

The Garden Route – 9 to 16 June 2021 – South Africa

The Garden Route is probably in the Top Five places known or gone to by tourist in South Africa. The route is made up of towns, national parks and reserves, hiking trails, rivers, beaches, the ocean, paved highways and roads and dirt tracks, and more. It begins in Mossel Bay and continues to Tsitsikamma Park and includes the towns of Wilderness (4 nights), Knysna (2 nights) and Storm River Camp (1 night).

We began our stay in Knysna. The Booking.com I chose was not by far my best lodging choice I have made in the last half dozen years. Making a quick check of the 60 Airbnb and 40 Booking.com (includes apartments, guest houses and hotels) this is the lowest rating – a 3 out of 10 – that I have given any place we have stayed. We booked for four nights and left after two. Not everything goes as well as it is planned in my head.



The view from where we parked our 4Runner and then placed rocks behind the tires to insure it didn't roll backwards. It was a steep driveway.

The day after our hike in Robberg Nature Reserve we moved to Wilderness by way of another back road drive designed by Gerald. Gerald also suggested we stay at Haus am Strand – on the Beach in Wilderness. Signed in for two nights and stayed four nights.



Our room is on the ground floor and our sliding glass doors are partially hidden by the tree on the right of the photograph. The beach and ocean are behind me.

Our lodging was a large one-bedroom apartment with kitchen, dining and living rooms. It was very comfortable and a short easy walk from the car park to our front door. Price was a little higher than our budget but we decided we would save money by Nancy cooking. Price: \$140/night.

The grocery store, the liquor store and several restaurants were anywhere from two to five minutes from where we were staying. Our favorite place to eat was an indoor/outdoor restaurant called *the Girls on the Square* – great outdoor seating and good food.

The next morning the hotel owner suggested we drive to Buffalo Bay for breakfast. It was pleasant drive and after our breakfast we continued the road to its end and turned around and drove back to our apartment.. The remainder of the day was declared by the two of us as a rest

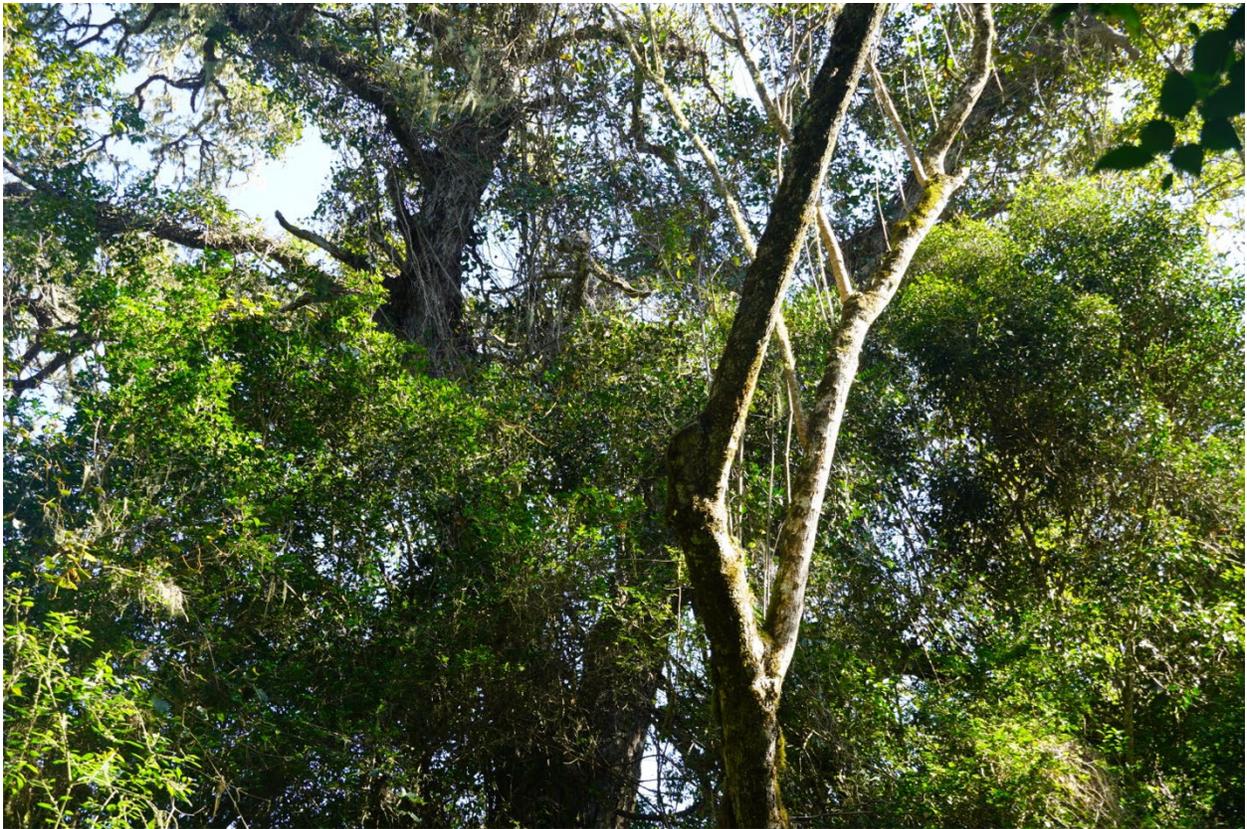
day. That evening Nancy found rice, black beans a green pepper and a few other items in our food bag and that became dinner.

We did do some grocery shopping – prices in U.S. dollars:

6 extra large eggs \$0.88
Sliced ham 250 grams \$2.33
Golda Cheese 300 grams \$3.41
Can of Black Beans \$1.01
Coke Zero 1.5 litter \$0.95
Shortbread (cookies) 200 grams \$1.26
Cabernet Wine \$5.30
Non-scented clothes detergent 1 Liter: \$3.53



Wilderness National Park





This river and a parallel trail were on our right on our hike in and on our left on our hike out.

On our round about drive to Tsitsikamma National Park and cabin at Storms River Camp we stopped at Birds of Eden. We spent two plus hours walking through the 2.176 hectares of aviary. So much easier to see birds here than in the wilds.



The bird is a Knysna Turaco – endemic to South Africa. During our time walking Wilderness National Park we saw this bird several times but never this close or sitting in the open.

While we were walking the aviary our 4Runner was being given a much needed bath. I am sure the man who washed our 4Runner in the aviary's parking lot had no idea some of the sand/dirt was by way of Morocco.

Our cabin at Storms River Camp was our first stay at a South African National Park camp. In short, the South African cabins are as nice as anything we had fallen in love with during our six months exploring Australia's parks.



The ocean in front of our cabin.



The living room and kitchen behind.

The cost was about \$100 for the two of us.

Less than a five-minute drive from our cabin is a restaurant. The evening we went to the restaurant to eat and use the WIFI there was only one other table with customers – Covid. The food was OK, not great but very edible. We stayed until closing to catch up on emails, news and plan the next day's drive.



The kitchen where we each made our own favorite travel breakfasts the morning we left – Nancy made eggs and I had granola, yogurt and fruit.



The bedroom and the bath is through the door.



Looking through the master bedroom door on to the entry patio with grill.



Standing on the road in front of our cabin looking at the ocean.

At this point in our South African drive, I still had dreams of spending a couple of weeks in Zimbabwe. So, rather than spend at least one full day in the park the next morning we got up and hit the road. Maybe on our return trip next year to South Africa we will take the time to stay in the Storms River Mouth Rest Camp for a full day or two.

South Africa just has too many roses one can stop to smell.