

## 18.9.2024 Windhoek

With our arrival in Windhoek, the stress of the check-in procedure in Frankfurt has faded. The system of Discover Airlines did not want to let us check-in because our return flight from Windhoek is later than in 90 days. The lady at the counter was not helpful, she simply repeated several times, that we have to buy a new ticket. We tried to explain that we would travel overland to neighboring countries, therefore we would not be spending more than 90 days in Namibia. The check-in lady was not only uncooperative but also not very bright. "You want to go to...hmm.. Botswa...what? How do you spell Zimbabwe...?" After a lot of discussion also with the team leader, who finally showed up at our counter, many phone calls and a cancelable hotel booking in Harare later, we were finally checked-in after one hour.

As we arrive in Namibia early morning it is cool. The pilot mumbles something about 5C, but we can hardly believe it is that cold. The travel season in Namibia is slowly starting. When Manfred picks us up at the airport he mentions, that alone today a total of ten customers are arriving, all of whom store their vehicles with him. Not all of the guests fit in his bus, Gerda has to come with her car and the last guests have to take a taxi.



As always, we are driven directly to our car, which also this time starts without any problem. Only one tire has lost some air and is resting on the stand, but that's not a big problem. Luckily, we now make the effort to jack up the car on a stand before parking it. Without any delay we head straight to the "Urban Camp" in Windhoek.



## 19.9.2024 Windhoek

One has to get used to the dry air again; somehow it feels drier than usual. Your nose burns, your lips crack and your hair hangs down like chives. It is also very windy, and the gusts of wind throw up large clouds of sand and dust.

The usual travel preparations are underway, everything has to be packed away and inventory taken. We buy essentials for the first few days, stroll up and down Independence Avenue and then drive out to Kai to change our motor oil.



## 20.9.2024 Windhoek

Today, we first visit the Road Fund Administration to pay the road tax, which is always due when arriving or leaving Namibia. Afterwards, we drive to Namib Truck, where we have the compressed air hose from the driver's seat renewed. During the last trip, the hose broke so many times that it has now become almost too short due to all the patching and is under a bit of tension. The repair goes quicker than expected, we even make it on time for lunch to the "Wilde Eend".



In the afternoon, the hot water boiler gets new insulation. The old insulation has thinned out so much, that it collapsed to the bottom and is not insulating anymore. With the new insulation, the boiler should keep the water warm for longer and not heat up the cabin so much. Finally, the solar panels are cleaned and then it's time to call it a day.



## 21.9.2024 Otjiwarongo

This year's "Carnet Run" we'll do in Angola. We are still a bit skeptical, as one grew up with almost only negative news about Angola. The first what comes to mind hearing Angola is civil war, landmines and oil... While researching Angola, we read that it is the fourth most dangerous country in Africa, after South Africa, Somalia and Nigeria... Maybe we shouldn't do so much research after all. But Angola is opening up for tourism, visa requirements are abolished and we hear from more and more travel friends that they have traveled Angola without any problems. We ask everyone we meet whether they have ever been to Angola and get some good tips as Angola is popular especially with fishermen.

After a big shopping trip our supplies are stocked up and we head north. It's great to be back on the pad. On the first day, we often drive to Otjiwarongo. Patrick's son Henk has meanwhile taken over the bar. A cold beer is just what we need now.



## 22.9.2024 Kamanjab, Oppi Koppi

Early in the morning we are woken up by the clatter and neighing of horses. How wonderful. After a quick breakfast we set off. Whenever we pass by a fuel station, we are encouraged each time to drive in and fill up - with great physical effort.



On our way North to Angola we pass through Outjo for the first time. In Outjo there is the "Farmhouse" restaurant, we gladly take the opportunity to have a break. The owner learned hospitality in Switzerland and has many impressive cakes on offer.



In Outjo stands the Naulila Monument, which commemorates German soldiers who fell in 1914 in Fort Naulila on the Kunene River in Angola while fighting against the Portuguese.



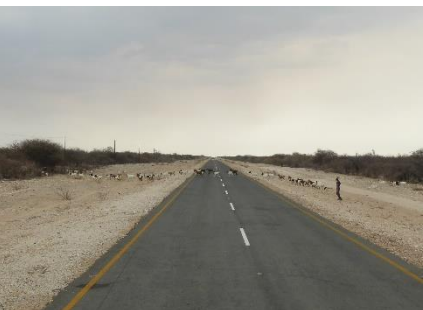


Late afternoon we reach the Oppi Koppi Rest Camp in Kamanjab. As an overlander you still camp for free, but in return you of course frequent their restaurant. The crazy ostrich, who always throws himself on the ground for a courtship dance, greets us immediately. It is Sunday afternoon, many locals are chilling at the bar and in the restaurant.



