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We look back on 5 eventful, exciting and sometimes very hot months in Namibia. We are rapidly approaching the farewell to Africa, because at the end of April we want to leave this unique continent, which has given us many beautiful encounters with people and animals. But now everything in order.



Thomi crosses the Caprivi Strip, meets travel friends in the Etosha NP and later picks me up at the airport in Ondangwa. We enjoy a nice drive along the border river to Angola, the Kunene, to the Epupa waterfalls. Even if the route is well prepared today, we would not drive it in a heavy rainy season. There are too many tributaries to cross and when the

river bursts its bank, a longer section of the track is under water. Corona has the advantage that in Epupa we get a large shady spot directly on the river without a reservation and are usually spoiled alone in the beautiful garden restaurant. Even if we have been traveling in poor countries for a long time, it is difficult for us to enjoy the food here. When we were here in 2003 there were only a few huts around. With the increase in tourism, a whole corrugated iron village has emerged, whose residents have earned practically nothing since Corona.....

In the wild, lonely Kaokoveld



Our next destination is the Kaokoveld, that's what the area in the north-west is called. Mostly barren, it is made up of rock and sand, criss-crossed by mountain ranges, and is inhabited by a few Himbas who subsist on their goats, sparse vegetation, and the ubiquitous white cornmeal porridge. It is advisable not to be alone in this lonely area.

We are happy that our travel friends are keen on the same destination and therefore agree to do this tour together, especially since they are traveling with an equivalent vehicle. From Kaoka Otavi we drive westwards beyond Orupembe and a few days later we reach a uniquely beautiful view point north of it. It only has one major disadvantage: it's so windy that flying sand fills the beer glasses and the chips fly away. The next morning fog hovers over the valley below us - here the hot inland air mixes with the cool air of the coast. The view of the blanket of fog in the desert is magical!



We drive a bit south through Hartmann's valley and up the Marien river again to a camp on the Kunene river, which also forms the border with Angola here. We refrain from visiting Angola. We don't imagine being stuck in this country because of a new corona variant as exciting. We treat ourselves to three days of rest by the river

before the rising temperature (42.8 °) drives us away. We roll slowly (good sandy track), bump (rougher stone track) or shake (corrugated) south towards Puros. Neither the Hoarusib nor the Hoarib river carries much water, so we can continue in the riverbeds and two days later reach good slopes again in Sesfontain. We will remember these 16 days, 1000 km of slopes, great landscape and good friendship for a long time.

We take a break at Oppi Koppi Camping in Kamanjab. Laundry has to be washed, Muck's screws and the chassis have to be checked. Thomi promptly realizes that a screw including a washer and 2 pop rivets vibrated through the 2mm thick aluminum sheet on the tank protection. Ah yes, the starter coughed badly for two days on the road in the middle of nowhere and only did its job on the third try. He seems to have calmed down though, we hope it stays that way!

Fascinating Cheetah Conservation

We reach the Cheetah Conservation via a good tar road to Otjiwarongo and a 40 km long track. This international project aims to ensure the survival of the cheetahs. Most of the animals live on farm land and are often shot by the farmers. Because they hunt during the day, they are the most observed of all predators and are therefore held



responsible for every sheep that is killed. The Cheetah Conservation Research Station has trained a dog to track cheetah poop. With its help, the "piles" on the farm can be found and the content can be analyzed. It was thus possible to prove that the cheetah is only involved to a small extent in the sheep that were killed. In addition, Turkish shepherd dogs are trained, which are given to the farmers for the price of a sheep and then protect "their" herd. Cheetahs that cannot survive in the wild live on the Conservation property. Some were injured or the mother was shot and could not teach her children how to hunt. To keep these animals fit, the "Cheetah Run" takes place every morning in a large enclosure. The animals chase after an artificial rabbit at great speed. As a reward for success, he can pick up a piece of meat before he has to leave the enclosure and it is his colleague's turn. The well-designed museum provides a lot of information about cheetahs and a video room completes the exhibition. Very worth visiting!

In busy Windhoek

Not far from the Cheetah Conservation is the Waterberg. We have a great desire to hike and so we spend a week in two different places with shorter and longer hikes. Most of the paths are not so well prepared. It gets very hot between the rocks from 1 p.m. and I have to take a break from time to time in the sparse shade despite drinking enough liquid. I'm just not 20 anymore!



Through the rather boring area between Okakarara, Hochfeld and Okahandja we reach Windhoek. At the Urban Camp we get a reasonably shady spot and wait for the visa to be extended. While waiting we are spoiled by Anton and his wife. We met Anton in Mudumo NP, at the very end of the Caprivi Strip. They pick us up at the campsite several times, show us Windhoek from all sides day and night and give us useful tips. An overview of the entire city is only possible from an airplane, too many valleys and ridges cut through Windhoek. With the visa extension in the bag, we leave the city via the Bosua Pass and Karibib, where marble is quarried, to get to the Ameib Lodge. The heat forces us out of bed at 5am so we can start the hike to the rock carvings early. A nice path leads us to the rock overhang, where we have to realize that the advertising photos for the place have been heavily tricked. Well, the drawings don't blow us away, but the hike is great and we like the surroundings. The rock formations of the Spitzkoppe attract us again magically and we enjoy the spectacle of the discoloration of the rocks at sunrise and sunset (Thomi was more likely to be there at the sunrise).

