

Kalahari review December 2010

19/12/2010

The night before our 'big' holiday. The year 2010 was rough – we've lost quite a few friends and close family members. Hein started with a new company, so the stress levels were high. A rest period was sorely needed.

I packed our 2 black crates – 1 with kitchen stuff and the other with our clothes. I also packed a green overnight bag with 3 days' clothes & toiletries. Our dinner was venison sausage on the coals with 1 minute mieliepap and tomato relish.

20/12/2010

Hein decided to take Sammy & Minx, our cat-daughters to their hotel. That gave me the time to shower and finished all the packing. Hein was back by 8h30 – said the girls were ok cause he talked to them the whole time and played ENYA cd to them. LOL. Think he's just managed to acquire a new job – cat courier. I'm usually way too stressed and of course they feel it.

He just had to pack everything in the car and we left on our holiday! At McDonalds we stopped for a drive-thru breakfast, but was disappointed. No black coffee, so we had cappuccinos. And sausage-and-egg McMuffins – not my favourite, I prefer the burger. But the cappuccino was nice.

En route to Kuruman, we only stopped to stretch our legs, visit the toilet and had sandwiches for lunch.

Our destination – Springbokpan Guest Farm, 6 km from Botswana border. (www.springbokpan.co.za - Frikkie & Ans du Preez, 072 323 4969 – R420/night/chalet, meals extra – dinner R110 pp & breakfast R65 pp – a bit expensive.) At Kuruman we phoned the Guest Farm to ask if they want anything from the shops – but they didn't answer. Phoned all the numbers I have, got no answer and started to be a bit worried.

At last I got hold of Ans, the owner's wife but the signal was bad. It was 183 km to Springbokpan, 100km gravel road. Halfway there, we realised we should have filled up on fuel. But we drove on. Just before 5 pm we arrived at Springbokpan.



Our 'chalet' was a converted park home – lovely big bedroom with double bed, aircon and cupboard. A tiny kitchenette and a separate toilet with basin. The base was a brick foundation and the roof thatch. We were the only ones there. The ablution block was 2 full bathrooms for gents and ladies. Ours had a cute hippopotamus painted on the door. It was decorated in orange and I especially loved the shower double curtain – inside the normal shower curtain, outside orange organza curtain.

After I've unpacked the overnight bag and steam ironed our clothes (Verimark gadget – absolutely amazing), we relaxed in the shade with a cold beer and cold drink. It was pure relaxation – silence, with only birds as company.

Just before 7pm we showered and walked to the main building – restaurant, pub, kitchen, guest rooms and also their home. After another cold drink, we had dinner. Tortilla wraps with tuna mayo as starter, lamb chops, chicken drumsticks, green bean stew, sweet potatoes, rice, crispy potatoes, beetroot & carrot salad as main. Ice cream with toffee sauce for dessert. Tummies full, we walked back, brushed our teeth and slept.

21/12/2010

Awoke at 5h35 – although the sun wasn't up yet, it was bright outside. While Hein took some photos, I made coffee. Instant, cause I forgot the filter coffee. (In 2009 we went to a bush camp without electricity with Carla & Jan, my youngest sis and her boyfriend, for 4 days. I searched the shops for coffee bags with the least chicory in. When I complained about the taste of it, Carla asked why I didn't pack my plunger and real filter coffee. I was stumped.) And Carla sms'd me the previous day to ask if I've packed the plunger – but forgot to ask if I had the coffee. LOL.

Under the trees a lovely breeze rustled the trees and birds chased each other. I decided to only use the 'cold tap' in the shower – lukewarm more like it. Breakfast started with muesli and yoghurt, slap pap (I added fresh tomato & green pepper cubes with grated cheese), toast, bacon, chicken Viennas, 3 bean salad with crushed pineapple (definitely something to remember for future salads) and eggs.

Ans had an ice cube maker and delivers ice to 3 shops in Botswana. If there were enough ice, we would drive to Tsonga in Botswana, 24 km from Springbokpan. Luckily I've packed our passports.

At the chalet, we read and dozed. A message was sent that we won't be going to Botswana that day. Tinned kernel corn and lentils was our lunch. Yum.

When we woke up after our afternoon nap, we discovered 2 tents pitched close by. The single guy, Yeandre, travelled with his bike and small tent – from his home in Malmesbury to Namibia to wherever his nose leads him. The other couple from Roodepoort, Nico & Magda, were on their way to Botswana with a 2x4 bakkie and a small tent.

At 6pm, Ans arrived and we all clambered on the bakkie for a game drive. The only giraffe was spotted, lots of different buck and even some small jackals. At the jackals' hole we stopped to look for cubs – and Connie, the dog, nearly disappeared in the hole. We had to pull him out by his leg (photo below)(Yeandre - centre)(Magda & Nico - right).



