

# MAIN CITY OF ZANZIBAR IS A FLOURISHING HOLIDAY DESTINATION



In 2004, the old fort of Stone Town, capital of Zanzibar, became a tourist attraction, a free space populated by street vendors. Since then its popularity has been growing and today it is a well-known holiday destination.

Zanzibar, an archipelago formed by two islands off the coast of Tanzania, attracts a growing number of visitors, including Muslims. Stone Town's population is 95% Muslim and while the locals are very conservative, **the city is well known for its economic modernity**. Many public places now welcome the visitors with colorful shops, bazaars, and other attractions, which benefit greatly to the city's economy which in turn relies heavily on the sector.

Stone Town, a UNESCO site, is a former capital of the Zanzibar Sultanate, and a center of the spice trade as well as the slave trade in the 19th century. Today it is the seat of local government. Visitors admire palaces and Arab mansions along the twisting streets of the port city. The Old Fort, built in the 1700s to fend off the Portuguese, now hosts local performances, a café and an art gallery.

The boom of tourism in Stone Town however has had a negative impact on local women. While in the past there were beaches and parks reserved only for women, places where they could meet or even play sports like in the case of the old fort, today most of these sites have been turned to commercial areas. **Local women, as a consequence, were pushed out of the city center** to the point that the visitors are often surprised to find out that there are no females in the streets.

In reaction to this trend, a team of engineers called Reclaim Women's Space create projects to return part of the social needs of women to the city impacted by tourism.

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