

ADVENTURE CYCLIST

GO THE DISTANCE. MARCH 2007 ADVENTURECYCLING.ORG \$3.50

TOUR OPERATOR'S GUIDE:

Go with the Pros

PLUS:

**MOUNTAIN BIKING
OREGON'S STEENS MOUNTAIN**

**CROSS-COUNTRY WITH
WANDERING WHEELS**

SCOTLAND THE HARD WAY

TOURING IRELAND



turous cyclists (that is to say: independent, but not too independent) for one-to-three week trips in all corners of the globe sounds fun to you, check out the BAC's website at www.bicycleadventureclub.com or call them at 858-715-9510.

Tour d'Afrique

The 7,438-mile, continent-spanning Tour d'Afrique is easily the most audacious new bicycle tour of the last five years. It does, however, have new competition from the recently announced, 5,960-mile, continent-spanning and equally audacious Silk Route Bicycle Race/Expedition. That both rides are organized by the same company is no coincidence — the crew at Tour d'Afrique Ltd is nothing if not ambitious.

Their namesake ride, the Tour d'Afrique, started in 2003 as a race/expedition from Cairo, Egypt, to Cape Town, South Africa. Riders can race, with timed stages similar to the Tour de France, or they can ride at a more leisurely pace (and most do) over the tour's 120 days. The average distance of seventy-seven miles per day is typically on dirt roads and gear is SAG-ed,

meals are provided, and nights are spent camping or in simple lodgings. For such a monumental ride, it's no surprise that the cost is an equally monumental \$9,400. Riders without four months to spare can also sign up for two-to-three-week sections in the African region of their choice.

The boldness and scale of Tour d'Afrique immediately made a splash in the touring world, and many observers praised the organizer's commitment to African bicycle advocacy. Then, in 2005, the Toronto-based company announced their second offering: The Orient Express, a 2,500-mile ride from Paris, France, to Istanbul, Turkey.

Clearly not a touring company that likes to think small, Tour d'Afrique Ltd this year announced their newest, and perhaps most daring, creation — the Silk Route. Following the ancient trading route between Europe and the Far East, the ride starts in Istanbul, and heads across Asia — including Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, lots of other countries ending in "stan", and China — for a highly-adventurous 5,960 miles to Beijing, China. Using the same trip structure as the Tour d'Afrique and the Orient Express, the

inaugural 2007 Silk Route expedition/race launches on August 4th.

Surely not by chance, this date means that truly inspired riders looking to knock off 8,000 miles and two continents can ride the Orient Express first, which ends in Istanbul July 29th, rest for five days, then head off on the Silk Route. Certainly, the big-thinkers at Tour d'Afrique would approve.

Tour d'Afrique, www.tourdafrique.com, (416) 364-8255.

Cross-Country Rides

Wandering Wheels and Bikecentennial started the wheels turning but, through the years, other tour companies have offered cross-country bicycle trips as well. For the touring cyclist, there's a certain lure to the coast-to-coast expedition akin to what completing the Appalachian Trail is for backpackers.

If you're interested in completing a self-supported cross-America tour, there aren't many options — make your own plans or go with Adventure Cycling Association — but if you want the additional support provided by a larger team with vehicle support, you have a few more options.

Cycle America offers nine distinct rides that link together to form a coast-to-coast trip from Seattle to Boston. Completing your personal coast-to-coast tour can be done in one fell swoop or in stages, it's up to you. The full trip costs \$6,285 (\$5,495 if you jump in early). 2007's trip runs from June 16 through August 18 — sixty-four days, with fifty-five riding days. So, what do you get? Cycle America offers vehicle and mechanical support; breakfast and dinner each day, with a lunchtime picnic thrown in; pre-arranged tent camping; and a shower at the end of each day; memories galore; and the clincher: you can say you rode your bicycle across America.

If you want to cross America but don't want to camp, try America By Bicycle. They offer the Fast America Ride from April 22 through May 24 from Costa Mesa, California, to Amesbury, Massachusetts. The route crosses the country diagonally and consists of thirty-one riding days.

