

Tanzania

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Date: 15-mar-06

Stage: Namanga to Arusha

Distance: 119km

Time: 7h 43m

GPS at destination: E 36°43'12" S 3°23'06"

Country: Kenya and Tanzania

The frontier was only 4km away and getting out of Kenya was a very quick exercise. Getting the visa from Tanzania took a bit longer. The lady that needed to process the passports did not really start her job before 8:00, so some of us had to wait almost an hour. George, who had a plane to catch out of Arusha to visit his family during the rest days, was not a very happy man there! Our passports went through pretty quickly so we got on the road and after an hour or so we were joined by the van der Valks.



Nice to chat in Dutch for a while!

Randy told us in the morning that we might see wildlife and yes, we saw baboons and giraffes. This was before the lunch and before the rain and thunderstorm got us. We had totally forgotten to take our rain jackets with us and as we also needed to go through the mud from time to time, we arrived in Arusha soaking wet and with our shirts totally under the mud.

Jenny had a problem with her fingers. As we came down to Arusha, the riding speed went up and with our cloves being wet, she had no feeling in her fingers and we had to stop a couple of times.

When we arrived in the Masai Camp in Arusha, our chauffeur for the Safari was already waiting for us, so we quickly put up our tent, took a shower, tossed all the luggage into the tent and left for our Safari to the Ngorongoro Crater. We were too late to get into the Conservation, who closed at 18:00, so we went to a Lodge just outside the park, the Farmhouse, where we had a marvelous meal in a very luxurious restaurant with a good bottle of wine.

The rooms are fantastic, to get an idea, here is an impression of them. Needless to say that we slept like a baby under the mosquito net.

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Date: 16-mar-06
Stage: Ngorongoro crater
Country: Tanzania

It is difficult to describe this wonderful day and we only have video images to show you, so that has to wait till we are back in France. But we saw all kind of animals in this immense crater of 240 square kilometers. This crater is a World Heritage site in the volcanic highlands of Tanzania (the rim is at about 2200 meter). We first drove up to the rim and had a stunning view on the crater driving around till we descended on a steep road down to the floor of the crater where we drove around for about 6 to 7 hours.

The most memorably event was the sight of 14 lions, who were preparing an attack on buffalo's. We were sitting on top of the car, watching them for about 1,5 hours and taking our lunch at the same time as we were taking video images. When in the afternoon we were looking at the flamingos, the rain and thunderstorm came down on us, giving the safari an even more authentic flavor. We saw a lioness lying at the site of the road in the rain, not bothered by us taking video about 1 meter away from her.

When we drove up to our next hotel, the Sopa Lodge, we had our most stunning experience of the day, 3 elephants were crossing the road and started eating on the trees on the side of it. We started taking video of them and one of the 3 came so close to us that we did not have to zoom in at all, a very memorable moment.

The Sopa lodge is overlooking the crater, and all rooms have a view on the crater. We really enjoyed this luxury after 2 months of almost camping in the tent, we had afternoon tea with cake, took a drink when overlooking the crater during sunset



and enjoyed a meal with a nice wine from South Africa (again!), made from a crape that we did not know the existence of, the Baronne. We definitely have to find a bottle or two of these when in Cape Town!

We also managed to talk to our daughters who called us in the hotel and finished the day in the bar with a nice Italian couple (Vittorio and Gabrielle). During the night we left the curtains open, the full moon illuminated the crater, a magnificent view we can guarantee you!

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Date: 17-mar-06

Stage: Arusha (rest day)

Country: Tanzania

The morning we used to drive back from the Ngorongoro crater to Arusha, which was a very nice drive. Passing the Manyara Lake and taking the road that on Sunday we have to drive on our bikes in the direction of Iringa.

The afternoon we took to buy some essentials in the local supermarket, finding a pair of pants and sandals for Jenny (we did not succeed with the pants, but finally found a pair of sandals in a shop that sold these for children!) and a new photo camera to replace the one that gave up service. We hope that this one is able to serve us till the end of the trip in Cape Town!

