

# **Biking Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay 2018**

## **Day 1, Saturday, November 10, 2018**

I woke up around 3:15 AM, took a shower, finished packing, loaded Marty's car and we were on the way to the airport at about 3:45 AM. I checked in for my flight by about 4:20 AM and walked around the airport for a while, I saw Blake, he was on his way to Geneva for a business trip. The flight to Atlanta left Portland at 6:00 AM. Once in Atlanta I asked a couple of times if I would need to collect my bags in Lima and they all said no (they said the same in Portland), they said the bags were checked all the way to Cusco.

## **Day 2, Sunday, November 11, 2018**

Once in Lima I went through customs and came to where they were offloaded luggage, I decided to check to see if my luggage was there and it was. I had to take my luggage and recheck it at the other airlines in Lima. When I went to check in, they said my flight was cancelled and they put me on a flight that was 5 minutes later than my original flight. Before leaving Portland, I was able to get currency for Uruguay and Peru only. In Atlanta I tried getting money changed for Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, they had none of those currencies. When in the Lima airport the first 2 places I went had none of my missing currency. The third place at the Lima airport had Bolivia money, so I exchanged 100 USD to Bolivian bolivianos (BOL). Then I found another place, one in the secure area of airport (after security) where I was able to get Argentina money. I was not able to find Paraguay money anywhere. Once in Cusco a man took my luggage (I had to tip him) to a taxi and the taxi driver took me to the bus station and helped me find the bus company for my bus tickets. He convinced me to tip him for the extra effort. I do not like paying people to help me with my bags, all my luggage has wheels and is easy to get around. Getting to the bus station quickly was a plus, it gave me the opportunity to walk around Cusco, after confirm my seat on the bus (it was a full bus). I had to pay an exit tax to leave on the bus terminal. Once on the bus the bus host gave us the bus rules, one of the rules is no poops on bus, only pee allowed. I did use the toilet one time and the flush did not even flush down my pee. Other than that, it was a very nice and comfortable bus. It took forever to go the 250 miles to Puno (>6 hours). They also made you wear a seatbelt on the bus, not sure I have ever been in a bus with seatbelts. I was dehydrating; I did not buy water prior to boarding the bus, big mistake. I also got a bad headache that night, not sure, if it was the altitude, water and/or over traveled. They had one stop on the bus after several hours and I was able to get water and a soda. That night I tried plugging my 120 VAC (Peru uses 220 VAC) power strip into the hotel receptacle and there was a spark and the receptacles all stopped working in my room. The lights were

still on and later that night I could hear people talking, I think they were fixing the power (probably resetting a breaker). In the morning the receptacles were working again.

### **Day 3, Monday, November 12, 2018**

I did not sleep great, my headache was really bad. I was dreaming about work. I ate breakfast late and did not leave the hotel until about 9:00 AM. I cycled to about 15 miles south of Puno and then back. The ride was pretty flat and not much to see. I did see some neat animals that looked like a cross between a racoon, rabbit and cat. Once back in Puno I went to the boat dock and was able to sign up for an island tour. It was cheap and very cool, but we spent too much time at the food area. When I arrived at the boat terminal on my bike, I realized I did not have my bike lock. A lady at one of the ticket offices let me store my bike there, I was a little concerned about getting my bike back, but all was fine when I returned. We visited some interesting floating islands. The people make islands and place straw huts on the island as homes. The straw hut are very small and sleeps about 4 people (per our guide). The tour was about 2 to 3 hours and we spent a lot of time hanging out. We went to an island where they served food, but I was not interested. I guess if I would have eaten there it would have been fine. I do not think anyone on our boat ate there. On the way back it started raining with lightning, I had not brought my rain gear; it was very sunny in the morning. Once back on land I got my bike and it started raining very hard. I waited out the worst of it under a storefront awning. Then I went back to the hotel and packed my bike in the suitcase to prepare for my bus ride the next day. (Bike total trip miles 32.27, Total miles 53 miles; Total GPS miles = 255 miles)

### **Day 4, Tuesday, November 13, 2018**

I woke up early and waited for the Bolivia Hop bus, the bus was supposed to pick me up between 8:00 and 8:30 AM, they actually picked me up in a minivan a little early (~7:50 AM). They picked up several other people on the way to the main bus. Then they took us to the bus and we left at approximately the correct time of 8:30 AM. They had a new bus and the toilets did not work (They claimed it was a new bus, did not appear new). In addition, the air vents were off until about an hour into the trip. The bus from Cusco was much nicer and roomier than the Bolivia hop bus. The Peru/Bolivia border crossing went very smooth with Bolivia hop and good thing I had my visa (not sure, what would have happened if I would not of had my visa). Once in Copacabana we had an hour to walk around and then they took the Bolivia Hop private boat to Isle Del Sol, we checked out the temple and hiked over a hill to a small village. A lady got mad at me for taking her picture, I should not do that. I did not know she noticed. Then we took a boat back to the bus in Copacabana and continued towards La Paz. At one point we came to a large waterway (I think it was a very big river) and all the bus passengers had to get off the bus and take a boat across the

channel. The bus went in a separate boat and we got back on the bus on the other side of the channel. Interesting river crossing! We arrived in La Paz at about 10:30 PM and the bus dropped each person off at their hotel or a taxi terminal. I was dropped off right at my hotel, cool! (End of day total GPS miles = 493.24 miles)