The package includes motel stays; vehicle and mechanical support; breakfast,

lunch, and snacks during the day's ride (dinner is on you); and the kick of saying you rode across America pretty darn fast. Cost is based on room occupancy: \$3,950 for three to a room, \$4,974 for two, and \$6,350 for single occupancy.

If you're interested in crossing the country faster, consider PAC Tour, which offers the Northern Transcontinental from Everett, Washington, to Williamsburgh, Virginia, in twenty-six days. (They also offer an Elite version in seventeen days but the 2007 version is already full.) The package includes motel stays (add \$1,050 for single occupancy); vehicle and mechanical support; breakfast, lunch and snacks in between (dinner is on you); and the kick of saying you rode across America even faster. 2007's version is between July 14 and August 10 with twenty-six riding days. Cost is \$3,995 if the participant number is above thirty and \$4,495 if it is below that.

If you are a woman and interested in a woman-only cross-country tour in 2007, WomanTours offers the fully-supported Meandering Mississippi (north to south)



The Lushness of Africa. Riders pedal a variety of otherworldly landscapes in the Tour d'Afrique.

from New Orleans to Lake Itasca State Park in Minnesota for \$5,390. They also offer a Southern Tier and TransAmerica, but you'll have to wait until 2008 for those.

• Cycle America www.cycleamerica.com
(800) 245-3263

• America By Bicycle www.abbike.com
(888) 797-7057
• PACTour www.pactour.com
(262) 736-2453
• WomanTours www.womantours.com
(800) 247-1444

COURTESY OF TOUR D'AFRIQUE

22nd Annual Lake Tour Bike Trek

June 8, 9, 10, 2007

RIDE FOR A REASON!



THE MIDWEST'S PREMIER BIKE RIDE

Round trip from Crystal Lake to Lake Geneva.

Your choice of 2- or 3- day ride options.

Enjoy your stay at The Abbey Resort on Lake Geneva!

Call 630-260-9600 or www.lungil.org



The Lake Tour Bike Trek supports our Smoke Free Illinois initiatives, as well as finding cures for Alpha-1, Lung Cancer, Asthma and other chronic lung diseases.

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION
of Illinois

ExperiencePlus!

Last One Down Buys the Gelato!

Mention this bubble and get \$100 off a tour.



www.ExperiencePlus.com • (800) 685.4565

Guided Bicycle Tours in Europe, Latin America & Down Under Since 1972.

America by Bicycle

Fully Supported Long Distance Bicycle Tours

SCENIC • AFFORDABLE
EXPERIENCED STAFF
MOTELS • MEALS
SAG & MORE

28 TOURS
from 5 to 52 DAYS

Toll Free 1-888-797-7057 • e-mail Abbike@aol.com www.abbike.com

FAST AMERICA RIDE

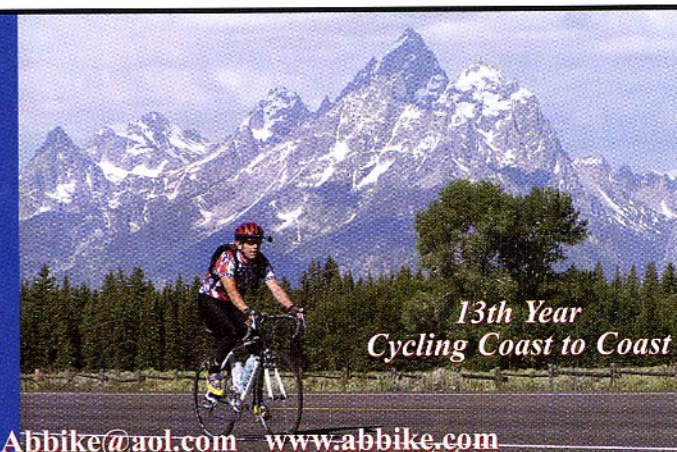
April 22 - May 24, 2007 • 3,450 miles
Costa Mesa, CA to Amesbury, MA

GREAT MISSISSIPPI RIVER RIDE

May 14 - June 8, 2007 • 1,775 miles
New Orleans, LA to Minneapolis, MN

CROSS COUNTRY CHALLENGE

June 2 - July 24, 2007 • 3,850 miles
San Francisco, CA to Maine



13th Year
Cycling Coast to Coast