

# *South Africa*





# *Zimbabwe    Zambia    Botswana*

*January 2024*

Mac McGinnis came to Leben Kai on time at 11:45 am to begin our journey. In twenty minutes, we picked up my friend, Jere Breneisen, at his home near Pequea, Pennsylvania. The three hour ride to Newark Airport seemed shortened because of a lack in traffic. Our checkin was smooth so we had a luxurious time (three hours) in the United Club, no stress. On boarding for Cape

Town ,  
we were  
upgraded  
to  
Premium

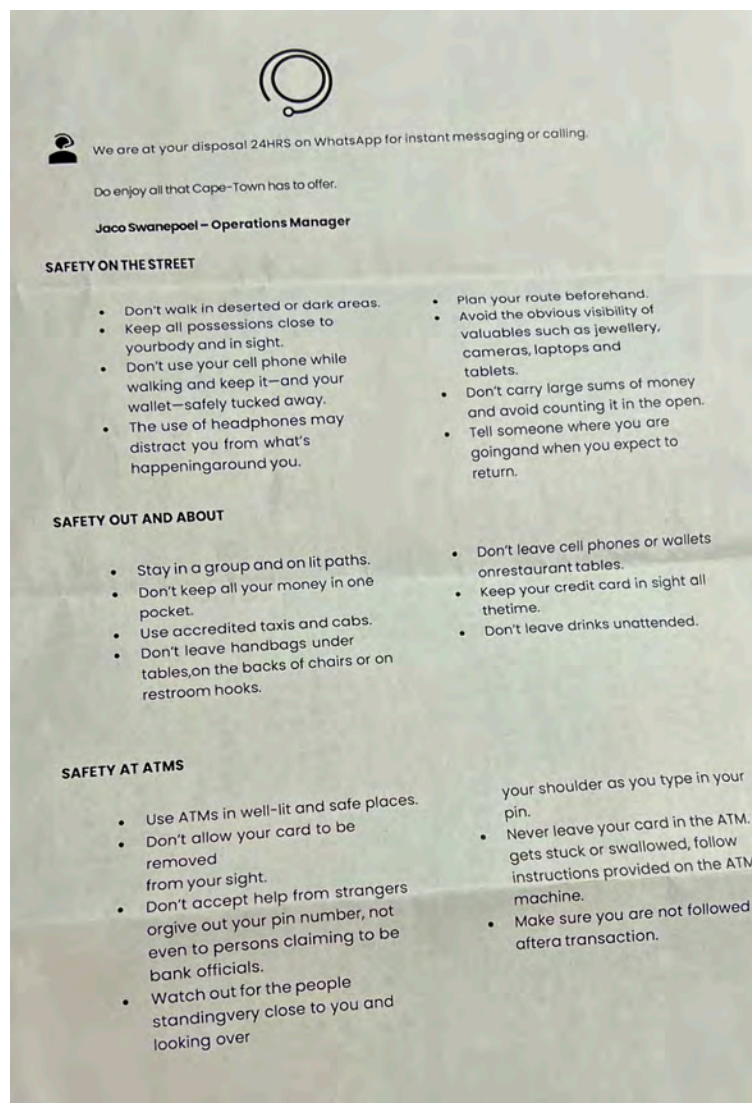


Plus. This gave us some extra comfort for the fourteen and one half hour flight. On arrival, we had to take a domestic flight on South African Airways to Johannesburg. Their executive lounge was posh with an unusual wooden table. This was a nice welcome to South Africa. The uneventful, three hour flight



soon had us tucked into the Garden Court Hotel.

We saw a stern, full page writing on our desk which was sobering. This notice was good reason for us to join the folks from Exoticca the next morning. When in doubt, there is safety in numbers; two people now walk in the shadow of twenty.



# South Africa



Flag



Coat of arms

South Africa occupies the southern tip of continental Africa. The map shows how far North it lies from Antarctica. This explains





why the country has no glaciers unlike their neighbors in New Zealand, Chile and Argentina.

The population exceeds 62 million. The ethnic mix is:



81.4 % black

8.2 % colored

7.3 % white

2.7 % asian

Colored is defined as multi racial. The white community has its origin in Europe, mostly Dutch and English. The asians are predominately from China and India.

The country has three capitals. Cape Town (Parliament-Legislative), Pretoria ( administrative ) and Bloermfontein ( Judicial ). Johannesburg is the largest city thereby having the highest court.

The white folks ruled the country during the colonial days. In 1948 the national Party imposed Apartheid thereby institutionalizing racial segregation. The world disapproved of this system and it



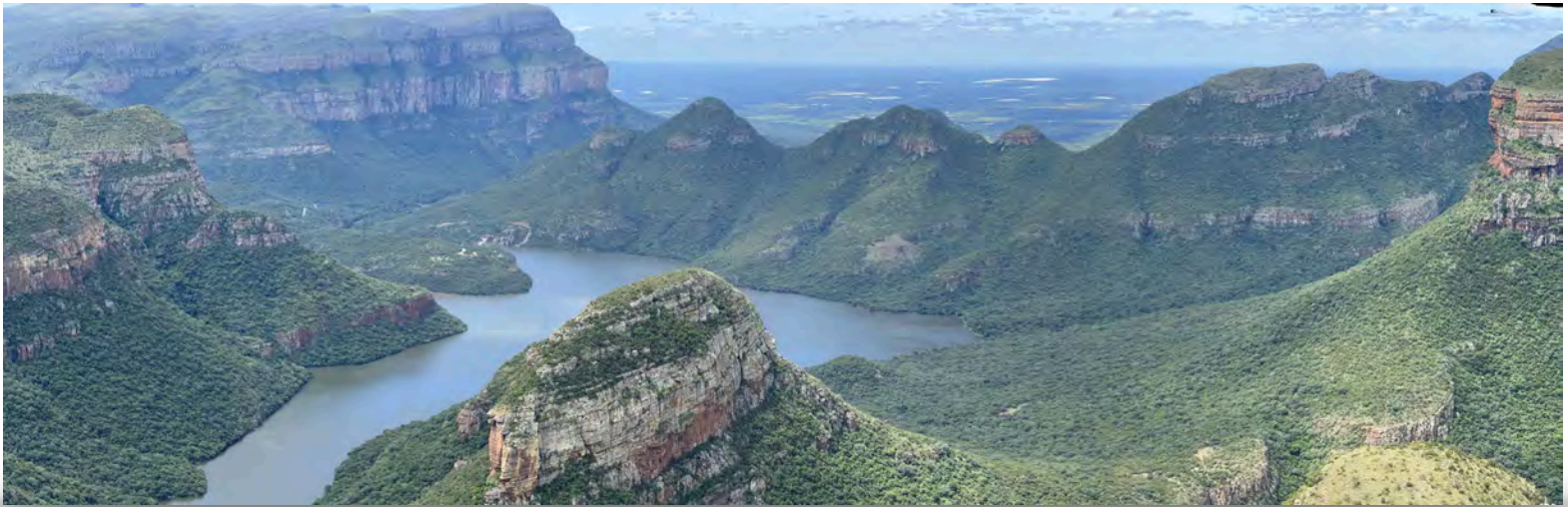


took many years to repeal this oppressive law. In 1994, all ethnic and linguistic folks were given equal representation in the government. Today, there is a 40 % unemployment and 60 % live below the poverty line. The currency is called the Rand; presently 18 Rands equal one American Dollar.

