

TRAVELING IN REMOTE ENVIRONMENTS

Bikes are amazing tools for travel. They can carry us for miles each day and into some of the most remote places in the world. So it's important that we prepare sufficiently to minimize the chances of anything going awry and are able to fix the problem ourselves if at all possible—or at least get to safety. And when we do reach civilization, travel is most fulfilling when we connect with the people we meet.



NAVIGATION

Most of the routes featured are not sign-posted. Even if they are, at least one form of navigation is advised. A GPS device is the most straightforward to use when on the bike. It allows you to enjoy the actual riding while only keeping a cursory eye on your direction. Remember you will almost certainly need a method of charging your device over multiple days of travel. Also, consider what you will do if the device breaks. Carry a backup, whether that is maps on your phone (make sure they are downloaded to the phone and don't require reception to use) or old-fashioned paper.

SUPPLIES

The further into the wilds your route goes, the more self-sufficient you'll need to be.

- Bring enough food to more than last until you reach the next town.
- Dehydrated food packs the smallest and lightest for the number of calories, but you'll need a stove to heat water to make it edible.
- Bring a water filter or other purification system.
- Think about your shelter.

STAYING IN TOUCH

You may be out of contact with the outside world for days at a time. Enjoy and embrace the solitude, but also take some



additional steps. Let loved ones know that you won't be reachable for a while. Arrange a day and time by which you'll make contact, and agree on a plan for what should be done if you don't. Pass on the contact details for local emergency services. Consider carrying a tracking device like a Garmin inReach or SPOT tracker. These are two-way GPS devices that will relay your location to the outside world. Many allow a preprogrammed message to be sent to a designated phone

number and have an SOS button that will alert authorities in emergencies.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

When traveling abroad, learning even the most simple of local phrases can hugely enhance your experience. Be respectful of the communities you are passing through; this is their home. Understand and accept that their culture may be different from the one you are used to. Take the time to say hello to the people you meet, and never underestimate the power of a loaded bicycle to stimulate curiosity and conversation.

If you are riding through areas that have significantly less wealth than your own situation, be mindful of that. Haggling may be a normal part of their culture, but will a few cents really matter to you?

Welcome others' generosity and thank them for it but never expect or rely on it. Think about small gifts that you may be able to offer in return. Can you carry some stickers or something similar to give to children that you meet?

