

# 3 planes, 5 mobile homes and a car

## Or 7 weeks in Namibia and South Africa in 2022

First of all, this is a report from a trip with failures, mishaps and annoyances.

No, the three planes had no breakdowns. We were allowed to take 2 x 23 kilos of luggage from Frankfurt to Windhoek. From Cape Town to Windhoek but only 1 x 20 kilos. So, we sent 16 kilos home from South Africa by post (ship). A suitcase was still 22 kilos and we had to pay about 4 francs for the 2 kilos. Airlink is a bit petty, but we were able to cope with that. We had experienced completely different things in the previous 6 weeks.

The flights themselves were OK.

Because we started our trip in Namibia, we booked a Toyota Navi 4x4 from Britz with CU-Camper.

### 1. Windhoek: First motorhome Toyota NAVI 4x4 from Britz

The handover, which took place at the airport in Windhoek, went smoothly. Except that we absolutely had to watch a video about driving gravel and other rules of conduct, which was a bit boring since we had already travelled several hundred thousand kilometres in Africa. At least we got a coffee when we asked for it.

We loaded our luggage into the cabin which was to be our living room, kitchen, and bedroom. Soon we realized that this part of the vehicle was old, not very clean and somewhat sparsely equipped. Since we had in mind to be on the road with the vehicle for 7 weeks, we bought a few things that we then gave away or left in the vehicle when we returned it in.

The bed had to be made by pulling a heavy board across the sitting area and laying out half a dozen seat cushions. We decided to leave it as is, because it was too cumbersome to do it at a daily basis.

We didn't put the clothes in the closets because of the unpleasant smell that came out. The storage space was so sparse that not everything could be accommodated. We left a large part in our luggage bags. We then had to heave them into the driver's cab every evening and back onto the bed in the morning.

On the second day, just before Etosha Park, it rained briefly, and we noticed a leak in the pop-up roof. Of course, it dripped right onto the bed.

We called Britz and they promised to bring a replacement car to Etosha. The next afternoon the replacement vehicle came, and we had to move all the contents from one camper to another. This also included the items that had already been part of the inventory from Windhoek. We had to hurry because the driver had to leave the park before sunset.

### 2. Etosha: Second motorhome Toyota NAVI 4x4 from Britz

From the very first moment we noticed that the lying surface was not 1.9 meters long, as described on the internet. Emanuel's feet protruded at least 5 centimetres over the edge of the bed when lying outstretched. He was 1.85 meters long when he was young and since then he has only grown in width. We could have lived with that, but when Christine got on the bed, the board crashed down on one side. The same thing happened on the next trips. Bringing the board back onto both lateral supports was not exactly easy and only possible with a lot of strength. It turned out that this rested only a few millimetres on both sides on the supports. With a little improvisation and precise alignment, you could at least sleep on it without falling. This structure was at least as old as the first.

After we had also energetically complained about this second vehicle, we agreed with the manager in Windhoek in Cape Town to switch to a larger mobile home. 4x4s are no longer needed. We shortened our planned route in Namibia by a week to get rid of the vehicle faster.

In Windhoek, a technician then came to the campsite to screw square profiles to the side of the trailer. That lasted until Cape Town. From then on, however, we only drove on paved roads.

### 3. Cape Town: First Iveco Maui 4 Berth

We then drove the almost 1,500 kilometres to Cape Town in four days.

For an extra charge we got a 4 berth camper with lots of storage space. They were fair enough to waive the one-way rental for the Toyota. They were very helpful here. The branch manager kept coming and asking us if everything was ok or if we had another request. To our surprise, most of the inventory in this camper was new. Some even in the original packaging. This was probably also due to Emanuel's severe criticism of the previous vehicles. In addition, an employee of CU-Travel had intervened at Britz.

### 4. Stellenbosch: Second Iveco Maui 4 Berth

Four days and less than 200km later the light came on while driving through Stellenbosch put a Christmas tree on the fittings. Brakes, ABS, and ESP symbols appeared.

We called the Maui emergency number. We were told that we were not allowed to continue like this. Well, we would never have thought of that! A mechanic will be sent with a replacement camper. This could perhaps replace a sensor. Stellenbosch is only about 30 kilometres from the airport, but we waited what felt like 2 hours until we arrived. We were also frustrated because we didn't believe in a repair. The mechanic confirmed our suspicions. So, it was time to reload the whole household again. Handover and control didn't really take place because we finally wanted to drive towards the coast. Finally, the branch manager assured us that he had checked the vehicle himself. But we didn't believe him, rightly so, as it later turned out.

