

# Across Australia in 42 days - solo cyclist's holiday with a difference



To ride across the Nullabor is like eating a cup cake with icing on top.

To drive across the Nullabor is like eating a cup cake with the icing scraped off.

Same cup cake..... just not as sweet!

These are solo cyclist John Butcher's impressions of his journey across Australia – peddling from Perth to Sydney.

His mission was simple: touch the ocean at Fremantle, cycle across Australia and touch the ocean at Botany Bay.

John, originally from Palapah, Ivanhoe arrived in Hay on the first day of winter, having clocked up 3950 kilometres and a few more to go before he touched the ocean at Botany Bay.

"I totally underestimated the joy and the pleasure a ride like this could serve up," he said.

"The country, the places, the people I came to meet and know all added to the wonderful experience of such a ride.

"The Nullabor was not at all like I was told it would be.

"I was told that it would bore the bike pants off me and that I must be in some way or another out of my mind to want to ride across the full length of Australia on my own.

"I cycled past wild camels and dingoes, nearly rode over a five-foot red belly black snake and one morning rescued a big old grey kangaroo who had managed to tangle himself up in a fence.

"Other times I had to hold my breath for what seemed forever as I passed dead to super-dead road kill; carcasses that were surrounded by billions of flies, a dozen crows and four to six very large, impressive eagles.

"I was never bored!"

Ever the explorer, John often took the scenic route between towns, adding another 600 kilometres to his trip.

John feels he was treated differently as a cyclist than he would have as a mere motorists.

"People stopped and some just stared and look at me as if I am built differently to them, it simply staggered them," he said.

"Some of the things I heard come out of people's mouths at time were quite funny; other times they were really humbling.

"And then there were times when it was straight-out strange, like the time a lady came up to me, saying she had only ever seen people like me through the front windscreen of her car.

"She said she had never been so close, or even talked, to someone like me - implying that I was not quite human."

John decided on the bike trip when he returned from a backpacking expedition through Asia with a couple of months up his sleeve before returning to work. Being from a family of elite athletes, cycling across Australia was an easy decision.

He left Hay on June 2 after catching up with his parents, David and Barbara Butcher who made the trip into town from 'Bronte' near Mossiel to spend the night with their adventurous son.

It marked his 34th cycling day and he touched the ocean at Botany Bay a week later on June 9 after stopping in the Blue Mountains enroute to visit an uncle for a couple of days.

John averaged 122 kilometres a day; battling rain, wind, heat and cold, the desert and plenty of uphill cycling.

But the most difficult section was the Hay Plains – easy cycling and on home turf but, as John puts it, "there really is nothing to see....."

His 4740 kilometre solo journey across Australia took 42 days.

He had no back-up vehicle but carried everything he needed for the month and-a-half on his bicycle.

His trusty tent lasted until he got to the Blue Mountains, only days from the finishing line and he was forced to spend his last few nights in pubs and caravan parks.

John finished his incredible experience with three simple words when he touched the ocean on Wednesday – "What a day!"

## Travel Talk



With just over two weeks before we leave on our Kokoda expedition, I have been starting to get my backpack ready and last week concentrated on snacks we will be needing on the track.

I checked out the **Duty Free** prices at Brisbane Airport, just to see how much more I would be paying by shopping locally. The price difference on a 200 gram packet of glucose type sweets was a full dollar - one third of the total cost.

And the cheapest place to buy these? Right here in Hay. All the local shops I checked out were cheaper than Brisbane with IGA's prices the lowest.

Thank you to everyone who has rung our office to make sure we had watched the Kokoda segment on 60 Minutes - I am so relieved that it is quite OK (essential rather) to have naughty food in your diet - like salt!

+++ Intercontinental Hotels will soon begin trialing the usage of **smartphones** in place of the traditional room key at some of its Holiday Inn properties. This will allow people with Blackberries, iPhones, Android mobiles and other smartphones to avoid the front desk and go directly to their rooms.

Intercontinental Hotels say people do not need to be burdened with additional items to clutter up their lives.

Trial participants will need to download a specialised App for their mobile phone, which will call up their booking confirmation details in order to synchronise with a sensor on the door lock.

+++ If you have always wanted to experience the adrenalin capital of the world - **New Zealand**, make that your priority right now.

If you book a New Zealand Kirra Coach Tour before the end of the month, you can take a second person for half price.

And the ski deals right now are unbelievable, from \$740 for seven nights, including accommodation in beautiful Queenstown, ski pass and car hire. Or you can take the whole family (two adults and two children under 15) for \$2630.

Check out Kirra Holidays' ad on page 7.

+++ The **Shanghai World Expo 2010** is off to a cracking start with some 70 million visitors expected to attend.

The expo runs until the end of October and China specialists have many great packages available, including special tours. I was in Shanghai late last year while just about the entire city was being rebuilt for the expo with slogans: Better City Better Life plastered everywhere.

The red carpet is well and truly rolled out and this would be the time to visit China.

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## TRY US LAST

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# Rodwells

## DON'T BE WOOL BLIND

### Answer no to these questions & you need help

- \* Do you know where your wool ends up?
- \* Do you know what garments your wool ends up in?
- \* Do you get feedback from the processor regarding your wool?
- \* Is your wool broker pro-active & energetic, do you think he really value adds?
- \* Do you fully understand forward contracts & futures?

## THE ANSWER CAN BE YES

In the last 10 years how many times have you moaned about putting your wool on a truck and playing no more role in your livelihood.

### MICHAEL BAKER@RODWELLS

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