Bella guests receive a **bespoke daily set menu** served from the villa's own dining area, with views across the infinity pool and the Indian Ocean.

- ✓ For evening dining, the **Sails Restaurant** with its extraordinary architectural backdrop of steel and canvas and its reputation for the finest seafood cuisine on the South Coast is the defining dining destination of the Diani evening.
- ✓ Lobster, dorado, yellowfin tuna and the day's freshest reef catch are prepared with a fusion of East African coastal and Mediterranean techniques that reflects the Almanara estate's Italian-African heritage.
- ✓ Private rooftop terrace dinners can be arranged at the Residence villas; beach dinners are a Casa Bella signature.

Health & Safety

Almanara maintains rigorous safety standards across all activities, dining and accommodation. The property's PADI-certified dive operation ensures all water activities meet international safety benchmarks. Medical assistance is accessible via Diani's health facilities. 24-hour security on the estate. Purified drinking water throughout.

Why We Love Casabella by Almanara

We love Casa Bella for the **completeness of the Almanara experience** it provides in an intimate format the full-service resort excellence of Almanara in a boutique package of just five rooms. The combination of the ocean-view rooms, the infinity pool, the Sails Restaurant and the spa represents one of the finest overall packages on the South Coast.

Why Our Guests Will Love Casabella

- ✓ Guests who want the **boutique hotel experience** personalised service, beautiful rooms, full-service amenities and the best restaurant in Diani steps away in a property small enough to feel genuinely intimate will find Casa Bella deeply satisfying.
- ✓ The exclusive-hire option makes it particularly attractive for private celebrations.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Book a sunset dinner at Sails Restaurant on at least one evening its position directly on the Galu Beach sand, with the iconic steel-and-canvas architecture and the Indian Ocean in front, makes it one of the most beautiful dining settings in East Africa. Arrive early for cocktails and watch the sky change. And book the Cloud Nine Spa for the in-water treatment: lying on the edge of the cliff above the ocean as the therapist works is an experience of very specific and very memorable quality.

Families & Children

- ✓ Almanara's Garden Villas are better suited to families with younger children than Casa Bella itself; the boutique hotel's more intimate scale is most appropriate for couples and adult groups.
- ✓ Children over 12 are welcome at Casa Bella.

NOMADS BEACH RESORT

Diani Beach, Southern Strip | The Pioneer of Sustainable Luxury

Location: Nomads Beach Resort operating under the **Sands Kenya** collection as **Nomad Beach Resort** sits on the **southern stretch of Diani Beach**, nestled within 26 acres of **indigenous coastal forest** that frames the resort's grounds and creates the unique sense of a property that exists in genuine dialogue with its natural environment. The resort is approximately 15 minutes from Ukunda Airstrip and is accessible both by air and by the scenic coastal road from Mombasa.

Introduction & History

Nomads Beach Resort holds a specific and celebrated place in the history of the South Coast: it was **the first luxury boutique hotel at Diani Beach** the property that established the template for what sustainable, high-quality coastal hospitality looked like in this part of the world. Since **2005**, the resort has led the Diani coastal scene in its commitment to environmental responsibility, earning recognition that goes beyond the hospitality industry into the broader world of conservation and sustainability.

Today, the resort is part of the **Sands Kenya** collection a family of properties that includes the extraordinary **Chale Island Resort** and its philosophy of *"barefoot luxury"* (the idea that true luxury is defined not by material excess but by authentic connection to nature and place) continues to distinguish it from more conventional beach resort competitors. Every booking at Nomad Beach Resort supports the **Diani Turtle Project** a local organization that works to protect the marine turtles that nest on Diani's beaches.

Ownership & Management

Nomad Beach Resort is **owned and managed by The Sands Kenya** a hospitality group whose philosophy of sustainable, environmentally conscious luxury is embedded in every operational decision. The management team's expertise is reflected in the resort's consistently exceptional guest review scores and its multiple international awards.

Awards & Recognition

Nomad Beach Resort has received extraordinary international recognition, including:

- ✓ **2025 World Luxury Travel Awards:**
- ✓ **Best Luxury Boutique Hotel in Kenya 2025 World Luxury Travel Awards:**
- ✓ **Best Luxury Boutique Retreat in East Africa**
- ✓ **2025 World Luxury Travel Awards**
- ✓ **Best Luxury Sustainable Resort in East Africa**
- ✓ **TripAdvisor Hall of Fame-** Sustained excellence over multiple years — **TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award 2025**

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Nomad Beach Resort offers **37 individually designed, air-conditioned rooms, suites, and beach cottages**, each furnished with **hand-carved mahogany** and traditional Swahili artefacts in a style that the resort has refined and perfected over two decades.

- ✓ **Sea Breeze Rooms** — Bathed in vivid blues with partial ocean views, the Sea Breeze Room is an oasis of calm: Lamu-style ceilings, light and airy décor, a queen bed, a private balcony perfect for cooling evening breezes. The gentlest and most accessible entry point into the Nomad experience.
- ✓ **Ocean View Suites** — Among the most sought-after rooms at the resort: stunning ocean views from private panoramic terraces, spacious sitting rooms with private bars, and some with their own Jacuzzis. The first-floor suites with their ocean-facing terraces are frequently cited in guest reviews as *"worth every penny"* at times exceeding \$800 per night and described as providing full value.
- ✓ **Beach Cottages** — Set directly along the beachfront lawn, these private cottages are the most intimate and romantic option at the resort: their own space on the sand, steps from the water, with the coastal forest providing shade and privacy on either side. The perfect romantic getaway setting — a private cottage on Diani's finest stretch of beach. All rooms and suites feature entertainment systems, private bars and high-quality linen throughout.

Amenities & Facilities

The resort is set within 26 acres of indigenous coastal forest one of the most extraordinary natural settings of any Diani property through which **forest nature walks** are offered, guided by staff who can interpret the birdlife, the botany and the ecological significance of this rare coastal habitat.

