

Cyclists

For some free fun you are invited to join the 8th annual Burma to Beach Bike Ride on Thursday, 18 December. This is your opportunity to ride completely across Thailand just for the fun of it. The trip begins at the Singkhon Border Checkpoint near the city of Prachuap Khirikhan and from there it is just 21 kilometers to the beach at Ao Manao. We will roll from the border at 11:am and should be cooling off with cold beer or beverage of choice at the food court on the beach. For those who wish to stay overnight at the Thai Air Force hotel on the beach the outlook at this time is pretty good for availability of rooms. If you want to stay in nice budget beach accommodations there are plenty available along the beach in Prachuap town ten minutes north of Ao Manao or at Klong Wan ten minutes south of Ao Manao.

The air force hotel at Ao Manao is primarily intended for the use of Thai military and their families but is open to all comers on a space-availability basis. This hotel consists of two main buildings on the beach. The rooms are large and well air conditioned, neat, clean and well furnished and equipped. The main building with nice pool is a couple hundred baht more expensive than its next door neighbor but rooms in both are identical. From the second building it is only a 3 minute walk to the pool. A small cooler is a good idea in case you develop a thirst after the exertion of the 21 kilometer downhill coast from the Burma border.

Bikes: If you do not have a bike but want to buy one or rent one, get with Chris Byrd. Here's some info from him:

"We have about 40 well-loved bikes for sale that are all Marin (California) brand ranging from 12,000 - 14,000 baht and from 1 to 1.5 years old. All are in excellent condition and originally sold for 18,500 baht new. Most of them are the Marin Larkspur CS3 hybrids that are perfect for all around riding and touring, but we have 2 Marin mountain bikes with front suspension (17 inch size only).

The hybrid sizes come in 15", 17", 19", 20.5", and 22".

If anyone is interested they can reach me at 081-173-4469 or Chris@tourdeasia.org

Best regards,

Christopher Byrd

Hua Hin Bike Tours/ Tour de Asia Bicycle Touring"

To get to the Singkhon Border Checkpoint you travel south toward Prachuap and when you get to the 331km marker you slow down for a right turn at 331.5km. From there you travel 8km west and then at Border Checkpoint sign turn left for an additional 5km to the border.

If you have the time while in Prachuap, there is a nice aquarium just 15 minutes of slow and easy bike riding south of Ao Manao and Klong Wan. **Check out this link for some photos:**

<https://www.google.co.th/search?q=prachuap+aquarium&biw=1366&bih=622&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=J-FfVK2PNoghugTNkYGoDQ&ved=0CF4QsAQ> or this one
<http://www.encyclopediathai.org/sunthai/center/prachuap/Aquarium.htm>

Ao Manao beach is actually the property of the Thai Air Force but everyone is welcome to enjoy it. It is one of the prettiest beaches in the part of Thailand. Additionally, it has historical significance as it was right here that the Japanese landed and attacked Thailand at the beginning of World War II. Near the airfield is a museum dedicated to the history of that event:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Prachuab_Khirikhan

Notes from the first event in 2007:

“ On a sunny September 23rd, cyclists from all around the world gathered at the Thai-Burma border checkpoint high in the hills overlooking the Thai countryside south of Bangkok and as far west as Thailand goes at this latitude. Foreigners and Thais on mountain bikes, racing bikes and touring bikes crowded the parking area where they adjusted brakes, pumped up tires, oiled chains, drank water and prepared themselves for the miles ahead. When the time came to push off, all riders were facing east

and a challenge none of them had ever attempted before. Good news for all of the cyclists was that because we were beginning the journey in the mountains, it would be very much downhill from the start.

After the initial downhill coast on tarmac past forested hillsides, the riders passed coconut groves, temples, rubber plantations, temples, jackfruit orchards, temples pineapple fields, cattle pastures, rice paddies, farmyards, temples and mile after mile of tropical growth on the right and left much farther than the eye could see. What began as a large group of bicycle riders pedaling dangerously close to one another soon stretched out like a river of sparkling chrome and bright colors until the leaders and the slower cyclists were far apart from one another. The cyclists safely crossed roads, highways, dirt paths, railroad tracks and klongs as they made their way eastward to the beach, the first rest stop and the obstacle that would prevent them from continuing onward. The first twenty hashers to complete Phase 1 of the Odyssey included Hollow Legs, Comes First, Space Cowboy, The Mingster, Tangmo. Harry, Jose, Brian, Barry, 69 Forever, Dairy Queen, Tom Jones, Dazzlin' Maslin, Domestic Violence, Boring English Cant, Nigel, Graham, Taipan, Noi, and Ballbanger. Dragging her tail, Dragon Tail coasted to the coast, with her foot on just one pedal most of the time, taking photos along the way. Ice Posse was also in the early lead as she forgot her bicycle and hitched a ride to the beer. Once all of the cyclist were present and accounted for we got really busy decimating the inventory of cold beer at a restaurant which provided most of us with some great Thai food. Slackbladder brought a sandwich since he thinks he does not like Thai cooking. He believes that it must all taste like the stuff his wife cooks for him at home. Ice Posse had some comments about the service but they are unprintable. "

Some more info to follow as we get closer to the 18th of December to include a map of the route. If you are more serious about getting some exercise when you cycle you might want to follow the map in reverse and ride your bike from the beach to the border which is not a coast but a climb of 21km. Best to leave the beach by 0900 so you have plenty of time to look around the market at the border to see what the Burmese are selling.

If you have any questions, just e-mail me.

Don Tetley

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