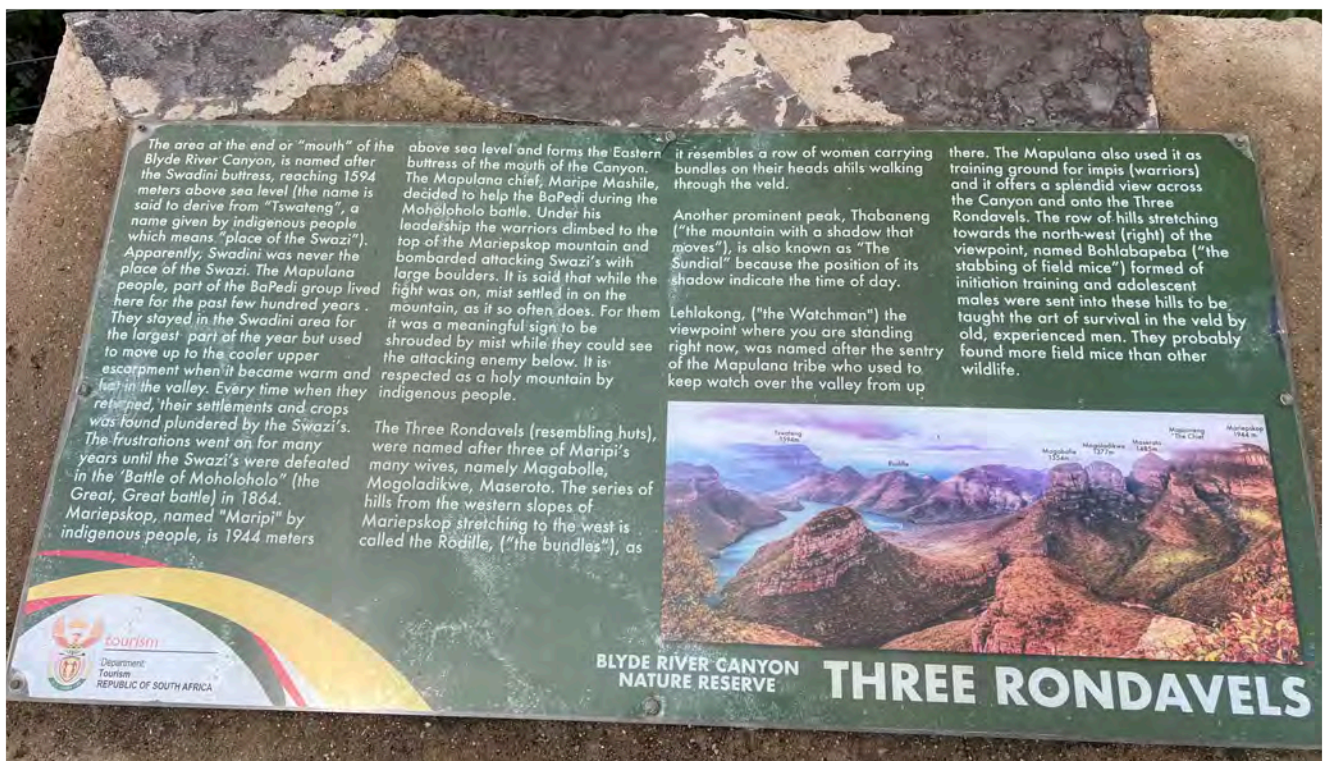


# Kruger National Park

The park is a five hundred kilometer, all day bus ride from Johannesburg. The journey offered some all world spectacles. At



Sable-Clermont, there was the Blyde River Canyon Nature Preserve.





At Blyderiverport, a special view of the Three Rondavels.

The Bourke's Luck Potholes are located at the confluence of Treur and Blythe Rivers where the sandstone rock has eroded for centuries to give us this feast for our eyes today. They are named for an unlucky gold prospector.







At the end of the hike, we arrived at God's Window.







It is said that the Kruger National Park is as big as New Jersey. This is wrong... Kruger is two hundred square miles larger than New Jersey!

There are no guarantees that you will see any animals when you enter the park; one can go for a few hours and not see anything. We were

blessed to stay close the fence of the Numbi entrance of the Park.





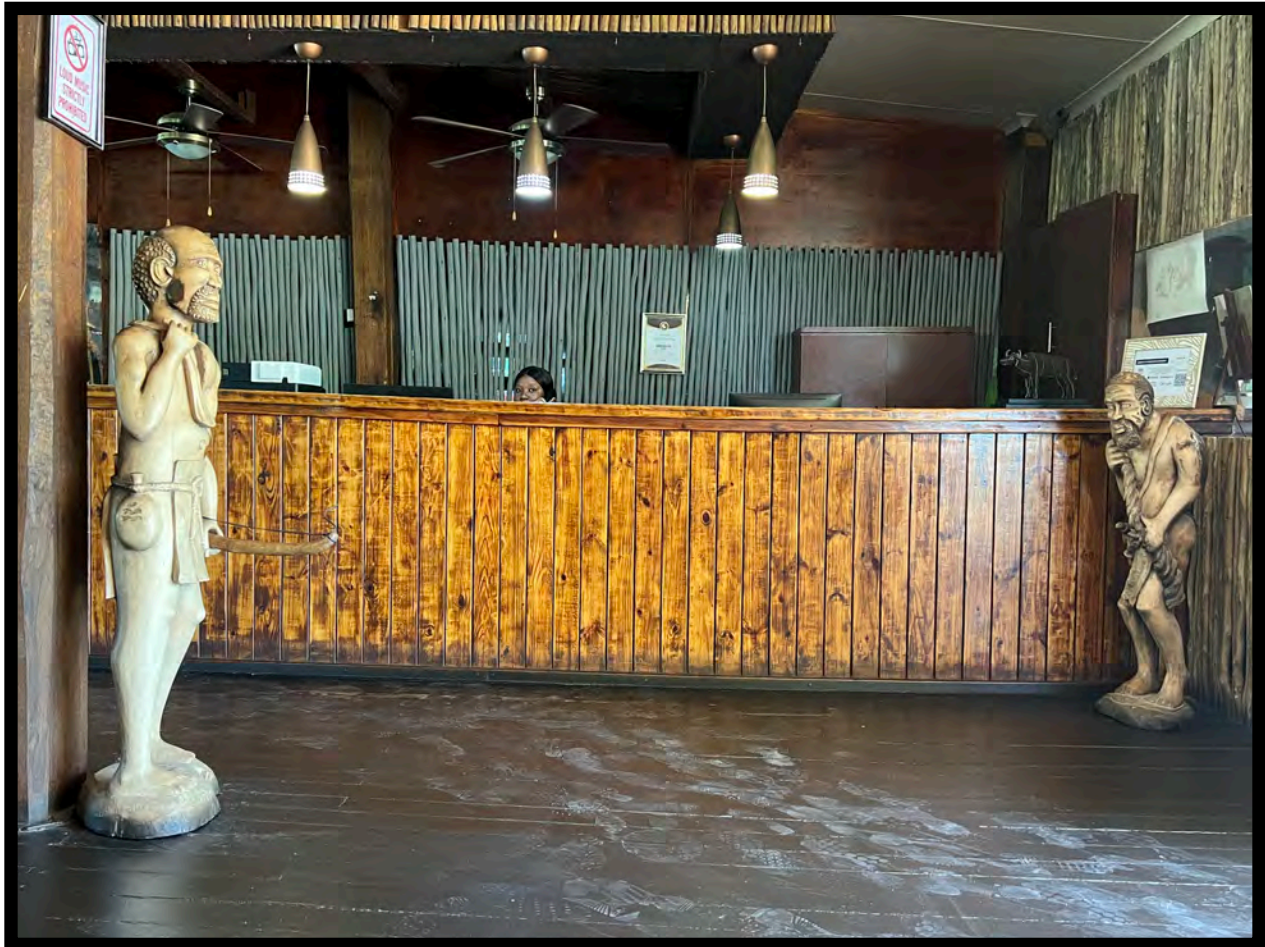
Nkambeni Safari Camp provided us with comfortable lodging. Our “tent” had a sturdy wooden floor five steps up. We were graced with a poster bed equipped with mosquito netting, flush toilet and plenty of hot water





