

Kenya

[Friday 3 march](#)
[Saturday 4 march](#)
[Sunday 5 march](#)
[Monday 6 march](#)
[Tuesday 7 march](#)
[Wednesday 8 march](#)
[Thursday 9 march](#)
[Friday 10 march](#)
[Saturday 11 march](#)
[Sunday 12 march](#)
[Monday 13 march](#)
[Tuesday 14 march](#)

Date: 03-mar-2006

Stage: Moyale to desert camp near Sololo

Distance: 79km

Time: 5h 35m

GPS at destination: E 38°39'01" N 3°30'43"

Country: Kenya

4 of our riders decided that taking a rest in Nairobi or doing the Kilamajaro was more important than cycling, so they left us for a good week or so to take a bus, leaving their bikes on the bus.

The start was fast as we descended to from Moyale to the desert. The temperature started to feel like in Sudan, with an average of 38 Celsius and a maximum of 43! There was no cold Coke on the road as well.

The day was relative easy as can be seen from the time it took us, so we were early in camp and had all the time of the world to talk with locals.

Many of us needed medical assistance, one of us even needed a small operation on her foot. It's well known that wounds do heal much slower around here as where we live and you need to be extremely careful with even the smallest wound.

The landscape is desert again, so sand, dry and only a bit of green. The road was reasonable, but not paved.

[Back to the top](#)

Date: 04-mar-2006

Stage: Desert camp near Sololo to desert camp

Distance: 84km

Time: 10h 15m

GPS at destination: E 38°12'28" N3°00'09"

Country: Kenya

This became a long day, although we started early, the piece after lunch was very difficult to say the least. On top of that our photo camera did not work, only the next day I got it back to work after giving it 3 big hits on the body! That was unfortunately after we meet a Austrian guy that was on his recumbent with 45kg of luggage under way from Cape town to Cairo. He told us that he wanted to go home now, as he was already 5 years touring around the world. Did not like his job and decided to go and see the world!

Kees is still feeling a bit funny and almost gave up at lunch. The afternoon we took plenty of stops, mostly under a tree. Once we saw plenty of goats under a tree, did not feel like chasing them off, so carefully approached the tree to see if we could just get a bit of shade as well. Two vultures were sitting in the tree as well, and the goats did not move. It appeared that they were protecting two dying goats that were under their feet on the ground. Mother nature is cruel. The desert is very, very dry, so almost every



kilometer we see a dead animal alongside the road. You wonder how anybody could live here!

At the end of the day we decided not to cycle tomorrow, Jenny had saddle soar, Kees already feels funny 2 to 3 days, and tomorrow seems to be the worst day of the TdA. Our health is worth more than doing all the kilometers! The camp was very quite that night and we slept like babies!

[Back to the top](#)

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Date: 05-mar-2006

Stage: Desertcamp to Marsabit

Distance: 80km (not cycled)

GPS at destination: E 37°59'38" N 2°19'11"

Country: Kenya

The group started at 7:00 and some even earlier. The road looked like yesterday afternoon, but on top of that there was a lot a headwind, so we were glad that we took the decision to ride the truck. The environment is really dry as dry can be, with again many dead goats and cows alongside the road.

After we passed the lunch truck we saw two immense craters of old volcano's, wonderful panoramas.



The campsite in Marsabit is in a wild park under trees and nice cool. We welcomed very tired riders in the local restaurant were we had some food and gave Ron an applause when he arrived after having done all the kilometers, it took him more than 12 hours on the bike! We did not have water on the campsite yet, so we could not do anything else then relax and wait till the last rider was in.



Learned something today! When you put a plastic bottle of water, with the water still inside, in the hot ashes of a fire, the plastic does not melt and you can heat the water for washing or so that way. Never thought that was possible!

[Back to the top](#)

Date: 06-mar-2006
Stage: Restday Marsabit
Country: Kenya

In the morning we made tea on the wood fire, what is that for a good start of the day in a jungle environment! On top of that the baboons played around the tents and close to the camp we saw about 8 elephants moving through the woods (unfortunately there was not enough light to take photos of them).



We started the day with the regular process of cleaning ourselves, our clothes and our bicycles, went for a 2nd breakfast in a tiny restaurant and did some shopping to have an additional supply of food in case we do not like

what has been prepared for all of us.

Randy had proposed the day before we do a BBQ, type pot luck, so everybody buys there own stuff. We thought that it was too risky when we saw the butcher shops in town, so decided to go to a restaurant together with some others that also were not sure that our stomach would support the meat with flies!