### **Day 5, Wednesday, November 14, 2018**

It was another bad night of sleep. Not sure why I cannot sleep well, normally I sleep great on my trips. I woke up around 6:45AM, that's when I actually got out of bed. Then I had my hotel included breakfast and got ready for my day trip to Tiwanaku. The man came to pick me up right about 8:00 AM, very prompt. Then they drove around and picked up other people and we drove the 1.5 hours to Tiwanaku. We started out at a museum, not my favorite thing, then we checked out the ruins, they were nice, but I was expecting better. The group on the tour was interesting, a couple from Germany, a man with a hangover from Wisconsin, an artist that grew up in Arizona that now lives in Kansas city (he was on a month trip which was partly founded as an art assignment, the founded part was in Chili), a French guy that did not know he had to pay admission (I think he might have either paid or thought he paid, most people paid the Tiwanaku admission with their tickets (not me)) and a guy from Canada that was spending 2 weeks in Bolivia (he had just come from a 4 day salt flats tour). After the tour, I went to find the meeting location for my "Death Road" bike tour on the next day. It was close but at first, it was hard to find, good thing I did not wait until the next day to find it. Then I walked around and checked out the sights of La Paz. Probably saw mostly everything. I bought a Euro USB charger on the street and when I plugged it into the hotel it sparked (I think it was 120 VAC charger) (End of day total GPS miles = 599.08 miles)

### **Day 6, Thursday, November 15, 2018**

I woke up at about 6:00 AM, first mostly good night of sleep. I went to breakfast a little before 6:30 AM and quickly ate. Then I made sure I had everything together and walked over to the Higher Grounds Cafe to meet up with the Gravity Bolivia "Death Road" cycling tour. Sounds scary, but it's not. It's all downhill, you start at an elevation of over 15,000 ft (my GPS read 15,183 ft) and end at below 4,000 ft (my GPS read 3,747 ft). The ride starts on pavement with a medium amount of traffic, we had some dense fog and steady rain. One part of the tour would have required 8 KM of uphill riding. All the groups bus the people and bikes on the 8 KM uphill. One guy in our group really wanted to do the uphill on the bike and I would have been interested, but the guide said it would take an extra 1.5 hours to finish the tour. Our guide said we could do the uphill if at least 6 people wanted to do it. Only 3 people voted to do the uphill (I was not one of them, I would have wanted to do it if it did not affect the trip timing or trip adventure). We did not end up cycling the uphill part, I noticed there were no bikes on the part the bus took us on. Then we got to a dirt road

with sheer cliffs on one side. The fog had lifted by the time we arrived at the dirt road and rain slowed to a drizzle. Shortly after that the rain ended. At this point of our tour the guide warned us not to high five little kids, he said the kids might grab your handlebars when you lift your hand to high five them. The road rule is ride on the left side of the road, the same side as the cliff. The reason for the rule is so the downhill driver can look out his window and see how close his tire is to the cliffs. The road is in very good shape, you need to pay a 50 BOL fee to maintain the road since most of the traffic uses the new highway. The "Death Road" is mostly used for cycling and support vehicles, but you occasionally see some vehicles driving uphill (I think we only saw 2 vehicles on the uphill for the main 30 miles). On the way down the road my pedal suddenly slipped, good thing I was not standing, like they recommend. I stopped and the sweep guide pulled over and used his tools to reattached the pedal arm. Then I was able to continue the ride. The ride was a blast and at the bottom we visited a wild life recovery center. We ate lunch there and they provided a couple tours at a small cost. I went on both tours. First was the monkey tour basically you were in a cage and some wild monkey came to our cage, then there were other monkeys in cages. It was not really that exciting. Then I went on the bear tour, which I expected not to be that cool and it was better. We walked through a jungle to where there was a couple of bears, one was just behind a light gauge electric fence. The bear swatted the fence and the lady yelled at it and told us all to stand back. Then she started throwing the bear peanuts. After the bear tour we drove about 3 hours to get back to La Paz. We arrived back in La Paz around 8:00 PM. I tried using the ATM at the hotel and it did not work. Then I asked about exchange USD for Bolivian bolivianos, but they did not have that much cash and suggested that I go to witches' market to find a money exchange shop. I started walking there and saw another ATM, I tried that one and it worked. (End of day total GPS miles = 719.91 miles)

### **Day 7, Friday, November 16, 2018**

I did not sleep very well, all night I was thinking how I wished I had not signed up for the private tour where I would self-guide myself down a canyon near la Paz. Spending 2 hours with a driver that will probably not speak English and hiking a canyon not knowing where to meet my driver was concerning. I went to the lobby in the middle of the night and no one was at the tour desk. In the morning, I also asked about the tour desk and they said they did not show up until 10:00 AM. I told the guy at the desk that I was concerned about the tour and he told me not to worry (but I was still worried). The private guide showed up and I went of the tour. He took me a long way, about an hour drive from La Paz. And he went down a long unused dirt road to the bottom of a canyon and dropped me off. He was telling me a lot of stuff in Spanish that I did not understand, all I understood was to follow the river for about 2 hours and he would be waiting at the lower part of the canyon (Mostly I understood that part because that's what they told me when I purchased the tour at the hotel in La Paz).