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Date: 18-mar-06

Stage: Arusha (rest day)

Country: Tanzania

Rain during the night, but nice sun during the day, so the usual washing etc took place. Irmie and Wendy made us a nice surprise in the morning. They prepared some pancakes that we used for our first breakfast!

Internetting and some more shopping finished this day, tomorrow we are on our way to Iringa, again a stretch of 7 days without a rest day.

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Date: 19-mar-2006

Stage: Arusha to Lakeview camp (Manyara lake)

Distance: 101 km

Time: 5h 43m

GPS at destination: E 35°55'49" S 3°40'14"

Country: Tanzania

Jenny and I left a bit earlier before the convoy started, as we wanted to see if the DHL office was open to get the address of the next DHL office in Iringa to have the replacement VISA cards being send to. Well, they were closed till

12:00 and we had to wait till the convoy arrived. Later that day we got the address via Lucien, who we called and who found both the address and the telephone number of that office. So the story of the VISA cards continues.

The road was magnificent and the weather too. After 20km after Arusha we stopped at the snake park, where Eddy was staying (one of the drivers that drove one of the trucks till Arusha). Jenny did a good job of "catching" a snake and also holding a small baby crocodile.

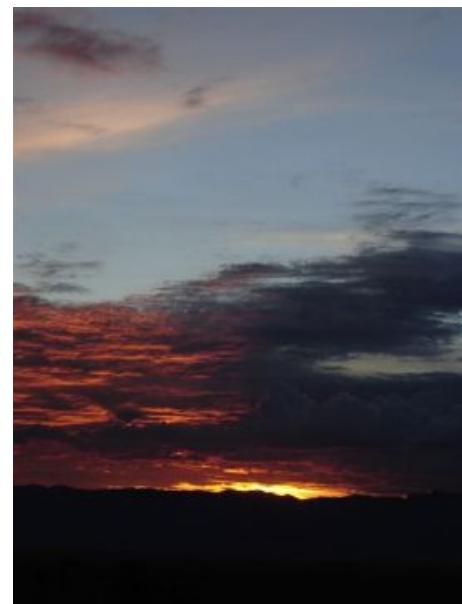
At lunch we had the usual spectators as always, but this time from Tanzanian boys.

The campsite was one of the beautiful sites. In the middle of nowhere, but with cold beer and above all, wine! We also witnessed the most beautiful sunset of the tour, at least from what we remember.

We stayed late to see the sunset, drinking the wine and enjoy the quietness of the environment, with thunderstorms developing over the mountains in the distance. Actually we did not wanted to go to the tent, but duty was calling, our alarm clock was set for 5:30 tomorrow!

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Date: 20-mar-2006

Stage: Lakeview camp to Bereko

Distance: 109km

Time: 10h 30m

GPS at destination: E 35°44'52" S 4°28'22"

Country: Tanzania

We needed to walk with our bikes for 1 km from the camp to the road. Yesterday we were already warned that there were a lot of little thorns, so before we got on our bikes we inspected our tires carefully, but not carefully enough apparently, because we had our 3rd flat of the Tour an hour later!



The asphalt stopped 3km after camp and would not come back before we came close to Iringa (with a small stretch near Dodoma, the capital of Tanzania). Repairing the leak was quick for two inexperienced leak-repairers, only 15 minutes later we were back on the road. But we got some rain and the dirt started to get sticky, leaving enough mud on our bikes to have to stop to clean the

fenders of the bikes.

An important clime brought us to the lunch truck on a nice place where we had a nice view over the area. The mountains in the distance predicted another clime and it was a steep one this time, so we did not go so fast. On top of clime, the rain started and we also got an important thunderstorm and above all a lot of mud on the road. We descended at about the same speed as we were climbing before. We were asking ourselves how we would reach camp and above all how we would be able to clean ourselves and our bikes.



When we finally reached camp around 6:00pm we decided that cleaning the bikes would be useless as tomorrow we will have to continue on the muddy roads. We also were guessing that if we would leave the bikes in the rain overnight, some of the mud would wash off.

