

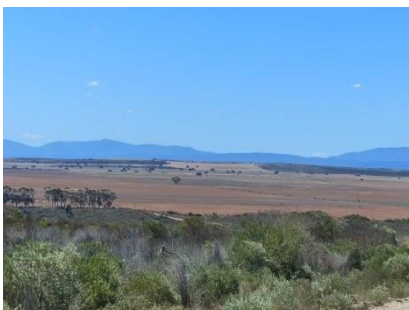
1.2.2018 Groot Jongfontein, Port Beaufort, Witsand

A detour leads us to Groot Jongfontein, where we find a very nice community campsite



with shaded tables and seating right next to the beach. It looks very tempting to stay here, but it is too early to stop already as we just started our trip this morning.

Our next destination is Witsand. On the scenic route we drive away from the coast. Only a few kilometers inland the landscape is changing dramatically. It is getting hotter and drier and the soil is turning red. We see many ostriches, game and sheep which have adopted the red color of the soil they stay on.



As we are cruising along, suddenly two red warning lights on the dashboard turn on: for brake pads and brake fluid! The RPM is on zero even so the engine is running. We stop on the dusty hot road side, open the hood and check the brake fluid, which is full. We pull on the cables, push all the fuses and suddenly the RPM awakes to life again and the warning lights turn off... We continue driving, but are wondering what could have caused this problem.

The Breerivier river mouth in Witsand is quite wide. Just 3 km north in Port Beaufort another natural swimming pool was built into the sea. For Dewi it is time to go for swim while Werner is feeding the fish – with no returns...



In Witsand we just park up on the beach for the night. A few locals are greeting us, some are stopping to chat with us and one guy is even sharing his favorite fishing spot with us. It looks like we are tolerated to park here despite a no camping sign (which is almost covered by us).



2.2.2018 Bredasdorp, Cape Agulhas

Our next stop is Bredasdorp, from there it is not far to Cape Agulhas the Southernmost point of Africa. As our journey leads us further inland we can see huge paddocks which are very dry and very few crops are growing here. Sunflowers are blooming, but are standing far apart and are only 50 cm high. The crops are so poor that one wonders if it is really feasible to cultivate them here.



Shortly before Malgas we see a sign indicating a 10T weight limit, but as usual we do not pay too much attention to weight limit signs. However, not much further we come across a river where no bridge is in sight. Slowly, from the other side of the river a small ferry is approaching – now the 10T weight limit starts to make sense. The ferry is purely moved by the muscle power of the two men who pull her along a steel rope. They acknowledge that our vehicle looks heavy but allow us on board. They even load another car onto the ferry. Now the weight limit is definitely exceeded by 25%



The remainder of the day we spent in a workshop. Just before we drive onto the ferry, the RPM quits again and the warning lights come on again. On the ferry, we want to switch off the engine, but the engine would not stop running! As we are not sure that the engine will start again if we stall it, we leave it running the whole time. The people in the other car must have wondered... No doubt about it, we definitely need to see a workshop. The best would be an auto-electrician, as all symptoms clearly point to an electrical error. We are lucky, just as we enter the next bigger city Bredasdorp we find a very decent car electrician workshop, in fact even a Bosch Service, which is exactly what we need.

The chief electrician is taking care of our problem and points out that the alternator is causing the problem. This is hard to believe, as the alternator is basically new and was running so far only 14.000 km. As we point out that this is almost a brand-new alternator, his dry answer is "Also newborn babies die". After a few tests it turns out that indeed the alternator is the problem, well it was "Made in China". Luckily, we took the old original Bosch alternator (which Werner fixed himself in Germany) with us as a spare. The spare alternator is tested and installed and after three 3 hours we can continue our journey.



Just before sunset we arrive in Cape Agulhas, where the iconic red and white striped lighthouse is welcoming us. It is the second oldest lighthouse in South Africa.



3.2.2018 Cape Agulhas

We are at the Southernmost point of Africa! Here is where the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean meet. This part of the coast, also called the “Cape of the Storms”, is the most dangerous part of the coast, with the highest waves after the Cape of Good Hope. Numerous ship wrecks are silent witnesses of the often stormy and adverse weather conditions for sea farers with very few safe harbor possibilities.



There is a long stretch of beach between the village of L'Agulhas and Suiderstrand favoured by local fishermen. Camping is allowed here or – the other way around – at least there are no signs forbidding camping. The rangers passing through did not chase us away.

We park next to a ship wreck close to the beach and find out that the „Meishu Maru“, a Taiwanese trawler, ran ashore here in 1982. Her cargo was Tuna and there were 17 survivors from the accident.



This is a very relaxed spot, we have good weather, the sharks seem to bite well and one can walk on a board walk along the beach and all the way to the light house. We decide to stay another night.



4.2.2018 Struisbaai, Elim, Strandkloof

Today we want to continue our journey westwards, but we manage to only drive 5 km to Struisbaai. The harbor area is very busy and the entire street is jammed with parked cars. Curiosity wins, we decide to find out what is going on. There is a huge crowd because the commercial fishermen are returning to harbor and clear their catch of the night. We see huge amount of Yellow Fin Tuna and the huge Black Marlin. People around us are speculating that the spearfished Black Marlin is one of the biggest Marlins spearfished ever in this area.



