

MOTORCYCLING THE HIMALAYAS:



A Trip Through Time on Royal Enfields - Part 1



BY KOZ MRAZ
PHOTOS BY HIMALAYAN ROADRUNNERS

I am preparing for a motorcycle trip to the Himalayas in year 2075. Riding Royal Enfields at altitudes up to eighteen thousand feet I'll need to be physically, mentally and psychologically prepared. What will I bring? How will I travel, where will I stay and who will I stay with? Oh, and did I mention that I leave this month?!

It's April 2018 in Los Angeles California but in Tibet, it's Nepalese New Year, 2075. The Nepali Calendar is approximately 56 years and 8½ months ahead of the Gregorian calendar (AD). It is a twelve-month system but unlike the international calendar, the months vary from 28 to 32 days.

Traveling hundreds of miles from Kathmandu through difficult terrain at high altitude to Lhasa seems a monumental undertaking. Not so if you're on a motorcycle with the Himalayan Roadrunners. It's an incredible way to experience this magi-

cal wondrous land, from the seat of a Royal Enfield motorcycle. They call it "The Adventure of a Lifetime" and if you're a motorcyclist, this one will be hard to top.

Himalayan Roadrunners began as a personal spirit-quest by Rob Calendar 25 years ago. Traveling to Tibet he fell in love with the majesty and mystery of Nepal. He also fell in love with a Tibetan woman and now resides in both Nepal and Vermont. This began as a quest for adventure and that quest never ended. Rob truly knows this land and its culture. Himalayan Roadrunners are first in the world to offer such an extraordinary experience and they now provide the ultimate in motorcycle adventures in locations throughout the world.

But let's get back to this preparation business. First is choosing one of the fascinating places HR goes to. Bengal, Bhutan, Ladakh (the highest motorable pass in the world at 18,830 ft.), Thailand and Cambodia. Their website is an informative resource and HR is accessible and responsive with all the details. Down-

loading their step-by-step PDF is a good first start in wrapping your head around such an adventure. First step is picking the specific motorcycle trek that fulfills your riding fantasies. The Himalayas have fascinated me ever since seeing the Dalai Lama speak over twenty years ago.

The plane tickets are incredibly inexpensive, only 800 bucks round trip! check, Passport, check, International Driver's License, check, insurance, check, a doctor's letter of health, check, your shots (I needed six), check, Diamox or Viagra (explained later) check. Read up on the do's and don'ts of international travel, luggage and weight restrictions and plan your personal needs for two weeks of travel, most of which needs to fit into saddlebags on a motorcycle. Expect rugged terrain, sleeping at local monasteries and traveling through places that have been frozen in time for thousands of years. Prepare for the ultimate challenge of man, machine and the mountain!

I may be over dramatizing a bit but I'm committed, the tour and flight are booked and the excitement mounts. Preparing yourself physically and mentally should also be



The Potala Palace Lhasa

taken seriously. Most people have some varying response to high altitude. AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) is actually caused by pressure, not a lack of oxygen, and varies from light-headedness to downright flu-like symptoms. Taking Diamox, prescribed by your doctor, prior to and

during your trip, will help. I've also read that Viagra helps by increasing blood flow if you don't mind the little distraction. See Tibetans and Viagra - the missing link?

Himalayan Roadrunners carry a decompression bag (HAPO bag) that can actually bring someone down

3,000 feet within minutes. Like I said, they gotcha covered. If you're like me, a writer or anybody who spends too much time behind a computer, get yourself in better shape. I started yoga classes to increase flexibility, and a trainer at the gym to strengthen cardio and endurance. It will only en-





hance your experience.

The time had come; the preparation for my trip through time was over. Because I'm determined to bring only one carry-on and my protective riding gear alone weighs 47 pounds, I actually wore all my riding gear on the plane. Motorcycle jacket, Kevlar jeans, riding boots, leather vest and yes, my helmet. This Terminator did one hell-of-a strip tease through airport security but this actually made a lot of sense. That was the bulk of weight and space in my luggage.

Spending 24 hours in the air and what amounts to losing three days because of time changes, sleep is imperative on such a journey. I learned a long time ago that an Ambien and glass of wine make the first fourteen hour leg of the journey palatable. I'm getting a bit groggy now, see you in Kathmandu.

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