

Your

Wedding Guide

From The Makokola Retreat

2026



Exchange your vows in our away-from-it-all retreat on Lake Malawi. Leave the first footprints of your new life together in the sand of our palm-fringed private beach. As the sun begins to set, the warmth of the day gently surrenders to the magical sunset as you say “I do”. Superb settings, eclectic cuisine and personalised service await you at The Makokola Retreat.

Function Areas and Settings

The Makokola Retreat is your ultimate romantic setting for weddings. Our many beautiful spaces give you flexibility of choice for any type of event. Imagine your wedding ceremony amongst vibrant indigenous gardens or our pristine beach, with a full view of Lake Malawi as your perfect surrounding. While various function areas are also ideal for receptions or intimate dinner parties. Please contact our wedding planner for complete details.

Alternative locations for ceremony and / or reception

Mlambe Golf Course

Within the property, we also have the Mlambe Golf Course; which is a par 3, 9 hole course rolling through an indigenous baobab tree forest with challenging water features. Mlambe means baobab in the local language hence the name. The golf course is the home of many beautiful birds and small mammals which are commonly seen and promises a unique venue for a small wedding or reception.

Coffee Lounge

Exchange vows in the romantic serenity of this 'floating' open lounge, built in the middle of our garden/pool area overlooking the lake. The Coffee lounge, styled after a thatched-roof traditional African hut with a prominent water theme, is a dream location for intimate wedding ceremonies or dinners with seating arranged within or around its perimeter. Also an excellent location for rainy days, during our 'Green Season'.

Lake Suite Section

Our lake suite section was completed in July 2018 and the wing opened with a wedding. This lake suite resident exclusive area boasts various corners to make use of for the perfect ceremony along with the El Chiringuito deck next to the lake suite infinity pool.

Advance booking and space confirmation

To avoid disappointment, we recommend booking 9 to 12 months in advance; however, we can sometimes accommodate shorter or longer notice. For any wedding event, the entire hotel will be booked exclusively for you. For further information, please refer to our room block policy attached.

Reserve a visit to our Retreat or contact Wedding Specialist

It is crucial to discuss in detail your wedding plans directly with our wedding specialist at least 6 months prior to the event. We strongly recommend that you come to visit us at The Makokola Retreat; we will then take the opportunity to show you around the property and answer any questions. Once, all details are discussed and decisions are made, we will send you a 'wedding summary' in order for you to pay a deposit according to the size of your wedding (this excludes any accommodation) that will guarantee your special day. To finalise, a wedding contract with all specifications will be provided for you to read and sign, as a mutual agreement. In the eventuality, that you are unable to come to the Retreat, then arrangements must be done to meet our specialist in Lilongwe or contact her directly by phone in the eventuality that you live abroad.

Cancellation policy

In the unfortunate event that a wedding ceremony or wedding event must be cancelled, a portion of the deposit may be retained as a cancellation fee, based on the time of cancellation.

180 days – 100% of deposit paid will be returned (minus \$1000 non-refundable)

180 to 90 days – 50% of deposit paid will be returned (minus \$1000 non-refundable)

90 to 0 days – 0% of deposit paid will be returned

For guest room cancellations follow standard our room cancellation policies.

Religious Ceremonies and Blessings

For religious ceremonies or blessings we can suggest a few choices, Mangochi district offers a number of typical African Roman Catholic Churches, they are very picturesque and make a wonderful setting for an African wedding. Donation to be left for the religious service is up to the customer.

We can also organize Roman Catholic wedding ceremonies in our gardens with a large floral arch and scattering of flower petals in the aisle. Permission from the parish priest is needed and it is usually granted after having inspected the site. Furthermore, we can contact other religious pastors such as Methodist, Anglican, and other denominations.

The Local Authority, the District Commissioner (DC) can officiate the Civil Ceremony. For this, bands have to be posted to the DC's office 3 weeks before the wedding. Birth certificates of both to be bride and groom and full passport details are needed. The Makokola Retreat will do all the paper work and, organize for the DC to come to the retreat and celebrate the ceremony. The DC usually stays on for the reception.

Wedding Planning

The Makokola Retreat is committed to ease the worries of planning your wedding. If you wish to custom-design your occasion, our wedding planner is ready to offer expert assistance – allowing you to anticipate your special day with pleasure and confidence. Whether you dream of a grand wedding or an intimate gathering, we invite you to explore all the possibilities...