for the shower and washbowl.

The woody reception area had some novel figures.



The vehicle used for the safari was specially made by Mahindra manufactured by a company in India. The sturdy ten passenger truck had three ascending seats behind the driver.

Jere and I preferred the top seat in the rear for the best





angle for photography. This seat was directly over the back wheels. Seventy percent of the roads were gravel, only thirty percent paved;



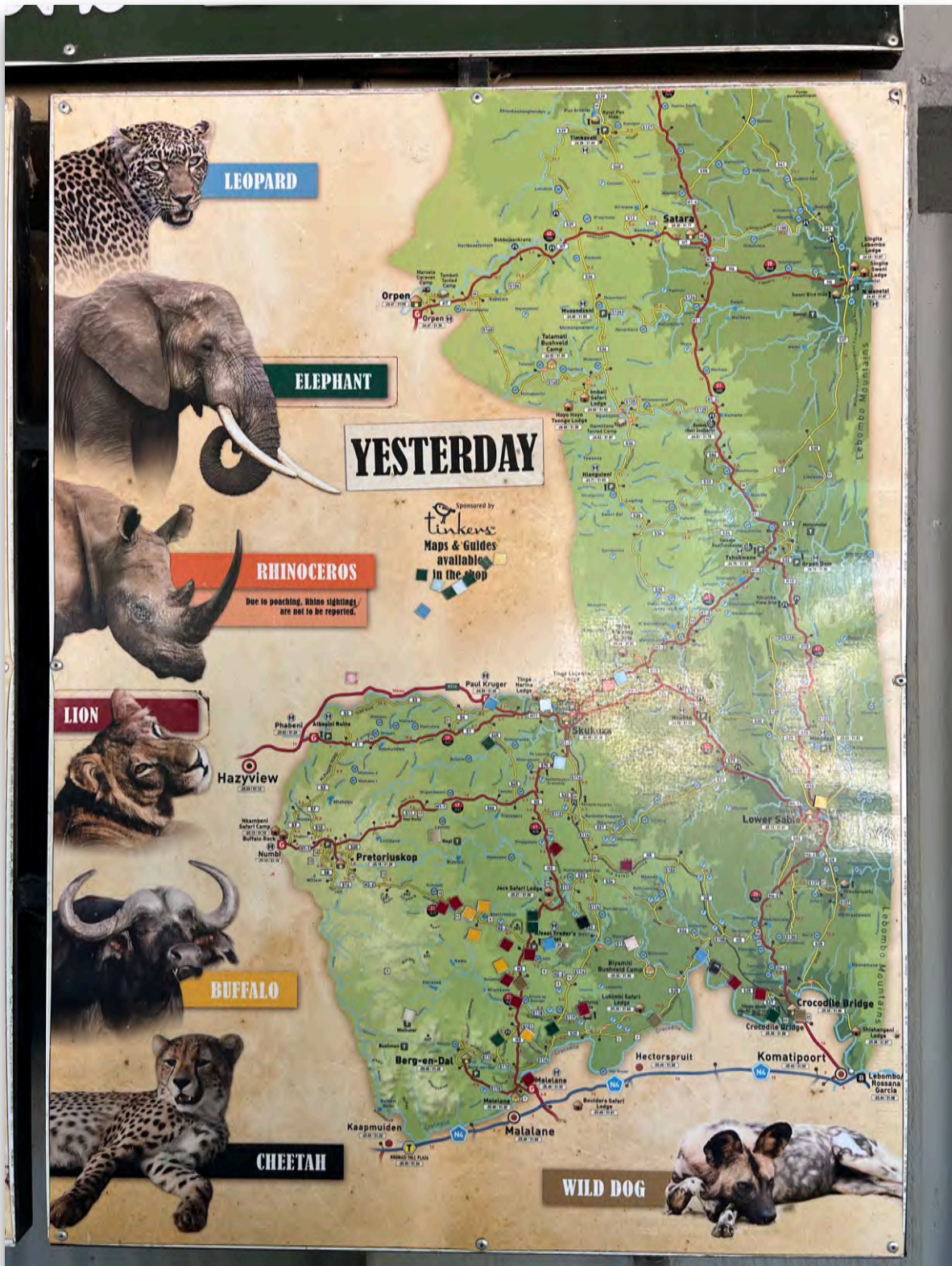
so we had the best share of the bounced butts.



Israel, our driver and guide, was knowledgeable about the animals, plants and terrain which made the nine hour safari tolerable.



We had to learn not to yell or scream when there was an animal in sight... quiet spelled success.





The big five: Lion, Leopard, Rhino, Elephant and Buffalo were not all seen the first day. It took another eight hour safari day to make this accomplishment.

## Lion



The dominate male will take over the pride by killing all the cubs. He can take three days of mating with each lioness. After the new cubs are born, the pride is his. Welcome to the cruel world of the savannah.



# Leopard

The leopard has the strength to kill an impala and drag it up to a tree limb to eliminate the competition.





# Rhinoceros



His horn is a symbol of wealth and success in China making him in danger of poachers. The horn will regenerate as long as he remains alive.





# Buffalo

A major source of food for the more dominant animals.





# Elephant



The African variety is the biggest land mammal with males that can grow to 17 feet in height. They have a love for the African Marula fruit which is abundant on the bushes. It is almost the size of an apricot with the same color.

This one missed digestion. The



fermented fruit on the ground can make them a little tipsy.







They are not able to sweat so they spend time standing in water or rolling in the mud.

