

The Road of Bones: 105 days

2020 Client Information Kit

Be one of only a handful of adventure bikers to embark on this extraordinary, sometimes life-changing, expedition into the incredible wilderness of Siberia.



"It was an epic adventure, it's hard to imagine anything will ever be as awesome and life changing again"
- Deanne & Lynne, Road of Bones 2012

Welcome to Compass Expedition's "The Road of Bones" info kit. Within these pages you will be introduced to one of the world's most scenic and historical journeys. This kit will detail everything you need to know to participate in this historic ride. Read on and dare to dream.



A little about the expedition

This evocative journey covers a quarter of the earth's surface as we ride from the bustling, vibrant city of London to one of the most remote towns on earth, Magadan, "beyond" Siberia. We take in some of the Europe's most scenic regions as we cross Germany and enter the stunning Tyrol region of Austria, via the epic Grossglockner. Crossing Hungary we enter the beautiful Romania, visiting Dracula's castle along the way, before passing through Bulgaria and entering Turkey. We spend time in Istanbul, the crossroads of Asia, wandering the mosques and fantastic bazaars before riding out along the Black Sea coast and into an area littered with remnants of the once great Ottoman Empire. No ride to Turkey is complete without a visit to the Troglodyte region of Goreme. We enter Georgia before crossing into the world's largest country, Russia, via the mighty Caucasus as we ride for Moscow. Starting out on the longest highway on earth, the Trans Siberian, we soon depart Russia and enter the storybook lands of Central Asia, the home of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane and countless Silk Road traders as we ride across the vast empty and utterly silent Kazakh Steppe on our way to the jewel in the Silk Road crown, Uzbekistan.

Blazing deserts, inland seas, mighty mountains, stunning Islamic architecture and a vastness nobody thought could still exist in today's world greet us as we ride these ancient trade routes. Wonderful Alpine valleys that tumble out of the Central Tien Shan Mountains provide us with memorable days of riding in Kyrgyzstan.

Back on the Kazakh Steppe we once again enter Russia and re-join the Trans Siberian as we ride on for the wonderful Lake Baikal, often described as the world's most beautiful lake. Mongolia will leave you

on a high as we ride this indescribably beautiful and remote land, the riding here provides us with a great introduction of what is to come. The Trans Siberian now turns to dirt as we ride east across Siberia before riding north toward the impossibly remote Yakutsk in the heart of Siberia. Our last challenge is the infamous "Road of Bones" officially, the Kolyma Highway, this incredible ride travels over one and a half thousand kilometres through the mountains to Magadan, on the Sea of Okhotsk. This is a road that has a tragic history yet is a road that will provide us with some of the most inspiring landscapes and challenging rides available, it truly is a challenge but one that is completely do-able with the right support.



Expedition Route

Week One

Departing London we cross "under" the English Channel and spend a night in the beautiful Brugge, Belgium, before reaching the legendary River Rhine at St Goar, Germany but not before spending a morning at the amazing Hohenswangau Castle. We ride the epic Grossglockner Pass before riding onto the stunning Salzburg, home to Mozart. We cross into Hungary and arrive at spectacular Budapest, scenically located on the Danube, before visiting Dracula's castle and the wonderful medieval town of Sighisoara in Romania, where we see the first week out.

Week Two

A brief visit to the UNESCO listed city of Nessebar, Bulgaria will see us reach the crossroads of Asia at Istanbul, we spend two nights visiting the remarkable Topkapi Mosque, Bazaars and other sights. Then a ride north - west visiting the wonderful Ottoman towns of Safranbolu and Amasya before visiting the amazing Troglodye dwellings at Goreme in Central Turkey. An optional hot air balloon flight is recommended to really get a great view of this amazing landscape.

Week Three

Riding north across the Turkish plateau we reach the Black Sea coast before stopping at Trabzon. Continuing on to Kars through tea plantations and gaping canyons we cross into the beautiful Georgia. Georgia provides us with some epic riding, no more so than the utterly stunning and legendary Georgian Military Highway that cuts a narrow yet winding path through the Caucasus, before crossing into Russia. We continue north onto Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad; this city was the sight of the bloodiest battle during WW2 and a visit to the moving memorial on Mamaev Hill and the 56m statue of "Mother Russia" is a must.

Week Four

Riding further north we eventually reach Moscow where we spend three nights allowing us to visit

one of the world's most recognizable sights of St Basils, located in the wonderful Red Square. Also on the agenda are the Kremlin, Lenin's Tomb and Gorky Park as part of an included city tour. Riding out of Moscow we enjoy a short ride to Suzdal a small Russian village seemingly caught in a time warp, things haven't changed a lot since the rule of the Tsars. The skyline of this small village is dotted with golden cupolas that glint in the afternoon sun; it's a wonderful place. We ride south for Kazan with its amazing Kremlin and then through rarely travelled country as we head for Samara set on the banks of the Volga, a once closed Russian city and home to the MIG jet fighters.

