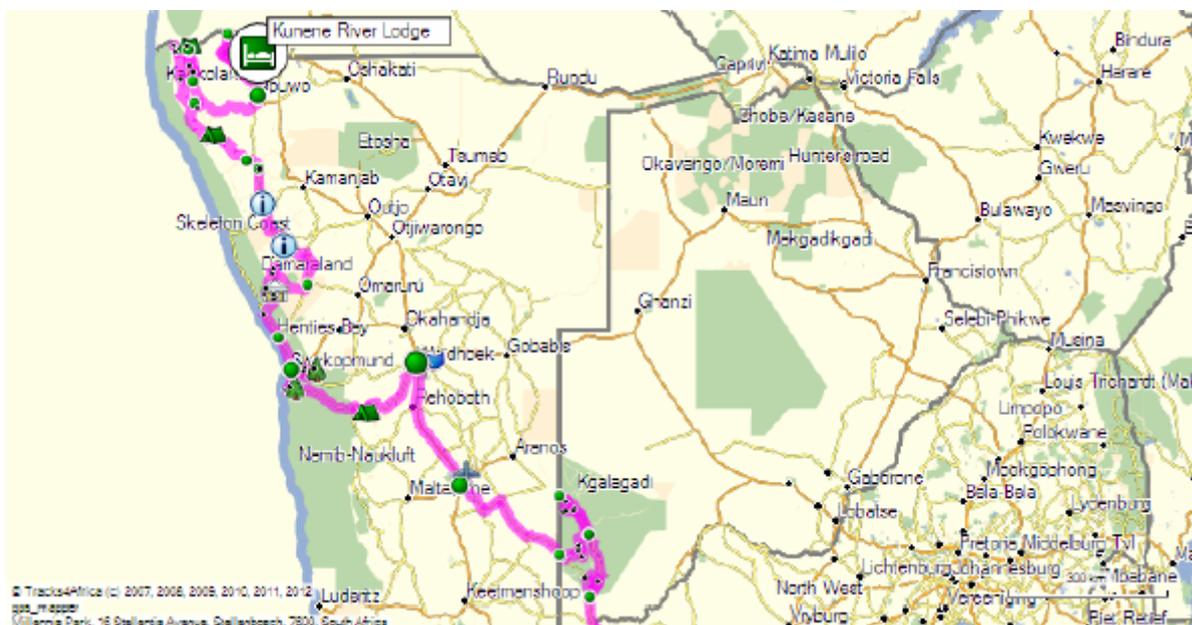


Dear friends,

Actually the mile recorder shows over 10'000km and we are a little bit more to the north-west than last time, at the Kunene River Lodge on the Namibia-Angolan border.

For those not touring around Namibia on a daily basis, and those rather occupied with the new girl/boyfriend than geography during the old high school days you may get a better picture of our itinerary since the last edition; Martin was working hard and established below map.



Today was a real lazy day (no driving), mostly dedicated to cleaning chores. After many days of dusty Namibian gravel roads the car, tent and us looked like a real mess. In addition we had to fix lots of loose screws – the road conditions are not the best...



Now we all look clean and polished again.

This time in Namibia we mainly focused on the northern part, the Damaraland and Kaokoveld. However, the beginning of our travel to the north collided

with the Easter holiday. Everybody knows that there will be no accommodation available at any tourist spot. And indeed, all South Africans seem to have gone to Namibia ... and all Namibian to their beaches.



So we spent the holidays in the surroundings of Windhoek. Two days on a guest farm and 2 days in a cave. Very interesting: outside shower and toilet with 180° view - now we understand the meaning of a loo with a view.

With the last drop of diesel we arrived at Swakopmund – even the petrol stations were sold out over the long weekend. As we did some complicated and lengthy calculations before departure in Windhoek, we could finally do it without a refill. Anyway there are several options should we run out of fuel, the most obvious Monika pushing the car.

Swakopmund was very nice for going out, nice dining, shopping and especially having a look at the old buildings.



There are places near Swakopmund that look like on the moon - well how we imagine it might look there.



Swakopmund is not only the nice place for going out, dining and wining – it's also the last major town to organize your survival if you're travelling further north. Beer for 10 days, wine for 2 weeks (because it's more difficult to get in small towns), a little water – just in case you run out of beer and if there is no shower available, then you need some food and finally 180 l of diesel for the next 1000 km. After having emptied our bank account to purchase all this stuff, we were ready for Damaraland and Kaokoveld. Only one major challenge remains: Not too far after Swakopmund there is a veterinary fence. One of these institutions created to avoid the transfer of possible illnesses from beef grown in the North to beef grown in the South and vice versa. So they built a fence dividing the whole country into 2 parts (southern beef and northern beef), equipped the fence with some gates and placed an officer at each gate to confiscate all fence-crossing meat. Well, we arrived at the gate, the officer, a rather well proportioned lady, looked very hungry at our fridge – but as she was explained that we were just on a day trip to the nearest expensive lodge helped her economise on her energy and not to look at our fridge. In this way our Southern beef was converted into Northern beef.



