

Malawi SAFARI!

Nat Geo Kids travels to Liwonde National Park in Malawi, southeastern Africa, for an awesome animal adventure...



You're never far from a sunny smile in Malawi!

Malawi meet and greet!

It's no wonder Malawi is nicknamed **The Warm Heart of Africa** – we encountered beaming smiles and friendly greetings everywhere we went, and politeness is a big deal! No matter how much of a hurry you're in, there's always time to ask how someone is. Here's how you do it in **Chichewa**, the local language...

Muli Bwanji? How are you?
Ndiri Bwino, kaya inu?
 Fine thank you, and you?
Zikomo Thank you

Lake Malawi

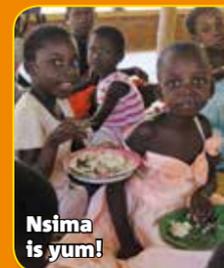
Malawi's most famous landmark is the huge **580km-long Lake Malawi**, the ninth largest lake in the world! More species of fish live there than any other lake – there are **1,000 types of cichlids!**



Malawi's cichlids are beautiful!

Local food

The main dish in Malawi is **Nsima** (pronounced *see-ma*). Made from maize and water, this stodgy comfort food tastes somewhere between mashed potato and polenta. In some parts of Malawi, a stranger snack can be found – **Mbiwa**,



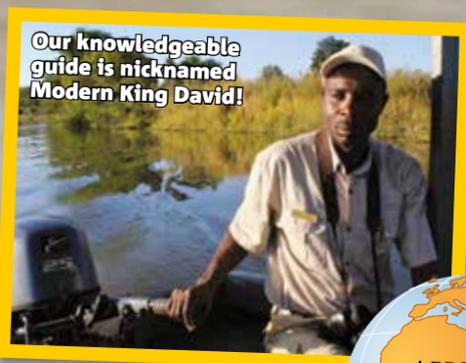
Nsima is yum!

aka **mice!** The rodents are boiled with salt and served on a stick, often sold at the side of the road for passing motorists to scoff!



Mouse for tea, anyone?!

Turn the page to see some more wildlife!



Our knowledgeable guide is nicknamed **Modern King David!**



Malawi
 Liwonde National Park



Male hippos use their **enormous teeth** to fight over territory and win control of a herd of females. The losers live on their own or in all-male herds.



As evening falls, hippos leave the water and spend around five hours a night grazing on grasses. Despite having those honking great gnashers, they're **totally vegetarian**.



When they go to the loo on land, males **spin their tails** to scatter their poo everywhere! They use dung to mark their territories.



Baby hippos can **swim** as soon as they're born, and can even dive underwater to drink their mother's milk. Sometime mums **carry their babies on their backs** in water.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Hippos' hearts beat very slowly in the water – just 20 times per minute compared with 90 times per minute on land.

We've only just arrived at **Mvuu Lodge** on the banks of Malawi's **Shire River** (pronounced *sheer-ree*) but already we can see graceful **impala** frolicking on the floodplains, whiskered **warthogs** grazing and cheeky **vervet monkeys** squabbling in the palm trees above us. "This is all real," laughs our guide, **David Mkandawire**, when he sees our mouths hanging open in disbelief. We climb into his wooden boat and head out onto the river to take a closer look.

Welcome to the wild!

Hundreds of curious red-rimmed eyes watch us from the water as our boat meanders along the wide green Shire – **hippos!** Almost 2,000 of these enormous **1.5-tonne mammals** live here at **Liwonde National Park** and during the day they submerge their bulky bodies to protect their surprisingly sensitive skin from the sun. "People used to think that hippos sweat blood," says David, "but their red colour is from a kind of natural **sunscreen** that oozes out of their skin to stop them burning."

As we cruise past a **pod**, a family group of around ten, a few of the hippos stretch open their jaws and we get a glimpse of their **50cm-long canines!** "They're warning us to stay away," says David, so he carefully manoeuvres the boat to avoid them. But we head straight from one dangerous animal to another – **Nile crocodiles...**

Nile crocodiles

These powerful predators are lurking in the water waiting to pounce! They eat unsuspecting **zebras**, **antelopes**, unattended baby **hippos** or even smaller **crocodiles**. "They drag their prey into the water and drown it, before tearing the flesh into chunks," says David. This is known as the **death roll**. Yikes!

With the ability to **smell blood** from **1km away**, the massive reptiles are scavengers too, though their main diet is **fish**. But the weirdest things crocs eat are **pebbles!** "Every so often crocodiles eat a stone to help them grind down the bones and horns they consume," explains David. Clever!

During droughts, big crocodiles can go for **two years** without eating! They survive using energy stored as fat in their tail.



Crocodile eggs that are warmer produce **male crocs**, whereas **cooler** eggs turn into **females**. The little babies may live to be over **100!**



The jaws of crocodiles are so strong they can **chomp bones, horns and terrapin shells!** **Strong stomach acids** help dissolve shell, flesh and bones.