

Day 1 – Saturday 3rd Jan 2009

Left Gordon's Bay for Springbok, plain sailing all the way to our B&B (www.mountview.co.za). Arrived in Springbok at 1630 to find all the shops closed, except for Nandos & KFC. Needless to say, dinner was at Nandos and we were in bed by 0830.

Day 2 – Sunday 4th Jan 2009

Left the B&B and did some last minute shopping at the local Spar before leaving Springbok at around 0900. Took the R382 towards Kleinzee, which turns into a gravel road. A right turn just outside Kleinzee took us on another gravel road to Port Nolloth. BE ADVISED – this road is very badly corrugated and probably caused the following: as we coasted into Port Nolloth, I heard this weird whoop-whoop sound coming from the back of the landy. We pulled over and discovered that the rear left was being held only by the lock nut!!! We tightened the wheel back on, and decided to stay over in Port Nolloth to have it seen to the next day. The lady at Mar-e-Sol coffee shop was very helpful and found us accommodation for the night at a Bedrock Lodge (<http://www.bedrocklodge.co.za/>) – we got to stay in a settler's cottage for R500 and had the whole house to ourselves.



Day 3 – Monday 5th Jan 2009

We were up early and went to see Martin, the mechanic at the local Engen. He checked the rear left and gave us a clean bill of health, but advised us to check the wheel every time we stopped. We proceeded to Alexander Bay and stopped there to refuel – be advised that the diesel pump's quantity counter is not accurate. We paid by card and only noticed afterwards that the amount of fuel displayed at the pump was much more than what we actually paid for!

We arrived in Sendelingsdrift and crossed the border on the 'Pont' without any hassles:



The staff and facilities at the Namibian border post are much better than on the SA side, so if you need the loo, wait the 15min until you're on the other side 😊

From the Namibian border post, we drove to Hobas on the C13:



However, we listened to the GPS, which took us all the way to Noordwoer and on the B1 and then back on the D316 towards Ai-Ais. There is a shortcut road, the D207 which will cut almost 200km off that route, and SWAMBO threatened to slap me when she found that out. The only saving grace of going the long way was that we got to drive on the most amazing dirt road ever, the D316. The Landy was flying and I had to keep from exceeding 100kmh.

We eventually arrived at Hobas campsite at around 1630 and setup camp. We then went to the Fish River Canyon viewpoint to watch the sunset – a truly spectacular view; the pictures don't do it justice:





We returned to the campsite and had a quick dinner, a couple of drinks and promptly passed out for the night.

Day 4 – Tuesday 6th Jan 2009

We were up early, packed up the car, showered and were on our way back to Sendelingsdrift. This time, we took the D207, and arrived at the pont crossing at around 1215, a saving of around 2 hours on the previous day's trip. We were then stuck for 2 hours at the crossing because the bloody Namibians had not radioed the SA side to let them know we were crossing. So for 2 hours we sat in the hot sun, had a sandwich in plain view of the people on the SA side. SWAMBO was so bored she even drew out an SOS message for the SA side to see:



Eventually two of them came over in their boat and asked us if we wanted to cross. By then we were so gatvol we didn't even chew them out, and they explained that they never got the call from the Namibian border post. We crossed to the SA side without any hassles, and setup camp at the campsite since we were too tired to drive to De Hoop.

Sendelingsdrift has a very good campsite, and we enjoyed our time there. Being alone also helped, and we had a lekker braai and plenty of drinks to drown our hassles.

Day 5 – Wednesday 7th Jan 2009

We left Sendelingsdrift and drove to De Hoop. We stopped at the Hand of God along the way:



We then arrived at the Akkedis Pass, and SWAMBO decided that she should be the one to tackle it. Far from being to object, so I played car guard while she expertly negotiated the pass:



Finally we arrived at De Hoop at around 1400, and were very disappointed with the place. Nevertheless, we setup camp and SWAMBO promptly went for a swim while I munched on a sandwich and took some pictures of the local scenery and mating dung beetles:



Towards the end of the day, one of the goats roaming around got left behind and SWAMBO decided to adopt it. Gary the Goat was fed and started following her around and bleating whenever she disappeared from view:



We had a lekker braai and a few drinks and went to bed early (this became a trend very quickly).

Day 6 – Thursday 8th Jan 2009

We decided that we didn't really like De Hoop and packed up and left for Tatasberg. The deep cycle battery was very low and the fridge had switched off during the night, so we did most of the route idling in 2nd gear. We arrived at Tatasberg at around 1300 and we amazed at the 'reed cabins' – the kitchen even had a fridge, cooking stove, hot water (solar geyser) and electricity.



We unpacked and went for a swim (well, I mostly sat around in the water) in the river to cool down:





We had some ostrich burgers for dinner and drank a very nice bottle of wine while watching the sunset and the moonrise. The temperature fell very quickly and the wind picked up as the sun went down, necessitating longs and jerseys.



We stayed over for another night, and left the day after. We did some more swimming and walking around and generally trying to keep cool in 36C heat in the shade. The wind picked up at around 1400 on cue, and it got quite cold at night as soon as the sun set.

Day 8 – Saturday 10th Jan 2009

We packed up the car, said our thanks to the SanParks officer on duty and left Tatasberg. On his recommendation, we took the road to Hellskloof Pass, which old Willem calls ‘the N1’. Truth be told, Hellskloof is boring. I put the landy in low range 2nd, and basically just idled all the way up and down. Akkedis Pass was much trickier, and more entertaining.



We arrived back at Sendelingsdrift at around 2pm, and we took a chalet for the night, SWAMBO being over the whole camping thing for now.





Gotta love all those No Entry signs all over the place though!

We walked around the site and took some pics, had an early dinner and drank our last bottle of wine.



Day 9 – Sunday 11th Jan 2009

We left Sendelingsdrift at 1000 and drove to Alexander Bay where we filled up and pumped up the tyres. We then drove on to Springbok and had some more Nandos for lunch and decided to push on to Gordon's Bay. We eventually arrived home at around 2100 very tired but having had an amazing holiday!

All in all, the Richtersveld is an amazing place, and we consider ourselves very lucky to have visited the park and experienced the clean air, stunning sunsets and some of the local folks.

Vehicle: 2005 LR Defender Td5 100 double-cab

Distance covered: 2604km

Fuel used: 279lt

Average fuel consumption: 11lt/100km

Problems Encountered

1. Rear left wheel almost came off just outside Port Nolloth on the way to the park
2. Cut on the rear left tyre, still made it there and back.
3. Diff lock light goes off on uneven surfaces, not sure whether the diff is in or not when it happens.

Lessons Learned from this trip

1. DO NOT drive on the dirt road from Springbok to Port Nolloth, it is very badly corrugated!
2. Make dinner while it's still daylight.
3. Have breakfast before you break camp, or make padkos for the road.
4. Bring AC plug-in lanterns & AC adapter for fridge/freezer – lots of campsites provide AC.
5. Take a proper cooler box.
6. Take bowls.
7. When asking the bank for an authorisation letter, specify the entire duration of your holiday even if you plan to spend only one day on the other side.
8. Bring a squash ball to use as a basin plug.
9. Pack all perishables in Tupperwares