

## 23.11.2016 Imsouane, Tamarar, Sidi Kaouki

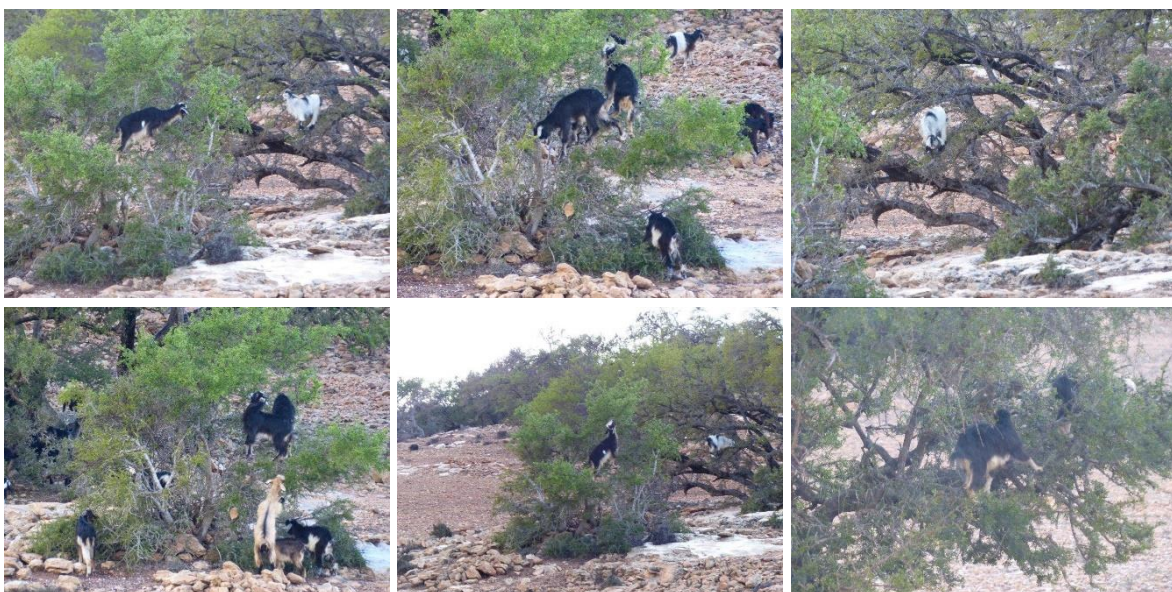
Imsouane turns out to be a “cool surfer’s paradise”. All of the sudden we feel like being at a beach in Thailand. Small little huts line up which house surf shops, cafes and restaurants. At the same time new huts are being built or renovated. Today it is rather quiet, but in summer there must be quite a different vibe.



Along the coast we drive up North, through hilly landscape, the road turns into a piste, but it's still good to drive on.

