

Biking Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore 2012

Day 1, Saturday, November 10, 2012 to Sunday, November 11, 2012

Nancy gave me a ride to the airport around 7:00 AM and I boarded my flight to Vancouver, BC around 10:30 AM. In Vancouver they could not read my luggage tag, the last number was missing on both tags. Therefore, they could not assign me a seat, I figured they would give me a lousy seat, but somehow, they gave me an emergency exit row seat (59H). They said emergency exit seats normally cost extra. Since it was an emergency exit row I could get up whenever I wanted during the flight without bothering anyone. The people on either side of me could also get up. From Vancouver I flew to Hong Kong and then to Bangkok. The flight was late to Hong Kong and there was only 45 minutes to my Bangkok flight, they ended up escorting a bunch of us to the Bangkok flight. We had to quickly get through several security points. I arrive in Bangkok around 10:00 PM. To get from the airport to my motel I took a train and then a subway. At the subway a man said I still had a long distance to go to China town and suggested that I took a tuk tuk. The short ride in the tuk tuk was the shortest and most expensive leg of my trip from the airport to my motel. I arrived at the China Hotel around midnight. This was the only hotel I pre-arranged before leaving for Southeast Asia. I had the room reserved for 2 nights. (Walked about 2 miles)

Day 3, Monday, November 12, 2012

In the morning I went for a walk to find a water-Taxi. A man in a car taxi would not seem to let me walk to the water ferry, he insisted on giving me a ride and I did not want to go. He ended up going way down in price so I went, should have walked! He ended up taking down several roads to get to a place that chartered boats on the river, I asked the price and it was very expensive. Not sure why I did not leave, but instead I paid the price and chartered the long boat. It would have been the right way to go if I was on a date. I noticed the grouped water tours where faster and had narration, looked a lot more fun and cheaper than my trip. The fact that it cost so much bothered me for the rest of my time in Thailand, I would not have needed more Thailand money if I did not spend so much on that boat ride. It made me a little angry at the taxi driver. Even though he did not change much he should have taken me where I showed him, I was headed on my map, to the group tour boat. I think it would have even taken less time to walk than the taxi drive to the chartered boat. While on the long boat we went up the river to check out water front. At one point a boat came up with store like items to sell. The boat operator suggested a beer and I shook my head no. Then he gestured to have me buy one for the driver of the long boat. I again said no and then he left. On the long boat we came to across where the group tours where feeding the fish in the river. After getting off the long boat I walked around Bangkok following my Lonely Planet walking tour of Bangkok. I first checked out the Grand Palace and most of the other places where not so easy to find. I was on my way to Wat

Pho and stopped to look at a map and a local man came to tell me places I should check out. He insisted I should go to a different place and suggested the taxi. I think he may have worked with the Taxi, no way I was taking another taxi and started walking in the direction he suggested. The places he suggested were far and I got a little turned around. The guy did suggest some good sites as seen on the map photos. But I did not really have time and wanted to go to Wat Pho and Wat Arun. From my GPS I could tell I was near my motel, so I went back there and got camera batteries. Then I walked back to town and went to Wat Pho. This was a neat site with a reclining Buddha as the main attraction. Then I took a very cheap water taxi to Wat Arun (what I had wanted to see in the morning). The Wat Arun is very neat and you go up some very steep stairs and get a great view of Bangkok. As I was leaving the ferry area, I noticed some nice chicken sticks at a food stand and bought 3 of them. They were very taste, so I went back to get more, but a lady was buying all the rest of her inventory. I could have waited for more, but wanted to get back to my motel before it got dark and find the train station. I ended up walking from my motel to the train station 2 times that day so I would be able to walk there in the morning. When I got back to the motel, I was very tired and slept great that night. I ended up walking about 21 miles, per what it said on my GPS. (Start total odometer bike miles 1091.1 miles; walked 21 miles)

Day 4, Tuesday, November 13, 2012

I started walking to the train station pulling my bike in the suit case with my duffle bag of gear on top. I knew the route very good, but I still turned on the wrong road and figured it out right away. I could have just turned right to get back on track, but instead I went straight because it looked like it might be shorter per my GPS, even with my GPS I made mistakes going the new route, I ended up dragging my gear for about an extra mile. Should have gone right, it's not easy dragging all the gear and I was not going to take a taxi. When I arrived at the train station I had lots of time, but the computers were down and they were not opening the ticket windows. I should have bought my tickets the night before, oh well! They finally opened one window and I was able to get a train ticket just in time to catch the first train to Hua Hin. The ticket office opened at 8:00 AM and the train left at 8:05AM. I was very lucky to make the train. I boarded the train, sat down and then found out I was in the wrong seat and wrong train car, it was tough getting on the train with my gear. The train was small just 2 cars and no place for gear, your luggage gets on the train with you. Most people had no luggage, I think with my 2 bags I had the most gear of anyone on that train. It was hard going from the wrong seat to the correct seat, I finally made it and put my big heavy suitcase that had my bike in it in the overhead rack. Not the right place for the suit case, but I saw no options. They served a coffee and sweet roll meal on train. When the lady gave me the meal she pointed at my suitcase and pointed in the front of the train. I then moved the suitcase off the overhead rack and onto the

front section of the train car, there was a better shelf for luggage there. Later in the train trip they served a lunch of rice, noodles, 2 meat balls and a dessert. Not bad meals on the train! When the train arrived in Hua Hin a man that worked on the train started to help me with my bag, he realized it was not easy to quickly get off the train the way I got on. He then opened the door to the conductor's room and removed my bags using the door on the front of the train. I had to get off the train using the regular door and go to the front of the train to get my bags. Once off the train I took my bike out of the suit case and assembled it. I put the wheel on the suit case and loaded my gear into the suit case. The suitcase becomes a trailer and I attached it to my bike and started cycling south. Several people watched me assemble my bike and trailer at the train station. A couple of people asked about the bike, I did the best job I could in answering them. Since I do not speak their language, I assume they want to know about my plans, so I mention Singapore. As I biked off, I found that my large front chain ring somehow was bent since I loaded it in the suit case. This is the second time my front gears were damaged while a bike Friday was in its suit case. The first time the bike actually had the main peddle axle bent. This time it was just the ring gear and I was able to straighten it out enough to work. It was still wobble and did not work good in the upper front chain ring for all rear gear chain rings. The biking was very flat and easy. I found a fine grocery store just south of the train station and bought groceries. I did not realize my trip odometer was off and lost the first 4 miles on my total trip miles. I ended out getting Mosquito bites, need to start taking the malaria pills. This area is a little north of the area where malaria is more of a risk. Since you should start the pills 2 days before entering the risk area, I started that night. I also started using my Deet mosquito spray daily. After I cycled a little more than 20 miles, I found a nice beach area with motels. The first motel was a little more than I wanted to spend, the second motel cost about the same but was nicer. I decided to stay at the nicer motel. I walked a long distance along the beach and found some neat sea shells and sand crabs. The beach had a neat natural arch with nature trail at one end. I hiked the nature trail in the morning. After walking a long distance on the beach, I returned to the motel by walking on the road back through the small town. I noticed rooms without doors and walls, but with visible beds and a roof. I continued my walk and figured out the beds were set up for Thai massages. At first, I thought it was some sort of low cost covered outdoor motel. At one ocean front motels I saw a couple of nice Ferraris parked out front with a guard watching them. When I returned to my motel after walking along the beach and through the small town, I was going through my handlebar pack and found 2 large live cockroaches. Not sure if they came from Bangkok Hotel or this motel. I assumed they were from this motel. I also noticed small ants in my room. Overall, the motel was very nice and with a very nice swimming pool. After my walk I went for a swim. There were some neat small lizards by the swimming pool. The motel had Wi-Fi, some kids knocked on my door after I settled in and gave me a piece of paper with the Wi-Fi password. I should have

brought my cell phone and battery charger, I'm pretty sure the cell phone is capable of hooking up to Wi-Fi. The motel guy originally told me the price was 1200B and then he went down to 1000B. Due to the heat and how this first day went I figured I would never make it 1000 miles on this bike trip, the 1000 miles was my goal for the trip. (Daily Bike 21.2 miles; odometer total bike miles 1112.3; GPS total miles 21.2 miles; walked 6 miles)

