

## Western Sahara

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Date: 27-oct-2007

Stage: Sidi Ifni to Karl Tafnidilt

Distance: 172 km

Ascent: 1120 m

Temp (L/M/H): 14/23/34

KCal: 3233

Time: 10 h 23 m

Country: Western Sahara

Very early we started with the team Bazuin-Vonk, it was almost dark and we put on our red lights to make sure that cars were able to see us.

The deal was to change the first rider every 5km and that worked fine. Actually, only Marius and I changed, the "girls" stayed behind in the formation, this way we advanced pretty well on this long trip.

The last part we needed to take a dirt road to Tafnidilt, which is not a town, but a sort of castle, owned by a Frenchman who lives there the whole year.



I got my first flat of the trip, probably I went to fast over some stones. Not nice at the end of a long day, but compared to some others, like Tim (see at the end of this report), it was not too bad.



The campsite was very nice and although we would have loved to have a room there, the night in the tent was nice a quite as well, far away from the traffic and towns.



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Date: 28-oct-2007

Stage: Karl Tafnidilt to Sidi Akhfinir

Distance: 144 km

Ascent: 470 m

Temp (L/M/H): 15/23/34

KCal: 2105

Time: 8 h 39 m

Country: Western Sahara

We needed to cycle back the 6km but fortunately this time without have a flat, although our bikes were covered in sand dust once we reached the tarmac.

Several times during these 7 days we would see dromedaries (or camels if you like), the first time status of them in Tan Tan.

After Tan Tan, the desert started, when we came from a height, the long straight roads where clearly visible to us. Hope you can spot them on this picture as well.

Again camels (as we call them often wrongly) and we would see them almost every day of the 6 days ahead of us.



On a downhill to a river, we were warned that something was wrong on the road, a truck was on his side and they were trying to put it straight up. We had the advantage as cyclist to be able to pass easily, although we needed to take care of the broken glass on the road.

Two km before arriving in Sidi Akhfinir a big hole in the ground, made by the sea was impressive and a bit dangerous as well, going to close to the edge was not an option.

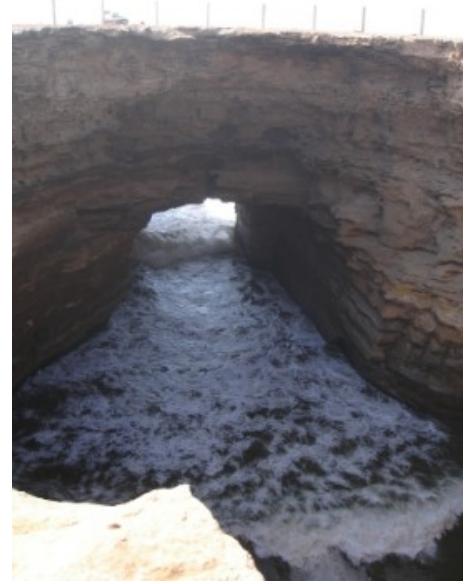
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## Travel journal

Published: Thursday, 09 May 2019 11:48  
Written by Kees Vonk

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[Date: 29-oct-2007](#)

Stage: Sidi Akhfinir to Daoura

Distance: 164 km

Ascent: 260 m

Temp (L/M/H): 19/26/36

KCal: 2100

Time: 8 h 20 m

Country: Western Sahara

Endless roads, as we remember them from last years trip. Sometimes along the sea, where we saw places where salt was collected at the beach, and with a lunch stop on the beach as well, where shortly before we wanted to continue a Swiss truck stopped and we had a chance to look inside this beautiful engine.

Again camels, this time very close to the road, so here again pictures of this wonderful "ships of the desert".

There are plenty of trucks transporting fish on the roads here. They do not have air conditioning, apparently transporting the fish using pieces of ice, and once every often, they drain the stinky water on the side of the road, giving a very bad smell for a couple of hundreds of meter.

