

Holiday Diaries by Denise Taylor, Award Winning Career Coach and Trainee DJ!



Camping Safari in Namibia 18th August - 1st September 2007

Saturday 18th August 2007

We arrived in **Namibia** about lunch time, everywhere is so clean, the roads are wide and it so doesn't look like I expect Africa to look. As we drove to our guest house we passed Robert Mugabe road.

We knew we had an adventurous 2 weeks ahead of us so chilled around the pool today but had a great meal out at [Joes Beer House](#) where we ate a variety of wild animals including Zebra. Ostrich, Crocodile and Kudu.

Sunday 19th August

We met our fellow travellers at the [Wild Dog and Crazy Kudu](#) offices and began our holiday. As it was a Sunday we were told it was going to be hard to buy beer but managed to get some "under the counter" stuff. We were going to be camping and eating round the camp fire each night so needed to take our own drink. Namibia is such a large country we knew we were going to do a lot of travelling. It was 300km today.

We arrived at our first camp. It was amazing, with fantastic views, especially from the loo! This was [Okonjima](#) and once it got a bit cooler we went to the [Africat Foundation](#). We had a tour of their centre, where they rescue and rehabilitate cheetahs. The camp helper cooked dinner for us and one of our party, who was an excellent amateur astronomer, explained the constellations to us.

Monday 20th August

We drove to the [Etosha National Park](#) via small clean towns and [Lake Otjikoto](#), Namibia's largest permanent natural lake where lots of guns are at the bottom of the lake, quickly disposed of during WWII.

We had our first game drive in the afternoon and saw a crazy kudu. It charged for the fence and dropped down dead. Our guide said it probably had rabies. That evening we could go to the flood lit waterhole, but I gave it a miss this evening, I was so tired. It had been another 300km drive.

Tuesday 21st August

We were up really early to go on an early morning game drive, the national park is huge and we stopped for lunch on the way to our next overnight stop - [Okaukuejo](#). This has been described as one of the "best game viewing opportunities in Southern Africa". That evening we were able to see both black and white rhino at the watering hole.

Wednesday 22nd August

Today we left early to drive to see the [Himba tribe](#). This is the only traditionally functioning Himba community outside the far north Kaokoland region of Namibia These tribes-people have

migrated here, lifestyle and customs intact, and are following their traditional way-of-life in their village on a farm. We learnt a lot about the culture, spent time with the queen and I lost my camera – taken by one of the children, luckily one of the young people on our trip got it back for me – swapped it for a packet of biscuits. It was another 300km drive

Thursday 23rd August

We seemed to spend forever on the road today – luckily I had my iPod and so listened to my music. It was 400km to the [Brandberg mountains](#). We visited the ancient Bushman rock engravings at Twyfelfontien.

Late afternoon we hiked into the mountains to see the world famous "[White Lady](#)" rock painting. Attributed to the Bushman artists, the white lady panel is believed by some to be in excess of 20 000 years old. It was late afternoon and we were concerned we would be coming back down in the dark so came back down following some French people, we were glad we had as it was quite dark when the rest of our group reappeared.

That night we slept close to the mountains. An interesting evening – Simon went for a wee in the night and saw elephants really close to the tents, in the morning we saw their footprints just a metre away from us – quite scary!"

Friday 24th August

Just 250km today! We were due to stop in [Uis](#), an old mining town, and one of the best places to buy semi-precious stones, but basically it was buying from men at the petrol station. We were heading out on a 250km drive to [Swakopmund](#).

We went to Henties Bay, to visit the seal colony at [Cape Cross](#). Here at certain times of the year there can be as many as 100,000 Cape Fur seals, not so many at this time of year but still fascinating to watch and smell- gosh how smelly would it be when they are all there?

We were staying in chalets- 4 to a chalet – wow, not a tent! We had a walk around the town and went to a local bar – the only white people there. We met up with the group that evening and had a meal at a seafood restaurant.

Saturday 25th August

We hadn't realised that our holiday was 2 separate weeks combined so had to go back to Windhoek today. This was about 350km. We had the morning to wander around Swakop. That evening we went back to Joes Beer House. This time with Val and her two sons.

Sunday 26th August

We met the next group – only Val and the boys were also doing the 2 weeks. We had a 500km drive to day and drive past the [Tropic of Capricorn](#) line, so took a photo! We had lunch at Rehoboth and were treated to some traditional dancing and a concert in the church. We camped this night in the quiver tree forest area - [Keetmanshoop](#).

[Quiver trees](#) are not in fact trees; they are a type of aloe, (Aloe Dictoma), so called because the branches fork "dictomously". These weird looking plants dot the landscape in this part of the world and are locally common, however they are one of the world's rarest flora species.

Monday 27th August

We visited the [Giants Playground](#) this morning, an area filled with massively eroded granite rocks that are precariously balanced in tottering towers. Going back to the campsite we saw a reasonably tame cheetah and could get quite close to take photos – I did stay back, not sure I could run fast enough if he was hungry.

We travelled the 400km to [Fish River Canyon](#) – it was spectacular and the second biggest canyon in the world. We then drove down to the border with South Africa and camped close to the [Orange River](#). It was a really beautiful area and there was an internet connection, although ever so slow. They grew vines here and it was quite lush.

Tuesday 28th August

We followed the path of the river, past the zinc mines of Rosh Pinah. Today we were heading to the town of [Aus](#) where we stayed at [Kline Aus Vista](#), a private reserve, beautifully located in the Aus Mountain Range, (Huib-Hoch-Plateau region). We met our guide from the first weeks trip – lovely to see him and we much preferred him! It was 200km today.

Wednesday 29th August – my 50th Birthday

Simon had got everyone from the first and 2nd week's trip to sign my birthday card which was so sweet! And everyone sang happy birthday at breakfast. We drove to [Luderitz](#), and saw some of the Namib wild horses. These horses are the only wild horses in Namibia and have, become adapted to an existence with very limited water.

A really interesting part of the day was a trip to [Kolmanskop](#), a desert ghost town about 20 km out of Luderitz. It was built in the 1920's during the diamond rush and was abandoned when bigger and better diamonds were found further along the coast. The area is still abandoned and the desert has encroached over the entire town, giving an eerie feeling and real meaning to the word "ghost".

We all had lunch at a local restaurant and they got me a birthday cake. We had a bottle of wine, but it really wasn't good. We had more time in Luderitz in the afternoon and stopped off to see the horses on the journey back. We still did 350km today.

Thursday 30th August

We headed out to the desert area today. The roads were poor so we spent over half a day travelling the 350km journey. That afternoon I went on a scenic flight over the dunes, my birthday treat. We did our first trip to the dunes late afternoon – you can't really climb to the top as they just go on and on so after so long I stopped to take photos and we walked back down.

Friday 31st August

Up early today to get to the dunes. We passed through [Sesriem](#), the gateway to the dunes, to drive into the heart of the dune field. To reach [Sossusvlei](#) itself we walked the last 5 km through the dunes. This was such hard work – up and down, and I was sinking, kept on wanting to give up. It was only 150km today.

Saturday 1st September

Back to Windhoek today and 450km of driving, a final meal at [Joes Beer House](#).