Other animals:

Spotted Hyena





# Giraffe





## Zebra ( Nature Tattoos )





## Wart Hog





## Hippopotamus ( Most dangerous to humans )





Velvet Monkey





## Wildebeest





Kudu









## Impala







Tortoise

Leopard

Striped Skink



Black Headed Oriole





## Crocodile





Martial Eagle





We returned to Johannesburg by a different route through Belfast-DeKroon. There were many miles of passing fields of non irrigated



corn that was planted close on the row. This is a sign of agricultural prosperity for this region of the country.





Pretoria has beautiful parks among well appointed stone buildings. It was difficult to get a frontal photo of the statue of Nelson Mandela. I was constantly molested by black men who would grab my arm and with a pitiful smile tell me how we love each other. “Fine, but would you kindly permit me to take a photo of Mr. Mandela?”

I loved the gardens here.



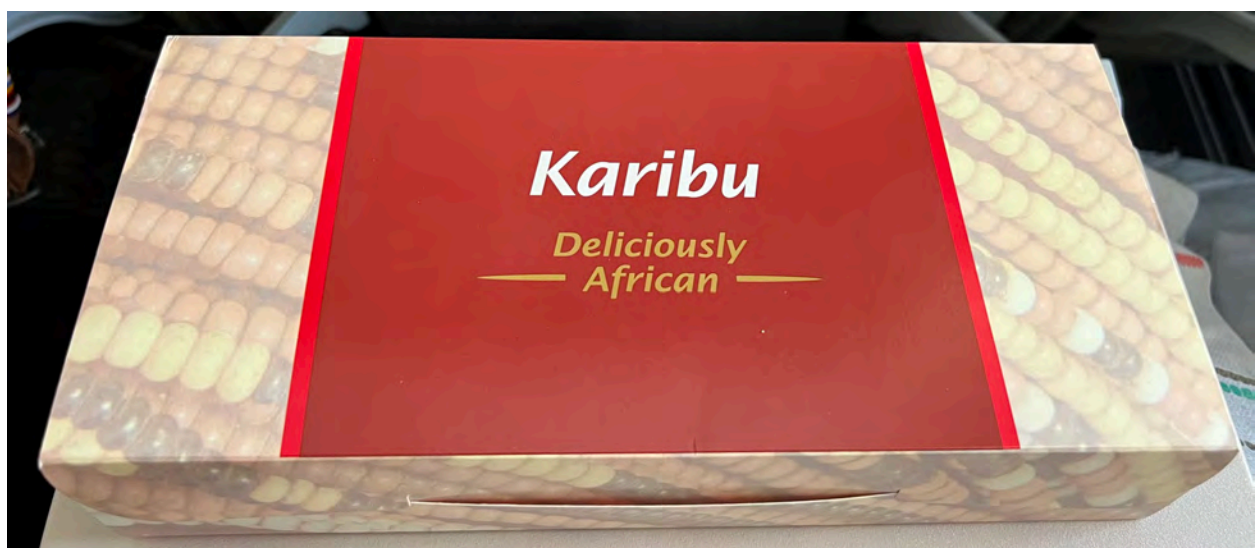








Another first was our flight to Cape Town on Fly Safe Airways. The three hour flight came with a good meal and warm greetings.





# Cape Town



On arrival, we checked into the Orono Hotel which had a central, downtown location not that far from the harbor. It fronted on to a neatly treed plaza. We spotted a Burger King on the far corner and chose it for our late dinner. Immediately outside the



hotel, our white skin attracted two muggers. The security guard at the BK saved the day.

At the same time a member of the group had his debit card snatched at an ATM...not a good start for a pleasant evening.





Cape Town has 3.5 million people, number two behind Johannesburg. It was the first established settlement from Europe in



South Africa. In 1652, the Dutch East India Company founded a establishment to replenish the ships going both ways from the Cape of Good Hope. The British established a colony in 1806 to control the trade routes East and West of Cape Town. Here today, forty three percent of the folks are under twenty five years of age.



Behind the city lies the Tabletop Mountain at 3562 feet above



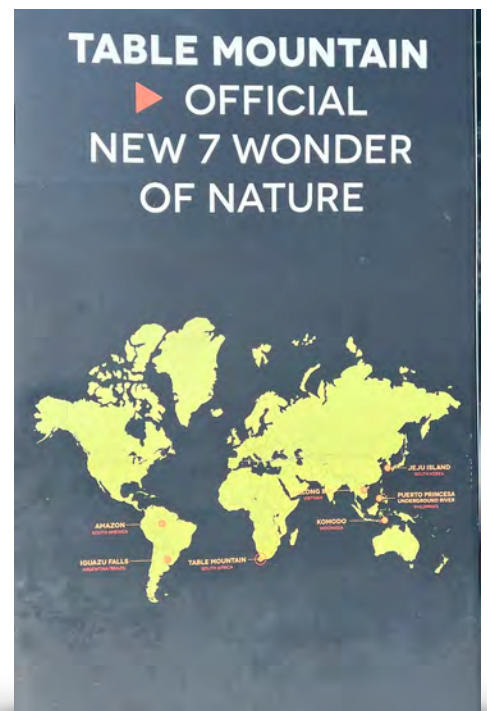
sea level. It is the guide point from most every location in the city.



There are 350 trails leading to the Top of the “Table.”

For the lazy folks, there is the 60 person cable car.

