

## 10.11.2019 Inhasorro

Today we will drive the last leg towards the coast of Mozambique at the Indian Ocean. Before we turn to the main road EN 1 we pass through Dombe. There at the river Rio Lucite we want to see the bark boats, which are still in use today as passenger ferries across the river. Vehicles can cross the river via a new bridge.



These tree bark boats are very unique as they are made from a single piece of bark of a very large tree. A gondolier punts the boat across the river.

This local craft is almost forgotten, probably because of the fact that there are no more old trees which can grow this large. These boats are so special they are even on display in the Maputo museum.





A badly corrugated road leads to the EN1. This track slows us down quite a bit and would be ideal for an attack... But actually, this road is too remote, the rebels may rather target the main highway where the news of an attack travels faster. Uh, we have to stop thinking about this otherwise we go crazy worrying too much... however we are very alert.

Finally, we reach the EN 1 and on a Sunday, there is not much traffic – we are not sure if that is good or bad for us. Well, enough... Quickly we drive through to Muxungue where we should be out of the danger zone and can relax.

Muxungue is well known for its cashew nut production, and of course we have to support the local economy.



Thereafter we take the final spurt towards the Mozambican coast. The EN1 does not really look like the main North – South highway as it gets pretty narrow at places.

From the last turn off of the EN1 it is only 15 km to Inhassoro and soon we feel the cooler breeze from the sea, we are looking forward to arrive at the Indian Ocean!



“Goody Villas” in Inhassoro is a large and relaxed campsite, directly located at the beach with shady spots under the many trees. Looks like we won’t go anywhere soon. After so much driving and stress we have earned a few days of relaxation at the beach.



### 11.11.2019 Inhasorro

The camp site is next to sea, so we can watch the fishermen practically from home. It is quite a task for almost the entire village to bring back in the large fishing net. Up to 24 men pull at the same time from shore and it still takes more than an hour to bring in the net. The catch is meagre... also two large sea turtles are caught in the net but are released back into the sea. To catch a turtle is punishable by law. Each catch is recorded and noted down by some village elders recognizable by their official hats. We assume that the earnings from the catch are later fairly distributed amongst the fisher men and their helpers.





Today we explore the village and walk about 3 km along the beach to look for the local market and bakery. The bread is sold out already but at the market there is always something interesting to discover.



So far on our journey we were mostly the only guests on a campsite and we enjoy the nice company here at Goody Villas. Soon we get to know Patrick from Australia, Kenwyn and Johan from Cape Town as well as Emmy and Andrew from Maputo. All are seasoned campers and travelers. Here and there we have a chat and exchange tips and information about travelling or cook together.

Quite a few beach boys visit the camp site every day and offer fresh fish, seafood like crayfish or squid as well as snorkeling and fishing trips. The famous Bazaruto Archipelago is just off the coast, it consists of five islands – a paradise for divers and snorkelers. Day trips from here to the smallest Paradise Island (officially named Santa Carolina) are very popular.

Rodriguez, one of the beach boys who is visiting the camp regularly, has a fishing trip on offer. Since Werner wants to do a fishing trip by boat for quite some time, it is quite an easy sell for Rodriguez. He comes back several times and informs us that other guests have booked already and therefore he is able to give further discount. Finally, we book a tour for the next day, pick up, lunch, a sun roof and other goodies are inclusive.

For dinner we treat ourselves and for the first time cook tiger prawns ourselves. Tiger prawns in garlic-butter sauce, quite yummy if we may say so.



## 12.11.2019 Inhasorro

We get up early as we will be picked up at 5:30 am. However, the crew is one hour late because they had problems launching the boat. Well, this is a good start. It is a rather windy morning, but Rodriguez is convinced that it will clear up soon and the wind will calm down.

What then arrives is not the nice little white yacht we expected. Instead a big old dhow turns up. A dhow is a heavy and slow boat, originally an Arab-Indian invention, usually it has a lateen (triangle shaped) sail and is mostly used in the Indian Ocean. Our anchor is a huge rock tied to a rope... To be precise, there are also no other customers on board, but local fishermen who don't speak a word English.

In heavy swells and high waves, a dhow is not an easy ride as it rolls strongly with the waves from side to side. As a result, Werner gets totally seasick and has to quit fishing. Dewi is still holding on without having to throw up, but fears for her life. There is no lunch served, as the cook also is seasick, but the sea is far too rough to even think about starting to cook up a meal. We both have no appetite anyway and would not be able to eat anything.



On the way back, it finally clears up and the sea is much calmer, ideal conditions for fishing, but now it's too late.