Wedding Specialist

A Makokola on-site expert will work with you to reserve your dates, plan the schedule of events, and coordinate all food and beverage details, from menu design to linens, as well as assist with other aspects of your wedding experience at the Retreat.

Period of the year and time of the day

Malawi is blessed with an exceptional climate. The Retreat enjoys comfortably warm temperatures with Great Rift Valley breezes and relatively low humidity from April to October. The rainy season, from November to March, brings short bursts of rain interspersed with brilliant sunshine, warmer temperatures and higher humidity.

We organize weddings all year round; however the dry months from April to October are considered to be the best choice. Due to unpredictable weather during the rainy season, we do not recommend months of December to end of March. In the eventuality, you choose the rainy months, we are not responsible for having to change locations at the last minute for everyone's convenience. Weddings are more successful in the afternoon going onto the evenings and this is what we suggest, it is also the best time for photographs and for the comfort of all guests.

Decorations and Flowers

Our in-house florist will be pleased to make arrangements with local flowers and plants for both reception and the ceremony trying our best to follow themes and matching decor for your event setting. Bride's Bouquet, Bridesmaid's bouquet and Groom's boutonniere will be designed with local flowers. In case, you wish to use local roses there is a supplement of \$5.00 per bunch of twenty roses. If you wish to use imported flowers, we would normally ask you to personally bring them or an extra charge will be added.

Regarding the decor, The Makokola Retreat offers a wide range of local linens, chair covers, cutlery, china and glassware for all banquet tables. The main function areas and dance floor are lit and decorated with special lighting system, candles and lanterns.

Public areas available for pictures

The Retreat is well-known for its beautiful green lush gardens; which can be the perfect background for your wedding pictures. Please consult our wedding specialist for more details.

Photographer and videographer must be contacted by the bride and groom directly. We can also suggest a professional photographer but we do ask to let us know in time and the price needs to be negotiated.

Wedding Cakes

Our pastry chef will be delighted to create an Italian wedding cake; which is a light sponge cake filled with a mixture of liquor marinated fruit salad or a liquor marinated fruits of the forest salad, bounded and covered with fresh cream and decorated elegantly with fresh flowers. A simple alternative to our traditional wedding cake is a profiterole pyramid, a chocolate gateau or a classical mille-feuille. If an English wedding cake is wanted we need to order it from outside and the cost will have to be negotiated. Any other special cakes must be discussed directly with our wedding specialist.

Menu creations

We offer 4 menu options, catering for either buffet or plated menu, to choose from. Or, we can completely custom-design a menu for you, along with your choice of beverages. Whatever the wedding event, from an intimate family brunch to a sophisticated buffet, our team will assist you from planning to execution.

Menu – Option One

Cocktails

1 Alcoholic Cocktail

1 Non Alcoholic Cocktail

3 Home made Cordials

Nuts and Crisps

4 Snacks

Hot Starter

1 soup

2 hot starters of your choice

Chilled Starter

4 appetizers – Compound Salad

Main Course

3 main courses of your choice served with seasonal vegetables, potatoes and rice

Dessert

4 desserts of your choice

Malawi Tea & Coffee served with Italian biscotti

Menu – Option Two

Cocktails

2 Alcoholic Cocktails

1 Non Alcoholic Cocktail

3 Home made Cordials

Nuts and Crisps

6 Snacks

Hot Starter

1 soup

2 hot starters of your choice

Chilled Starter

6 appetizers cold + Compound Salads

Main Course

5 main courses of your choice served with seasonal vegetables, potatoes and rice

Dessert

5 desserts of your choice

Malawi Tea & Coffee served with Italian biscotti

Menu – Option Three

Cocktails

3 Alcoholic Cocktails

1 Non Alcoholic Cocktail

3 Home made Cordials

Nuts and Crisps

8 Snacks

Hot Starter

1 soup

3 hot starter of your choice

Chilled Starter

8 salads or cold starters of your choice

Main Course

6 main courses of your choice served with seasonal vegetables, potatoes and rice

Dessert

6 desserts of your choice

Malawi Tea & Coffee served with Italian biscotti

For this type of service the Retreat can cater for a maximum of 250 diners.

Menu – Option Four (Plated Menu)

1 cold starter*

1 soup*

1 fish dish*

1 main course with 3 side dishes *

1 dessert*

Malawi Tea & Coffee served with Italian biscotti

*All of your choice

For this type of service the Retreat can cater for a maximum of 50 diners.

