

HOT SPRINGS

Although a meagre fourteen days have passed since setting foot on Ethiopian soil, Time feels stretched, folded and ironed threadbare at the same time. Excellent mood to go at it a gear lower and enjoy the view.

Our colleagues urged us to throw off the burden of work and ease our back aches at the hot springs a meagre one hour drive from home. After we grouped together with two local nurses, who fulfilled, somewhat, the role of chaperones, and two Norwegian students, here in Hawassa to learn the sacred art of teaching whilst mastering the skills to perfectly bronze one's corpus, we were off to the bus station. On sight we were, naturally, instantaneously sighted for dollar and euro signs obviously dripped from our selves, and thus proceeded a ritual of fishing, where, curiously, I felt more like a fish than a fisherman. Eventually we were herded into an inconspicuous minivan and further negotiation proceeded inside whilst windows were opened on all sides in order to let the competitor drivers continue their plea and bargain. In the end, after bringing the price down to 400 Bihr, to raise it again to 500 Bihr, we were finally ready to roll out and move on... to retain stationary pose a few hundred metres along the road so the driver had ample time to pick up his girlfriend – for we were off to the grand and famous hot springs on a Sunday, a day for leisure and pleasure, paid for by the Whites.

Finally, err, which is a contradiction interminis in sub-Saharan Africa, finally, we were on our way, traversing a road under construction. Fifty five minutes later we arrived at our greatly anticipated location, dropped it like it's hot and did some advanced relaxing amongst a sea of indigenous life forms.

After this ordeal, we hiked up the mountain to inspect the multiple sources of water rising up through fissures in the earth's crest. Some of these sources spawned water at one hundred degrees centigrade adding a mystical touch to their direct surroundings, an excellent opportunity to wash our clothes,... which we did not have with us.

Once returned to our minivan, a lively discussion with our local guides ensued, followed with brisk action from their supervisor, and settled for a good price eventually. The road home proved uneventful. So tiresome relaxation can be...

