

# Enahara

## What is Enahara?

Enahara, or eNaharra, is an indigenous language in northern **Mozambique**. Primarily found in coastal areas, Enahara forms part of the country's Bantu language family, which includes Makonde, Yao, Ndau, Chwabo, Xangana, Tswa and Chopi, amongst many others members of the same dialectic group.

Although not as widespread as other dialects and variants, Enahara still has upwards of 500,000 speakers.

## What is Makhuwa?

Enahara also goes by the name Makhuwa-Enahara and is a variant of the broader Makhuwa (also spelled Emakhuwa, Makua and Macua) group.

Makhuwa is not a single language but rather a collection of closely related tongues, such as Echirima, Esankaci, Enyara, Emwaja, Makhuwa-Meetto and Makhuwa-Shirima.

Approximately six million people speak Makhuwa and many of its speakers live north of the **Zambezi River**.

Central Makhuwa (otherwise known as Makhuwa-Makhuwana) is the most well-known version of Makhuwa. Found in **Nampula Province**, this version has the largest number of speakers and acts as the region's lingua franca.

But the language's reach does not stop there. Looking further afield shows the remarkable scale and breadth of Makhuwa. The entire language family, with its countless variants, is **Mozambique's** largest indigenous linguistic group.



## Where is Enahara spoken?

Enahara is prevalent in the province of **Nampula** and the coastal regions of **northern Mozambique**. The language commands its fair share of attention.

For many, Enahara's epicentre is **Ilha de Moçambique**, from which the language stretches north to **Memba** and **Nacala**, and reaches as far south as **Mogincual** and **Angoche**. Visitors will also find many Enahara speakers inland, in places like **Lumbo** and the city of **Nampula**, otherwise known as the 'Capital of the North'.

Given Enahara's maritime links and proximity to major trade routes, it comes as no surprise that the language borrows heavily from Swahili and Arabic.



## Key grammar points

- **Tone** Enahara is tonal, with high and low tones that mark different meanings, distinguish between grammatical forms, such as tenses, and conjugate the conjoint/disjoint verb form that focuses on different parts of a sentence and the information it communicates
- **Subject-verb agreement** Enahara conjugates verbs with a prefix that marks the subject based on the noun class
- **Noun classes** The language has more than 10 noun classes split into categories that pair singular and plural forms, indicate tense and aspect and determine the agreement between nouns and adjectives, verbs and pronouns
- **Verb forms** Enahara uses disjoint or conjoint forms based on the words that follow verbs. The conjoint form requires a post-verbal element, such as an object, and cannot end a sentence. The disjoint form, meanwhile, focuses on the verb itself, meaning it can end the sentence, and is also used when the verb stands alone or an unrelated element follows it

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- **Sentence structure** Enahara tends to follow the subject-verb-object [SVO] order for neutral sentences but is also highly flexible, meaning topic and focus dictate the order of words. For instance, if the subject is new information and not the topic, it follows the verb. There are also references to cleft sentences, doubled infinitives, topic doubling, verbal copulas, predicative lowering and other similarly complicated-sounding things, but we didn't really learn enough of the language to understand how, why, when or where those things would come into play
- **Negation** Achieved by marking the verb with a negative marker in place of a positive subject prefix



## Ilha de Moçambique

One of Enahara's homes is the island of **Ilha de Moçambique**, just off the region's east coast.

Despite its size, **Ilha** held much influence. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was the capital of **Portuguese East Africa** and was a pivotal trade hub.

Over the years, **Ilha** welcomed Goan, Arabic, Swahili, Portuguese and French merchants to its shores. Each guest left something of themselves behind, sometimes in the form of words that blended into Enahara. The island absorbed all such tangible and intangible influences and became a striking place, shown by its Portuguese colonial-era buildings, splendid mosques and grand churches.

The usual goods – gold, timber, spices and so on – passed through **Ilha**. But the island also played a far grimmer role in the slave trade, the ghosts of which temper the island's otherwise calm air and bucolic fibres.

Visitors approach **Ilha** from the mainland at **Lumbo** via the **N105**. They then cross the **Daraja la Kisiwa cha Msumbiji** bridge, which connects to the island. This bridge is long and thin, with no cover against the elements.

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And as they walk, bombarded by heat from the sun overhead, the visitors' focus lands on the small, unassuming island awaiting them. What might they see as they wander around **Ilha de Moçambique**?

The island's southern tip is close to where the bridge meets the island. To reach this point, skirt the cemetery to **Brasão Português**, the historic landmark on the water's edge.

