

Ethiopia 2014 & 2015 – Part III – Photos of Me

I travelled to Ethiopia in December 2014 and January 2015. This mound of drivel is part of my Ethiopian Adventure. As I don't expect anybody to read a 10,000 word 30+ page document, I have ordered it into four convenient parts.

	Component	Description
Part I	The Volcano Adventure	<p>The main reason I went to Ethiopia was to see Erta Ale as I had been fascinated by this volcano for over a decade.</p> <p>17 pages</p>
Part II	Roads & Drivers	<p>These deserve their own report as the drivers were amazingly good and all this on some downright terrifying roads.</p> <p>This is serious 4WD territory</p> <p>7 pages</p>
Part III	Photos of Me	<p>The most frequent complaint that I receive about my holiday reports is that there are virtually no photos of me¹. As I travel solo and am insufficiently self absorbed to indulge in the narcissism of the selfie, this is a selection of photos taken by others where I am in the frame.</p> <p>7 pages</p>
Part IV	The Birding Section	<p>After the volcano tour I did a 3½ day bespoke birding tour which was absolutely brilliant in a completely different way.</p> <p>9 pages</p>

¹ For the life of me I can't see why this is an issue that anybody would want to complain about.

Are you sure you want to see the rest?



The speckled appearance on my sunglasses is caused by standing downwind of an erupting volcano.

Sartorial Elegance

My strategy for most of my gear was to wear then jettison, to that end I mostly took stuff destined for the clothing bin. Apart from one jacket my purchases individually were each <\$10. This was a particularly effective strategy in this neighbourhood, however it meant that you presented an exceedingly daggy² appearance.

² Australian/New Zealand terminology meaning unstylish, untidy and/or scruffy.

On the way to Erta Ale: one of the many "nature/photography stops". These allowed you to truly experience the desert in all its exquisite fierceness³. This is day 2 of a 4 day wear of the shirt which was donated by a work colleague. Men's business shirts are particularly useful as they are heavy enough to keep off the sun. The camouflage pants were one of the few things that I brought (wore) back. They weren't exactly colour co-ordinated for the desert terrain; however after a few days that problem rectified itself.



In one of my vaguely tidy moments wearing my Kenya hat, which turned 30 on this holiday. The glasses were particularly useful as they allowed you to also identify the photographer. Isn't it amazing that the application of lipstick can overcome several days of grime and a complete lack of washing.

³ Particularly when squatting behind a rock the size of a basketball. The black lava absorbed the heat and was definitely over 50°C.

Drinks at the Army Bar

The Army bar at Dallol was the pinnacle of civilisation after Erta Ale. It was often rather busy inside so we utilised a local landscape feature (mound of rocks). We can say that the service was excellent as the owner quickly overcame this by providing a table and seating (crates).



Myself, Aga, Petra, Dave, Chris – Britta took the photo

Goat Girl



Having lived in a number of desert locations in Australia, the one thing that I have learnt as a skirt is always far more comfortable than trousers. Consequently I wore a skirt while in the Dallol; Britta (one of the Germans) was particularly impressed by its cheerful floral nature. I was also impressed by its ability to hide the dirt, which was particularly useful after I threw a cup of tea down the front of it.

