

Scott Stoll: 2007 Spirit of Adventure Recipient



Scott Stoll sharing a traditional meal, Egypt

Scott Stoll's typical day appears to be like any average camper's desire to commune with Nature, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Waking up just before sunrise, the birds are chirping and the wind is rustling the leaves of a nearby bush. Stretching out the stiffness from the night before, Scott puts some water on the fire to boil; coffee is coming soon. After a nice breakfast, he packs everything up, purifies enough water for the day and then explores the surroundings.

However, this is no average camping trip and this routine became the norm for roughly four years as Scott embarked on his journey. From 2001-2004, Scott set out on a personal quest to bicycle the circumference of the world. Since the age of four Scott has loved the sense of freedom that riding a bike gives a person. It was this sensation, and his first cross-country bicycle journey in 1997, that revealed to Scott how much he loved to go to places on his bicycle and to meet people along the way.

It is this adventurer's unequivocal spirit and enthusiasm to understand the world and its people that moved the Los Angeles Council of Hostelling International USA to announce Scott as the 2007 Spirit of Adventure Award recipient.

"I define bicycling around the world as cycling the circumference of the earth (40,077 km or 24,855.34 mi as measured around the equator), without treading the same ground twice and visiting as many cultures and phenomena as practical," explains Scott. Additionally, he planned his route around avoiding specific weather conditions (like inhospitable temperatures and seasons), war zones, and the familiar problem of over packing.



A lizard in the Outback, Australia

Scott took over a year to plan, immunize and hammer down preparations. He departed with over 200 items in tow. He estimated that the entire trip would cost him a little over \$30,000. A large sum that he saved up by bringing packed lunches to work, not going out with friends on the weekends and investing his funds.



A citadel in Belgium

The first 15 months of the trip were shared with his friend Dennis while the rest of his trip was spent independently, splashed with experiences of remarkable people and great suggestions. Scott averaged 50 miles a day but did go as far as 116 miles in six hours and as little as 21 miles in seven hours. His journey racked up a little over 100 flat tires. He also suffered most imaginable ailments, such as salmonella, giardia, dengue fever, boils, strep throat, conjunctivitis, prickly heat rash and then some.



Around the world in 1,461 days, 4 years, 25,752 miles, 50 countries and 6 continents

Visiting 50 countries on six continents over a period of 1,461 days, Scott began his trip in San Francisco where he lived. The map on the next page features the route that Scott took. He started down Baja, then through Mexico, Central and South America. He flew to Europe working his way from Spain to the United Kingdom and then through Central and Eastern Europe. Next, he visited Israel, Egypt, India, Tibet and Nepal as he made his way through Southeast Asia. He then went to Australia and New Zealand just before finishing his journey in east Africa, traveling through Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and ending in Cape Town, South Africa.



*"I lost 65 pounds of fat and gained 15 pounds of muscle.
Those pounds really melted off after eating a salmonella sandwich in Guayaquil, Ecuador
and cycling over the Andes Mountains on nothing but bananas and Coca-cola,"
Scott Stoll on his before and after photos.*

When asked what his favorite moments were Scott states he most enjoyed the unexpected invitations to share dinner with local families. As for best location Scott loved the road up to Everest Base Camp, towering high above the scenic Himalayas. His only complaint was conquering boredom and loneliness and getting up some nasty 36% grades. As for his worst day, that was probably spending the day in a Zimbabwe prison.

Not only did Scott's perspective change when he took his definitive trip around the globe, his physical appearance did as well. He transformed from the inside out, losing 65 pounds of fat and gaining over 15 pounds of muscle.



The fruit and vegetable markets, Tanzania

Scott now has resumed his former life as a graphic designer and resides in Scottsdale, AZ. He just can't stay put though, "I just can't imagine working in a cubicle under florescent lights 12 hours a day again." This September he left his bicycle at home to take a three week trip to Bali, Indonesia, inspired by "a giant case of island fever."

Asked about his future plans, Scott's trip around the world has posed a new challenge: the need to integrate and exemplify all the different points of views and cultural lessons he learned. "I really want to surround myself with a strong community of friends and family. This is one thing missing in America that I found almost everywhere else," explains Scott. He wants to display these ideas in his graphic design work and finds now that clients are drawn to him because of his accomplishment in cycling the circumference of the world. Scott will also be publishing a book, "The Wheels of Life," based around his experiences abroad.



Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest salt desert, Bolivia

For more information about Scott Stoll, visit his website at www.theargonauts.com. There are journal entries from his four year trip, photo albums separated by country, information to help other adventurers take big or small cycling trips, and details on how to purchase his book.