The canyon was pretty nice, but it seemed like the type of canyon that could easily flash flood and there was a 50% chance of rain. I kept thinking if I do not meet up with my guide, I have no idea how to get back to my hotel, dummy me I did not even bring the name of my hotel with me. After hiking about 45 minutes, I came to an ideal pickup location with a road that came down from the top of the canyon, at this point it was the first place that I had seen any people since my driver dropped me off. But I figured since it was a 2-hour hike, I had not gone far enough. I continued for about 30 minutes, the canyon was much less interesting, and the river got too large to easily continue. At that point, I figure this was no longer a tourist trail and I decided the first place that looked like a good pickup location must have been correct. So, I walked quickly back up there (about 20 minutes to get back) and was relieved to find my driver. He took me back to La Paz, I still had about 6 hours before my bus to Uyuni, so I walked around and decided to take the Gondolas, what a great network on Gondolas they have in La Paz. The traffic in La Paz is horrible and it takes forever to get around, however the gondolas are great for getting you around town. I decided I would go back to the hotel and make my way to the bus terminal at 5:00 PM. By that point I felt I had seen all that I wanted to see in La Paz and that the canyon was a good idea after all. I was at the bus station before 6:00 PM and got my seat assignment and had them store my bags. I walked around for a long time and I noticed when a bus arrived, they were loading a ton of stuff in the cargo area of the bus. That made me worry whether or not they would be able to get my stuff on the bus. They got my stuff on the bus and it departed at 8:30 PM. (End of day total GPS miles = 781.82 miles)

### **Day 8, Saturday, November 17, 2018**

About an hour into the bus ride (per my GPS about 16 miles as the bird flies from La Paz), the bus broke down. It took them about 3 hours to get the bus working. I was only due to arrive in Uyuni about 3 hours before my salt flats tour, I was concerned if anything else went wrong I would lose my tour. The bus was going fast to make up time, I could feel it slightly loose traction on a few corners. Well by the time the bus arrived in Uyuni it was only about 1 hour late. When the bus dropped us off, no taxis, no bus terminal, just lots of buses and not organized. I found someone to ask where the tour guide place was and I went over there, it was still closed. Someone from the café across the street came over and told me the tour guide office was not open until 9:00 AM and let me store my stuff in their café, a lot of people were in the café with their gear waiting for the tour company to open. I had breakfast there and asked if I could leave my stuff while I walked around. I went back to the tour guide and it was opened, I had them confirm my ticket and asked about storing my gear there and they had a room for me to store my gear. Then I went to find my hotel and asked about storing stuff there and that was OK too. So, I went back to the café to get my stuff, I walked past the tour guide and they flagged me over there and I explained I was going to walk my gear to the hotel and they offered me a ride, but I said no. Then they said

the ride was free, so I took it. I did give a small tip for the free ride. They offered me a ride back to the tour agency, but I had plenty of time and said I would walk. It was only a little over a half mile, I was glad I did not have to drag my bags to the hotel. They ended up letting me into my room early and I unpacked some stuff and got ready for the tour, I was glad I got into the room. However, I could not find my notepad and finally realized I had to leave. I ended up finding my notepad in the hotel lobby as I was leaving (shew). Then I walked back to the tour company and asked about the train. They said the train tracks were out south of town, so that was not an option for the following day. Then they showed me where I could get a bus to Tupiza, I walked over there and decided to wait to buy my ticket. Then I went back to the Salt flat tour company and waited for the tour to begin. The tour was great, first we checked out the old trains. Then we went to a place where they processed the salt and had several souvenirs for sale (where I bought very cheap souvenirs). Then we went to check out the salt hotel, then we had lunch on the salt flats, then we hiked the trail on "Isle Incahuasi" (island in the middle of the salt flats with saguaro type cactus and a hiking trail to the top of the island). Then we went to the center of the flats our guide helped us take some interesting photos, then we went back to the salt hotel and then went to a part of the salt flats near the south border of the flats to watch the sunset and have a glass of wine. Then it was back to Uyuni at about 7:30 PM. Then I bought water and went back to my hotel. (End of day total GPS miles = 1254.18 miles)

### **Day 9, Sunday, November 18, 2018**

I went to sleep late and slept great. I did not set the alarm and woke up around 7:00 AM. I slowly woke up and assembled my bike for this day's ride. I first bought a bus ticket to Tupiza, I was hoping to get on the morning bus the next day, but that bus was full, so I had to get an evening bus. I cycled south for about 30 miles, started with three liters of water, The road was great all the way, I was waiting for it to get bad, from 2 cyclist reviews and my Salt Flat tour guide the road was gravel and not that great for cycling. Maybe I almost got to the bad part, I was more than half way to Atocha from Uyuni when I turned back, I was concerned about water, if I knew I could have found a bus back to Uyuni I would have continued to Atocha. I saw several lamas near the road and lots of flat sand and no trees. It was an easy ride south and not too bad north, with the exception of partial head winds (They were not direct headwind, from the front side). On the way south I had noticed a place that looked like a highway work zone near a few building (I only saw one other building in the entire 32 miles). On the way back north, I noticed someone in front of one of the buildings that had what looked like some sort of small advertisement sign, so I stopped to ask if they had water for sale. The lady went inside what looked like her house and she had a few liquids for sale (Sodas and water, not much of anything else for sale). I ended up buying a 2-liter water and 500 ml coke from her. I probably could have made it back to Uyuni without buying the water, I still had some water and I had

been rationing the water. It was nice having extra water and I was glad I could buy it. Once back in Uyuni I found a grocery store and bought supplies. Then I went back to my hotel and had a tuna sandwich with snacks dinner. (Daily bike miles = 63.81 miles; Total mile son Bike odometer = 117 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 1319.41 miles)

