

# The Cyclist's Vehicle

## We Are Traffic

by Yassar Ono

Edmonton Critical Mass is crazy.



It's just supposed to be a bunch of people riding bikes from City Hall to Old Strathcona, but for some it's way angrier than that. Some riders take the "We aren't blocking traffic; we are traffic" slogan a little too seriously.


What I had read and heard did not prepare me for my first time on this group bike ride. In the huge crowd gathered at City Hall when I arrived, I saw everything from slick, carbon frame speed machines to rusty collections of scrap steel attached to tires. There were a few custom built bikes, including a 2 metre tall monstrosity made by bolting 2 frames on top of each other. It was all quite a sight. Even the veteran riders seemed surprised by the crowd, commenting that there were many newcomers.

I suspect that this was due to the recent Critical Mass article in SEE Magazine. That article tried to address the question of whether or not Critical Mass was political. It mentioned that there was bit of controversy regarding blocking traffic, particularly on the High Level Bridge. On that segment of the route, some of the cyclists were said to prefer to take both lanes as a safety precaution or a symbolic act. Others supposedly preferred to allow cars to pass as a matter of courtesy.

I found that this controversy was pretty much a work of fiction. As the ride commenced, the organisers let us know that we will be taking both lanes on the bridge. Period. There were no voices of dissent. In fact, it took about five minutes for the group to decide to take up every lane on all roads.

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## Learn to ... Ride in Traffic

EBC will be running a CanBike 2 course in late May/early June. We will also run a Women's Only CanBike 2 if there is enough interest: CanBike 2 is an 18 hour on-street riding course for cyclists looking to improve their traffic riding skills. Please contact John Collier for more information: 780.433.1270 [jbcollier\[at\]shaw.ca](mailto:jbcollier[at]shaw.ca) 

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Kent McPhee

Editor 

## Decide for Yourself



**Critical Mass meets on the last Friday of the month - 5:30 PM -  
- City Hall -**

**THE EBC MISSION** is to promote and facilitate cycling as everyday transportation by providing bicycle services and resources.

**WE ARE TRAFFIC** *continued from pg 1*

I looked to my left and saw an older, rough looking gentleman on a beat up road bike. He claimed that taking up both lanes was important because, "It sends a message." And what message would that be? "Fuck you, driver!" Ohhh-kay. I turned to the cute blonde to my right, who was riding a newer mountain bike. "No. I don't agree at all. That's why I'm in this lane," she told me.

That was kind of cool. I had found the point of contention within Critical Mass, and you might even say I was riding right on it. My wheels rolled symbolically on the line between Mr. Militant and Ms. Courteous. But, despite this clear division, we were all there having the time of our lives, like we always should when on our bikes. That's what it was like when we were kids, after all.

Remember the day the training wheels came off? If you were one of the lucky ones, you were on clean pavement and you didn't even notice when no one was holding you up. If you were really lucky, you also got to experience your first big wipeout the moment you realised you were riding on your own.

It's good to get that first real wipeout over and done with; you learn that bleeding a little isn't the end of the world. The next few years, we all learned to love our bikes. All of us. We'd ride around the block, to school, to 7-11 or to no particular destination. There's just something special about gliding so smoothly and so quickly over the ground with the wind in your face, and being the engine of your vehicle.

But most of us grow up and drive cars instead, sometimes cursing cyclists as we pass them. Those of us who keep riding bikes will often curse right back. At Edmonton Critical Mass, which, according to its web site, is supposed to "promote cycling/other means of non-polluting transportation," some cyclists are actually going out of their way to antagonise motorists.

What went wrong?

The unofficial leader of the ride, though less than thrilled by the actions of many participants -especially since they reflect on the group as a whole- shrugs, "Everyone has their own reason to be here, so I can't control everything they do. I don't want to."

I paused dramatically, then told him, *Great men do not seek power; it is thrust upon them.*

"..."