Ans had arranged for a braai and everyone joined in. Fernando, Ans's son and his girlfriend Nadia braaied the meat. Hein especially enjoyed the company and we had a lovely time. Fish fingers for starters. There were

sheep's' ribs, chops, potato salad, green salad, beetroot, pumpkin dish and water melon as dessert. We were surprised to find it close to 11 when we climbed into bed.

22/12/2010

Today we slept late! 6h30. Hein went for a quick shower while I fixed coffee. Again we had a lovely breeze outside. Breakfast was left-over braaivleis, scrambled eggs, bacon, chicken nuggets, toast & tomato slices. Ans said the ice maker did its job and we would leave for Botswana around 11. At the chalet we chilled, read a bit and then I packed my hat, suntan lotion, our passports and cold water for our trip.

Hein was the designated driver with me as front passenger and Ans in the back. The fridge on the back was filled with 2,5 kg bags of ice. At the SA customs, we went through quickly. However at the Botswana customs, Ans had to produce forms for 'importing' and we were there for a little while. It was already quite hot outside, but thankfully the aircon worked perfectly in the office.

At last we were through with documentation – only to have trouble starting the bakkie. Hein just couldn't get it to start – when Ans tried it started immediately. We had a giggle over it.

The trees and shrubs were lovely and green on our way to Tsonga – lots of goats greeted us along the way. In Tsonga, we drove to the 1 shop, delivered the ice and again struggled with the bakkie. Then Hein discovered the trick with the key and everything was ok.



At the next stop we delivered more ice and then onto Shoppers (similar to Shoprite Checkers). What a lovely big supermarket – clean and spacious. I was feeling a bit peckish, so bought some 'slap' (soft deep-fried) chips and buns to make 'katkop' (cat head – don't know why it's called that, but we had it plenty in our student days.) Ans went to the Pep Stores across from Shoppers and I assembled our lunch. With vinegar and tomato sauce it was a lovely treat. Ans had quite a laugh because she's never had that before – and not while driving in a bakkie either.

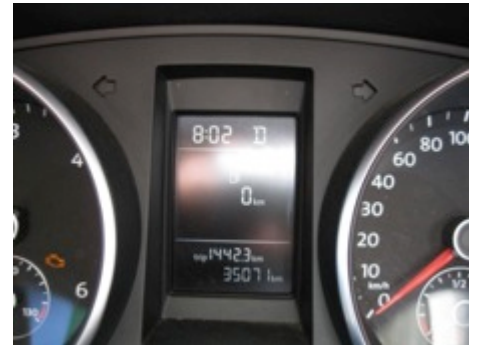
Our drive back was hot, but not unbearably so. A nap was in order in the lovely cold bedroom and we woke up at 5pm. Hein played us some lovely music on his new toy, Apple Mac laptop, and then we showered for dinner.

Although we were early, Hein played some more music and Frikkie joined us. Hein played some lovely Afrikaans music and we reminisced over older days. Dinner was sheep ribs, chicken breasts, crisp potatoes, pumpkin & sweet potato dish and chocolate tart with custard for dessert. After we've paid our meals, we said goodbye to Ans & Frikkie. We slept soundly.



23/12/2010

At 5am we woke, quickly packed everything, showered and by 5h50 am we were on the road to Kuruman. With only 200 km's worth of diesel in our tank. Close to Kuruman, we asked Lizzie (our GPS) to indicate the nearest fuel station. She took us on a detour through a neighbourhood and by that time, we were driving 40km/hour – nerves on end, cause the car was driving on diesel fumes I had my AA card ready to phone for assistance. We pulled in at the station and filled the car – only to discover we still had 2 litres of diesel left! Phew, that was a close one.



After that adrenaline rush, we desperately needed some coffee and sustenance. At the Pick 'n Pay centre Hein stopped to withdraw money and I spotted a coffee lounge. I ordered 2 Americano's (explaining first how to make it) and then Hein had savoury mince on toast with egg and I had a savoury mince omelette. Funny how savoury mince can not be savoury at all.

Onwards to Upington. Our idea was to buy all the groceries in Upington – but our little car was already packed to the roof, so we only bought the basics for 1 day. Hein went to Trappers Trading for some new outdoor sandals and I went to Edgars to buy bath sheet towels. Experience has taught us that in chalets towels are normally only big enough to cover the bum.

From Upington we drove 80 km to our next holiday destination, (20 km smooth gravel road), Khamkirri Resort (www.khamkirri.co.za 082 821 6649 – R550/night), right on the banks of the Orange River.

Details on our open-plan chalet were quite sparse on their website, so I've phoned them a few times with questions. 2 Days before we left Johannesburg, I phoned again and asked if there was a cupboard. Nope. Off to Outdoor Warehouse to buy a camp cupboard.

