

Mauritania

[Tuesday 6 November](#)
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Date: 06-nov-2007
Stage: Desert camp to Border to Desert camp
Distance: 97 km
Ascent: 220 m
Temp (L/M/H): 18/34/44
KCal: 1505
Time: 8 h 48 m
Country: Morocco/Mauritania

Today we left Morocco, or actually the Western Sahara and transferred the border with Mauritania. Like always, the frontier are not the right place to get an impression of a country, although we passed the border rather quickly, the officials, especially on the Mauritanian site, are not too friendly.

Between the two countries, there is a stretch of 5km no mans land where there were a lot of wrecks of cars parked long-term.

Just before crossing the border, plenty of cars of the Challenge Amsterdam Dakar arrived there as well. We had nice charts with some of the owners of the cars. The cars will be donated to people in Senegal



and usually are not worth more than €500.

Crossing the border also made us believe that we entered a new world, the world of high temperatures and headwind. After lunch we stopped already after 10km to be able to cool off under a tree.

And shortly after that we found a hut where we took soft drinks, sitting on the mats on the floor and chatting with the women that were running the business. The men were just walking around and sleeping in the back of the hut. Like always, the women are much busier than the men.

Alongside the road was a railroad track. Twice, once during our cycling trip and once when we arrived in camp, we saw a very long train coming by, with people sitting on the wagons to get a free ride (we suppose). During the late evening, another train came by and we had the impression that it was running through our tent, so close was the campsite to the track.

Great surprise, we were able to get a shower from a tap that was attached to a submerged pipeline. This way a desert camp is not too difficult!

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[Date: 07-nov-2007](#)

[Stage: Desert camp to Desert camp](#)

[Distance: 143 km](#)

[Ascent: 125 m](#)

[Temp \(L/M/H\): 22/32/44](#)

[KCal: 1691](#)

[Time: 9 h 16 m](#)

[Country: Mauritania](#)

Again an early start, the wind started to blow in the wrong direction, so we needed a lot of water and were glad that the truck stopped to replenish our bottles and camelbacks.

Here in Mauritania we find often wreck of cars alongside the road, Rudy tried to see if he could still drive one.

Today is our 38th wedding anniversary and we were able to call our daughters in Holland and Denmark. Remarkable, just in the middle of nowhere to have mobile phone coverage.

It was hot again as you can see from the temperatures mentioned above, so we needed more drinks at one of huts, where the drinks were kind of kept cold with a fridge that runs on batteries that are charged with solar power. Two beautiful children were watching us, not saying one word and we were allowed by the brother to take pictures from them.

The campsite was alongside the road, but fortunately Anna and Adam were able to get soft drinks, so we celebrate our wedding with soft drinks for everybody.

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Travel journal

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Geschreven door Kees Vonk



Date: 08-nov-2007

Stage: Desert camp to Desert camp

Distance: 132 km

Ascent: 305 m

Temp (L/M/H): 22/28/41

KCal: 617

Time: 6 h 35 m

Country: Mauritania

Early again, the road is getting a bit more interesting with vegetation increasing a bit.

Also more sand and it is indeed hot, so Rudy poured some water on our shirts to cool off.

Alongside the road, we find water beds, or at least, it looks like it. Marius took a short nap on one of those.

The day went by like the 3 before, most of the time we are trying to make kilometers and entertain ourselves as described above. Today we even had no Coke stop at all! So only hot water from the bottles.

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Date: 09-nov-2007

Stage: Desert camp to Nouakchott

Distance: 126 km

Ascent: 115 m

Temp (L/M/H): 20/30/41

KCal: 1281

Time: 6 h 52 m

Country: Mauritania

A bit cooler today, but after lunch a lot of wind and on top of that a sandstorm when we were getting close to Nouakchott. The police here is not so kind as in Morocco, they did not liked the fact that we our passports in the safe of the truck and it delayed our trip into town a bit. It might have been caused by the sand

that was on our faces!

Nice hotel rooms were promised by the organization, but every rooms was taken. At least that was the first message. When we had decided to camp, the manager had good news, the team Bazuin-Vonk was able to get into one of the rooms and especially the ladies were very happy.

Unfortunately this day did not end so well for Jenny, she fell in the shower and hurt her back. The floor of the shower was soaking wet and the steps down to the room were wet as well. A nice bleu developed quickly and we hope she will be able to continue the ride on her bicycle to St. Louis and Dakar. Future will tell!



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Date: 10-nov-2007

Restday: Nouakchott

Again a real rest day, after breakfast we walked to the fish market over the beach and took a taxi there with 5 other cyclists to the Novotel and after the usual writing of our last report took a very luxurious lunch at the Novotel with a bottle (Yes!) of white Bordeaux.

Back to the beach to take a swim and a nap and we were ready for the next 3 days. There are plenty of fishing boats at sea and on the flood line you find plenty of dead fish.