### **Day 10, Monday, November 19, 2018**

I packed up and checked out of my room. I showed them the draw that broke and they were OK with it. (The draw had broken when I had it loaded with stuff and opened it, the draw then crashed to the ground and broke off the plastic handle, a very cheap piece of not-so-great build furniture). I went to the bus station and changed my bus ticket to an end location of Villazon (instead of Tupiza). They changed my departure time by 3 hours. I had them store my gear at the hotel while I cycled north towards La Paz, I went past Colchani until I came to a view point and a lady with a dog at a bridge (She may have thought it was funny that I turned right then, but that was my planned turn around miles.). The riding is very flat and easy. On the way back, I had a sidewise tail wind (a sidewise headwind on the way north). I went back to the hotel to get my luggage and loaded the bike in the suit case and got stuff ready in front of the hotel. Then I slowly walked my stuff to the bus station. Once I had my stuff stored at the bus station, I still had over an hour for the bus to depart, so I walked around and bought a few supply things. They changed my bus again and I departed slightly earlier (about 10 minutes early than the new later time). The bus left Uyuni at about 8:00 PM and arrived in Villazon around 2:00 AM, a taxi driver gave me a ride to a nice hotel, we woke up the hotel desk clerk and I got a room for 2 nights. Probably went to sleep about 2:45 AM. I went to sleep quickly once at the hotel. (Daily bike miles = 48.7 miles; Prior to leaving Uyuni GPS miles = 1369.26 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 1550.74 miles)

### **Day 11, Tuesday, November 20, 2018**

I woke up around 6:30 AM, got my bike ready and started cycling towards Tupiza at a little after 7:00 AM, the ride was medium hard, a lot of downhill and some rolling hills, overall, there was a 2000-foot loss on the bike ride, seems like it should have been very easy. Tupiza is supposedly the town were Butch Cassidy and the Sundance kid died, there was no sign of this history in the town center or anywhere that I could find. I went to the bus station in Tupiza and found a sprinter van service to take me back to Villazon. They put my bike in the back (I removed the pedals and handlebars so the bike could easily fit behind the last seat in van) and headed back, they kept picking people up and people were standing by the time we arrived in Villazon. It was very cheap, not even enough for the salary of the driver in my opinion. I was back in Villazon by about 4:00 PM and I cycled around and then went back to the hotel to get

ready to cycle into Argentina on the following day. (End of day total GPS miles = 1669.16 miles)

### **Day 12, Wednesday, November 21, 2018**

I left the hotel a little after 7:00 AM, I took a photo at the border and the police said I should not take have taken the photo. I thought he would make me delete it, but he did not. I did not figure out how to stamp out of Bolivia, they pushed me towards stamping into Argentina and that was no problem. I easily found the bus station in La Quiaca and had to wait a little over 2 hours for a bus to Salta. There is an hour time change going into Argentina, so I tried resetting my bike odometer time and accidentally reset all the settings (for this day I used my GPS to calculate day miles  $3.5 \text{ miles} = 1672.66 - 1669.16$  (at La Quiaca)). About 26 miles before Salta a security checkpoint turned back the bus, they made us all get out and they had removed my orange suitcase with my bike. It was tied shut, so I opened it for them and they asked for my passport and destination. Then they let us all get back into the bus and let the bus turn back around so we could continue to Salta. Once in Salta I could not find a night bus to Pampa Del Infierno, so I got a hotel for the night. (Day bike miles = 3.5 miles; End GPS at La Quiaca 1672.66 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 1934.62 miles)

### **Day 13, Thursday, November 22, 2018**

At about 1:00 AM I woke up with a bad bug byte, it was gone in the morning. The previous day I asked about the buses to Presidencia Roque Sáenz Peña and I thought they said 4:00 AM and 5:00 AM, so I left my hotel at 4:30 AM so I could get the first bus out. Well, when I arrived at the bus terminal buses were not leaving yet. People were sleeping on benches. It turned out the bus companies I talked to the previous day said 4 PM and 5 PM. There was a 6:00 AM bus, but it was full (event the previous day they had not mention that bus). I was looking for other bus companies, but there were none open yet and a man tried to help me, when I showed him where I was going and the company that left at 4:00 PM, he said it was a premier company. I decided not to wait until the other places opened, I noticed the sign said hotel and bus in one. I started thinking I needed a place to stay and somehow changed my destination, so I would not get dropped off at 2:30 AM. (I sort of wish I would have stuck to the first plan, for bike miles). I ended up having to spend all day at Salta, I had my stuff stored and took the gondola up to the city overlook hill (I paid for a round trip ticket, but walked down – could have saved 150 ARG). On the walk down, I ended up in the historic part of Salta, somewhat neat. Somehow, I got turned around and had to use my GPS to find the bus station. Once at the bus station I still had almost 2 hours to wait. Once on the bus the premier seats were on the downstairs part of the bus. The seats were very comfortable, but the downstairs is very noisy (First time on bus downstairs seats). To me the slightly less roomy seat of the upstairs

would have been better (for the less noise). (End of day total GPS miles = Not logged miles; Estimated miles left Salta at 4 PM arrived Resistencia about 5:00 AM. Travel time 13 hours (8 hours to midnight) for about 510 miles; Estimated miles to midnight 8/13 \* 510 ≈ 315 miles)