At the chalet, I was shocked but not altogether surprised to find there was no storage whatsoever – not even for groceries. The bathroom has a shower, toilet and basin and luckily enough shelves for toiletries. In the main area there is a double bed, a single bed mattress on a concrete base, a small fridge and then a concrete counter with small oven-cum-stove and kettle. Cutlery consists of 2 knives, 2 steak knives, 4 forks, 2 dessert spoons, 2 teaspoons, 1 serving spoon, 1 tin opener, braai tongs. 1 Pan, 1 medium pot and 1 braai dish. No aircon, but a air cooler (just like a fan).

First I packed the few cans I brought from home with plunger and basic groceries on the concrete bench. Then I hung our shirts/blouses in the camp wardrobe with a few shelves for undies. The rest of our clothes went into one of our black crates on top of the single bed with more heaps of clothes next to it. As well as our stack of books. My earrings I hung on the chicken wire of one window.



The patio is lovely with a bamboo roof, 'pub' table and seating, braai and dishwashing sink. All 6 windows of the chalet are covered in mesh and chicken wire and closed with Velcro canvas 'sheets'.



The river is about 5 m from the patio. 'Wingerdstokkies' (vine stumps) were bought at reception, so Hein made a lovely fire and we had chicken pieces and opened a box of pasta salad. After our

early dinner, we walked to the bar over a suspension bridge – very slowly – had a drink, watched the sunset from their patio and walked back.



24/12/2010

At 3 am I awoke – could hear something was in our rubbish bin, looking for the chicken bones. I only went back to sleep at 4h30.

At 6 am, we got up, had lovely filter plunger coffee and sat outside admiring the fresh Kalahari world. With groceries still on our to-do-list, we showered and headed back to Upington. After a quick breakfast at a coffee shop, I tackled the Pick 'n Pay. Bought most of the things, except for tinned corn, peas, samp and paper plates. Hein went to CNA to buy my xmas present and then took over the shopping. I was on my way to Game for some CD's for Hein, when my eye caught this Crazy Shop. Inside I went and what did I find – flycatchers, paper plates, xmas tinsel, xmas crackers, a net food dome, dishwashing gloves, collapsible storage boxes and some hangers.

At the butcher, we bought a lovely deboned leg of lamb, mince, sausages, chops and steak. On our way back to the chalet, we stopped at the little town Kakamas, 22 km from Khamkirri. The OK looked swamped, but we persevered. Wow, I found all the stuff I still needed – tinned corn, peas, 1 min porridge and paper plates.

With a bag of washing, we stopped at the reception to hand it in. Ida asked if everything was ok and I mentioned the lack of storage. She promised to bring us another camp wardrobe. For lunch Hein braaied some boerewors, heated up buns and I made a tomato relish on the stove. I spooned the left-over relish into a Ziploc bag and refrigerate it. For most of the afternoon, we read and relaxed – with bags of tinned goods waiting to be unpacked. We opened our pressies.

I got a lovely book from Patricia Cornwall and a pocket Italian/English dictionary. Hmm, guess Italy's on our bucket list for next year! Hein got 3 music CD's. Temperature of about 35 oC.



The camp hanging wardrobe was delivered (left). So I steam ironed our shirts/blouses and hung them in there. I used our shelved camp wardrobe as pantry (right), the storage boxes from Crazy Shop for bread, chips and paper plates. The 2 black crates then turned into storage for our clothes (yuck, I HATE living out of a bag/crate). BUT at least



everything had its place – Hein was now very happy, cause I can stop my moaning (LOL) and I was extremely happy cause the chalet was ordered. Even my bread, buns & tortillas was placed alphabetically ... NOT!

By the time I was finished organising everything, I was knackered. So we only had left-over chicken from the previous night and sweetcorn. The evenings are too fabulous – so we sat in the dark just relaxing.

25/12/2010



Xmas day. The neighbours woke us before 5, so we had a lovely cuppa and watched the sunrise. Now have a close look at the patch of grass on the photo left – later on I'll show a photo of that very same spot ...

Hein lit the fire for breakfast and our other neighbour, Jasper, came over to say hi. Breakfast was boerewors with buns and tomato relish. I did the dishes, we phoned our parents, send sms's to family & friends and then we tackled our books. Hein was busy with Prey, Michael Crichton, and I started with Patricia Cornwall. This dry weather played havoc with our sinuses.



Lunch was deboned leg of lamb with Portuguese spices on the braai (with Hein reading his book while watching the lamb), cooked jacked potatoes with cheese and a 'salad' of tinned vegs & mayo.

I decorated the table with an African tablecloth, xmas tinsel, the crackers and paper serviettes folded into a bishops' hat. Or close to it, anyway.



It was a lovely meal!!! The temperature was very high, although still not unbearable. The afternoon was spent mostly reading and sweating. Around 4h30pm it was still 41 oC!!