Our Dutch friend GeertJan did a demonstration on his recumbent (for the Dutch: ligfiets) for the children that were staring at us around the camp. The rain continued, but became more a drizzle, so we were not sure if the bikes would be clean in the morning. We see tomorrow, get a bit of sleep first!

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Date: 21-mar-2006

Stage: Berekoko to bush camp

Distance: 104km

Time: 10h 00m

GPS at destination: E 35°53'19" S 5°14'49"

Country: Tanzania

Well, the bikes were wet, but not clean at all. So before we left we had to clean the chains and lubricate them, so we left camp after the racers were gone, we catch them later.....

The condition of the road were reasonable compared to yesterday at first, but later became as disastrous for us as the day before. Our trucks had to wait because another truck got stuck in the mud.

We never had been so late at lunch, only at 1:00pm and afraid that we might not be able to get to camp before dark. There was a beautiful tree, the baobab, next to the lunch location. The trunk was enormous; we think that 20 people would be needed to circumvent it.

We left after 30 minutes, knowing that the roads were less hilly after lunch. Some of the landscapes were nicely formed by the water, could be a good inspiring picture for a future paintings by Jenny.

Well we made it to camp, but we had to push the limits on our pedals. We were just in time to eat and wash a bit with a bottle of water and sleep to become strong for the next day.

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Date: 22-mar-2006
Stage: Bush camp to Dodoma
Distance: 118km
Time: 8h 30m
GPS at destination: not recorded, Dodoma
Country: Tanzania

After such a long day we slept like babies. Jenny did a massage of Kees's knee that gave him a bit of a problem yesterday and also some Reiki. Surprise, surprise, no more pain! She herself also needed some massage, the nurse Jon did a short session during the riders meeting in the morning.

Today we got sand, mud, stones, etc. Jenny thought that there was a new type of road almost every kilometer. On some of the houses/huts along the way we saw red crosses, we guessed that this was because they needed to be taken down. We got confirmation from one of the locals when we asked. In some villages we saw crossed on almost every other house!

We reach the tarmac of Dodoma just before a thunderstorm flooded the area and we felt that it would be wiser to wait in a small restaurant than to get soaking wet!

On the way into Dodoma, we were surprise to see vineyards, the evening we used to try to local wine, not too bad!

A local rider helped cleaning the bikes and in compensation for his work we gave him one of our used tires. It is very difficult for the people here that like cycling to get good material. So they use every opportunity to get that from us.

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Date: 23-mar-2006

Stage: Dodoma to bushcamp

Distance: 91 km

Time: 6h 53m

GPS at destination: E 36°03'41" S 6°47'00"

Country: Tanzania

After a short convoy we reached the dirt road again and decided that today we would like to get pictures from the locals. That is not always easy, the guy that was next to the stack of charcoal, only wanted to be on the photo if we gave him money, so we only took the photo of the charcoal. Others were more willing to get their picture taken as you can see.

One of our riders hit the dirt pretty rough and needed to be stitched up by the surgeon. He was not the first one, we have had two more cases of riders that fell of their bikes and needed stitches. We also have a total of 12 riders that are no longer on their bikes in this part of the Tour. That's almost 20%, we feel proud and lucky that we are still able to continue to cycle.

Our surgeon Thobias has a lot of work this way, but fortunately also finds time to ride his bike himself. As a little thank you to all the assistance he is given, here a picture of him going of the



rough roads in Tanzania.

We hear more and more riders complaining about the food. The food in the evening is ok, but not with a lot of fantasy, almost always stew, with curry and little or no fresh vegetables. Leftovers from the day before are often used as a spread on the bread for the lunch the next day. We stay away from that as we think that stomach problems in our group are perhaps related to that. So we take some tins of sardines with us and make our own bread.

The afternoon and evening was hot, so hot that we tried to stay outside of our tent as long as possible. The sky was beautiful, clear with stars, but all around us we saw lightening on the horizon, so it was like watching fireworks. The next day we would see if the thunderstorms would come our way or not!

