

15 MONTHS IN AFRICA

AFRICAN SMILES



Martin Čepička

African smiles

15 months in Africa



Disclaimer: This material is an information product. Any distribution or provision to third parties without the author's consent is prohibited and is a violation of copyright law that may be prosecuted. Thank you for your understanding and respect for this message.

Martin Čepička

African smiles: 15 months in Africa

E-book published at my own expense

Prostějov 2022

ISBN: ISBN 978-80-11-00941-0

www.anglictinasbalenanacesty.cz © 2021

CONTENT

Introduction.....	6
Chapter 1: Why Africa?	7
Chapter 2: South Africa – the exciting country.....	9
2.1 Cape Town – the most beautiful city.....	9
2.1.1 Arrival in CT	9
2.1.2 Breathtaking trip around CT	10
2.1.3 Looking for a good place to stay.....	27
2.1.4 Sightseeing trips in the city.....	31
2.1.5 I found something more	38
2.1.6 When I burn-out.....	46
2.1.7 Settling down	51
2.1.8 Is crime in SA really so bad?	66
2.1.9 New beginning	67
2.2 Hermanus – watching whales.....	68
2.3 Johannesburg – the most dangerous city.....	79
2.3.1 Mugged in the street.....	83
2.3.2 Sightseeing trips	84
2.4 Kruger national park – my first safari	91
2.5 Leaving South Africa.....	106
Chapter 3: Mozambique – the country of beaches	110
3.1 Maputo – the city which saved my life.....	110
3.1.1 Trips around Maputo.....	113
3.1.2 I found love	125
Chapter 4: Eswatini – the country of the friendliest people.....	127
4.1 Manzini – the friendliest city	128
4.1.1 A trip to a traditional Swazi village	135
4.1.2 Stressful time	143

4.1.3 I visited a church service	150
4.1.4 I fell in love with this country!	154
4.1.5 Stressful time II.....	162
4.1.6 Christmas time	168
4.1.7 My first visit to a children's home	169
4.1.8 Souvenir markets	172
4.1.9 My second visit to the children's home	176
4.1.10 The interview for a visitors pass	182
4.1.11 Calm time	186
4.2 Mbbane – the business city.....	189
Chapter 5: Back in Mozambique	192
5.1 Back to Maputo.....	192
5.1.3 The worst moment of my stay.....	194
5.1.4 Looking for a good place to stay.....	198
5.1.5 Trips around Maputo.....	201
Chapter 6: Back in Eswatini.....	212
6.1 Back in Manzini	212
6.1.1 Helping the children at the children's home.....	215
6.1.2 Helping children at a care point	221
6.2 Sightseeing trip around Eswatini	233
Chapter 7: Back to Mozambique II.....	239
7.1 Back to Maputo II.....	239
7.1.1 Visiting a children's home.....	242
7.2 Inhambane – the beach city	248
7.3 Vilanculos – the capital of water sports	259
7.4 Beira – the heart of Mozambique	264
Chapter 8: Back to Eswatini II.....	275
8.1 Back to Manzini II	275

8.1.1 Opening a business.....	283
8.1.2 One day visit to the kindergarten	286
8.1.3 The worst time of my stay	295
8.2 Back to Eswatini/Manzini III	302
8.2.1 Saying goodbye	304
8.3 My first safari in Eswatini – Nisela park.....	313
8.4 Hlane Royal National Park - the best safari in Eswatini	323
Chapter 10: Back to South Africa	335
10.1 Mbombela (Nelspruit) – the shop city.....	335
10.1.1 The scariest moment of my stay.....	343
10.2 Pretoria – the best city in South Africa	344
10.2.1 Sightseeing trips	347
10.2.2 Safari park for free!	359
10.2.3 My last days – interviewers	369
Chapter 11: Leaving Africa	373
Conclusion	380

Introduction

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 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 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 😊.

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



Chapter 1: Why Africa?

“They will kill you and steal all your things! They hate white people. We don't want you to travel there! "Are you nuts?" 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 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.

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!"

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!"

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 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 Nick (white South African) picked me up 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 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 😊.

Anyway, I was lucky 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 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 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 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 around Cape Town in his car for the next day! I said yes because I had been thinking 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.

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 the plan of our trip around Cape Town 😊



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

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 every Saturday.



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



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 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 😊.



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



That's inside the market.



In Hout Bay, there's a fantastic view of the surroundings!



As you can see on our faces, we were having a good time! 😊



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! 😊



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



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



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



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



You can get pretty close to them! You can either watch them behind the railing or close on the beach (but you have to find the right path) 😊



I was told the colony had about 3.000 birds in total! 😊