Two more notes for today: Since 2 days we are using our spare tent, the first one



broke down and we are so glad that with the experience from last year, we decided to take 2 tents with us just in case. We are now in a nice colourful red tent.

Secondly, when we arrived in Nouakchott yesterday and asked for the hotel, a local answered in Dutch (Allemachtig prachtig!) and when he had given us directions, he wished us a nice trip by saying: Goede vakantie kaaskop! (Kaaskop is how the Dutch are sometimes referred to, literally means Cheese Head).

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Date: 11-nov-2007

Stage: Nouakchott to Desert camp

Distance: 145 km

Ascent: 210 m

Temp (L/M/H): 15/32/43

KCal: 1121

Time: 8 h 42 m

Country: Mauritania

First of all, Jenny is on the bike, although with difficulty, she managed to finish this day (and the others). A tough lady indeed!

The road out of Nouakchott was easy and for a while we saw again the cars from the Challenge Amsterdam - Dakar, they are bringing old cars to Senegal and we saw them for the first time at the border between Morocco and Mauritania.

During the day we encountered trucks with a huge load of hay. We could pass easily, but we question how things would work out



if two of these cars meet!

Gradually there were more trees coming into the landscape, nice to have that after so many days of sand.

The last part we had dirt road again and to get to the truck we needed to carry our bikes, plenty of sharp things on the ground.

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Date: 12-nov-2007

Stage: Desert camp to Desert camp

Distance: 108 km

Ascent: 300 m

Temp (L/M/H): 21/32/45

KCal: 860

Time: 7 h 29 m

Country: Mauritania

In the morning we saw that one of the small Baobabs was blooming, we had seen plenty of baobabs before, but never with flowers.

We are close to Senegal near Rosso, but

as the border crossing there is world famous for corrupt officers, we took a dirt road to Diana and had to camp near the swamps half way.

Before we reached the camp, we had to pass a small village and children there were aggressive, they wanted to steal Jenny's shirt and almost were successful.

For Marius and Hannie it was worse, they lost their windbreakers that Marius had snapped on his rack. We discovered it too late to be able to find the one that committed the crime, unfortunately.

Although the dirt road was from time to time difficult, the scenery was nice, with the Senegal river so close, there is enough water to keep everything green.

Because of the fact that we are camping with so much water around with is a nice place for mosquitoes, we had a very very early dinner and were in our tent before the sun went down. Still kind of hot in the tent and the insects were making the sound of rain on our tent, attracted by the light of our headlamps. We also got a frog that tried to get into the tent by jumping on it several times, a funny sound!

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Date: 13-nov-2007

Stage: Desert camp-Border to St Louis

Distance: 93 km

Ascent: 50 m

Temp (L/M/H): 21/31/42

KCal: 146

Time: 7 h 22 m (including border waitingtime)

Country: Mauritania/Senegal

The mosquitoes have nicely been waiting for us to get out of our tent, so many of us had bites all over the place. Those that had to go to the toilet during the night on a not so comfortable place!



The second part of the dirt road for another 50 kms, with plenty of water around and a lot, lot of birds. Part of this area is natural park, shared between Mauritania and Senegal. In the distance we saw a patch of flamingos, a bird easy to spot with their rose colour.



The border crossing was not too long, Wilbert is a genius in arranging these things quickly, not paying too much money, the Senegalese authorities first asked him 10€ per passport as "present", but finally settles for less than 2€!



No pictures to be taken at the border crossing, we know that after Geerten had a narrow escape on the previous border

when he took a picture there. Fortunately he could delete the image on his camera, but we were afraid he would lose his camera completely a week ago!

After the crossing we took a lunch at a hot location (no wind and a bit humid) and continued to St. Louis with an easy drive, except for the last part, the town is hectic with 2 bridges to cross, one of which is old and made by Eiffel. On the second island there is a huge fish market, the road wet of water and rests of fishes and needless to say that the smell is also very strong.

The big bird pelican is a big friend of the market, eating all the fish that are left behind.

Arriving at the hotel the rooms reserved by Priscilla for us were still there and with a nice cold beer and a bottle of red wine, we celebrated to have arrived safely at the last rest day spot.

Hanny and Marius, who have, like us, a dog, adopted for the evening these two puppies, they were sleeping for hours on their lap.

Wilbert invited all those that wanted to eat in camp to a restaurant next door, so it became a late night, with good food and wine, at least for us cyclists who usually are in our tent by 8 o'clock in the evening.

Mauritania

We found this country not too interesting, plenty of sand, but not with the colours we saw in for instance Sudan. Not a country where we like to go back to. In the north the people were friendly, in the south a lot less friendly.



Nouakchott is very dirty, although we understood that a massive cleaning project is underway, we did not really see the results of that yet.

Participants

In Nouakchott two men joined the team Joan & Joan both from Spain, who are 73 and 75 years old. We nicknamed them Sainte Claus and Father Christmas! Nice men and very courageous to join us here in the heat.

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