Our dessert was a Pick 'n Pay xmas pudding with box custard. Yum!

When it cooled down a bit, we walked to the pub and met up with our neighbour Jasper & his wife, Marietjie. He travels all over with his work and had many stories to tell. When I mentioned paper plates, he nearly fell off his chair. No, no, he said. I will only eat from ceramic plates – and only white ones. No other colour or decorated plate will do, I will rather starve, he said.

Frikkie the barman is a student from Stellenbosch, so we had a lovely time chatting with him. Hein ordered more firewood and we walked back. Later on we went over to Jasper's chalet and chatted for a while.

I excused myself and made lovely sandwiches from the leftover leg of lamb and cheese. I tried to read in bed, but my reading light attracted all the little bugs, so I turned it off and slept.

26/12/2010

At 1h30am I awoke – and felt the whole building tremble. Hein said I was dreaming.

Before 6 we got up, Hein went to try his fishing luck in the river while I made coffee. The river has risen considerably, cause the Gariep Dam's sluices have been opened. Hein said the river was too fast for fishing.

With a new supply of firewood, Hein lit the fire, I made us some tomato relish & cheese sandwiches – and we toasted them. Pure heaven! We have also decided to close all the windows today – maybe it will make a difference to the sweat-factor.

As we talked about travelling, we decided to take Italian lessons when we're back home – and save money for a trip to Tuscany next year. I grabbed one of my books, Tasting Tuscany, and found a chapter on a seaside Tuscany town. That's a sign, I said to Hein. When I Googled accommodation in that town, I found a hotel, 50 m from the sea with a room for 85 euro per day.

Hein suggested I start my holiday review on his laptop, so that's what I've been doing for the past hour ...

For lunch Hein braaied rump steak and boerewors. I made '1 min stywe pap' and mixed it with last night's leftover veg and topped it with cubed cheese, it melted and was lovely. I only had boerewors and pap, cause I'm not a big steak fan.

Later the afternoon, we went to watch cricket in the lounge area, but the game was stopped because of bad light. At the pub we chatted with Frikkie, the barman, and other people.



I decided we should have tortilla quesadillas for dinner. Hein lit the fire, I spread tomato paste on a tortilla, placed cubes of leftover steak on it, sprinkled it with pepper and cheese and topped with another tortilla. Hein then bbq'd it in a closed grid for few minutes. It was absolutely smashing and what a great idea for a quick snack. You can literally put any filling in.

Tiredness overcame us and we went to bed.

27/12/10

The alarm went off at 5 am. We made coffee, had a rusk, showered and drove to Augrabies Falls. Just before 7 we entered the gate. It was spectacular.

A few years ago the falls didn't have a lot of water – this time it was a show.



Afterwards we went to the restaurant for breakfast. Although they only had a few waiters, their menu was good and we had a lovely breakfast with coffee.

On our way back, we stopped at the Desert Raisin stall. I bought some fat raisins and some interesting snacks, 'pineapple cores'. They are dried and sugared pineapple cores. Absolutely smashing!

Along the way, we also stopped at 'Die Pienk Padstal' (The Pink Farm Stall). As the name suggests, the décor's pink. I especially loved the pink gemstones on the ground and the water feature made with watering cans.

At the camp, we informed reception about some problems at the chalet and read at the chalet.

After a late morning snooze, it was just too hot to bother with cooking, so we had Weetbix with milk for lunch.

Dinner was nicely marinated chops, boerewors, Chinese style rice, tinned corn and tinned peas. It was 40 degrees at 6h45pm. The river was still rising.

After a luke-warm shower (not even the cold water is cold), I felt a bit better. I made the quick 4 minute Chinese style rice, but it tasted a bit funny so we threw it out. But the tinned corn & peas were lovely! At 8pm we were in bed, but it was extremely hot and we battled to sleep. At midnight I woke up, had some cold water and after 2 we had another earthquake. This time Hein felt it too.

28/12/10



At 5 the alarm went off, but we snoozed till 6. Made coffee, showered and dressed and went for our quad bike game drive. But with the rising river, they had problems transporting the personnel over the waters, so were delayed. We went back to the chalet, made more coffee and I suggested we make cowboy food.

Hein lit the fire, used a pan and fried bully beef, then added baked beans & tomato relish. On the grid he toasted bread slices. It was a feast for kings! We enjoy it with our favourite 'salad sauce', Habanero sauce.

After we read a bit and chilled, we drove to Upington for some much-needed fresh vegetables. First we decided on lunch at Le Must – and guess what I had? Baked sheep's head! My first – and it was an item on my bucket list for quite a while now. It was really tasty. Why did I want to eat it? I just did – and it really tasted like leg of lamb!



Knowing there's a Woolworths, we stopped there, but found it didn't have food, so we drove to Pick 'n Pay. After buying the groceries, Hein bought ice and more water and we drove back. It was 45 oC.