It's a Klingon proverb and from what I can tell, that got his attention and the attention of his friends. Maybe we'll start in a new direction to mend our relationship with motorists. Maybe there's some hope.

John Collier, local bicycle safety guru guy, claims that there's not just hope, but things are pretty good the way they are. He tells me that he doesn't really think cyclists and motorists have problems sharing the road. According to him, cyclists have little to worry about, really, so long as they travel in a predictable manner (read: straight lines, 0.5-1.0m from the curb). Still, things could be improved with education for both motorists and cyclists. In particular, remember: *Cyclists are vehicles.*

Motorists often seem ignorant of that fact.

Kent McPhee, the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters' newsletter editor guy, told me about a recurring incident that really outlines this "pet peeve." Kent comes to a stop at the stop sign as he approaches Gateway Boulevard. He is heading towards Superstore across the street, so he waits for a break in traffic before proceeding through the intersection. As a matter of misplaced courtesy, a lone vehicle stops for him as if he was a pedestrian. The problem is that no one else approaching the intersection has any idea why the car has stopped. Kent can only shrug, since he's still facing a stop sign.

Any cyclist will tell you a story similar to Kent's, and many of those stories will end with accidents. Just a few months ago, I was signalling to turn left when an oncoming vehicle -perhaps unfamiliar with hand signals-

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**WE ARE TRAFFIC** ... continue from pg 2

slammed the brakes for me, causing a three car collision. Again, this is just a matter of a motorist failing to recognise that cyclists are vehicles. At this point, though, isn't the "pet peeve" more of a serious safety issue?

So maybe it really is a good thing that Critical Mass blocks traffic. It certainly makes us visible and, in the words of Crazy Loud-Talking Francophone Guy, "IT'S JUST FUN, EH! AND IMPORTANT TO SHOW THEM THAT WE ARE TRAFFIC!"

But does it really show them that we are traffic? I think maybe it shows the opposite. Unlike Critical Mass, traffic generally follows traffic laws. Come to think of it, cyclists tend to break traffic laws at a high enough frequency that maybe it makes sense that motorists don't know we are supposed to be vehicles.

On any given day, you can see cyclists riding all directions on all sidewalks, crossing streets without dismounting, or just simply taking the right of way whenever they feel like it. Is it any wonder that motorists are confused or angry?

I'm not sure. At Critical Mass, the prevailing belief is that the bulk of ignorance and abuse comes from the motorists themselves. If we are blocking the road and playfully taunting drivers, then it's the one day of the month that we are the big jerks; the cars have the other 30. But it seems at least half of us would prefer peace over retaliation.

This is the real divide within Critical Mass. The activists can be found on both sides of the divide and have the mutual approval of the non-activists. There is little or no division on the lane-blocking issue. But, all other unity aside, some people think it's a good idea to go out of their way to stick it to the motorists, and the others roll their eyes in disapproval.

The only thing that everyone agreed on whole-heartedly was that this ride is fun. This holds everything together, especially on the High Level Bridge, where the group let out huge, child-like cheers.

"It's so peaceful," Cool Girl tells me, grinning from her vintage cruiser.

She agreed -along with most everyone- that taking up both lanes on the bridge was at least fun, if not necessary. This city really has its moments, and I have to admit that one of them was looking out over the river valley while slowly riding across the bridge with no cars in sight.

But weren't the motorists annoyed? I dropped back to talk to a couple guys in an SUV.

"Oh, no. No big deal," they said.

I studied their facial expressions for a moment, and decided that they were probably being fairly honest.


Unfortunately, the boys in the bright white G35 sports car -who had earlier ripped angrily past us on the wrong side of the road- were not available for comment.

Local TV Celebrity Guy hoped that some people saw how much fun we were having and might think to ride their bikes more. He did note, however, that the message was probably lost on the guys in the G35, and that yelling "get a bike" wasn't really persuasive either.

"If the goal is to get people on bikes, that's not the way to do it," he said.