### 23.9.2024 Ruacana, Okapika

It is 310km to Ruacana and we drive through without stopping. Ruacana is located practically at the border with Angola. During the drive we see the usual charcoal burners who produce and sell charcoal. Of course, herds of goats always want to cross the road just as we approach. Near the Etosha National Park there are signs warning of elephants. Unfortunately, no elephants ever actually cross our path, only goats.







Our campsite of choice is "Okapika" because it is only 20 km away from the border crossing Omahenene, where you cross over to Calueque in Angola. The campsite is a large, sandy site with a small pool and a mango plantation. Unfortunately, the mangos are not ripe yet. We are the only guests and spend a relaxing afternoon whilst mentally preparing for the border crossing tomorrow.





Border crossings are rarely something you look forward to, because you never know what to expect. How friendly will the border guards be, are they in a good mood or whether they might be up for harassment, how many touts are lurking there, how long will the queues be... It was recommended to cross at the Calueque border crossing as it is said to be more relaxed there, so we are hopeful.

We pre-ordered dinner at the Okapika camp, we often do this to support the local economy. When we arrive for dinner in the early evening, the table is beautifully set for us on the balcony. We weren't expecting that. We have a lovely view of the grounds with mango and moringa trees.



#### **24.9.2024 Border crossing Namibia / Omahenene – Angola / Calueque**

In the morning we take our time. In our experience it is often better to not arrive at a border crossing too early. Early morning is the time for commercial cross-border commuters and it is usually busy, the lines long. At around 9:00 a.m. the first wave is processed and it becomes quieter. But these strategic considerations are not necessary, the Calueque border crossing is small and sleepy, there are no other cars while we are there, mainly pedestrians want to cross the border.

For those who are interested in the details of the border crossing: On the Namibian side, the formalities are, as usual, quickly completed: immigration (passport stamp), customs (Carnet de Passage stamp), police (our details are entered in a thick book) and RFA (pay road tax). The road tax counter is not manned at all, the lady has to be called first. While we wait for her, we watch the porters with their wheelbarrows pushing their customers' purchases across the border and returning with empty wheelbarrows. At the end a colleague from NamPol wants to inspect the inside of our car. However, the main reason for the inspection is obviously curiosity; he says he wants to buy our car.

The Angolan visa used to be one of the hardest to get. We are curious what to expect. After we are finished on the Namibian side, we roll about 50m further towards a small booth. There we have to sign-in in a large book. Meanwhile, a border official takes the

obligatory photos of our vehicle from all four sides with his smartphone. Previously, you had to bring these photos with you, all printed out, but this has also become easier. When all is done, the border official points out that we have to drive past the booth on the right side. In Angola, there is right hand traffic! For a change, Werner is finally sitting on the correct side for our left hand drive vehicle.