Week Five

We leave Russia and enter Kazakhstan and the mighty Kazakh steppe. We ride the "road of death" across the silent Kazakh steppe, so vast that you can see the curvature of the earth, it really is a remote, lonely place, and we spend a number of nights camping in the wild surrounded by silence, sunset out here is extraordinary.

Next stop is the Aral Sea, where we see fishing boats left high and dry on the sand dunes when only a few decades earlier they were floating in the same spot. (Please note we do not see the Aral Sea, that's the whole point, ITS GONE). The Aral Sea disaster, as it is known, is a testament to man's capacity to completely stuff up his environment.

Week Six

We ride through the Kyzyl-Kum Desert to our next port of call, Turkistan, where we visit Kazakhstan's greatest building the Kozha Akhmed Yasau mausoleum built by Tamerlane in the 14th century. Leaving Kazakhstan we cross into Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is home to some of the greatest Silk Road treasures and is about as far away as you could get from the usual tourist trail, yet it holds some of the most fantastic architecture on earth. We spend two nights in Tashkent before riding out for Samarqand.



No name is so evocative of the Silk Road than Samarqand. Two nights are spent in this magical city wandering the ancient alleyways and markets and watching as the sunsets over the mighty Registan, no other sight is so synonymous with the Silk Road as the Registan. Another two nights are spent at Uzbekistan's holiest city, Bukhara. Sipping tea and eating Shashlyks around the ancient Labi Hauz is like stepping back in time. Bukhara too is synonymous with the Silk Road and also has a strong history relating to the "great game" played out in the 19th century.

Week Seven

We ride onto Tamerlane's birthplace of Shakhrisabz and view the mighty Ak-Saray palace once so big it even dwarfed the Registan, all that is left now is its 40m/ 131ft high entrance, still an amazing sight. We cross the 1788m/ 5866ft pass of Takhtakaracha before riding back to Tashkent and down into the Ferghana Valley before spending a night in Fergana. We cross now into what is known as Central Asia's Shangri-la, Kyrgyzstan, home to some of Central Asia's grandest mountains. We are now in the cool of the mountains for the first time as we ride through stunning canyon lands dissected in two by a turquoise river running far below, the riding is simply stunning. We cross the immense Kazarman Pass inhabited by a handful of very friendly Ger dwelling families where we camp out amongst the mountains in this stunning landscape.

Week Eight

We ride over another pass at 3500m/ 11482ft and down to the capital, Bishkek where we can recharge our batteries and enjoy the city life for 2 nights. Leaving Bishkek we skirt the shores of the world's second largest alpine Lake of Issyk-Kol before arriving in the old Russian town of Karakol where we spend the next three nights. Karakol is the base we use for exploring the postcard picture perfect alpine valleys that tumble out of the Central Tien Shan Mountains that border China. We visit the red rock canyons at Jeti-oghuz and the stunning Altyn Arashan valley after a wild Kamaz truck journey to gain access.

Week Nine

Leaving Kyrgyzstan we once again enter Kazakhstan and camp a night in the wild before visiting the immense Charyn Canyon and riding onto Almaty. Three nights are spent in Almaty as we explore the city or maybe take a ride up the nearby Zailiysky Alatau range that looms just beyond the city limits. We once again ride across the vast empty and silent Kazakh Steppe eventually reaching the Russian border after nearly three days of riding. Crossing into Russia we rejoin the Trans Siberian highway as we head further eastward towards Krasnoyarsk.

Week Ten

More wild camping in amongst the endless Taiga before arriving at Irkutsk, seven days after leaving Almaty. Irkutsk is the stepping off point for the wondrous Lake Baikal the deepest freshwater lake in the world. We ride up the western side of the lake reaching the privately owned bay where we shall camp mid afternoon. Krestovka Bay offers some of the finest views of the towering cliffs that rise lakeside and also a rare chance to view fast disappearing Shamanic rock art. Returning to Irkutsk we enjoy our last "Big city", with its many fine restaurants and classic Russian Gingerbread houses that we will see for a few weeks

Highlights

- Brugge, Belgium
- Riding the Grossglockner
- Tyrol region, Austria
- Dracula's Castle, Romania
- Medieval village of Sighisoara, Romania
- Istanbul
- Ottoman village of Safranbolu, Turkey
- Goreme, Turkey
- Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad)
- Saint Basil and the Red Square, Moscow
- Suzdal, Russia
- The "Road of Death", Kazakhstan
- The immense Kazakh steppe
- The Aral Sea (for all the wrong reasons)
- The Silk Road cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, Uzbekistan
- The glorious Registan, Emirs Ark and other Silk Road antiquities, Uzbekistan
- The Central Tien Shan Mountains, Kyrgyzstan
- Song Kol (the lake and it's Ger dwelling families)
- The 3,820 m / 12,532 ft Chong Asskan Pass (with views of China), Kyrgyzstan
- Altyn-Arashan (stunning Alpine valley), Kyrgyzstan
- Lake Baikal, Russia
- The vast, endless Taiga as it turns the colours of autumn, Russia
- Riding the world's longest road, the Trans Siberian
- The incomparable silence and vastness of Mongolia
- Amarbayasgalant Monastery, Mongolia
- Khovsguul Nuur (beautiful Alpine lake), Mongolia
- White Lake, Mongolia
- Cinnamon rolls, Tseterleg, Mongolia
- Yakutsk, Russia
- Riding the remote, challenging "Road of Bones", Russia
- Riding into Magadan, Russia