Read and tried to take a nap at the chalet. I made a green salad for dinner, but it didn't cool off during evening, so we just had weetbix for dinner.

Sleep was difficult in the heat.



29/12/10

Up at 5, had coffee and a rusk, showered and dressed for the quad bike game drive at 7. They gave me the biggest one cause it was easiest to manoeuvre. I made a few circles to try it out and then we were off. I managed to keep the petrol button steady. We saw lots of Springbok as well as a baby

springbok. Blesbok, small-built elande, zebra and the trail of a very big iguana. The sun was up but not hot. At 2 places I had a mild attack of panic – we didn't wear helmets and there were loose rocks in the road, but otherwise I actually quite enjoyed it. After an hour, we returned to the camp.

After that adrenaline rush, Hein lit the fire and we had yummy boerewors on Panini rolls. It was quite cooler today, only 39 oC. Hein started to read 'The girl with the dragon tattoo – Stieg Larsson) and was enjoying it. I started Harlan Coben, 'Darkest Fear'.

For lunch we just warmed up the left-over boerewors and had some leftover tinned corn & peas with it. Although we don't really trust the tap water, we have bought a filter waterbag-thingie and used that for boiled kettle water. For drinking, we buy bottled water. And drank lots of it. I tried to at least have a litre, but yesterday we had probably 2 litres each.

A nap in the cooler weather.

For dinner, we decided to go to the Khamkirri restaurant. I showered, dressed and we took our books along. At the outside pub, I ordered an ice cream wafer and then ate off the wafers. Then I ordered a tall glass, a shot of 'ietsie (something), which turned out to be Tequila and a tin of Strawberry Sparletta. A float with a kick. It was delicious!!!



The menu is very limited for the restaurant so we opted for chicken schnitzel, chips & salad. The tables are laid outside on the deck and we had a lovely big Greek salad as starter. The schnitzel and chips were enjoyed with a nice monkey gland sauce.

At the chalet, we continued to read in the nice and colder weather. Hein had trouble sleeping again, not even Rescue Remedy helped for the hot weather.

30/12/10

Up just after 5 and it was amazingly cool outside. Even now, 09h15, it's only 26 oC. After 2 cups of coffee, Hein said he doesn't feel like weetbix for breakfast. (The neighbours had bacon for breakfast and that made him hungry.) With 4 tortilla wraps left, I spread tomato relish on them with black pepper and cheese and we grilled them on the fire. Hein also opened a can of Viennas (only 10g/100g fat) and we had a feast.



With the canvas-curtains on the windows, it's actually hotter in the chalet than outside.

Glimpsing at our car, Hein discovered it had a flat tyre. Oh dear! I asked him if he can still remember how to change a tyre. He just laughed and said we'll have to see.

Lunch for me was tuna with Greek salad. Hein had tinned Viennas later on.

Dinner was made in 5 minutes. Ainsley Harriot's couscous, heated-up bully beef and tinned corn & peas. Another hot night for Hein.

31/12/10

While Hein was sleeping late, I sat outside when I felt raindrops. A light rain fell in bursts. Now remember – this is Kalahari. It's desert – it doesn't rain here. We made coffee, showered and Hein stopped at the reception to fix the tyre. A nail was embedded firmly in it. After a while it was fixed and we went to Vergelegen coffee shop for breakfast. Luckily I remembered from years ago their portions, so I only ordered a half portion of tramezinni with salami, feta cheese & avo. Wow, the portion was huge! Hein had an omelette with bacon, cheese & peppers.

At Kakamas, we bought some stuff at the OK, thankfully it wasn't very busy. At the Deli, a liquor store that also stocked meat, we bought 2 packets of boerewors. When Hein asked for ice, she replied it was too hot to make ice. And there's nowhere you would find any.

We drove to the other liquor store and found ice. Hahaha. Hein told me to have a look at the cute coffee shop. I went inside, had a look around, bought the Plum magazine with very nice recipes and 2 Magnum ice creams. Back to the chalet.

The rain has been falling on and off, but in the afternoon it started to fall heavy and thunder was heard too. The resort planned to have braais out for people to use with music, etc.

At 8pm we drove there, but reached a part of the road leading to the reception area that collapsed. It was still raining heavy, so we went back to the chalet, Hein lit the fire and we managed to braai chops & boerewors on our own.



I wanted to make a nice dessert, something like trifle, but didn't have cake. So I improvised with Marie biscuits. I used a 1 litre lunch box and started with 2 layers of Marie biscuits, then I put a layer of drained crushed pineapples, some black pitted cherries, some Ideal Milk, custard and repeated the layers. I could barely close the lid and thought it was a touch-and-go dessert. After a while in the fridge, I took it out and wow!! It tasted like a tiramisu!! What a success.