At 9:00pm in our tent the temperature was close to 30 degrees, difficult to go to sleep. In the small town close by, the people were playing the drums and children were signing, so we finally got to sleep on the sweet sound of their voices.



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Travel journal

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Geschreven door Kees Vonk





Date: 24-mar-2006

Stage: Bushcamp to bushcamp

Distance: 96km

Time: 10h 25m

GPS at destination: E 35°45'08" S 7°18'31"

Country: Tanzania

No rain during the night, but when we were taking our breakfast (porridge as usual) heavy rains started and we had to face a difficult start to say the least.

Mud, mud and mud! After 45 minutes Jenny almost decided to stop as it was very difficult to get through on our bikes. We kept trying however and the roads improved a bit. We came through a village where the road has changed into a river, but then we got on better road and the rain stopped as well. After 2 hours, we almost had forgotten the very difficult start of the morning. Almost forgotten as we still can see ourselves wading through the mud in some places.

Randy told us the day before that we will



see lakes, among others an artificial lake with a dam. Just before the dam we had a nice Coke. The dam itself we were not aloud to photograph, apparently they are afraid that someone will rebuild a similar one?

Big Mike, Huberte and Madeleine had prepared a surprise for us. We passed the halfway mark at 5857km, and Mike had bought a lot of excellent food, among others fresh fruit like pineapples and coconut. We stayed longer at that lunchstop because of that!

One more Coke stop, this time with the other Dutchies (www.3opdefiets.nl) and when we arrived at the camp we had surprise number 2 of the day, BBQ! We should have complained about the food a bit earlier in the Tour!

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Date: 25-mar-2006

Stage: Bushcamp to Iringa

Distance: 78km

Time: 7h 00m

GPS at destination: not recorded

Country: Tanzania

Rain at the start and a 20km clime on wet, stony and sandy roads in the mist. It had a special atmosphere. We felt like "Cyclist in the Mist" in Uganda! Everything is green, green, green around here. Later it became dry and the roads were better. The lunch was better as well, we could prepare our own sandwiches

and not only with peanut butter but also maple syrup! Again, we should have complained about the food earlier in the Tour!

As we are used to greet all people we meet on the road since we left Egypt and especially since we entered Ethiopia, we continue doing that here as well. Here the greeting is Jambo, and the response to Jenny's "Jambo" is often Jambo Mama. When we are greeting women they start laughing seeing Jenny on the bike. At first we did not understand why they said "Pole Pole" but now we know that it means, take it easy. Probably we are considered to be at an age were it is better to sit on a chair then riding a bike!

As we wanted to be at the DHL office in Iringa before it closes at 4:00pm, we did not take any other stops than the lunch stop, but it did not help. By the time we reached the DHL office we found that it had close at 2:00pm on that day (Saturday). Bad luck. Will we see the new Visa cards before Cape Town?

We were lucky to find a room at the campsite (a Baptist Conference center). Lucky because it started raining when we arrived there and lucky because it cleaned the dirty bikes a bit (but still a lot of work the day after we could predict).

The evening we went with all the Dutchies (6 in total) to a local restaurant and had a very nice evening meal and laughed a lot. Talking in English is ok, but having a good laugh you need to do that in your mother tongue!

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Date: 26-mar-2006

Stage: Rest day in Iringa

GPS at destination: not recorded

Country: Tanzania

The usual day, with cleaning etc. Also shopping and going around Iringa, a town a bit bigger than Marsabit in North Kentia, but comparable. Good Internet facilities however and that we had not seen in Kenya except for Nairobi.

Tomorrow we leave for the last 4 days in Tanzania before we enter Malawi. We like the country and the people, they are friendly and helpful. A country with a lot of potential.

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Date: 27-mar-2006

Stage: Iringa to bush camp

Distance: 101km

Time: 7h 09m

GPS at destination: E 35°11'15" S 8°26'13"

Country: Tanzania

There was a lot of rain during the night, glad we are not camping and hope those that are in their tents stay dry!