- ✓ A **5-star PADI dive centre** — **Diving the Crab** — operates from the resort, providing everything from beginner introductory dives to advanced reef explorations, wreck diving (the MV Alpha Funguo at 29 metres) and whale shark encounters. A **watersports centre** offering kitesurfing, windsurfing, kayaking, boogie boarding and all non-motorised water activities.
- ✓ **Deep-sea fishing** through the resort's **Furaha Fishing** operation.
- ✓ The **Forest Breeze Spa** offers traditional massages, Ayurvedic and reflexology treatments in a setting within the coastal forest. A **wine cellar for private dining**. **Riva's Bar** overlooking the pool and beach the ideal spot for sunset cocktails. **Nomad Beach Bar & Restaurant** described by regulars as *"the best spot on the beach"* and one of the South Coast's most social and beloved gathering places, with sushi, wood-fired pizzas, grilled seafood and some of Diani's most reliable sunset cocktails.
- ✓ **Afternoon tea** is served daily between 4pm and 5pm a civilizing ritual that sets the tempo for the Nomad evening.
- ✓ **Evening wine tastings** with the resort's knowledgeable sommelier have become a guest favourite.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

- ✓ Nomad Beach Resort's culinary identity is built around the extraordinary natural bounty of the South Coast and a philosophy of honest, beautifully executed food that celebrates the finest local ingredients without overcomplication.
- ✓ Fresh reef fish, line-caught tuna and the day's best seafood provide the backbone; Swahili-influenced preparations create the character; the beachfront setting especially at the legendary Nomad Beach Bar provides the atmosphere that makes every meal memorable.
- ✓ The resort also operates one of Diani's most celebrated specialty dining experiences: **The Red Pepper**, serving contemporary Thai cuisine in an intimate, atmospheric setting that provides a beautiful contrast to the beachfront dining atmosphere of the main restaurant.

Health & Safety

- ✓ Comprehensive health and safety protocols throughout the resort.
- ✓ The PADI 5-star dive centre operates to the highest international standards.
- ✓ The resort maintains close relationships with Diani's medical facilities and has 24-hour security, fire safety equipment and first aid capabilities.
- ✓ All watersport activities are supervised by qualified instructors.
- ✓ Children under six should not use the upper-floor balconies without close adult supervision.

Why We Love Nomads Beach Resort

- ✓ We love Nomad Beach Resort for its **integrity**.
- ✓ This is a property that has known what it wants to be since it opened in 2005 a boutique resort that takes its environmental responsibility seriously, that earns its guest loyalty through consistency and warmth rather than through novelty, and that produces the specific quality of deep relaxation and marine engagement that the South Coast does better than anywhere else.
- ✓ Three World Luxury Travel Awards in 2025 confirm that its vision has been sustained.

Why Our Guests Will Love It

Guests who want **full-service boutique resort hospitality** the dive centre, the spa, the multiple restaurant options, the forest nature walks, the wine cellar combined with a genuine environmental conscience and the extraordinary natural setting of Diani's finest beach stretch will find at Nomad Beach Resort a property that delivers with complete consistency.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Book an Ocean View Suite on the first floor for the panoramic terrace experience there is no better ocean view from a hotel room on Diani Beach. The evening wine tasting with the sommelier is one of the resort's hidden social gems arrive at 6:30pm and let Eric do the rest. And do not leave Nomad without a full day's diving with Diving the Crab the reef here is exceptional.

Families & Children

Nomad Beach Resort is a comfortable and well-supported environment for families. The beach cottages provide ideal family privacy; the dive centre offers programmes for young divers (minimum age restrictions apply for PADI courses); and the forest walks and turtle conservation work provide genuine educational experiences for children of all ages.

CHALE ISLAND RESORT

Chale Island, 10km South of Diani | Kenya's Only Private Island Resort

Location: Chale Island is a small, extraordinary private island situated **600 metres offshore** from mainland Kenya's south coast, approximately **10 kilometres south of Diani Beach** and some 50 kilometres south of Mombasa. The island is accessed exclusively by boat typically a 5-to-10-minute crossing from the Chale jetty on the mainland and this short separation from the world establishes, from the moment of arrival, the defining character of the experience: the sensation of having left everything behind.

The island takes its name from "*Chale*" an old warrior of the Digo tribe who is buried on the island and whose descendants still come, on certain days each year, to perform religious rituals. This living cultural presence gives the island an atmosphere of genuine depth that no amount of resort development could manufacture.

Introduction & History

Chale Island is, quite simply, **Kenya's only private island resort** a distinction that no other hospitality property in the country can claim, and that immediately places it in a category of global significance. The island is **1.2 kilometres long and 0.8 kilometres wide**, oriented north to south, and divided into two distinct zones: the resort and its beaches; and the protected forest and wildlife reserve.

This division is intentional the island was built with the explicit philosophy that its accommodation and infrastructure should "*be elegant but not luxurious, blending into the natural environment and reflecting traditional architecture*".

The island's natural environment is extraordinary.

Dense **coastal forest and mangroves** cover much of the interior; a **tidal saltwater lake** subjected to the natural changes of the tides creates a constantly shifting inland water world; **two troops of Colobus monkeys** inhabit the forest; the beaches serve as **nesting grounds for Green turtles**; and the surrounding waters are host to **whale sharks** (November to February), **humpback whales**, abundant dolphin populations and some of the finest diving in Kenya.

The resort underwent a **complete renovation in 2024** — rebuilding and redesigning its facilities with a particularly strong focus on the environmental beauty of the island. The result is a property that feels genuinely fresh while honouring the ecological commitment that has always been central to its identity.

Chale Island is managed as part of the **Sands Kenya** collection — the same family of properties as Nomad Beach Resort with a shared philosophy of sustainable, nature-centred luxury and a management team of considerable coastal experience.

Ownership & Management,

- ✓ Chale Island Resort is **owned and operated by The Sands Kenya** whose commitment to environmental responsibility, community engagement and sustainable tourism is the foundation of every operational decision at the island.
- ✓ The team of **more than 180 employees** represents multiple nationalities and at least 10 Kenyan tribal backgrounds a diverse, skilled and deeply invested team.

Awards & Recognition,

- ✓ Chale Island Resort holds a **TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award**, consistent recognition from leading luxury travel operators, and is specifically cited for its ecological commitment and its extraordinary natural environment.
- ✓ The resort has been repeatedly recognised as one of the finest marine biodiversity destinations accessible from any beach resort in Kenya.

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements,

Chale Island offers **7 categories of accommodation** across **60 rooms in total** the widest range of any property in this guide, designed to accommodate every configuration from couples to large groups while always maintaining the fundamental character of island seclusion.

- ✓ **Standard Rooms** — Set within the island's gardens, elegantly decorated in traditional Swahili style with natural materials, carved wooden details and the understated quality of finish that defines the island aesthetic. Air conditioning, private bathroom, Swahili-style bed.
- ✓ **Superior and Deluxe Rooms** — Elevated in specification and view, these rooms provide enhanced comfort and positioning within the island, with partial or direct ocean views from their windows and private balconies.
- ✓ **Ocean-View Suites** — Expansive private spaces overlooking the Indian Ocean: large living areas, private terraces with panoramic water views, luxurious bathrooms with indoor and outdoor elements, and the full depth of the Chale Island service experience.
- ✓ **Suite on the Rock** — One of the most extraordinary accommodation options in Kenya: positioned on the coral rock at the water's edge, the Suite on the Rock provides an entirely unique perspective on the island environment and the ocean beyond.
- ✓ **The Overwater Bungalow** — Kenya's **only overwater bungalow** — a statement that deserves to stand alone. Built over the island's tidal saltwater lake, the overwater bungalow provides a Maldives-level intimacy with the marine environment in the entirely unique context of the Kenyan south coast. For those seeking the most romantic and most memorable room in the entire Diani coastal region, this is the non-negotiable answer.