### **Day 14, Friday, November 23, 2018**

I decided I did not want to go all the way to Corrientes, so I stayed at Resistencia. The people working on the bus were looking for me and when they found me, I explained I was going to stay there, the bus then took off. I assembled my bike and trailer and started biking east, the plan was to go to the first hotel about 30 miles away and spend the night. It started raining very hard not far from the bus station. I hung out under someone's house's overhang and got more rain ready. Then I took off when the rain slowed down. It was on and off drizzling all day. I found a nice hotel (Hotel 1970) after cycling for about 30 miles (per GPS). Well, it was not opened, so I continued towards the next hotel, well a short distance later there was a tollbooth and the other side of the booth the road went to single lanes and no shoulders, there was lots of mud if you went off the road and the traffic was heavy. (Turn around bike mileage was 34.91 journey miles) I did not want to do that riding, so I headed back to the closest hotel (Hotel 1970) and asked about the hotel. Both the nearby gas station and nearby restaurant seemed to indicate the hotel never opens. Not sure exactly what they said, but it seemed like they indicated the hotel never opens. I decided to bike all the way back to the bus station in Resistencia. When I arrived at the bus station, I had trouble getting by security, they finally let me pack my bike. Then I went to the bus companies and found one that was about to leave for Formosa (from the time I arrived at the bus terminal to the time I departed- including loading bike into the suitcase) was less than an hour. (I had arrived in Resistencia slightly after 3:00 PM. I was on the 3:55 PM bus to Formosa). I took the bus to Formosa and paid for 2 nights at a hotel in Formosa. (Daily bike miles = 68.92 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 2644.85 miles)

### **Day 15, Saturday, November 24, 2018**

I left the hotel around 7:00 AM and planned to cycle 25 miles south and then return. The highway had no shoulder and a lot of traffic, but most of the way there was a new road that was under construction, but since building roads in South America is a slow process, it was OK for motor scooters and bikes to use the work in progress traffic-less highway. I only had to deal with the main highway about 10% of the time and the traffic seemed pretty nice, a few close (2 to 3 feet away, most vehicles moved to the oncoming highway lane to give me more room) fast cars, but not many. When I was on the work in progress highway a little over 22 miles from Formosa, it suddenly ended. At that point, the only way to get to the main highway was through a swamp or to backtrack to the main highway. I then backtrack so I could return to Formosa and

then continued north past Formosa for a few miles. When north of Formosa the road had a small motorcycle/ bike lane divided from the main highway by a steel guardrail. It seemed to work OK, but it would probably not work good pulling a trailer (lots of motor scooters and not wide enough for a trailer and passing motor scooter). Motorcycles continually passed and the lane was not very wide. Then I headed back to Formosa. As I was biking to the waterfront, I ran over some Christmas lights that people were putting onto trees, I heard them say something, but it was too late. I think I broke a few of the bulbs, I apologized, they did not seem that mad at me (they probably should not have laid them out on the sidewalk without someone guarding them). Then I checked out the waterfront, you could see Paraguay across the river. The waterfront had a very nice walkway to an area where the Paraguay River was mostly in Argentina. I spent a lot of time there trying to get good photos of birds. I meet a couple that wanted to friend me in Facebook, but I could not find my name if Facebook. Maybe I used Stagnut in Facebook! As I was biking back to my hotel a souvenir cloths line with flags for sale caught the light on my helmet and I took down a string of flags a man was trying to sell. Oops again, I apologized and tried helping him put the flags back up. It was sort of funny, we both ended up laughing off the disaster. Then I bought a bus ticket to Clorinda and stuff at the store (even new pants). (Daily bike miles – 66.21 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 2705.96 miles)

### **Day 16, Sunday, November 25, 2018**

I woke up around 6:30 AM and got ready for the day, I checked out of the hotel at 8:30 AM and went across the street to the bus station. I waited for the 10:00 AM bus to Clorinda and took the bus. When the bus arrived in Clorinda people asked where I was going and I said to the hotel across the street, well it had no rooms. I assembled my bike and trailer in front of the no vacancy hotel. Then I cycled to find another hotel. My GPS showed two other hotels in town (The GPS did not show the full hotel across from the bus station). The first hotel looked OK, but it was closed. I looked in the window and it seemed like it had been out of business for a while. Then I went to the other hotel and was able to get a room. The people at the bar across from the hotel I stayed in kept trying to get me to come over, but I was not interested and smiled and waved as I went past them. On the way back to the hotel I avoided that bar and came across others interested in my bicycling travels and they explained there was a soccer game and that was being watched by the people at the bar across the street. The hotel would not let me put my bike in a secure place, they did let me lock it to their grill, it was still there in the morning. I think theft is almost non-existent in these small towns. I biked around a lot, towards the border and thought I should have taken my passport, in case I stopped by the police or border patrol. I normally take my passport with me everywhere. I cycled back to the hotel around 5:30 PM and then walked to the grocery store. I think I was collecting up too many groceries. (Daily bike miles 26.77 = 92.98)

