

FIRST DAY TRIP OUT OF NAIROBI ON 11 AUGUST 2012

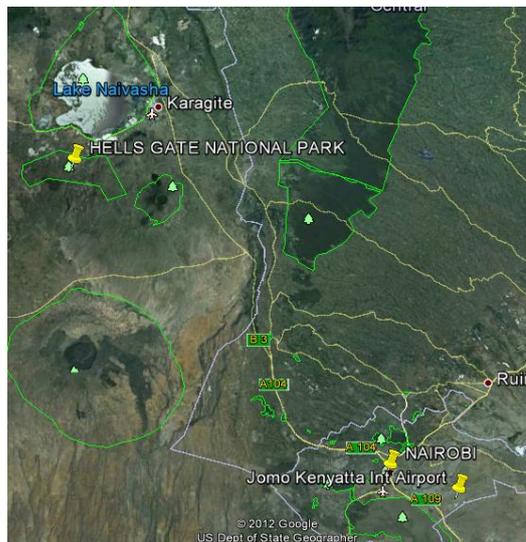
HELL'S GATE NATIONAL PARK – A PICTURE STORY

I finally and at last got my reconditioned 2nd hand new car on the 9th of August imported from Japan. So I decided on Saturday 11th August to take my first trip out of Nairobi to explore the country.

The Hell's Gate National Park is about 100km North West of Nairobi and takes 2 hours to reach due to the traffic on the roads and also the conditions of the road. It is however considered to be one of the "must see" attractions that is within a comfortable day's trip from Nairobi.

It is located within the Great Rift Valley and just south of Lake Naivasha, one of the two lakes that is popular for the pink Flamingos. The other lake being slightly more to the north and being Lake Nakuru.

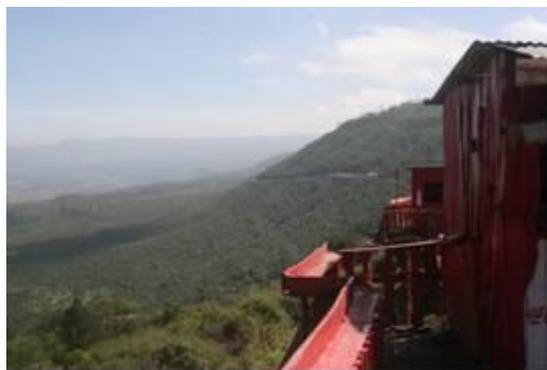
Located at the Gate's entrance are some of the large flower areas for which Kenya is popular. Due to the fact that Kenya is located on the equator it has long flower growing seasons making it a very cost efficient flower growing area.



On my way to Hell's Gate this is the first sight that I had of the Great Rift Valley.

The red kiosk on the right is the first of rows and rows of little "shacks" where the locals sell curios along the road.

You can however see the steep fall of the escarpment in this photo to the valley floor at the bottom



Not very clear due to the misty conditions but you can see the valley floor way down below in the photo.



Along the way on the right side of the road was this unexpected site. I have not seen anything written about before in any of the tourism / travel books and so came as a bit of a surprise to me. It is located immediately next to the road and reminded me of the many many "Mother Mary" icons that you see all along the roads in Italy.



The inside of the little church is tiny with only two rows of benches seating about four persons each, on each side of the isle.

It is very neatly kept and also has a pretty little garden.



I only stopped for about 10 minutes at the little church but when I came out there was a traffic jam caused by a bus that stopped functioning on this narrow road.

The road which runs down along the escarpment is narrow, twisting, and turning all the way. It is therefore a dangerous road as there are frequent delays such as this one caused by heavy vehicles.

Ah, the new second hand reconditioned Japanese car!

The car really comes from Japan having been shipped from Kawasaki on 30 June 2012. It took 1 ½ months by sea to get to Kenya. Although Japanese it is a left hand drive (left hand of the road that is), which I do not understand.

It has an in-built GPS that speaks to me Japanese and the manual is also in Japanese and Korean and Chinese and all those funny scribble languages – but no English or Afrikaans!

An example of the Saturday morning traffic going through one of the many little towns that you go through. We were (again) at a standstill and so I could take the following photos at my leisure.

And yes, it is a wedding car coming from the front.

Same village a little further down the road.

The towns and villages in Kenya is surprisingly clean – more so than in SA. The infrastructure its sidewalks etc are just very poorly developed. The roads are generally in a very poor condition. People will not complain so much about the condition of the SA roads after they have been to Kenya.

Kenya is not part of “Dark Africa” anymore. Each village like this one would have, for example, an Internet Café (rudimentary but still – it works!)