Back at the campsite we receive a warm welcome. Our fellow camping friends were worried that we actually boarded the old dhow in these weather conditions and have awaited our return... We are just happy to have survived this trip – and we even paid for this disaster...

### **13.11.2019 Inhasorro**

Today we take it easy as we have to recover from yesterday's boat tour. Slowly our stomachs have calmed down and our appetite returns.

To our surprise Rodriguez turns up again. After such a disastrous trip we assumed we would never see him again. However, he must have heard that the sea was really rough and felt a bit pity for us. The paid for and promised lunch we did not receive either. From him we learn that the cook was seasick as well. While on board we weren't sure if he was just sleeping or feeling unwell. Fair enough, Rodriguez wants to deliver us the lunch we missed out on.

We are still fit enough to start the “washing machine” and manage to do a major load of laundry.



Our Unimog also needs a bit of attention – the drive belt to the compressor is a little loose and the tire pressure control system is losing air so that our tires go flat over the time of a few days. Werner could tighten the belt and found the air leak in the system.



It is almost getting dark, but no sign of Rodriguez yet with our promised food delivery. Meanwhile the bets on our campsite are 50:50 for and against him showing up again with the food. He seemed honest, so we don't give up hope, yet. Finally, there is a shadow on the fence, he is indeed back and hands over fish with rice – at least his honor is restored.



## 14.11.2019 Inhasorro

Patrick offers a ride into the village and we happily join in, we could need some fresh vegetables as well.



As our home cooked prawns turned out quite well, we dare to buy fresh calamari from a beach seller. He shows us how to gut and prepare them. We gladly take cooking advice from our camp neighbor on how to cook calamari. Calamari can get very rubbery if it is cooked wrongly (too long). However, we managed well and the calamari turned out soft and tasty.



## 15.11.2019 Vilankulo

Unfortunately, we can't stay forever. Actually, our planned three days turned into five days already. One reason being the really nice company on this campsite. But now we are well rested and can continue our journey southbound along the coast of Mozambique.

Before we depart, we check out once more how the locals bring in their huge fishing net. A few times each morning it is the same procedure: They take out a long net with a boat and pull it in from shore. The results are always rather meagre with only a few small fish in the net. Fisherman Charlie is late and the already departed dhow even turns around to pick him up from the beach.



Today we want to visit Vilankulo, a place about 100 km away. On the way there are many construction sites, indeed the main road EN1 is in dire need of repair, the pot holes are uncountable. The construction sites can only be passed one-way on single lanes, which causes long waiting times for the opposite traffic to pass. Therefore, our trip takes much longer than the anticipated two hours.

At the last construction site a black guy all dressed up in a fine shirt loses his mind. He jumps out of the car and threatens the poor girl who holds the Stop-and-Go-Sign demanding to be allowed through immediately. He does obviously not consider the fact that the opposite traffic has not yet fully passed through the long construction site. Completely irritated and under threat the girl turns the sign to „Go“; the entire queue

starts to drive. The foreseeable happens, the traffic from the other direction arrives, we can not pass each other. Finally, we drive up the steep bank onto the newly constructed road officially still closed to traffic. The other drivers have no chance to get up this bank and are cheering at us as we pass the line of cars blocking each other. Would be interesting to know how and when they have been able to solve this situation.



Vilankulo is a much bigger town compared to Inhasorro, also laid back. The street is very narrow due to all the market stalls and we have to navigate very carefully with the Unimog. The last 10 km stretch to the camp site "Villas do Indico" at the North Beach is a sandy track for which 4x4 is a must. The construction workers standing on the truck in front of us have a lot of fun playing air guitar with their shovel.



## 16.11.2019 Vilankulo

Today we want to visit the South Beach of Vilankulo and plan to stay at the „Dona Soraya Lodge“. This lodge has seen better days and we are again the only guests. The Swiss-Spanish owner couple Soraya and Peter lives for more than 20 years in Africa and they also suffer from the lesser and lesser tourist numbers.

The tourism on the beaches especially in northern Mozambique came literally to a standstill, as these are close or even inside the rebel areas. In the unrests from 2014 to 2016 Vilankulo was only reachable by military convoy. Beginning 2019 the devastating cyclones Idai and Kenneth created huge damage to the infrastructure and buildings which did not help the tourist industry either. Now the rebels are creating trouble again....

It's not an easy life for the resort owners, many have given up, closed down or went bankrupt. Some holiday resorts, which are still positively mentioned in our updated travel guide book are now run down or closed. Money for urgently needed repairs, renovations or modernizations is missing. The owners are struggling with the situation and do not want to easily give up all their work of a lifetime where so much effort and money went into. Often their entire savings were spent on a lodge or resort which should have been their old age provision...

