



Old ships run aground north of Layoune



Reflecting on the day's sights and driving with the group

area that seemed to have been planned for a tourist boom that never happened. The site had ample facilities for camping, cars and a small collection of rooms and apartments – which, while comfortably furnished, were a little rough around the edges.

DAY 8: We had a free morning to explore Boujdour before setting out on the return trip north. The city was originally a fishing village located around a lighthouse, which is listed as the touristic highlight in our guidebook but it doesn't point out the soldiers guarding it who dislike you trying to photograph it. It's now a major fishing port and very industrial although there is a centre that you can walk around which is crammed with a confusion of small shops that open directly onto the street and people selling wares on blankets on the pavement.

Back at the campsite we packed up the Defender and headed out of the city following the coast road north. Unnervingly large chunks of cliff were missing due to coastal erosion from the waves, and so to future-proof the route a new parallel road was already under construction a little further inland.

North of Laayoune, Western Sahara's largest city, we stopped to take photos of ships that had run aground in the shallow coastal waters. They were impressive boats but seemed to be more like touristic icons rather than true maritime disasters.

By the time the sun was ready to set we had passed back into Morocco, still heading north on the N1 and at the same latitude as the Canary Islands. All the official campsites we had called were closed so it was time to wild camp again. Eventually we found a place a way off the road but suitably secluded. We had driven almost 360 km today.

DAY 9: A nearly 400 km trip north on the N1 passing through the market cities of Tantan and Guelmim to end our day at a proper campsite in Sidi Ifni. A day not without its highlights though... 50 km after Tantan the road headed inland and we took a track heading east back to the coast. After 25 km and a few missed turns we were down on the beach next to the waves of the receding Atlantic. In a surreal moment a lady cycled towards us who had been camping nearby. Russ asked her if the beach was really as passable as his guidebook suggested. This was, of course, still a recce so we were very much in unknown territory. She thought it was okay, as two non off-road vehicles had come past earlier.

Full of confidence we set off in convoy through the estuary water splash and on to the beach. Follow the existing tracks was our leader's advice. We were car four in the convoy and in third gear, high ratio, diff lock on and my foot solidly planted all the way down we seemed to be rapidly catching up with the Toyota that was in front of us. In the end we cruised past the other cars that were struggling in the sand and were quickly out on our own running about 100 metres from the water's edge while still following the most recent tracks that someone had left. Close attention was required to keep avoiding the shocking amount of waste that had washed ashore on this deserted stretch of coast. After 28 km of driving we found a road that provided an exit off the beach and parked up on a solid area of sand to wait for everyone else.

Eventually everyone turned up with stories of getting stuck and issues with overheating, all of which we had gladly missed out on. All safely together again we headed towards

