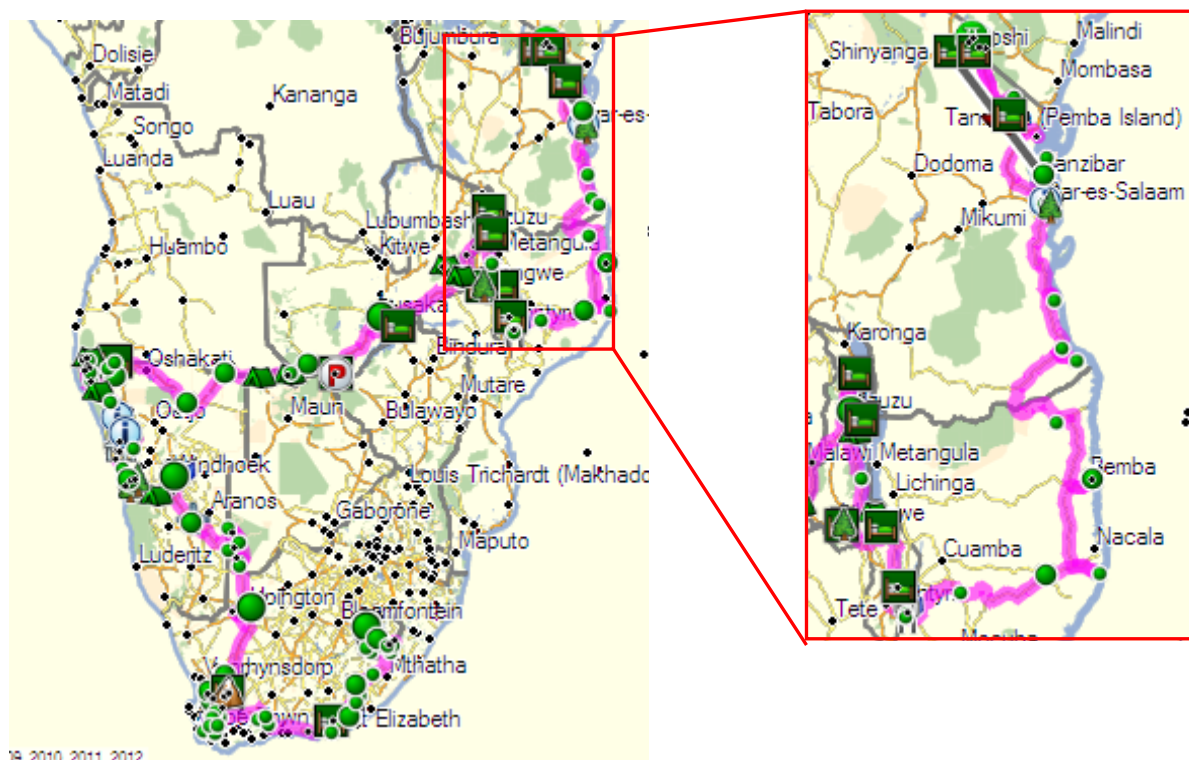


16.6.2012

Dear All,

Today we arrived at the bottom of Mount Kilimanjaro. Long time ago we went to different outdoor shops in Bloemfontein to buy warm jackets, thermal underwear, woollen caps, gloves, gaiters and all other necessary stuff to get up there. Today, when I look up – well, there is no visibility of the top, only clouds - I am frightened that I will never reach anything over 2000 m; especially when everybody here calls me mama! Were all our purchases for nothing???

But before we continue with our Kili experiences hear a little bit more about our adventures during the past weeks. For those still a little struggling with African geography we added the small map below.



After our hiking trip in Mulanje we left Malawi to come to the northern part of Mozambique. We dreamt of driving one day to the white beaches, the turquoise water, the lots of dead prawns, fishes and lobsters, etc. We entered at a very small border post with an officer who was a little bit overwhelmed as he had to handle two foreigners at the same time in a correct manner.

