

## Riders from previous trips write the following accounts

South South Sulawesi (August 2009)

**Scott Main (bike engineer, 42)**

I took this trip in August 2009. It was AWESOME. I'd be happy to talk to anyone about it. Just phone me on +61 2 6260 4200 or email me. [ironmain@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ironmain@bigpond.net.au)

**Rob Wildman (Project manager)**

I always struggle with the idea of reading a testimonial. In the first place it is someone else's journey always written after the experience and, as we all know with time, you just forget the bad bits. I never ever write them but for this one occasion I have made an exception.



Colin, whose long experience in this part of the world, is very comfortable with the local customs and language, and in putting together this trip, has got it just right. The organisation of the journey is unseen and everything just happens, seemingly without being arranged. The trip simply puts you in a position where you can feel you have done it on your own and this is where it is very different from all others.

My aim on this trip was to absorb and enjoy the culture of the place as much as time would allow and to top it off, I could ride my bike to get there. What more could I ask? Now I believe you have to have some cycling experience (for example some Big Rides

experience) otherwise you will not enjoy this - you have to expect to climb some hills (yes some very steep hills) and some longish days in the saddle (11-12 hours) but what the brochure doesn't tell you is that you get plenty of rests and help. I found the idea of just stopping at convenient pondoks (little bamboo rest stops), where the assistants would rush over and take you bike, fill up the water while you had a cup of tea or coffee, were the highpoints. Every time you stop of the roads of Indonesia, you are greeted by faces and "hellos" you only think happens in the country. The kids are so alive and everyone has a great laugh at their efforts to speak Bahasa. Pure entertainment!

Of course there are the white sand beaches, coral snorkelling, waterfall swimming and other very pretty locations but there is also the drab and the dirty. Above it all though sours the welcoming, beaming crowd which is Indonesia. It is always the people which make this place the exciting and fascinating place that it is. This is not just a cycle ride - the cycling is just an excuse to get absorbed by the culture which hits you at every turn in the road.

But just one more thing for the cyclists - on our second day we had a massive climb up and out of a waterfall valley. At a road junction halfway up, we could take the short flat route back to the hotel or the continual climb of 8kms round trip back to the hotel. We chose the longer route.

Why? Because rolling down the country back lanes in the mountains of Sulawesi would have to be one of





the loveliest cycling experiences you can get. Remember, be open and willing to engage - that's what this trip is all about.  
Rob Wildman

Toraja February 2010

**Charlie Farren (retired teacher)**

How fortunate I was to have heard about this amazing trip to Indonesia. It was an opportunity to visit and explore a fascinating country which would not have been possible without the support and organisation of Cycle Indonesia. We regularly travel as independent cycle tourists but it was obvious that to enjoy Sulawesi and begin to have an understanding of the people, language

and culture would have been impossible without the in depth knowledge provided by Colin Freestone and his crew. It was an extraordinary experience - lots of cycling, eating and sightseeing in a little known part of the world which for Australians is virtually on our doorstep.

Charlie Farren

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**Scott Main (bike shop owner)**

I did Colin's South South Sulawesi and after it wrote that it was 'awesome'. This Toraja trip was double awesome. I used to be a professional cyclist so look at cycle trips with a critical eye. For me this trip had everything. There was more than enough cycle challenge. The scenery was fantastic with lots of variety. And Torajan culture is just so different to ours. The trip was really well planned with one day rolling easily into the next. Each day too was planned and they too evolved naturally. Our group had a range of cycling strength and experience but Colin kept us all together so that our spirits were always high. A terrific cycling, cultural and social experience.

Scott Main

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