Hein and I were now both busy with Stieg Larsson's books, me on the 1st one, Hein on the 2nd. We read till 22h30.

With the colder weather, we had a lovely night's rest.

1/1/2011

It's a new year!!! As usual, I woke around 5h30. Made coffee and was 'shocked' to see the



level of the river (above left) (refer to page 5) and then we walked around to check the damage. It was bad. There was a Corsa who couldn't pass the damaged road, although we think he tried. His bumper was loose.

After another cup of coffee, Hein lit his first fire of the year (above centre & right), we toasted some bread and scrambled eggs on the fire. Yum!

Hein walked to the bridge again and saw that they were trying to fix another road to cross over.

We both sat down and read. I had some Liquorice Allsorts sweets, Hein had beer and I made him a cheese & cucumber sandwich. (When I started 2 years ago to watch our fat intake, I've eliminated butter/margarine from my sandwiches. But have sometimes continued to use it on Hein's.) Sometime during this holiday, Hein remarked that he thinks he can live without butter/margarine on sandwiches.

I had some camp trifle and am just so amazed at the outcome of this simple dessert. Can't wait to try out different 'coffee' versions of my 'camp tiramisu' at home.

Hein is swiftly reading through his 2nd book, I'm $\frac{3}{4}$ with my 1st. It's a race. It's lovely and cool.

After 4pm, I showered and we walked to the restaurant. We read our books and had dinner at 7. Spare ribs & salad for me, steak (med rare), chips & salad for Hein. I don't know how they manage to have perfect lettuce every time I've had salad so far ... once I've opened a bag of lettuce, I cannot seem to preserve it. The spare ribs were great and Hein's steak perfect! The food is really good.

We walked back to the chalet before the dark catches us. With all this rain, red ants were everywhere. They climb on your feet as you walk and man, can they bite! I did several jigs in the air and sprinted for a few metres. Ok, I've just had my exercise after my dinner. Hahaha.

By now my 1st book is finished, so I'm waiting anxiously for Hein to finish the 2nd one. But when I read something else, the insects were drawn to our little reading light. No fun at all.

2/1/2011

We slept late. Only woke after 6. I had a lovely night's sleep; Hein said he rolled around a bit. It's still lovely and cool outside.

So far, we've been on holiday for 2 weeks. And just to show how tired Hein must have been ... every single previous holiday, after the 3rd day, Hein would start to get antsy and talk about cutting the holiday short. After 2 weeks, he hasn't made any such comments.

While we drank coffee outside, I noticed that the river seems to be lower. Hein has started the 3rd and final book ... woohoo! I quickly did the dishes outside, made us some more coffee and just sat and thought about the colour of my new study (we are seriously thinking of buying a slightly bigger house).

Hein mentioned a lack of breakfast options (meaning bacon, boerewors, etc), so I suggested we make toasted cheese sandwiches. He immediately lit the fire.

With the last 4 slices of bread I used cherry tomatoes & cheddar cheese for sandwiches, with a little bit of mayo. Then I also opened a tin of Viennas and we warmed it on the grill.

I showered and then we both went back to our books. It was still cool, but managed to go up to 35oC.

Lunch was tuna for Hein and rusks and coffee for me. And yoghurt as dessert. Hein has taken out the other half of deboned leg of lamb for dinner. With Provencal rub, he braaied it on the coals. I cooked potatoes in their skin, steamed green beans and we enjoyed it with feta cheese.

The flies are seriously bothering us. Maybe the flies have all hatched with the funny weather. How can nothing affect them? Even the hanging fly catchers are not a match for them. Yuck. When it got dark outside, we sat on the bed and read.

One more day left, then Kimberley. Tinned apricots, custard and Ideal Milk for dessert.

3/1/2011

Our last full day at Khamkirri resort. We're ready to move on. While having coffee, the flies were already starting to pester us. Yuck!

Hein has lit the fire - one of his last ones for this Kalahari holiday.

We had a delightful thin boerewors. I made 1 minute stywe pap and tomato relish. It was absolutely delicious with slices of cheese.

To hand in our last bundle of washing, we showered, took our books along and watched cricket. We then decided to have lunch there - I had again the chicken schnitzel, Hein had a hamburger & chips.



I'm absolutely CRAVING chicken - chicken schnitzel just doesn't do it for me! Hmmm, that lovely crisp outside from the fire, the juicy thighs and wings Kalahari is just meat world!!

We walked back to the chalet and read our books. I started to pack most of the stuff and somehow it felt that we've got more things than when we arrived ... weird.

When it 'cooled down' a bit (35 oC), Hein lit the fire for our last meal at the chalet. Lamb chops with tinned mixed beans and tinned peas. I had yoghurt for dessert.