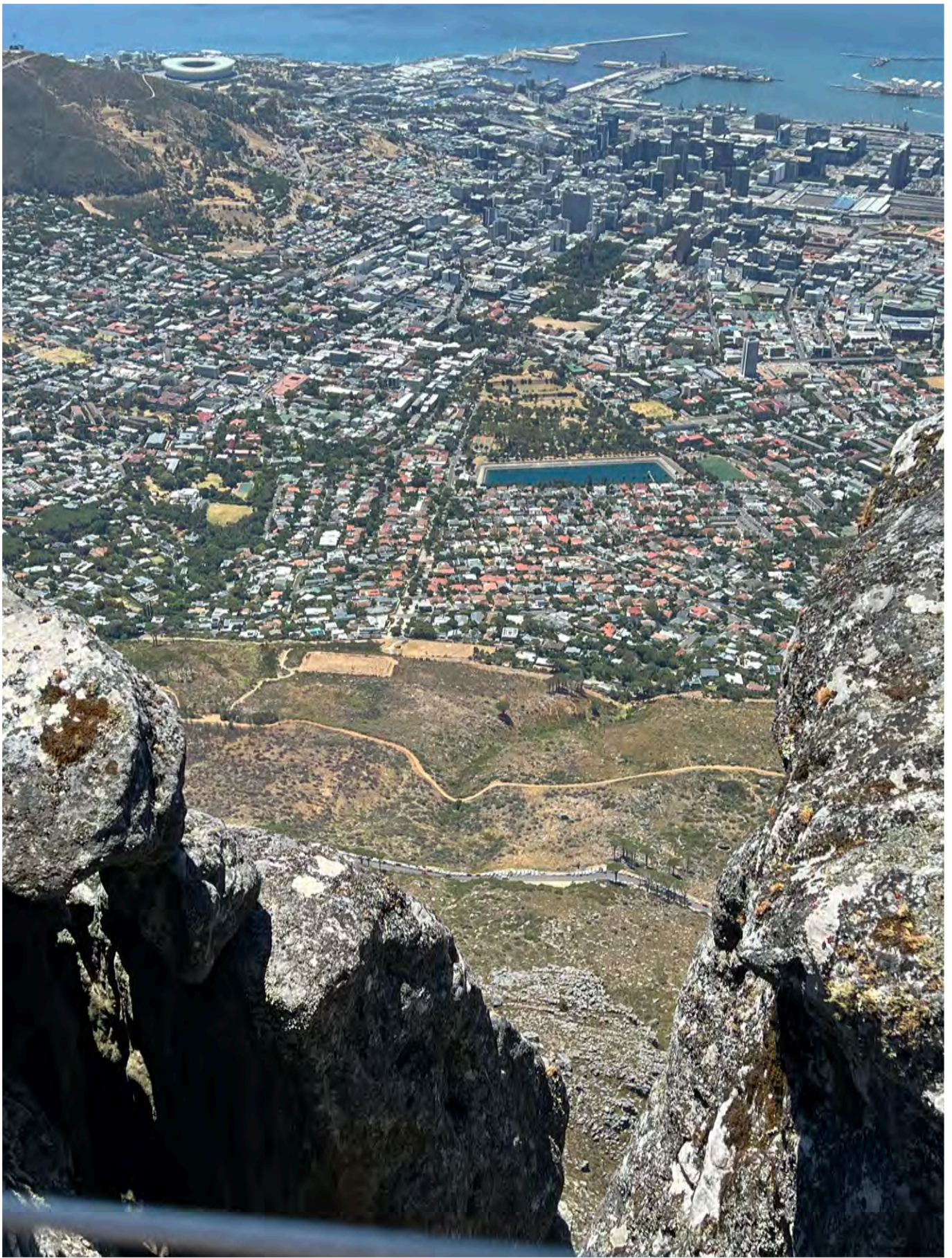
The mountain has been voted as one of the seven wonders of the nature in the world. I loved the different plants and flowers there. I’m sure that you would agree that these views are all world.













The beaches are many and varied. The beach at Sea Point has no protection from the South Atlantic winds.



The distressed trees make a shady parking spot.





The parasailing begins from nearby mountain cliffs and has



adequate beach space for landing.





For those who dislike the wind, there are beach communities protected from the wind by direction of natural cliffs. The beaches do vary in their specialities but all offer high end living.





Dr. Christian Barnard performed the first human to human



heart transplant in December 1967 here in Cape Town.





Sea lions hang out at Hout Bay.







Proceeding south of the city, the scene changes when entering the Tokai National Forest. The mountain range resembles a sleeping rhinoceros.

The opposite mountains are covered with protea bushes. We were treated by some early blooms; imagine the blaze of color in 2-3 weeks for the whole area.

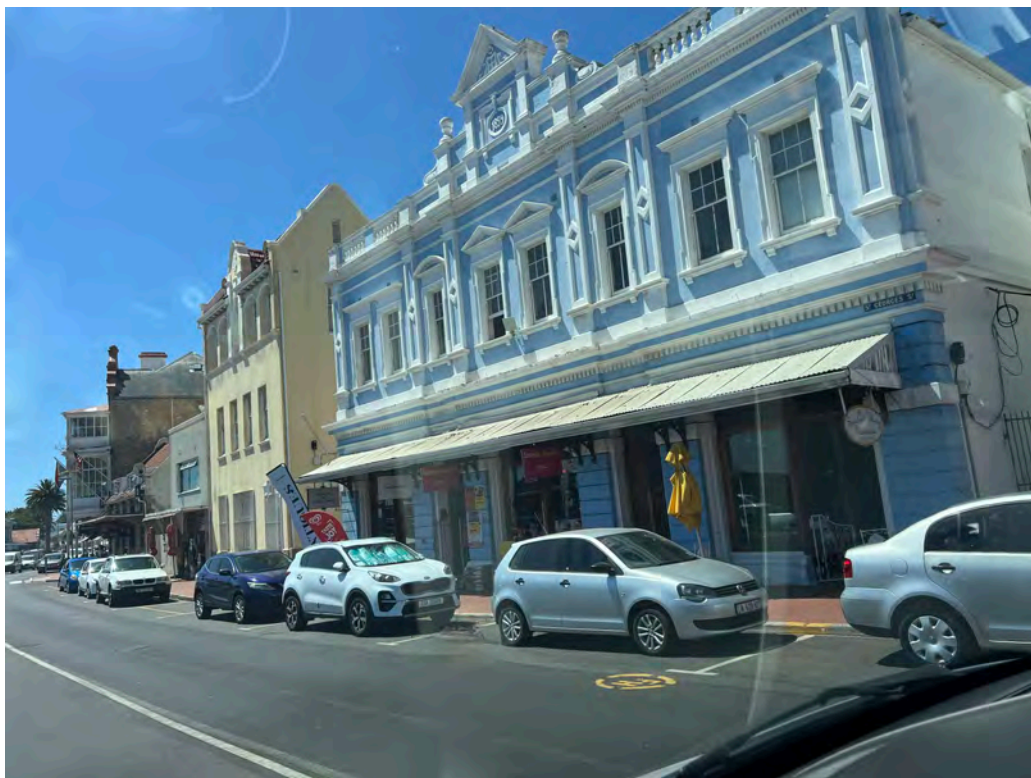






Protea grows well in the higher elevations of Hawaii, also.

Simon's Town has many examples of early Dutch houses and business buildings.





Boulders is still within the Table Mountain National Park, home to the African penguins ( *spheniscus demerus* ). A pair was brought here in 1982 which have prospered to number 3000 by now. They are quite photogenic among the huge boulders on the



shoreline. I was fascinated by their tiny nests that they build in the sand. The nest size makes the egg look larger.









A view of Simon's Town from the mountain.





The Cape of Good Hope is guarded more by rocks than trees. The light house sits among bushes where animals have free run.



Baboons sit on fence posts looking for some free food from cars with open windows. They learn while young to love a free ride.





The ostrich is at home in the bush and on the road.







One can sail to India or Europe from here. It was time for afternoon







tea to celebrate the bottom of the continent.





Cape Town Waterfront







The area is well restored with good restaurants and shops.







The pedestrian bridge has to open to permit boats to pass in the canal... some neat engineering. One can easily spend a day of enjoyment here.