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Date: 30-oct-2007

Stage: Daoura to Desert camp

Distance: 155 km

Ascent: 240 m

Temp (L/M/H): 17/25/35

KCal: 1208

Time: 8 h 15 m

Country: Western Sahara

We stayed again at a very special campsite, about 5kms from the main road in the middle of no where. The Belgian owners have everything well under control, the toilets and showers are un-African clean and we were able to get COLD beer last night! A place to recommend if you are in the area. Again and early departure, and where we reached the road my camera decided to stop working, so we have to use some of Marius photos to show you the camels we saw today, and I am sure you are ready for more of this!

As you might know, Morocco claims the Western Sahara to be part of their territory. For that reason, plenty of military power is visible, in one of the towns it looked like we were entering a garrison town. During the desert camps, we are guarded during the night by policemen, a safe feeling.



Because of the tail wind we had today, we reached camp already at 2 o'clock, to plenty of time to relax and to drink a glass of wine with our team, Arnound and Geerten.

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**Date: 31-oct-2007**

**Stage: Desert camp to Desert camp**

**Distance: 146 km**

**Ascent: 160 m**

**Temp (L/M/H): 17/24/34**

**KCal: 205**

**Time: 6 h 57 m**

**Country: Western Sahara**

The 5th day in a row that we have tail wind, we almost cannot believe it! And again camels along side the road, this time we could get very close as you can see.

In Boujdour, were we took a coffee/tee break with some nice croissants, we found police helping us to cross the town, so we had to take a picture from him.

Just after this town we saw Dakar for the first time on a sign, only 1740kms to go!

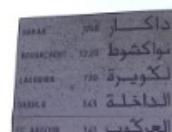
The roads along the sea are beautiful,



but apart from that, there is not much too see, except from fisherman in small huts. The campsite was close to a small town of these huts, only men are living there, which gives a pretty special atmosphere there. When Marius (I forgot my camera!) took the wonderful picture of the fishermen taking a boat our of the sea, the one on the right stopped the crew and started to throw sand at us!

Marius and I went for a swim close to this town, fortunately no hindered by any of the men who were angry at us before.

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Date: 1-nov-2007

Stage: Desert camp to Desert camp

Distance: 175 km

Ascent: 295 m

Temp (L/M/H): 16/25/38

KCal: 1118

Time: 8 h 47 m

Country: Western Sahara

In the middle of the night (actually it was a quarter past ten, but by then we are already 2 hours in bed!) a cry awakened us, causing unrest in the camp for some time, as we did not know what had happened. Apparently someone who took Larium (Anti Malaria) got hallucinations which caused bad dreams. We still do not know who caused it, but we believe it was our doctor Wout.

Another cry happened early in the morning, this time it was clear who did it, Bob found a scorpion under his tent! We better put our shoes inside the tent during the night!

OK, one more photo of camels, the last one I promise, but a very nice one.

Today we had a bit of wind from the side, but with our 5km schedule, everything went smoothly and we reached camp at a reasonable hour. Again a nice sunset at



the camp, a bit cold as well and with the wind blowing sand in our nose, ears and eyes, we start to get fed up a bit with the desert. We still have one day to go before we can clean ourselves in Dakhla.

Today is the birthday of Madeleine, who surprised us with making tartiflette, a French meal with potatoes, onions, meat and above all cheese. And although the cheese needs to be Reblochon, the local brie cheese did the job as well. Not a crumb of tartiflette was left at the end of the meal. This was also easier for Marius and Mathew, who had to clean the dishes that night.

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**Date: 2-nov-2007**

**Stage: Desert camp to Dakhla**

**Distance: 110 km**

**Ascent: 85 m**

**Temp (L/M/H): 17/25/34**

**KCal: 275**

**Time: 4 h 42 m**

**Country: Western Sahara**

The wind and especially the direction of it, is the topic of the day among us and today again the wind is kind of behind us. Although it shifted a bit to the east, we still have tail wind mainly.

The last 30 kms were a bit more difficult, the road turned so much that we almost had headwind for awhile, but the panorama was wonderful, with a lot of sand, sea and wind. We saw plenty of kit surfers, a good sport for it.





After camping at Dakhla we reach around noon, so plenty of time to wash ourselves, our clothes and our bikes. You know our habits by now! Some of us are very efficient, like Geerten, who is washing himself and his clothes at the same time.

