

namaste

May 2005

Vol. 2, Issue 2



Africa begins...

Cape Town

Tracking Black Rhino

Plus...

Expedition Shipping Saga

Namaste Global Expedition

...and more

Namaste!

Following a short two-week visit back to the UK to see family and friends after 388 days in the Americas, the expedition arrived in Cape Town on 13 May to begin the trans-Africa adventure. With 2 weeks to explore the city while waiting for the Landie from Rio (and what a hassle it was getting it out of Brazil!), followed by some servicing, repairs and new equipment shopping, the journey north began on 28 May, but not before a visit to Africa's southernmost point at Cape

Agulhas. The first destination was the Tswalu Kalahari Reserve close to the Botswana border to find out more about tracking rhino and enjoy the plethora of other wildlife on the fringes of the vast Kalahari Desert.

Packed full of features as well as the regular updates, feel free to send me an email with your suggestions and ideas for future issues (chris.charlton@namaste.co.uk)

Cheers, Chris

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Global Expedition Highlights

6/5/05 Day 397
Cotswold Falconry Mile 42440



13/5/05 Day 412
Cape Town Mile 42440



21/5/05 Day 412
Table Mountain Mile 42440



23/5/05 Day 414
Landie arrives Mile 42500



24/5/05 Day 415
Workshop Mile 42520



31/5/05 Day 422
Tswalu Reserve Mile 43920



Photos in this issue
by Chris Charlton

25/5/05 Day 416
Cape Agulhas Mile 42900



31/5/05 Day 422
Tswalu Reserve Mile 43920



28/5/05 Day 419
Kalahari Desert Mile 43346



30/5/05 Day 421
Tswalu Reserve Mile 43770



30/5/05 Day 421
Tswalu Reserve Mile 43770



30/5/05 Day 421
Tswalu Reserve Mile 43770



29/5/05 Day 420
Tswalu Reserve Mile 43725



28/5/05 Day 419
Kalahari Camp Mile 43346



Expedition Trivia...

of Days (overall): 31 (422)
Miles in month (overall): 1480 (43920)
Avg miles/day (overall): 48 (103)
Longest day miles (overall): 436 (612)
countries (overall): 2 (20)
of police stops (overall): 2 (129)

Top Tips this month...

Top Tip: Tswalu Kalahari Reserve
Favourite City: Cape Town, South Africa
Adventure Spot: Table Mountain
Place to Stay: Big Blue, Cape Town
Night Spot: Buena Vista, Cape Town
Wilderness: Kalahari Desert

Features...

Discover what it's like to track black rhino on page 5. Explore Cape Town on page 6 and read the Expedition Africa Plan on page 7. And find out what is coming next in future issues of Namaste News on page 9...

Global Expedition Update

May began with a sunny and warm bank holiday weekend back in England. I had taken the opportunity to visit home for two weeks while the Landie was being shipped from Rio to Cape Town. Whilst it was fabulous to see everyone after almost 13 months on the road through the Americas, it was not quite as stress-free as I had hoped...

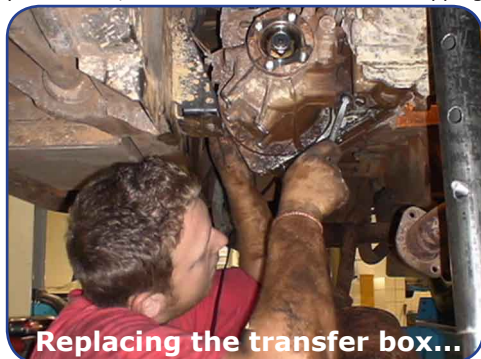
For the process of getting the Landie out of Rio proved to be a little more tricky than my previous shipping experiences. Carving your way through red tape and bureaucracy, Brazilian-style, was no mean feat, and I have much to thank Emma and Flavia for in their relentless pursuit of the simple goal of getting the Landie on a ship to South Africa. (Emma, who had been travelling with me for 2 months had very kindly stayed on in Rio for 9 days to allow me to get back to the UK.)

Sitting in Namibia writing this newsletter, it feels like a distant memory, but the endless international phonecalls, signs of promise, dashed hopes and seemingly unending and hidden costs all added up to an experience I hope to avoid in future.

Several problems contributed to the delays and issues. Firstly, having the requisite bits of paper. To arrive over a land border under a temporary import permit but not leave the same way (i.e. by ship) caused some local head-scratching. 4 days delay.