Day 5, Wednesday, November 14, 2012

I woke up around 6:00 AM and hiked to the top of the hill near the beach. I found a trail the previous evening that I was checking out. When I arrived on the beach side the trail was under water due to the high tide, I had seen the trail the previous day and it was accessible from the sandy beach during low tide. It was submerged in water since the tide was higher. I had to take my shoes and socks off and wade through the water to get back onto the dry beach to go back to motel. I then went back to the motel packed my gear and was on the road again by 7:15 AM. I paid to check out the Khoa Sam Roi Yot National Park and went down one road with lots of mosquitoes. I even had on the Deet mosquito repellent and got several mosquito bites. I missed the road with all the sights and then found a visitor center. They told me all the sights were north and I would have to back track to see them. Due to time constraints I decided to skip going back and continued south. Not sure what I missed out, the rocks and sights along the road were very nice and at one point I saw several monkeys near the road. At about 11:00 AM I heard a loud bang and then noticed my trailer tire had a flat. I was surprised the flat was caused by a road side thorn; tires should not puncture that easily. It was the only flat of my trip. After that for about 100 miles I noticed a lot of the thorn bushes near the road and avoided getting too close. It was already getting very hot by the time I fixed the flat tire. As I continued, I noticed several wet areas with aerating devices. There were trucks parked along the road with people collecting shrimp from the ponds into 55-gallon drums of water. At one of the trucks a kid started following my bike and it looked like he was trying to open my trailer while I was biking. Seemed strange, there was never a time during my trip that I felt like I would get robbed. I think the kid was just trying to be funny with his peers watching. Since it was getting so hot, I started resting for about 30 minutes every hour in the shaded bus stops. Biked in the heat until I arrived at Hat Wanakorn National Park where I camped on the beach. The beach was mostly deserted and I was the only one staying at the beach front campground. It was hot well into the night, so I took sleeping pills and slept great that night. (Daily Bike miles 68.2; odometer total bike miles 1180.5; GPS total miles 88.08; walked 2 miles)

Day 6, Thursday, November 15, 2012

I left camp around 6:00 AM, before it got too hot. I stopped at a store to get food and continued along highway. I came to an American style highway rest stop. Very big

with camping, stores and food stands. I had a very good meal there. I continued biking and at one of the police road blocks they checked my passport. It was the only time on this trip that my passport was checked while traveling on the road. I saw a man traveling on a bike loaded with gear going north, he looked at me and we both turned around to talk. As we were taking ants kept climbing up my leg and occasionally biting. The biker's name was Peter and he was from Belgium. He had been in Thailand and Malaysia for the past 2 years. His current trip was cycling the parameters of the 2 countries. He started in Bangkok and cycled the east coast of Thailand-Malaysia to Singapore and was on his way back to Bangkok following the west coast. That is not exactly what he told me, but that's what it seemed like he said. He wanted to talk forever, he did give me good information about bike traveling and what to expect in Malaysia. He was very friendly and I only saw one other couple bike touring on this trip in Thailand. I saw no bike touring people in Malaysia. I came to a town where my GPS did not show any motels, I noticed a place that looked like it might have had rooms and asked the lady if she had rooms by placing my hands on my head sideways. She shook her head yes and I figured out the price so I could stay for the night. She had turned the TV on for me, I tried changing the station and could not figure it out, so I turned off the TV hoping I could turn it back on and find the channel again. I never did figure out how to turn the TV back on. I walked back to the nearby town along the dark road looking for food. On the way back I stopped at a restaurant to eat. It was humorous I had a lot of trouble explain that I wanted chicken and rice. It took about 5 people to interpret what I wanted and they finally gave me a very good meal. The people that tried waiting on me were laughing at the experience, so was I! It was funny! I was the dumb American that could only speak English in a foreign land. I should have taken my phrase book, that has always helped in past trips. My fingers were starting to go numb from cut off circulation, this seems to happen every other bike trip. It takes about 6 months after I return for the fingers to get better. I find if I move my fingers often it does not happen, I guess I did not move them enough on this trip. That night I dreamed that someone stole all my stuff back in Portland. (Daily Bike miles 88.1; odometer total bike miles 1268.4; walked 4 miles)

Day 7, Friday, November 16, 2012

I started biking and after a while I noticed I was running out of water. Normally I saw stores in all the small towns, but not in the last 2 small towns. Then I saw a shop that look like a house, I went over to see if they had bottled watered and from the front view it looked like they did not have bottled water. The man running the shop went in the back room and got me 2 1.5-liter waters. I saw a sign for a waterfall and started biking down this road. I looked at the river and then started to continue, but it looked like a long distance. A man that was watching me waved me to come over to his house. The man was very friendly and introduced me to his parents. He spoke good English, but his parents spoke no English. They tried asking me questions and he

interpreted. He was a seasonal worker in Phuket and owned a farm in this area. He got a coconut off a tree and cut it open so I could drink the milk. He also gave me some bananas. He also gave me some cut watermelon. When I was ready to leave, he gave me bananas and 2 uncut coconuts. I did not want the coconuts, but could not seem to get him to keep them. The man was a 36-year-old named Boa. The next morning, I left the coconuts in the motel room. He also filled up my water bottles, I was not sure if it was tap water. I figured if it was tap water, I should be OK, the man Cycling named Peter (that I met the previous day) told me he always drank tap water and it was OK. The guy, Boa, showed me pictures of 16-year-old girls he knew and asked if I liked Thai women. I told him I thought that was very wrong and had no interest. To me that is very bad and I did not appreciate the question. As I was leaving, I figured I should offer the guys some money so I tried giving him a 20B, I figured he would refuse it. Instead, he wanted more and I ended up giving him 60 B. The last 10 miles to Ranong was very difficult, hilly and I was tired. There was a neat waterfall before a big hill, I stopped there and had a tuna sandwich. I was ready for a motel, the first one cost 2250B, too expensive for me, it was about 5 miles before town. I continued to town, I could not find the motels on my GPS and asked people where I could find motels. I ended up using my phrase book to ask about motels, since almost no body spoke any English in this small town. It took me a while but I finally found a motel that was on my GPS. The motel did not have a motel sign and did not look like a motel, but it had the same name as on the GPS, so I asked and they gave me a room. (Daily Bike miles 87.2; odometer total bike miles 1355.6; GPS total miles 258.22; walked 2 miles)

Day 8, Saturday, November 17, 2012

I biked for a while and it started getting hot. I realized I did not have as much water as I thought and was about to run out. Then I found a medium sized store, all they had was very small waters. I bought 3 of them and a soda. I was getting worn out and man slowed down to see if I was Ok and I said I was fine. Afterward I thought about it and should have seen if we would give me a ride to the next town. I saw motel in small town and should have stopped but kept going. I started thinking there would be no more motels and I would have to stay in one of the bus stop shelters. That was where Peter from Belgium told me he stayed in the shelters almost every night. It seemed like a long distance to the next town and then I found a very nice motel with a pond behind it. At this point Thailand was transitioning from Buddhism to Muslims. I went to eat at the motel restaurant; it looked like they specialized in sea food. Should have had sea food, but instead tried the Pad-See-Ew with chicken, one of my favorites when I eat Thai food in Portland. I was able to order it because the name is the same as in the USA, the only difference is the work from Chicken is Gai (which I knew). It was very good. I was getting mosquito bites at the restaurant and went to my room to get the jungle juice while I was waiting for my meal. After my meal I walked a

very short distance, not much of a town and then back to my room. I went out of my room in my underwear to create a wave point on my GPS to mark my motel. Well, I closed the locked door and the keys were inside. I tried the back door and no luck (it was also locked). So, I went to the restaurant in my underwear and told them I locked my keys in the room. They went somewhere on a scooter and came back with a man that had the spare key. It was a little embarrassing, but the biker underwear is black and I do not think anyone knew it was underwear. The room was very nice, I did have to kill the 2 mosquitoes I found and noticed a lizard in the bathroom. They just added character to the room. Half the motels I went to did not have sheets, good thing I brought my own sheet, the motel on this night did not have sheets. (Daily Bike miles 58; odometer total bike miles 1413.6; GPS total miles 314.7; walked 0 miles)