We spent the next night in Hartenbos, where we unfortunately had to realize that we had gotten a real piece of junk. Emanuel became a little clearer on the phone about what he thought of the company and its vehicle.

It started with the water pump and the interior and exterior lights not working. After several phone calls to Maui, it turned out that the main power switch was off. That already shows how the boss controlled!

Other shortcomings were:

The cabin door could not be unlocked from the inside, only with the key from the outside.

The outer flap of the storage compartment could not be closed, and one of the three hinges was broken.

A light comes on the dashboard that a bulb is broken.

With the interior lighting, only half of the lamps worked on all the LED strips.

The bracket on one of the window blinds was broken.

A drawer could not be locked, with every curve it rolled up and down. We tied them with a string.

This vehicle was the lousiest we had gotten up to that point. Emanuel called it a junk car in Maui and was totally hateful.

We were promised a brand new 6 berth camper to bring to Buffalo Bay the next day. Since we wanted to stay there for three days, that wasn't a problem, we just didn't like the repeated reloading.

#### 5. Buffalo Bay: Mercedes Maui 6 Berth

In the late afternoon, two Maui employees arrived in the Mercedes. As experienced car changers, we had already stowed as much as possible in travel and shopping bags. With the help of the two young Maui men, the move was completed in record time. The Mercedes looked good, but it wasn't brand new, it had been rented out at least once before. The mileage of more than 3'000km betrayed this.

This one was not free from the shortcomings either.

On the third day we had some rain again and of course it dripped onto the back bed. This time it came from a screw hole in the roof fan. After several phone calls to Maui, we were given the address where the problem would be taken care of. We would be reimbursed for the costs, what else? At Campworld in Port Elizabeth, the fan was sealed on the outside and the screw that was too short was replaced with a longer one.

A drawer got stuck when opening and closing. For this, this one opened and closed and a second one in each curve.

The curtain between the body and the driver's cab was "attached" to a curtain rail with unsuitable plastic parts. These plastic pieces kept falling out when moving and it was difficult to push them back into the track.

We found another defect only after a long search. Sometimes there was a smell of gas in the vehicle. It was the gas tap on the bottle, but it only leaked when it was turned on. Luckily nothing happened there.

We didn't feel like changing the vehicle again, so we only reported this defect when we returned it.

#### Walvis Baai AVIS Toyota Corolla

You're probably thinking that everything must have worked. Unfortunately not quite.

Even booking was difficult. Although we have an Avis Preferred card, we were unable to make an online booking. This failed again and again due to the various credit cards we used. Finally we went to Avis at the airport in Port Elizabeth and wanted to make a booking there. Here we were in South Africa and Walvis Baai is in Namibia. The clerk was also unable to make a booking at her terminal. But that was still possible on the phone.

In Walvis Baai we wanted to take over the booked car. Our luggage was quickly stowed in the trunk. When the GPS was then connected, it got no power from the 12 volt connection. The suspicion fell on a blown fuse and we had to laugh out loud. The AVIS employee looked surprised at us, he thought we were laughing at him, he didn't know our previous mishaps. After all the events of the last few weeks, nothing surprised us anymore. We then joked that we probably still had to change planes to Frankfurt. After some searching, the head of the local rental station found the defective fuse.

The flight from Windhoek to Frankfurt went without a hitch, only the German Federal Railways didn't run smoothly. But as you know, that's nothing special.

By the way, we didn't let all these events spoil our trip. The highlights were the many animal sightings in Etosha and Addo Park. Most of all we enjoyed meeting many friends in Namibia and South Africa.

An addendum to the beds in both Maui campers:

We had to use both "big" beds in the two 4-bed vehicles and the 6-bed vehicle. Both are only 120 centimetres wide, so they are only suitable for 2 slim adults or children. One was also only 180 centimetres long, so Christine had to lie diagonally.

The large 6 berth camper has an alcove which is very low and only suitable for children. There was a board to prevent falling out, but the mattress stuck out a few inches over the edge of the bed. Therefore, the fuse could not have been attached. The very short ladder and the mattress overhang would have made climbing very difficult.

Since there are no windows in the alcove apart from a skylight, it is certainly quite warm there in midsummer.

We are probably spoiled by our own mobile homes. But in the end we pay a lot for the rent and then expect a minimum standard and a little comfort can't hurt either. We've had rental vehicles in the past, and there were also shortcomings, but never to this extent.

For information: Britz and Maui South Africa and Namibia belong to THRSA Holding.

CU-Camper mediates mobile homes internationally