Secondly, customs and inland revenue personnel who had little interest in solving the problem speedily as they were predominantly out to lunch, or finding reasons to wait until tomorrow. Only upon the kind intervention of the British Assistant Consular-General did they realise that we needed action. I guess being on the end of a phonecall with someone saying: "Hello, this is the British Government, can we be of any assistance?", prompted Brazilian officialdom into a more appropriate response. The next day, we were given the requisite clearance to ship and all the paperwork was in order. 5 days delay.

Thirdly, having bona fide agents operating on your behalf, both for the international shipping



Replacing the transfer box...



Meeting of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans at Cape Agulhas

Did you know - the Tablecloth?

"As if Table Mountain is not spectacular enough in itself, for much of the summer it is capped by a seemingly motionless cloud that drapes itself neatly across the summit. An Afrikaner legend explained the phenomenon by telling of an old burgher, who was fond of his pipe, attempting to outsmoke the devil in a competition. Meteorologists, of course, have a slightly less interesting explanation..."

segment, and to handle the port-side loading of the container and customs clearance. Whilst I was impressed by the hard work and diligence of Flavia who worked for the port-side agent, she was given next to no support by her senior colleagues and associates. The right people were rarely in the right place at the right time and it was frustrating to watch from a distance. On several occasions, even once we had all the paperwork to hand, poor agent management led to the missing of deadlines and ships were missed. 7 days delay.

All in all, the Landie finally shipped out of Rio on 14 May, 16 days late, and to put it in perspective, it took a total of only 3 hours to clear the Landie

at the South Africa end. What a relief it was when I finally laid eyes on it with Table Mountain in the background. The expedition could continue! Fortunately, the experience has not dampened my enthusiasm for Brazil as I feared it might.

Having arrived in Cape Town as scheduled on 13 May, I had some time to get organised for Africa while waiting for the vehicle to arrive. Given that I anticipated Africa to be more challenging than the Americas, I set about acquiring a few extra bits of kit. A GPS system linked to my laptop (using my hand-held as a back-up), a portable generator in case of power or car battery failures, and a satellite phone for emergencies. The generator has already proved useful as only 2 weeks after leaving Cape Town, the inverter (that supplies 220V from the 12V car batteries) was out of action for a week. Perhaps I was tempting fate!

At the same time, I tried to explore as much of Cape Town as I could. With my compadres from the Big Blue and new friends, in particular Jacky, George, Nick, Emma, Jenny, Zuzka and Che, we checked out some of the best nightlife on offer

continued on page 3...

Coming Up...to find out how to join, click below

June 2005

Exploring Namibia's incredible landscapes from the Fish River Canyon in the south to the Skeleton Coast in the north; from the Namib Desert in the west to the Caprivi Strip in the northeast. Touring the Okavango Delta, Makgadikgadi pan & diamond mines of Botswana on route to Victoria Falls...

July 2005

Touring south through eastern Botswana and southern Zimbabwe, through South Africa's legendary Kruger National Park, before exploring Mozambique's Indian Ocean coastline. Then north through Malawi, often known as 'little Switzerland' owing to its beauty on route to Tanzania...



Table Mountain views...

Global Expedition Update cont...

and we weren't disappointed.

And Table Mountain, of course. No visit to Cape Town could be complete without hiking to its top. We waited for a perfect day, as the onset of winter had brought some mixed weather, but it was so worth it. Overlooking the city and visible from everywhere, it rises 1,086 metres (3,563 feet) above sea level. The mountain is covered in fynbos - a major vegetation type unique to



Camps Bay from above

South Africa that includes proteas, ericas, and plants found nowhere else. A large variety of wildflowers bloom on the mountain, including *Disa uniflora*, a species of orchid known as the Pride of Table Mountain. The mountain top is rocky and treeless. Animal life includes baboons, dassies (the rock hyrax), and also Himalayan mountain goats descended from animals that escaped from the nearby Groote Schuur Zoo.

Though we didn't get a chance to visit them, the National Botanical Gardens at Kirstenbosch on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain were originally a gift from Cecil Rhodes to the nation in 1895. About 9,000 of the 21,000 southern African flowering plants are cultivated in the 560-hectare (1,400-acre) garden.

While Zuzka and I hiked up the Platteklip Gorge, we enjoyed the rapid and revolving descent in the cable car. Built in 1929, it takes visitors all the way to and from the summit and is used by over 300,000 passengers each year.