Notably, all Tuna commercially caught is line fished, no nets or trawlers are used. The boats are not too big and we count up to eight anglers on one boat. Actually, the boats look more like smuggling vessels, small and with three or even four 300 HP strong outboard engines. These very fast boats must go 30 to 70 miles offshore to find the tuna grounds and fish through the whole night.



Struisbaai is proud of its 14km long sandy beach.



At the Struisbaai harbor a big sign is introducing „Parrie“, a sting ray who lives in the bay and likes to visit when the fishermen return to harbor. This fish is quite famous, as it was for a while living in the Capetown Aquarium before he was released back to freedom. Indeed, hard to believe, suddenly Parrie appears for a visit! Looks like he is checking out what goodies the fishermen left behind for him.



As the last boat has offloaded its cargo, we finally continue our journey. We pass through Elim, a village, which was founded by German missionaries of the Moravian Church (originally „Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine“) in 1824. Elim was named by the missionaries of the after a biblical oasis. The entire village is declared a National Heritage Site; the clock in the church tower is 240 years old and was imported from Germany.



Finally, we stop for the day at the Strandskloof Campsite. Time for a big washing, as our laundry has piled up. Soon we are in Cape Town and we better fill up our water tank. We do not know what to expect in Cape Town and whether we still can get water there. Maybe the camp sites are closed – we were warned this could happen due to the severe water shortage. All media are reporting heavily about the water situation in and around Cape Town.

5.2.2018 Gansbaai, Stanford, Rooisand

It is only 11 km from Strandskloof to Gansbaai. This coast is famous for the high population of great white sharks. Shark cruises and shark cage diving are offered and the cruise boats we see are all full.

A 4x4 trail leads along the coastline, and we discover a bay with hundreds of shiny abalone shells. Soon after the track is getting too narrow and too steep for us and we turn around.



In Gansbaai we finally discover a car wash, as our Unimog urgently needs a shower to get rid of the thick salt cover from the ocean spray. Most of the car washers here only have small wash bays with low roofs, maybe big enough for one of our tires... Well, in this one we also do not quite fit in, but they make it happen. Our Unimog probably never enjoyed such a nice foam bath before.



Stanford invites us for a coffee break, we enjoy sitting in the shade, as it is a very hot day. Stanford is a nice little place with lots of shops, galleries and coffee shops in newly renovated houses. Behind Stanford civilization begins. There are more and more villages to pass through, traffic is increasing and soon we reach the city of Hermanus, one of the most popular seaside towns for Cape Towners.

It is not easy to find a place for the night in such a densely populated area, but thanks to „I-Overlander“ we read about the parking lot of the Rooisand Nature Reserve. There we can still walk along the board walk and watch some bird life before we put up camp.



6.2.2018 Betty’s Bay, Cape Town

Stoney Point in Betty’s Bay is home to a colony of African Penguins also known as Jackass Penguins and here one can get pretty close to them. This place is only one out of three colonies in South Africa where these African Penguins live and also breed.

They have more or less hijacked the local boat ramp for their exclusive usage. The wreck of the ‘Una’ was used in 1926 to build the jetty. It is a lot of fun to watch these cute little creatures. Here we also see for the first time Dassies or Rock Hyrax also called Rock Badger. As we read about them, we can hardly believe that the closest related species to the Dassie is the African Elephant!



We could have watched the penguins for a few more hours, but the big city is calling. Only 90 km later we are in Cape Town. We have heard so much about this city, now finally we are here. Only slightly worried about the water situation.



The 'Victoria & Alfred Waterfront' is one of the most popular attractions of Cape Town, it attracts about 24 million visitors per year. The harbor is still very much in operation and is now surrounded by shopping malls, restaurants, cafes and museums, as well as the Two Oceans Aquarium just to name a few. Our camping app i-Overlander tells us, that we can stay at the 24 h parking lot of the V&A Waterfront – one can hardly park any closer to the centre. Our Unimog fits in well and off we are to explore the Waterfront.



7.2.2018 Cape Town

Temperatures are soaring, but the city has to be explored. We want to see for ourselves if Cape Town is living up to its image of being one of the nicest and best-to-live-in cities. In 2014 Cape Town even got the title 'World-Design-Capital', as the first African city in history.

Our first destination is Bo-Kaap Quarter also called Malay Quarter with its brightly colored houses. Here the former Cape Malay slaves have settled after slavery was abolished in 1834. Happy to have escaped their miserable lives they started to paint their houses in bright colors. Only the Bo-Kaap museum is a little bit disappointing, we would have expected more detailed information.



We are walking a big circle through town, around the St George Quarters, towards the town hall, where Nelson Mandela gave his first speech after his release from prison in 1990. The Castle of Good Hope is the first building in South Africa constructed from stones, it was built between 1666-1679 by the Dutch East India Company. Jan van Riebeeck was in charge of this construction which was meant to be a re-supply station for their sailors heading to India and back. Each of the stone slabs was imported from Holland. Cape Town was to become one of the most important re-supply stations for passing sailing vessels and was therefore developing quickly.

In the evening we have sore feet and enjoy the fact that our home is parked just a few meters away from the Waterfront.