As we had not yet requested the all important visa to enter Mozambique, he had to issue some of these really beautiful biometric stickers for our passports:

in this case you do not just pass on a lot of Dollars from your hand to the officers' one and get a stamp in your passport, filling up yet another page. In Mozambique, of course you first follow the ritual of this odd money transfer. After that you are invited to come to a special room within the immigration building. This room is normally equipped with a kind of desk, some chairs and – who would believe it - a laptop with a camera and a scanner for fingerprints. You're asked to take place on a chair in a corner. Behind you a wall, which is in urgent need of some fresh paint. Of course a little bit a special situation. You receive the officer's full attention – nevertheless you feel a little like at the reception of a prison (some of you may remember Martin's personal experience with such kind of institutions). The camera is positioned at you; the officer is extremely concentrated in typing some commands on the laptop. You think hopefully all this technical stuff works and he knows well how to handle it, otherwise you would have to go back to the Embassy in Lilongwe some 500 km distant. No worry the picture he took was great (Martin's last one in the prison was not any better), the fingerprints are scanned, the officer copies one letter after the other from your passport to the laptop (name, surname, last 37 stamps in the passport including the Arab and the Chinese ones). All no problem, one hour later the printer makes some funny noise, a kind of sticker is produced and fixed onto your passport. The whole thing gets a stamp, you have biometrically correctly entered the Republica do Mocambique and you feel honoured that all this very advanced technology was efficiently working just for you.

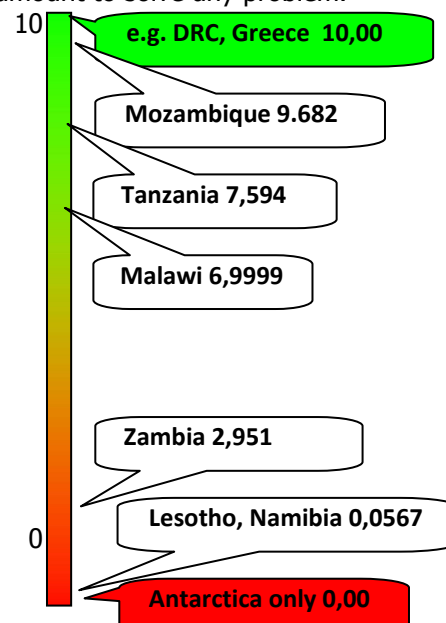
After this first success in Mozambique, we arrived after a very, very long, small and dusty gravel road – average speed 35km per hour - at the town of Gurué in the tea producing area to continue on somewhat better roads to the town of Nampula and then onwards to Ilha do Mozambique, which we finally reached 3 days later... so far our dreams of a one day drive to beaches and famous dead prawns of Mozambique.

The Street worker's Barometer

- a comparative analyses of the effort to survive from passing vehicles, with special regard to street workers' behaviour vis-à-vis the odd tourist.

Scale from fully inactive, hopeless, endangered to die out, in need of World Food Program (=0) to innovative, extremely active, fast growing in number, showing full impact of the last 73 years of successful GIZ support (=10).

Calculated on a formula including the number of road blocks/km, the number of sunglasses and cell phones per worker, the diversity of possible offences and the required time and amount to solve any problem.





Road to Gurué, tea plantations and town

Ilha de Mozambique came closer to our dreams. An island amidst turquoise clear sea water with plenty of old houses, churches and forts built by the Portuguese; one of the UNESCO world heritages. All looks a little bit run down, but that adds to its charm.





We stayed in one of those renovated old houses, a small hotel with walls thick like the length of your arm below the elbow and very high rooms for keeping it cool in the hot and humid climate.

But after all those nice cool mountain retreats we suffered a lot of the heat and regularly had to replace the missing liquid either by 2M or Laurentina, some of the local beer brands. We tried it once with rotten grapes, but they were out of a plastic container and gave us a terrible headache.

Unfortunately Mozambiquan wine prizes for a decent bottle are somewhere up in the stars.

After Ilha de Mozambique we decided we had to see more of this turquoise water. Ibo and the Quirimba Island are known to be famous for this. Well, the question was how to get there and where to stay without paying 500 US Dollars a night per person; of course a light breakfast included. Ilha de Mozambique is easy to reach as there is a bridge connecting the mainland with the island. Ibo is a little bit further away and all recommended boats in Pemba, the nearest big city, were out of order or under repair. But before looking for a boat we also needed to find more people to share costs. Finally we were 5 people, with 2 cars, Australians on their way from Zambia to Ethiopia, a Belgian touring Mozambique and us. We drove up bad dirt roads

through picturesque villages for 5 hours to reach the nearest harbour just opposite the island of Ibo where we tried to hire a local dhow, preferably with motor. The cars were left at a secure parking and after fierce negotiations off we went.