[Back to the top](#)

Date: 07-mar-2006

Stage: Marsabit to Laisamis

Distance: 96km

Time: 11h 08m

GPS at destination: E 37°47'54" N1°35'02"

Country: Kenya

The morning started with a very fast decent to the next desert, Marsabit is on the top of an old volcano. The roads were in reasonable condition, but the temperature started to go back to the range we have had in the 3 days before reaching Marsabit. Camp was near a school, so many children showed up and we were obliged to put the rope around the campground to get some privacy. So the situation brought back "sweet" memories of Ethiopia!

[Back to the top](#)

Date: 08-mar-2006

Stage: Laisamis to desert camp

Distance: 85km

Time: 9h 32m

GPS at destination: E 37°34'26" N0°56'33"

Country: Kenya

The roads became very bad after leaving Laisamis, stones, sand, and on top of that very hot!

The bridges we crossed where a river was supposed to flow were completely dry. Women were trying to get some water by digging a big hole into the river bed and getting some last drops out of these "wells". We feel ashamed that we can get just the water from our trucks and do not have to look for water ourselves (watch the contrast on the photo!). Often we are asked by children on the road if we would be willing to give them a bottle of water. Difficult to ignore that request, but if you start with one, you will have the whole village coming to you!



The water situation in North Kenya is really bad, we spoke to several people on the road, for instance with a farmer who was sitting on that same bridge where the photo was taken and told us that during the last 3 years his livestock went back from 200 to 50 cows, most of the 150 were dying because of the draught. Agriculture is close to impossible due to the lack of water, so people here try to survive with their cows and goats.

[Back to the top](#)

Date: 09-mar-2006

Stage: Desert camp to Isiolo

Distance: 82km

Time: 9h 43m

GPS at destination: E 37°33'25" N0°17'30"

Country: Kenya

The last day in the desert before we will reach the more tempered (read less warm, more water and vegetation) part of Kenya.

We had a special night, about 4 o'clock Kees went out to go to the toilet, taking his headlamp with him. When back in his tent, Randy came asking if everything was all right. "Yes, but why you ask?", it appeared that a lot of animals were around our camp, Randy thought a lion perhaps, but definitely many elephants and if they see a light wandering in the night, they might go for it! Our tent was at the outside of the campsite and 20 minutes after Randy told us (we could not get back to sleep) we heard "something" sniffing around our tent, we tried to see what it was, but did not wanted to get out of our tent, so we still are not sure what it was, perhaps an elephant? A little later Kees heard another sound, but this time he was reassured by Jenny, it was the rumbling of her stomach! By the time we had to get out of bed we fell asleep, so needless to say that our start of the last day on difficult roads was a bit slow and sleepy.

The road we followed is very scenery, with high mountains and big valleys. At the bottom of a downhill we found a cokestop and started to talk with the



locals, among others the chief of the town there, Josef and his family. Again the same story, they get help from the government to survive but they desperately need rain! Difficult to believe that we had 6 days of rain in Ethiopia and that rains is expected to fall after we reach Isiolo. The help of the government(s) should be going into building reservoirs, dams, etc. but we have not seen too many signs of that for the moment.

A photo of two grandmothers, we have no idea who is the oldest!

Finally, finally, a river with water, we are approaching Isiolo, that is clear.

15 kilometers before Isiolo we got rain, a thunderstorm developed over the village, but we arrived just after that and only got a few drops. The lunch truck also got a few drops, but did not have enough drops of diesel left, 6 km from Isiolo they ran out of gas!

Reaching Isiolo is like going through a revolving door, the climate changes, there is a lot of green and fruit stalls all along the roads, it's like getting from hell to heaven!

We camped at a hotel, where we took one of the bungalows and above all where we drank real cold beer and with one of the other riders had a BBQ with a rack of lamb AND a bottle of wine. We have to say that we do not regret being back in a bit of civilization after many days in the desert!

