

Updated December 18, 2024 (Wednesday)

Four days at sea

Not too much to say about four days at sea. We managed to stop in northern Mozambique to refuel, but did not dock. The refueling ships came out to us. While there, we saw one smaller cruise ship pull in near ours.



Back on the ship, there was a talk series put on by someone calling herself the “South African Lady”, who explained many things about life in South Africa over the years. Apartheid was very interesting. I had thought it was only separation of whites and blacks, but it was much more. Each ethnicity had their own assigned business. For example, Indians were allowed to own small retail businesses and were allowed to sell bread, but sales of other foods were allocated elsewhere. The Indian stores were forbidden from selling edible products other than bread.

Another example is you had to be black to work in a mine. Others were not allowed even if they wanted to. And much more, but these are examples.

The Indian population was ingenious. They baked a curry dish inside loaves of bread. The Indian population knew what they were buying, but it looked legitimate.

Another interesting fact for today is based on the 40% unemployment in South Africa and the high crime rate. If you make a deposit to your bank account and that deposit is in cash, the bank imposes a 6% fee. Turns out the security involved in transporting and handling money is expensive. The charge reflects this added cost.

Nosy Be, Madagascar

We finally made it to a real port. It looked quite beautiful from the ship.



This is one of the few ports we had not booked a land excursion, so we just took the tender to shore and a shuttle bus to town. The bus went for a mile along

streets filled with tourist shops with locals selling what they had, streets filled with people, cars, and tuk-tuks (3 wheeled taxis). A real concentration of life. We rode along this main road for a mile and then the bus stopped and said we were at our destination. Where we stopped looked exactly like where we started, except it was farther from the water. The entire area looked the same. One woman on the shuttle was a little upset and asked where the downtown was. I thought an area with shops and one looking like the entire population of this part of the country was present, that this would qualify for downtown.

A little walking around in the 90-degree temperature, a realization that the bathrooms were only accessible using coins in a currency we did not have, and we were soon back on the shuttle, the tender, and the ship (and air conditioning). We do have another stop elsewhere in Madagascar where we booked a tour.

What did we learn in the short outing? First, fruit on the island is harvested for use in making the Naked Juice brand we see in the U.S. and elsewhere. Second, a plant is harvested to make the scent used in Chanel Number 5. And third, the people may not have a lot of money but all the ones we met seemed very happy. Maybe because we were there to buy things, but maybe not. Even the guide on the shuttle was full of laughter.

Summary to date:

- First port canceled due to rough seas
- Second port tour was cancelled
- Third port cancelled due to political unrest
- We got to stop at Madagascar and were off-ship for an hour
- The subsequent port is cancelled due to cyclone damage, but we are stopping in Zanzibar instead
- The ship has good wine and tolerable whisky