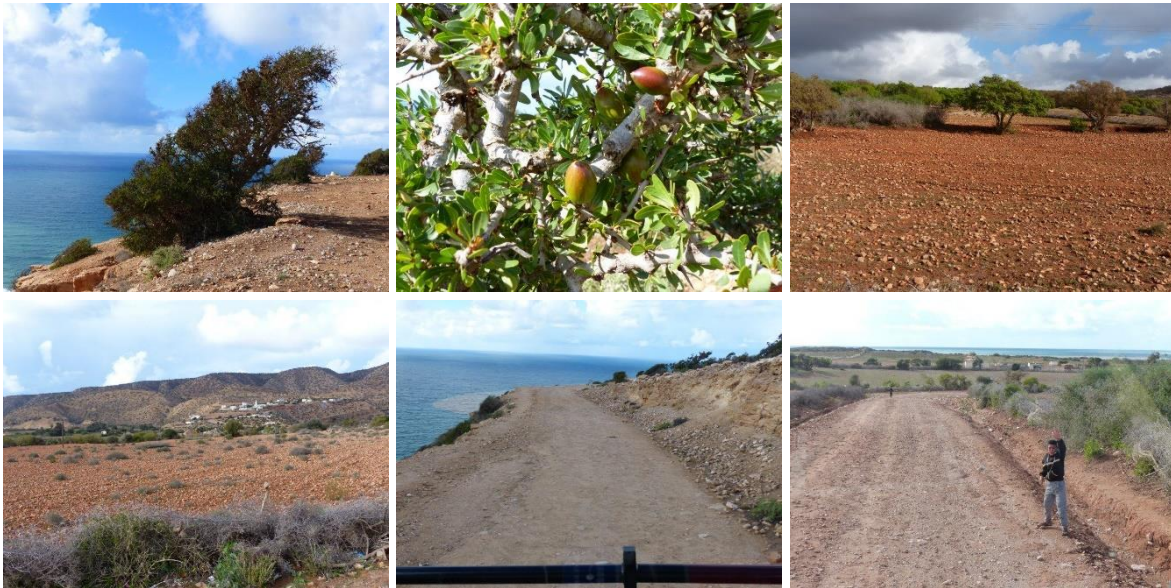


All of the sudden we discover the tree-climbing-goats and hit the breaks to watch them for a while. Unfortunately, it starts to rain and visibility gets worse. Hm, all this climbing can't be healthy for the trees, but it is definitely very fascinating to admire the climbing skills of the goats. Why do the Moroccan goats climb trees but not in other countries?





From this coastal route we have a great view of the ocean until the horizon. We pass by many paddocks, where mainly stones are growing. Agriculture is indeed a hard business here.



Finally, we reach a river and it looks like we can't get any further. The bridge has collapsed and the street has been swept away. We do not really want to drive through, the water is muddy, the ground not visible; it's also not very clean, the strong rain has cleaned out the whole sewage system and everything is muddled in the water. However, we see a brave man, who rolls up his trousers and starts walking through the water. He really has not much choice, the way around is very far. We turn around.



Instead of driving straight to Essaouria we decide to stop in Sidi Kaouki, located 25km away. Sidi Kaouki is a small quiet fishing village; not much is going on, the restaurants at the beach are mostly empty. But no wonder, it is raining and it is only 14C.

At dusk we discover a small, hidden dive, where also food is offered. We get grilled fish with salad and are happy. Moroccans at the neighbouring table are having fun. Their table is loaded with plates of fish, calamari rings, meat and veggies. Their innocent looking plastic mugs however carry suspicious looking heads.





## 24.11.2016 Sidi Kaouki

During the night it rains heavily for a long time. However, in the morning blue sky is awaiting us. Not only blue sky, but also a “fresh roll delivery service”.



Willingly, we buy a bread from this pop-up bakery (actually it is the camp manager). Since the weather forecast for the next few days is worse, we decide to stay for the day and enjoy the good weather at the beach.



A long walk at the beach, sardines and Tajine, watching surfers and those who want to learn, camels and coffee are offering disport for the day and suddenly it is already time to go to bed.





## 25.11.2016 Essaouria

Essaouria is only 25km away from Sidi Kaouki, so we arrive there quickly and find parking at the beach near the kite surfers. Essaouria has the nick name 'Windy City' and indeed it totally makes sense. The wind is blowing the sand several meters high from the beach to the boardwalk. That's why this town is very popular among kite surfers.



In Agadir tourists are not allowed in the port area anymore, but in Essaouria it is still possible to visit the port and even have lunch there. The hustle and bustle is very interesting to watch, fish and all kind of seafood are offered for sale, ships are being repaired, seagulls scuffle for fishy left-overs.

We overhear from a tour guide, that today less fishermen than usual are offering their catch. Due to the stormy weather many boats didn't leave port last night.





The medina (old town) of Essaouira is still in good order. The main roads have become market streets with many cafes, souvenir, carpet and hodgepodge shops. But still many people live here in their apartments and pursue their everyday life. Fortunately, the sellers here are not so pushy and it is possible to walk through the alleys undisturbed.