Cape Town is also the legislative capital of South Africa and the Western Cape is a major centre for commerce, industry, trade, and agriculture - particularly wine production, notably around Stellenbosch. People of mixed racial ancestry make up the province's majority, and three of the nation's official languages - Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa - are each spoken here. About 10 per cent of the South African gross national product (GNP) is generated by Western Cape Province and the government's Reconstruction and Development Plan is expected to be crucial in spreading the high living standards enjoyed in Western Cape to the entire population of South Africa.

With the Landie safely in Cape Town and cleared through customs, I could then get to work on a few repairs and servicing. First up, we fitted the new spare wheel carriers which I had hauled as excess baggage from London. About 28 man-hours later, they were ready for action and I hoped they would need less re-welding than the originals had after relentless off-road vibration. Time will tell.

Before completing the vehicle servicing, I had pre-arranged a day trip with Jenny, a friend from Big Blue, to Cape Agulhas. This promontory in

south-western South Africa is the southernmost point of Africa, and therefore seemed a must for the start of the trans-Africa adventure.

Fog, uncertain currents, and rocks make passage around the cape dangerous for ships and the meridian of Cape Agulhas is the boundary between the Atlantic and Indian oceans and the junction of two of the earth's most contrasting water masses - the cold Benguela current on the West Coast and the warm Agulhas current on the East Coast.

On our way back to the city, we drove around False Bay to the Cape Peninsular. The cliffs at the southern point, towering more than 200m above the sea, consist of three clearly defined promontories - Cape of Good Hope, Cape Maclear and Cape Point. The Cape Peninsular is also home to much flora and fauna, including the only protected population of Chacma baboon in Africa. We were a little amused by one of the baboons stealing a woman's handbag in search of food, clearly not for the first time, as it knew what to look for!

With 2 more days in the Land Rover workshop to replace the transfer box which had been leaking oil, replace a blown gasket, fix the faulty fuel guage, replace the window that had been smashed in Peru (I had been using a temporary perspex one), fit new tyres, and complete a full service, I was finally ready to go and the journey back to London could begin...

On 28 May, I headed north through the Western Cape, the southernmost province of South Africa, which was part of Cape Province before the country's first democratic elections were held in May 1994. Bordered by the Indian and Atlantic oceans, Western Cape shares borders with Northern Cape and Eastern Cape provinces and contains a chain of mountain ranges, including the Outeniekwaberge, Hexrivierberge, Cederberg, and Tsitsikammaberge ranges, which buffer the

interior of this region from the coastal areas.

Continuing into Northern Cape, the largest province in the country, you can't help notice the change in landscape, which becomes flat, rocky, and sparsely vegetated. The southern region is also part of the arid expanse known as the Great Karoo, a vast plateau. In the north, the Kalahari Desert extends from Botswana and Namibia into South Africa. Along the Atlantic coast is Great



Morning gossip in Tswalu

Namaqualand, an area noted for its abundant mineral deposits and the profusion of wild flowers that bloom in the spring. The Orange River and its major tributary, the Vaal River, converge in Northern Cape, and the Orange then winds west and empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Near Upington the Orange drops over a 146-metre (480-foot) outcrop to form Augrabiesville, one of the tallest waterfalls in Africa.

Although it ranks as the largest province in South Africa, Northern Cape is the least densely populated. People of mixed racial descent comprise the majority of the population, and the principal language here is Afrikaans. Two other languages, Setswana and Xhosa, are also widely

continued on page 4...



Sable Antelope in Tswalu

Global Expedition Update cont...

spoken. Agricultural products from the area include citrus fruits and wool. Wine produced from the vineyards that thrive in the province is also important to the economy and Northern Cape produces more wine than any other province in South Africa.

After an overnight camp in the mountains off the main road between Springbok and Upington, I continued on to my first destination, the Tswalu



Home to hundreds of birds

Kalahari Reserve to see "Rhino" Jo, a friend of a friend who I had been looking forward to meeting.

At the gate to this private reserve, I smiled as Jo pulled up in her open-sided, home-made jeep, complete with bush hat and jacket, to greet me and lead me across the sand tracks to her base. As Jo explained, she had been invited by Tswalu to study the ecology of black rhinos on the reserve, in particular to ascertain how many rhinos it could support. The computer model that will result from her research data will not only provide information on habitat capacity for Tswalu, but can be adapted to other parts of Africa.

And what an amazing place Tswalu is. Set on the fringes of the southern Kalahari Desert, this arid and semi-arid plateau region is home to a huge variety of animals, including, of course, black rhino, but also cheetah, lion and most major species of antelope.