New riders arrived, first of all a new rider from the Siemens team. Rudy left, Sven came. We also were joined by a female rider from Germany, Isabelle.

Furthermore we saw many of the "dissidents" back, except for two, who will join us 3 days later in Mbeya, one day before we cross the border with

Malawi.

Health wise we still have a few people who cannot ride due to medical reasons, upset stomach and infections are the most common causes. Our nurse Jon has a lot of work!

During the packing in the morning, the rain started again and on and off this continued till about noon, after that it became better fortunately. As we are at >1600m of altitude, the rain makes it a bit chilly. At the lunch stop we did not stay so long, it was getting cold in our wet clothes, with soaked wet socks and shoes as well as cold fingers. We regret that we did not buy the full finger version, in stead of the open finger ones.

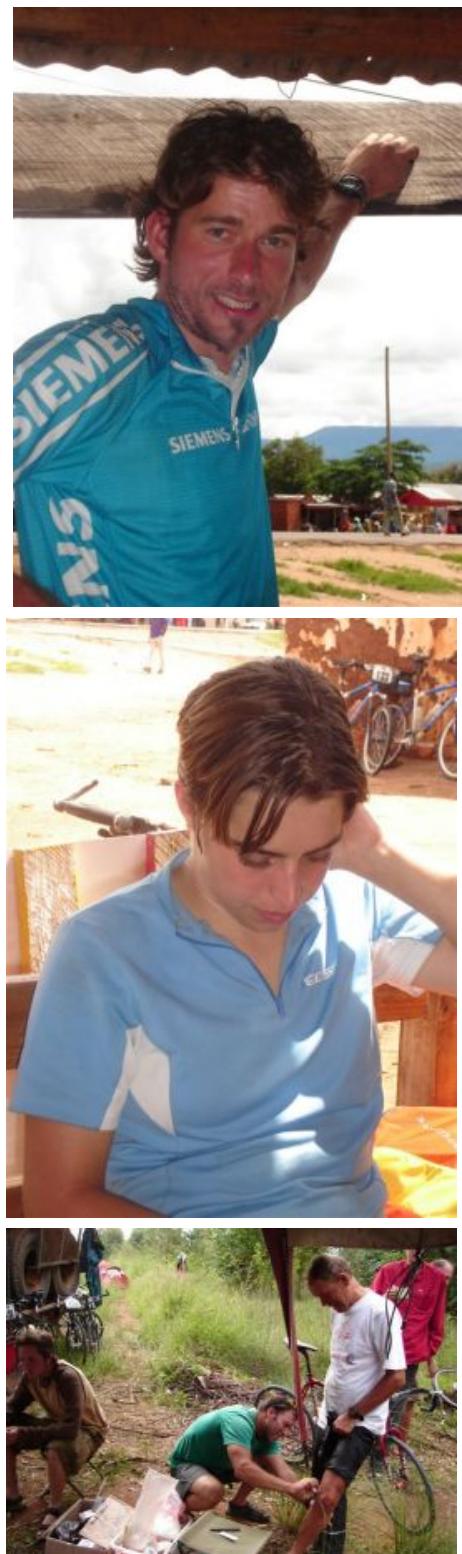
Before our lunch stop, we got hungry and with the other Dutchies bought bananas in a small village.

Later in the afternoon we bought delicious passion fruit that we used as a vitamin booster in camp.

The landscape felt "European" with perfect asphalt, lot of clouds and huge trees, that appeared to be Eucalyptus. So that and the houses and people reminded us that we really were in Africa.

Camp was situated under the high trees on 3 paths in the wood, we hope that nobody need to drive through it tonight!

We have another rider that has a broken aluminum frame, lightweight can have its drawbacks, but honestly, we would have loved to have a few kilo's less on the bike.