[Back to the top](#)



Date: 10-mar-2006

Stage: Isiolo to Nanyuki

Distance: 72km

Time: 6h 33m

GPS at destination: E37°04'51" N0°00'51"

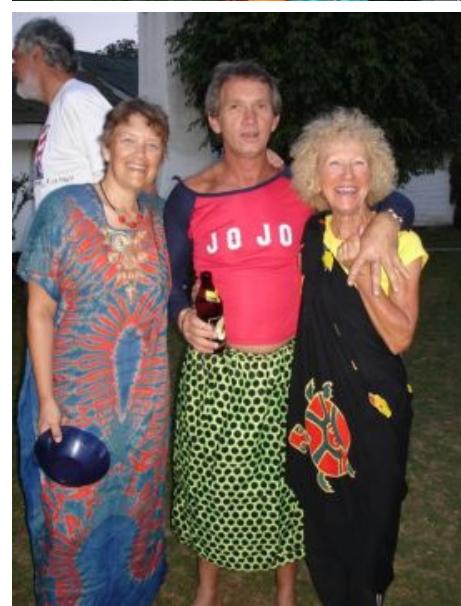
Country: Kenya

One of the most scenery stages, we were promised and indeed a beautiful ride around Mt Kenya with a important clime (we did 1400 meter in climbe today).

The descent was important as well, the traffic increased and unfortunately one of use had a collision with a car that decided to take a turn when she was just next to the care. Fortunately only the front wheel collapsed, she had nothing (and the driver took off without helping!)

It was time for another shave and buying food. All of us did that and Ron bought 1 liter of icecream that he was more then willing to share with others.

The campsite was a hotel again, but this time we staying in our tent as the grass was very comfortable and the temperature nice cool. We went to bed "late" to Tour d' Afrique standards, we had a Equator party, needed to get dressed up in toga and danced till about 11 o'clock. We also received a price, the price for having done almost half of the tour on the heaviest bikes of the group, where most of the riders are riding on mountain bikes made of aluminum or other lightweight materials, ours are from steal and about 5 to 7 kilo's heavier and the average bike in the group. More robust (think about the 3 frames broken already), but you pay the price by going



up. And as on this tour we have to do about 66000meters in climb, you can feel it! So for those wanting to do the TdA in the future, aim at a bike that is around 12/14kilo maximum.

[Back to the top](#)

Date: 11-mar-2006

Stage: Nanyuki to Sagana

Distance: 105km

Time: 7h 33m

GPS at destination: forgot to record, but remember the S reading was about 53 seconds past the Equator

Country: Kenya

We left in convoy, this time to be able to take a group photo at the equator, which is just out of the town of Nanyuki. So we are half way around the globe, almost half way in number of cycling days and a little less than half way in terms of kilometres.

The rotation of the earth gives a funny effect on water flowing through a funnel, on the northern hemisphere it goes clockwise, on the southern counterclockwise (or was it the other way around?) and someone was giving us a demonstration of it.

Nice roads, but headwind and roads that go up and down. So we felt that a second breakfast with scrambled eggs and chips where needed to give us more energy. At the lunchstop later that day one of us had put her bike behind the truck, and found that her wallet disappeared when she got on her bike. So any future



participants on the TdA, never put your bike out of sight when you have left bags, odometers etc. on it!

The last part of the day (it was Saturday), we were accompanied by schoolboys on bicycles that came from school. Kenya has a very good developed English based, schooling system. Many people speak perfect English, so also the schoolboys with which we had an almost half hour conversation about our trip and their country. Their education is perfect, but the possibilities of finding a job are limited, so you meet people that have a degree at the university, but are selling fruit along the road as there is no work in their profession.

As we are getting closed to Nairobi the traffic increases, and you have to pay particular attention to cars overtaking in the opposite direction, they do not leave you a lot of room and you need to get off the road quickly to avoid the worse.

The campsite is the most beautiful we have had, green grass at the border of the river Tana, we all felt that we should take an extra rest day here (like we felt at the lake in Ethiopia).

There was a possibility to do wild water rafting by moonlight; Jenny does not like water too much, but Kees decided to try it and he likes it! Especially the contrast between the very hectic parts where you are splashing down a waterfall and the parts where there you only quietly pedal over calm water, with bats and birds around you. There was an almost full moon, so that added a special touch to this very successful evening.



[Back to the top](#)

Date: 12-mar-2006

Stage: Sagana to Nairobi

Distance: 53+46km

Time: 3h30m +2h56m

GPS at destination: not recorded

Country: Kenya

We reached the lunchtruck at the Blue Post hotel around 10:30h.

The road had become a highway and we saw the sign to the town of Thika, the town where Iris (remember our Dutch friend from Luxor) had lived with her parents.

There are police controls at almost any major town and too slow down the cars and trucks the police put very impressive pieces of metals with nails on the road, we saw something similar back in Egypt.