All rooms have been redesigned following the 2024 renovation with air conditioning, private bathrooms and the Swahili-inspired finishes that reflect the island's architectural philosophy.

Amenities & Facilities

Three outdoor swimming pools. Three restaurants and multiple bars, including a **sunset deck bar** with views across the Indian Ocean one of the finest sunset-watching positions available on the South Coast. The **Maisha Poa Wellness Spa** *Swahili: "good life"* is built over the heart of

the island, its nine open-air treatment rooms positioned above the tidal lake, where the energies of the mangroves, the coral caves and the ocean breeze converge to create a treatment environment of extraordinary sensory depth.

Diving the Crab — the world-renowned PADI and SSI dive centre that operates from the island, with its own Chale Island base and experienced dive guides. The surrounding waters provide some of the finest dive sites accessible from any Kenyan resort property: **Kisite Point**, **Shimoni Cave**, vibrant coral gardens at multiple depths, and the seasonal highlight of **whale shark encounters** (November to February). The dive centre has operated since **1985**, making it one of Kenya's most established and trusted dive operations.

- ✓ Guided **canoeing expeditions** through the ancient mangroves. **Island hiking tours** through the coastal forest. **Glass-bottom boat rides**. Arrangements for **safari trips** to Diani Beach and to Kenya's major game reserves.
- ✓ Gift shop.
- ✓ Children's programming.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

- ✓ Chale Island's three restaurants and multiple bar venues provide a comprehensive culinary experience across the full range of the island's beautiful settings.
- ✓ The main restaurant serves a fusion of **Traditional Kenyan**, **Italian** and **Oriental** cuisines; **Katika Ziwa** (the name means "at the lake") specializes in fresh seafood in the extraordinary setting of the island's tidal lake; the sunset deck bar provides the ideal sundowner setting as the day turns golden.
- ✓ The island's sustainable kitchen philosophy emphasises local sourcing from trusted coastal suppliers.

Health & Safety

- ✓ Chale Island operates comprehensive health and safety protocols across all activities, dining and accommodation.
- ✓ The island's relative seclusion means that all safety systems first aid, emergency communication, medical evacuation planning are maintained to the highest standard.
- ✓ The dive centre operates to full PADI safety requirements. 24-hour security.
- ✓ The island's generator provides reliable power, with electricity available continuously following the 2024 renovation.

Why We Love Chale Island

- ✓ We love Chale Island because it is **genuinely irreplaceable**.
- ✓ No other property in Kenya no other property in East Africa offers what it offers: a private island, surrounded by coral reef, inhabited by colobus monkeys and nesting sea turtles, with whale sharks offshore from October to March, the only overwater bungalow in Kenya, and the extraordinary sensory completeness of an environment where forest, mangrove, ocean and reef are all within minutes of each other.

Why Our Guests Will Love Chale Island

Guests who want the **private island experience** the absolute separation from the mainland world, the extraordinary marine encounters, the jungle and the beach and the reef all accessible within a single extraordinary setting will find at Chale Island an experience that stands entirely alone in the Kenya coastal landscape.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Book the overwater bungalow for a honeymoon or significant anniversary it is the only one in Kenya and the experience of waking above the tidal lake, with the sounds of the island surrounding you and the Indian Ocean visible through the bungalow's windows, is genuinely unlike anything else available on this coast. Arrange the whale shark snorkelling if your visit falls between October and March the microlight spotter aircraft that Whale Shark Adventures uses to locate the sharks means sightings are far more consistent than any other operator can provide.

Families & Children

Chale Island welcomes children of all ages. The island's natural environment provides a genuinely extraordinary educational environment for curious children; the marine activities (glass-bottom boat, snorkelling, introductory diving for older children), the colobus monkeys and the sea turtle nesting programme engage all age groups. The overwater bungalow is, understandably, most suitable for adult guests.

WATER LOVERS BEACH RESORT

Diani Beach, Central Strip | The Mediterranean Idyll

Location: Water Lovers Beach Resort is positioned on **Diani Beach** approximately 35 kilometres south of Mombasa enjoying a beachfront location where the soft sand shoreline and calm waters extend **500 metres to the coral reef**, creating the ideal protected swimming and watersport environment.

Introduction & History

Water lovers as it is affectionately known by its devoted returning guests is a property of precise and beautiful character: a **blend of Swahili coastal culture and Mediterranean style** that produces something neither purely African nor purely European but genuinely its own. The motto is disarmingly direct: *"Come as guest, leave as a friend."* And it is a motto that the property consistently upholds.

- ✓ The resort is one of Diani's most intimate luxury addresses accommodating just **ten rooms** across its gracious beachfront setting, with the turtle-shaped infinity pool as the social and aesthetic centrepiece of the property.
- ✓ The scale ensures that the staff-to-guest ratio is exceptional and that every guest receives a quality of personal attention that larger properties cannot deliver.

- ✓ The resort's **Swahili-Mediterranean aesthetic** is expressed throughout: whitewashed walls, carved wooden details, Italian-influenced furnishings, mosaic tile work alongside traditional coastal craftsmanship.
- ✓ The beachfront dining position a sea-view restaurant directly on the sand and the beach bar complete the picture of a property that knows exactly what it is and delivers it with consistency and warmth.

Ownership & Management

- ✓ Water Lovers Beach Resort is **privately owned and managed** by its founders, whose personal investment in every detail of the property's character and service is the foundation of its enduring reputation.
- ✓ The consistent quality of guest reviews across TripAdvisor, booking platforms and the recommendations of leading luxury travel specialists reflects the stability and care of owner-managed hospitality.

Awards & Recognition

Water Lovers Beach Resort has been consistently listed as one of the finest boutique luxury properties in Diani by leading travel operators and guest review platforms, with particular recognition for its service quality, intimate scale and the unique Swahili-Mediterranean character of its design and culinary offering.

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Water Lovers accommodates a maximum of guests across **8 spacious oceanfront suites**, a **penthouse apartment** and a **bungalow villa** all oceanfront and all luxury-equipped. Every room faces the Indian Ocean, with the 500-metre lagoon between the beach and the reef providing the tranquil, clear-water view that defines every day at the property.