The boat ride took about an hour. Finally we reached Ibo town – probably more a village than a town, CBD consists of 3 fully ruined houses. Nevertheless, no choice, the place is famous, so we considered one of the ruins as our guesthouse and started exploring this world. We were here to enjoy these turquoise waters of the Quirimbas.



To reach these famous waters you have different options. First one: to travel to the smaller islands with a local boat, second one: to first cross the mangroves and walk to one of the neighbouring islands. To start with, we opted for the second option. To be properly equipped we boosted the local economy in buying appropriate shoes. The shop keeper could make some profit as well as the Chinese manufacturer. This was also the opportunity to see some interesting places in town.



After working a very long time with a company called GIZ, Martin still has a problem to ignore examples of best practises which exist all over the world. After some research he finally found a beautiful example of Knowledge Management at Ibo village. Anyone feeling inspired by the pic above may contact Martin for further advice.



Our hike started well. For the first few hundred meters the path was quite ok, for the remaining few kilometres it was rather muddy. ...



Top and right: Mike's shoe parade pictures

After a few hours walking thru thick mangroves, sand and water we finally reached our paradise island. Logically it was low tide – otherwise we could not walk to this place. So we could admire a beautiful, very wide batch of white sand, unfortunately there was no water to really make it a beach.



A few hours later and after a lunch of overcooked micro-fish

and plain rice, the water returned, we started to have a beach – this kind of turquoise water and white sand shown on Discovery Channel during long European winter nights.



A little unfortunate, we were told that this was high tide now and that we had to climb immediately into

our dhow to return. A dhow is a kind of a wooden sailing boat. Usually it works to cross the sea; however, the crew was not very skilled – finally they did not drown us, probably because we did not make any advance payment.

Chartering a dhow to the other islands was our next plan. We properly planned everything, found a highly professional skipper with a seaworthy dhow and even agreed on the price for the trip. However, bad weather and strong winds made us change these plans. We had to cancel the trip and returned to the mainland (a stiff wake up call at 4.30 am) – where the weather situation was not much better and the road as slippery as soap.



Back to Pemba we supplied in food, drinks and diesel and continued the last kilometres north to the town of Mueda and the border to Tanzania. The road changed from tar to potholed tar to gravel and finally to gravel with holes to bury a whole car inside. But, we kept on going towards the border ... until we suddenly arrived at a marvellous piece of tar and a bridge in the middle of nowhere, the famous Unity Bridge, the border between the 2 countries.