Day 9, Sunday, November 18, 2012

I stopped to check out this beach and these kids were talking to me. They were very friendly and one of them wanted to ride my bike. I did not want to spend the time and have them all ride the bike so I told him no. I probably should have let him ride the bike. He would not have gone far. He was with family and friends. I just thought it might take too long, if I let him ride the bike I might have to wait until all his friends also tried riding it. It was a very hot day and I took a lot of rests. Felt like I had to keep going if I was going to arrive in Phuket at a reasonable time the next day. I actually was doing better with the heat. I must have been getting used to it. At first in the afternoons, I would rest for about an hour and bike for about 30 minutes. Now when I feel like I am about to faint from the heat I rest for 30 minutes and ride for an hour. I cycled into the evening trying to get to a town closer to Phuket, I finally felt I went enough miles and stopped to see how much a hotel cost and it seemed too expensive. Then I went to a second hotel and they did not have any rooms. The town I was in had a lot of tourists. This was the first place with so many tourists since I left Bangkok. Most of the places I went to had no tourist or at most 2 of them. The last motel in the town had a room at a good price so I took it. The lady that was running the motel said she saw me biking down from Bangkok a few days earlier pulling my suit case. She was coming back from Bangkok with her boyfriend when she saw me and told her boyfriend they should do what I was doing. He was not interested according to her. I walked pretty far that night and stopped at an internet café. I tried using the internet, but when I type letters, they came up as Thai characters and I could not figure out the keyboard good enough to log into my Hotmail account. Then I tried my ATM card at 3 different machines and it never worked. What a nightmare I'm was not sure if I have enough cash for my trip. I decided to try withdrawing money using my Visa card, but the cash exchange place told me I would have to wait until the morning and go to the bank to withdrawal money using my visa. This reminded me of the 1500 B boat trip I took in Bangkok and I started feeling agree toward the Bangkok taxi driver again. At this point I was worried and hoped I would have enough money

for my trip. I did still have a lot of cash so I figured if I was cheap about things, I could make it without getting more money. The air conditioner in the motel that I was staying at did not work well, it was more like a fan. It ended out being good enough, but the worst one of this trip (except camping). I thought about eating at the McDonalds, but it cost more than the local food stands. I was getting blisters on my feet and my fingers were tingling from cut off circulation due to holding on the bike handlebars. It seems like about every other bike trip I experience the tingling fingers. (Daily Bike miles 72.6; odometer total bike miles 1186.2; GPS total miles 385.37; walked 6 miles)

Day 10, Monday, November 19, 2012

In the morning I went to check out of motel and was ready to get going before it got too hot. The lady at the hotel desk gave me detailed mapped (hand written map, definitely not to scale) directions of how to bike to Krabi. She told me not to go one way due to a big hill. Then she asked if I had a place to stay in Krabi. When I said no she recommended a place gave me detailed directions (on a hand written map) and a phone number to call. Luckily all her talking delayed my departure, then I was about to leave and I felt a few rain drops. The lady at the motel desk suggested that I get the breakfast that comes with the room and wait out the rain. I then sat down to eat my breakfast and it started to down pour rain for about 20 minutes. This was the second downpour of my trip, the first one was in Bangkok. Both downpours I was able to stay dry. The days that followed I normally had 2 downpours every day, it turns out that in Malaysia the monsoon season is still going on. I figured that it was going to be wet in Malaysia. After buying my airfare based on the fact that it was the start of the good season to travel in Thailand I read up on Malaysia and found that it was Monsoon season at this time. Oh well I already bought the air fare and it was too late to change my mind. While I was waiting out the rain at the motel another man staying at the motel told me that this area was one of the best places in the world for scuba diving and that was why there are so many tourists. He asked where I was headed and I told him originally, I was going to Phuket next, but was reconsidering so I could avoid the touristy area and dead-end island. He agreed that there was nothing real interesting in Phuket and agreed that my new route would probably be better. He was from England and had been to that part of Thailand a number of times for scuba diving. I told him about my ATM not working and he told me that he usually gets a pre-paid MasterCard before traveling and that it could be used as a credit card or ATM card. Sounded like something I should do on my next trip! I was glade the lady delayed my start and after breakfast the rain slowed way down and I was able to bike away. I was getting a little wet from drizzle and splashes from cars. After about 30 minutes the drizzle stopped and I slowly dried off. For at least 5 hours after that it was dry. I saw a kid on his elephant in a stream, he was very proud of his elephant and turned so I

could get a good picture of him on the elephant. I also saw 2 people riding their elephants to town. This was the only area where I saw elephant; I guess it comes with the Tourist. The directions the lady gave me to Krabi where sparse, I saw a turn that I thought might have been the first one she recommended, but no sign so I continued. A long ways latter I came to the correct turn. Then the second turn I also questioned, but followed the road sign. It all made since when I thought it through, the scale was just a lot more miles that I originally thought. In one small town I stopped in the shade of a bus stop to get away from the heat and this man come over to attempt to communicate with me. He kept saying something and showing me a coin, I figured he was trying to bum money. There was no way I would show him my money. As an attempt he showed me his wallet and in it he had a lot more money than I had. He had a coin that he was bouncing on the bench, so I took out a coin to bounce on the bench. We both bounced coins a few times and he keep trying to ask me something, but I could not understand him. He seemed a bit annoying, so I decided to leave, he left at the same time. I thought he was going to follow me, but instead he went in front and found someone to bug at a store. I continued until I came to the intersection where the lady told me to go right so I could avoid the hill. With the aid of my GPS, I could tell the route without the hill was about twice as many miles. I don't mind getting off my bike and walking it up hills. It gives my butt a rest, so I went for the hill. It was a long hill, I pushed and biked most of the way up the hill. Then a 3-wheel motor scooter (I think the guy was selling Pad Thai) slowed down and pointed at the bar on his scooter, I shook my head yes and grabbed the bar. He then pulled me towards the top of the hill. He was going about 20 MPH and at one point I could not hold on. I let go and yelled. He slowed down so I could catch up and grab on the bar again. He was with his wife and pointed at a large steel pot on the scooter and said what sounded like "Pad Thai". That's why I thought he was selling Pad Thai. I probably would have bought some, but when we got to the top of the hill, he gestured me to let go and off they went. There was a little store at the top of the hill and I would have stopped there if I did not get the tow to the top of the hill. But since I was going well and it was now downhill, I kept going. The tow from the motor scooter was only about 2 KM. The couple on the scooter where very nice I took their picture as they left me going down the hill. On the way down the hill, I stopped to take photos, some people slowed down to see if I was OK. I shook my head yes and they continued down the road. I was almost out of water and I saw a coca cola sign in front of a building with a man doing work in front of the building. I gestured like I wanted to buy water (showed him my empty water jug) and he took my jug into a room and filled it with cold water from a big bottle of water (probably about a 30-gallon jug). I quickly drank down the water and he filled it a second time. I tried giving him money, but he shook his head no. I then took a short rest with food from the heat in the nearby bus shelter. The hill was along neat towing cliffs and through a dense jungle. It was a very nice ride. I was glad I went the route of the hill. I felt a few drops of rain again and cycled hard to the next

bus shelter, I was a little late and got fairly wet. However, I beat the major part of the downpour and was mostly dry. I couple of working people in a motor scooter stopped at the shelter to get out of the rain. Then a couple from Europe also stopped in the shelter to wait out the rain. We all tried to communicate, the European's ask the local guys where we were and showed them a map on their iPad. Then when the rain slowed down everyone shook hands and we started on the road again. The monsoons became a social event on this trip. At the bottom of the hill, I came across a town where school was just getting out. All the kids were in school uniforms, some of the cheered me on. It seems like a lot of people found my mode of transportation interesting. I stopped at a gas station for food and a group of kids dressed in customs (I think they were part of a circus) riding in a truck full of some sort of equipment wanted to know about my trip. One kid wanted to ride my bike, so I let him I figured they would need to leave and would not all want to ride the bike. It was getting dark, but I wanted to continue to Krabi, as I was walking the bike, I noticed a big thing running across the road. It turned out to be a scorpion that was about 10 inches long. A little scary I did not want to get too close and thought I got a good picture, but it turns out the picture was not of the entire scorpion. I should have tried a second time, but I could not see it good in the night and I was a little afraid that if I got too close it might try getting me. When I arrived in the outskirts of Krabi I stopped at the 7-11 to get a snack. I sat on the curb and small ants started biting me. I moved to a bench that was in front of what looked like a closed visitor center to eat my sandwiches (got away from the ants). Then I tried to find the place the lady in Sea Fan told me was a good place to stay. I went back and forth around town without any luck. I went by a youth hostel, but really wanted to find the place the lady from Sea Fan recommended. She said something about near a football field, but I never saw the field. I then went back to the youth hostel and no one would answer the door. I checked out another motel and they were booked for the night. Then I went to a big motel and they had a not too expensive room for me. (Daily Bike miles 85.9; odometer total bike miles 1572.1; GPS total miles 472.2; walked 1 mile)