- ✓ **Oceanfront Suites** — Each of the eight suites is spacious and individually appointed, with private verandas or terraces facing the sea, ensuite bathrooms of generous proportion, and the Swahili-Mediterranean design vocabulary carried through in every detail.
- ✓ **Penthouse Apartment** — The most expansive accommodation at the resort: a four-bedroom luxury apartment with stunning views of Diani Beach and the Indian Ocean, designed for groups or families seeking the most private and spacious configuration the property offers.
- ✓ **Bungalow Villa** — A standalone villa within the resort grounds, providing the privacy and independence of a private home with full access to all resort amenities and services.

Amenities & Facilities

- ✓ The **turtle-shaped infinity pool** one of the most photographically distinctive pools on the South Coast sits at the heart of the property, its shape both playful and homage to the sea turtles that inhabit the reef offshore.
- ✓ A **beach bar** and **sea-view restaurant** complete the beachfront leisure environment.
- ✓ A **spa** offering massage and beauty treatments on the beach and in dedicated treatment rooms.
- ✓ Kayaks, paddleboards and snorkel gear available from the beach hut for independent exploration.
- ✓ Diving, kitesurfing, deep-sea fishing and all major South Coast excursions arranged through the resort's concierge network.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

- ✓ The kitchen at Water Lovers is one of the property's most distinctive features the Swahili-Mediterranean fusion that defines the resort's character is expressed most eloquently in its food.
- ✓ Fresh seafood from local fishermen; the finest local vegetables and tropical fruits; the Italian influences in pasta, risotto and wood-fire preparation; the Swahili coastal spicing in the fish curries, coconut preparations and reef seafood dishes together these create a menu of genuine originality and pleasure.

Health & Safety

- ✓ Standard luxury resort protocols throughout.
- ✓ The beachfront position and calm lagoon waters provide a safe swimming environment for all guests. 24-hour security.
- ✓ Medical assistance accessible via Diani Beach's health infrastructure.

Why We Love Water Lovers

- ✓ We love Water lovers for its **honest character** it knows what it is (an intimate Swahili-Mediterranean beachfront resort of genuine quality), it delivers that character with complete consistency, and its guests return year after year because of it.
- ✓ The turtle pool, the sea-view restaurant, the personal warmth of the team these are pleasures that do not diminish with familiarity.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Ask for the beachfront massage at sunset the resort's therapists work on the sand at the water's edge as the sky turns gold over the Indian Ocean, and it is one of the most purely pleasurable experiences available at any Diani property.

Families & Children

- ✓ Water Lovers is warmly welcoming to families.
- ✓ The penthouse apartment provides the ideal family configuration; the calm lagoon waters are safe for swimmers of all ages; and the snorkelling and kayaking equipment is a natural draw for older children and teenagers.

MSAMBWENI BEACH HOUSE

Msambweni, South of Diani | The Cliffside Sanctuary.

Location: Msambweni Beach House occupies one of the most dramatic and private positions on the entire South Coast set on **coral cliffs** some 50 kilometres south of Mombasa and approximately 30 minutes from Ukunda Airstrip, far south of the main Diani resort strip in the small, largely undeveloped coastal village of **Msambweni**. The property is surrounded by **28 acres of natural land** and enjoys **700 feet of virtually private beach** along a 4-mile stretch of white sand that is entirely free of other resort development.

Introduction & History

To arrive at Msambweni Beach House is to arrive at something genuinely apart a property whose remoteness is its defining luxury. Tucked away from the busy Diani main beach, clinging to its coral cliffs above the Indian Ocean, Msambweni has been described by Expert Africa as a place where guests are *"quickly seduced by the combination of light, space and colour around the house and villas, by the intriguing and almost deserted beach and caves at the bottom of the cliff."*

The property began as a family home of considerable character its whitewashed walls, Swahili-style architecture and cliffside position give it the feel of a Mediterranean villa that has been transported to the East African coast and has made the coast its own. The main house is a masterwork of arched doorways, carved wooden details, sweeping cliff-top terraces and the extraordinary blinding light that the white walls and the Indian Ocean produce together at midday.

The kitchen trained by a **celebrity Belgian chef** has become one of the most celebrated culinary operations on the South Coast, producing a remarkable fusion of Swahili coastal dishes, French and Belgian cuisine and the finest fresh seafood that Msambweni's trusted local fishing network can supply.

Ownership & Management

Msambweni Beach House is **family owned and operated** a personal investment by its founders in a vision of secluded, genuine luxury that the main Diani resort strip cannot provide.

The **World Luxury Hotel Award** it has received reflects the property's success in delivering that vision at the highest international standard.

Awards & Recognition

World Luxury Hotel Award — recognizing the property's exceptional quality and the uniqueness of its offering — **TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award** — sustained excellence in guest experience.

Consistent listing by leading luxury travel operators as one of the finest private boutique hideaways on the Kenyan coast

Barefoot Luxury — Rooms & Sleeping Arrangements

Msambweni Beach House offers a combination of **main house suites** and **private villas**, totaling 4 main house rooms/suites and 3 private Lamu-style villas:

Main House Suites (3 rooms) — On the first and second floors of the main house: fully air-conditioned double suites with en-suite facilities (flush toilet, twin washbasins, bathtub and walk-in shower), beautiful soft furnishings in the Swahili coastal palette, a hot beverages station, personal safe and private veranda with views across the Indian Ocean. Each room carries the character of the main house arched ceilings, carved wood, the blinding white of the Swahili tradition.

Ocean Suite — Accessed via a walkway leading from the infinity pool: a private, tented-style accommodation with a wonderfully safari-esque quality that provides panoramic sea views, a roomy double bed, ample storage, comfortable seating and a dining area with director's chairs. Perfect for guests who want the feeling of complete privacy within the estate.

3 Private Lamu Villas — The most extraordinary accommodation at Msambweni: three individually styled villas, each with its own **private infinity pool**, private garden, private Jacuzzi and panoramic sea views. Decorated with traditional Swahili four-poster beds, beautifully carved wooden accents and a quality of finish that makes the private villa experience here among the finest on the South Coast. Air-conditioned, with digital satellite television. For honeymooners or couples seeking total seclusion, these villas are definitive.

Amenities & Facilities

The **T-shaped main infinity pool and whirlpool bath** set at the cliff's edge overlooking the Indian Ocean is the social heart of the property. The almost deserted beach below, accessed via a path through the coral cliff, with its **caves at the base of the cliff** that fill and drain with the tides, provides one of the most unusual and atmospheric beach environments on the South Coast.

A **beach massage hut** at the base of the cliff treatments in-room available on request. **Cycling** through the nearby bush and farmland on mountain bikes. **Table tennis** and **volleyball** on-site. A beautifully curated **curio shop** stocked with art, jewellery and hand-crafted items from local artisans. A **phone set into the coral cliffs** allowing guests to order food and drinks from the beach without leaving the sand.

