Planning a Cycling Vacation

When you think of vacation, do you envision palm trees, sun, sand and waves crashing all around as you sip a cool beverage; or, do you see gorgeous vistas and bikes whizzing by as you traverse the countryside? If you answered yes to the latter, then read on. If not, call your travel agent and I'm sure they can help you find a great price on an all inclusive vacation to the Bahamas or some other exotic location.

Plan Ahead

For those who have never tried it, cycling can be a fantastic way to spend a vacation. The key to having a relaxing and enjoyable time lies in how well you plan ahead. Unlike your typical vacation, a cycling trip requires extra gear and good planning. The more you do in advance, the smoother your trip will be, and the more fun you will have. The good news is that there are lots of options and plenty of people out there who can help you plan your trip.

To a large extent, happiness on a cycling trip lies in your ability to be flexible and roll with the punches. Inevitably, things are going to go south at some point along the way. Don't freak out! Take a deep breath, then adapt and overcome. Many experienced cyclists have been on trips where people lost deraileurs, broke seat posts, lost chains, and even crashed, but they still had fabulous trips. The key was being prepared and not panicking. Instead, they dealt with the problem head on and focused on having a good time. Not only that, often they also walked away with a great story to retell to their friends when they got home!

How to Do It

When planning a cycling vacation there are plenty of options. Adventurous types do it all themselves. This is the most labor intensive but also potentially the most rewarding. For these trips you need to do all of the planning and logistics on your own. Today this is a bit easier because of the internet, but that being said, you still need to do a lot of research and work to figure out where to go, how to get there, where to stay, and what to bring. The library is another great resource. You might be surprised how many cyclists have published books that give routes and tips for the same area you want to visit. Finally, reach out to members of your local cycling club to see if others have traveled to the same location and don't be afraid to call shops and groups in the area where you will be.

Some things to consider if you do it yourself include:
- ➢ Transportation to and from the start/finish;
- ➢ Places to stay;
- ➢ Food & water;
- ➢ Support along the way;
- ➢ Getting your gear from point to point
- ➢ Figuring out routes you will take;
- ➢ Knowing where bike shops are and when they are open;
- ➢ How you will get your bike and/or other equipment there and back
- ➢ Where you can do your laundry; and lots of other details that add up fast.

Another option is a full-service trip. There are lots of companies out there that specialize in doing all the work for you. In this case you only have to worry about getting to and from the trip and they take care of the rest. In fact, some companies will even provide the bike. Just be forewarned, if you go this route, be prepared to spend quite a bit of money. Luxury comes with a price tag, but many who have ridden on these trips swear by them and will tell you that they can be worth every penny.

Cycling vacations can be a lot of fun and when you get home, it is almost guaranteed there will be plenty of stories to tell your friends and co-workers, so get going and start planning your next trip.

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