

## 14 Questions with Adventure Motorcycle Legend Helge Pedersen

Written by Justin Coffey  
Thursday, 14 March 2013 03:22

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Helge Pedersen, Founder of [GlobeRiders Motorcycle Adventures](#) , author of 10 Years on 2 Wheels and renowned adventure motorcyclist, is preparing to ride his newly outfitted 2012 BMW R1200GS Adventure from Seattle to Tierra del Fuego, what will be the first GlobeRiders trip of 2013.

Ahead of his expedition, we sat down with Helge to talk about his bike, some of the accessories he installed and his forthcoming 15,000 kilometer trip to Tierra del Fuego.

### **How many miles is your next GlobeRiders trip?**

This GlobeRiders trip will be take me from Seattle to Ushuaia. The route is approximately 15,000 kilometers.

### **How many riders?**

Starting in Los Angeles there will be nine riders and eight bikes (one of them is a sidecar rig). In Colombia we will have two more riders with their own bikes that will fly into Bogota, Colombia.

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### What bikes are your clients riding?

We will have eight different models of the BMW R1200GS and GS Adventure, one BMW R1150GS, one BMW R1200 HP2E and one sidecar rig on a R1200GS.

### What are you riding?

A brand new BMW R1200GS Adventure 2012 model modified to my specs with accessories from Touratech.

### When do you leave?

I am leaving Seattle on December 26th and will meet the group in Los Angeles on December 29th.

### When will you be back?

The journey ends in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina on March 30th, 2013. After that we will ship the bikes back to Seattle, so I should be home on April 1st.

### What route are you taking?

Because I am concerned about the snow, I will stick to the coast riding down to California. From Los Angeles the group will ride along the Baja Peninsula to La Paz, where we will take a ferry to Mazatlan, mainland Mexico. On the Pacific side of Mexico we will enter Guatemala, then Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica where we cross to the Caribbean side into Panama.

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From Panama we fly our bikes and people to Colombia. No time to track through the Darin Gap this time :-). After taking on additional members, we head south from Colombia to Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile. We will be crisscrossing the Andes mountains and in and out of Argentina and Chile four times before ending up in Argentina.

### **What will be the hardest part, in your opinion?**

The hardest part of a 94 day long journey like this is to be able to let go of all concerns about business and unfinished matters at home. It always takes several days to several weeks to arrive and fully connect with the journey and live in the moment. That is the psychological challenge of any long journey. From a physical point of view, the biggest challenge is to get used to an overloaded bike and handle this in all sorts of terrain and climates. Central American countries are notorious for their corrupt and tedious border crossings taking 4-6 hours to cross, that will definitely be a test for the group. We will have plenty of alternative routes for those that are interested in more challenging back-roads, but in general the main roads we will be following are fairly good. In case of any problems we have the security of a chase vehicle following the group at all times.

### **What are you looking forward to the most?**

I am always very curious of the group dynamic. After all, we will be sharing the road for 94 days and for that reason need to get along. Team building is high on the agenda and we have already had an online forum for several months so that we can get to know each other. During the days we ride in small group of 2-3 riders and follow the same GPS tracks. This is a huge benefit and very liberating for those that like to regulate their speed.

The highlight of the journey is the ride itself and the people that we meet along the way. We will have organized events to learn about the local culture, ride some incredible roads in the high Andes Mountains, get close to huge glaciers and have the good fortune of having traveled by motorcycle the length of the Americas. It is truly a ride of a lifetime.

### **Have you ridden this route before?**

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This will be my third time to having ridden this route. The first time was when I spent three years crisscrossing Latin America, from 1985-1988, and the last time was the scouting trip I did in 2010 in preparations for this tour. We will be following my 2010 tracks on this GlobeRiders Adventure.

### **What are some of the essential items you plan to take with you?**

First and most important to any journey is to be prepared mentally for the long road ahead. It is also very helpful to be in good physical condition to be able to endure such a long journey. With that said, it is also extremely important to know your bike and its modifications. Make sure you have tested the bike well ahead of the journey. Pack it, load it down as if you were leaving and do some test rides. Better to find problems while you're still at home. Learn from past journeys, pack light and then remove 50%, you will always bring too much "stuff."

Essential stuff is a solid skid plate, good panniers, a good shock absorber and a comfortable seat. Always carry spare inner tubes even with a tubeless tire. Bring a bike cover, so that your bike can be "invisible" when parked for the night. A spare key for both your bike and panniers, hidden somewhere on the bike, is a good idea also. Spare prescription glasses and medication, as well as emergency cash and copies of all your important paperwork.

### **Will it be mostly paved or gravel roads?**

For the most part we will have paved roads of variable quality. However, we will also have alternative routes for those that like more of a challenge. There will also be the unavoidable dirt track and bad road to be prepared for. It is impossible, on such a long journey, to predict what is around the next corner, which is why we call it an Adventure motorcycle journey to the end of the world.

### **How many countries will you visit along the way?**

After leaving the USA we will visit 12 countries!

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### What's the most important accessory you installed ahead of your trip?

On the 2010 GlobeRiders Alaska to Tierra del Fuego Expedition I had a brand new 2009 BMW R1200GS Adventure model and at the end of the journey the rear shock absorber failed. Unfortunately this has happened on every new bike I have ridden since 1981. I am very disappointed in this and really look forward to testing Touratech's new Extreme shock absorber on this very demanding journey to Tierra del Fuego. Just from reading the specs on the shock I am very optimistic that I finally have found a shock absorber that can endure the ride for all adventure riders. Follow us on this ride to the end of the world and see what I learn about Touratech Suspension!

To learn more about Helge Pedersen and GlobeRiders Motorcycle Adventures, click here: <http://www.globeriders.com/>

Photo comes courtesy of [Angela R. Goodman Photography](#)

This article originally appeared on Touratech USA's website. Check out their blog for adventure motorcycling stories and product announcements. <http://www.touratech-usa.com/Adventure/Bl og/>

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