Day11, Tuesday, November 20, 2012

In the morning I biked around the town of Krabi and found the bus station. I asked them how to take the bus to Hat Yai and they gave me the prices. They told me the bike would be an additional 200 B. I did not have my gear. It was still at the motel. I needed a new patch kit for my bike, I only had a few patches left after my one flat. I normally bring a new patch kit on my bike trips, but forgot it this time. I found a bike shop and tried buying a patch kit. They did not have kits, instead they had individual patches and the glue was purchased separately. I ended out just buying 4 patches, I did not need more glue. I then biked to the water front and noticed a ferry taking people to a small island on the other side of the river. A man tried talking me into going, he said it was very neat. I figured I really did not have time, I needed to check out of the

motel by 11:00 AM. It looked really neat and I figured I could get back to the motel in time, so I took the ferry to the island and biked through a lot of the island's township. There were only motor scooters on the island, no cars. The roads were very narrow and the island had a Mosque, that's where a lot of people were hanging out. Not much of a tourist area, but I did see 2 tourists with a guide on bikes. Then I went back to the motel and packed my gear. I biked to the bus station and they told me to get ready the bus was due to leave in 5 minutes. I took apart the trailer, folded the bike and put the trailer parts and duffle bag into the suit case. They immediately loaded my gear on the bus and we took off. This bus did not charge extra for the bike, in fact the charge was barely more than the charge they told me there would be for the bike earlier that day. The bus broke down, I think the town where it broke down was named Ao Tong. The bus driver and another man from a nearby shop were removing wires, using a soldering iron and they used a black box to fix the bus. I'm not sure if they replaced the black box or fixed it with the soldering iron. It took around 20 minutes to fix the bus and then we were on the road again. The bus then stopped for a food break and everyone got off the bus to eat in a food court. I took my backpack. I thought people took their stuff with them to prevent theft. I noticed another man taking his pack, but he was getting off at that stop. Everyone else left their gear on the bus. The food was very good and spicy. I thought the bus driver said it was time to get back on the bus, so I got back on the bus. I was the only one that got on the bus and people belonging were on their seat, I was hoping people did not think I was going through their stuff. Then the bus pulled over to the gas pump and people started getting back on the bus, no one looked at my funny. As I looked outside the bus window it was raining most of the day, good day to be on the bus. When I arrived in Hat Yai it was pouring, I put my trailer together as a lot of people watched and it was still raining hard when I was ready to leave. I waited another 15 minutes and it slowed to a drizzle and I biked off. I wanted to find the highway going south so I would know where to go the next day. It was wet and with the aid of my GPS I was able to find the route south. However, I did not confirm my finding because it was very hard crossing the road. I noticed a nice motel before I headed south of town and according to my GPS there may have been another motel and 15 miles south of town. I went for about 5 miles and did not see any motels. I was getting very wet and did not want to be stuck without a place to stay. I then backtracked to Hat Yai and stayed in the nice motel. My GPS was only showing one motel south and lots of them in Hat Yai. By the time I got back to the motel I had seen earlier I was soaked. It turned out that I made the right decision, the next day I did not see a motel 15 miles south of Hat Yai. The motel was very nice and I walked to the large store that evening, it started pouring and a lot of walkers (including me) waited it out at the security guard parking lot entrance. The security guards were interested in what I was doing in their town. The store was huge with mostly large quantities of stuff, warehouse style shopping. I ended up buying a loaf of bread and by the time I got back to the motel I was wet again. I took a shower with

my clothes on to clean them, I normally do that a couple of times a week to keep myself from stinking too much. I also have a change of clothes to go out after biking in the evenings. (Daily Bike miles 36.9; odometer total bike miles 1609; GPS total miles 509.6; walked 4 miles)

Day 12, Wednesday, November 21, 2012

The ride to the Malaysia boarder was about 30 miles south of Hat Yai and I saw a couple of neat Buddha temples on the way to the boarder. When I arrived at the boarder the town in Thailand was crawling with people. A group of people cheered for me and we got a group picture. At the boarder people told me where to leave my bike while I had my passport checked. Lots of people around that could have easily ripped me off when I left my bike to get my passport checked. I think people are very honest in Asia and more likely it was very safe because people were keeping an eye on my gear. Once in Malaysia I tried to find a map of the country at all the gas stations, no place had maps. The guy cycle touring in Thailand, Peter had warned me that I should get a good map and bicycles were not allowed on the main highways. Peter said when I first entered Malaysia I would need to go on the main highway for a few miles and then use the national highways. About 15 miles of riding on the highway a police officer pulled me over, I figured he was going to tell me not to ride on the highway. He was very friendly and spoke very good English he wanted to know where I was going and where I started. He was also interested in my age. He was 48 years old. He did not say anything about biking on the highway and wanted to know where I was planning on staying for the night. I told him Alor Setar and he told me what to expect with respect to the cost of a motel. He was very nice I ended up getting a photo of him before he left. I continued on the highway and after a few more miles I came to the first sign that indicated no bicycles. Per my GPS it looked like if I cycled the main road for a little further, I could save a lot of miles, so I continued at a fast rate for about another 5 miles on the main highway. Then I took the national highway for most of the rest of my time in Malaysia (only one other time was I on the main highway and that was my last day in Malaysia). The motel I picked in Alor Setar looked cheap and it was the worst one of this trip. It stunk and the air conditioner did not work well and the bathroom plumbing was strange. I can afford better than that, I'm on vacation I think I will look for better rooms from now on! I did bike around and look before picking that motel and some of them even seemed worse. But the one across the road looked better. The town of Alor Setar is very nice with a big tower (like the Seattle space needle) and a nice mosque. There was a lot of shopping areas in town and I looked all over for maps of Malaysia, but could not find one. The GPS should do the job however there are a lot more roads in Malaysia than Thailand and since the main road was off limits to bikes a paper map would have been nice. Good think I bought the Southeast Asia GPS maps, they helped a lot. Malaysia seemed a little more uptight than Thailand, people gave me glares and when I smiled, they

would smile back. In Thailand people went out of the way to smile while waving as I went by. I think the thing is that Thailand is more custom to tourism and find they make more money if they go out of their way to be friendly. At a department store in Alor Setar, they would not let me in with my back pack. I decided not to go in that store. When I was walking through a dark parking lot a man approached me asking for a dollar and I replied no. I thought he was going to follow me, but he left me alone after that. Also, Malaysia has a strong Muslim culture, while Thailand is more of a Buddhism culture. (Daily Bike miles 70.2; odometer total bike miles 1679.2; GPS total miles 577.64; walked 3 miles)

