

## **Bev & PC – 2012 Africa Safari 9 (and final)**

### **Southern Mocambique**

We made our way back to the EN1 after four good days at Chitengo. There was a modern version of the Groot Trek just ahead of us. Fortunately they had stopped just after the gate to GNP and we managed to get to Inchope and refuel ahead of those possessed with the herd instinct. The BP filling station has decent toilet facilities, a well stocked little shop and the only place since leaving SA where the attendant cleans your windscreen (rewarded with a handsome tip he was!). The stretch from when you rejoin the EN1 to Inchope is characterized by frequent potholes and includes a magnificent bridge over the Pungue River – a real scenic drive. After Inchope there is a stretch of very good tar for around 150kms. The next 150kms is potholed, so frequent braking and much weaving required as we headed to Inhassoro for the night. The 15kms off the EN1 to the town is a strip tar road so there is a need to give way to oncoming traffic – albeit not always reciprocated by others, particularly the chapas. We ended up at the Goody Villas Camp – probably the best kept secret as it was a splendid facility – own allocated ablutions and scullery, beautifully grassed site right on the beach with staff that are really attentive to your needs – at M200p/p the best deal we've had in 2.5 months. Sam is the guy in charge and asked him if they had any beers for sale. Yes, he replied but only Black Label and 2M. I ordered and paid for 6 2M (M50ea which after the M120 at Chitengo was a real bargain). About a hour later I wondered what had happened to my beers, so went looking for Sam, but he'd gone, and so I thought had my 6 2M and M300. Well a man cannot do without his beer, so I broke open the reserve stocks and got stuck into those, hoping I'd find somewhere to get replacements the next day. About two hours, and quite a few frosties later, the night guard appears and announces that the beers are now cold, can he bring them? Of course, was the reply and 6 bitterly cold 2M were duly delivered! Inhassoro has gone onto 'must visit again list'.



Next morning it was the ATM for cash, Handling (found in many towns and sell beer and sodas in case lots) for a case of 2M, the market for fruit and vegetables and the bakery for rolls. Looked for a grocery store, but everything was closed (a public holiday – Lusaka Peace Accord Day). Tried Vilankulo on way down to Pomene, but did not venture far enough north in town to find the supermarket. The turn-off to Pomene Lodge is just north of Massinga. The first 35 km is a good dirt track. At the gate you pay an entrance fee (M200p/p + 200 vehicle + 50 trailer) the next 20kms is a sand track with the last 10 being deep sand – so drop tyre pressure and engage 4wd. About 5kms after the gate we came across two young Portuguese tourists walking. We

put their gear into the Pajero, they hopped onto the nose cone of the trailer. Where do you want to go was the question when we came to the fork in the track that either takes you to Pomene Lodge or Pomene View Lodge. They don't know, so they'll carry on with us. The joy of being young! Luiz and Teresa are on a 6 week visit, flew into Jhb, bussed to Maputo, hitch hiked around Mocambique and need to get back to Jhb by 14 Sept to get their flight home via Dubai (cheapest option for them).



It felt like we were in Pringle Bay. There was a stiff breeze and a real nip in the air as we set up camp on the beach. We decided to pay the R183/d extra and take a barracca to get some shelter and get off the sand – beach camping is not as romantic as it sounds. The lodge is located on a sand spur between the lagoon and the sea with camping mainly on the sea side. Diving and fishing seems to be the main attractions. Not being a diver and no knowledge of east coast fishing it was a case of enjoying the warm water – unfortunately the wind changed direction and brought in an armada of blue bottles. Apart from the drive through the dunes the fresh vegetables, rolls daily from the lodge kitchen and a sooty tern that must have been blown off course by the Pringle Bay wind, we do not have much positive to say about Pomene.



Next stop was Bilene and the Laguna Camp. It took us 8 hours to do the 450kms which included stopping to inflate tyres. There are numerous villages with 60km speed limits – and at least 2 speed traps. The road is good all the way to Macia as is the last 30kms to Bilene. The restaurant at Laguna was unfortunately not open, so we had to settle for a braai. Again a very adequate campsite run by the owner Louis van Niekerk. Next morning it was vegetable shopping in the town – has a real coastal holiday town feel and out of SA school holidays is like any SA coastal holiday town – quiet.

After refueling in Macia we set off for Limpopo National Park (LNP) some 200kms inland and our final stop in Mocambique. The road to Chokwe takes you through an irrigation scheme that seems to be operated mainly by small scale farmers – after Chokwe there were a few larger scale operations. It looks like Chokwe is a growth point judging by the number of new buildings completed or in progress. The road is potholed in places to Chokwe and then improves until you get to the junction with the road to Massingir and LNP. Thereafter it's a rather bumpy tar road with potholed sections and a few diversions where repair work is being done. Massingir has a bank with an ATM, a filling station that had no diesel. The entrance gate to the LNP is just beyond Massingir across the magnificent Massingir dam wall (the source of the water for the irrigation scheme). The dam is on the Olifants River and the Aguia Pesqura (fish eagle) camp is on a ridge overlooking the dam. On the manager's advice we took site no 6 – close to the ablution facilities (which are good, but we had to connect gas ourselves) and a splendid view over the dam. Do not expect to see any game – cattle and people (some burning vegetation at edge of water) yes. Birds and fish eagle aplenty, yes. However, it was two very relaxing days at a lovely spot. The LNP is clearly a work in progress, but it will take many years, maybe a decade or

two before there is a significant wild life population established as I understand they are relying on natural translocation. Then there is also the question of the local communities within the park boundaries.



From Aguia Pescura to Letaba in Kruger is just over 100kms, with the border at Giriyyondo just over half way there. The road is badly corrugated much of the way, but you have a 40km/h park

speed limit which is further 'managed' by frequent speed humps – some benign, but quite a few vicious ones. Clearing immigration and customs on Mocambique side was a breeze, but then there was officious little man who wanted to inspect everything – my registration papers, drivers licence and the contents of vehicle and trailer. However, we were soon back in SA and on our way to Letaba and effectively the end of our Safari as from there it is Sun City to regain possession of the Bordeaux Cup and then back to Kleinmond via Karoo National Park.

Traveled back to back to Kleinmond safely.

### **Brief summary of our trip**

Duration	84 days
Counties	5 - Botswana (transit) Namibia (transit) Zambia, Tanzania and Mocambique
Distance	17128km
Fines	1 for speeding in Tanzania Ts30 000 (R160) - 63km in 50km zone
Punctures	1 – slow puncture caused by nail on left back tyre. Plugged in Dar es Salaam, but needed a gaiter which was done in Phalaborwa. Bridgestone dueler AT.
Highlights	Peregrine Falcon Camp, Livingstone (Z); McBride's Camp, Kafue NP (Z); Shoebill sightings in Bangweulu Swamp (Z); Chisimba Falls, Kasama (Z); Isanga Bay, Lake Tanganyika (Z); Ruaha National Park (T); Kilwa Kisiwani (T); Pemba Dive and Bush Camp (M); Ilha De Mocambique (M); Gorongoza National Park (M) and Goody Villas, Inhassoro (M). Met lots of really nice people, both locals and fellow travelers. A real privilege to be able to travel in this way to these fantastic places.
References	Rough Guide to Tanzania and Bradt Guide to Mocambique – both very useful references. Maps – Southern and Eastern Africa Road Atlas; Info Map Zambia; Info Map Tanzania; Road map of East Africa; Info Map Mocambique. 4x4 Community Forum various trip reports and guidance sought from Forum members.
Lessons	Take spare fuel filter.