



UMTALI

and the

MANICA MOUNTAINS

RHODESIA

Rhodesians Worldwide



Top: Umtali's Civic Centre, with the Queen's Hall in the left corner.

Centre: Umtali's Main Street.

Bottom: The Olympic-size public swimming pool.



AUTHORS, poets, world travellers and just ordinary tourists have for decades sung the praises of Umtali, the third-largest town in Rhodesia and the capital and centre of a vast, all-appealing holidayland known as the Manica Mountains.

Its natural endowments enhanced by far-sighted residents, Umtali well deserves its most frequent appellation—"loveliest town in Rhodesia". In recent years visiting industrialists, too, have found beauty there—the beauty of cheap and ample land, power and water, a large, contented labour force, and proximity to a seaport; but that is another story.

It was Evelyn Waugh, who, after a visit a few years ago, wrote in a travel book on Africa that in Umtali "there is neither snow nor sea, but there is everything else" for the holiday-maker. What follows is an attempt to indicate, in brief, some of the things that earn Umtali its "everything".

HOW TO GET THERE

Apart from chartering an aircraft, there are two ways of getting to Umtali—by rail and by road. Two train services a day operate from Salisbury to Umtali, in the morning and at night, and a fast diesel-car service operates on Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Road mileages, as reported by the Automobile Association, are:

From Salisbury	161	Fort Victoria	193
Beira	180	Lusaka	464 (via Chirundu)

THE CLIMATE

Situated at an altitude of 3,450-4,060 ft., Umtali enjoys a pleasant climate for most of the year. Even in the warmest months (October and November) there is generally a cool breeze at night, and the mountains are not far away. Mean average temperatures: maximum 78°, minimum 57°.

WHAT TO DO AND SEE

Kingsley Fairbridge Memorial. At the top of Christmas Pass, some four miles north, on the main Salisbury road, stands one of the most appealing statues in Southern Africa—a bronze of the famous Kingsley Fairbridge as a boy with his African companion and his little dog. Fairbridge roamed these hills as



At Melssetter, with the beautiful Chimanimani Mountains in the distance.

a boy and here first dreamed his dream of child migration that led to the establishment of the Kingsley Fairbridge farm schools in Australia and Canada.

"Umtali Heights". Near the memorial a road climbs through the mountains to a viewpoint named "Umtali Heights," where one can get what is probably the most magnificent views of the town and the beautiful surrounding hills and valleys.

Courtauld Theatre. Every month there is a theatrical performance in this £50,000 theatre by a very talented local group, the Umtali Players. Don't miss a visit, if only to see what is considered one of the most modern and best-equipped "little theatres" in Southern Africa.

Civic Centre. The Centre consists of an impressive municipal administrative block, together with the Courtauld Theatre and the Queen's Hall (seating 650 people, and a gift to the town by Sir Stephen and Lady Courtauld, who have made Umtali their home). The Civic Centre is the pride of Umtali's residents and is well worth visiting. Make a point of seeing the magnificent polygonal, richly-panelled Council Chamber.

Nature Park. Worth a visit is the Murahwa's Hill nature park, a botanical paradise in a setting unequalled in Rhodesia. Three miles out of town.

Museum Houses the historic relics that recalls the early settlers of the Manica Mountains. Among these relics is one of the wagons used by Thomas Moodie's pioneers—to the area known as Gazaland. Another feature is a fine collection of guns and rifles.

Sakubva Township. Model African township. Sakubva, is open to interested visitors.

Sport. There are facilities in Umtali for almost every kind of sport, including badminton, squash, table tennis and jukskei. There are two 18-hole golf courses, and another nine-hole course at Leopard Rock. Vumba. Two bowling clubs welcome visitors. The town's swimming-pool is of Olympic size. For the fisherman, Fern Valley Lake yields bream and bass. Horses can be hired.

Entertainments. Two cinemas in Umtali, hotel dances.



Trout fishing in an Inyanga stream.



Top and centre: Two typical hotels near Umtali.
Bottom: A portion of the Vumba National Park.

RECOMMENDED DRIVES

Vumba, starting 6 miles away and part of Umtali. This is a holiday paradise of forests, mountains, streams, pools and waterfalls. No one should ever drive hurriedly up this broad, winding road, for the views are quite breathtaking and demand enjoyment at leisure. Do not forget to visit the Vumba National Park, created by a Rhodesian garden-lover who bequeathed it to the nation. It has a variety of trees, shrubs and flowers virtually unrivalled in Rhodesia.

Penhalonga, 11 miles away on the scenic road to Inyanga. One of the oldest settlements in Rhodesia, and once one of the most important gold-producing areas, it is now a "ghost" town that is not without a good deal of historical interest. Near Penhalonga is one of the many waterfalls of the Eastern Highlands—the Odzani Falls—and Lake Alexander where caravans may be hired for a fishing holiday.

Melsetter, 89 miles away (or 98 miles by the scenic routes). Another well-known resort facing the beautiful Chimanimani Mountains, on the border of Portuguese East Africa. The well-known local Chimanimani Hotel has every tourist amenity, including a six-rink bowling green. Visit the Bridal Veil Falls, four miles from the town.

Birchough Bridge, 81 miles away. The bridge, over the Sabi River, is the third-largest single-span bridge in the world, and is a most impressive sight. En route, 54 miles from Umtali, is the **Hot Springs Resort**, with a hotel and hot mineral swimming-pool used all the year round.

Chipinga, 43 miles from Melsetter, in the centre of great tea estates, is famous for its unique and lovely Chirinda forest (mostly mahoganies), which is a remnant of the great forests that once covered the Eastern Districts. One giant red mahogany, 216 ft. in height, with a trunk more than 50 ft. in diameter, is now a National Monument. It is estimated to be many hundreds of years old.

Inyanga. This is the northerly part of the Eastern Highlands and a holidayland of wide appeal. Most of Inyanga is one huge national park, specially noted for its trout fishing in 53 miles of well-stocked streams and lakes. There are two routes to Inyanga. One is through the picturesque Penhalonga Valley to Watsomba, and thence via the old scenic road past the Mtarazi Falls and the Pungwe Falls and Gorge (a spectacular drive) to the Rhodesia Estates, a total distance of 67 miles, most of it on gravel road. The other is via the full-width tarred road via Watsomba and Julesdale, a distance of 65 miles.

ACCOMMODATION

There are four liquor-licensed hotels, and a number of good holiday hotels in the surrounding districts. For caravans and campers, two camping sites with excellent amenities (including h. & c. baths)—one on Christmas Pass, and the other in the Vumba National Park—as well as a camp of chalets in the Vumba.

For further information apply to the Secretary, Manicaland Development & Publicity Association, P.O. Box 69, Umtali, or The Town Clerk, P.O. Box 91, Umtali.