Day 13, Thursday, November 22, 2012

I woke up around 6:00 AM and took off before it got too hot. The ride was uneventful to Butterworth. There were some bigger than normal mountains near the road, but my ride was flat. One thing I noticed that seemed funny is a lot of people where their jacket with the zipper to the back. All I could figure is that it was to keep the wind and rain from hitting them in the stomach. Some of the jackets were winter coats and that makes no sense with temperatures commonly getting above 95 F. The thing is that it was very hot and did not seem like anyone would want to wear a jacket. Once at Butterworth, I looked for a bank to exchange travelers check for Malaysian money. The first bank had the alarm going off and they would not let me in the bank. The second bank was already closed and it was 3:57 PM, the bank sign said they closed at 4:00 PM. I found about 3 more banks in Butterworth and they were all closed. I knew I could make it without getting more money, but just wanted money to feel more comfortable about spending money. I had \$200 in traveler checks I wanted to cash into Malaysian money. Probably can find another place, I don't think it needs to be a bank for traveler's checks. After my experience in Thailand with the ATM I did not want to try the ATM again. I broke down and tried my ATM (I withdrew 1000R), it worked and then I felt I had more than enough money for the remainder of my trip. When I returned to Portland my ATM would not work it turns out the bank put a hold on it when I used it in Malaysia. They thought it was a questionable transaction. The funny thing is that I have used my ATM in Italy and Costa Rica without any problem. I guess Malaysia, must just be more questionable, not too many tourists in Malaysia. I then took the ferry to George Town and was in a large group of motor scooters to get on the ferry. I was the only one on a bike. As I was looking for a motel in George Town, I felt a bump and a lady on a motor scooter had bumped into my bike trailer at a stop light. The bike trailer was fine so we just looked at each other, then the bike trailer, I gave her the who cares gesture (lifted shoulders with a blank look) and we kept going. I looked for a motel, first motel was full. The second place had hostel rooms for 58 R with shared bathrooms. After the night in Alor Setar, I decided to find a better place, I could afford it. I then found a very nice room near the ferry and town for 110 R. I ended up staying there for 2 nights. They charged a large

key deposit (50 R ≈ \$15 US) for the plastic card motel key. Seems like a lot for a programmable plastic card. I did get my deposit back when I returned the plastic card on checkout day. I went to eat a nice seafood restaurant for my Thanksgiving dinner. When I was getting the meal, I thought it was very cheap, but I forgot that the Malaysia money cost 10 times as much as Thai money. It turned out the meal was my most expensive meal on this trip. However, it was a very tasty Thanksgiving dinner. Since it was a sit down and wait for service meal, I felt a little out of place eating by myself. I then walk all over China town looking for a map, no luck. I went back to my motel and went to sleep. (Daily Bike miles 66.8; odometer total bike miles 1746; GPS total miles 642.12; walked 5 miles)

Day 14, Friday, November 23, 2012

I decided to bike around the island and started off towards the airport. At one point I was following a lot of people with hard hats towards some tall building that were being build. When I arrived at the last building the road was closed and the security guards would not let me continue on the sidewalk. It looked like it was a dead-end peninsula anyways and only people working on the building were there. I should have known better since the road was headed towards craned sky scrapers and most of the people had hard hats walking or biking on the road. There were almost no cars on the road. I then backtracked and got back on the main highway. I then went to the airport to see about buying a Malaysia map, all they had was the free tourist maps. I figured if I could not get a map at the airport I should give up. The tourist maps did help, but my GPS was way more detailed. However, the tourist map had a further range. On the GPS if I scale more the 5 miles/ inch the roads go away. After the airport I realized my GPS was not tracking miles, I had turned off the tracking part of my GPS the previous night so I would not get more miles on the GPS while walking around in George Town. I missed about 20 miles on my GPS track. From the airport I backtracked a distance so I could check out a small fishing village, that was a waste of time, I should have followed through to the main highway from the airport. A little after that another downpour happened and I was able to make shelter. It took a while to slow down, but it was drizzle for about 2 hours after that down pour. My GPS quit tracking again I think due to the rain, it has never done that before. It was wet for most of that morning, got soaked through. Then it dried off, the west side of the island required a lot of uphill biking/ walking the bike. At one point I saw a lizard that was about 2 feet long. I stopped to check out a waterfall and could see a couple of monkeys jumping around in the jungle. It was a very nice island, my favorite place in Malaysia. I continued and when came across a neat park with pools where people were swimming (I think it was called "Forest Recreation Park and Museum). It was a very nice place and I was surprised there was no entrance fee. I had lunch in a small town on the northwest corner of the island, I think the town was named Teluk Bahang. It was a nice small town and the meal was very taste. I then continued back towards

George Town, by the time I got back to town most of the day was gone. I really wanted to check out the Botanic Garden so I headed up there before it got dark. When I first arrived in the parking lot, I saw people checking out monkey, I biked over there and spooked the monkeys. There most of been about 200 monkeys and they all ran towards a wall and jumped over it. They did not come back so I went to check out the park. There were 2 separate areas in the park. The first part of the park was very fancy without any people and well-groomed plants, next to a road on a big hill. There was a guard near the step road and I went part way up the road pushing my bike. I thought the road guard was going to stop me, but he did nothing. The guard may have been to make sure only authorized motorized vehicle drove up the very step road. The hill was very steep and I was not sure where I was headed so I biked back down to the park. The other part of the park had paved road and trails. That part of the park had a lot of people and monkey all over the place. I also saw a 2-foot lizard there. I meet a man that claimed to have been a movie maker in Hollywood and when he lost that job, he ended up working at Wal-Mart. He did not like Wal-Mart and was married to a lady from Malaysia. Now the man lives in Malaysia and collects social security checks. He also was involved with Web books. After checking out the botanic garden it was starting to get dark so I made my way back to the motel. Great day and I really enjoyed the island of Penang. I was very glade that I decided to spend an extra day there. I walked around town for a while on one road there were some very attractive prostitutes. They tried luring me, but I have no interest in that type of trouble. I found an internet café and was able to use it, this was the first time I found internet that I could use on this trip. (Daily Bike miles 66.4; odometer total bike miles 1812.4; GPS total miles 703.57 (off for about 25 miles); walked 6 miles)

Day 15, Saturday, November 24, 2012

I took a lot of photos of trucks on this day. Since I work for Freightliner Truck Company, I normally like to get photos of trucks that I see on my trips. I end out taking a lot of my people and vehicle photos while I am riding my bike (I do not stop cycling, I take the photos as I am moving), I actually ended up taking over 2,800 photos on this trip (Probably about 70% of the photos I took while moving on my bike). At one point I felt a few drops and was going to continue biking, but thought I should get a snack at the gas station. After paying for my snack, it started to pour, at that point I was glad I stopped for the snack. It seemed like I was almost always able to make shelter before the monsoon type downpours. I was looking in one of the road side ditches/ lagoons and I saw a very big snake or something in the water. It went deeper into the water when it saw me. Not positive it was a snake. The animal was very long and the head looked small. My guess is it was at least 6 feet long. When I arrived at the turn off to Taiping, I found a motel and decided to stay there for the night. It was right across the street from what looked like some sort of night club. I then biked to the town of Taiping. It was a nice ride and as I walked around this park

it started lightly raining, then I arrived at the covered area of the zoo and it started pouring. This downpour lasted longer than most of them, it was for over 30 minutes of downpour. Then the rain tapered off, I finally decided to ride back to the motel. The rain did not completely quit all the way back to the motel and it was at least 5 miles to get back to the motel. By the time I got back to the motel I was soaked. That evening I heard fireworks and looked out the window at the end of the hall in the motel. The night club like place across the street was firing off some major fireworks in their parking lot. The parking lot was not that big and I'm sure the sparks were affecting the cars on the nearby highway. I did not want to go over there. I believe the reason I stay out of trouble on my trips is because I avoid night life. I believe that people that drink do not always like foreigners. I should have gone over there it was probably interesting. Overall, I have never met anyone in Asia that was not friendly. (Daily Bike miles 64.4; odometer total bike miles 1876.8; GPS total miles 766.57; walked 1 miles)

