
My Most Precious Festival Experience

I am not exactly the festival-type. I have friends who will be unreachable on weekends simply because they are at a festival in a remote location. They come back on Monday morning, suit up and go straight to work and start counting down until the next weekend's festival. It's such a mission to me on the other hand. However, this makes the few festivals I attended much more memorable for me.

Last year's October was a very festive month and I was getting a lot of invites from people I'd recently met. My only concern was that festivals like Rocking the Daisies were expensive. This one local festival- called Elandsbaai Local Feral Festival- was for free. So I checked in with a few people from the Couchsurfing group and decided to join them. These people who-at the time- were just acquaintances for me became some of my close friends and this festival was where the seeds were planted. Elands Bay is a very small town on the West Coast region of South Africa, about 220 km to the north of Cape Town. It was renowned as a surfing location as well as being home to caves with rock paintings in it.

This the "festival area". As you can see everything is very self-budgeted and amateurly made, but it's also worth appreciation because of how the community tries really hard to keep it alive. This the campsite, so we basically camped. It was 60 Rands per tent per night which some of the locals were walking around during the day to collect. This is the beach. It was so windy that the wind was lifting the sand particles and sending them onto us with full speed and it hurt! The waves were much higher and frequent compared to Muizenberg, but a lot of people still surfed during the day because it was really warm. For me, the cold was unbearable.

Instead of surfing, I spent my mornings exploring the coral reef. The sea life here is truly mesmerising. Anemones, starfish and much more. . . I don't know what this is but looks like the skeleton of a fish of some kind? The photo below was a saddening occurrence of a very exhausted seal that just washed ashore. It was trembling and barely moving, possibly very ill. A lot of people tried to take care of and feed the seal, but nothing really helped as we discovered the body on the same spot the next morning, partially buried under the sand. It was probably lost between strong currents and washed ashore for a dying breath.

The days were quite chill as opposed to what you may think. This wasn't a commercial festival where many bands lined up one after the other. Instead, there were scattered acoustic jam sessions and drum sessions during the day and some amateur bands at night. The improvised music activities were quite friendly. We even grabbed and gave some of the instruments a try at some points. The bands at night were mainly Afrikaans & English indie. It was also a dog-

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friendly and family-friendly area. One person from the group brought his dog as another brought her child, enriching the loads of fun times.

On Sunday afternoon we paid a visit to the cave known for its rock paintings. These paintings belonged to the San people who were among the original inhabitants of Southern Africa. The rock paintings depicted the illusions that they saw during Shamanic trance experiences. It was generally the medicine men who performed these experiments because they took special interest in therapeutic herbs and wanted to try the effects on themselves. Physical contact is not allowed as it makes the paintings come off over time.

It was the first time I shared valuable conversation with some of these people. That's why this local festival that probably even Capetownians don't know about will always have a special place in my heart. Beside my friends, I also met so many people from the other tents as it's very likely to happen at camping-festivals.

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