Hein really battled to sleep because of the heat. He turned and tossed and at some stage I mumbled at him for disturbing me. I've set the alarm for 5am, but decided to rather set it for 6. When I asked Hein, he said he got to sleep at about 12, which meant he got about 5-6 hours' sleep in.

4/1/2011

With Ricoffy, Cremora & milk I made our final 2 Kalahari-on-the-river coffees. Outside, we had a last long look at the river while sipping the coffee. During our last grocery trip, Hein had bought wild bird seed. All of a sudden he noticed that where he used to spread the seeds for the birds, grass was sprouting. We giggled – there may be a 'lawn' soon.

After we showered, we finally packed up everything and left. Just outside the gate of Khamkirri, we found the road flooded with water – luckily a lorry passed by and we watched the water level closely. Then we drove through slowly.



At Upington, we drove to Bi-Lo Bistro/Coffee shop/Supermarket. A lovely spot – the décor is quirky and ingenious. In the garden they have a Koi pond (our spot with a view of the sea) and the cutest umbrellas over the tables. Look almost like an upside down farm dam. Old galvanised baths are mounted against the wall.

I wanted to order something 'different', but at the lack of that, I ordered a pita with bacon, egg, cheese & sauce inside. Yum. Hein had a SA breakfast. Hein didn't pack a jeans, so we decided to slip into Edgars for a pair and also to buy another

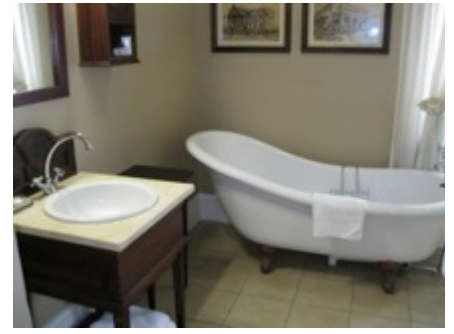
overnight bag for our (or I suppose mostly my) stuff. He also bought some casual shoes at Trappers Trading.

With tummies full, we started our 3rd leg of our holiday to Kimberley.

From Upington, it's 375km. Passed Groblershoop. At Griquastad we thought we'll buy a sandwich for lunch, but everything looked dodgy. The next little town, Campbell, was an hour's drive from Kimberley. Every single shop in this tiny town was closed – siesta maybe?

We arrived in Kimberley at 14h15. I've searched on the GPS and found they had a McDonalds. With a quick QP Burger lunch, we repacked our (now 2) overnight bags and drove on to The Kimberley Club (www.kimberleyclub.co.za - (0)53 832 4224) where we were booked for 2 nights. It really looked luxurious on their website. As the GPS took us on the route, she indicated that there were only 250m left to our destination – and we were in a 'dodgy' part of town. My heart nearly jumped out my throat. It just couldn't be! We were paying a massive R1550/night (without breakfast) so hell's bells, it must be something!

As we turned the corner, things looked a little better. We parked at the 24hr secured parking spot and found the porter waiting there. (hmm, things are looking better!)



With our 2 overnight bags, we followed the porter into the hotel. Wow, once you're through the gate you're in another world. *The Kimberley Club was founded in August 1881. Leading men of Kimberley wanted a meeting place along the lines of London clubs where they could enjoy a drink or two, good food and the company of their peers, in comfort, away from the dust and dryness of the diggings. Cecil John Rhodes was the prime mover in the founding of the Club.*

Old world charm all the way. Our suite was the Cecil John Rhodes' suite.

Our room was on the 1st floor with windows overlooking the courtyard. Splashing out a bit, meant an executive suite. A big bathroom with roll-top bath (can't wait to try it out), big shower, toilet and bathroom cabinets.

Spacious bedroom with big bed and air conditioner! Yeah!! Cupboards and 2 comfy chairs. The lounge is decorated with 2 armchairs, a couch, an armoire & chair and another card table and 2 chairs. The TV cabinet hosts a TV with satellite dish and mini-bar with very reasonable prices. Hein immediately opened a cold beer.

Although we couldn't open a door onto a balcony or courtyard, we were happy. I unpacked everything and fussed about having to iron some of it – Hein mentioned we're only here for 1 full day. Hmmff. I need to have choice. And one never knows what you have to dress for!

With everything in its place, we dressed comfortably and Hein sat down on the couch, checked his emails and watched cricket.

After 6, Hein first took a leisurely bath, and then I did. We dressed for dinner and had a drink first in the bar. It's really an old gentleman's club atmosphere! The barman guessed a gin & tonic for me and then gave me a double!

Our order for dinner was taken. When our starters were ready, they called us. I had snails with blue cheese & bacon on phyllo pastry (quite rich but delightful), Hein had bean soup with rolls. Pork belly roast was Hein's main choice and that really was divine! My choice was lemon & poppy seed-coated Cape Salmon on potatoes and peppers. Absolutely lovely. I threw caution to the wind and ordered lavender crème Bruleé with black coffee. Yum!