Day 16, Sunday, November 25, 2012

I was biking in this one town and a man in biking gear and a nice bike caught up to me. He wanted to know about my trip and he told me he was a teacher on his 6-week winter break. He also told me that his wife was a seamstress. A couple of people passed in a car with bikes and they honked at this guy. Then we caught up with the other guys and all biked together for a while. Then came a big hill and they all left me in the dust. They were racing to the top of the hill, then they started back down the hill and on their way down we all stopped and talked for a while. A few more of their friends joined us and we all hung out and talked. They spoke good English, some of them better than others. We took photos and they biked back down the hill. I think they were all teacher on winter break. I continued and in one town I saw a group of 4 Asians on touring bikes. They may have been going the distance of Malaysia, these guys had a lot less gear than I had. They were the only bikers I saw in Malaysia that looked like they were cycle touring. I saw 3 people cycle touring in Thailand. I saw another big group of cyclists, these guys just blasted by me and I never saw them again. They did not have traveling gear, probably just on a daily bike ride. The ride was nice through small hills with towering rocks, mostly covered in low clouds. It would have been a great ride on a clear day. I came across an interesting grave yard with wavy cement grave stone enclosures. A sign said it was some sort of Chinese grave yard. At one point I saw a temple on top of a small rock mountain (or large hill). When I went a little farther, I saw a parking lot to access the cave that had a trail to the temple on the rock hill. I went to check it out and the parking lot attendants told me where to lock my bike. They somewhat kept an eye on my bike while I checked out the cave and temples. Very interesting place, it was a cave with Buddha, statues, painted walls, temple, scripts and a trail through the cave that took you most of the way up the hill. The cave was called Perak cave temple. Like the other neat places, I

checked out in Malaysia it did not charge an entrée fee, but did have plenty of boxes to place donation. Like every day in Malaysia (except the last day) I got a big downpour. Actually, most days I would get 2 big downpours. In one town I was stopped at a light and a nice-looking young lady on a motor scooter gave me some fruit for free. She said the fruit was from her tree. The fruit is not like anything I have ever seen in the USA. It had a spiny peel and tasted like a very large grape. She gave me at least 20 of the fruit. They were very tasty and I put most of them in my trailer until that evening. They did have ants on them. It started sprinkling again (it had already down poured) and I expected a downpour so I went to a gas station to get a snack and wait out the rain. Well, this time it never down poured it just drizzled for a long time. The guy that was pumping gas was kind of bothering me. He took my trash to throw away for me. I normally do that myself. I was thinking maybe he wanted money. I finally had enough and it never did start pouring so I left the store and continued biking in the very light rain. I continued to the town of Gopeng and found the motel. At the motel they did not speak English. Or I should say they only knew a few English words and we did not try to talk. There were other resorts in the rain forest. The motel was very nice and next to the highway. I saw a sign to a rainforest resort that was another 3 miles out of the way. I think I should have gone the extra miles and stayed there. My place was fine, but a rain forest resort sounded interesting. I walked around the town and it was very Malaysian, I doubt they had many tourists in that town, I was a rarity. I used my GPS to find a grocery store. The store was more like an open-air market with a roof and an 8-foot barbed wire fence around it. It was closed, so I went towards another store per my GPS. The other store was an open 7-11 and I was able to get groceries. When I walked around town it seemed like everyone was stirring at me. This was pretty typical of Malaysia. The town seemed a little scarier than other towns, but I'm sure it was perfectly safe. I was back at my motel by 7:15 PM. (Daily Bike miles 63.9; odometer total bike miles 1940.7; GPS total miles 828.86; walked 2 miles)

Day 17, Monday, November 26, 2012

I biked hard until about 11:00 AM and then I felt the rain start. I decided to take a break at a gas station and then it started pouring. I really needed to take a dump, this way the only time during the trip that I was not at the motel when I need to dump. There are rest rooms in the gas station, but they do not have western style toilets. So, while I was waiting out the rain, I tried taking a dump in the whole in the ground toilets. You need to stand over a 6-inch diameter whole and let it drop in. Well, I did not get it perfect and had to spray the corners of the whole (they have a hose with sprayer next to the hole in the ground). I got water all over, it was very wet. The gas station attendant was very friendly, I noticed when he went into the rest room that he came out and got the mop. He did not give me a bad look. He may not have realized I was the one that made the floor all wet. On the other hand, that might be normal. The

rain had tapered off so I decided to head off while he was cleaning up. I started cycle in the direction I thought I needed to go, then after a couple of miles I noted my GPS indicated I was going the wrong way. I returned to the intersection near the gas station and took the road that is straight from the gas station (right turn to me), it looked like the right one on my map. As I was going, I felt rain again and made it to shelter near a building. It was a wet day, even though I was missing the downpours I was basically soaked. While I was waiting out the rain a small truck went by and I heard a very loud bang. My ears were ringing after that for about an hour. Not sure if it was a back fire or firework. I noticed a couple of dogs that were hanging out near me took off after the bang. Maybe the noise was set off to scare the dogs. While waiting for the rain I looked at my GPS and realized that I had made another wrong turn at the same intersection about 2 miles back. When the rain tapered off, I went back to the intersection with the gas station for the third time and took the only remaining choice, this was the correct route. Went about 8 miles wrong, bad morning for biking lots of rain and kept going the wrong way. Things got better and I was able to dry off. I stopped to take off my rain gear and some kids saw me. They all cheering and wanted me to take their photos. They were trying to talk to me, but I could not understand them. They spoke no English. At one point a young man stopped me on his motor scooter; I could not understand him since he spoke no English. He was gesturing like someone died and pointed at his wallet. He had his hands in prayer like form. I think he was trying to bum money. I normally do not like it when people try to bum money and feel I should not contribute to that type of behavior. So, I shook my head no and cycled away. I thought he might follow me, but he turned around and went the other direction. Glade to get rid of him! I rode the last 15 miles to what was a bus station on my GPS. I was expecting a big terminal since it was on the GPS. Well, if it was not marked on the GPS, I would have never known it was a bus stop. I asked about the bus to Malacca and the lady did not understand me. She pointed at this young guy (probably about 20 years old) that was waiting for the bus and I showed him where I was headed, he asked the lady. Then I was told they did not have a bus there. The young guy told me I would need to take a bus to Kuala Lumpur and then find another bus to Malacca. The lady indicated that I could not take my bike. I showed her how it folded and she agreed it was OK. I paid for the bus and it was due to arrive in 5 minutes. I quickly took apart my trailer hardware and loaded the parts into the suit case that made up the trailer. Most of the people waiting for the bus looked like poor locals, some did not have shoes. When I paid for the bus, I took out my wallet with all the money and it seemed like everyone noticed. Maybe only the lady I paid noticed, I think I was a little paranoid. The people were definitely stirring at me as I packaged my bike trailer for the bus. Normally I take out the wallet that has minimal money, it was a mistake to take out the other wallet. I need to change the way I do that, normally the wallets feel the same I just keep the one with the money in the left pocket. After that I put the wallet with the money in my passport carrier, so I did not

make that mistake again. When the bus arrived, I was the only one with stuff for the luggage compartments and the young kid that helped me get the ticket also helped me get the bags on the bus. The bus driver did not help. I did not feel like I put the bike in the compartment securely and was worried about it as we went to Kuala Lumpur, but everything went fine. I was also concerned with the fact people may have seen my money, but once on the bus I was given plenty of room and no one bugged me. The bus ride was very bumpy I kept thinking my bike would fall out of the luggage apartment, but it made it fine. Once in Kuala Lumpur I decided to stay in the motel across from the train station. They did not let me take my bike to my room, but did let me lock it to the emergency stair case. I walked around train station after checking into the motel to find out about the bus to Malacca in the morning. I was told I would need to take a bus to another bus terminal. I then went back to the motel and ate a sandwich. Then I walked around town looking for the buildings in the picture of Kuala Lumpur, the city was very interesting. Lots of action at one part of town there were lots of young ladies (probably in their 20s) were dressed in very short skirts and trying to recruit people. I do not think they were prostitutes. It may have been traveling services or messages. I did not care and kept walking. It took me a while, but I finally found the buildings I wanted to get photos of and took pictures. When I returned to Portland, I showed a friend the photo of the building and he told me that was the tallest building in the world, I told him no there were taller buildings in that city. We looked it up on the internet and found out it was the tallest building in the world from 1998 to 2004 (the building is called Petronas Towers). Then I returned to the motel, neat city. I think I saw everything I wanted. I am not much into the city life. (Daily Bike miles 78.7; odometer total bike miles 2019.4; GPS total miles 906.14; walked 9 miles)

