



6. TANZANIA & ZANZIBAR

(14 January to 5 February 2011)

6.1. A Complete Friendship in a Tuk-Tuk (Linda; Tanzania; January 2011)

We make our way to the ferry terminal in Dar es Salaam in taxi tuk-tuks. We intend to spend a week in Zanzibar and our bikes stay behind.

These three-wheeled tuk-tuks pepper Dar es Salaam. They squeeze between cars, hobble over sidewalks and turn on a ticky.

I share my tuk-tuk with Lucy Petro (in the photo). I exclaim that Lucy is a significant name in my family; the name of my grandmother, the name of our godchild! She tells me she is a pastor, a chorister and a business lady. She shows me a photo of her two lovely daughters, both gospel singers. I tell of our trip, by motorbikes, up through Africa.

A section of our road to the terminal is cordoned off for the passing of dignitaries. Our 15 minute trip takes an hour and 15 minutes. We sweat and chat easily.

Lucy loves English, as its rich vocabulary allows her to express her love for God more fully. She sometimes finds Swahili limiting. I say important things are best expressed simply. She agrees.

We speak of Africa, Women, and God. Lucy is endlessly tested, as a lady pastor, in ministering to men caught squarely in a male dominated society. Women are still firmly considered the possessions of men. They are rarely consulted in family matters and are often physically abused. Her own grandmother is regularly beaten by her husband. Lucy has difficulty imparting the concept of a man and a woman equal in the eyes of a God. This is very different to my upbringing as a person first and a woman second.

I explain, as best as I can, that I am not a believer; that I draw courage from the people around me, and that I have never been more encouraged than by the people around me on this trip. She understands and tells of the many disappointments she has had with many religious institutions in her life.

We say good-bye and grin from ear to ear at having partaken in a complete friendship.

Later, aboard the ferry to Zanzibar, I am so very glad that all those women I have seen working their fields have God to accompany them.

TANZANIA & ZANZIBAR

6.2. On a Bicycle without my Burqa (Linda, Zanzibar; January 2011)

Harry and I hire pedal bicycles for a day in Zanzibar. We want to scurry up and down those tiny little alleys, just beyond Stone Town, like the locals.

We soon get the hang of it. There is no room for you in that busy little alley-way, but somehow room appears 'just in time'. We smile, we nod, we tinkle, we 'jambo' along merrily.

Harry needs a chip, a fuse, a plug and ('it would be nice to have') a little battery-operated fan. So he stops and he dashes through tiny little shop-fronts with skinny but huge interiors. He emerges, mostly empty-handed but always with a smile on his face. I stay astride my bicycle, and take care of his.

On all sides of me, it's the raised legs, bodies and arms of a mexican wave at a game, over and over again. And yes, it's almost as noisy as a vuvuzela filled soccer game, too. And in it, I pick out a lady that reminds me of Harry's mom, awkward and boisterous little school boys and girls, a disgruntled teenager, a serious young man. Many of them wear the burqa, or the hijab, a khimar, or a dishdashes and a sokoto, as Zanzibar is predominantly Muslim.

I haven't brought my camera along. I don't feel its slight weight around my neck. I can't react to the urge to place that silvery aluminum case to my eyes. I don't snap and capture what I see.

So I get to nod at the group of middle-aged men resting on their haunches next to me and munching away at roasted mielie cobs. By the time Harry is back, they have taught me 5 new Swahili words! I get to mimic a little girl skipping along and give her mom a 'thumbs up'. I get to chat about 'rules of movement in an alley-way' with an English speaking vendor. I get to smile broadly at three terribly shy school girls. I get to catch and hold the gaze of a lady, my age, and we softly acknowledge our differences and similarities.

I get to see beyond her burqa and she gets to see beyond mine.

Her burqa reveals round brown eyes, open, engaging and caring. My burqa, that camera thankfully left behind in our hotel room, would not reveal a thing! It's tourist armour. It's the buffer that keeps us apart. It's a statement of difference. It's a line drawn in the alley-way not to be crossed. It's a wet blanket to a wonderfully warm opportunity for engagement.