On the windswept shore



We continue to the coast, where the Benguela, an ocean current, flows north from Antarctica, promises to cool off. So nice, in Hentiesbaai we need our summer blankets at night after a long time! We drive north along the coast to St. Nowhere. Apart from a campsite with huts, which is mainly used by hobby fishermen (for the women it has a spa and riding horses!), there is only miles of sandy beach. On the way we visit the seal colony in Cape Cross again, where, as in 2019, there are many dead young animals lying around and it stinks terribly. Nonetheless, an interesting experience. We also have to see the big hole that was created in the search for tin. Water collects below and three ladies bathe in it. We are more fascinated by the various stones that are lying around above and gleaming magnificently in the sun. We also discover beautiful lichens on the way, the first settlers of the wasteland. We drive south on the very good coastal road to Swakopmund. On the way, there are many dead end roads off to the beach. There are mostly four-wheel drive Toyotas and fishermen

around. The water, which is about 15 degrees warm, does not invite you to swim. But it is rich in nutrients and therefore there are many fish.

German Namibia

Life is good in Swakopmund. The city is very German and the range of goods is varied. We ate the best pizza in Namibia at "Gabriele", really Italian - and the panna cotta or the tiramisu, mmhhh.....



We take part in a guided desert tour to the "Little Five" with our friends. If we are lucky we will see chameleons, scoop-footed geckos, the White Lady (dew-dropper beetle), snakes, etc. And we are lucky, Thomi's camera is running hot! Here we let the photos do the talking. However, what is shocking is the fact that the chameleons in

this area are almost extinct because they fetch around 5,000 Euros on the black market. On our way south we make another stop at Sossusvlei. The sharp-edged dunes and the wind patterns in the sand never cease to fascinate. We want to spend Christmas together with our good travel friends at a campsite on the edge of the Namib Naukluft Park. It only has 5 pitches and they are about 50 meters apart. Pure calm. Every day 7 horses come by, sometimes they are the only other visitors. Ernst and Thomi try to capture the starry sky as well as possible on photos or film, no extraneous light far and wide. After a week, however, the rest is enough for us and we part ways again.



Lüderitz is on the sea and is not a big city either, easy to explore on foot. At the Portuguese, who runs a fish restaurant, we can safely park during the night and we enjoy delicious seafood. We spend New Year's on the nearby peninsula in Stormbird Bay. As the name suggests, it winds almost continuously. We like it here so much that we stay 3 nights.

Then we have to go back to Lüderitz because Thomi bought a permit for the ghost town of Kolmannskuppe, so he can take pictures there from sunrise to sunset. That will be a lot of work afterwards!

No way through - high water



In Klein Aus Vista you can go biking and hiking, which we also enjoy. The onward journey is planned via Rosh Pinah to the sea in Oranjemund. But not possible. As can be seen from the newspaper, heavy rains have torn up the tarred road along the center line for several meters. Apparently one half has collapsed and a bridge is under water. The route is now closed until more detailed clarifications have been made. We are therefore driving the planned tour the other way around and hope that in two weeks all routes will be accessible again. On a very nice side route we drive to Keetmanshoop and later to the Mesosaurus Fossil Park. We stay 3 nights, once only in the company of mongooses, owls, pygmy falcons and dozens of sociable weaver birds. We wander around between the quiver trees and Thomi rehearses the starry sky photography again at 02:20!!

We are curious about the water level of the Fish River Canyon. Did the water from the heavy rains flow there? No, it doesn't look like. The view of the gorge is still beautiful. In Außenkehr we are approaching the sticking point of our planned tour: is the bridge on the way to Oranjemund passable again? She is not!

We are therefore settling down in Aussenkehr on the Oranje River. This flows through the desert here, but we are surrounded by vineyards. The farmers use the water of the river to produce wine and raisins. The river's water has burst its banks, the brown broth flowing at high speed. A canoe tour lasting several days is therefore definitely not going to work out. So we have time to write the travel report, sort photos and plan the route for South Africa. With temperatures between 35° and 40° this is not always easy. After a week we move to the Amanzi Camp, which is closer to the border town and has trails for biking, which Thomi appreciates, of course. Half of the campsite is already under water and the level rises 80 cm every 24 hours. Only the upper part, which is on a terrace, can still be used - for how much longer? Three days later we are still about 40 cm from the top of the embankment, but the water level has been stable since yesterday and we can stay until tomorrow, when we cross the border to South Africa. The first change of plan for this country is already set..., let's go to the Augrabies waterfalls, they must be spectacular now!

Bye bye Namibia!

Thanks, it was as always great to travel here.

Esther and Thomas

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