Week Eleven

Crossing into Mongolia is like crossing into another world, it is a country without fences and mostly without roads, we simply ride across the landscape uninhibited, it truly is the last great act of freedom left in biking. First stop will be the Amarbayasgalant Monastery scenically located at the junction of three valleys. The riding becomes more difficult now as we ride across the open landscape on rough dirt tracks, you will barely notice though as we are overawed by the immensity of the countryside where we free camp for a number of nights before eventually reaching Moron, and onto the spectacular Khovsgul Nuur. We stay in a lakeside Ger camp run by the effervescent Otgoo and her team; the lake is only a few hundred kilometres from Lake Baikal, as the crow flies, but a 6-day ride since we left Baikal

Week Twelve

Khovsgul Nuur is a stunning lake surrounded by snow capped peaks and alpine forests where we spend three nights in a traditional Ger. We can ride along the western side of the lake for unbelievable views of the lake with brilliant white Gers reflecting in its calm waters or enjoy a fish lunch in a wonderful log cabin restaurant, lakeside. Dragging ourselves away from Khovsgul Nuur we take a short ride to Moron Ger camp where we spend a night for some truly spectacular Mongolian hospitality. Continuing on we take the remote back tracks to White Lake and this is where the riding becomes challenging as does the navigation. We follow a single grass track across the valley floors and begin to cross numerous creeks and high passes. We spend a night at a Ger camp on the edge of the beautiful White lake, no T.V, no mobile phones, its magnificent isolation. The pace is picked up a little as we ride for Tseterleg and enjoy what is possibly the finest meal in Central Asia at the Fairview hotel and restaurant. We visit the magnificent Erdene Zuu Khiid Monastery, the former capital of Genghis Khan, on our way to Ulaan Baatar.

Week Thirteen

We spend three nights here re-charging our batteries and visiting the sights including the wonderful Gandantegchinlen Khid (Great Palace). It comes as a surprise to be talking with fellow travellers again as we have been in some very remote, rarely traversed regions for some time. We then ride north toward the Russian border and soon rejoin the Trans Siberian. This is a weeklong ride through the vast and remote Taiga that seemingly stretches on forever. It is a beautiful time of year to visit as the immense Taiga is beginning to show its autumn colours. We arrive at Chita for a well-earned shower and a cold beer and maybe a sauna to wash off the Trans Siberian dust or mud before, once again, riding out into the vastness that makes up the Taiga. Turning off the paved Trans Siberian Highway and onto the Lena Highway, also known as "the highway of hell" we ride directly north toward Nerungheri where we can enjoy a hot shower and some excellent restaurants, including some quirky Soviet Karaoke bars, before again riding out into the endless forests of the remote reaches of Siberia. This is epic riding in a forgotten land; we truly are in a remote area of the world.

Week Fourteen

The riding becomes challenging here and is a great practice run for the "Road of Bones". We eventually reach Yakutsk, a surprising city of 240,000 people in the middle of absolutely nowhere. From here we enter the Kolyma Highway better know as the "Road of Bones". This is becoming one of the must do ride for true adventure bikers. The ride across this vast imposing landscape is nothing short of epic, it is a challenge, it is difficult and it is very remote, but as one famous Hollywood actor, cum biker, commented "I have lived more in these last few hours than I have in the last few years" or something like that! (Note: we take the Winter road as the Old Summer road is no longer passable, the winter road is still part of the tragic Road of Bones network that crisscrosses Siberia and the Kolyma region and is no less significant than the road made famous by Ewan and Charley). We ride into Magadan and get our first glimpses of the ocean since Turkey, all those months ago. Join us on this life changing ride, savour that moment when you know you have accomplished an amazing feat and discover some of the world's most remote, historical, yet stunning countries.

The Schedule

The schedule above is a guide only and we will endeavour to remain faithful to the itinerary. However, during an expedition of this magnitude, things sometimes go wrong, events that are completely beyond our control; border strikes, landslides, road closures, surly border guards, local conflict, even being forbidden to ride a motorcycle into a city (it has happened) all may have an effect on our expedition. We will endeavour to get back as per itinerary as quickly as possible. The final decision as to what course of action to take lies with the Compass Expeditions crew.

A Day in the Life

No two days are the same, nothing can be assumed but we do follow a certain routine. Each morning we arise at a reasonable hour and have a filling breakfast, where possible, before going over the days ride. You will be fully briefed the night before of our next destination, route to be taken, road condition, sights to see, and things to do. Depending on location, availability and need we will first fill the bikes before riding out toward our next destination. At a pre-determined point we shall meet for lunch. Lunch is prepared by us out of our mobile kitchen and is a hearty filling meal enough to sustain us for the afternoon's ride (on some occasions lunch will be taken at a local restaurant/truck-stop) this is an exception not the rule. Arriving at our overnight destination we perform minor safety checks of the bikes as well as any routine maintenance that may be needed before having a shower and a cold beer or wine. In keeping with our "ALL INCLUSIVE POLICY" breakfast is included on every day of the expedition. Lunch is included on ALL ride days and dinners once a week & of course all dinners while camping.