Diving through **Diani Marine PADI dive centre** arranged from the property. All major South Coast excursions coordinated through the team: Wasini Island, Kisite Marine Park, Maasai Mara, Shimba Hills, Tsavo.

Culinary & Dining Experiences

The Belgian-trained kitchen is one of the South Coast's most praised culinary operations and the fusion of Belgian/French technique, Swahili coastal ingredients and the extraordinary freshness of locally sourced seafood produce a dining experience that guests consistently describe as

among the finest they have encountered in Kenya. The outdoor dining location at the cliff's edge, with the Indian Ocean below and the stars above is a setting of complete theatrical beauty. A phone set into the cliff face allows guests to order from the beach itself.

Health & Safety

- ✓ Msambweni's remote location means that comprehensive safety infrastructure is a priority.
- ✓ The property maintains full medical first aid capabilities, close relationships with regional medical services and AMREF/Flying Doctors partnership where required.
- ✓ The cliff path to the beach and the cliff-base cave environment require careful navigation at high tide; guests are comprehensively briefed on tidal patterns. 24-hour security.
- ✓ Free WiFi throughout, including on the beach.

Why We Love Msambweni

- ✓ We love Msambweni Beach House for its **audacious remoteness**.
- ✓ In a destination as well-served by luxury properties as Diani, the capacity to find somewhere that still feels like a discovery a property whose cliffside caves and private beach and Belgian-trained kitchen and Lamu villas with individual pools feel entirely genuine and entirely special is remarkable.
- ✓ Msambweni is the South Coast's most complete secret, in the best possible sense.

Why Our Guests Will Love Msambweni

Guests who want **total seclusion, extraordinary culinary quality and the sense of having found something truly private** particularly honeymoon couples for whom the private Lamu villas are the ultimate choice will find at Msambweni Beach House an experience that exceeds the standard definition of luxury.

The Vard Africa Insider Note

Book one of the Lamu Villas for a honeymoon the private infinity pool over the ocean, the Jacuzzi, the carved four-poster bed and the absolute seclusion of each villa's garden create the most romantically complete South Coast experience available anywhere along this coastline. And explore the cliff caves at low tide they are extraordinary before ordering lunch through the phone in the cliff while you wait for the tide to return.

Families & Children

Msambweni Beach House is best suited to **couples, solo travellers and small groups of friends** seeking complete seclusion. The property's cliff-face setting, cave beach environment and intimate scale make it most appropriate for adults. Well-behaved children over 12 are welcome.

OUR SIGNATURE BAREFOOT LUXURY EXPERIENCES

What To Do in Diani

Diani is a destination of extraordinary experiential range from the most meditative beach walk to the most adrenaline-rich ocean adventure. The following experiences represent our curated selection of the finest encounters available on the South Coast, each personally vetted and arranged by Vard Africa through our network of trusted local partners.

THE SUNSET DHOW CRUISE

Sail the South Coast as the Day Turns to Gold

There is an art to the Diani sunset, and the finest way to receive it is from the deck of a traditional wooden dhow. The South Coast's particular quality of evening light warm, amber, horizontally dramatic transforms the Indian Ocean into something that painters have attempted for centuries and only nature can fully achieve. From the deck of a dhow, with the sail above and the reef below and the whole of Diani's 25-kilometre beach visible to the north, the sunset is not merely beautiful but genuinely profound.

Vard Africa arranges **fully private sunset dhow cruises** on traditional vessels crewed by experienced South Coast captains whose knowledge of the reef, the currents and the most beautiful sailing routes is refined by generations of practice. A fully stocked bar cold Tuskers, Dawa cocktails, chilled Sauvignon Blanc, fresh coconut water and a board of Swahili coastal snacks are provided on deck. The cruise departs from the beach nearest your villa in the late afternoon and sails south along the coast, through the calm lagoon between the beach and the reef, returning as the last light fades and the first stars appear.

For the full experience, Vard Africa can extend the cruise into darkness on appropriate evenings, combining the sunset passage with a **bioluminescent plankton encounter** in the calm inshore waters a phenomenon less famous here than in Kilifi but no less beautiful. The dhow, moving through water that glows blue with each bow wave, is one of those experiences that stops conversation for a moment as passengers simply receive the beauty of what they are seeing.

SUNSET & SUNDOWNERS EXCURSIONS

The Art of the Perfect Diani Evening

The Diani sunset deserves the finest possible setting, and Vard Africa curates multiple configurations for the ultimate South Coast sundowner experience, each suited to different preferences and different moments in a stay.

The Sandbank Sundowner — At specific tidal states, exposed sandbanks emerge offshore from Galu Beach, creating temporary private islands of brilliant white sand in the middle of the turquoise Indian Ocean lagoon. Vard Africa arranges private sundowner setups on these ephemeral sandbanks: a table set in the sand, champagne on ice, freshly prepared Swahili bites, the reef on one side and the beach on the other, the whole of the South Coast sky above. This experience is available only for a few hours before the returning tide reclaims the sandbank — its temporariness is part of its magic.

The Cliffside Sundowner — For guests at cliff-top properties (Alfajiri, Msambweni), the clifftop position at sunset is one of Africa's most dramatic natural theatres. Vard Africa can arrange private cocktail setups at the cliff edge, with a mixologist, a curated coastal grazing board and the Indian Ocean turning from gold to copper to rose below.

The Beach Bonfire Dinner — On the privately arranged stretch of Diani Beach, Vard Africa sets a private bonfire at the waterline as the sun sets: a long table on the sand, candles in storm glasses, freshly grilled seafood prepared by your villa's chef, and the whole of the empty Diani beach in both directions. This is the definitive South Coast special occasion dinner.

EXPLORING THE WHITE SANDY BEACHES OF DIANI

25 Kilometres of Africa's Finest Sand, Entirely Your Own

Diani Beach is, at its simplest and most irreducible, one of the most beautiful stretches of white sand in the world and the pleasure of simply exploring it, at your own pace and in your own time, is one of the most rewarding things available on the South Coast.

Vard Africa encourages guests to **walk Diani Beach at dawn** when the light is horizontal and gold, the tide has smoothed the surface to a perfect plane, the beach vendors have not yet arrived and the whole of the South Coast feels privately owned. The beach walks south from the main resort strip toward Galu, toward Msambweni, toward the increasingly remote and pristine stretches where the forest meets the sea reward every step with increasing beauty and decreasing company.