Rising at the crack of dawn the next day, Jo and I drove into the local village to meet her scouts. These local, professional scouts are key to Jo's research, as they are her trackers. Whilst she has become an accomplished tracker in her own right after 18 months of research, the local scouts have grown up in this area and their skills have been honed over many years of practice. And it was great to discover some of their tracking secrets [for more on tracking black rhino, see page 7.]

One downside of the open-sided jeep that morning was the cold, as the overnight temperature falls substantially without the sun's warming rays. So as we huddled behind the windshield, it was delightful to feel the heat of the sunrise on our skin. The reason for being out this early is that it is the best time to track, in particular to find signs of movement from the previous night in the long early-morning shadows.

We were looking for a black rhino that had recently been introduced to the reserve and there were some concerns that it had not drunk any water in the time it had been there. Our mission, then, was to find this rhino, and to see if it had visited any of the waterholes in the vicinity. After careful examination of the area

surrounding its previous sighting, we homed in on its whereabouts, not far from one of the villagers' houses.

It was an exciting moment when suddenly Jo spotted the rhino in the bush only 30 metres away. Keeping a respectful distance, we slowly circled the rhino, which seemed remarkably relaxed in the early morning glow. Maybe it was waiting for a caffeine fix to get going on the day!

Returning to the villagers' house, we discovered that it had paid them a visit in the night, calmly walking through the front gate, trampling on their vegetables and drinking from a nearby tap, but not before ripping it out of the ground. It must have given them quite a scare and certainly much to talk about! But the good news was that the rhino had drunk some water, so plans were made to divert it to a nearby water hole to prevent more bumps in the night!

Rather than collate more data that morning, we returned to base for a fry-up and more coffee, perhaps something to do with the caipirinhas from the night before (a small gift from Brazil that had travelled with the Landie)! It felt so good to be back in Africa and close to the wildlife. It had been a few years since I had last visited South Africa on a ranger course back in 2001.

The rest of the day was spent sorting out some kit that I had yet to do, and then enjoy a mellow horse-ride across the reserve to enjoy what I call "magic hour", that fantastic late afternoon sunlight that dances across the savannah grass.

On 31 May, my friend from the UK, Paul, was due to arrive in the nearest town, about an hour and a half away. He had travelled overnight from Cape Town and was joining me for a month through Namibia and Botswana to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

After picking him up and returning to Tswalu, we had a relaxing afternoon and some great food cooked by Liza following a majestic sunset with

beers in hand. Just as the evening was getting going, Jo had a call - a new rhino was arriving that night - ok, time to start on the water and prepare for some excitement. Nighttime releases are preferred as the animal is much more relaxed, you hope...

As we watched the container lowered from the flat-bed truck the rhino was starting to come round from the drugs given to it by the vet.



