

How is it going? A story about getting bogged

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by Michael Lohmar, Germany

Having just arrived back from a trip to the Red Center, I am able to look back to a variety of exciting times we had there.

Visiting places like Alice Springs, Glen Helen, the famous Kings Canyon and finally, Ayers Rock and The Olgas were both exhilarating and breathtaking.

In the end, our time there was short, but very special.

It is one thing to know such places out of magazines, and from pictures and websites.

However, really being there yourself, standing in front of Ayers Rock and taking a deep breath of eternity, gives you idea about the things such places might have seen already from the past.

There were also a few smaller things worth reporting. Such as almost stepping on the tail of a nearly one-meter-long lizard

Not noticing him before he moved, I am not sure who was more scared.....him or me.

Finally, there was the day when I managed to get stuck with my 4WD in pretty much the only sandhole around. It was in the middle of nowhere and a damned hot day! I had not known to lock the front hubs, or engage low range. Whether this was me being stupid, or the rental agency not explaining, I will leave for you to decide.

After having seen all the educational movies like Hatari! and Indiana Jones, I was quite confident and started a bit of digging. I also tried to put some more substantial material under the wheels. An hour later, after no success, and a lot of sweat, I gave up. A nearby tree gave me the chance to sit and contemplate my options.

I was grumpy with myself, and so decided to wait another two hours until the worst heat of the day had passed. Then, ignoring the first rule of the bush, I decided to leave my car and walk for help. My goal was the ranger station I had passed earlier in the day. Carry enough water gave me the confidence to be able to walk 15 or 20 km before dark.

Leaving a short note behind the windscreen, I started walking in a better mood.

In fact, discovering that carrying seven to eight liters of water can become somewhat dragging didn't take long though.

I almost couldn't believe the sound of a motor approaching from behind. And a minute later seeing a friendly smiling ranger looking out of his 4wd asking me, "How's it going? You enjoy walking in the bush?"

"For sure I do!!" was my answer and we both smiled about it very much. Nevertheless I'm sure he easily was able to see how happy I felt about getting help.

"Jump in," he said. "I will pull your bogged car out of the sand!".... And that was what we finally did, then were able to enjoy the rest of the day without anymore worries.

Now after a short glance back in civilization and another extensive two days 4wd training on Fraser Island, we will have a look how it will go with a chartered sailing boat cruising the Whitsunday Islands and perhaps feeding the fish there with our breakfast ... gulp!

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