

BRUTAL BEAUTY: EXPERIENCING ISLANDS FROM THE SADDLE

ROUTE
ISLAND HOPPING

LOCATION
FAROE ISLANDS

THE FAROES ARE brutally honest, egalitarian even. Treating all visitors alike, the howling winds and piercing rain make no exceptions. The roads hug the most jagged and fractured coastlines before climbing up and over mountains with no summit, just clouds sitting on sweeping flanks.

It took only minutes for the threesome of Chris McClean, Fiola Foley, and Paul Errington to learn this lesson. They were soaked to the bone and frozen after a few kilometers of riding from the archipelago's airport on the island of Vágar. As they pedaled north to the spectacular waterfall at Múlafossur, rain soaked the sleeves of their waterproof jackets and road spray saturated their shorts in seconds. A torrent of water—in full flush given the climatic conditions—was free falling down to the sea far below. It was there that they learned their second lesson. The low, claustrophobic mist withdrew almost instantaneously. Just when you think the Faroes have you beat, they will give you something back and pull you in closer. The dark clouds overhead split for a second, allowing rays and shafts of light to pierce through. Patches of white gold danced on

the turbulent sea's surface. The high ridges that form the natural bowl that drains into Múlafossur revealed themselves, before the wind blew once again and drew closed the curtains of fog.

A trip to the Faroes can quite easily fall into a highlights reel. It is all too tempting to see it as a geological theme park full of breathtaking cliffs and sea stacks. Each corner in the road reveals another awesome (in the truest sense of the word) landscape. Traveling by bike gave the group a different perspective. They were able to take in the places in-between, locations and experiences that you will not find in a guidebook or shared on Instagram, but are no less moving than the must-see spots. While they rode, they felt like they were part of the islands and truly interacting with them, rather than just observing.

On the island of Eysturoy, the trio slogged up the steep switchback road on the side of Slættaratindur—the highest peak on the Faroes at 880 meters (2,887 feet)—and around to Eiði. There they visited Risin og Kellingin, or the “Giant and the Witch.” The two sea stacks stand just off the coast, somehow both fragile and monolithic. Legend says the giants of →

