

FLASHBACK FRIDAY: ASTRIDE WHERE AFRICA IS SPLITTING APART

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It looks like a crack in a road, but this is in the Afar Triangle of Djibouti, where a triple junction of tectonic plates is tearing Africa in pieces. Plates spreading apart is called a Rift. I'm standing over where three gigantic rifts – the Red Sea that has split Arabia and northern Africa in two, the Gulf of Aden that will split off Somalia from the rest of Africa, and the Great Rift Valley of East Africa currently ripping Africa itself asunder – originate. Here the once intact Africa Plate began to tear in three directions.

Ironically, here is where humanity did the same. Genetic scientists have determined that some 60,000 years ago a small band of Africans (less than 200) rafted from what is now Djibouti to what is now Yemen in Arabia – and that incredibly, every human on earth today except for those who stayed, is descended from them. That means, e.g., all Europeans, Chinese and Asians, Australian Aborigines, North and South Native Americans, descended from those 200 people long ago.

Two amazing facts from this tiny country. There's a third – it's the best place in the world to swim with whale sharks, an unforgettable experience. All in Djibouti! (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #238 photo ©Jack Wheeler*)

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