Mueda hotel, road to the border, Unity Bridge

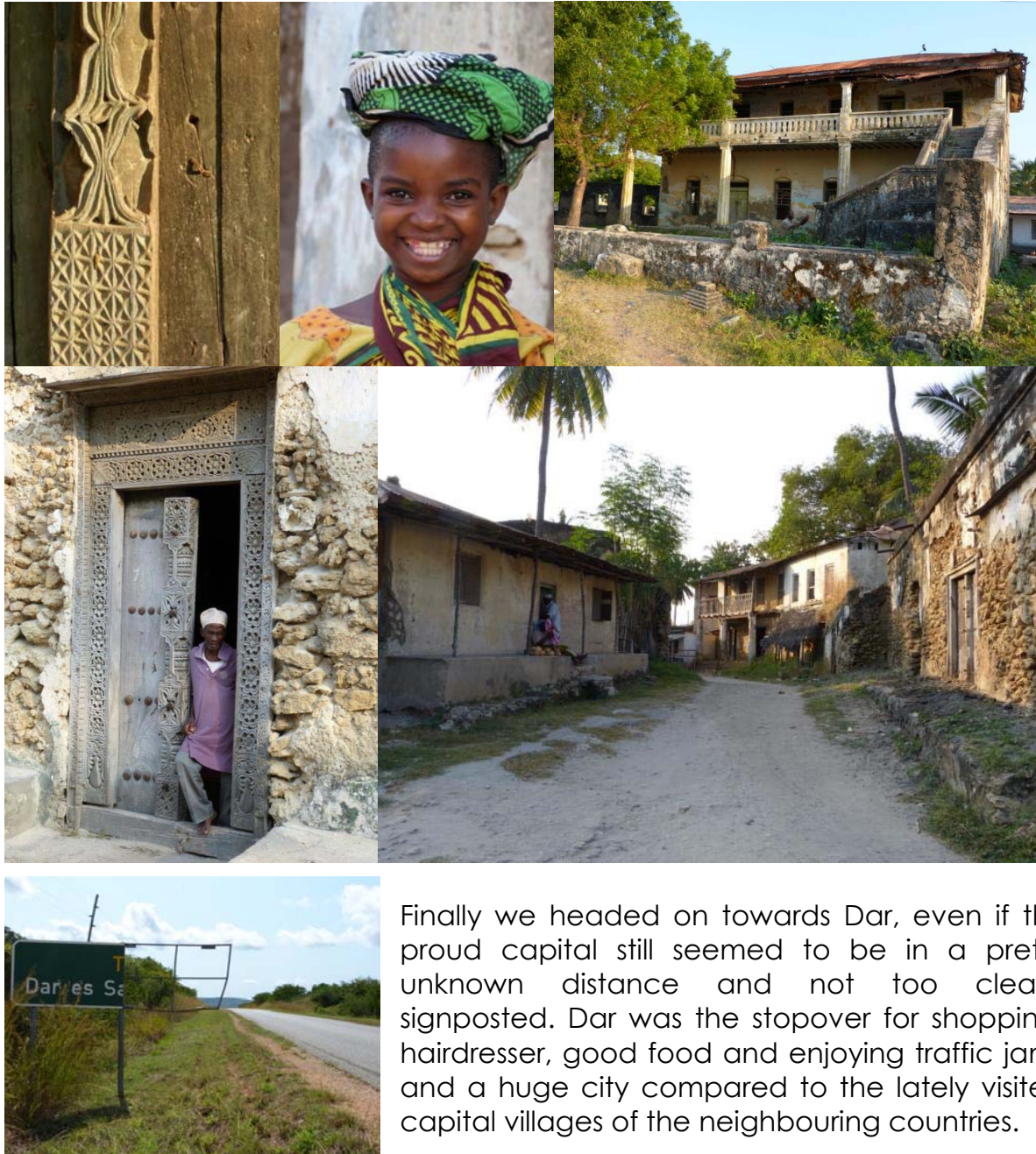


The tar did not last for long, gravel and potholes followed. In the evening, after a daylong drive and lengthy admin. procedures at the border, we arrived at the town of Lindi with a car more than dirty.

What we enjoyed most that evening was the shower, not the usual bucket shower we were used to, but real

running water, even if cold – just followed by a couple of Tanzanian beers named Kilimanjaro, Safari, Tusker, etc.

Before travelling further north to the capital Dar es Salaam we stayed for some days in the south of Tanzania to visit interesting villages and towns with strong German and Arabic colonial influence.



Finally we headed on towards Dar, even if this proud capital still seemed to be in a pretty unknown distance and not too clearly signposted. Dar was the stopover for shopping, hairdresser, good food and enjoying traffic jams and a huge city compared to the lately visited capital villages of the neighbouring countries.

It also was the place to finally plan and organise our Kilimanjaro trip. If you want to reach the top of Kili you have to be fit and acclimatised. Well, forget about the first statement and let concentrate on the second issue. This brought us to the idea that we should go somewhere into the mountains. Taking this into consideration we had to drive further north. This would not only make us fit for Kili but also help us to get less distance to Laufenburg, still some

9312.451 km far. So we followed the advice of our GPS and took the highway north out of Dar. This gave us another chance to gain a lot of valuable



experience on how to drive in a complete traffic jam – somehow reminding us of Dakar on a Friday at 1pm. Further north the road was faster – of course except some delays due to poor people earning their daily life from passing traffic – we still feel a little uneasy, it's evident that quite a lot still had to fall asleep very hungry.

Finally, after some 7 to 8 hours and a steep climb we reached the Usambara Mountains and the town of Lushoto. Here we were immediately confronted with a serious problem. Nevertheless, everybody knew immediately that these Mzungus from the tribe of the Awagabundu could not correctly spell any word in Swaheli.



