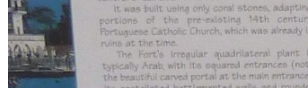




Basement of the Arab Fort (Naime Kongwe)
The Naime Kongwe, also known as the 'Old Fort', was built between 1639 and 1710 by the Omani Arabs of the Buzaidi dynasty, who had gained control of Zanzibar in 1698.



The tower of the House of Wonders
The imposing wooden tower was added to the original building at the beginning of the 19th century, replacing the nearby light-house that was seriously damaged by the British bombardment of 27 August 1896.

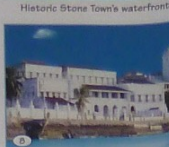
(see overview for more information)

Carved portal of the House of Wonders
shown in the picture above, is a detail of just one of the several sumptuously carved portals which can be admired within and outside the House of Wonders.

They are all original, quite impressive and definitely worthy of a close look. Notice the exquisite hand carved details and decorations which make each portal unique and among the best examples on the whole of Zanzibar.

Made of selected and precious hand woods, all 15 of the portals in the House of Wonders have a semicircular lintel (see overview for more information)

Historic Stone Town's waterfront



A view of the People's Palace

The actual Palace, as we see it today, is only about a century old, and was in fact built upon the ashes of the former Sultan's Palace, the Beit el-Sahli.

Its facade went completely destroyed by the more than 500 shells shot by British warships on 27 August 1896, along with the adjacent Beit el-Ham (which housed the sultan's harem) and the Lighthouse Tower.

The Beit el-Sahli construction was ordered in 1828 by the first sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Said, and was completed around the middle of the 19th century. More imposing and sumptuous than the actual People's Palace, the Beit el-Sahli was more compact and in harmony with the architecture of the other edifices along the waterfront, the facades of which gave an impression of continuity.

In Arabic, Beit el-Sahli literally means the 'House of the Coast', and from the same term (sahli) derives the modern word 'swahili', referred to the 'people of the coast' and to their culture.

(see overview for more information)

The Old Dispensary in 1994

The 19th-century Dispensary, known today as **Stone Town Cultural Centre**, is certainly one of the most characteristic buildings of the Archipelago, baroque expression of Indian architecture. The double decked balconies of its beautiful facade are finely decorated with carvings and elaborate wooden frames.

It was constructed thanks to the funds donated by a rich Indian merchant, Thania Topan, who personally laid down the first foundation stone in 1897, on the recurrence of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

In those times, Thania Topan was the richest one of the three wealthiest Indians of Zanzibar. Besides many other properties, he owned three large big cargo ships, which used to sail closing the commercial Bombay-Zanzibar-London triangle. Among his many commercial activities, he was trading large amounts of money to other entrepreneurs, such as the notorious slave trader Tippu and to the sultans themselves.

It was thanks to the interests on these credits that Thania Topan had this edifice built as a hospital, donating it to the small Khoja community. At that time it was known as **Nasur Muhammad Dispensary**.

In 1992 the Aga Khan Trust for Culture foundation started the restoration works, which were completed in 1996.

Balcony in Indian style

Besides the Arab influence, the architecture of Indian origin is strongly present in Zanzibar. Stone Town, and can be easily admired on several facades decorated with wooden ornate carvings, festoons and carved balustrades.

A jahazi on her way to Dar es-Salaam

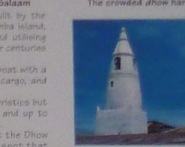
Zanzibar's local boats are still built by the skilled carpenters of Nungwi or Pemba island, making use of local handiwork and utilizing ancient techniques handed down for centuries from father to son.

A jahazi is a big belled sailing boat with a vertical prow, used exclusively for cargo, and can reach considerable size.

A dhow has the same characteristics but can have an oceanic design and up to ten masts rising high above the sails.

They can both be still seen at the Dhow Harbour (15), a fantastic spot that brings visitors back to the past centuries.

