

## Facts on Malawi



- the red symbolises the bloodshed by the Malawian people in the fight for independence from the British
- the black symbolises the black people of Malawi
- The green symbolises agriculture which is a major aspect of life for any Malawian.
- The rising sun symbolises the hope for the future of Africa.
- It is a landlocked country in southern Africa surrounded by Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania.
- Before its independence it was known as Nyasaland.
- Its current president is Bingu wa mutharika
- The currency is Malawian Kwacha and there are approximately 250MK to a pound
- The foreign exchange in Malawi is poor and they are often desperate for british pounds and US dollars.
- Often people have to queue for miles for petrol as there are often petrol shortages.
- The main languages are English and Chichewa. English is often only spoken among educated people as it is taught at primary school.
- The main religions are Christian (79.9%) muslim (12.8%) other (3%) and none (4%)

## Health care in Malawi

- There are currently 265 doctors in Malawi. This is 2 per 100000 population. This is an increase of 222 since 2004 when there were only 43. Despite the increase in number it is still extremely difficult to find doctors, nurses and midwives.
- HIV, TB and Malaria are the most common diseases in Malawi.
- Cancer, heart disease and lung problems are not very common in Malawi
- Life expectancy in Malawi for men is 56 years and women it is 57
- Over 26000 children are infected with HIV through mother to child transmission every year.
- 58% of households sleep with mosquito nets after the ministry of health distributed 6 million nets to prevent malaria.

## Food in malawi

- nsima is the staple food, it is made of maize flour or cassava and has the consistency of dough with a bland taste.
- Rice and potato is also eaten often but are considered luxuries.
- Cassava is a starchy root vegetable found all over Malawi
- Papaya, mango, banana and guava are often seen growing on the trees.
- Chambo is a type of fish found only in lake Malawi.
- Meat is not often eaten, instead beans and eggs are. However, the meat often eaten in Malawi is chicken, goat and beef.
- Malawians consider food essential to hospitality and go out of their way to feed a guest, even if they have very little to offer. At dinner time, the guest is shown an extra courtesy by being served first, followed by the man of the house, then the women and finally the children. As *nsima* is eaten with the hands, everyone washes in a communal bowl before and after the meal. Once again, the guest washes first and so on. Guests will often be encouraged to carry on eating until they are full. Custom dictates that a guest be served so much food that he can't finish everything on his plate!