Weather

We shall be leaving England late May and will be anticipating good weather across Europe; a little rain should be expected and certainly snow will still be on the Grossglockner. Turkey will still be a little cold on the high plateau & possibly wet near the coast. At this time of year it is not uncommon for a little rain to be still around in Moscow. There is no escaping the heat of Central Asia but we shall only be experiencing the worst of it for two weeks. The mountains of Kyrgyzstan will be cool and clear and by the time we reach Siberia the Taiga shall be turning the wonderful colours of autumn. We reach the Road of Bones when the rivers are at their lowest levels and the days are starting to cool down meaning a lot less mosquitos. In summary we will experience the full gamut of weather conditions but generally on the better side of these condition, i.e. we wont be riding thought white out conditions in sub zero temps!!!

Road Conditions

The road conditions vary wildly on this expedition. The roads across Europe are smooth and quick. We do ride a couple of freeways on a small number of days to cross Europe quickly and clients should be prepared for this; however we shall ride small valleys and amazing passes in Austria which can get a lot of traffic and be narrow. Turkey offers some immense wide-open spaces with great paved roads that are in the main empty. Georgia is utter chaos and a real insight to what we shall expect in Russia. Roads are paved but some will be in terrible condition. The Georgian Military Highway is a series of incredible winding twisties with many hairpins, all paved. The Russian roads can be very badly potholed and the Russian traffic can be aggressive at times, the might has the right really is the rule of thumb here. The so-called "Road of Death" in Kazakhstan is all but paved now but can be in terrible condition with massive potholes in some small sections if there are roadworks the detours can be sandy. Mongolia has only a small number of paved roads and most are brand new, the remainder is dirt and some of it is a little difficult with shallow creek crossings with muddy entries & exits. The eastern section of the Trans Siberian is all paved but some of this pavement has al but disappeared and can be either dusty or muddy, weather depending, but definitely rough! The Lena Highway once referred to as "the highway of hell" can be muddy and IS very rough and is mostly dirt. The "Roads of Bones" is without a doubt the most challenging riding, with sections of mud (if we get rain), loose gravel, washed out bridges corrugations and long distances through the endless forests.

As with the weather riders should prepare for all road conditions and some dirt riding practice should be undertaken before the ride. An off road riding course is included, as part of the Road of Bones Expedition and is being conducted by Dakar legend Simon Pavey and the team at Off Road Skills in Wales a few days prior to the start of the expedition.



This ride is completely achievable by anyone with motorcycling experience. At no times do we include extreme moto-cross style riding, we always chose the least difficult option and the majority of riding is very easy, however we have all seen "The Long Way Round" and know what to expect, although we are arriving far later in the season when the rivers are at their lowest.

Food

As stated above all breakfasts & lunches are included on each and every ride day for the duration of the expedition. Dinner is included one night per week and while camping, approximately 28 nights. The food is much like the weather and roads, just about every conceivable cuisine can be experienced during this journey. Food in Europe is of course varied and plentiful, Turkey is renown for its great cuisine however Russia can sometimes be somewhat bland / monotonous, especially as we ride further east. Mongolia has a shortage of fresh fruit and vegetables and a general focus on sheep products, especially in the countryside. In remote Russia & Mongolia some of the best dining experiences can be had out of our cook tent.

Breakfasts

Some tour operators claim that "breakfast is included" with their accommodation, having previously travelled in the regions that this expedition is going to we know a single egg on a piece of toast will not sustain anyone for a long and sometimes arduous day on the bike. In any case where we feel the breakfast provided by the hotel is not sufficient we will supplement the breakfast with our own supplies.

Lunches

On most ride days we shall prepare fresh, out of our mobile kitchen, a hearty filling lunch. Lunch usually consists of a choice of salads and a platter of luncheon meats with a choice of fruits and non-alcoholic drinks and usually cakes or biscuits. (Everything is subject to availability). We note that other operators prefer to give clients a choice of where they eat (at clients own cost), we are all too aware of the sometimes dreadful effects of food poisoning which can be a tour stopping event. We are sometimes travelling to remote and sparsely populated regions and despite all the restaurants, truck-stops best intentions, hygiene standards are virtually non-existent. We do; however, stop in some great places every now and then for lunch, especially the roadside cafes in Uzbekistan and far eastern Russia where you cant beat a hearty Borscht for lunch. On these occasions we eat out the lunch is on us.

Dinners

We provide one dinner per week, usually from a wonderful local restaurant where you can select from the menu and one where we have eaten at before. When we are camping we provide hearty campfire meals of at least two courses, this equates to approximately 28 camp meals & 15 restaurant meals.