The crowded dhow harbour at 10

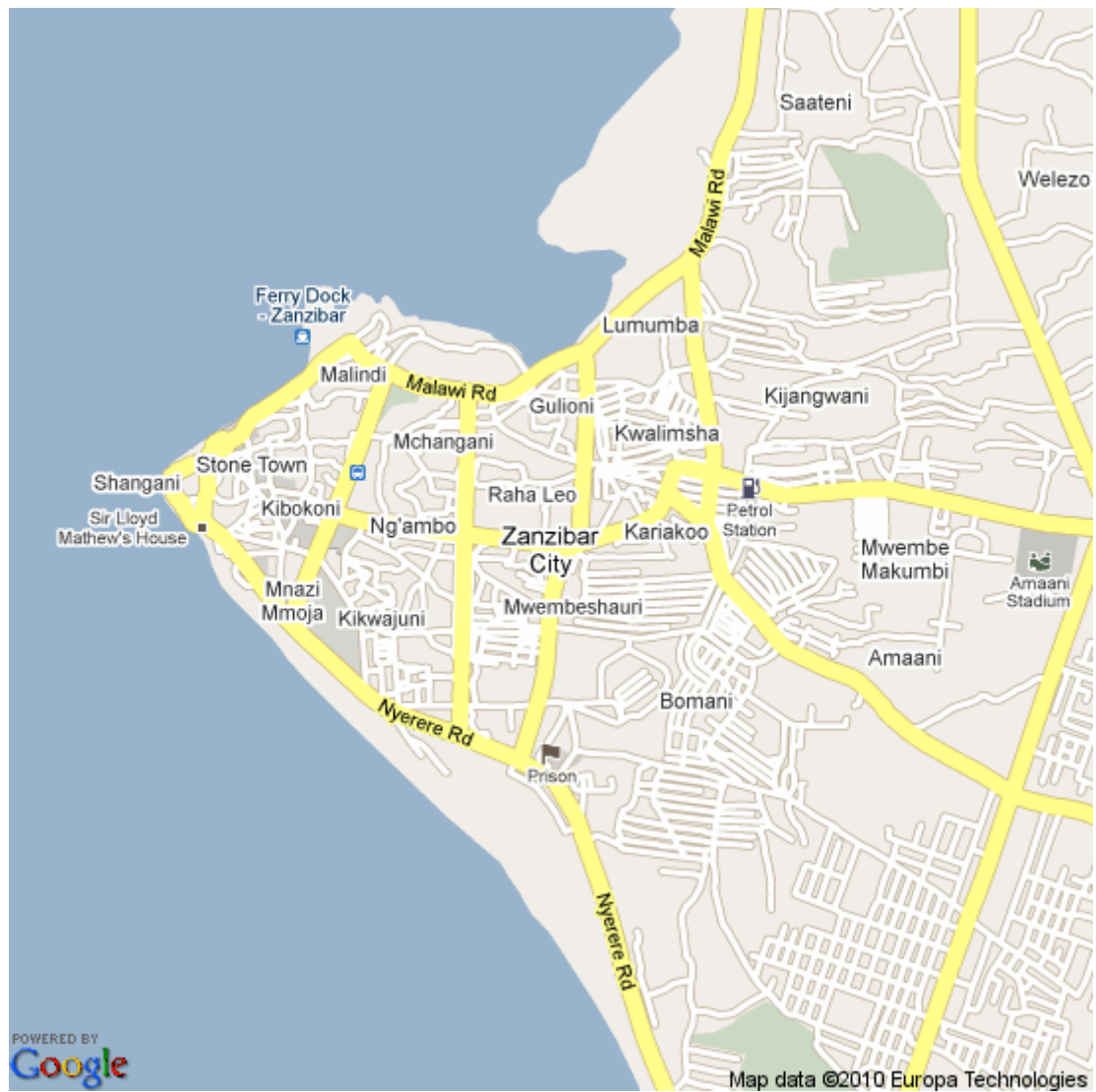


The ancient minaret of the Bahari

The Bahari Mosque was built in 18 the pre-existing (much older) minaret quite rare in Tanzania is visible and the Bahari Mosque of Chale Chale.

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ARCHIPELAGO OF ZANZIBAR - UNGUJA ISLAND