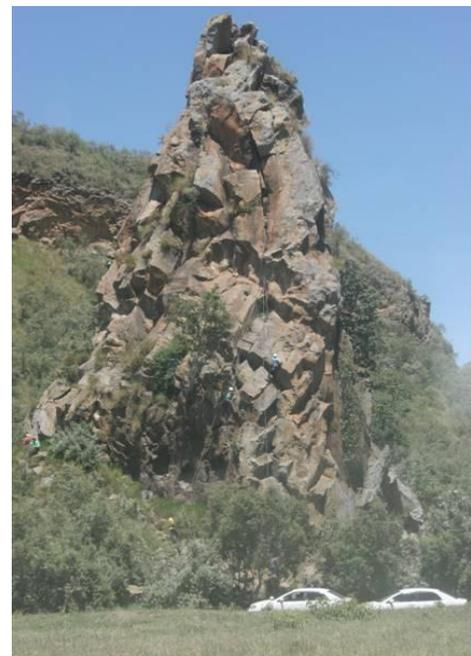
At last, Hell's Gate's gate.

The park and the gorge reminded me of a mini Golden Gate. I hired a guide to take me through the Park and every now and then told him of similar experiences in South Africa. I think he got fed up with me after a while telling him the every this I saw was bigger and better in SA.

He showed me a cave that he was very proud of but reminded me of caves we went to in Heidelberg Kloof as Voortekkers. I then told him of the Cango Caves in SA. He got quieter after that.



There are two huge granite "pillar" like this in the Park, this one being the smaller of the two. However, rock climbing is not allowed on the other one due to the danger of rock falls.



Not a very clear picture but it shows the length of granite cliffs shown better on the next page.

This photo was taken to get the effect of the cliffs and the clouds.



This photo shows the cliffs clearer.

There are no dangerous animals in the Park. That makes Hell's Gate one of only two Parks (and there are very many Parks in Kenya) where people are allowed to go hiking, horse riding and bicycling on their own.



Entrance to the gorge area



The Gorge.

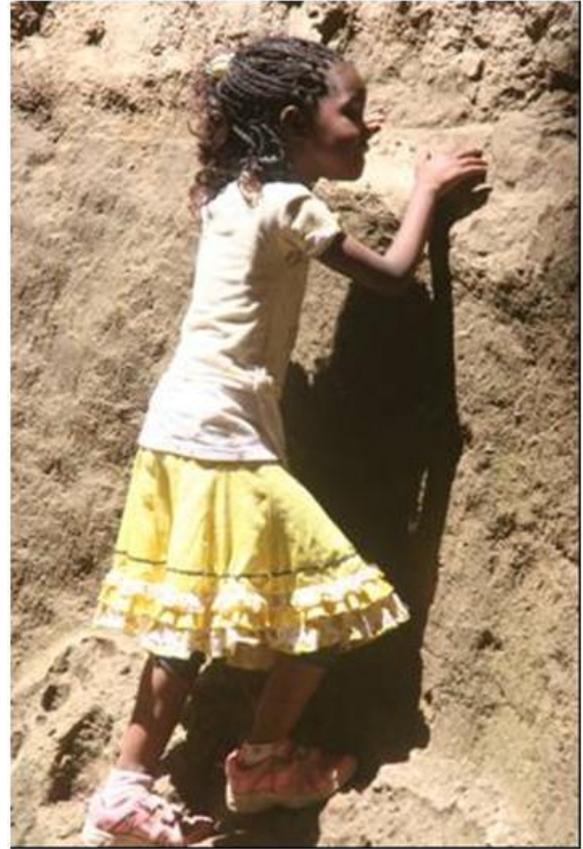
It is actually quite impressive and very interesting. The water flows from Mount Longonot through this Gorge.

Many years ago Lake Naivasha and Lake Nakuru were apparently part of one huge big lake bigger in size than the current Lake Victoria. This huge lake had only one exit for the water to come out and hence "The Gorge" developed.





The Gorge could be dangerous. In March this year 7 youths from a church group died in the gorge. Rain came down on top of Mt Longonot and flash floods came through the Gorge catching them by surprise.



This photo was taken after we came out of the gorge and stood on top. You can see the top of the gorge in the bottom 1/2 of the photo and the larger of the two pillars sticking out at the top.



Inside the Park area are many hot springs. These springs are used to generate thermal-electricity.

Our environmentalists in SA will die ten thousand deaths before they would allow a “factory” in one of our Park!



Mount Longonot seen from a distance



Lake Naivasha seen (not very clearly) from a distance.



THE END

On my way back I saw the tree on the next page in a village that I passed through. It was such an interesting tree that I imagined the village elders gathering under this tree to discuss important matters – the effects of Global Warming and the state of the World’s Financial Markets and what they would do to those greedy bankers when they get hold of them..



19 AUGUST 2012