

THE POWER ISSUE

THE PLACES, PEOPLE, AND IDEAS THAT SHAPE TRAVEL NOW

Condé Nast Traveler

VEGAS,
BABY!
24-PAGE
PULLOUT
GUIDE

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

SEPTEMBER 2008

ULTIMATE TUSCANY

44 Top Towns, Hotels,
Restaurants & More

CARIBBEAN

Gorgeous Grenada

AMERICA

Best of the Southwest

AFRICA'S

Comeback Country

2008 WORLD SAVERS AWARDS

FEEL-GOOD TRAVEL

38 Socially Responsible
Hotels, Airlines, Cruise Lines,
and Tour Operators

PLUS:

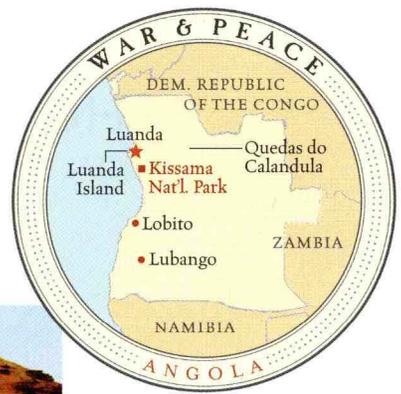
JEFFREY SACHS—THE POWER OF ONE

« THE QUIET AMERICAN
Matt Damon's Remarkable Mission

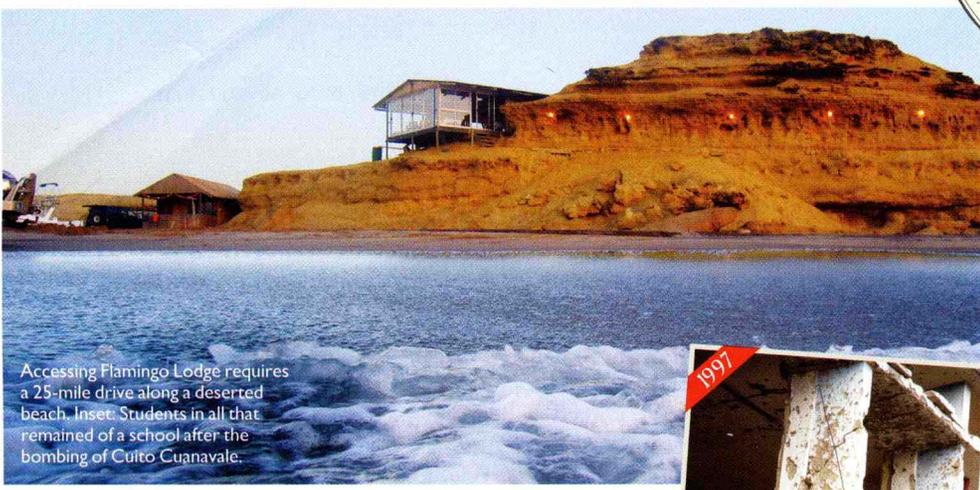


ANGOLA

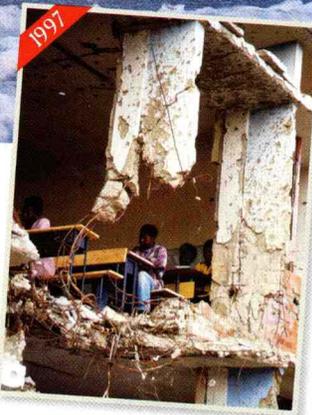
INVESTMENT IN CRUCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND *plans for a massive new game park* THE SIZE OF ITALY SPUR HOPES FOR A SURGE IN TOURISM



WILDLIFE
CULTURE
ADVENTURE



Accessing Flamingo Lodge requires a 25-mile drive along a deserted beach. Inset: Students in all that remained of a school after the bombing of Cuito Cuanavale.



ONLY SIX YEARS have passed since Angola emerged from almost three decades of a brutal civil war that decimated its infrastructure and killed as many as 500,000. Now the government is making significant efforts to bolster tourism by partnering with aid organizations to remove land mines, rebuild bridges, open roads, and invest in construction countrywide—5 new hotels opened last year and 12 more are currently being built. Private investors are spending \$100 million for the construction of mid-range and upscale hotels in Huila province in preparation for the African Cup of Nations (the continent's main soccer competition), to be held there in 2010, and the international airport in the capital city of Luanda is slated for

completion in 2012. Even a contemporary art museum is planned for Luanda. Perhaps most encouraging, authorities are in the process of streamlining the visa application procedure so that visitors will no longer have to wait weeks or months for the document; the speedier service will be available within the next three years.

