

2 Months to go

It doesn't seem like long ago that we were sat in Yo Sushi! watching coloured dishes going round and round. We pondered whether this was what Japanese restaurants were really like and the idea began to form of cycling there to find out.

Five and half months later and that spark of an idea has expanded into a full blown plan, of sorts, and we're now just 9 weeks away from saddling up and heading across the world on a tandem.

It all seems to have happened very quickly but it's amazing how once you start to think about something, and then start talking about it and then get down to working out everything that needs to be put in place a plan can gather momentum and carry you along. In fact talking about it with lots of different people has been the key to making it all happen as it makes it all seem much more real and adds a certain amount of commitment (no one wants to lose face by saying they are going to do something and then backing down).



The bike is starting to come together with most bits that move being replaced.

The question we keep getting asked is "How's the planning coming along?" and in terms of the fine details of the trip itself the answer is "We haven't done much". Most of the exact route, stopping points etc. will be worked out as we go so we just need to look at the logistics of which countries need visas and how to apply for them, which ones will be

cold/hot/wet and make sure we're in roughly the right place at roughly the right time. How we get there will sort itself out en route.

The big planning tasks that are occupying our time are to do with what we're leaving behind in the UK so arranging for the house to be let, where to store all our belongings, sorting out insurance, bank accounts, selling cars. Not as exciting as drawing on maps and buying kit but all very necessary to make the trip happen. Piles of stuff are forming around the house and being allocated as 'Keep', 'eBay', 'Freecycle' or 'charity shop'. How do we accumulate so much clutter?

Perhaps the most important job is handing over the reins of the Las Vegas Institute of Sport Audax. Not an easy thing to do having looked after it for the last 5 years but the responsibility for organising *probably the finest cycling event in the country* (not our words) should be in capable hands with a willing band of volunteers stepping forward. Writing out the 'organisers instructions' has taken a fair bit of time which has made us realise just how much we have put into the event over the years.

As well as making sure we actually go, talking about the trip has also yielded all sorts of other benefits. Lots of people have told us about friends and family along our route who can help us out which will be really useful either to gain some local info and as possible places to stay. Through a friend of my brother we've been asked if we want to write articles for Outdoor Adventure Guide magazine which in turn has meant various companies have offered to support us in return for gear reviews and mentions (thank you Ellis Brigham, Icebreaker, Paligap and especially Roll for the Soul). On the most part everyone has been very supportive and enthusiastic for us but occasionally we get asked "Why would you want to do that?". It's a hard one to respond to as if they need to ask the question then I'm not sure they'll understand the answer so we have to talk in broad terms about the trip just being a big holiday to some interesting places (which is essentially all it is) and skip over the details of months spent in a tent without a shower and having to cycle thousands of kilometres.



Enjoying the last few weeks of riding down the Severn Estuary in the morning.

For now we are making the most of the things we'll miss by spending time with friends and family, having nieces and nephews to stay, dancing at music gigs and enjoying good food and feather duvets.