Accommodation

Hotels

We use hotels for a large portion of this expedition, usually 3 to 4 far in standard, however on a very few occasions we must use very basic accommodations as that is all that is available. We have chosen our hotels for the location, friendly staff and uniqueness but also for the sake of the itinerary, we may pass a large city early in the day but continue on to a smaller town with basic accommodation. If we stopped at every city that has decent accommodation the expedition would take 200 days. The accommodations are as varied as the landscapes we ride through, from Felt lined Gers in Mongolia to hostels in Kyrgyzstan and fantastic hotels in Uzbekistan.

Camping

This expedition includes approximately 28 nights camping, some of these locations are stunning and it would be criminal to hide away in a hotel, some places there simply isn't any other choice. It is the nature of this expedition that we are travelling to some very remote locations with zero facilities; our only option is to camp. There will be sections of up to five days where we camp with no showers however this is at the later stages of the expeditions as we travel to further and further away from civilization. We always attempt to camp near a river or lake to allow riders to wash off the days dirt etc. Some of the most memorable nights of the entire expedition are whilst camping out in deep Siberia under a curtain of stars watching the Aurora Borealis or camping on the Kazakh steppe where the silence and remoteness is overwhelming. On some camping occasions it may seem that we ride through towns with basic "hotels" only to "camp" a few hours further on, we do this to ensure we cover as much distance as possible over a given timeframe as opposed to stopping at

lunchtime each day as this would make the expedition so much longer. Our camp is by no mean roughing it as we provide a 3-person tent for each client; each tent has a bedroll and pillow. We have a huge cook tent and 4-burner stoves to enable us to produce some wonderful meals

ARE YOU UP TO IT?

The Rider

The rider should have at least two years experience on riding large motorbikes; this however is not a "set in concrete" requirement as we realize that riding skills differ from person to person. The rider does, however, need to be confident with a larger bike and confident in his/her abilities to ride safely in foreign countries that have a slightly different view of road rules than what we may be accustomed to. If carrying a co-rider, this expedition is not the time to find out you are not comfortable with it. Riders do not need to be enduro experts but more importantly it is the riders attitude to safe riding that makes or breaks their tour. On previous rides we have the worlds first grandmother to ride this route with us, a rider who had NEVER ridden a bike before and riders in their mid 70's all successfully completing the Road of Bones.

The Co-rider

The Co-Rider needs to have experience in riding as a pillion and have confidence that they can handle some long days on the saddle on some very ordinary roads in sometimes-inclement weather. On the more difficult sections co-riders have the option of riding in the support vehicle (space permitting).

In Closing

It is in the nature of this expedition that you will at times be tested. There will be times that people will feel exhausted, dirty or simply frustrated. A flexible attitude is paramount as is a good sense of humour and above all a tolerance for things that can and do go wrong, as well as an acceptance of other peoples and cultures that are completely removed from ours. A willingness to work as a team for the general day-to-day running of the expedition and to "muck in" is essential. The more you put in the greater the sense of achievement at the end. If you are intolerant to riding dirt roads, sometimes lack of choice for lunch supplies/fruit and vegies and the inevitable breakdowns then for your own sake please consider if this journey is for you. It is paramount that all clients are aware that this expedition is 105 days in length and as such you will be away from family and friends for this time.

The points below are critical and you need to posses these qualities for your own enjoyment

ARE YOU?

- ✓ Good humoured
- ✓ Tolerant
- ✓ Accepting of things that may be different
- ✓ Willing to help out for the success of the expedition
- ✓ Have the drive to keep going when everyone else has long since given up

GREAT THEN READ ON!!

CHOOSING YOUR BIKE

Choosing to ride a Compass bike

If you choose to ride one of Compass Expeditions bikes you will be riding the new BMW F 700 / 800 GS or R 1200 GS. These bikes come from a stable of the worlds finest touring bikes and as such we have chosen them for our epic "Road of Bones" ride. Unencumbered by luggage these powerful bikes are ideally suited for the demands of riding this challenging expedition across a quarter of the world.

Additional Accessories for Compass Expeditions bikes

- » Crash bars
- » Aluminium Bash Plate
- » Top box
- » Radiator protector
- » Bark busters (hand guards)

Bringing your own bike

There is no doubt that just about any bike could feasibly attempt such a journey, but for the sake of the expeditions success we must insist you leave your step through 50cc at home. Bikers will insist that they and they alone have the most suitable bike for doing the "Road of Bones", they could be right, but we have compiled a "by no means complete" list of the bikes we have owned over the years and that would be more than capable of completing this expedition. Please be aware below is not a definitive list

Suitable bikes

- » BMW R 1200 GS or any BMW in the GS Range
- » HONDA TRANSALP
- » YAMAHA TENERE
- » KAWASAKI KLR 650
- » KTM 990 ADV or 690
- » TRIUMPH TIGER / Explorer

Modifications that need to be considered

- ✓ At least 650cc
- ✓ Range of at least 400 km/ 250 miles
- ✓ Have protective equipment such as crash bars, aluminum bash plate, headlight protector, Barkbusters (hand protectors)
- ✓ Top box for personal day use items
- ✓ Bike alarm and/or disc lock
- ✓ Heated hand grips
- ✓ Garmin GPS unit

All bikes must be in a roadworthy condition, be fully serviced with new chain sprockets (were necessary) & new tyres immediately prior to shipping. We

reserve the right to refuse participation for any bike we believe simply won't make it; the timely success of the expedition is our priority. Contact us on info@compassexpeditions.com for any questions concerning your bike.