Guided beach ecology walks arranged by Vard Africa with local naturalists who can interpret the remarkable intertidal life of the reef flat at low tide — the sea stars, the octopus in the rock pools, the hermit crabs, the reef fish visible in the lagoon's crystal-clear shallow water transform a beach stroll into a genuinely enriching natural history experience.

The **Colobus Conservation Centre** at the northern end of Diani Beach is a recommended morning visit: the work done here to protect and rehabilitate Kenya's Angola colobus monkey population is extraordinary, and the opportunity to watch these remarkable primates in a setting of such natural richness is one of Diani's most distinctive wildlife encounters.

THE VARD AFRICA JET SKI DOLPHIN SAFARI

Our Signature Experience — Ride the Ocean in Search of Wild Dolphins

This is one of Vard Africa's most beloved and most characteristically **Vard signature experiences** and it is available nowhere else in quite this form. Our **private Jet Ski dolphin safari** takes a small group of guests out beyond the reef on high-performance personal watercraft, guided by a professional marine pilot whose knowledge of the dolphin pods that inhabit these waters is intimate and reliable.

The experience begins with a safety briefing and equipment check at the beach. The Jet Skis launch through the reef passage and into the open Indian Ocean, where the guide leads the group toward the dolphin hotspots known to operators who have worked these waters for years. When a pod is located and the large resident populations of **bottlenose and spinner dolphins** in the waters off Diani mean that encounters are highly consistent guests can slow their machines and allow the dolphins to approach, often swimming directly beneath and beside the Jet Ski at speeds that match its gentle pace.

This is not a dolphin show. These are wild, free-ranging dolphins in their natural ocean environment, encountered on their own terms. The exhilaration of the Jet Ski ride combines with the extraordinary intimacy of the dolphin encounter to produce something that occupies a unique position in the emotional geography of a Diani stay.

Vard Africa arranges professional guides with full ocean safety certification, emergency communication equipment and the specific knowledge of dolphin behaviour that ensures encounters are respectful of the animals while being as memorable as possible for guests. Maximum group size: 4 to 6 guests per expedition.

A VISIT TO KISITE MARINE PARK

One of East Africa's Finest Marine Sanctuaries — A Full Day of Ocean Magic

Located near **Wasini Island** close to the Tanzanian border, **Kisite-Mpunguti Marine National Park** is Kenya's premier protected marine environment and a full-day private excursion to this extraordinary destination is one of the non-negotiable experiences of any extended stay on the South Coast.

The **full-day private dhow excursion** arranged by Vard Africa departs from Diani Beach in the early morning a road transfer to Shimoni, followed by a traditional dhow sailing into the marine park's crystal waters. Along the way, the dhow searches for the resident **dolphin pods** that inhabit the Wasini channel bottlenose and humpback dolphins are frequently encountered, sometimes swimming directly alongside the boat. Within the park, guests snorkel over **coral gardens of extraordinary diversity**: over **250 fish species**, sea turtles resting on the reef, moray eels in the coral crevices, angelfish, parrotfish, triggerfish and the full spectrum of Indian Ocean reef life. For certified divers, world-class dive sites including **Kisite Point** and the **Shimoni Cave** are accessible.

A **fresh Swahili seafood lunch** on Wasini Island grilled fish, coconut rice, fried cassava, fresh tropical fruit in the shade of mangrove trees, with the Indian Ocean glittering in front, is the midday high point of an experience that, from departure to return, delivers sustained magic. A visit to the **slave cave at Shimoni** a reminder of the darker history of this coast adds historical depth to a day of extraordinary natural beauty.

The best months for Kisite are **October to March**: calm seas, high visibility, consistent dolphin sightings and the possibility of whale shark encounters on the way out or back.

SNORKELLING, SURFING & PADDLEBOARDING ON YOUR PRIVATE BEACH

Your Ocean, Your Pace, Your Private Reef

The reef directly offshore from the finest Diani villas is among the most accessible and beautiful snorkelling environments on the Kenyan coast and the experience of entering it from the private beach of your own property, without the organization of a tour or the presence of other groups, is one of the defining pleasures of a South Coast villa stay.

Vard Africa ensures that every property in this guide provides **high-quality snorkelling equipment** prescription mask options available on request for guests' free use at any tidal state. **Stand-up paddleboards** provide a complementary relationship with the ocean's surface: the meditative practice of balance and breath on the calm lagoon water, discovering the reef's geography from above before descending to explore it from within.

Surfing for those with experience or those wishing to learn is available at appropriate points along the South Coast where the swell breaks over reef passages. Vard Africa arranges qualified surf instruction for beginners; for experienced surfers, guides to the best local breaks are included.

The combination of snorkelling, paddleboarding and surfing from a private beach the ocean entirely your own, the reef steps away, the villa and its kitchen available for refreshments whenever appetite dictates represents barefoot luxury in its purest expression.

PRIVATE DEEP-SEA FISHING EXPEDITIONS

Cast a Line in the Blue Waters of the Indian Ocean

The deep waters beyond the Kenyan Barrier Reef are among the finest **big game fishing grounds** on the East African coast, and the fishing programme available from the Diani South Coast particularly from Msambweni and the deep-water sites accessible from Chale Island is genuinely world-class. **Yellowfin tuna, sailfish, marlin** (black, blue and striped), **wahoo, dorado** (mahi-mahi) and **kingfish** are the primary targets; the tropical waters ensure good fishing conditions year-round, with the peak season running from **September to March**.

Vard Africa arranges **fully private deep-sea fishing expeditions** aboard the finest crewed sport-fishing vessels available on the South Coast including vessels from Nomads Beach Resort's **Furaha Fishing** operation and Msambweni's trusted captain network. Half-day and full-day expeditions are available, fully equipped with professional gear and experienced local guides whose knowledge of the currents, the bait fish movements and the seasonal fishing patterns of these waters is refined by years of practice.

The **catch-and-cook** option bringing the morning's catch back to your villa's chef for preparation as sashimi, grilled whole over charcoal or incorporated into the evening's tasting menu is one of the most satisfying culinary experiences the South Coast provides.

SET OUT ON A PRIVATE BOAT WITH A PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

Your Ocean, Curated

For guests who want the full range of Diani's marine environment reef exploration, island visits, sandbank picnics, dolphin watching, snorkelling spots and the sense of freedom that comes from having a private vessel entirely at their disposal Vard Africa arranges **full-day private boat charters** with professional marine guides whose knowledge of the South Coast waters is comprehensive.

The private boat gives guests the flexibility to design their own marine day: starting with a dolphin search in the morning, moving to a snorkelling spot on a patch of pristine reef at low tide, anchoring over a sandbank for a private picnic lunch prepared by the guide's support team, exploring a quiet cove inaccessible from the beach, and returning along the coast as the late afternoon light turns the water gold. The guide navigates, the guests explore on their own terms, at their own pace, with the whole Indian Ocean at their disposal.