Day 18, Tuesday, November 27, 2012

I went to take a taxi to the other bus station. I was in the downtown bus station, the bus to Malacca was at a different location. I figured it was close and the bus taxi driver said 35 R, seemed expensive so I said no and was looking for another taxi and then he went down to 30 R. So, I decided to go for it. The ride to the other bus station was a long distance, I was glad my bus into Kuala Lumpur the previous night was not to that bus terminal, from the Malacca bus station I could have never checked out downtown Kuala Lumpur. I felt like the original taxi price was good when I realized how far the taxi guy went and the amount of traffic he would need to go through to get back to where he picked me up. The guy did not turn on his meter until he was about ½ way to the Malacca bus station, the cost was a lot less on the meter, my guess is he pocketed the extra money. At one point the taxi guy was not paying attention and bumped into the car in front of us. Him and the guy in the other car stopped to see if there was any damage. Both cars looked fine and the other driver let us go on our way. Once at the Malacca bus station I bought a bus ticket and had trouble figuring

out where to go to wait for the bus. What they told me at the ticket counter did not match where I was shown to go by the bus station security. I asked a guy waiting for a bus and he showed me how to read the numbers on my ticket and he was going on my bus. He helped me identify my bus and we boarded it. The seats were assigned on the bus, but there were only 5 people on the bus. When the bus left the station, I noticed the guy next to me moved to another seat. As I was looking out the bus window it was very rainy. Good day to start on a bus. By the time I had my trailer back together at the Mallacca bus terminal and attached to my bike the rain was almost stopped. I left town and as I was approaching a road a motorcyclist slowed down to talk to me. It was a police officer and he wanted to know about my trip. He was very nice and at the stop light he gave me the thumbs up. I should have taken his photo. It was a drizzle day, but not too wet. At one point a guy in a car stopped to take my photo then he passed me and stopped again. I got off my bike and we talked to him for a while. We got photos of each other. He told me that his brother has a bike Friday (bike like mine). Once in Batu Pahat I checked out a luxury motel, it seemed too expensive. As I was leaving the parking lot attendant told me where to look for cheaper motels. The next one down the road looked fine and 2/3 the price of the first one. It looked very good so I stayed there. They put my bike in a locked up back room. Some motels would let me take my bike in the rooms and other ones had places for me to lock them up. I walked into the town and the mall near the motel. I was looking for souvenirs, but really could not find anything. In the town I saw a shop with very cheap clothes. I ended up buying nice used blue jeans and a button up polo shirt, with Mount Kinabalu written on it (highest mountain in SE Asia). The man wanted to know if I lived nearby, he showed me his sewing machine and told me he fixed clothes. He thought I could use his service. I went back to the motel to sleep. (Daily Bike miles 64.5; odometer total bike miles 2083.9; GPS total miles 964.91; walked 5 miles)

Day 19, Wednesday, November 28, 2012

My first stop of the day was in front of a Mosque to get photos of me with my bike in front of the mosque in the parking lot. In one town I saw monkeys in a tree near a river. I saw a lot of neat fruit trees (Papaya, Durian, Rambutan, Pineapple, Duka, etc.) and stands selling the fruit. That is very typical for Southeast Asia. I checked out the water in a small fishing village. The coast was all rocks instead of sandy beaches. I was wondering why as I followed the Malaysia coast, I hardly ever saw the ocean, no sandy beaches. Why would someone want to hang out on uncomfortable rocks? The fishing village was nice with old houses on stilts and a pier. They had piles of claims for sale, too bad they did have cooked ones. Then the next town had some big markets, I was looking for souvenirs but could not find anything. As I was leaving that town, I saw a stand with Muslim hats and bought one as a souvenir. I ended up missing a turn and was led to a main highway that had a sign forbidding bikes. In looking at my GPS I could either go for a short distance on the road which did not

allows bikes or go a long distance out of the way. I decided to go with the road that did not allow bikes. I did not get far when I felt rain, it started pouring before I made it to shelter, so I raced to the next bridge. That was the most rain that actually got me all at once, the other times I made it to shelter before the downpours. The rain was so heavy that water got inside my plastic totally sealed trailer. The only place where it seemed like the water could enter the sealed trailer was on the underside where the screws attach the trailer to the wheels and the suit case. While under the bridge a group of about 5 kids on motor scooters showed up to wait out the rain under the bridge. They all had bags of funny little fruit (Rambutan and Duka). They kept giving me fruit and they were eating it at the same time. The fruit was very good. When the rain stopped, they each gave me a hand full of fruit and I put it into my trailer for that evening. I continued after the rain and got off the main highway fairly quickly. After a couple hours I felt some more rain and stopped at a gas station to get a cup of noodles. It then started to pour rain again. The gas attendant was very social and wanted to know all about my trip. He ended up riding my bike around the parking lot. By the time the rain peaked out there were about 30 motor scooters at the gas station waiting out the rain downpour. As the rain tapered off the motor scooters left. I was one of the last ones to leave. I only need to go about another more 5 miles to town. I left the gas station wet and in light rain. Then I finished the ride to Johor Bahru. This was the first day I was stuck in the monsoon, every day they happened but normally I made shelter before getting soaked. Once in Johor Bahru the first motel I checked out was right across from the train station, but would not let me bring my bike inside and was expensive. They wanted me to lock it my bike up outside the motel, this was the worst place since I was in Asia a motel suggested I put my bike. I decided not to stay there. The next motel I checked out was very nice and they let me put my bike in my room. The room was very nice, next to all the markets and action and the room had a great view. It was also less expensive that the motel that wanted me to lock my bike up outside. The room was on the 12th floor and I could see buildings on the island on Singapore, not the city. I walked all over the town and markets. I finally found good souvenirs and bought lots of stuff. I needed to use up my Malaysian money. Did a pretty good job, but still had enough to convert it to Singapore money the next day. I checked out the bridge to Singapore and it looked like a long line of packed traffic. My butt was really hurting from that day's bike ride and it was hard to walk, the biking is a pain in the butt. It's funny I made it this far before my butt hurt so much that it was hard to walk. For some reason the last day of biking really did it in, more than the other 19 days. (Daily Bike miles 86.9; odometer total bike miles 2170.8; GPS total miles 1049.3; walked 4 miles)

Day 20, Thursday, November 29, 2012

I woke up in the morning and walked around the town of Johor Bahru, I was not in a hurry to get to Singapore. I figured once in Singapore I would need to wait for check

in times at a motel and it would be more expensive than Malaysia. There was activity in town like soldiers marching and kids training. I finally decided to try biking to Singapore, it required backtracking to get to the highway I was using my GPS and I figured it was giving me a car only route. I got to one point where it looked very hard to cross the road due to all the traffic and no shoulder for biking. The previous night I noticed a solid line of traffic on the bridge. I figured it would be 20 miles of solid unenjoyably riding to the city of Singapore. The island (country) was only about 3 miles, but the city was on the other side of the island (about 20 miles away). Also, I thought it might not be legal to bike on the highways, since I have heard how strict things are in Singapore I decided not to risk getting in trouble and went back to the train station in Johor Bahru. I was about 3 miles from Woodlands, Singapore and it was about the same distance back to the train station. Well, I made the wrong choice and went back to the train station. When I got back to the train station the security guy said I could not take my bike and suggested I biked to Singapore. When I showed him that the bike folded in half, he said it was OK for me to take my bike. Then I tried rolling it and he would not let me take it to the train like that. I had to fold the bike and carry it while pulling my suit case. Not very easy and made no sense why I could not roll the bike on its own wheels. Well, I got my train ticket and noticed it was not going all the way to the city of Singapore, it was only going to Woodlands. I asked about a ticket all the way to Singapore and they indicated no. I think they said a bus from Woodlands to the city of Singapore was required. Well, it took about 2 hours before I was on the train and in Woodlands. That was the longest it has ever taken to travel 3 miles. While on the train I could see the traffic on the bridge and it turned out the solid line of traffic was diesel trucks waiting to get into Singapore. The inner lanes of the bridge was for cars and the traffic was very light in those lanes. There were people monitoring the cars coming in, from what I could see if I would have biked another 1/10th of a mile than morning I could have easily gotten to the bridge and cycled into Singapore. Once in Woodlands I tried finding a bus or train to the city of Singapore, but I could not figure it out. At the bus terminal they did not have an information booth. I then started biking to the city of Singapore. It turns out the train was a big waste of time. Well, the weather was dry all morning and when I started biking it started sprinkling. If I would have skipped the train I could have already been in the city of Singapore before the rain started. Well since it started raining, I figured I should look for shelter, I found a bus stop and decided to take a break. That was timed perfect because about a minute after getting under the bus shelter it started pouring. A man on a bike and a man on a motor scooter also stopped at the bus stop for shelter. It really did not seem much different in Singapore than Malaysia. The big difference is there is much more trash on the side of the roads in Malaysia (in Malaysia I saw a man dumping trash out of his truck onto a pile of junk next to the road) and things are more expensive in Singapore. I stopped to eat and I noticed a man eating with his fingers. I saw this in Malaysia too. Most people eat with silver ware, but some people

