

15 MONTHS IN AFRICA

# AFRICAN SMILES



Martin Čepička

# African smiles

## 15 months in Africa



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Martin Čepička

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## Introduction

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My name is Martin Čepička. I come from the Czech Republic, Europe. I'm an online English teacher who travels around the world and teaches English via Skype. The best thing about my online job is I can work where I want in the world.

Once, I made a 4-month trip around Asia. Some months later, I traveled to Africa alone. And this book is about my African stay.

When I arrived in South Africa (the country) I had no travel plan, and I didn't know when I would go back home. I just wanted to meet super friendly people, see as many places as possible, and travel slowly.

During the next **15 months**, I traveled all around **South Africa, Eswatini, and Mozambique**. I met hundreds of super friendly people and learned<sup>1</sup> a lot about their culture, traditions, and the countries, in general. And I truly visited many places (see the map below) and sights (you can find some basic info about them in this book).

You must know my stay wasn't just one big adventure with **beautiful memories**, (watching whales, penguins, safaris, Cape Town trip, finding love, visiting and helping children's homes, finding my best friend etc.) but it was also often a **big drama** (3 times mugged<sup>2</sup> in South Africa, not allowed to cross the Mozambican border, a horrible interview about my visitor's pass for Eswatini, almost died in Mozambique!). My traveling was often challenging but overcoming the problems made me a better person.

You can imagine it would be a pity not to write a book about my travels 😊

My book is called **African smiles** because a lot of African people made me smile and I also made a lot of African people smile on my travels 😊.

**In this book, you can explore Africa with me and improve your English at the same time! This book is original because there are footnotes<sup>3</sup> (written in Czech) in the text helping Czech students understand the grammar! Remember that it's important to understand**

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<sup>1</sup> learned (AmE), learnt (BrE) = minulý tvar od učít se

<sup>2</sup> mug (sloveso) = přepadnout (kvůli penězům např. na ulici)

<sup>3</sup> footnotes = poznámky pod čarou

**English grammar in use**<sup>4</sup>! Footnotes also often help you translate a difficult phrase or a difficult word. The book contains 512 footnotes, maybe 200 of my travel photos, and plenty of maps to perfectly illustrate my itinerary<sup>5</sup>.

Travelers and English lovers, enjoy my book!

### VISITED COUNTRIES AND PLACES

- 1 – Cape Town
- 2 – Hermanus
- 3 – Johannesburg
- 4 – Pretoria
- 5 – Malelane
- 6 – Mbombela (/Nelspruit)
- 7 – Eswatini/Swaziland  
(visited places in the country: Manzini, Mbabane, Nisela, Hlane, Maguga, Ezulwini, Lobamba)
- 8 – Maputo
- 9 – Inhambane
- 10 – Vilanculos
- 11 – Beira



<sup>4</sup> English grammar in use = anglická gramatika v praxi

<sup>5</sup> itinerary = plán cesty

## Chapter 1: Why Africa?

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“They will kill you and steal all your things! They hate white people. We don't want you to travel there! "Are you nuts?<sup>6</sup>” This was my parents' first reaction when I told them that I had bought flight tickets to Africa 😊.

My mom added later, "If you don't travel there, I will give you the money for the flight ticket back. But please, don't go!" 😊

But I didn't listen to them. I thought positively about my trip and how to enjoy it as much as possible.

I'm stubborn with some things. If I want something, I go for it. So on<sup>7</sup> 22nd of July, 2018, I boarded a plane in Paris to Cape Town, South Africa.



Because the flight took 13 hours, I had plenty of time to think about my past and the reasons why I was traveling to Africa<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Are you nuts? = Spadl jsi z višně? (šibe ti?)

<sup>7</sup> s dny se pojí předložka ON



I remembered one world traveler who was so fascinated by Africa, "Oh, man! You must go to Africa! I've been to all the continents. Europe is nice. Asia is nice. America is nice. Australia is nice. But Africa is the real gem of the world! There are the most beautiful things and the continent isn't so touristy<sup>9</sup>!"

It's true I'd always wanted to go to Africa since the conversation with him, but the biggest reason, why I was traveling to Africa, was that **I wanted to meet REALLY friendly people!** 😊

Although I consider myself easygoing, positive, smiling, happy, and optimistic, I felt like somebody made me angry in the Czech Republic every day.

Later, one South African man started to chat with me on the plane. He was super friendly, and he gave me many tips on what to see in South Africa. I realized for the first time: "Oh, man! Africa will be the right friendly place for me!"

---

<sup>8</sup> zde je použit minulý průběhový čas, protože ten se používá pro děj, který probíhal v určitý okamžik v minulosti (v ten moment jsem zrovna cestoval do Afriky).

<sup>9</sup> touristy = přeplněný turisty

## Chapter 2: South Africa – the exciting country

### 2.1 Cape Town – the most beautiful city

#### 2.1.1 Arrival in CT

The new beginning of my life started. I arrived at<sup>10</sup> the airport in Cape Town at about 9 pm. I got a 3-month tourist visa free of charge.



At first, I was so excited to be finally in S.A. because I always found S.A. a cool (interesting) country for a European! Soon, I also became nervous because I didn't know what to expect from this country, but I was fine very soon. 😊

Then my Couchsurfing (free accommodation, but it's about meeting other cultures) host<sup>11</sup> Nick (white South African) picked me up<sup>12</sup> at the airport and took me to his place. It was very nice of him because he didn't even want any money for it, even though his house was pretty<sup>13</sup> far from the airport! He also didn't mind coming for me so "late"! Can you imagine doing this for a stranger? 😊

So I had a local friend immediately after my arrival!

