

WORLD TOUR SECTION MIDDLE EAST & ASIA: Istanbul – Bangkok 1IB

This section is an alternative route of the WORLD TOUR in Asia. It is the continuation of the South-East Europe section and will take you on a southerly route into China.

Istanbul is always worth a visit. It is here that we will take care of tolls, import formalities and of course our motorcycles, but we will also take the opportunity to take in the sights such as the world-famous Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque and the Cisterna Basilica. The next few days will be filled with famous names: Pergamon, Ephesos, Pamukkale, Cappadocia and many more. Centuries of human history surround us as we visit historical ruins and soak up the atmosphere of the stunning landscape, on foot, bike and even in a hot air balloon. We say goodbye to the coastal roads of the Marmara and the Aegean as we head inland into the twisties of the Turkish hinterlands.

Central and Eastern Anatolia are full of hidden gems that the “normal” traveller will never experience. Lake Van and Mount Ararat are just around the corner and, although we can't guarantee we will find Noah's Ark, we are certain you will feel the historical significance of the beautiful region. The Iranian border is just around the corner and with it another set of toll and import formalities. Once successfully completed we continue our route to the south-east, taking in a multitude of sights along the way. Isfahan with its wildly varied history marks a change of course. From her, we head north to skirt around Afghanistan and Pakistan. Making our way

through central Iran and the Kavir Desert we head for one of the few border crossings into Turkmenistan, where Ashgabat offers a welcome break with the opportunity to visit its many mosques and museums. Just a half days ride further – in the middle of the Karakum Desert – Derweze village and its “Door to Hell” is waiting for us. We will cross Uzbekistan along its southern border, visit the fortress of Xiva and pass Buchara as well as Samarqand towards the foothills of the Alai Mountains and on towards the borderlands of Tajikistan. After a rest day for some sightseeing and essential motorcycle maintenance, we head out onto one of the most interesting sections of this route: the Pamir Highway. The next few days will be more challenging than all the previous ones put together. Altitudes well over 4000 m, rough road conditions, a relative lack of infrastructure – everything here is more extreme/ adventurous than we have experienced previously. This also applies to Kirgizstan, where we will spend just one night before pressing on into China. From the border, it’s another 6 weeks on the road before we reach our final destination: Bangkok. And finally, into China! We enter one of the world’s largest countries in style as we cross one of the world’s highest borders. We will pick up our new registration papers in Kashgar before we head east into the world’s second largest sand desert. Long riding days take us ever deeper into one of the oldest cultures on Earth, while the landscape slowly changes to match our expectations of the Far East. We will visit one of the lowest elevations on Earth and climb the western reaches of the Great Wall of China. In one single, spectacular day we will cross three mountain passes, each over 4000 m high, as we make our way into China’s former capital of Xi’an, home of the famous Terracotta army. The landscape changes almost daily, becoming ever more lush and tropical. Religious, historical and natural sights abound. Never-ending curves carry us south with a new and exciting experience around every bend.