From here, scan the horizon to see **Fortim de São Lourenço**, a 17th-century Portuguese fortlet perched on an isolated islet. This small fort, triangular and bastioned, once protected the island's harbour.

Even now, sitting calmly in the shimmering water, the fort has a stern bearing that tells of colonial control. The viewpoint, though, is a relaxing place, where people come to watch the world go by. It is here that many visitors will hear their first murmurs of Enahara, softly lilting and carried by the breeze.

Follow this breeze north up **Ave 25 do Juhno**, past **Praça da Ilha**, to **Monumento aos Heróis Moçambicanos**.

The monument is a simple, noble affair, designed for quiet reflection. It sits at the end

of a red brick path, flanked by a pair of anchors and resting 'neath a pattern that seems to show the rising of the sun.

This design is perhaps symbolic. The memorial honours **Mozambique's** battle for independence from Portuguese colonial rule, marking the dawn of a new life for the country. All around are remnants of this same colonial architecture. But the passage of time has faded and weathered them, as if to say their influence continues to dwindle.

Many of the island's residents live in **Makuti Town**, in the south of **Ilha. Makuti** shows a divide between coloniser and colonised. To the north, the domain of the colonists, structures have an imposing stone stature. But in places like **Makuti**, the homes and buildings have traditional African and Arab designs, reflective of Ilha's life as a cultural melting pot, when an influx of crafts and styles took root on the island. Rather than stone, **Makuti's** style comes in the more modest form of wooden poles, thatched roofs, palm leaves and mangrove sticks.

There are many homes here, creating a marked sense of community. Amongst the markets and backstreets, Enahara shares the buzz of daily life in **Ilha**, rather

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than Portuguese, the official language.

There is much to see on Ilha, and little space to write about it. Each visitor will find something distinct to them. Those who follow the eastern coast road will soon reach **Igreja de Santo Antonio**.

This church, with its few attendant palms and isolated, windswept air, rests on a small peninsula. There it remains, as though it is the only building left standing after an episode of colossal ruin shattered the entire world. But that is a story for another time.

Heading north from the church, follow the eastern, wide-open **Rua dos Combatentes to Fort São Sebastião**, Ilha's northern tip. The fort, with its cannons and squat walls, maintains a vigil overlooking the water.

Time, though, has taken its toll. The walls are somewhat faded and overgrown with moss, and the cannons long since empty. A melancholy floats here, fed by the ghosts of what once was.

To escape this feeling, veer onto **Ave Dos Continuadores** and follow the road to **Estátua Vasco de Gama**.

This statue of the Portuguese navigator adds further layers to **Ilha's** story. His fleet landed on the island in 1498. And when de Gama spent time on the island, **Ilha's** strategic importance soon became clear, and the island took on a new role as a port of call on the region's trade routes.

The bronzed de Gama still watches on as dhow boats split the water, and fisherfolk push themselves and their vessels into the ocean, aided by a cool breeze.

Other details stir the senses on **Ilha**. The **Garden of Memory**, on **Rua dos Trabalhadores**, evokes a pocket of calm over which float the calls to prayer from nearby **Mesquita Central**, the mosque with vibrant green walls and an understated minaret tower.

All around, the island sits as though in a vacuum, at once faded and serene, which hints at **Ilha's** lengthy, dense story.



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And as the visitor casts a glance further afield, they may note that **Ilha** sits in a bubble through which time passes, but ever so slowly. It is here that the language comes to the fore, heard through snatches of passing conversation. The kinetic, warm rhythm reflects its island setting and tells the visitor that centuries of sun-baked history remain encoded within the lilt of Enahara.



## Glossary\*

**I** Miano

**You** Vano

**He / She / It** Ala

**Yes** Ayo

**No** Nada

**Peace / Hello** Salama

**Hello, how are you?** Musali  
bwanji? / Mwahala?

**I'm fine** Kwahala

**Thank you** Koshukuru / Shukrani

**Goodbye** Korua

**What is your name?** Nzina nanyu  
ndani?

**My name is...** Nzinanakalti...

**Nice to meet you** Eukitzivela /  
Oodsuwela

**Good morning** Mosheleliwa

**Good afternoon** Mashkomulu

**Good evening** Mokeleliwa

**Where are you going?** Munrowa  
veni?

**Where?** Nikuve?

**How much?** Enhalakavi?

**Sorry** Okiswamiki

**Bald** Ntari

**I am bald** Miano kiana ntari

**I like to learn** Miano okisivela  
otsuwela

**I like your nose** Miano okisivela  
epulau

\*Incomplete but well-meaning