Nick was pretty nice and friendly, but after maybe 10 minutes of asking him questions about South Africa, we had nothing to talk about! The problem was he didn't ask questions about me, my country, and so on. I found it strange 😊.

<sup>10</sup> arrive AT = dorazit do (AT – na konkrétní místo např. letiště)

<sup>11</sup> host = hostitel (ne host!)

<sup>12</sup> pick up (frázové sloveso) = vyzvednout

<sup>13</sup> pretty = docela

Anyway, I was lucky<sup>14</sup> he was my host because he was very active at Couchsurfing, and I made friends in the city very quickly, thanks to it.

After we arrived at his place (Woodstock area), he showed me "my" room. Actually, it was just his living room with a couch, but I'd known<sup>15</sup> about it. You usually sleep on a couch. That's why it's called COUCHsurfing.

But even the couch wasn't for me 😊 because he had accommodated<sup>16</sup> another guest (a German girl, Carol) who had already taken the couch. Nick had to put an extra mattress for me on the floor in the living room so that I could sleep on it. I didn't mind that because I wanted to make as many new friends as possible 😊

Moreover, Nick shared his house with two housemates – 1 white South African, Josh, and one black South African, Tom. Tom had a Colombian girlfriend who was staying with him<sup>17</sup> there at that time. Tom had an Indian (from India) girlfriend, Akshaya, who was staying with him there at that time, too. When Carol, the German girl, came "home", she brought a black South African boyfriend who stayed with her on the couch. You can imagine how international our house was! 😊

I was okay with all that. Everybody was friendly, open, smiling, calm, and talkative 😊.

### 2.1.2 Breathtaking trip around CT

I was even luckier that evening. Nick offered me and the others an all-day tour<sup>18</sup> around Cape Town in his car for the next day! I said yes because I had been thinking<sup>19</sup> about how to see all the beautiful sights in Cape Town (for short: CT) without a car. The problem is that the best sights in CT are very far from each other. And now I had the excellent opportunity to join somebody and go by car! By the way, Nick charged 800 Rands (1077 CZK) per person.

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<sup>14</sup> to be lucky = mít štěstí

<sup>15</sup> Zde je použit předminulý čas, protože ten se používá pro děj, který se stal před nějakým dějem (věděl jsem o tom předtím, než jsem ten „můj pokoj“ viděl)

<sup>16</sup> předtím než jsem se ubytoval já = předminulý čas

<sup>17</sup> zde je použit minulý průběhový čas, protože ten se používá pro děj, který probíhal po určitou dobu v minulosti (bydlela tam s ním tou dobou)

<sup>18</sup> tour = prohlídka (okružní – kolem dokola)

<sup>19</sup> zde je použit předminulý čas PRŮBĚHOVÝ, protože ten se používá pro děj, který se stal před nějakým dějem a trval nějakou dobu (přemýšlel jsem o tom nějakou dobu)

Akshaya, the Indian girl, joined us as well as Azadeh, an Iranian woman staying somewhere else. Nick knew Azadeh via Couchsurfing, too. So the next day, we hit the road!



The red line stands for<sup>20</sup> the plan of our trip around Cape Town 😊



That's the group! From left: Nick, Akshaya, Azadeh, and me.

<sup>20</sup> stand for = znázorňovat

It was perfect that Nick was with us because he could tell us a lot about everything (the history, the best places to see) as a local.



At first, we went to a famous market (The Neighbourgoods Market) for breakfast held<sup>21</sup> every Saturday.



These cooks were so lovely that I had to take a picture of them! 😊

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<sup>21</sup> to be held = pořádat



I tasted some traditional South African food 😊.



Then we went to the Castle of Good Hope, where we learned about the history of South Africa 😊.



Then, we went to another<sup>22</sup> market on the coast in Hout Bay where we could see seals!

There's one in the picture. Can you see it? 😊



And we could see this one very close 😊.

---

<sup>22</sup> another = další (ještě jeden), používá se s j.č. poč. pod. jmen



At the market, I tasted traditional dried meat called Biltong.



That's inside the market.





In Hout Bay, there's a fantastic view of<sup>23</sup> the surroundings!



As you can see on our faces, we were having<sup>24</sup> a good time! 😊

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<sup>23</sup> view OF sth. = výhled NA něco

<sup>24</sup> zde je použit minulý průběhový čas, protože ten se používá pro děj, který probíhal po určitou dobu v minulosti (měli jsme se dobře na tom výletu)



As we were going along the coast to the south, we often saw beautiful rocks around! Of course, we had to stop to take pictures of them! 😊



The rocks were just pictourious<sup>25</sup>! 😊

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<sup>25</sup> pictourious = obrazné (jako z obrazu)



Although the weather was often moody, I was always in a good mood! 😊



Maybe you've heard<sup>26</sup> **there's a high rate of crime in South Africa**. This sign warned us of that.

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<sup>26</sup> doted' – proto předpřítomný čas



We also stopped to take a picture of the biggest and longest beach in CT! 😊



Then we arrived in<sup>27</sup> Simon's Town. There's a large colony of African penguins (Boulders Beach)! This sign warned us of<sup>28</sup> them! 😊

<sup>27</sup> arrive IN = dorazit do (město, stát)

<sup>28</sup> warn OF sth = varovat před něčím