– 66.21; GPS Trip miles when I arrived in Clorinda was 2779.77 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 2806.60 miles)

### **Day 17, Monday, November 26, 2018**

I left the hotel at a little after 7:00 AM and easily made it to the Paraguay border. At the border I asked about stamping out of Argentina, the police indicated I needed to continue to the Paraguay border. Once at the Paraguay border a man asked if I needed money exchange. I had him exchange 40 USD for 200 MIL Paraguay money. Then the guy guided me to the short line to stamp out of Argentina and showed me the line to stamp into Paraguay. That man and another man watched my bike while I quickly made my way through customs. It was easy, the people that helped me seemed to indicate that I would not be able to bike to Asuncion and that I would need to take the bus. It was early and I really wanted to bike to my hotel in Asuncion. They pointed to a bus near the border; I went over to it and noticed my GPS indicated another location for the bus terminal. So, I started biking, I knew there was a big bridge that crossed the Paraguay River and I expected they would not let me bike over the bridge. I figured it would not be the first time I needed to deal with an unknown bridge so I continued biking. Once at the bridge there was a tollbooth, I looked at the person in the booth as I went past him and he did not seem to care. Once at the bridge I noticed a sidewalk near the oncoming lane, so I crossed the road and took the side walk to the other side of the bridge. I saw no bike or pedestrians as I crossed the bridge on the sidewalk (seemed strange normally there are a lot of pedestrians and the bridge was quit long). Once over the bridge I started getting into the city traffic, I had 5 to 10 miles of unpleasant city traffic to my hotel. Once at the hotel I told them I needed an additional night, seemed like no problem. I was at the hotel slightly after noon and they let me in my room, cool. Then I freshened up a little and cycled to town. Very poor area, homeless camps with lots of children, several of the children were naked. I decided to bike the waterfront back. When I was about parallel to my hotel, I tried using my GPS to get back to my hotel, it wanted me to go through muddy unimproved ghettos roads with flooded out box homes to get back to my hotel. I did not want to do that so I backtracked until I came to a place with a paved road. Then my GPS gave me a better optional back to my hotel and I returned to the hotel. Then I went to the mall and bought more fluid (water and orange soda) and used the ATM to get Paraguay money. Then I was all set for Paraguay money, this trip was starting to wind down. I was not sure what I would do in Asuncion for 3 nights. (Total trip bike miles when I arrived at hotel 121.82 miles; Total trip bike miles when I ended my ride for the day = 139.75 miles; Daily bike miles = 46.77 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 2849.45 miles)

### **Day 18, Tuesday, November 27, 2018**

I left the hotel a little after 7:00 AM and cycled to the nearby park. The traffic is no

fun. The park was pretty nice, about half way around the park there was a bridge to another park. At the other park I did not see anyone on bikes, I went back to see if there was a sign restricting bikes and I saw none. I assumed I would see bikes cycling, but around I only saw lots of runners and pedestrians. I passed hundreds of people before someone seemed to scold me for my bike. Not sure what he said. Then I came to the main entrance to the park and a man flagged me over to him. Then he showed me a sign that said no bikes and made me leave the park. Then I went back to the biking part of the park and cycled all the trails allowed for bikes. Then I cycled to the airport and then I cycled to what my GPS called the city center, there was nothing there. Then I used the GPS to look for landmarks and found a couple of not very exciting squares/ park (one park was the one with lots of homeless people I went to the previous day). I checked out a few buildings near there, not much to see in Asuncion! Then I went towards the river front, where I had seen a large homeless camp the previous day. There were people on loud speakers talking to the crowd and police all over the place. Some of the police were in riot gear. It seemed like a bad place for me, so I went to bike the waterfront. As I was biking, I saw a brigade of Policed vehicles (one bus full of police in riot gear and 2 of the vehicles were like highway grade tanks). Seemed like a riot going down, I checked the news that night and did not see anything to do with a riot. I think they must have intimidated the crowd and kept the demonstration peaceful. There was a lot of people at the demonstration. Then I cycled the waterfront and found there was a way to my hotel around the swampy slums, the road was not easy to cycle, lots of traffic. At one point, I was on the sidewalk and my wheel became stuck and I flipped over my handlebars, no cuts, but my arm and hand are sore. I think I slight re-injured my rotary cuff (ongoing life problem). The rotary cuff was mostly better within a few days, but continued to hurt for weeks. Once I was close to the hotel, I decided I wanted more miles for the day, rain was predicted to start at about 2:00 PM, but it had stayed sunny. I lucked out and it stayed mostly rain free for another day! I went to the mall and bought groceries and then back to the hotel to work on my journal. I also watched Spanish TV, good Hollywood movies (translated into Spanish), but I do not understand the dialog. (Daily bike miles = 53.30 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 2898.94 miles)