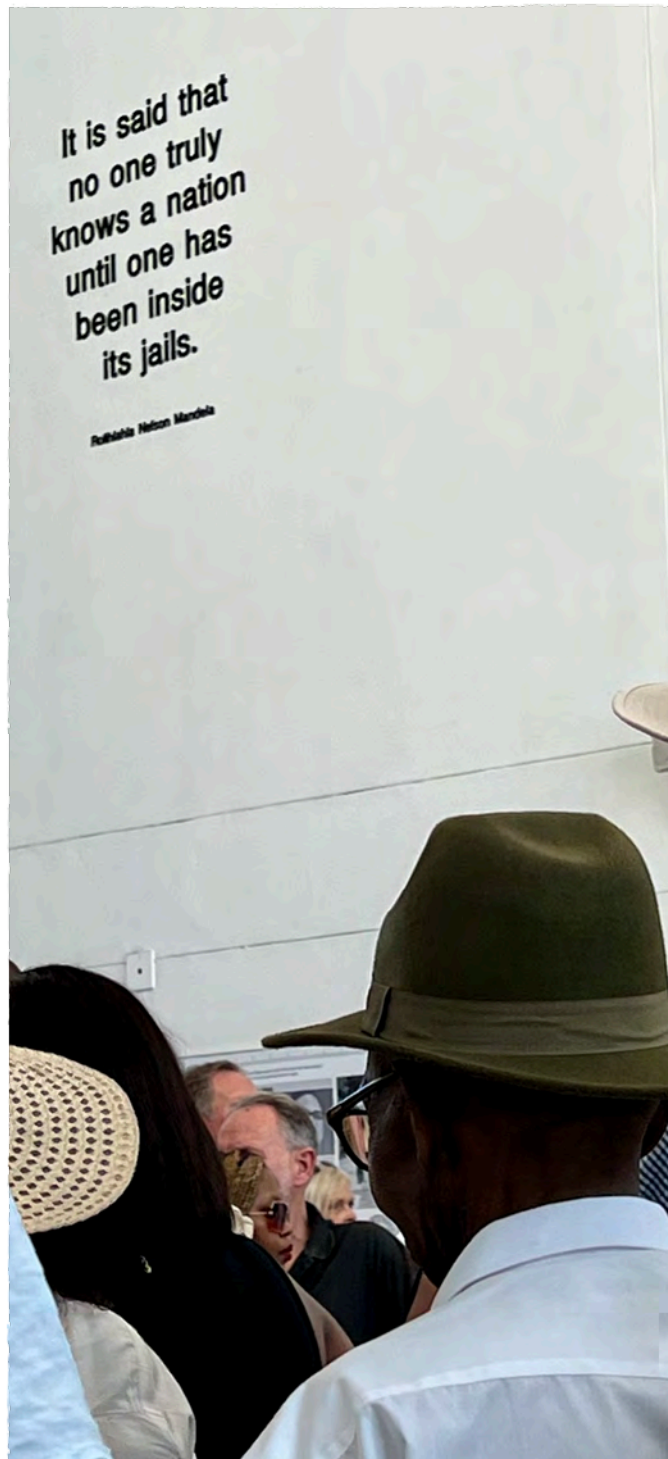








# Robben Island





Inside the boat terminal while waiting in a long line for boarding, I was blessed with this photographic opportunity. It was a summation for what was to follow.



The two square mile, flat island less that five miles offshore is where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for eighteen years. He was a





**NAMIBIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS ON ROBBERN ISLAND AND IN OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN PRISONS**

The MacMillan Dictionary defines a political prisoner as, "someone who is sent to prison by their own government because it does not approve of their beliefs or actions".

Namibians held on Robben Island:

| Surname        | First Name(s)     | Imprisonment |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Nahale         | Festus            | 1968 – 1971  |
| Veir           | Gerson Hitjevi    | 1968 – 1972  |
| Nashivela      | Jonas             | 1968 – 1972  |
| Homatani       | Nathaneal Lot     | 1968 – 1972  |
| Nileenge       | Petrus Simon      | 1968 – 1974  |
| Tshaningua     | Ndjaula           | 1968 – 1983  |
| Tuhadeleni     | Eliaser           | 1968 – 1983  |
| Toivo ya Toivo | Herman Andimba    | 1968 – 1984  |
| Shitlala       | Philemon          | 1968 – 1984  |
| Zacharia       | Lazarus           | 1968 – 1984  |
| Nileenge       | Shinima Wilhelm   | 1968 – 1984  |
| Nambinga       | Rehabeam Olavi    | 1968 – 1984  |
| Shitpowete     | Joseph Helao      | 1968 – 1984  |
| Hamulemo       | Simeon Namuganga  | 1968 – 1984  |
| Amungulu       | Nattalie          | 1968 – 1984  |
| Itika          | Sakeus Phillipus  | 1968 – 1984  |
| Shipooneni     | Johannes Samuel   | 1968 – 1985  |
| Ushona         | Malakia Shivute   | 1968 – 1985  |
| Tijahura       | Kaleb Hanganee    | 1968 – 1985  |
| Kamati         | Petrus            | 1968 – 1985  |
| Halutani       | Abel              | 1968 – 1985  |
| Nunlango       | Beuel             | 1968 – 1985  |
| Nashidengo     | Mathias Elia      | 1968 – 1985  |
| Shidi          | Immanuel Augustus | 1968 – 1985  |
| Shilongo       | Julius Israel     | 1968 – 1985  |
| Moses          | Michael Hingilwa  | 1968 – 1985  |
| Nankudhu       | John ya Otto      | 1968 – 1985  |
| Shiungileni    | Simeon            | 1968 – 1985  |
| Kadhikwa       | Rudolf            | 1968 – 1985  |
| Shimufelele    | David Hamunime    | 1968 – 1984  |
| Hawika         | Nghidipo Jesaja   | 1968 – 1984  |
| Ekandjo        | Eino Kamati       | 1968 – 1984  |
| Surname        | First Name(s)     | Imprisonment |
| Shimufelele    | Jonas Shishveni   | 1969 – 1980  |
| Halita         | Solomon Festus    | 1969 – 1985  |

black lawyer and political activist who fought the curse of Apartheid. In 1994, Apartheid ended and he was elevated to become the first black president of South Africa. He also received the Nobel Prize for Peace. The prison had a sports field. Good behavior brought some privileges but it was still a prison where there was no such things as rights. It was a depressing afternoon. The good news is that today South



Africa has come back to equal justice for all.

# THE KASSINGA CAMP MASSACRE



"The number of people who died in the massacre is unknown. It is thought to number between 624 and 700 souls."

Refugees at Kassinga camp in February 1978, prior to the massacre

It is estimated that over 70 000 Namibians fled to stay in refugee camps in exile.

One of these camps was at Kassinga in Angola. Kassinga was initially used as a stopover point for PLAN combatants, who established a base, but it quickly began to function as a transit camp for Namibian exiles. In 1976, the Angolan government formally allocated Kassinga village to SWAPO to cope with the influx of thousands of refugees from South West Africa. The number of refugees was estimated in May 1978 to total 3 000 to 4 000 people.



Victims of the Kassinga massacre were buried in a mass grave.