Please note there will be an extra charge for any special delicacies that may have to be imported. The Makokola Retreat prides itself on gardening creativity, and offers an extensive array of organic fruits and vegetables that are grown on the property. Also the fish served daily is fresh from the lake.

Bar Beverage Service

The Makokola Retreat will be able to provide all your beverage requirements to suit the occasion depending on your budget.

Host Bar

For groups where the host will pay for a specific amount of guests beverages. This means that once the limit has been reached, the wedding guests are responsible for paying their own drinks.

Open Bar

For groups where the host will pay for all the guests beverages consumed without limit.

Corkage Bar (for dinner only)

The hotel will allow you to bring in your own special dinner wine with an additional corkage fee per bottle. However, no other alcoholic drinks are permitted.

The Retreat's wine list comprises a selection of South African red, white, rosé and sparkling wines. However, should you prefer to bring your own wines this would be acceptable with a corkage fee of \$10.00 per bottle that will be automatically charged to your final bar bill.

We require your choice of drinks, wines and amount of host bar at least (60) day prior to your event so that we may be assured of your selection.

NOTE: Cash Bar only for cocktail time and/or dinner time is not accepted. This type of service will only be available after dinner hours or once the host bar has been exhausted.

Music and entertainment

At your request, we can provide a list of recommended options according to your wedding needs.

Reception Essentials

Whatever the size of your party, here are a few ideas of four important categories to think about and discuss with our wedding planner.

Music – Get the party started by selecting your favourite type of music. We recommend a deejay which offers a great musical range but speaking to him/her before the event is suggested in order to cater to your wishes.

Decor – From linens to lightning, we will create that special ambiance for your wedding. Any special theme and colour schemes must be organised with time.

Place cards, table numbers and seating plan – You must choose your own style **and print them before arriving to the retreat**. Our team will be available to help placing them while the set ups are being prepared. In that case, we do ask to please provide us with all the place cards, table numbers and seating plan 2 days in advance and divided into sets according to table plans.

Favours – There are so many ideas for party gifts such as:

- Charitable - Place a handwritten note on each serviette naming a charity to which you've donated.
- Edible – Select a locally produced provision which can be personalised.
- Thematic - Use a wooden carved key holder as the napkin rings.

Please note that we can only supply the board or structure for the seating plan and our staff can help distributing all place cards, table numbers and favours. We do not offer printing services at the retreat.

Spa and beauty services

Arrangements can be made for an outsourced spa therapist to be on site for your special day to relax and get pampered as we know what it means for you to look- your- best on your wedding day. Any hair, beauty (manicures and pedicures) or makeup consultations need to be arranged outside the Retreat.

Bridal room facilities

To make your wedding day more practical, we provide a full standing mirror for the bride, a wedding dress stand to hang and protect the dress from any wrinkles. We also offer electrical extensions, in case you need to plug more than one electrical item at once.

Please, note that we do not offer wedding dress pressing/laundry services at the hotel.

Wedding Package

Let us help you create the perfect beginning of your life together. The Makokola Retreat assures intimate elegance and thoughtful attention in a unique destination. Your wedding package includes:

Personalised services of our wedding specialist.

A complimentary bottle of Sparkling wine in your room

Complimentary upgrade to the next room category, for the wedding night based on availability.

Floral turndown service on the night of the wedding.

Complimentary late check-out at 15h00 for bride and groom room on day of departure.

Special keepsake wedding gift from the Makokola Team.

Group discounted room rates by 10% for family and friends, with a minimum of 30 rooms occupied per night.

Contact Wedding Specialist

To obtain further information or details, reserve your wedding venue or book a room, your options are:

Contact specialist by e-mail:	Alessandra Bizzaro sandra@makokola.com
Phone directly specialist:	+ 265 888830753
Contact reservations department:	+ 265 (0) 1580244 or reservations@makokola.com
Website:	www.makokola.com
Postal Address:	The Makokola Retreat (Club Makokola 1992 Ltd) P.O. 59 Mangochi Malawi

Wedding Costs

ITEMS	SIZE OF GROUP	PRICE	
Decorations / Setup Fee	small medium large extra large	\$2,116.00 \$3,686.00 \$5,256.00 \$6,521.00	
Menu Option 1 Menu Option 2 Menu Option 3 Plated Menu Children Menu	Ages 2-12 years	\$81.00 p/p \$92.00 p/p \$105.00 p/p \$87.00 p/p \$31.00 p/p	Max. 50 pax
Wedding Cake	small medium large extra large	\$291.00 \$374.00 \$500.00 \$690.00	
Choir for ceremony Cultural Dancers Local Acrobats & Band Local DJ		\$316.00 \$483.00 \$374.00 \$2,059.00	
DC / Civil Service		\$305.00	
Flower Bouquets	bride bridesmaid flower pins	\$98.00 \$48.00 \$9.00	each each

Small Wedding 2-50 guests / Medium Wedding 50-100 guests / Large Wedding 100-150 guests Extra Large 150 & plus

Notes:

Our maximum capacity for a wedding at the retreat is 250 guests. This allows all guests to fully enjoy our facilities and services.