We were on approx. 1500 m with nice cool climate, lots of clouds and real fireplaces. It seems Lushoto and Lesotho are not too far apart...

To further acclimatize we continued to the village of Marangu at the bottom of Mount Kilimanjaro. The hotel of our choice possesses a lot of long - faded charm. Jimmy Carter was a guest there in 1988, before climbing Kili with his wife, but that event took probably place during the hotel's better days. As usual we were the only guests – funny either all guests just left, or the hotel is having a lot of bookings for the coming day... - we stayed another day, so the other guests probably were also postponed by a day...



DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	DATE
29/7/88	B. M. LUANDA	Box 19 MOSHI	16/4/89
- 11 -	A. A. NCHIMBI	" "	
- do -	E. S. LUANDA	- do -	7/8/89
- do -	MATHIAS MINJA	- do -	
28/8/88	B. M. LUANDA	- do -	22/8/90
7/8/88	Jimmy Carter	USA	
"	Rodriguez Carter	" wonderful hospitality!"	
10/10/88	Grand Guide	P.O. Box 19875 Dar es Salaam	26/5/91
14/10/88	Thomas K. Mafua	Box 9121, Dar es Salaam	17/5/91
18/11/88	C. T. Kiangi	Box 2485 Dar es Salaam	17/5/91

12.7.2012

Actually we are sitting at one of the wonderful beaches of Zanzibar to continue telling about our previous adventures.

Normally life often takes another turn than expected and that is what we experienced with Kili. Monika got a bad cold – probably she just was too frightened to climb - and we had to postpone the trip for another week. The week in between was spent at a beautiful beach with lots of coughing, sneezing, etc. However, one week later, strong as a bull, we started the adventure anew.

Starting point for climbing Kili was Moshi, a smaller town at the foot of Kili, quite cool and always covered in clouds. We have chosen the famous Machame Route because it is longer, more difficult, the landscape is more beautiful as we'll surround the mountain at 4000 m. There are no huts but only tents and you need more energy to get up to the summit. But all this helps you to better acclimatize and thus increases your chance to succeed. The alternative Marangu route was described as the way for old guys (much older than us of course), students and sissies.

The climbing company had their own hotel they booked us into – something like a railway station; coming and going of all sort of people for 24h a day. We were briefed about the climb the day before departure, how long and how high to walk (uff), what to take and not to take, what to expect, and especially what not to expect. The next day the shuttle brought us to the Machame gate, the border of the national park and the beginning of the trail. The whole place rather looked like Paris or Heathrow airport after a 48 hours strike of the cleaning staff and the pilots at the same time combined with an ice storm and large inundations in the main buildings. Hundreds of porters, climbers, cooks, guides were already queuing up for registering with the park wardens. We too, to inform them about the grandfather's 3rd girlfriend, the date of Monika's first date and other important information essentially necessary to climb a mountain. After an hour or so, off we went, together with a team of 6 porters, a cook, a guide and his assistant.

