

# Zimbabwe

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## 1. Introduction

National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe is the organisation responsible for the management and conservation of both Cultural and Natural heritage, under the National Museums and Monuments Act Chapter 25/11.

Immovable cultural heritage include rock paintings, terraces, ruined earthen houses, historical buildings, forts, liberation war heroes graves and dry stonewall sites.

## 2. Stone walls monuments

### 2.1. Dry Stonewalling

Dry stonewall sites called Zimbabwe (Dzimba Dzamabwe in Shona) meaning houses of stones are constructed by piling stones one on top of the other without the use of any binding material. The Zimbabwe were constructed by the indigenous people of that time who are believed to be the ancestral Shona people, and this happened between the eleventh and nineteenth centuries. To date there are more than 1000 recorded Zimbabwe ranging from short lower walls to huge monumental sites like Great Zimbabwe.

Although these sites were abandoned for political and social reasons, they continued to play a very important role to the communities. They are until now very highly valued to the extent that the biggest of these sites, Great Zimbabwe, has been given a name to the present nation of Zimbabwe. Two of these sites are on the World heritage list, twenty-six others are National Monuments, which is the highest status sites can have in the country.

The conservation and management of the sites is carried at selected national monuments following experimentation and research that has been carried at Great Zimbabwe, which has been fully documented and is under tight monitoring. Other sites like Matendera, Danamombe, Ziwa, Tsindi Khami and many other National Monuments have benefited from the management program. A site management plan has been prepared for Khami.



*Original covered entrance on a wall in the hill complex of Great Zimbabwe. This is the only surviving lintled entrance because stone lintels were used instead of wooden lintels used for the other entrances which have since collapsed*

## **.2. Rock Art**

Rock art sites are scattered throughout Zimbabwe, with the large concentration in South Western Zimbabwe in the Matopos, and also in North Eastern Zimbabwe around the Domboshava. The Matopos alone has more than 4 000 recorded rock art sites.



*Domboshava, Rock Art Site  
about 30 km north of Harare*

## **2.3. Nyanga archaeological complex**

Nyanga Mountains are the highest and receive the highest rainfall in Zimbabwe. Nyanga archaeological complex consists of terraces, pit structures, water furrows, and forts (Nyangwe Fort). This area is testimony to a complex agricultural system where a lot of effort was put to irrigate crops as well as farm sustainability.

## **2.4. Grain bins**

The invasion of Zimbabwe by the Ndebele in the late 1830s led to conflict in the country. This period is usually referred to as the Refuge Period. The Ndebele raided the Shona in search of food, and to counteract this, the Shona built stonewalls and grain bins in hidden locations. The grain bins are dotted right round the country, but mostly in the South and Central parts of Zimbabwe, and as National Monuments they are represented by Sibizini Grain Bins in Central Zimbabwe.

## **2.5. Iron smelting furnaces**

About 95% of the mines in Zimbabwe are located on old (ancient) mines. Iron smelting furnaces are usually found in association and in some cases away from stone enclosures. The furnaces are decorated with female reproductive organs as smelting was likened to the process of giving birth. The furnaces are found in most parts of the country.

## **3. Geological/Natural Monuments**

### **3.1. Victoria Falls**

Victoria falls is Zimbabwe's National Monument Number 1, and is shared with Zambia.

### **3.2. Mabura caves & Chinhoyi caves**

According to the National Museum and Monuments Act, a cave is a monument, and there are several of these features in the country. Mabura cave in central Zimbabwe has guano and shelters bats. It is important to the local communities, who have used it without killing the bats. Chinhoyi caves are limestone caves with a perennial water pool, which is estimated to be more than 100m deep.

### **3.3. Fossil Forests**

Central Zimbabwe and Northern Zimbabwe have forests, which have fossilized over a long period of time, and are also part of the heritage.

## **4. Historical Monuments**

### **4.1. Historic buildings**

They are buildings built before 1910. Most of these buildings are from the colonial period and are found in the towns of the country. These are quite distinct and have been preserved as part of the heritage.

### **4.2. Old Forts**

There are a number of forts built by the whites during the first uprising of the blacks against colonial rule. These are mainly found in central and Southern Zimbabwe where the war was intense, and they include, Fort Victoria, Fort Gibbs and others.

### **4.3. Memorials and Shrines-**

These include Provincial and National Heroes Acres for burials of liberation war heroes, Rhodes' grave, and those of his close aids, found in the Matopo National Park, and Shangaani Memorial, for the Wilson patrol wiped out by the Matebele, also located on the same hill with Rhodes' grave, although it was initially located at Great Zimbabwe.

### **4.4. Strip roads-Lundi strip roads**

### **4.5. Suspension bridge- Mbembazane suspension bridge**