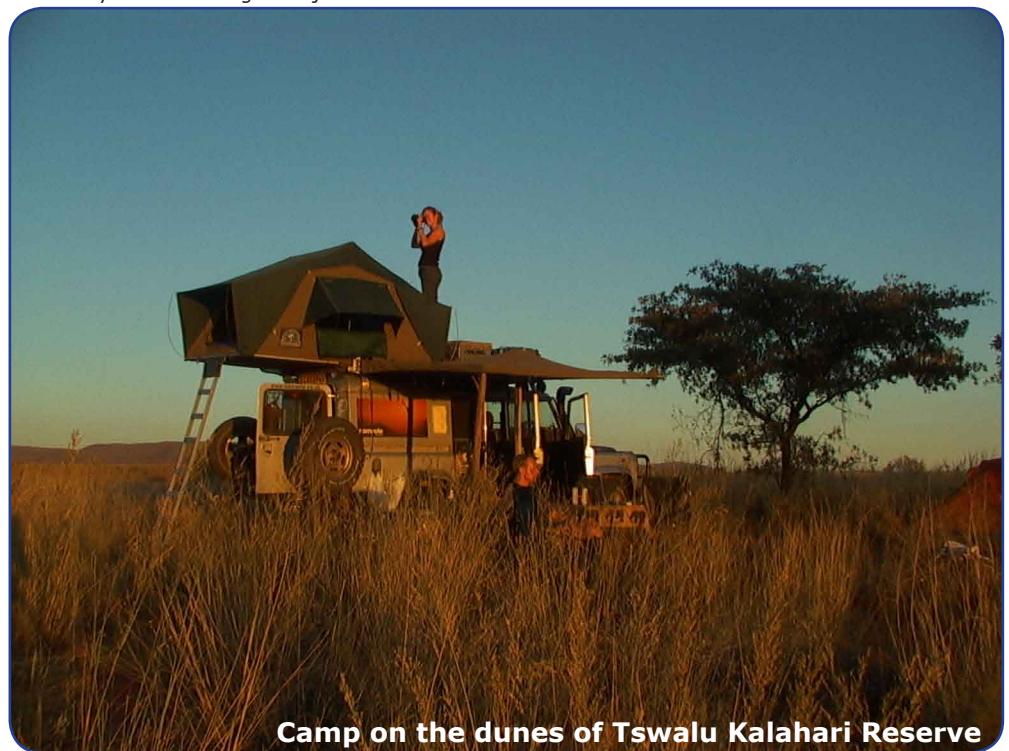
Lionesses out for a stroll

Standing on the back of the truck peering into the container from above, we could watch the rhino in torchlight from only 3 feet away. At the moment of release, the vet gives the rhino an antidote to the tranquiliser and it started snorting and it was ready to go.

Two guys pulled open the door of the container and scrambled for the back of the truck as some rhinos have returned and attacked the container and truck on release. With a snort and a charge, the rhino was off into the wilderness. It circled for a while and then was gone.

Smiling on our way back to base, I couldn't help but feel that the Africa adventure had truly begun...

by Chris Charlton



Camp on the dunes of Tswalu Kalahari Reserve

Tracking Black Rhino...

At over 100,000 hectares, Tswalu Kalahari Reserve is the largest singly owned nature reserve in South Africa. This vast wilderness was created in 1995 through the vision of Stephen Boler, a British businessman who bought 34 farms in the Kuruman district of the Northern Cape with the aim of 'restoring the Kalahari to itself'. Following his untimely



Black rhino tracks can be used to identify specific individuals much like a fingerprint...

death in 1999 the reserve was purchased by the Oppenheimer family who are committed to continuing his dream.

In June 1995 ten desert-dwelling black rhinos were brought to Tswalu from Etosha National Park in Namibia. They adapted well to the Kalahari environment and have produced seventeen calves over the last ten years. The big question is; how many black rhinos can be supported at Tswalu in the long-term? Since October 2003 I have been monitoring their movements and feeding behaviour to try and find an answer.

To do this I need know what the rhinos are eating and how this changes throughout the year. Black rhino are most active at night and spend the hot days dozing in the shade of thorn trees. The soft, red Kalahari



Discussing the morning's tracking strategy with the local scout, Nonnas...

sand leaves a clear imprint of their footsteps making it possible to record their activities indirectly by following their tracks back from the night before and counting the number of bites they took from different trees.

I work closely with Tswalu's team of game scouts who are responsible for monitoring all the rhinos to ensure their health and security. Firstly, we check the waterholes to try and pick up the tracks of rhinos drinking the previous night. The sole of a rhino foot is not smooth, but contains cracks unique to each individual, providing a useful aid to identification. However, this is not foolproof and we need to see the rhino clearly to confirm their unique ear notches to ensure correct identification. Initially we follow the tracks by vehicle, watching for them crossing the sandy roads, so we can narrow their location to a specific area. Once we know roughly where the rhino is we need to go out on foot to get close enough to see them clearly, without being detected ourselves...

Tracking black rhino on foot is one of life's greatest thrills. Stealthily placing each foot to avoid making too much noise and constantly checking the wind direction – ears pricked for a warning snort or crashing of branches and eyes straining to see a solid grey shape in the bushes ahead. As the sun and

back along the rhino's feeding track recording detailed spatial information about their movements and feeding behaviour.

My aim is to build a computer model to compare the amount of energy available from plants throughout the year and the amount of energy each black rhino needs to determine



Female adult with baby. Keeping a respectful distance is key to avoiding a charge...

how many black rhinos should live here. This model will not only benefit Tswalu by providing information on habitat capacity, but will be adapted to be used as a tool for black rhino management throughout Africa.

HANDY HINTS FOR RHINO TRACKING

- Ensure you stay downwind at all times – rhinos have an acute sense of smell.
- Move as quietly as possible avoiding twigs and clumps of grass.
- Remain in single file to present the smallest possible profile.
- Keep an eye out for the nearest tree, rock or raised area of ground in case you need to get out of the way.



Sunrise is the best time to track as fresh overnight tracks are easy to spot...

