

MALAWI

THE LIVINGSTONIA TRAIL

2 NIGHTS 3 DAYS – NYIKA NATIONAL PARK

The Livingstonia Trail is by far the most popular hiking trail on Malawi's unique Nyika Plateau, its route running from Chelinda in the heart of the plateau to the famous Livingstonia Mission on the Khondowe plateau on the eastern edge of the plateau overlooking Lake Malawi. This can now be enjoyed as a fully-serviced trail with Central African Wilderness

Nyika is famed for its spectacular views as well as being the only big game Afro-montane area in south central Africa.

It is a wild, untouched and remote upland area with a variety of plains game that can be seen while on the Trail, such as zebra, reedbuck, roan and eland. Red forest duiker and blue monkey are possible sightings in the forest patches.

Included: All meals, park and camping fees, porters, game scout and head guide, all equipment.

Excluded: Drinks, gratuities, prior accommodation at Chelinda and onward accommodation at Livingstonia.

Brief Itinerary

The Livingstonia Trail is a two-night/three-day hike comprising approximately six hours walking per day. The first day traverses the high plateau grasslands as far as the Phata Stream where camp is made.

The second day is a steep descent through the Mwenembwe Forest to the boundary of the Nyika National Park at Chakaka Village.

The third day is along the steep sided North Rumphu valley through Malawian villages where the people eke out an existence from the steep slopes. There is a final ascent to Livingstonia and accommodation either at the Stone House (built in 1903 by Robert Laws, the founder of the mission) or at Lukwe Camp overlooking the Manchewe Falls, the highest waterfalls in Malawi.



Accommodation

This is a real 'wild' camping experience staying in spectacular campsite settings. Accommodation is in trails camps that are situated near rivers; each site has sturdy small tents of approximately 2.2 metres by 1.7 metres wide and 1.2 metres high and eco-friendly latrine services (long drops) and bucket showers provided with water heated over the fire. Drinking water is available throughout the trip from the mountain streams; however once you reach the park boundary on the second day it is not advisable to drink from these. Three wholesome meals a day are provided; the exact menu will depend on time of year and personal preferences.

How difficult is it?

This is a vigorous hike and should only be attempted by people with good fitness levels. Chelinda Camp is at an altitude of 2 400 metres and although the general direction of the hike is downwards from here there is much climbing as well and some of it is steep. The path varies from a well-worn footpath to poorly marked game trails; it is generally firm underfoot but is often uneven. The hike covers about 40 kilometres in 2 ½ days of walking and although the overall trend of the walk is downwards there is also a lot of climbing. Days 1 and 2 will generally have about 6 - 8 hours of walking per day depending on fitness levels but we generally walk slowly, stop a lot for photos, water breaks, meals, etc, and to soak up the scenery. From the last campsite to Livingstonia Mission is about 5 hours with a steepish climb at the end. The paths we use are generally game paths and are quite firm underfoot with some slightly boggy areas around the watercourses. There are occasional options, if the group is keen, to divert a little off the usual path to visit forest patches and viewpoints.

Weather

Weather is variable depending on the season, but it can be chilly at night so we recommend bringing a good quality sleeping bag. More detailed information is available on application.

What will we see en route?

For the first two days and depending on the time of year we expect to see a steady variety of plains game – most notably zebra, reedbuck, roan and eland. The forest patches may yield red forest duiker, and blue monkey and we also hope to see some of the park's elusive leopard and spotted hyaena. Each walk is accompanied by a specialist guide with great knowledge of the route, and the fauna and flora you will encounter. Wildlife seen will vary depending on the time of year but generally the higher grassland around Chelinda always holds the most wildlife so you can expect to see a good numbers of animals on the first day and less and less as you walk towards the edges of the plateau.

Water

We replenish our water supply from streams on the grassland - these provide, cool, safe potable water. There are occasionally long breaks between water supplies - we will point these out and ensure we always fill up where we can.

Equipment list for this hike

Ideally you should keep personal gear to a minimum. If you are on one of our mobile safaris then depending on your itinerary we may be meeting you with a vehicle at Livingstonia, in which case you may be able to leave gear with us to be reunited with at the end of the hike.

Clothing

The temperature on the hike will vary considerably and at any time of year on the Nyika the nights will be cool to cold as will the early mornings and evenings, while midday temperatures will be warm. However there are no facilities en route for washing clothes so it is best to have clothes such as good loose tracksuit pants that can both keep you warm yet be easily removed when the day heats up.

Please note that we recommend a pair of good trainers as a back up to the walking boots, in case the boots get wet or muddy on the hike, which is quite likely, so having a dry back up pair of footwear is a good idea.

What must I bring?

- A strong pair of legs!
- Binoculars
- Sun cream and hat
- A head torch
- Light rain gear
- Camera and spare batteries
- A good water bottle
- Stout walking boots
- Tracksuit and warm jacket
- A towel and pillow
- Toiletries



Central African Wilderness Safaris supplies:

- Tents
- Porters
- Bucket showers

A note on luggage

In order to keep the number of porters down to a manageable level we ask that two guests pack their clothes and personal gear into one bag. As you will be departing Chelinda and arriving Livingstonia you may well have more gear than you need for the hike which needs to get to Livingstonia – there are two options for this: For a prearranged fee we can road transfer this gear to Livingstonia for you, or you can personally employ a porter to take your excess gear. Please let us know if you require this service

How to book

If you are planning an extended trip to Malawi including a hike then we strongly recommend that you book this through one of our many excellent travel trade partners in your country of residence. If you contact us on M1@cawsmw.com we can make a recommendation to you.



Departure Dates		
LH1	Start 3 rd August	End 5 th August
LH2	Start 10 th August	End 12 th August
LH3	Start 17 th August	End 19 th August
LH4	Start 24 th August	End 26 th August
LH5	Start 31 st August	End 2 nd September
LH6	Start 7 th September	End 9 th September
LH7	Start 14 th September	End 16 th September
LH8	Start 21 st September	End 23 rd September
LH9	Start 28 th September	End 30 th September
LH10	Start 5 th October	End 7 th October
LH11	Start 12 th October	End 14 th October
LH12	Start 19 th October	End 21 st October

Minimum group size – 4

Maximum group size - 8

Please note that we are happy to quote on smaller or larger groups on request and also on different dates if these above do not suit.

Cost per person sharing: US \$500

This includes: All meals, services of guides and porters, park fees

This excludes: Drinks and gratuities