## 26.11.2016 Essaouria, Safi, Lalla Fatna, Beddouza

Also on our second day in the medina of Essaouria there are many things to discover and we walk around new corners we haven't seen yesterday. The heavy rain has flooded part of the port area... Unfortunately, it starts raining again and we get home totally soaked. It's only early afternoon and it's no fun walking outside anymore. The weather forecast also says it will continue to rain until tomorrow morning so we decide to leave town.



Late afternoon we reach Safi. This city is three times the size of Essaouria, with a huge industrial area at the entrance to town – the first impression is not very inviting. We want to park near the Medina, but a self-proclaimed unfriendly parking guard jumps out of nowhere asking for a fancy price and we decide to skip this medina. We drive to the camp site of Safi, which looks already a bit rundown. The camp manager asks for 70DH, which is on the higher end, but informs us at the same time, that they don't have hot showers. Why pay more for less service? We continue 11km to the Lalla Fatna Beach, where one can stand on a parking lot overlooking the sea. However, also there a parking guy is awaiting us with a fat grin in his face. Since it's getting late and almost dark he may not have expected another visitor and deems himself lucky. He asks for 100DH! That's even more than before for even lesser service. Although he is giving us a discount, his behavior is so dislikeable that we don't want to give him any money at all. The next town Beddouza is 17km away, let's go. Well, what have we learned is the best camping solution in Morocco? Exactly, just park directly in front of the Gendarmerie Royal, the local police station and we do just that. Today we have a Morocco overdose...



## 27.11.2016 Oualidia, El Jadida

The road along the Atlantic coast leads past paddocks, wave-like between the road and the sea. We are worried instantly if such wavy paddocks will survive a flash flood and if not everything would just be flushed out into the sea. The valley seems to be ergonomically unhealthy.



Our first stop is in Oualidia. At this pretty lagoon with golden sand beach you will find a former summer palace of the king. However, it is not used anymore and slowly degenerates.

Many sales people drive around on their motor bikes and offer seafood, oysters, sea urchin and more which they carry in boxes on their luggage rack. And they still offer it to us a third or fourth time, although we previously already politely declined for a second and third time. Persistence is everything...







This area is defined by agriculture. One vegetable paddock after the other follows for kilometers. We choose the prettiest sales booth and stock up on vegetable.



In Moulay Abellah we come across a huge souk (market) and drive very slowly and very carefully through all the cars, donkey carts and market booths. Due to the rain, the market is quite muddy today...





Soon we reach El Jadida, a port town with a long history. The famous Portuguese old town was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century El Jadida was an important stop for supplies for the Portuguese seafarer on their way to India. The town has been occupied by the Portuguese, the Spanish and the French. The 'Cite Portugaise' (Portuguese old town) is surrounded by an almost complete city wall, the main tourist attraction of the town.

The locals however also like to come here because of the nice beach.







We heard that it is allowed to park at the beach promenade of the Avenue Sete near the Ibis Hotel and we try our luck. The parking guard advises us, not to park too close to the hotel and shows us where he wants us to stop. As we turn off the engine and look around we realize that we park exactly in front of the main entrance of the hotel...

## 28.11.2016 Tamaris Plage

We enjoy breakfast with freshly pressed orange juice at the beach promenade and watch the languid happenings at the beach, not much is going on, it is still early.

After breakfast we hit the road, we want to drive to Tamaris Plage a place shortly before Casablanca. The coastal road R302 doesn't lead directly along the coast as we expected, so there are no nice vistas over the sea. The closer we get to Casablanca the more construction projects turn up, where constructions workers are busy doing their work. Modern residential complexes are being built for the growing middle class of Casablanca.

At Tamaris Plage we park on the beach parking and discover a few nice restaurants and cafes waiting for clients. All is good, except for some wild dogs who bark at us quite ferociously.