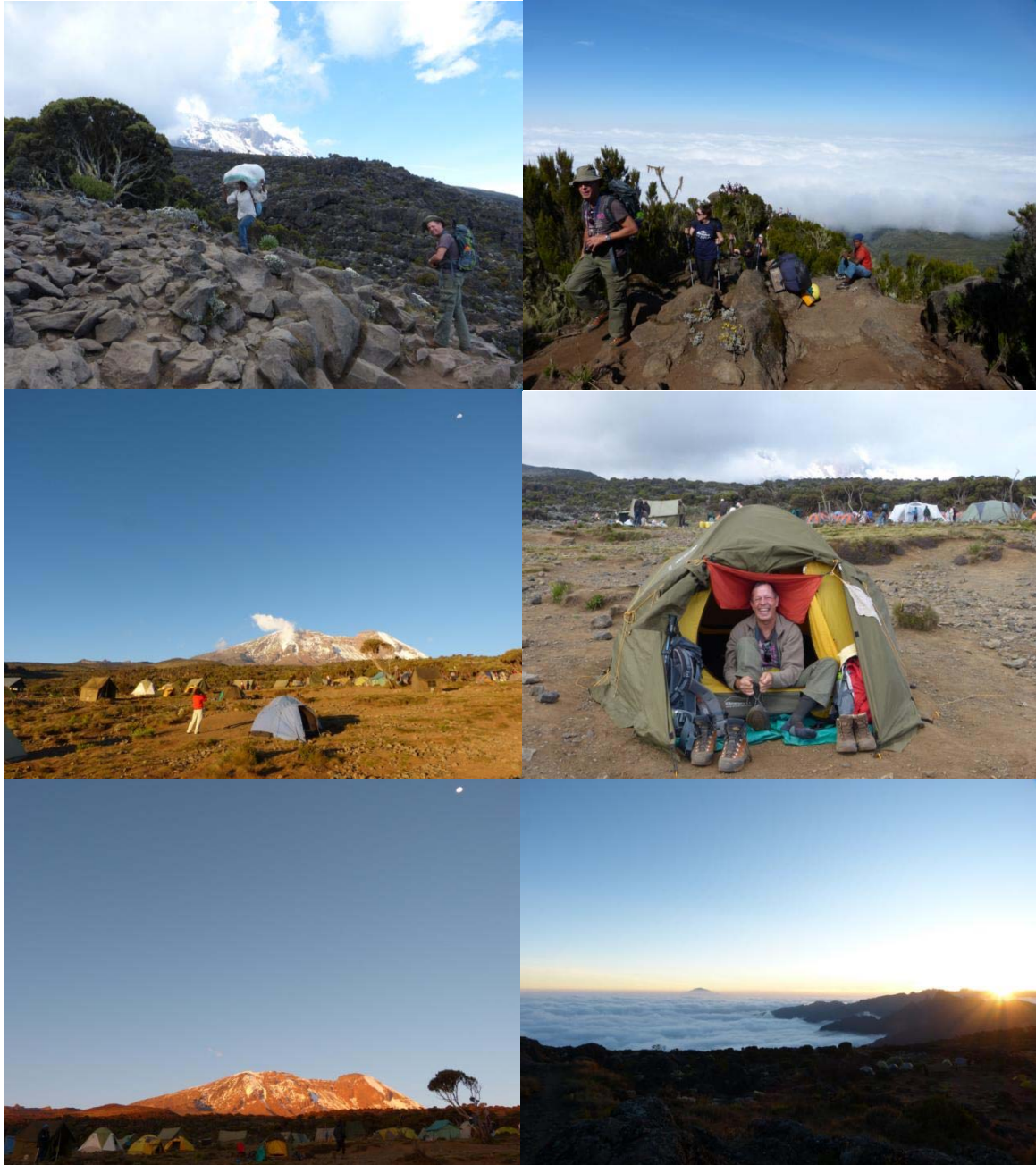


The trail of the first day was an easy walk through beautiful rainforest from the gate at 1900 m up to the first camp at 3100 m. Cautiously we rented a second warm sleeping bag, knowing that we had to overnight in tents up to 4600 m...



Together with us another approx. 300 people from different companies were climbing. Hence, you never felt lonely and there always was a lot of chatter and discussions. You have a little bit the feeling of being at the Costa del Sol or Rimini beach in August or in Ballito during X-Mas time, queuing up at McDonald's for a cheeseburger with double tomato sauce and artificial bacon.

At the beginning of the second day, above the clouds, we finally saw where we should go to – still very high and very, very far away, but spirits rose towards the end of that same day, as the camp was already at 4000 m, beautifully situated and with a wonderful sunset with our target in full view – and we're already a little bit nearer.



You might ask yourself how cleaning procedures were going on. Well, we got a small bowl of hot water twice a day, and that was it. Maybe they thought we should use it for a swim – definitely a little bit too small. Nevertheless usable for wetting, some washing and eventually to rinse socks at the end – what we never did as socks do not dry for days at an elevation above 4000 m. Quite soon we started to have vivid dreams of wonderful hot showers with plenty of soap and shampoo – we would have accepted even an ice-cold shower!