Bike shipping

We include all shipping to and from your homeport*, no matter where you are from, we don't **cost** penalize you if you aren't from our country as some other operators do!! We also include the following shipments

- ✓ English Channel crossing
- ✓ Magadan to Vladivostok

*More info on the term "homeport". Below are the ports that we return all bikes to:

- ✓ Australia; Port of Melbourne
- ✓ USA: Port of Los Angeles
- ✓ UK: Felixstowe
- ✓ Other destinations: Please contact us

Please note that at no time do we collect or deliver to/at your house, bikes must be delivered and collected from the above ports.

Important note: If you are unable to finish the expedition on your bike due to any reason and the bike has to be shipped out BEFORE the group reaches Magadan then this extra shipping cost will be your responsibility. Compass Expeditions provides all shipping FROM MAGADAN to your homeport*, if you decide in Moscow that you don't wish to ride any further or you crash out and you want your bike home ASAP or for any reason whatsoever the cost of either getting your bike home or to Vladivostok from your "end of tour" point is your responsibility.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do I do if my bike breaks down?

If your bike breaks down we will endeavour to fix it ourselves or get it to a point where it can be fixed, all repair costs are borne by the client if not riding a Compass owned bike. We have never been "stuck" unable to proceed and the locals are masters at getting broken down bikes going again.

Do I need to bring my own spares?

Yes you do need to bring a basic list of spares with you suitable for your bike. These spares need to include, front fork seals, head stem bearings if on a BMW F700 GS, wheel bearings, front and rear sprocket and drive chain, clutch and brake lever, mirror joining brackets, brake pads, this is for ALL bikes (old & new). If riding an older bike you will be familiar with what you need, however please contact us at mick@compassexpeditions.com for more info. Our support vehicle will carry all your spares. A more complete list of spares will be provided in due course.

What about tyres/tires?

Tyres are very difficult to get once out of Europe with the last chance to source any being Moscow. At the same time it is impossible for us to carry up to 60 tyres on this expedition thus have an agent in Almaty who can provide new Tyres to complete the expedition. We are able to purchase Heindenau K60 Scouts in Almaty however we order these 6 months in advance. We ask clients to be prepared to use 2 rears & 1 front tyre during this expedition. Your tyres should be new at the beginning of the expedition. Tyres are an endless subject of conversation however we are tied to what we can get and longevity of tyre life is absolutely paramount on this expedition, thus Heindenau K60 Scouts have been our choice for all past expeditions. Contact us with any questions you may have regarding your tyres.

What about servicing?

The Road of Bones is under 30,000 km, so if serviced just before you depart you will only need 2 services during the expedition. We have 3 major service points for this expedition at authorized BMW dealerships. These service points will be in Moscow, Russia; Almaty, Kazakhstan & Ulan Bataar, Mongolia. If a

service is needed earlier or later we shall arrange that on your behalf. Service costs for your own bike are your own expense. It is important to note that these dealerships are for BMW cars and have to "call in" a BMW bike mechanic when we arrive, these dealerships have nothing in the way of spares, not even oil, we shall buy locally. Any issues with your bike MUST be notified to your crew ASAP so that we can arrange repairs, sourcing of parts etc as far in advance as possible.

Will it get stolen?

Hopefully not, it's a long way to walk. Seriously though, theft is an important consideration. We park our bikes at secure bike/car parks that are under 24-hour guard or inside the hotel property whenever in a city. At a small number of hotels bikes are parked overnight in front of the hotel. A disc lock and/or immobilizer is required. Theft is not something to stress ourselves about; with a little care your beloved bike will be safe. It is important to remove everything from the bikes each night, even when camping. A small bike cover is also a good idea.

How do I get to start/finish point?

Easy, as mentioned above we include all shipping to and from your homeport, unlike other operators who only include shipping IF you happen to live in the same country as them? As far as we are aware we are the ONLY Company to include shipping to and from your homeport no matter where you are from. Caveat: there are a few rules here, if you are from Antarctica or some equally remote impossible to ship from port or no port at all country the cost burden will be on you to get your bike to a port that has "regular" shipments from. We include your flight from Magadan to Vladivostok. From Vladivostok to your country there are a number of options. Some airlines operating from Vladivostok with international connections are below:

- » Asiana Airlines: www.flyasiana.com/english/
- » Vladivostok Air: www.vladivostokavia.ru/en/passengers/
- » Siberia Airlines S7: www.s7.ru/en
- » Korean airlines: www.koreanair.com

Can I get my bike insured?