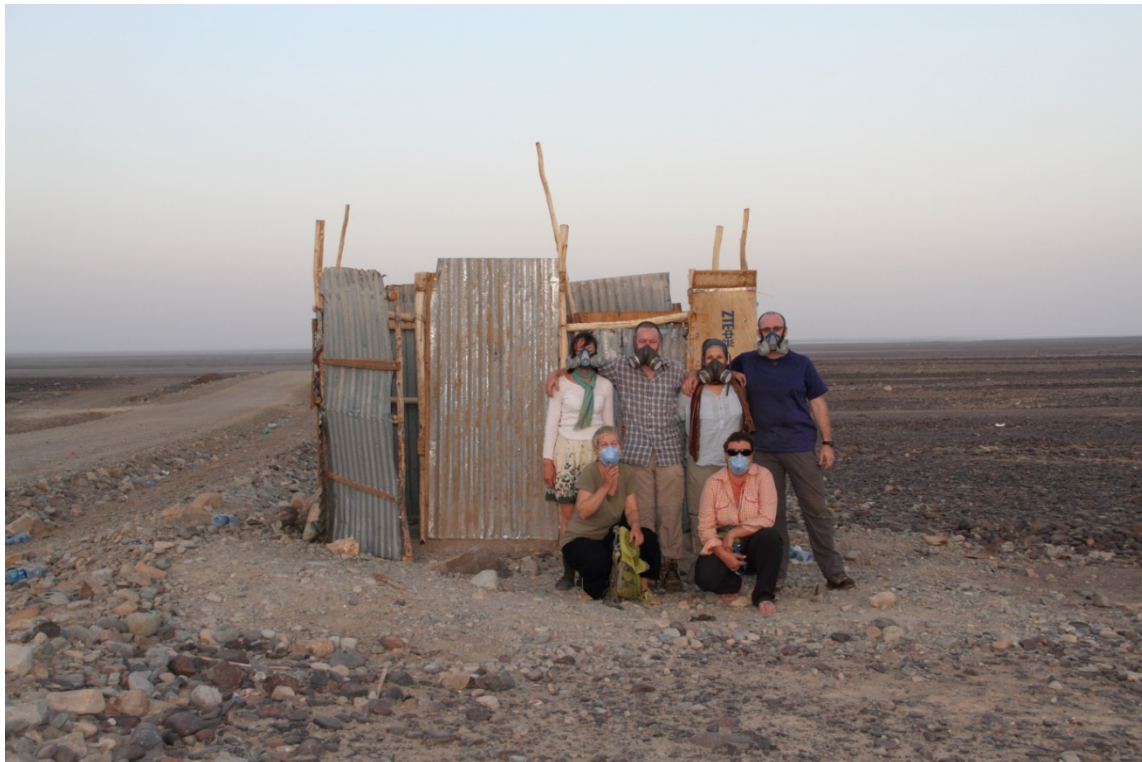
Britta thought the outfit so delightful she insisted on a photo, she also insisted the goat be in the frame as well⁴, naturally I felt it was the perfect way to show off the Marimekko umbrella (which was supposed to be useful in protecting you from the sun, but not really large enough).

Therefore this photo entailed enticing a couple of local goats with Britta's supply of dried apple rings (they liked that) and a bit of artful posing on my part. At least you don't have to endure me warbling "♪ High on a hill. ♪ Was a lonely goatherd ♪" and skipping around⁵.



Gas Masks

We were required to have gas masks as part of the volcano tour particularly for some of the acid gases prevalent on Erta Ale. They were also particularly useful for the "toilet" at Dallol. Essentially it is a "Long Drop" comprising a concrete floor with a hole in the floor. I presume when it fills up, they move it to another location. Unfortunately tourists using it were not particularly good at aiming so its condition could get pretty horrendous.



Myself, Chris, Petra, Dave, kneeling
Britta, Aga

⁴ Exactly why don't know, I suggest you ask her

⁵ Sorry, no video.



Desert Complexion

This is actually the before photo for some expensive skincare hydration. The Danakil is a particularly hard desert, with humidity close to zero. I ended up using Lucas' Pawpaw Ointment as moisturiser. Given that I turned 55 on this holiday I seriously started to look it.

I also have to admit the strategy of taking accumulated hotel shampoos, while cost-effective, resulted in straw like condition. I certainly won't be repeating that.

Thelma and Louise

What is it about headscarf and sunglasses that makes you want to do that Thelma and Louise pose?



This is me, Britta and Enku after leaving Dallol on our way to Wukro, we have stopped near a raised coral reef in which many of the original formations (corals, etc) could still be seen.

Birdwatching

After the volcano tour I did a 3½ day bird watching tour. This necessitated a wardrobe change (apart from the hat) the white and pale colours of the desert were discarded for the dull darker colours for bird watching.

The trousers were pretty much destined for the clothing bin and by the end I was seriously crossing my fingers that both pairs would actually survive and not embarrassingly disintegrate at the most inopportune moment.

At least the strategy meant that I had enough room in my suitcase for 4½ kilograms of Ethiopian coffee to take home.



Meeting the locals at Abita Shala National Park