But now back to our journey. From Swakop we followed the Skeleton Coast up to Henties' Bay to move towards Messum crater. This is an enormous very old crater with a diameter of more than 20 km.

The landscape is very dry, just some of the world's oldest plants, the Welwitchias and some shrubs are growing there. The temperature was 40+, one of the reasons for stocking some cans of beer for this journey!



We were the only people for miles and could choose the best point for setting up our tent and having our sundowners. At night the Milky Way was fantastic.



Along the Brandberg we drove up to Twyvelfontein to admire the rock engravings. They looked familiar to the ones in Lesotho.



After another diesel refill at Palmwag we moved further north to Purros. Last time there, we saw plenty of desert elephants in the riverbed around the village – and they even woke up Martin at night while roaming around the campsite – but this time there was none. Monika was quite happy about it as these elephants are known to be not the friendliest ones.



To keep her in a good mood, we had to choose the campsite very carefully: It should be fully enclosed by trees and bushes to avoid elephants approaching her and it should be very open to identify approaching elephants as soon as possible. Well, after some time we had to compromise – on the site and on the mood. Next morning, still no elephants. Even if this corresponded to Monika's wishes, she was quite disappointed for not seeing one of

them.

So we had to drive on, northwards towards the Angolan border. Still some 250 km left. Stony roads, sandy roads, lot of corrugations, most the time a combination of all 3 at the same time. The whole day we tortured the car, passing the only important village in the area (a police station with a sleeping officer).



Finally we arrived at the Kunene River, the northernmost point in the Hartmann valley and border to Angola. (As my maiden name is Hartmann, we simply had to go there to see if there are still some ancestors sneaking thru the dunes of the valley, growing mice and trying to survive on a diet of sand, some weeds and mice milk).



The valley is not populated at all, but very sandy, windy and with lots of game. As we could not find the usual five star game lodge we choose a beautiful site in the bush (what did we say before about the loo with a view and water for showers...)

In the morning we were greeted by grazing gemsbok near the tent.

After some further intense and scientific petrol calculations we decided that we also could visit the Marienfluss valley lying just beside –



with the next petrol station being another 450 km away. A completely different valley, much greener – well if we can speak about greener in Namibia - populated by the Himba ethnic having large herds of cattle and goats.



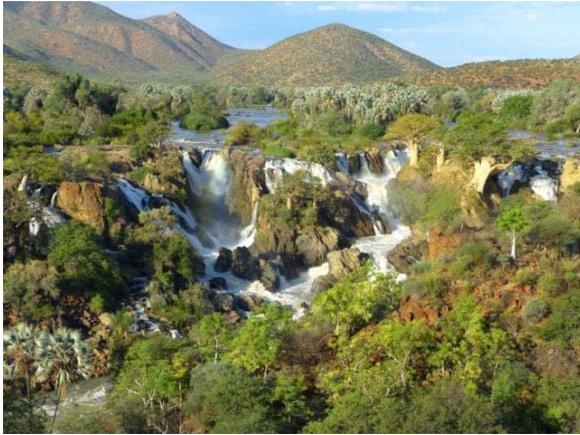
The Himbas are nomads, due to their splendid isolation not having changed their way of life for some centuries. More than 100 years ago some evangelic missionaries came to this area. They told the local people their usual message; they could convince some of them – by now the Hereros, with their typical cloth they copied from the missionaries' wives more than 100 years ago. Others preferred to remain as they are – now the Himbas, still following their traditional fashion habits. Even nowadays a visible difference in their fashion patterns.



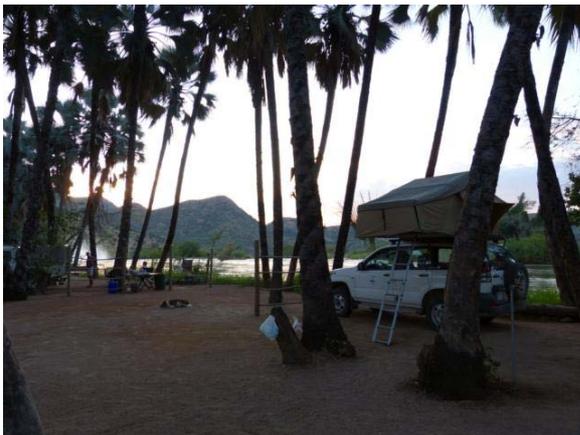
In Marienfluss valley we camped next to Kunene River and could listen to the splashing noises of the crocodiles in the river. – Descending from the tent Martin was very carefully examining the ground!



After getting lots of fuel in Opuwo we could head onwards to the famous Epupa falls in the Kunene River, famous also for its sunsets (and the sundowners) and to the Kunene river lodge.



There we had our extended cleaning session, relaxed by the river and went on a wonderful boat tour with a beer stopover in Angola.



According to the lodge manager all perfectly lawful.

For the continuation of our journey see our next edition of "be jealous".

See you!

