

Pongwe Beach Hotel

Zanzibar

Set over on the north eastern coastline of Zanzibar, Pongwe Beach Hotel is a small hotel that consists of 18 rooms set in small cottages, 2 rooms to each cottage (so clients are sharing a wall). Most rooms have views of the beach and sea beyond.

Run by Val, who learnt his trade in the large hotels of London, this hotel aims at the 3 star price bracket. The food is good without being overly complex, and the service is equally as good.

The beach itself is a beautiful little cove that is sheltered on both sides by a small coral outcrop, and, as the hotels owns the land around it as well, there are no hawkers on the beach at all.

The setting is without doubt beautiful and although Pongwe's activities and facilities are somewhat limited the lodge has its own traditional wooden long boat that provides the opportunity to go fishing. They can also organise snorkeling out at Mnemba Atoll where you will find many coral species and marine life; and at Kizimkazi where sharks, dolphins and turtles can be found. Scuba diving can be arranged with a local hotel whether it be a day dive or a PADI open water course. Sun set cruises can also be arranged and a couple of tables are set out on the beach for dinner each night (arrange this as soon as you arrive or else you will miss out!). There is now a small swimming pool that was built in 2006.



- 18 simple but well positioned en-suite semi-detached cottages.
- Small and shallow but beautiful Pool.
- There is no watersports centre as such but the hotel does have a stunt kite, kayaks, and snorkeling equipment.

Our View

For those of us who want an economical beach break Pongwe is a good option. However Zanzibar's product has diversified recently and there are new similarly priced lodges on the scene that have raised the bar (on site spa's, air con and great dive centres are now the norm!). We also find that for those of us with itchy feet, Pongwe is just too remote...the snorkeling and dive trips take at least an hour in a car each way! Yes it has a good reputation and yes the beach is good...but we question whether the personal service and overall standards that made the lodge famous are as good as they used to be. Be under no misunderstanding, this is a self confessed 3* hotel that can let down someone wanting to end their honeymoon in style.