After a very hectic and long drive from Thika to the Upper Hill Camp Site in Nairobi we were welcomed by food and drinks, and witnessed the ceremony of donating bicycles, that will help women with their work. Part of our fees goes to a fund from which these bicycles are donated. Many of them told how they make use of the bicycles, and also the minister of tourism gave a speech, but that was more to motivate us to stay longer as a tourist and spend more money here, not exactly a speech in line with the purpose of the event in our opinion.

At the campsite 3 man in Orange T-shirts showed up, the van der Valks arrived, with our new chairs and a surprise from Priscilla for Jenny, biscuits to use in



the morning (we have difficulty with the porridge in the morning) and a nice postcard. We had dinner together with them and two French participants Christian and Madeleine at their hotel and came home late to our tent.

How does it feel to be almost half way? A sense of satisfaction, but also a sense of looking forward to the next half and also a feeling of like to meet our family again. We miss our daughters, son-in-laws and grandchild!

[Back to the top](#)



Date: 13-mar-2006

Stage: Nairobi (restday)

Country: Kenya

Well, we know now why the nickname of Nairobi is called Nairobberry! At the Norfolk hotel where we went to do some Internet, my wallet with credit cards was stolen, almost in front of my eyes. The money was not that much, but loosing the credit cards gives a lot of hassle. First of all, all the paper work to get the police statement (fortunately the hotel security guy helped us with that), but next to block the cards (again fortunately we got great help from the guys from the bank in France and Holland) and then to find out what money is left. Again, fortunately most of the money is in the money belt around my waist and also fortunately two "spare" credit cards, so let us put this behind us and forget about it as soon as possible.

One of the reasons that Kees lost attention on his wallet, was the fact that the PC in the hotel did not work properly, it told me that all files (including our photos) where no longer on my hard drive! Fortunately (again that word!) the PC gave the wrong information and we still have all the photos and reports. As you already found out, it was a large report that you probably had to read in two stages!

This report is shorter; it only covers the Nairobi to Arusha stages.

One more thing before moving to the next day, our photo camera finally gave up. After many attempts to get it back to work, the lens no longer wants to get out of the body and it could not get repaired quickly (we went to a Sony repair center) so we are using the camera on our iPaq for the moment, and are thinking buying a new camera in Arusha.

[Back to the top](#)

Date: 14-mar-06

Stage: Nairobi to Namanga

Distance: 160km

Time: 9h 32m

GPS at destination: E 36°49'03" S 2°32'00"

Country: Kenya

We started with 6 new people on the tour, those you already know are the van der Valk's who brought our new chairs. They brought so much stuff that they were having problems with KLM at check in, but they found a very creative solution for that. Their extra luggage was for a mission in Africa and the two chairs were for a missionaries to sit on. So Jenny and Kees are missionaries from now on!

We also have a French couple, Madeleine and Christian, joining our group. Christian did the 2004 tour from Cairo to Addis and now wants to do the part from Nairobi to Windhoek. Madeleine is not cycling, but supporting her husband while riding the truck. When we started talking to each other we found out that we live 5 minutes away from each other as they also have a house at the Cote d'Azur! Jenny is no longer the eldest person in the group, Paul Westmattelman is doing the rest of the Tour that he started in 2005.



We left camp in convoy, a long one again as Nairobi is a bit town. The convoy was not so hectic as on our way in the day before yesterday, but when we hit the smaller roads things became a bit hectic, a red car tried to pass us on the left site over the sand and rocks and threatened to get into our convoy when he saw that the shoulder of the road was no longer drivable. Our traffic enforcers (some of our fellow cyclist that kindly ask the drivers of the cars to wait a minute till we are all passed) did a good job in stopping him doing so.

The road and the weather was beautiful, so most of us did not feel the 160kms was long. We stopped frequently to get a coke, once at a tourist shop where a big Mama was serving us coke and later at another souvenir shop, where the owner was a very friendly man. He has a daughter that we needed to take a picture from, you can see why! We also saw our first zebra, unfortunately it was a dead one, hit by a car alongside the road.

The campsite near the border with Tanzania at Namanga was very nice, and the big surprise from Miles our chef was to have BBQ chicken, and fresh salada, we were delighted! "Where is the wine"; we hear you ask. No worries, it was there alright. A special wine! A former colleague of Priscilla from KLM was flying as stewardess on the flight to Nairobi with the van der Valks. She gave them a nice bottle of excellent South African white wine with which we completed our fine meal. Thanks Angelique!

[Back to the top](#)