Good luck, we have never met an insurance company that will go near you once you mention that you are taking your bike overseas, but at least give your insurer a call, miracles may occur. You will need to purchase compulsory insurance from border insurance issuers however this is 3rd party liability only. You will also need to pre purchase Green Card insurance that covers you for the ride across to the Turkish border, again 3rd party only.

Do I need a Carnet de Passage en Douane if bringing my own bike?

No carnets are not required for any of the countries this expeditions travels through.

What about visa's?

In most of the Central Asian countries and Russia you will need a visa along with a letter of introduction or L.O.I. we will obtain the L.O.I for you at our cost however the client is responsible for obtaining his/her own visa's (we shall coordinate this for you). A visa agency is adept at getting visa's especially those that are a little tricky to obtain. We will need to co-ordinate, with you, the L.O.I and visa process. It all sounds complicated but we have done it all before with no problems.

What about vaccinations?

We highly recommend that you speak with your doctor and/or check out the World Health Organization website at www.who.int/country and have a look at their excellent International Travel and Health book, available online. In Australia visit the Australian Medical Centre website at www.traveldoctor.com.au or phone 1300 65 88 44. For our U.S clients visit www.cdc.gov/travel/ and for our U.K clients go to www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/ for travel health recommendations in general go to www.mdtravelhealth.com. We are not allowed to, by law, hand out health advice as we are not medical practitioners, so it is paramount to visit your travel health professional well before departure. If you have any general questions regarding staff vaccination choices then please contact us.

WHATS INCLUDED WHEN RIDING A COMPASS EXPEDITIONS BIKE?

Equipment

- ✓ BMW F 700 / 800 GS or BMW R 1200 GS
- ✓ All mechanical spares, servicing, repairs and tyres/tires
- ✓ Top box for personal day use items

Expedition support

- ✓ Services of ride leader & support vehicle driver, with mechanic and/or medic experience
- ✓ Full GPS Track logs
- ✓ Full pre-expedition rider training at an accredited rider program
- ✓ Support vehicle to carry all luggage, (two Compass Supplied bags per person), spares etc.9
- ✓ Mobile kitchen for lunches & campfire dinners
- ✓ Satellite phone (charge per minute)

Daily on road costs

- ✓ Airport transfers
- ✓ All accommodation of a generally 3 to 4 star standard
- ✓ All camping equipment excepting personal sleeping bag
- ✓ One bonus night accommodation
- ✓ All ride day lunches & mentioned dinners (1 per week & all camp dinners)
- ✓ All breakfasts on every day of expedition
- ✓ All tolls, ferries and security park costs
- ✓ Motorcycle third party insurance
- ✓ Flight Magadan to Vladivostok

Excursions and entrances*

- ✓ Entrances to all national parks as mentioned on itinerary
- ✓ All entrances to historical sights as mentioned on itinerary
- ✓ All museum entrances as mentioned on itinerary
- ✓ Off bike activities, such as Altyn-Arashan
- ✓ City guide, (this is for city guide only, if extra guiding is asked for by client, such as take me to a good bar or a BMW dealership, this is at clients costs)

* Please refer to the end of this document for a full list of included excursions

Other stuff

- ✓ A medical kit on support vehicle
- ✓ Comprehensive pre-departure booklet
- ✓ Daily briefings on route and destination

WHATS NOT INCLUDED WHEN RIDING A COMPASS BIKE?

- × Visa's
- × Fuel
- × Lunches on non-riding days
- × Sleeping bags
- × Traffic fines
- × Repair and/or recovery costs to Compass Expeditions bike for loss or damage caused by negligence or failing to heed ride leaders directive
- × Medical costs, it is a pre-requisite that all clients have comprehensive medical insurance that covers for riding a motorcycle over 650cc in foreign countries.
- × Activities not mentioned on the itinerary
- × International flights

WHATS INCLUDED WHEN RIDING YOUR OWN BIKE?

Expedition support

- ✓ Services of ride leader & support vehicle driver, with mechanic and/or medic experience
- ✓ Full GPS Track logs
- ✓ Full pre-expedition rider training at an accredited rider program
- ✓ Support vehicle to carry all luggage, (two Compass Supplied bags per person), spares etc
- ✓ Mobile kitchen for lunches & campfire dinners
- ✓ Satellite phone (charge per minute)
- ✓ Mechanical support if needed

Daily on road costs

- ✓ Airport transfers
- ✓ All accommodation of a generally 3 to 4 star standard
- ✓ All camping equipment excepting personal sleeping bag

- ✓ One bonus night accommodation
- ✓ All ride day lunches & mentioned dinners (1 per week & all camp dinners)
- ✓ All breakfasts on every day of expedition
- ✓ Flight Magadan to Vladivostok

Excursions and entrances

- ✓ Entrances to all national parks as mentioned on itinerary
- ✓ All entrances to historical sights as mentioned on itinerary
- ✓ All museum entrances as mentioned on itinerary
- ✓ Off bike activities, such as Altyn-Arashan
- ✓ City guide, (this is for city guide only, if extra guiding is asked for by client, such as take me to a good bar or a BMW dealership, this is at clients costs)

* Please refer to the end of this document for a full list of included excursions

Shipping

- ✓ As mentioned shipping to the UK start point and home again is included from your homeport

Other stuff

- ✓ A medical kit on support vehicle
- ✓ Comprehensive pre-departure booklet
- ✓ Daily briefings on route and destination

WHATS NOT INCLUDED WHEN RIDING YOUR BIKE?

