

15.2.2018 Barrydale, Ronnies Sex Shop, Swartberg Pass

It's time to say Good-bye, we thank Riana and Johan for their great hospitality. We continue on Route 62, this time we start at the other end and drive Eastbound. Not far from Montagu is the town of Barrydale, with some nice places to go. Johan recommended „Diesel & Cream“ and we have our second breakfast there. The decoration is unique with a collection of antique items. It seems that the Route 62 is developing as a tourist destination.



The next stop is „Ronnie's Sex Shop“. As the story goes, Ronnie had an ordinary shop on this remote part of the Route 62. One night, his friends had the glorious idea to add the word „Sex“ on the wall – as we all know „Sex sells“.

One of the female guests started to leave her underwear and this is how it all began... Meanwhile a photo stop at Ronnies is a must when travelling on Route 62. There are now even branded T'Shirts and other merchandise on sale – the marketing department is up to speed and his business is booming. Ronnie has to thank his friends...



At the foot of the Groot Swartberge we stop for today. Tomorrow we want to tackle the Swartberg Pass. However, it is not easy to find a campsite here. Our map shows a camp at the restaurant Kombuse Gat, but it does not really exist. Luckily, the people of the restaurant are very friendly and allow us to stay overnight and camp on the parking lot.



16.2.2018 Swartberg Pass

The Swartberg Pass was built between 1881 and 1888 by Thomas Bain. The mountain range forms the boundary between the Little Karoo, a semi-arid desert to the South, and the Great Karoo in the North. A narrow gravel road winds through the mountains and the vistas are documented as a UNESCO world heritage site. Unfortunately, the weather is anything but ideal to drive up the mountains; from 1300 m elevation onwards we have almost no visibility. We decide to not drive up to the very top and wait for Anke & Gregor to scout the rest of the pass to the top. We use the time meanwhile for small repairs...



The road via Oudtshoorn leads us towards the coast. This is the region of many ostrich farms. In the hay days before the first world war, an estimated 100.000 ostriches were living here. Today there are about 150 ostrich farms left. We make a small detour to one of the farms and decide to rather invest in an ostrich kebab instead of paying entrance fee and for a guided tour.



The Robinson Pass leads us back to the coast and we check into the Swartvlei campsite. Along the road we see huge areas of burned down forest, it is hard to believe how much forest is lost due to fire.



17.2.2018 Knysna, Noetzi, Tsitsikamma

We pass through Knysna again and also this time it is very busy. Just like last time, a bus load of German tourists arrives at the same time like us at the parking lot. Almost all of them want to know about our Unimog with German number plates

At the Knysna Waterfront a high school water polo tournament takes place. We watch the match for a while as we have never seen a live water polo match.



A visit at the „Freshline Fisheries“ restaurant in Knysna is highly recommended! Very fresh seafood and all kind of locally caught fish is on the menu. We were very tempted to order the entire menu.



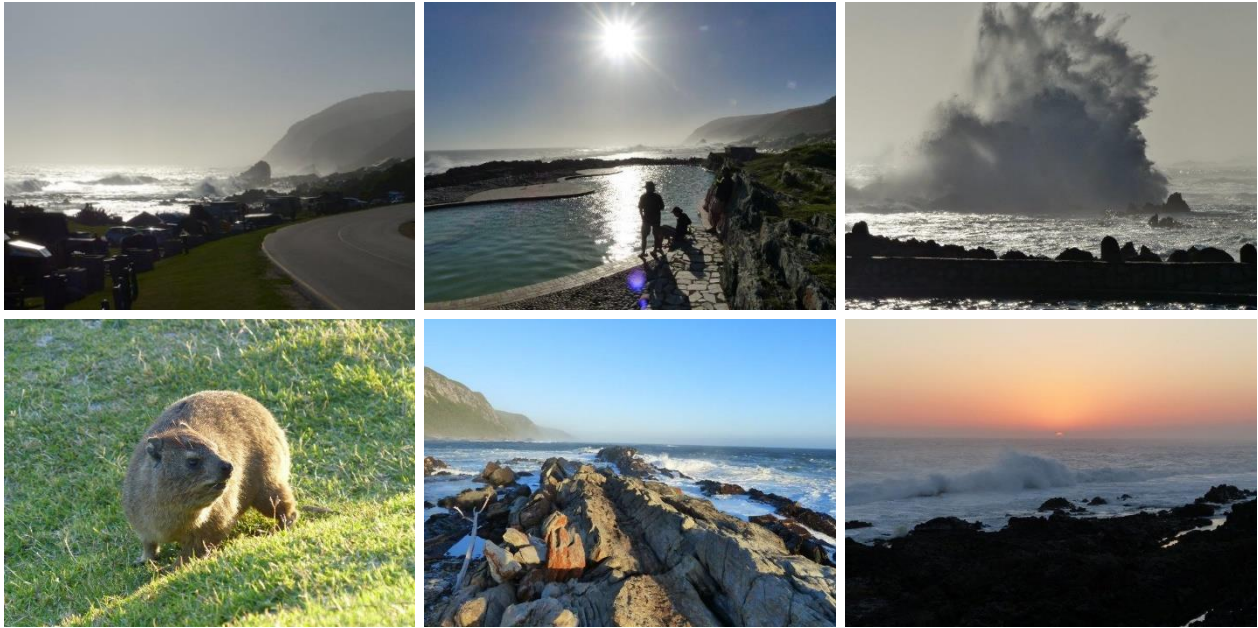
Close to Knysna at the beach of Noetzi are castles along the beach. But not sand castles... It is a strange sight to see six real castles nestled along the beach, but why not. Obviously, it was someone’s dream to be the proud owner of a castle residing at the beach. The oldest castle-like home was completed in 1932. Some are still in use today, others are in ruins, it is possible to rent a castle for functions and events. At the nearby river mouth, the water temperature is warm and ideal for swimming.