Vard Africa's private boat programme uses vessels with full safety certification, GPS navigation, emergency communication and life safety equipment. Guides hold relevant marine pilot qualifications and are selected for both their nautical expertise and their communication skills.

GUIDED SUBWING EXPERIENCES

Discover the Marine World in the Most Extraordinary Way

Subwing is one of the most exhilarating and most unusual water experiences available in Diani and one that very few visitors to the South Coast have yet discovered. The Subwing device is a composite board that attaches to a boat by a tow rope; the guest holds the board and is towed through the water at a depth and angle of their own choosing, using body position to steer and dive through the underwater environment at a pace that no snorkel swim could match.

The sensation moving through the reef at speed, banking left and right through coral formations, diving toward the sandy bottom and then rising to breach the surface, all with the power of the boat providing the propulsion is described by those who have experienced it as unlike anything else in ocean recreation: simultaneously the most physically engaging and the most visually spectacular underwater experience they have had.

Vard Africa arranges Subwing sessions with **professional guides** who provide full safety briefing, supervise each session from the tow boat and ensure that the experience is safe for swimmers of all levels. Water temperature is warm throughout the year; a mask and snorkel complete the equipment.

GUIDED JET SKI EXPERIENCES

Professional, Safe, Thrilling

Beyond the signature **Jet Ski Dolphin Safari** (described above), Vard Africa arranges **standalone guided Jet Ski experiences** on the waters of the Diani lagoon and beyond the reef for guests who want the thrill and freedom of high-performance personal watercraft without the specific dolphin encounter focus.

Sessions are guided by professional, certified marine pilots who provide comprehensive safety briefing, supervise the entire experience from their own craft and tailor the ride to each guest's ability and preference from gentle lagoon cruising for first-timers to high-speed reef passages and open-ocean runs for experienced riders.

All equipment is maintained to professional safety standards; life vests and helmets are provided; all sessions are conducted within designated safe zones and in accordance with Kenyan Coast Guard regulations.

MANGROVE & SUNSET CRUISE ON YOUR PRIVATE BOAT

Slow Down & Receive the South Coast's Most Meditative Experience

The mangrove systems of the Diani South Coast extending along the creek and tidal channel systems behind the beach provide a completely different and deeply beautiful marine world from the reef and the open ocean. The mangroves' extraordinary ecological function as nursery grounds for reef fish, nesting habitat for coastal birds, carbon storage systems of immense capacity and natural barriers against coastal erosion makes them as ecologically significant as they are visually extraordinary.

A **private mangrove cruise** by traditional wooden boat through the channel systems south of Diani Beach moving slowly through the green cathedral of interlocking roots and branches, watched by kingfishers and herons, with the sound of the open ocean a constant presence just beyond the tree line — is one of the most meditative and most visually distinctive experiences available on the South Coast.

Combined with a **sunset cruise** along the coast as the day ends, the mangrove and sunset experience provides the full tidal and temporal range of what this extraordinary marine environment offers: the cool green intimacy of the mangrove passages in the afternoon, the open gold and rose of the open ocean at dusk. Vard Africa arranges both in sequence on private vessels with professional guides who can interpret the ecological world as it passes.

A WELLNESS RETREAT ON THE SOUTHERN COAST

The South Coast as a Natural Sanctuary for Body, Mind & Spirit

Diani is, in its fundamental character, a wellness destination not in the branded, programmed sense of a spa resort, but in the deeper sense of a place whose natural environment actively and consistently promotes the restoration of physical and mental wellbeing. The quality of the air, the warmth of the ocean, the sound of the reef, the extraordinary marine encounters, the quality of the food and the rhythm of a day organized around the tides rather than the clock all of these are the ingredients of the most effective form of wellness there is.

Vard Africa curates **bespoke private wellness programmes** on the South Coast, combining in-villa treatments (Swedish massage, deep tissue, hot stone, Ayurvedic and Swahili-inspired therapies using locally sourced oils and botanicals), professional yoga sessions on private ocean-facing terraces at dawn, guided meditation on the beach at low tide, and nutritional programming with the villa's private chef to ensure that every meal actively contributes to restoration and energy.

For guests seeking a more structured programme, properties including **Kinondo Kwetu** (with its renowned exclusive yoga weeks and cliff-edge yoga shala), **Nomads Beach Resort** (with its Forest Breeze Spa and forest nature programming) and **Almanara** (with the Cloud Nine Health Spa and meditation sessions) offer the infrastructure of established wellness operations within the extraordinary natural setting of the South Coast.

Vard Africa's wellness retreats are fully bespoke duration, modalities, practitioners and scheduling are all designed in advance in consultation with each guest, ensuring that every element of the programme is precisely aligned with what the individual actually needs.

A VISIT TO ROBINSON ISLAND — PRIVATE GLASS BOAT TOUR & SNORKELLING

A Deserted Island Entirely Your Own

Robinson Island a small, uninhabited sandbar and coral outcrop accessible by boat from Diani Beach is one of the South Coast's most beautiful and least-known marine destinations: a pristine, temporary island that emerges fully only at specific tidal states and provides the experience of being entirely alone on a private island in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

Vard Africa arranges **private glass-bottom boat tours** to Robinson Island departing from the beach nearest your villa, the glass-bottom panels of the boat providing a window into the reef world below as the guide navigates the lagoon. At Robinson Island, guests disembark onto the sandbar for a private snorkelling session on the surrounding reef exceptional for fish diversity, coral quality and the possibility of sea turtle

encounters followed by a beach picnic on the island's own sand. The glass-bottom return journey, as the tide rises and the island's extent diminishes, adds a particular quality of poignancy to the experience.

The combination of the glass-bottom boat's underwater window, the deserted island landing and the private snorkelling creates an experience of the Indian Ocean that is genuinely unlike any other available from Diani.

THE EXCLUSIVE SANDBANK DINING EXPERIENCE

Dine on a Deserted Sandbank with Your Own Private Chef

This is, in the Vard Africa Diani portfolio, the experience that guests describe most often as the single most memorable moment of their South Coast stay not because it is technically complex or geographically ambitious, but because it achieves something that the finest restaurants in the world cannot: the combination of extraordinary food, complete privacy, and a setting so beautiful that it renders language temporarily redundant.

At low tide, a sandbank emerges in the Indian Ocean lagoon off Galu or Diani Beach. Vard Africa arrives hours in advance to set it: a long table with linen and crystal in the middle of the sand; candles in storm glass lanterns; fresh flowers from the villa's garden; ice buckets with chilled champagne and wine. Your private chef prepares a **bespoke menu** on a beach kitchen setup fresh lobster, grilled reef fish, king prawns and the day's finest catch, accompanied by locally grown produce, artisan bread and the finest desserts the kitchen can produce.