- × Visa's
- × Fuel
- × Third party insurance
- × Servicing of your bike, repairs and transport costs to repair point (if needed)
- × Lunches on non-riding days
- × Sleeping bags
- × Traffic fines
- × Medical costs, it is a pre-requisite that all clients have comprehensive medical insurance that covers for riding a motorcycle over 650cc in foreign countries.
- × Activities not mentioned on the itinerary
- × International flights

An important note: the word “medic” does not imply that our medic is a doctor or paramedic, but our medic will have successfully completed advanced first aid training at the very least.

The word “mechanic” does not imply that our mechanic is a fully qualified BMW technician, but our mechanic will be very experienced with motorcycles in general

WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE GETTING ON THE PLANE!

Personal documents

All documents must be the original and will be checked before departure so to ensure no nasty surprises while sitting at a far-flung border.

- ✓ Passport, must be valid for at least 6 months after completion of this expedition, passport must also have at least 15 empty pages
- ✓ Five colour passport photos
- ✓ Your original local driver's license
- ✓ For riders bringing their own bikes, the original bike registration document known as the V5 logbook in the U.K
- ✓ International drivers license I.D.P available at your motoring organization e.g.: AAA in the U.S, R.A.C in the U.K, R.A.C.V, R.A.A etc in Australia.
- ✓ Credit card, either Visa or Master Card
- ✓ ATM card
- ✓ Original travel insurance documents
- ✓ Visa's
- ✓ Please supply to us one photocopy of all documents and keep two copies for yourself
- ✓ A current vaccination certificate showing all inoculations

Things of a personal nature

- ✓ Camera, SLR and a small digital one to carry in the jacket
- ✓ Sleeping bag
- ✓ Mp3, I-pod or something similar
- ✓ Swiss army knife
- ✓ Diary

A COMPLETE LIST OF THINGS TO TAKE WILL BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR PRE-DEPARTURE BOOKLET

Recommended Riding Gear

As bikers you will undoubtedly already have your own personal riding gear. The list below is simply a guide to what you need to be comfortable for the duration of the expedition

✓ **Helmet**

A full-face helmet is essential; riding with a motocross style and goggles will be extremely uncomfortable for such a long expedition especially in dusty conditions. A silk or thermal balaclava worn under the helmet is also a lifesaver on those cold mornings.

✓ **Clothing**

Waterproof gear is absolutely essential, as are removable liners in both the pants and riding jacket. You will be riding through virtually every weather condition so a good jacket and pants that can be adapted to the riding conditions will only enhance your experience. A thermal fleece such as Paddy Palin, Himalaya or Patagonia is excellent for wearing under your jacket on colder days. A set of light coveralls is indispensable.

✓ **Boots**

Again this is a personal choice, a pair of motocross boots is of course ideal but they are cumbersome and bulky to carry half way around the world. A pair of knee high leather riding boots is a great compromise, they should be light, robust and can be polished up to go out at night.

✓ **Sunglasses**

Don't forget your sunglasses. A good pair of strong sunglasses is essential; the light is intense out in the blazing Central Asia deserts.

SIGHTS INCLUDED ON THIS EXPEDITION

- ✓ Entrances to all national parks mentioned in the itinerary
- ✓ Dracula's castle tour
- ✓ Istanbul city tour
- ✓ Museum of the defence of Stalingrad and Mother Russia statue
- ✓ Moscow city tour
- ✓ Lenin's tomb
- ✓ Kremlin tour
- ✓ Suzdal Kremlin entrance
- ✓ Turkistan Mausoleum and guide
- ✓ Samarkand city tour
- ✓ All entrances to Samarkand sights, including the Registan, Bib-Khanaym mosque, Guri Amir mausoleum, Shadir-I-Zindah
- ✓ Bukhara city tour
- ✓ Entrances to Kalon Minaret, the Ark, Ismail Samani Mausoleum
- ✓ Overnight 4x4 Kamaz truck trip to Altyn Arashan
- ✓ Amarbayasgalant Monastery, Mongolia
- ✓ Erdene Zuu Khiid Monastery and photographic permit (SLR/Digital only)
- ✓ Gandantegchinlen Khiid Monastery
- ✓ Permafrost Museum entrance in Yakutsk (a lot more interesting than it sounds)
- ✓ Mask of sorrow memorial in Magadan (very moving)



We are sure you will have a thousand more questions; we hope so. Below are our full contact details. Thanks for spending your time reading this info kit. We hope it has inspired you to challenge yourself, if not riding with us then just riding and enjoying this remarkable world that we live in.

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1300 887 327 (within Australia)

Website: www.compassexpeditions.com

Blog for 2016 expedition: <http://www.londontomagadan.com>