As we had a cook he had to do his job supplying us with all sorts of delicacies. To do so, the porters carried all kind of foodstuff up to the mountain. As temperatures are freezing at this elevation, a soup may always be a good idea. To prepare it, our cook used a kind of powder mixed with water and small bits of veggies. Imagine you're on a construction site, mixing concrete for a slab. Due to the wonderful veggies in this mix of water and (cement) powder, everyday the soup had a different name, e.g. know the veggie, name the soup. But soup was not all we got, there was the cook's famous tomato sauce, good for stew, for spaghetti sauce, for rice, pap and fufu – name it, it must be good. This sauce was made of another powder – probably comparable to plaster on a construction site. Some time ago, this powder must have been placed next to some tomatoes, hence the colour, with still a very neutral taste like water with little else. This nice sauce we got every day, not for breakfast where we got a similar powder called porridge, but for lunch and dinner. After the fourth repetition we could no more with it, it seems people are less hungry on the mountain. Google it and you'll find this confirmed. So far, our complaints, we did not lose weight, nevertheless, our dreams of a shower converted into dreams of a meal. For eating we had our own mess-tent. Luckily, imagine eating outside when it is frozen and windy!



For all biological reactions to the food supplied we had our own toilet tent – what a luxury. But, have you ever had a camping toilet on a 45 degree slope? Imagine, you just slip off...and don't think CrazyGlue may fix it. You might excuse us as we do not have any appropriate pictures.

Of course, we did not attempt to climb Kili in order to complain, but to have the fun and get up. Therefore let's go back to our trail. The 3rd day was our test if we would survive the altitude. We had to walk further up, up to the Lava Tower, at 4600 m. Here we had a lunch, then descended to 4000 m, the Barranco Camp.



All went well - with a slight headache - except experiencing the view from this camp to the famous Barranco Wall. This wall is famous of being the major obstacle to climb Kili. A sheer cliff, not passable for ordinary hikers, you need at least 50 years of climbing experience, only climbers having already conquered Mt. Everest, Annaconda, Great Wall and Thaba Bosiu would be able to climb this wall (just google "Barranco Challenge"). And this wall will await us tomorrow. Monika only experienced with Thaba Bosiu really will await a serious challenge – and she already was afraid of THE WALL long time in advance!



But much closer were our fatigue and the emerging cold of the night. Barranco is in a deep valley at 4000 m, very near to the glaciers and the snow of Kili. Therefore after our usual portion of soup powder (with some veggies) followed by something with this tomato sauce powder, we had to get to our sleeping bag, put into the second sleeping bag – so prepared to at least minus 10 degrees.

The next morning Monika was ready to climb Mount Everest, at least the little bit between 8670 and 8900 m altitude. To ensure a great success to this undertaking we opted for a late start just to get stuck in the worst traffic jam. Unfortunately another group of a few climbers, namely 50 staff of the Ashante Gold Mine (together with 200 support staff) on a team building and fundraising exercise was just in front of us. No problem, Monika could examine her chances to climb the wall with each single person – exiting. Martin was very keen of capturing every single moment of that experience. And here Barranco Wall starts. It's a little step, then a little narrow, finally some 5 meters higher even a little exposed – the dream of all google hypochonders.

Fortunately Monika realized the trap of all the received information, simply ignored it and climbed the sheer wall over “thousands” of meters, straight up, knowing only people with experience on Mount Everest or Thaba Bosiu could do this. A few minutes later the show was over, Barranco Wall was conquered and Monika was on top of it – it felt a little bit like being on the summit of Kili.



After the wall we went on to Karangu, our next camp. An somehow easy day with only 4 hours of walking.





Next day, the show must go on: another few hours hiking and by midday we arrived at Barafu Camp. 4600 m above sea level and starting point to the summit. So far everything went well. For lunch we got some of this cement powder with water followed by plaster powder with more water. Then we had to rest. Not because of altitude or general fatigue. The simple reason was the fact that we have not yet finish our today's hike.