Decoration / Setup fee includes the hiring cost of the venue, all the furniture, equipment and materials necessary for the function, labour costs, decorations, etc.

All prices are inclusive of taxes.

Prices are quoted in USD \$ for international guests.

Prices for Malawi Residents are quoted in Malawi Kwacha pegged to USD \$ due to local currency fluctuations. Please check with hotel for current exchange rate.

Agreement to Catering Policies

Booking your function, Deposits and Payments

To confirm your wedding day (reception space + all hotel rooms) a deposit according to the size of the wedding is required along with signing the booking agreement below. Please note that in case of cancellation \$ 1000 from any deposit paid is non-refundable.

Small wedding deposit:	\$2 300
Medium wedding deposit:	\$4 025
Large wedding deposit:	\$5 520
Extra Large wedding deposit:	\$6 900

100% of the estimated balance owing, less deposit paid is due no later than one week prior to your event. Should there be any additional charges incurred over and above the estimate invoice, final payments can be made upon departure.

Decorating and damages

For your additional decorating ideas, prior consent with our wedding specialist is required.

Please be advised that you are responsible for any damages to the function area and property used for the function including ruined linen etc... And should there be any major damages occur you will be billed for replacement costs of such items.

Menus & Wine Selection

Our wide variety of starters, main courses and desserts has been designed to offer you flexibility in creating a menu. Our Executive Chef welcomes the opportunity to create a special menu just for you. We ask that you advise the hotel of your menu and wine selection a minimum of (60) day prior to your event so that we may be assured of your selection. Please advise the wedding coordinator a minimum of (14) days prior to your event if there are any allergy concerns for your guests.

Guaranteed Attendance

A guaranteed number of guests attending your special day is required (14) days prior to the event. If the number is not received, the estimated number of guests at the time of the booking will be taken as the guaranteed number for billing purposes.

Should more than your guaranteed numbers of attendees arrive to the function, we will charge separately for any extra guests. In case of the contrary, we will not reduce number of attendees after you have given us a confirmation 2 weeks prior. We regret any changes or circumstances, however, we supply for the event according to numbers confirmed and our Chef starts with menu planning well in advance.

Prices

Prices quoted are guaranteed for (90) days. Please keep in mind that menus do change as do pricing, labour costs etc... So it is possible that between the time of your initial inquiry and your selection of meals a new menu with new pricing could be in effect.

Food and beverage from outside the hotel

Due to health regulations, The Makokola Retreat does not allow any outside food to be brought in with the exception of wedding cakes.

The hotel does not allow guests to bring their own alcohol into the property under any circumstances.

Outside services and suppliers

The Makokola Retreat needs to be informed of any outside services or suppliers, such as photographer, wedding cake supplier, hairdresser, DJ, babysitting, etc. for such an event. Their full names need to be added to the guests list for permission to enter the property. We take no responsibility in providing equipment, tools, supervision, lodging, meals, etc. to perform their tasks as they will be hired directly by you and are not part of the hotel team.

Function Areas

The Makokola Retreat reserves the right to provide an alternate function area should the guaranteed number of guests differ greatly from the originally expected number. The same applies in case of bad weather; of course changes will be communicated immediately to the bride and groom.

Security

The hotel does not assume liability or responsibility for damage or loss of personal property or equipment left in the function areas. Any valuables must not be left unattended before, during or after the event.

Cancellation Policy

In the event of cancellation, the customer is subject to a charge of 100% of the total value, should the cancellation be less than (90) days from the function date. Refer to cancellation policy in this booklet for more details.

Gratuity

For such events a service gratuity will be applied automatically to your final bill according to the size of your wedding.

Small Wedding	\$242.00
Medium Wedding	\$426.00
Large Wedding	\$604.00
Extra Large Wedding	\$725.00

Important Notice

The contents and prices in this package can change without prior notice.

Please note your acceptance to the above terms & conditions by signing below:

Bride's Signature & Date

Groom's Signature & Date