



Global citizenship through Design & Technology

Quirimbas Archipelago and Ibo Island Information Pack



The Quirimbas Archipelago is a string of 32 small islands that stretch for one hundred kilometres off the coast of northern Mozambique. The archipelago is becoming popular with tourists on a luxury budget but for the most part the people of the islands go about their daily business with activities that have sustained the lives of the inhabitants for over a thousand years. Local fisherman cast their nets and lines along hundreds of kilometres of meandering channels and mangrove lagoons and Arab style dhows still wind their way around the coast. Ibo island is one of the larger inhabited islands in the archipelago and is the focus of this pack.

Mozambique is a large and diverse country but the Quirimbas Archipelago has a lot in common with the rest of the country. Mozambique has long been connected with the outside world and Quirimbas inhabitants have been trading with foreign visitors from as early as AD600, when Arab traders established fortified trading posts along the coastline. Via these ports, slaves, gold and ivory were shipped to the Arab world. By the mid- 17th century, after years of resistance the Quirimbas Archipelago was ruled by two Portuguese families and Ibo Island (the main location focused on in this pack) had become the most important trade centre of all the islands. The history of Ibo carries not only the successful and lucrative trading of goods such as textiles and precious minerals but also the exchange of humans as part of the slave trade that continued throughout the 17th and 18th centuries in this area.

Ibo Island still hosts local silversmiths that remain trading in the now crumbling forts and 17th century mansions. Their trade now relies on tourists from the surrounding luxury resorts. Traditional silversmiths hand craft intricate jewellery using ancient Arab techniques and tools. This jewellery is found no-where else in the world.