- Beware of other possible threats in the area such as buffalo or other rhinos.
- Enjoy the thrill of getting close to these beautiful, unpredictable beasts!

by Jo Shaw

People

Fellow Adventurers...



Jacky Tau, 30, from Cape Town, was a great host to the expedition to explore some of the city's nightlife.



Zuzka, 27, from Prague, Czech Republic, joined Chris for a trek to the top of Table Mountain.



Jenny Duncan, 22, from Australia, joined the expedition for the day to Cape Agulhas and Cape Point.



Jo Shaw, 30, from Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, hosted the expedition for 6 days and organised horse-riding, hiking and safari trips, and took Chris and Paul on fabulous rhino tracking adventures.



Paul Wilkinson, 34, from London, England, began his month-long journey on expedition through South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

Along the way...

A big thank you to all those people who we've met along the way in May, including:

Che, George, Jenny and all the staff at Big Blue; Jacky, Ricky and friends; Emma, Jules, Katie, Kaylii, Marius, Michael, Nick, Sarah and everyone at Big Blue and Buena Vista Social Cafe (Cape Town); Liza, Steve, Peter, Nicole and all the staff at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve...

And a big thank you to all my friends and family back in the UK who made my visit home so memorable. And congratulations for all their new babies while I've been away!!!



In the News

In the News

The Expedition featured in the UK's Independent Newspaper supplement on 26 May. See www.namaste.co.uk/news for details...

Previous Newsletters

Previous issues of Namaste News are also available at www.namaste.co.uk/news

Letters & Emails

Thank you for all your letters, emails, text messages, and faxes. Each month, a few excerpts will be printed here...

"Hi Chris, So...we finally did it! It's funny though, after all the ups and downs the past 2 weeks I can't quite turn off that cynical voice in my head...it's still hard to believe it is actually all done now...Still, it is...and Flavia and I celebrated over a lovely lunch and a much needed bottle of Brazilian 'Champagne'. I'm sure you will be celebrating the end of the saga in true Charlton style tomorrow night too!!", Emma, London, UK

"...Just me again - wanted to let you know that I did something amazing over the weekend: I did a sponsored walk from Keswick to Barrow - 40 mile!!!! Raised nearly £800.00...Did you ever think that I would be able to walk 4 miles never mind 40!! Yee Haa!! Hope you're OK and still enjoying yourself...", Col, Cumbria, UK

"Chris, many thanks. Good of you to take the call. The world seems a small place when you can chat to friends three quarters of the way up Table Mountain. I will keep a good eye on the website to find out where you are up to. And a long weekend in Eastern Europe (when you get there) has much appeal. Best wishes", John, London, UK

"Hi Chris. How are things? Hoping that the shipping went off without a hitch and that you had or are having a good time in the UK. When are you due out to Africa? Thanks for the tips on the Blue Parrot Inn (superb) and the Cenote diving (awesome). Dived with Abyss who were excellent. Will have to come back at some stage and dive a few more of the Cenotes. It's also got me interested in maybe doing a cave diving course!", John & Linz, Mexico

"Just wondering where you are...I didn't get the April and May newsletters and was just checking in to make sure the fearless warrior is fine and well...", Mer, California, USA

"Hello chris, now i have two beautiful girls, all went well, without any pain, i use only happy gas! Viivi was born monday evening 16.05.2005 22:32, she was 3790 gr and 51 cm, very nice little girl, looked just like maija...", Pauliina, Finland

"Hi Chris! Thankyou so much for your email and the contacts, I really appreciate your help. Have a fantastic time and I can't wait to hear all about your adventures!!...", Jen, Cape Town

Website Update

Stage 1 Development

Namaste Management Case Studies are in production. Available from April 2005.

Stage 2 Development

The first Namaste Management Guides (Project Management Series; Leadership & Management Series) and Namaste Fun Films (Climbing Denali; A Taste of North America) are now in production; and should become available from July 2005.

May 2005 Stats

Hits: 43,024
Countries: 42
Downloads: 2,835 Mb

April 2005 Stats

Hits: 41,476
Countries: 41
Downloads: 2,508 Mb

Cape Town...

Think of Cape Town and you can't help but think of Table Mountain. It is a distinctive 1,086m high flat-topped mountain, flanked by the lower Lion's Head to the north-west and Devil's Peak to the east. One of the world's most famous landmarks, it provides a dramatic setting for the harbour and city. Its northern face is a sheer precipice 3 km long, broken only by the deep cleft of Platteklip gorge. The top 600m is formed



of horizontal layers of sandstone, deposited on the floor of a shallow sea between 400 million and 500 million years ago, resting on a foundation of slates and granites.