We have finished the 7days and cycled almost 1000km through the Western Sahara. It is clear that Morocco wants to claim this area, many of new houses are build, but nobody lives in it. Presence seems to be vital important for Morocco. The roads were kind or dull, but sometimes those alongside the beaches where nice. The wind was very favorable for us, aswell as the temperature with the wind blowing from the sea mostly. Another 2days and we will reach Mauritania and another 2 weeks and we will be in Dakar.

### Participants

Tim is from Belgium and has joined us one day before Sidi Ifni. He has not been very lucky so far, got 4 flats in the first 4 days and has also problems with his knees and stomach. We hope things will get better for him soon.

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**Date: 03-nov-2007**  
**Rest day: Dakhla**

We could get a lift from the truck, who had to do some business in town. First time we are sitting in the truck and hopefully also the last time (if you are in the truck during a stage, you are for whatever reason not cycling, that's why).

We took a late lunch after finishing our last report there in the most luxurious hotel of Dakhla, luxurious to African standards, because many things did not work (like the flushing of the toilet), it is remarkable to see how something totally new and well build is deteriorating so quickly in this part of the world.

Dakhla is well known for its excellent quality of kite surfing and in the hotel there was a prediction of the wind forecast for the next 8 days, it showed that for at least a couple of days the wind stayed in the right corner, northeast. We hope the forecast is right.

Our "hotel" was at the campsite. We only got a room, with mats on the floor. So a bit basic, but at least we had not sand and no wind during the night.

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Date: 04-nov-2007  
Stage: Dakhla to Desert camp  
Distance: 153 km  
Ascent: 260 m  
Temp (L/M/H): 17/25/34  
KCal: 1770  
Time: 7 h 37 m  
Country: Western Sahara

As we had to do the first 35 kilometers with headwind, going back to the fork in the road, we decided the 4 of us to go as early as possible and Marius and I took the front for 2km each. That went pretty well, we were able to finish the first 35 in 1,5 hours and celebrated it with a nice Coke.

The Team Bazuin-Vonk often passed a ghost town several times here in the Western Sahara. Morocco want to have presence there and they build new houses and like to have people to come and live there. Apparently that does not work too well, there is nobody living there.

Bob has had a bad day, he became ill and lost his 1st place unfortunately. He got a lot of good support that day from the other boys as you can see on the photo.

This area has been very much disputed, and many mines are left in the sand. On the road it is OK, but if you into the sand to do the necessary things, you better stay close to the road as not to cause a second explosion. Jenny on one of these difficult missions found two beautiful seashells. There are plenty of those in the sand here. A good sign that once this part was under the sea level.

Rudy, our cook made fish for dinner today, a very nice meal indeed and the big fish had just finished his own meal, there were small fishes in his stomach.

Bob had not only a problem with his stomach, but also had irritated eyes from the sand (he is wearing lenses like me) and forgot to take spare glasses with him, fortunately I was able to lend him mine, that he used for some days, putting his sunglasses over it.



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Date: 05-nov-2007

Stage: Desert camp to Desert camp

Distance: 164 km

Ascent: 195 m

Temp (L/M/H): 16/24/33

KCal: 1078

Time: 8 h 04 m

Country: Western Sahara

Today, when we stopped on the road to do some private business, police came to ask if everything was all right. They are very polite here and like to make sure that we are traveling the roads in good health. You will not find that always on the roads in Africa, as we know from the past year experience.

We had long stretches of roads that were not too interesting; we tried to shorten the time, but telling jokes, stories and also reciting a film that we had seen sometimes. Marius did a wonderful job with the film the Green Mile. I am sure that one day, I like to see that film myself.

The campsite was wonderful, with a huge sand dune in the back of the campsite. Marius and I climbed it and tried to make a 360 degrees panorama picture from it. We will add it to the website once back in France, as on this PC here I cannot



find the right software for it. Only a small impression to get the taste already.

The policemen came to our camp and warned the organization that it could not be safe here due to the risk of mines. We also found another scorpion at the site, so we were very careful not to go to far from our tent. Funny noises during the night, I can assure you. (This report start to get very toilet oriented indeed!)



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