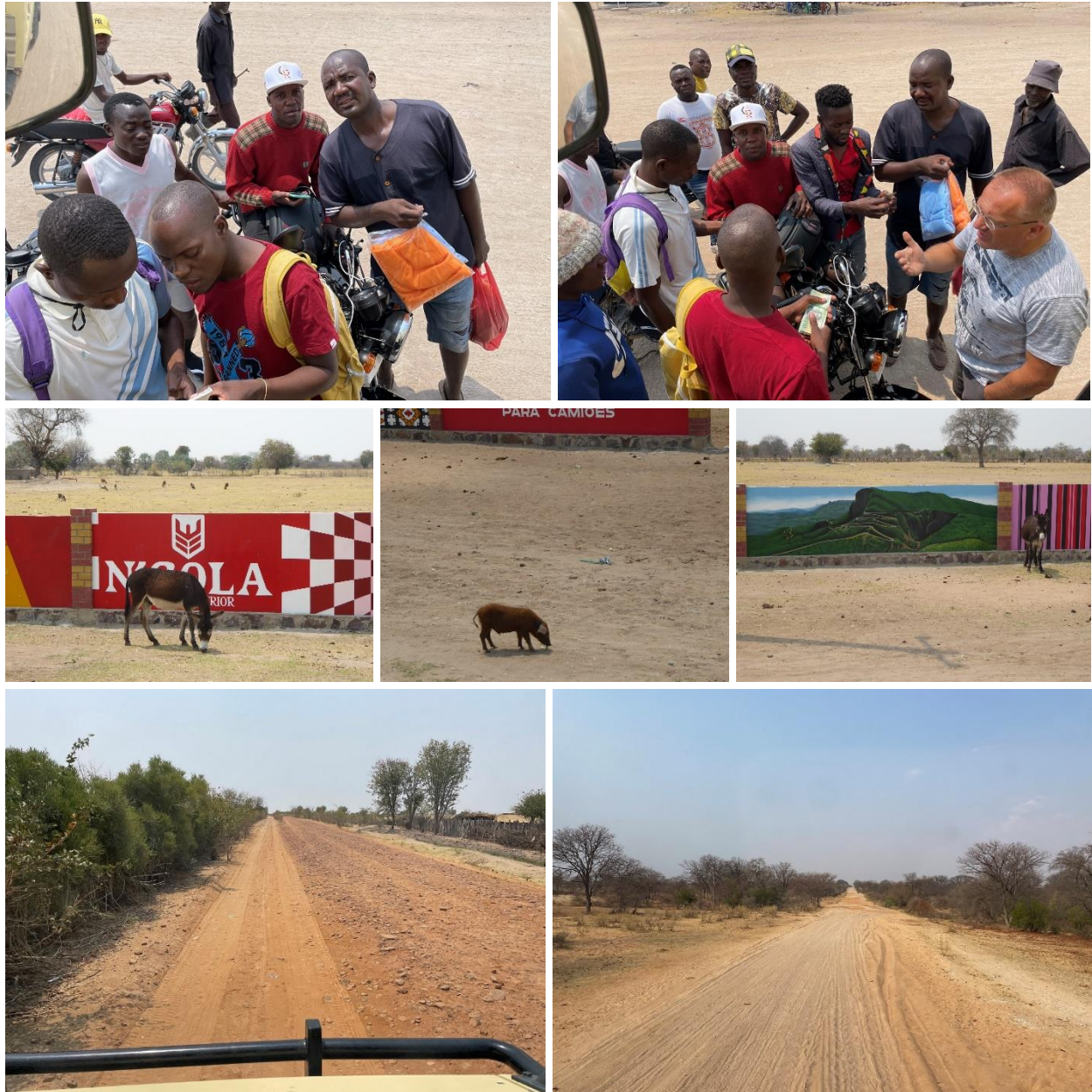
The Angolan border building is large, the officials are friendly. However, the official language is now Portuguese... Our passports are quickly stamped, we don't have to show any other documents. At the next counter our vehicle is registered. Since we are now registered in the system, this step will be omitted the next time we enter the country, we just have to bring this piece of paper again. As a third and final step, we have to acquire a TIP (Temporary Import Permit), as the Carnet de Passage is not recognized in Angola. We hand over our prepared color copies of the driver's passport and drivers license. The TIP costs 150Nam\$, which we can also pay in Nam\$, as we don't have any local currency on hand. That's it, all done.

Our very first impression of Angola: it's unusually empty for a border crossing. There's nothing except a bar, there's no gas station either, supposedly to prevent smuggling of fuel with Namibia.





We roll slowly out of the border area when the first money exchangers approach on their sparkling clean motorcycles. A crowd quickly forms around our car. However, they offer a poor rate, so we decide not to exchange any money. A pig and a donkey are the first to greet us, and then we almost miss the turnoff to Xangongo.



The first major town after the border crossing is Xangongo, about 90 km northeast. The road is in a very poor condition with numerous potholes. This stretch of road is not recommended during the rainy season. A dam for a future road was started to be built, but the road was never completed. Now this dam is a permanent obstacle that must be circumvented or crossed. You drive along it, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left. It takes us three hours to complete the journey.





The lunch break under a large baobab tree overlooking the Kunene River makes up for the bad road.





We absorb the first impressions of rural Angola as we pass through villages and many baobab trees, we see classes being held outdoors; in Naulila, school has just finished.



In the afternoon, we reach Xangongo and need to get some cash, but both ATMs are out of bank notes and the banks are closed since 3 p.m. We stand around weighing our options, thinking through what best to do when a bank employee takes pity on us and offers to exchange USD with us. We communicate using Google Translate



With all the errands we've had, it's getting late. Now it is urgently time to find a place to sleep for the night. iOverlander lists a few bush camps about 50km from town, and we just make it there before dark.