Whilst dominated by Table Mountain, Cape Town is surrounded by superb mountain walks, vineyards and beaches. One of the best at Camps Bay is only 15 minutes from the city centre. Whilst not as trendy as the beaches at Clifton, it is more spectacular as the Twelve Apostles mountain chain tumble into the sea above a broad stretch of beautiful white sand.

With 350 years of recorded history, Cape Town is part African, part European, and is a volatile mixture of third and first worlds. The cafes and bars in Long Street and the restaurants and shops around the Victoria & Albert Waterfront could easily be in any cosmopolitan capital, but the townships on the bleak, windswept plains to the east of the city could only be in Africa. There are few places where there is a more stark difference between rich and poor. Apartheid allowed the whites to reserve some



of the world's most spectacular real estate, and the contrast between Crossroads and Clifton is complete - black and white.

namaste

GLOBAL EXPEDITION

Join the expedition in Africa

for an adventure of a lifetime...

Namaste!

Welcome to the Africa Plan of the Namaste Global Expedition, an amazing around the world adventure. Join me on the expedition for a weekend, a week, a month or longer, and it is up to us to decide what we want to do.

Click here to download the full Africa Plan PDF (to be updated monthly), which should give you some idea of the expedition plan for Africa, though this is subject to variation depending upon conditions, politics and what you would like to do. You will also

find other info documents for more detail, including how to join the expedition.

If you need anything more, please don't hesitate to contact me, by email, fax or phone. I look forward to your suggestions and ideas; and travelling with you soon...

Cheers, Chris



Highlights...

Perhaps nowhere in the world will you find such a variety of cultures, vistas, contrasts and contradictions, cities ancient and modern as in Africa. From the snow-capped peaks of Kilimanjaro and Mt Kenya, to the scorching heat of the desert; from the impenetrable jungles of the Congo, to the silver-sanded beaches bordering the Indian Ocean.

A key theme of the Namaste Africa Expedition will be to explore many of the continent's game reserves, whilst touring through this continent full of culture and design, of music and dancing, with a wealth of wildlife, flora and fauna. Some of the planned highlights include:

May 2005

Time to explore gorgeous Cape Town, built on the peninsula of the Cape of Good Hope with Table Mountain as a backdrop before heading north through the western Cape to the Tswalu Kalahari Reserve & rhino sanctuary...

June 2005

Exploring Namibia's incredible landscapes from the Fish River Canyon in the south to the Skeleton Coast in the north; from the Namib Desert in the west to the Caprivi Strip in the northeast. Touring the Okavango Delta, Makgadikgadi pan & diamond mines of Botswana on route to Victoria Falls...

July 2005

Touring south through eastern Botswana and southern Zimbabwe, through South Africa's legendary Kruger National Park, before exploring Mozambique's Indian Ocean coastline. Then north through Malawi, often known as 'little Switzerland' owing to its beauty...

August 2005

Across the great plains of Tanzania before climbing Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest at 5,895m (19,340 ft). Then to the coast for some relaxation and diving on Zanzibar before a journey inland through Kenya's incredible game parks, including Tsavo & the Masai Mara. And in both countries, a chance to see much of the Great Rift Valley, one of Africa's most spectacular sights...

September 2005

Through the Kabalega and Ruwenzori national parks of Uganda; and unforgettable river journeys on Africa's second biggest river in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Discovering the equatorial jungle, exotic butterflies and the pygmies of the Central African Republic before crossing to the Waza National Park of northern Cameroon...

October 2005

A visit to the capital of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, once the centre of one of the ancient Mossi kingdoms; and the famous red, white and black Volta rivers. On to historic Mopti, the 'Venice of Mali' founded in the 13th century and the legendary Timbuktoo before experiencing the unique lifestyle of the nomads of Niger...