Travel journal

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Date: 28-mar-2006

Stage: Bush camp to bush camp

Distance: 131km

Time: 8h 05m

GPS at destination: E 34°17'32" S 8°48'15"

Country: Tanzania

Going to bed early as we did yesterday

evening, has one disadvantage; when you wake up around midnight you might not go back to sleep easily. That happened to Jenny, she was awake for hours and by the time we needed to get up, she was fast asleep. So why did we not went to bed later? The reason was the rain, and the chilly temperature. We hope that today we can stay up later with good weather. In the morning we had a bit of drizzle, but the sun appeared as well, so we had a very early rainbow high in the sky.

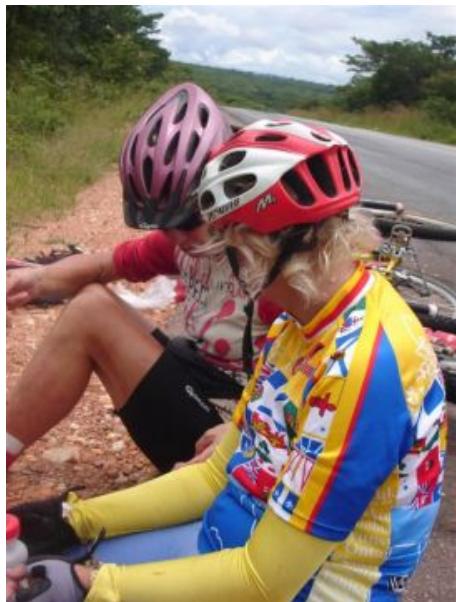
Roads where excellent, we first stayed in the forest and when the racers passed us came to open land with stunning panoramas.

Children are always excited when we pass, sometimes they ask for money, but mostly it is Jambo and laughter.

Jenny's "twin sister divided by birth" is back on the bike, she hurted her ankle during the safari in Arusha and could not ride for 2 weeks. For a big part of the day she was riding with us. Jenny is happy that she can chat with her!

We see mobile salesman with a big display from time to time, they go from village to village, like in the good old days in Europe.

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Date: 29-mar-2006

Stage: Bush camp to Uyole

Distance: 95km

Time: 6h 33m

Country: Tanzania

It rained again during the night, but the morning was dry with a beautiful sunrise. We had about 100km ahead of us with a significant climb at the end to the hotel/campsite in Uyole (close to Mbeya). It gave a beautiful panorama once we reached the highest point.

The road was like yesterday, we saw plenty of school children, they come running to us when we stop and are excited and scared when we take pictures.

We saw an aureole around the sun at noon, almost 90° above us, so the shadow under our bikes is minimal!

Rice paddies is something we did not see before, probably because there is enough water around. Drinking water however is a different story, there is not enough of it here.

At the side of the road wheat and beans are left to dry, with the fumes of the



trucks and busses passing they might get a special flavor.

At coke stops we often have spectators, like this little girl.

We went to bed not too early after 2 glasses of wine, so most likely we will not wake up in the middle of the night!



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Date: 30-mar-2006

Stage: Uyole to Bush camp

Distance: 119km

Time: 8h 20m

GPS at destination: E 33°50'47" S 9°41'19"

Country: Tanzania

The sunrise out of the window of the room we had in the Stockholm Hotel in Uyole was fantastic!

It gave us the energy to get early on our bikes to start the climb to 2300m. A lot of trucks passed us, some so slow the riders were hanging on the side of it!

We had to watch for the small karts, fully loaded that descend with the "driver" running in the front with his feet barely touching the ground!

We were warned for the "sleeping policeman", concrete obstacles to slow traffic down before the villages, that



was useful information, after the climb the descend was major (we finally ended up at 600m!) so our speed as well (Kees hit 91km/h on his bike, but questions the reading a bit). Last year many riders crashed there.

A big truck crashed as well, we saw marks from tires going off the road, and when we stopped to see what happened we saw the truck 50m lower in a valley, totally destroyed, only the axels with the tires reminded of his glory. There were plenty of people searching in the remains, to see if there was still something they could use.

The landscape is very tropical, with banana trees all around and tea plantages. First time we saw those.

We thought that we have heavy bikes, but here we see guys that must have over 50kilogrammes to pedal!

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