### **Day 19, Wednesday, November 28, 2018**

I woke up around 6:30 AM and got ready for the day. I was cycling by about 7:30 AM, I went to the Parque Guasu Metropolitano and cycled in loops for about 25 miles. The full loop is a little less than 3 miles, there are a couple of cross trails. I ended out taking a lot of bird and mammal photos (I think the mammals were Coypu). I cycling that loop several times, it was a nice loop that kept me from riding in the heavy city traffic. After that I biked the easy roads back to the hotel, I thought about cycling into the downtown, but did not want to get into the traffic. Also, there was 50% chance of rain all day, with a peak rain percent around 2:00 PM. I wanted to end

my biking at 2:00 PM, so I did. The rain never really happened, by 6:00 PM still no rain. I should have cycled more, instead I packed my bike in the suitcase to prepare for my flight to Montevideo, Uruguay. I then went to my hotel room and vegged out. I also went to the market at the mall to get supplies. (Daily bike miles = 45.67 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 2940.77 miles)

### **Day 20, Thursday, November 29, 2018**

Pretty much a wasted day, worked on journal until about 11:30 AM and then checked out of hotel (checkout time was noon). Then I walked around the mall until about 1:45 PM and then I took the hotel transfer service to airport. The transfer service car was a lot nicer than a taxi, but it probably costs a lot more. I forgot to turn on my GPS when I was driven to the airport. When I arrived in Uruguay, I did not turn on the GPS until we were already moving in the taxi. I figured once at the Paraguay airport I would be able to check in my bags and shop around at the airport. That was not the case, I had to wait hours before the check-in service was available and hung out working on my journal. They started checking people in for the flight about 2 hours before boarding time. I quickly went through the process and was in the international terminal with a little more than an hour to spare. I tried finding out about the export tax (I read that Paraguay had an airport export tax), but there was none. I tried finding stuff to buy, but nothing was that interesting. I did find a not-so-great T-shirt and nice flute. Then I exchanged the rest of my big Paraguay bills in for Uruguay bills. The flight was great and when I went through customs in Uruguay, they did not stamp my passport. US citizens just get their passports scanned and they take your photo. I was able to quickly get a taxi to my hotel. Very nice hotel, nicest hotel of this trip. (Bike miles = 0 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 2952.49 + 6 miles (Airport missing miles))

### **Day 21, Friday, November 30, 2018**

I had my included breakfast and then packed up and left the hotel. I took a taxi to the bus station. I was confused on the cost I thought he was saying 10 times what he charged. He was honest and gave me back most of the money and the required change. I tried tipping him and he told me to give the tip to the people that removed my bags from the taxi. Luckily, I had looked up the companies that go to Colonia, I arrived at the bus station around 8:45 AM and found the company that had tickets and was able to get on the bus by 9:30 AM. As I was waiting for the bus, I realized that I never wrote down the name of the hotel I was staying at in Colonia and never marked its location on my GPS, oops!!!! The guy in the seat next to me was very large and I was slightly squashed to the window. He was a very nice person and the bus ride was fine. I ended up opening my laptop and finding the name and address of the hotel I was staying at in Colonia. Then I found the bus had WIFI, so I was able to get on the web and use google to find the location of the hotel I was staying at in Colonia on the map. Then I found the streets and locations on my GPS and marked the hotel. It

worked, once I was in Colonia, I was easily able to find the hotel using my GPS. I was in Colonia by about 1:00 PM. I put my bike and trailer together, I figured it would make it easier to get to the hotel and back to the ferry and I wanted to setup the bike to ride. The trailer is not that hard to setup. Then I biked with the trailer to the city limits, I wanted a photo with my trailered bike entering town, then I tried to cycle to the ferry terminal, I probably could have done it, but there was a guarded gate and I did not want to ask. Then I found an information center and tried talking to the lady, she only spoke Spanish. It sounded like I could go to the guarded area and find out about the ferry tickets. I decided to first check into my hotel and get rid of my trailer. After checking into the hotel, I went back to the ferry, I went in the back way and did not need to go by the guard shack, then I locked up my bike and asked about my ticket. The lady was able to look up my reservations and gave me a valid ticket for the following day and told me to show up at 10:15 AM, the boat leaves at 11:15 AM. Then I started biking around town, then I biked west to the small airport, I was thinking about taking photos of the airport. I changed my mind when I found the airport was very small and heavily armed by militants (sometimes they do not want you taking photos!). I bike a little further east and then back to Colonia. Then I cycled towards Carmelo along the water front, a very nice ride and I watched the sunset as I cycled back to Colonia. Then I went back to the hotel and walked along the main street, most of the shops were already closed. I did window shopping and did not see anything interesting. I got groceries and went back to the hotel to eat dinner in my room. (Daily bike miles = 38.40 miles; End of day total GPS miles = 3105.66 miles)