It strikes me that the camera accentuates our differences and conceals our similarities.

Fancy! It's been the most fulfilling day of my trip and I don't have a single picture to show for it! I wonder if this is easily remedied?

6.3. Some More Photos from Tanzania and Zanzibar



Believe it or not - this is a bar called Triple Js - we drink & eat in morkels-style comfort!



We find lodges used by locals best - here we are with our host Sarafina.



The twin towers of Stone Town.



Typical stone town door.



Zanzibar, Stone Town again.



Zanzibar, Stone Town



Dar es Salaam is hectic and you need to be an aggressive lane splitter.



Obama is everywhere in East Africa - on posters & on menus as a fast food special.



Harry & I hire these bikes to circle the north & eastern sections of Zanzibar island - we feel as funny as we look!



We really do feel as funny as we look.



Zanzibar, east coast again.



Zanzibar, the east coast.



We run out of petrol as the fuel tap was on reserve!



... and there is no fuel at the petrol stations.



49 We get 'black market' fuel. What are those guys doing behind that door. Needless to say, we kangaroo home on very diluted fuel.



One of many Great Rift Valley views & heading for a certain wetting.



The memory of the international conference in 2002 lives on.



Zanzibar north 'Nungwi' beach.



Corny, I know.



Dinner with the Dutch couple Maarten & Wibian near Mt Kili.



Our bikes in the foyer of our hotel in Arusha.



Best meal award seriously goes to 'chapati and goats meat'.



Maaisai on bike at a weekly maasai market.



Maasai ladies.



Local 'dry banana wine' proves a close second to 'autumn harvest crackling'.



Weddings, birthdays are celebrated every Saturday night around and around the clock tower in Arusha.



... and again around and around ...



One of countless overturned trucks we see along the road.



The piki-piki brigade is never far away.



Worlds apart.

6.4. The Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater (Harry; Tanzania; January 2011)

The Serengeti is a magical place which exudes a liberating sense of space.

Stretching for over 14 000 square km it forms the backbone to an interrelated eco system encompassing alkaline lakes and a string of volcanoes and volcanic craters.

One of the largest volcanic craters in the world is found here - the Ngorongoro crater, a collapsed volcano that is +- 20km wide and forms a natural amphitheatre for animals. Within its towering walls wildlife has found its own Nirvana.

Add to the mix sunburnt plains that stretch as far as the eye can see, some of the oldest human remains to be found anywhere on the planet, more than 100 varieties of dung beetle, 500+ bird species, and the obligatory game and it soon becomes apparent that one could spend weeks here.

Our pretzel budget however only allowed for a 4 day excursion. Was the USD 570 per person worth it? Undoubtedly yes. From our experience in other national parks (in SA and abroad) Linda and I both feel that this experience is one of the best and most memorable of any national park.

One could argue that the park fees are possibly high relative to SA and the amenities not the best but then we were on a camping excursion. Far more luxurious facilities are available for those with more expansive budgets.

And what a feast of wildlife!

We were fortunate to witness the beginning of the Wildebeest migration; a symbiotic

relationship where the Wildebeest migrate in tandem with the Zebra.

The Zebra benefit from the protection in numbers and sheer physicality that the Wildebeest herds afford. The Wildebeest in turn benefit from the cunning and alertness of the Zebra.

A symbiotic relationship of brawn and brains.

We witnessed the early stages of a frenzied three week bout of territorial conquest and mating; survival of the fittest as long columns plunge through waters on their annual exodus North; replenishing the species in a brief population explosion that produces more than 8000 calves daily and swells the ranks of the Wildebeest to a million and more.

And that is only the beginning. Add to the mix the spectacle of predator vs. prey and it soon becomes apparent that this must surely rank (in our humble opinion anyway) as one of nature's greatest spectacles.