eat their food with their fingers, they picked up the rice, saucy chicken and stuff the food in the mouths. They end out with gravy all over their hands and face. Once in Singapore I started looking for a motel, the first one was way too expensive and fancy. I noticed a couple of them that looked like dormitories and then found one that looked OK. The one that was OK, did not have any cheaper single rooms. They had a room without a window that was cheaper than the room with a window. I decide to get the room with the window. That room was on the lower floor and the window was shaded. You could not see out the window. I probably should have gone with the no window room. She did warn me the only windowed room was on the ground floor and said I could look at it first. I should have, I did ask for discounts and she said no. I noticed a man that night asking about discounts and they said no to him also. I read that most motels have some sort of discounts and you had to ask. I think things were easily booked at cheaper motels. After checking into the motel, I hung all my wet stuff, took a shower and cleaned some stuff up in preparation for my flight home. I then went for a walk to town. I found the mall where I could take the duck tour from the next day (amphibious WW II city tour) I was able to find the neat part of town with the Helix, it's a walking bridge that has a frame that represents the human DNA and lights up at night. I never saw it at night. That was the area with the main Singapore marina, most if the main sights of Singapore would be seen from that area – marina Sands Motel, Merlion Park, Floating stadium, Gardens of Singapore, Singapore Flyer, etc. I walked back to the motel and ate sandwiches. Then I went shopping at Mustafa center, a hug store with everything from cloths to souvenir, to gold to food, etc. Then I went back to the motel and finished getting everything ready for my flight home, except the bike and things I would need the next day. Hard day of walking since my butt hurt so much, I think I figured out a big part of the problem was my special biking shorts, the seam was not well designed. (Daily Bike miles 20.2; odometer total bike miles 2191; GPS total miles 1070.92; walked 6 miles)

Day 21, Friday, November 30, 2012

I started biking at about 7:00 AM towards the Helix and when I was passing a Mosque (I think it was Sultan Mosque) I noticed it was open and no one was around. I decided to go inside and check it out. As I was checking it out a Muslim man asked me where I was from and I told him the USA. He said he was passing by and noticed my bike. He thought it might not be locked up and checked it out closer to see that it was locked. He told me leaving a bike unlocked was very risky in Singapore. I guess theft is a problem in Singapore. I asked him if it was OK to take photos in the Mosque and he said yes. He admired my bike and wanted to know how much it cost, I told him it cost me about \$1000 US dollars and he said for him to get a Bike Friday it would cost him about \$2000 US in Singapore due to shipping. My bike is a lower end Bike Friday and they have them that are a lot more expensive. I was surprised that he was so failure the US made Bike Friday. While talking to the man at the Mosque a child

came up to us and the man said it was his son. I ended up taking a photo of him and his son. I noticed a folding Hummer bike and told them that I had one like that. The one they had was nicer than mine, it had gold colored trim in areas. They said that was how they bought the bike. He asked where I was going for the day and I told him to the city. He told me the best route for biking and gave me detailed instruction which I followed all the way to the Helix. I could not find where I was supposed to go from the Helix to get to South Park, he mentioned a tunnel under the highway. I got photos around the Mosque and then went to where the kid's Hummer bike was to get a photo and they were gone. I then cycled into town following the directions from the man in the Mosque. I went to take a photo of a fountain and a security guy said I could not take a photo there, not sure why. The bike route the man from the Mosque suggested was very good and I was glad he told me the route. When I arrived at the Helix I was sidetracked and checked out this Mall, I was at the far end of the mall and I think that is why I did not find the road under the highway. I was interested in checking out the other side of the marina and so I biked over to Merlion Park. From there I followed the river and then tried to go towards where I thought South Park might be, I kept getting lost and using my GPS to get back to the main part of the city. One place that I found when I was lost had a big Chinese style temple with hundreds of Buddha. It was free to visit, I am surprised at how many places do not charge admission. I finally made it to the South Park area and checked out the Garden by the bay. I did notice a trail under the highway that looked like it went to the Helix. The tunnel had a sign that said no bikes. I noticed people biking through the tunnel, this must have been the tunnel the man from the Mosque told me about. Even though I saw people biking through it and I had seen people biking in other areas with no biking signs, I decided not to disobey the sign and biked the long way back to the Helix. Then I biked to the mall with the Duck tour and was not able to get on the next tour, but could get on one 30 minutes later. I paid for the Duck tour and checked out the Mall until I needed to board the Duck tour boat. The Duck tour was a fun way to quickly check out the Singapore Marina area. It was also very informative, interesting facts include 1/6 family households in Singapore have at least 1 million dollars in saving. Singapore is the most densely populated country in the world. Singapore is the 4th place financial institute of the world behind London, New York and Tokyo. The strict claims of Singapore is not true – gum, spitting and cussing will not get you thrown in jail, I saw things like gum in the drinking fountain and people biking in areas with signs that said no biking, seems not that much different than other places. I did not get back to the motel until around 7:00 PM. I started getting my bike packed up and then went to look for some dinner. I decided on prawns with rice, the picture of the meal showed king sized shrimp. The meal looked very good in the picture. It was fresh cooked and took a long time to arrive after ordering. I had to eat my dinner with my fingers, they did give me silverware, but the prawns were very small and had shells. I could not get the shells off with my fork and knife. They also did not give me a napkin and the sauce on

the rice was very message. I really felt like a slob the way I was eating, but I do not think anyone noticed. My butt was really hurting and I could hardly walk so I bought an Ace bandage thinking I could make a patch, I never ended up using it. I then went to the store and bought more souvenirs. After that I went back to the motel to finish packing. By the time I had my bike packed and all my gear ready for the flight home it was after midnight. I did not get much sleep that night. This was the first day since I left Thailand that I did not get at least one Monsoon type down pour. There was a little drizzle at one point of the day (about 6:00 PM – just after duck tour), but that's all. (Daily Bike miles 25.5; odometer total bike miles 2216.5; GPS total miles 1096.36; walked 3 miles)

Day 22, Saturday, December 1, 2012

I was only half a sleep all night, I did not want to over sleep. I got out of bed at 5:20 AM and made sure I had everything ready and finished any food I had left. It cost 50% extra to take a taxi before 6:00 AM, so I decided to wait until after 6 AM, I ended up telling the motel clerk to call me a taxi around 6:05 AM. I was in the taxi at about 6:15 AM on my way to the Singapore airport. I did not have my itinerary out and the cab was asking which terminal I needed to go to, I was not positive and could only tell him it the international terminal, he actually wanted to know the airlines. Since Singapore is a small island that is its own country all flights from the airport are international flights. As he was driving, I was able to get my itinerary and tell him the flight, airline and time. He dropped me off and I was easily able to figure out where to go and checked in for my flight. I had time to walk all over the Singapore airport and spend all my left-over money. I decided to take photos of all the different planes, no American Airline, Continental, etc., All unusual airlines for a person like me from the USA – Vietnam airlines, China airlines, etc. When at the Hong Kong airport I also walked around and photographed planes. In Vancouver I did the same thing. I slept for about 8 hours during all my flights, I had flights and layover times adding up to 21 hours before returning to Portland. Nancy was at the airport and gave me a ride. We went to a movie and had dinner. Then she went to her daughter's place and I fell sound asleep. (Daily Bike miles 0; walked 10 miles)

In one town (not sure which day), I could not get on the highway going south and had to take my bike and trailer over stairs to get to the other side of the highway. I could not bike to the other side of the highway because there was a barrier between the north and south lanes of the highway. I cycled a long distance north trying to find a break in the barrier or car bridge, but could not find anything. At one point I noticed a walking bridge, but I continued south for a while. After not seeing any other options, I cycled back to the walking bridge and I took my bike to the top, then went back to get my trailer. Then I walked the bike and trailer to the other side of the bridge. Then I took the bike and trailer down the stairs separately. It was a strenuous task.

Day 23, Sunday, December 2, 2012

I did a little bit of biking and unpacked things. I went to work the next day.