November 2005

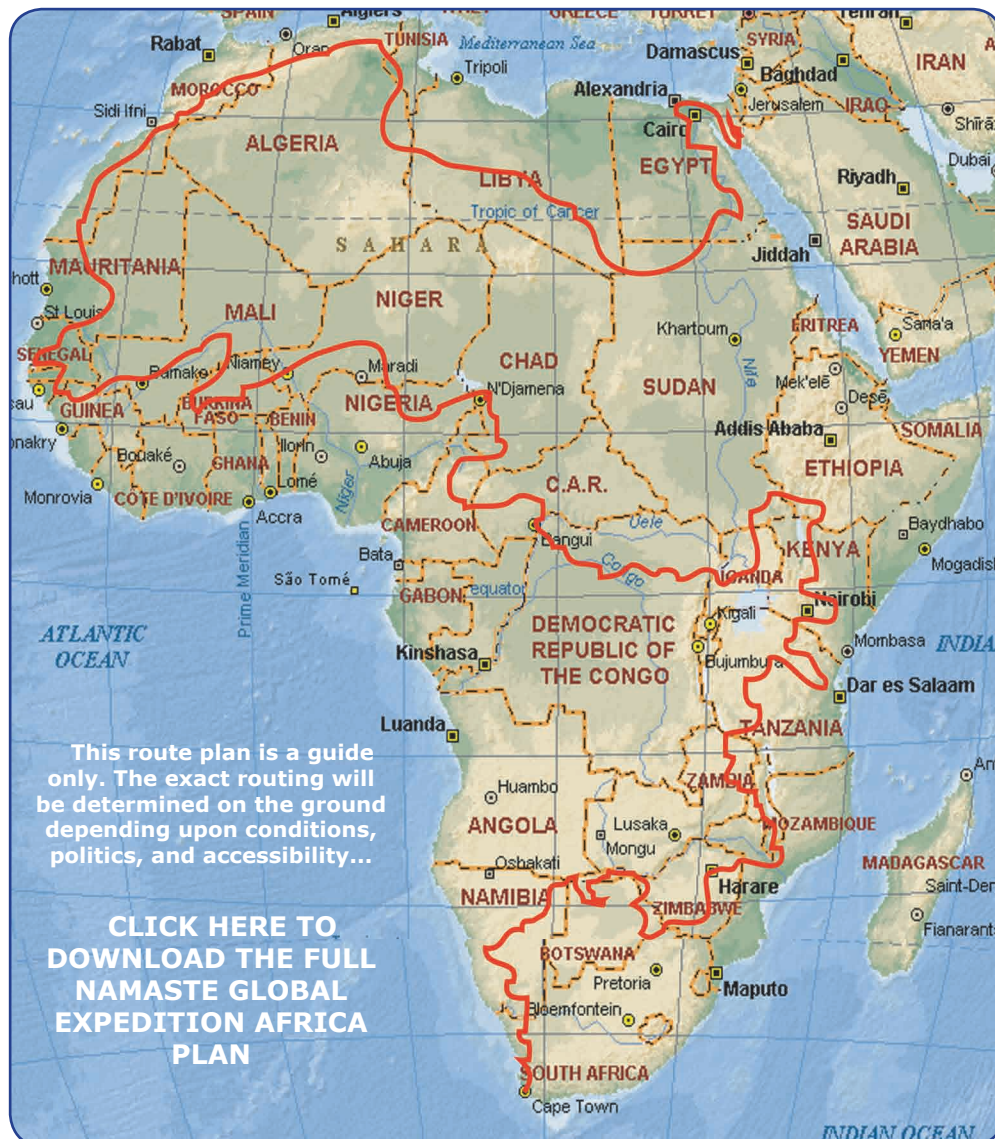
From the mountains of Guinea to the Adrar plateau of Mauritania; the Atlantic coast of the Gambia and Senegal, before turning north through Mauritania along the western Sahara before a tour of the length of the Atlas Mountains and ancient cities of Morocco...

December 2005

Exploring Roman ruins of coastal Libya; and the scenic and pre-historic wonders of its Fezzan region. Then into Egypt to explore the the Gifl Kebir plateau, the Nile river region, Cairo and the pyramids, the Great Desert Road and of course some Red Sea diving off the coast of the Sinai Peninsular...

Africa Route Plan

Africa. This vast and diverse continent of 53 countries stretches from the Cape of Good Hope to the shores of the Mediterranean. Encompassing the world's largest desert and one of its most extensive rainforests, it is the adventurer's last frontier. Whether it's the stunning wastes of the Sahara Desert with its barren mountains, the inspiring beauty of snow-capped Kilimanjaro rising sheer from the East African plateau, the lush, mist-covered volcanoes and lakes of Kenya's Rift Valley, colourful tribal peoples, or the lure of ancient Egypt, this continent has them all. And of course, the large numbers of big game that still roam the plains of this fascinating land make Africa the king of safari...



This route plan is a guide only. The exact routing will be determined on the ground depending upon conditions, politics, and accessibility...

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