### **Day 22, Saturday, December 1, 2018**

I woke up around 7:00 AM and packed stuff, I went to breakfast when it started at 8:00 AM. I walked to where they sell souvenirs and they were still not opened. Went back to my hotel and waited until 9:00 AM to leave and head to the ferry terminal. My plan was to pack the bike in the suitcase and walk onto the ferry. Well, when the ferry terminal help saw my bike, they did everything to let me keep it intact (I could not explain I wanted to pack it. Turned out to be much better not to pack the bike and then unpacking it in Argentina). Since I do not speak Spanish, it was difficult figuring out what they wanted me to do, they had me leave the bike with the trailer in one place and then go through customs (for both Uruguay and Argentina on Uruguay side of bay). They wanted me to get my bike after I cleared customs, but I could not explain that, another security guard indicated I would need to wait. Then I started watching people arrive in cars and they left their cars and came to the same waiting room where I was, then I paid attention to those drivers and when they started letting people onto the boat, I followed a driver that I had seen leave his car and was able to get my bike to load on the ferry. It all went smooth and then I took the ferry to near Buenos Aires, I had mapped out my route to Moron the previous night, in case I wanted to bike there. When I arrived in Buenos Aires, I used my GPS instead of my flag points, the

GPS wanted me on highway that did not allow bikes. I tried side roads and some had nice bike lanes. I could not use my route and ended up mostly using a point process to find Moron. About 25% of the way to Moron I was on bike lanes. Then I found I was off track and using the GPS directions was not working, then I just found Moron on my map and followed my arrows and roads until I arrived in Moron (I think I was in Moron by about 3:30 PM). I took photos and then went looking for a hotel. I found 2 hotels, that looked empty. But they would not rent me a room. No other hotels on my GPS going in the direction of the airport, so I decided to head in the direction of the airport and look for hotels as I cycled. A man pulled me over and we tried to communicate, he did not want me to go in the direction I was headed, he ended up giving me a ride. He used google translate to tell me I was headed to a dangerous area. He ended up giving me a ride to a hotel near the others hotels that would not take me. He talked to the guy at the hotel and I was able to get a room. I tried to give the man a 200 Pesos tip for helping me, but he would not take it. He said he picks people up using Uber and he was headed to a birthday party with his wife. He definitely saved me, I was concerned. I walked around Moron and then returned to my hotel to eat and get ready for the next day. (Trip miles when leaving Uruguay = 39.03 miles; Total odometer = 346 miles (since reset at Bolivia/ Argentina boarder); GPS total 3106.24 miles.) (Daily bike miles  $28.65 = 67.05 - 38.04$ ; American Journey miles  $22.93 = 61.96 - 39.03$  Boat ride miles per GPS  $32.17 = 3138.41$  (Reading on Argentina shore) – 3106.24 (Reading on Uruguay shore); End of day total GPS miles = 3169.03 miles)

### **Day 23, Sunday, December 2, 2018**

I hung out at the hotel until about 9:00 AM (check-out time was 10:00 AM) and then started cycling towards the airport. The ride to the airport was pretty easy, the traffic was light since it was a Sunday morning. Once I was about 6 miles from the airport I had to change to a highway. The new road I needed to get on had signs indicating no bicycles and there were tons of police all along the road on the way to the airport, my guess is there were still a lot of G20 summit delegates about to leave Buenos Aires. A lot of the police had riot gear display and ready to use. I saw other cyclist on the road that indicated no bikes so I followed them. For the full six miles there were lots of police near the road, so I would wave to them and smile and they would wave back and smile. I would get an occasional funny look, but I was never stopped or searched the entire ride. I probably passed about 30 groups of police. Some groups were very large (I probably went passed well over 200 police officers in the last six miles to the airport). I arrived at the airport at about 11:10 AM and was packed and ready to go by about 12:10 PM. Then I went into the terminal hoping to check my bags and the Delta representative were not there yet. I was told they would not be there until 6:00 PM, so I had to hang onto my bags. I noticed the self-check in and used it to change my seats. I had a middle seat for the long flight to Atlanta, so I was able to change that seat to a

window seat (last available window seat), but I could not check in due to having bags, self-check-in only works for no bags checked (from what I could see). Once I checked in and went to the secure part of the airport, I was hoping to do some shopping, but the shopping was not so good at the Buenos Aires airport. On my flight to Atlanta, I sat next to a man from Argentina that was traveling to LA for vacation. He was a seat hog. His arm was on my side. However, I did sleep for most of the flight. Once at Atlanta the customs check in line was very long. When I picked up my bags, I found my duffel bag was badly torn apart by the baggage handlers. I showed the check in help and they said I could file a complaint; the baggage was old so I let it be. I did however get a plastic bag to put the duffel bag in for the remainder of the flight home. On the flight home, I kept thinking I did not do a great job of putting the duffel bag in the plastic bag and was not sure everything would get home. When I picked up my duffel bag in Portland, it was still intact in the plastic bag. I ended up exchanging my Argentina peso at the Atlanta airport, the exchange rate was horrible. Oh well, lost about \$20.00 on that exchange. (Daily bike miles 17.51 = miles; End of day total GPS miles = 3185.33 miles)

#### **Day 24, Monday, December 3, 2018**

The flight from Atlanta to Portland went smooth. I arrive in Portland at about 11:00 AM, took the max home, took a shower and cycled to work. I was at work by about 1:00 PM. On this trip I cycled about 631.63 miles and covered over 2,500 miles using ground transportation and about 33 miles on boats traveling through Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay in 24 days. (End of day total GPS miles = 3185.33 miles – This does not include air flight)