Your group arrives by boat as the meal is ready. Dinner is served on the sandbank, surrounded by the Indian Ocean, with the reef visible just offshore and the beach and its distant line of palm trees the only visible connection to the world you have temporarily left. The tide is rising; you have perhaps two hours before the sandbank returns to the sea. This is not a limitation but the experience's most powerful element — the knowledge that this setting exists only for tonight, only for you, only now.

PREMIER WHALE SHARK ADVENTURES

Kenya's Most Extraordinary Marine Encounter

Whale Shark Adventures — Kenya's only dedicated whale shark tour operator and the organization that has pioneered marine encounter tourism on the Diani coast since the year 2000 offers what is, in our considered view, one of the most extraordinary wildlife experiences available anywhere in Africa.

The **whale shark** (*Rhincodon typus*) is the largest fish species on earth, reaching up to 40 feet in length. Despite its size, it is a filter feeder entirely harmless to humans, feeding on plankton and tiny fish with its vast, vacuum-cleaner mouth. Swimming alongside a whale shark matching your pace to the gentle pulse of its massive spotted body through the warm Indian Ocean is an experience that consistently reduces grown adults to tears of wonder.

What sets Whale Shark Adventures apart from any comparable operation in East Africa is their use of **microlight spotter aircraft** to locate the sharks from above before guiding their boats to precise positions for encounters. This approach produces encounter rates that are, by their own data, **ten times higher** than those achieved by any other dive centre in Kenya. It also ensures that encounters happen on the whale shark's terms approaching slowly and from a non-threatening angle which produces both better outcomes for the animals and more prolonged, natural encounters for guests.

The **whale shark season** runs from **October through March**. During the same months, **humpback whale sightings** from July to October provide a companion experience of oceanic scale and beauty these extraordinary 40-tonne cetaceans migrate past Diani seasonally, their songs recorded by Whale Shark Adventures' hydrophone equipment and audible to guests on the research vessel. Year-round, the team offers **dolphin encounters, turtle snorkelling** and **marine research participation** guests can join whale shark photo-ID and tagging operations, contributing to the data set of the **East African Whale Shark Trust (EAWST)** that Whale Shark Adventures' director founded in response to the need for conservation research.

This is not just a wildlife encounter. It is participation in the active understanding and protection of one of the ocean's most magnificent creatures. Vard Africa considers it a non-negotiable inclusion for any South Coast stay that falls within the whale shark season, and a deeply rewarding experience at any time of year.

KITEBOARD WATER SPORTS ON THE DIANI COAST

Catch the Wind on Africa's Premier Kitesurfing Beach

Diani Beach and in particular the **Galu Beach** stretch at its southern end has emerged as one of the finest kitesurfing destinations in East Africa, a reputation built on the consistency and strength of the **Kaskazi** (northeast monsoon) and **Kusi** (southeast monsoon) trade winds that provide reliable, moderate-to-strong kitesurfing conditions for extended periods each year.

The **best months for kitesurfing** are **December to March** (Kaskazi winds) and **July to September** (Kusi winds) between 15 and 25 knots of warm, consistent breeze, cross-shore at the ideal angle for the Galu Beach launch sites. The warm, shallow lagoon waters between the beach and the reef provide ideal conditions for learning and intermediate progression; more advanced riders can head beyond the reef into the deep-water swells for wave riding.

Vard Africa arranges **private kitesurfing instruction** for beginners from the first day of learning kite control on the beach through to water starts and basic riding with qualified IKO-certified instructors whose patience and communication skills make the learning curve manageable and the experience enjoyable. For experienced kilters, Vard Africa's guide network can provide conditions briefings, equipment rental, coaching sessions and access to the best sites for the day's wind direction.

The social scene around Galu Beach's kitesurfing zone is one of Diani's most lively and international — a community of visiting riders from across the world who congregate around the beach bars and the sunset, united by the shared pleasure of one of the ocean's most exhilarating sports.

GETTING THERE & LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

Air Access

Ukunda Airport (UKA) — Diani's own domestic airstrip, located just **10 minutes' drive** from the majority of properties in this guide, is the primary and most convenient air access point. Daily scheduled flights operate from **Nairobi's Wilson Airport** with Safarilink, Air Kenya and Fly 540, with a flight time of approximately **55 minutes to 1 hour**. Private charters from Wilson Airport, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and any safari airstrip in Kenya can be arranged for direct delivery to Ukunda. The flight from the Masai Mara, for example, takes approximately 90 minutes making Diani one of the most effortlessly accessible beach destinations from any of Kenya's major safari circuits.

Mombasa International Airport (MBA) — Served by international and regional carriers from Nairobi, the Gulf, the UK and Europe. From Mombasa Airport, Diani is **approximately 1.5 to 2 hours by road** depending on traffic the journey requires crossing Mombasa Island and taking the Likoni ferry to the South Coast, adding a dimension of local colour to what would otherwise be a conventional airport transfer.

7-minute flight option — Mombasa Air Safari operates a 7-minute scheduled service between Mombasa Airport and Ukunda for guests arriving on international flights who want to minimize road transfer time.

Vard Africa Logistical Support

Vard Africa provides comprehensive end-to-end logistical support for all Diani journeys, including:

- Pre-arrival consultation and bespoke itinerary design
- Private charter bookings from any Kenyan airstrip
- Property meet-and-greet at Ukunda Airport
- All road transfers between airport, properties and excursion points
- Activity bookings and on-the-ground coordination with all experience partners
- In-destination 24-hour support via our Nairobi operations team
- Emergency protocol and AMREF/Flying Doctors network access
- Dining reservations at Ali Barbour's Cave, Sails at Almanara and all other South Coast restaurants

Best Time to Visit

- ✓ **January to March** — Finest beach and swimming conditions. Warm, sunny and calm. Whale sharks October–March (partially overlapping). High season — book well in advance.
- ✓ **July to September** — Kusi season. Cooler, with consistent trade winds. Excellent for kitesurfing. Humpback whale season July–October.
- ✓ **October to March** — Whale shark season. The most extraordinary marine encounter period of the year.
- ✓ **December** — High season begins. Festive atmosphere. Book the finest villas six months or more in advance.
- ✓ **April to May** — Long rains. Most properties remain open; some deals available. Not ideal for beach holidays.

Prepared with care and first-hand knowledge by the Vard Africa Destination Curation Team. All information is accurate to April 2026. Property details, availability and pricing are subject to seasonal variation.

Please contact your Vard Africa journey designer for current rates, availability and bespoke itinerary design.