At 10 pm we had to get up. We drank some tea, ate some bisquits and got into 5 layers of different clothes, scarves, caps, gloves against the freezing temperature at 4600 m and expecting some more rather cold weather at 6000 m. At 11 pm, with our headlights on, we were ready to climb another 1300 m until sunrise. All started very well. The first 100 m were steep but feasible. The same for the next ones and also the following ones. So we hiked our way up to the summit the whole night. The path was a little steep, snow on both sides, and the ground was deeply frozen. Feet and hands got colder and colder, temperature was around minus 15 C and slowly we could feel that the air got thinner and thinner. On the last little 100 m to the rim, at 5700 m, Monika decided that she would no longer have any power to continue. Of course not because of altitude, but because she always claimed that the hike was the aim, not the summit. She felt like having drunken a whole case of rotten grapes and 5 bottles of whiskey on top of it. We had to go a little slower, reinstall her will to survive with some hot tea and a frozen Snicker. Finally she agreed to postpone suicide and to go on; nevertheless she

seemed to be a little bit funny, needing some assistance to keep her steps on the path. At the end she was surprised that she stood in front of the signboard congratulating her for having reached Stella Point on the rim of the Kibo Crater – and that even before 6 am. Nevertheless, there were much more serious cases than Monika's. Some persons received oxygen from bottles, thus looking a bit like divers or astronauts; other only arrived at Stella Point by noon or even later, some didn't make it. Therefore Monika rather had to be considered a species under close observation than a serious case.

Martin still had no signs of altitude related disorder, even not a head ache. Of course this was not very encouraging for Monika, happily she did not really realize it; she rather concentrated on another half of a Snicker with hot tea. At that time we were still pretty optimistic that no permanent damage of Monika's current situation would occur due to lack of oxygen. In the meantime the Snicker sneaked her up again, another 30 minutes to Uhuru peak. Now on the top of the crater, no longer steep, just a smart path on the glacier, paired with a wonderful sunrise, that even Monika saw. Sorry guys in Lesotho, the Kilimandjaries call this the Roof of Africa – maybe some competition to your roof – please just sort out this small issue between the concerned parties. Around 7 am we reached the peak. Took the usual photos to proof our presence in front of the signboard, took a lot of other photos nobody ever wants to see and started our way back to more sustainable living conditions. We still had to descend of nearly 3000 m to avoid mountain sickness.





Kindly note the first photo above left does not show Martin queuing up in a Chinese prison for execution, but him at Stella Point. Dear relatives please do not expect an invoice of the Chinese Government for the bullet.

Who climbed high up will fall deeply. Normally this applies to all kind of situations in life – nevertheless not to a hike on Kili. It was rather who climbed up has to hike down the whole way. So we did. The first little bit was 1300 m down to Barafu camp – just steep and extremely dusty. There we had lunch, a small rest and off we went for another 1500 m down to Mweka Camp at an altitude of 3000 m. Finally, at 5 PM we arrived – after 15 hours of pure walking only. Here, after intense tests and observations we stated that Monika's condition stabilized, no permanent damage due to lack of oxygen was to be expected. With Martin it might be a little different. Even if he did not show any strange or unusual reactions on the summit or even on much lower elevations he remains strange. Here, we have to analyze further if this situation was already prevailing before climbing Kili... probably it was.

Next day – nothing special, just 4 hours walking back to the gate, the first shower after 7 days, getting our certificates for climbing, giving everything to a laundry and drinking lots of Kilimanjaro beer to recover from the mountain.



Signing out, our climbing team, what a nice certificate

We're convinced everybody now wants to climb Kilimanjaro. Don't be afraid, it's by far not as challenging as some people may believe. You just need to fulfil a few preconditions:

- Be used to mass tourism - simply queue up at any big airport during peak holiday season (just to get used to it, even if you have no flight); and spend a week on a beach in Gran Canaria, Mallorca or Ballito during X-Mas time (just to get the right feeling, even if you don't swim);
- be fit enough to climb a hill – the guys in Lesotho may climb Thaba Bosiu as an exercise (probably climb it 3 times daily for 3 months, this should be enough) or go to Lehakoe's Club with a certified body builder. The guys in Nepal may consider climbing Mt. Everest to be prepared for Kili and the guys in the Netherlands, Ghana and Senegal best forget about it, because walking on flat land will not help anyway (just consider yourself fit enough);
- ask your boss for a salary increase to cover the cost of climbing Kili. According to Martin's experience this should not cause any problem, every superior would immediately understand the case.

So far the adventures of Monika and Martin. We're looking forward to experience more interesting and strange things in our forthcoming travel to Rwanda, Uganda and Kenia. Those will be included in our next newsletter.

Cheers

Monika & Martin

Last but not least:



Martin in close contact with the local population. Here in his attempt to save the life of a desperate street worker.