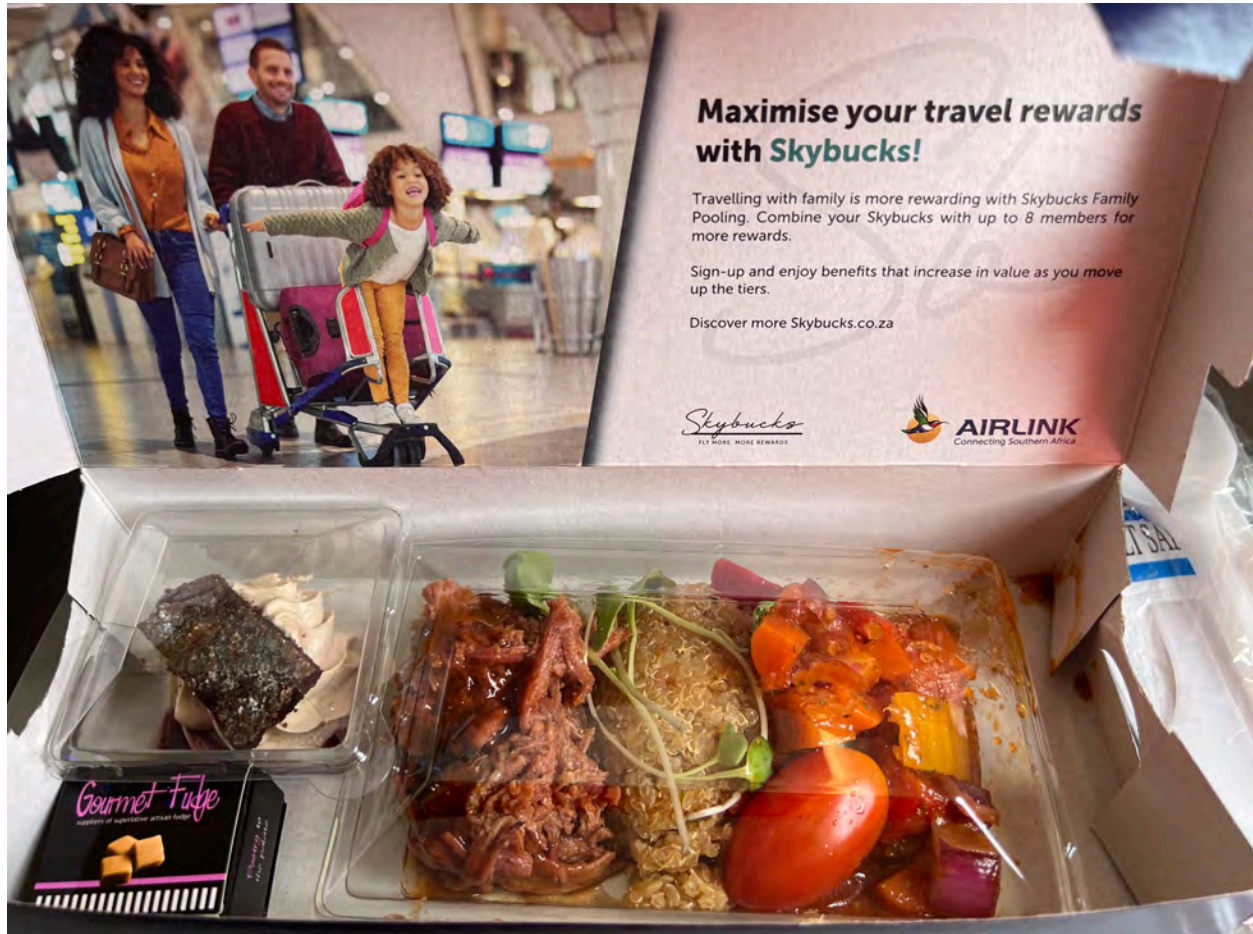


Goodby South Africa...It has been a wonderful experience





# Zimbabwe



Flying on Airlink was another new experience. The food was different from Fly Safair... less colorful and tasty. On arrival, we secured a double visa. We didn't know at the time, but we actually needed three because of our visit to Botswana.

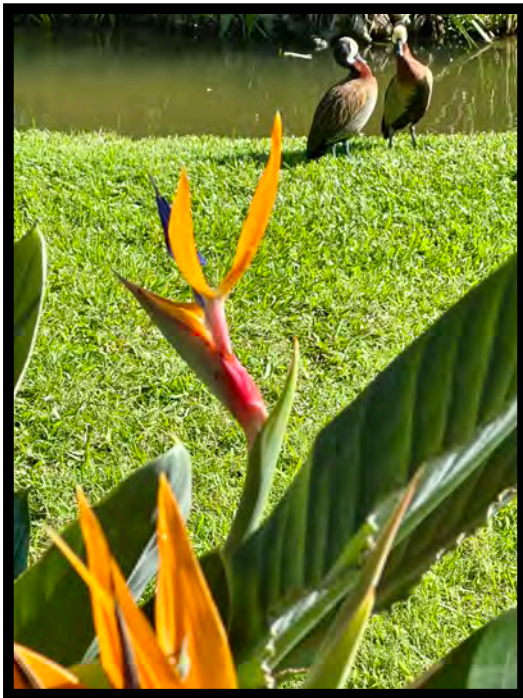






Zimbabwe is a landlocked country North of South Africa. The population today is almost 17 million people. In 1923, the country was known as Rhodesia and was made into a British colony with the capitol city in Salisbury. In 1965, a white minority declared independence which resulted in a 15 year war. The independent, new country arrived in 1980 with Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister. He

became president in 1987. His presidency lasted until 2017. During his presidency he discovered that 1% of the population ( white ) owned 80 % of the arable land. He solved the problem eradicating that ownership. The white farmers either left the country or were killed. Today, there is no “ white “ ownership of the lands.



The currency used in Zimbabwe is The Zimbabwe or American dollar or the South African Rand. Depending on your present location, it was difficult to know what was the acceptable payment. One had to keep these currencies separated in

isolated pockets. A credit card was out of the question.



Our accommodation at Victoria Falls was fancy. The single beds



were equipped with mosquito nettings. At 2 am, it could be tricky to unwind yourself to keep your bathroom appointment. The food was





good; one evening I had a delicious oxtail goulash with the entertainment.