I agree. I hope that Edmonton Critical Mass will evolve into something resembling "Critical Manners" and "Courteous Mass" rides that exist in other cities. It would pretty much be the same, except the cyclists let cars pass and, presumably, don't yell at them.

Still, despite the fact that I don't agree with the actions of the militant cyclists, I was thoroughly entertained by them.

I think I'll go back. 

**VOLUNTEERING AT EBC**

**Teach Special Needs Kids** - EBC is looking for volunteers to assist teaching special needs children how to ride a bicycle. Volunteers must be experienced cyclists. The course will run Thursday early evenings in May and early June. Please contact John Collier for more information: 780.433.1270 jbcollier[at]shaw.ca

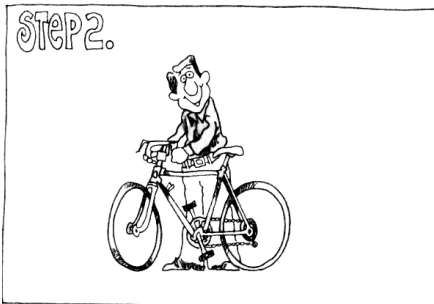
**Special Needs Coordinator** - EBC is looking for a volunteer to coordinate a special needs Tandem Captaining service. Each year we get a few requests for special needs tandem rides. You would find and match tandems and captains to special needs stokers. Please contact John Collier for more information: 780.433.1270 jbcollier[at]shaw.ca

**Call for Casino Volunteers**  
EBC has been granted a casino for Friday, April 3rd and Saturday, April 4th, 2009.

Money that is generated from this fundraising event is used for rent, facility upkeep, BikeWorks, wages, the hiring of a coordinator and educational courses. EBC is not dependent on the casino to survive but it does make operating our facility and carrying out our mandate a little less stressful.

To operate the casino we need to have filled 38 positions/shifts – it is best for everyone that we have as many volunteers as possible so that the volunteer effort is spread out over a larger portion of our membership.

Only people volunteering for key positions (General Manager, Alternate General Manager, Banker and Count Room Supervisor) are required to fill in a form. The volunteer form can be obtained at: [http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca/pdf/gaming/gaming\\_forms/5400.pdf](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca/pdf/gaming/gaming_forms/5400.pdf) (you will have to cut and paste this URL into your browser). Please deliver the form to me once it is signed and complete.



If you are volunteering for the any of the other positions (not key positions) you will only need to send me an email with your contact information, what day and shift you would prefer, what position you would you prefer, and whether you are a member. You can email me this information to kalman[at]interbaun.com or drop it off at Earth's General Store (#201, 10832 Whyte Avenue).


No experience is necessary and all training is provided. A variety of positions, shifts and duties are available (Chip Runner, Cashier, Count Room, Banker, General Manager and Count Room Supervisor). The time commitment ranges from 5 1/2 to 9 hours - depending on the position you volunteer for.

In March I will be putting the schedule for all the shifts together so the sooner you send me your availability the sooner I can finalise the schedule.

Casinos can be fun and educational. Food (full restaurant with vegetarian options) and refreshments are provided at the casino and paid for by EBC in appreciation of your volunteer time.

The event will be held at the Baccarat Casino 10128 – 104th Avenue. Please bring photo identification with you when you turn up at the casino for your shift.

If you require more information please contact Michael Kalmanovitch at kalman[at]interbaun.com or at 780-439-8725 (Earth's General Store).

**Newsletter Volunteers** - EBC is looking for volunteers who are interested in helping to put out the Cyclists' Vehicle. Our newsletter is currently published 3 times per year. Help with any of the many tasks associated with newsletter production is sought. Whether your interest lies in the organizational and editorial end of things, or in design and layout, or writing, or simply in production and distribution...there is something you can do! If you'd like to find out more or if you'd like to get started, please email [newsletter\[at\]edmontonbikes.ca](mailto:newsletter[at]edmontonbikes.ca) 