"Angola is the destination that the majority of my clients are interested in," says Jim Louth, president of U.K.-based Undiscovered Destinations, whose Angolan itineraries include quad biking amid sandstone canyons, parasailing over desert coastlines, and exploring the indigenous Himba's villages. Among the other chief attractions of this sprawling southern African country are colonial Portuguese architecture (particularly in Lubango, which was largely unaffected by the war); Quedas do Calandula, Africa's largest waterfall after Victoria; rain

forests; diamond-dust beaches; and a dune-strewn desert coastline. For years, South Africans have been driving north, enticed by the excellent deep-sea fishing off the Angolan coast. Inland, the wildlife populations—

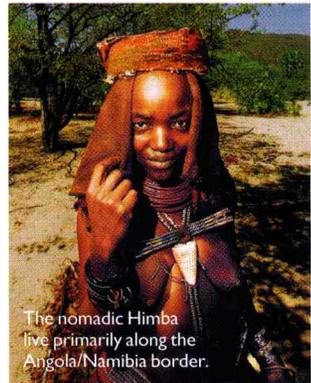
wiped out by poaching during the war—are again thriving. Indeed, one of the largest translocations of game in history occurred in Angola in 2001: 36 elephants as well as zebras, ostriches, wildebeests, and giraffes were flown from Botswana and South Africa to Angola's 2.5-million-acre Kissama National Park, two hours south of Luanda. **Vance Martin, president of the Colorado-based Wild Foundation, which assisted with the translocation, cautions that while game in Kissama is flourishing, "don't go expecting to see wildlife every day. Angola—and its wildlife—are rebounding but still in the recovery stage."**

Arguably the greatest tourism feat since the end of the Angolan civil war—still only a vision—is the proposed Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA), which will span a portion of Africa roughly the size of Italy. The joint conservation area will bridge the borders of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, giving the continent's largest elephant population roaming grounds free from the threat of culling. KAZA will include a sizable

portion of Angola's Moxico and Cuan-do Cubango provinces, both hard hit by the war. Peace Parks Foundation, the conservation organization overseeing the project, says that KAZA could be a reality by 2010. If the park is successful, it will have far-reaching implications for Angolan tourism. "Angola today is where Vietnam and Cambodia were in 1990," says Louth. "Those countries are now mainstream. Angola's time will come. It is coming, now."

On the Ground: Many Angolan hotels are difficult to contact from the States. Your best bet is to book through a tour operator such as **Undiscovered Destinations** (44-191-296-2674; undiscovered-destinations.com) or **Angolan Adventure Safaris** (27-21-462-6104; aasafaris.com). Rooms at the following can be obtained through these and other operators. **Kwanza Tarpon Lodge**, 40 miles south of Luanda, has ten riverside bungalows on stilts (doubles, \$320-\$500). At the **Hotel Terminus**, in the port city of Lobito, all 21 rooms face the beach (doubles, \$440-\$480). Built into sandstone cliffs, **Flamingo Lodge** and its seven rustic bungalows are on the edge of the Namib Desert, facing the Atlantic (doubles, \$260-\$300). A cluster of thatched-roof cottages, the **Somitoto Hotel** is in the countryside on the outskirts of Lubango (doubles, \$80).

Kristan Schiller is a New York-based reporter.



The nomadic Himba live primarily along the Angola/Namibia border.

FACT FILE

Conflict status:
The civil war began in 1975 and ended with a cease-fire agreement in 2002.

Number of tourists in 2000:
51,000

Number of tourists in 2005:
210,000

Ease of travel:
Shoddy roads and military checkpoints make navigating Angola difficult for independent travelers. The Cuando Cubango and Moxico provinces, in the east, are still beset by land mines. Use a tour operator.

TICKER TAPE > THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT PLANS TO HOLD ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR—THE FIRST IN THE COUNTRY SINCE 1992.