# Victoria Falls



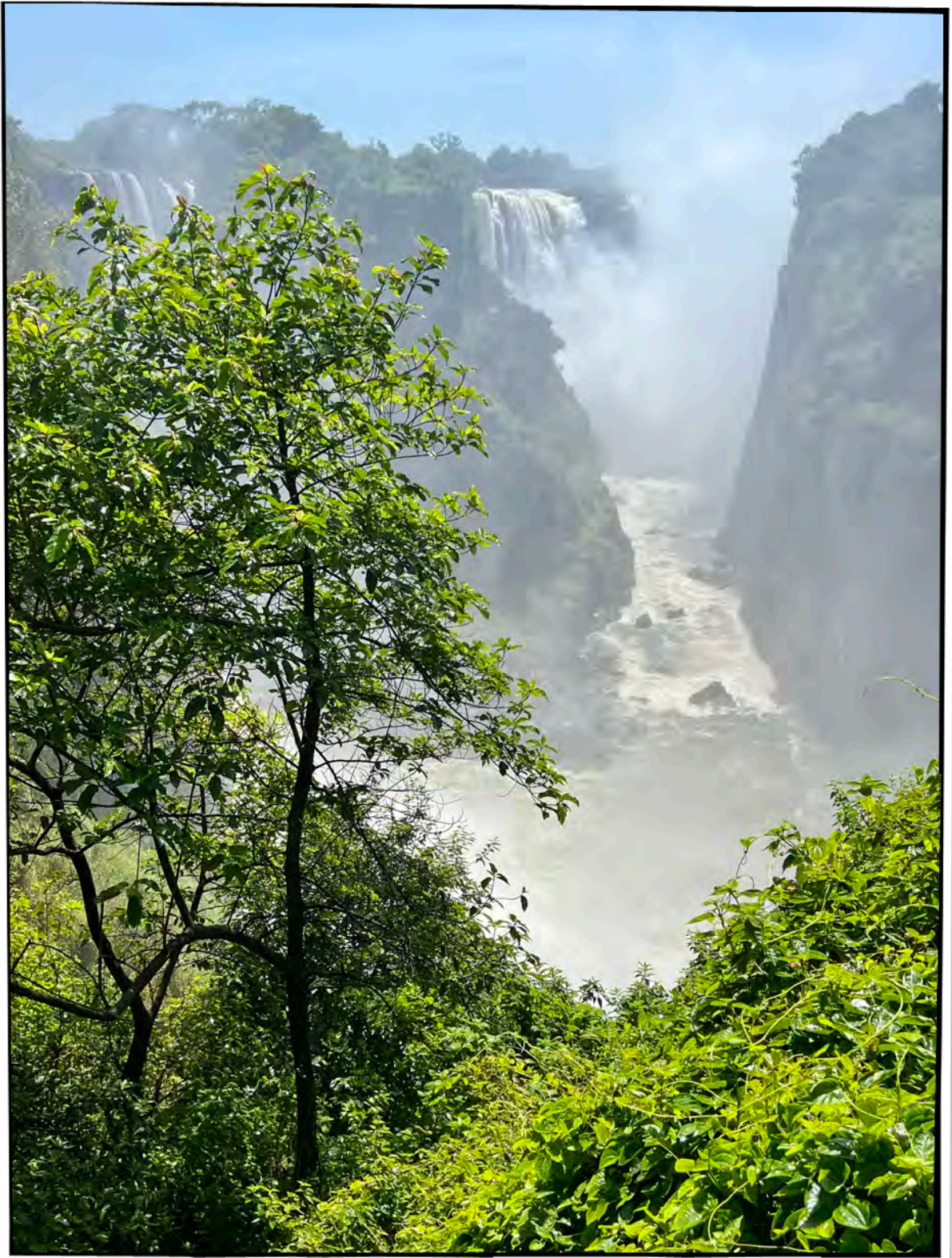


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ictoria Falls lies on the border of two countries- The rainforest in Zimbabwe and Zambia to the East. It is thought to be the largest volume of water over a falls in







the world. The source of the water is the Zambia River. The falls measures 1.7 kilometers ( 5604 feet ) and 104 meters ( 354 feet ) high.





The 2.4 mile loop trail to see the Zimbabwe side of the falls enables you to see 80% of the Falls. It is a rather flat but humid rain forest walk. There are sections where one gets soaked by the Falls' mist which is a welcome cool off. Here and there we were greeted by a monkey. Here is a photo me accompanied by two butterflies. At the far end





of the Zimbabwe  
side is a huge gorge  
leading into  
Zambia. One  
more...



# Zambia



The wavy lines in the crest signify their section of the falls





Zambia requires a visa which involves big time traffic jams and long lines at the border building. On the Zambian side there are more trails but only 30 % of the falls can be viewed.

Mosi oa Tunya means “The smoke that thunders” in the language of Zambia. It is their name for the Falls. The Scottish missionary and explorer, Dr. David Livingstone, “Dr. Livingstone, I





presume?”, was the first white man to discover the Falls on 1855. He named the falls after his queen, Victoria.

### **“Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”**

This statue is of **Dr David Livingstone**, a Scottish Missionary and first known white man to have sighted the Falls on 16th November 1855.

He named it the “Victoria Falls”, after the then Queen of England. He first came to Africa in 1841 and made 3 explorations in Africa lasting a total of 33 years. The statue was erected in 2005 to commemorate 150 years of his sighting of the Water Falls.

Dr. David Livingstone died in Zambia in 1873. His internal body parts were buried in Chitambo village, Serenje District in the Central province of Zambia whilst his body was embalmed and preserved using salt and carried to the coast by his workers for onward transportation to Britain. It took 9 months for his remains to be transported back to Britain and finally buried on 18th April 1874.





Many rainbows can be seen from the metal footbridge in front of the Falls. The mist comes up through floor of the bridge vertically which soaks you to the skin instantly. Oh, did anyone remember to



protect the camera lens? The noise is deafening ... the mighty power





of nature...an overwhelming experience!  
More sights:



It was so appropriate to relax on a sunset cruise on the upper Zambezi River around the Kalai and Siloka Islands after that vigorous day at the Falls... a good time for the hypos to cool off, too.





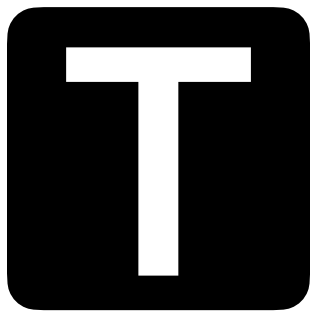








# Botswana



he country lies west of Zimbabwe and north of South Africa.

The huge baobab tree in the entrance to the Chobe River Complex was a welcome to another lovely safari day. We are near the town of Kasane. It is the gateway to the Chobe National Park.

Botswana is stable because of its







diamond industry and strict tourist regulations. Our morning safari was by boat.

Chobe National Park is the third largest park in Botswana following the Central Kalahari Reserve and Gemsbok National Park. The Chobe River yielded good photos of crocodiles, hypos and buffalo. Lots





of birds hanging out to eat the insects which the buffalo attract.

A view of the goose and the crane and a strikingly red bird rounded out the morning.



After a good lunch buffet,





we loaded into our vehicle for our overland, afternoon safari. Early on, we found a lioness sleeping under a bush. Thirty feet away was her giraffe kill. All that steak made her sleepy. She didn't seem to care about all the flies on her face.









The giraffes look larger here than the ones in Kruger. Giraffes



and humans have the same number of vertebrae in their necks - seven





It is believed the Chobe National Park has 50,000 elephants. They need two hundred pounds of forage /day to maintain these behemoths. Chobe has vast acreages of luscious grasses which seem to surpass the horizon. It was easy to view over a hundred elephants within on gaze here.

They love to roll in the mud. The video shows how a Momma protects her calf while frolicking in the mud bath. A treat to end our safari experience.





We were so gratified to see our United 787 Dreamliner with a rainbow protruding from the cockpit at the Cape Town terminal. It was such a blessing for us to visit these four beautiful countries.



Our nonstop, fifteen hour and five minute flight to Newark was the beginning of our rest from these wonderful adventures.

*Text and Photos by  
John Bucher Herr*



