

Using the Lebombo Border

From SA to Moz

The SA Side:

You get a gate pass given to you at the entrance gate.

Vehicle Check: Very rarely done, but carry your RC1 just in case. Those without an RC1 seem to be let through without hassle, but why take the chance.

Customs: Nothing to pay, nothing to fill. They just stamp the gate pass you get given at the entrance gate.

Immigration: Nothing to pay, nothing to fill. They just stamp the passport. Go to the window alone or they get pissy.

The Moz Side:

You get a gate pass given to you at the bottom of the hill. Say "Bom dia" and "Obrigado" to the Alfandega (Customs) man.

At the top of the hill a self-styled 'official' will loudly demand your gate pass. Tell him "Voetsek".

You may get another self-styled 'official' that wants to look at your money (never happened to me in more than 100 crossings). Tell him 'Voetsek'.

Immigration: Nothing to pay, nothing to fill. Ask for the last day for exit to be written into the stamp if you plan to stay the full 30 days – there's two ways to count to 30. Getting it wrong costs money when you leave.

Customs 1: Get a TIP form from the Alfandega man at the window. Sometimes you get two papers and a carbon, sometimes only one. There's nothing to pay but fill the form in reasonable detail – put in trailers, quads and boats. Get the form and your gate pass stamped, there's nothing to pay.

Customs 2: The only potentially tricky bit. You need to get the gate pass signed off by an inspector. Find one wandering around outside and say "Bom dia chefe (pronounced 'chef'), quero inspecao por favour". Be

relaxed, look into his eyes, smile as if you really like him, and wave your keys like you welcome a search. Often he'll just sign your gate pass and wave you away. Say "Obrigado". If he wants to look inside the vehicle don't let him see the booze. You're allowed US\$50 of groceries per person. If you have stuff you don't want him to see pack it into clothing-type bags – they never look inside luggage but they might get excited if they see a horde of Checkers bags.

Exit gate: They take the gate pass, check that it's been signed off, and mostly don't more than glance into the car.

3 Kms further on: There's another checkpoint which is there to catch the suspect vehicles. It's unlikely they'll bother you unless something went wrong at the border and they phone their pals to pull you off here.

Moz to SA

The Moz Side

No gate pass. You just drive in. Be prepared a to be assailed by runners if there's a long queue, and be prepared for an argument over money if you use one. Normally all Immigration's windows are manned, so the queue moves quite quickly.

Immigation: Stamp only. Be prepared to pay if you counted the 30 days incorrectly. Sometimes they count the day of entry as the first day, and sometimes not.

Customs: A non-event. There's a window to hand your TIP in but nobody checks that you do so. If you have anything to hide – like you're leaving a trailer or a quad or a boat in Moz – then you won't want to hand the TIP back. If you hand it in they'll look at the stamp to see if you went over 30 days.

Exit gate: The border guards sometimes look if you've had your passport stamped, but rarely. Nobody bothers about the TIP.

The SA Side

You get a gate pass on entry.

Immigration: Stamp only but sometimes there's a long delay due to there being 5 windows but only two nose-pickers to man them.

Customs: Stamp only.

You're home!