With the aircon in the room, we thought we'll have a lovely night's rest, but unfortunately it blew right on the bed and was unpleasant. Without the aircon, and for some reason we didn't open the windows, it was stifling in the room. Hein went to watch TV in the lounge. After midnight, I woke up and it was so hot in the room. We opened the windows and slept on.

5/1/2011

After 5 am we woke, made some coffee and relaxed. Just before 7, we showered and went down for breakfast. At R75/person it's a bit overpriced – cereals, yoghurts, stewed fruit, pastries, jams, cheeses and fruit. Then you can choose some hot breakfast. I just had toast, cheeses, stewed fruit & yoghurt. Hein had the healthy breakfast, poached haddock with eggs & mushrooms.

Years ago we were going to see the Big Hole, but when they told us R50/person, we thought it too much and turned around. It was now the time to go see it. After a roundabout drive with our GPS, who could only say left left left, we finally found the way.

The Big Hole - 150 years ago, the site of the Big Hole was a featureless, flat-topped hill. When word spread that diamonds had been discovered, thousands of prospectors, armed with nothing more than more than picks, shovels and hope, descended on Kimberley and created the largest hand-dug excavation in the world.

Digging commenced at the Kimberley mine site in 1871. By the time mining ended on 14 August 1914, the mine had yielded 2722 kilograms of diamonds, extracted from 22,5 million tons of excavated earth. Today what remains is a massive crater 214 meters deep with a surface area of 17 hectares and a perimeter of 1,6 km.

Somehow they have very poor parking directions – the one moment you see a sign for the Big Hole's parking, the next you have nothing. We drove around for a bit, found it and parked.



It's quite cute – they've preserved the initial 'town' (above left) and it's really quaint. For R65/person we bought a package deal – (look at the Big Hole, watched a 20 min movie and went down the mine.) We had a look at the Big Hole from a lookout point (above centre). With no pillars beneath it, the platform swayed as people walked on it. After a very creatively-made 20 min film about the origin of Kimberley, we went down an elevator down in the mine. It was a modern elevator, but creaked so much and it felt like we were going down metres and metres. Walking through a tunnel (above right), there were whistles and banging and the lights dimmed for a while. Very effective. After a while, we exited the tunnel and were back at the ticket desk. So we've only been down 1 floor!

A few shops were around – coffee shop, a few diamond shops and a gift shop. I looked around but nothing caught my fancy, so I didn't buy anything. At the Australian Arms Pub Hein had a cold beer, while I had water. Looking at their menu, I nearly fainted when I saw one item: baby chicken stuffed with bacon & pine nuts. I didn't order it, but I'm so going to try that at home: I'll make a stuffing of bread crumbs, bacon, celery & pine nuts.

At Clicks we bought a Glomail 'gadget' for cracked heels – Hein's heels were a bit rough after walking in sandals for 2 weeks. It looks like a grater.

At the hotel, we read for a bit, then Hein went to buy us some KFC. A twister (so-so) for me and a Zinger burger for him. He said it had quite a zing. Then he used the 'gadget' on his heels – wow, for R100 it really worked!!! After a while, most of the cracks disappeared completely. With some cream, his heels were in top shape again.

Into the last quarter of my 3rd book of Stieg Larsson, I was flying through it. Hein had a nap, watched cricket and started to plan for 2011's business. Finally I closed the book – wow, rarely do you have 3 books with so much action and suspense in it! Absolutely worth it, can't wait to see the movies now.

Hein soaked in the bath with music on his computer. Our last night of the holiday.

This time for dinner, Hein ordered the snails for starter and pork stroganoff on fettuccini for main. My choice was a butternut & lentil Bobotie and dessert – a meringue nest, filled with Amarula-flavoured white chocolate mousse, topped with chocolate sauce, a cherry and some grenadella sauce. Double yum!!!!

Just after we went to bed, I heard all these 'pops' outside in the streets. Although it didn't have an echo (which meant bullets) and I didn't hear police sirens, I was still a bit worried. Suppose it was just a very big party.

6/1/2011

At 6am we woke up, packed and checked out of the hotel. We arrived back home at 12. As soon as we unpacked everything from the car, I drove straight to Woolworths, bought some cooked drumstick-and-thigh portions and a salad. I ripped into that chicken like you won't believe!

Hein went to fetch our cat-girls while I unpacked everything. It felt good to be back home again. The cats inspected the house for a few hours, then we all settled down.

It truly was one of the most relaxing and enjoyable holidays ever.

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Note: When we left Khamkirri Resort on the 4th January, the water level of the river went down. Sadly after that, the whole Upington-Kakamas-Keimoes area has been declared a disaster area. Below are photos of the Augrabies Falls as well as the Khamkirri Resort.