The Tsitsikamma Coastal National Park (part of the Garden Route National Parks since March 2009) is home to one of the main attractions of the Garden Route Park: the suspension bridge spanning over the Storms River. We will visit the bridge tomorrow.

The camp site in Tsitsikamma, the Storms River Mouth Rest Camp, is one the most spectacular camps, located directly at the sea. When we arrive at dusk the surf is

gigantic and huge breakers are hitting the coast, what an amazing view. No wonder that this camp is so popular. The downside is that the strong breeze doesn't make it very comfortable to sit outside.



18.2.2018 Tsitsikamma, Oyster Bay

A track, mainly a board walk, leads through the local rain forest to the suspension bridge built in 1969. In fact, it is not one suspension bridge, but three: two shorter and one longer suspension bridge have been built here. Actually, they serve no particular purpose except to reach a viewpoint on the other side of the river. The climb to this viewpoint is quite steep but we are rewarded with great views over Tsitsikamma.





Early afternoon we continue our way to Oyster Bay. There, the huge thunderstorm which was following us the whole time, is catching up with us. A few beers shorten the wait for the storm to pass, while we check the weather forecast quite frequently...





After the thunderstorm has passed we can go for a beach walk and are lucky to find some firewood on the way. Preparations for dinner are running at full speed, the camp fire is burning and the freshly caught fish is frying in the pan when another thunderstorm is catching up with us. At dinner time it is raining so heavily, that we have no other choice but to take shelter again in our Unimog.

At least we know now, that there is enough space in our Unimog for four people and the best parties are anyways always happening in the smallest kitchen.





19.-20.2.2018 Addo Elephant Park

The last highlight before our friends have to depart home is the Addo Elephant Park. We stock up on supplies in Uitenhage and reach the Addo camp in the afternoon, leaving enough time for an evening game drive. Unfortunately, the bad weather system is still accompanying us, the visibility is limited and we only see a few elephants. But suddenly we see a pack of jackals preying on a carcass, they seem very alert and nervous. Out of nowhere, a spotted hyena appears and chases the jackals away. Now we know why they have been so nervous.

While watching the great show we almost forget the gate closing time. As we arrive at the gate only 7 minutes late it is locked. We call the rangers office and have to wait until an employee is reopening the gate for us. Luckily, we do not get into trouble for being late, in the Kruger Park they obviously issue steep fines for being late at the gate.





21.2.2018 Addo Elephant Park

Today is our last chance to see elephants and we are lucky. Unfortunately, the weather is still cloudy and hazy which makes it more difficult to spot game. We cross the park in full length to get to the South gate, turn right and arrive in the afternoon in Port Elizabeth.





23.2.2018 Port Elizabeth, Colchester, Craddock

Time is flying, the two weeks with Anke and Gregor passed by so quickly. Unfortunately, they had to fly home yesterday. The remainder of the day we use for some house work, laundry, small repairs... there is always a lot to do.

We have heard only good things about our next destination the Mountain Zebra Park. To get to the Zebra Park, we have to first drive back via Addo then turn North via Colchester to Craddock. It's quite a distance we have to cover today and the bad weather is still following us. Thick black clouds are building up and we are racing against each other.

On a side road directly at the fence of the Mountain Zebra Park we stay for the night. In the evening the thunderstorm finally catches up with us. One of the most impressive thunderstorms we have seen in our lives is passing directly above us with huge lightening, thunder and a substantial amount of rain. Our Unimog is shaking heavily. We even see lightning hitting a farmhouse not far from us. Sparks are flying in all directions then the lights of the house go off and the emergency generator kicks in. After what feels like an eternity it is finally over and we can go to sleep.



24.2.2018 Mountain Zebra National park

The Mountain Zebras, one of the rarest vertebrate, was close to extinction. In 1937 the Mountain Zebra Park was established to protect this species. With great efforts and some set-backs the number of Mountain Zebras was increased from just 10 animals to now over 600. The Mountain Zebra is smaller than the common Zebra with a very distinctive "clean" pattern. The park area was increased from initially 17qkm to now 284qkm by buying up the neighboring farms.

After a cloudy morning it clears up and we have beautiful weather while exploring almost every road in the park. We see plenty of animals and the landscape is very nice; the park is definitely worth a visit. Good that we still made the detour to this park.