**From the cycling celebrities file...**

**Robin Williams is big into cycling with an admitted addiction to bikes. He's shown up at race events and the North American Handmade Bike Show. When on the road he will relax between gigs by exploring the city he's in. He likes racing and has been known to be able to keep up with Lance at Pro-Am fundraisers.**

**“When I'm riding my bicycle I feel like a Buddhist who is happy just to enjoy his mundane existence.”**





## PLANES, TRAINS, AND BROMPTONS

by Zoe Todd

In early July, my partner and I headed to cities east armed with a pair of borrowed Brompton folding bicycles. We wanted to be as environmentally friendly as possible, so we opted to take the bus and train rather than fly and bring the bicycles for in-city transport without relying on transit or cars. We are in love with how much independence and freedom we had with the Bromptons! Rather than wait for buses or muck around in the metro, we were able to zip around and see things on our own schedule.

Somehow the bikes made a city like Toronto seem smaller. The time it takes to get places is compressed when you are travelling by bike (no need to wait at the bus stop and or to sit through monster traffic jams either).

After consulting the VIA and Greyhound baggage restrictions, we determined that we would be able to check our bikes as luggage. Our plan was to stuff them in a couple of MEC duffel bags and check them like baggage. We road the bikes to the VIA train station in Edmonton and they refunded me \$40 because I qualify for their student discount. Yay! Then they proceeded to charge us \$20 each for bringing bikes along. Boo! However, a VIA guy then told us that next time we should pack them outside the station and nobody would notice. He then cheerfully pointed us towards the coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and donuts and wished us well on our trip. It took about 18 hours to get to Winnipeg. Train travel turned out to be very nice. All in all, it was far more pleasant than the airplane.



Andrew Ritchie - Inventor of the Brompton folding bicycle.

In Winnipeg we cycled our way to Aunt and Uncle's house, winding our way from the Forks to their neighbourhood along the river. One of the main objectives of the visit was to experience the Winnipeg Folk Fest, which is held in a provincial park outside the city. While I opted to hop on the shuttle bus to the Winnipeg Folk Fest, my partner did actually manage to cycle all the way there and back on the Brompton and reported that it was an enjoyable ride, albeit one that was a bit tiresome at night.

The next stretch of the trip was perhaps the most stressful ... the bus to Toronto. The bikes were loaded into the luggage compartment without hassle and we set off on the arduous 30 hour trek in the Canadian Shield. I had never wrapped my head around the immensity of this part of the country, and my patience and resolve did start to wear thin after a run-in with a belligerent drunk man, a fracas with some racist women in Thunder Bay, a mechanical breakdown in Sudbury ('twas a bit ominous when our first bus driver cheerfully loaded 'Titanic' into the VCR to send us off on the journey), and too much time sitting while passing cyclists pushing themselves along the shoulder-less stretches of the Trans-Canada (how I longed to join them!).


In the end we made it to Toronto. The roads were hectic and seemed narrower than in Edmonton, but we were able to ride to all of the highlights on our list, including a Sunday evening visit to Cherry Beach. The commuter train between Toronto and Montreal didn't allow for checked luggage, so we rode from our accommodations to the train station and then loaded our backpacks and the duffel bags into the oversize luggage shelf near the entrance. Nobody hassled us about the fact that we were carrying bikes, which was a relief. With transport companies, the basic rule of thumb seems to be: "If it doesn't look like a bicycle, it's not a bicycle."

Montreal blew us away: the extensive bike lanes, profusion of cyclists on every street at every hour of the day and night, and the multitude of places one can easily visit by bike (including the biodome and the Olympic park) made it the cycling highlight of the trip.

On the way back we opted to sell our return bus tickets (the trip to Toronto was the strongest test of our friendship yet so I chose to fly rather than put ourselves through another 52 hours of mechanical failures, bad food, and a growing desire to shower), and bought one way airline tickets home. The bikes were sequestered as oversize luggage, but nobody charged us for sporting equipment, as we had feared they might.


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## Learn to ... *Fix Bikes*

EBC will be offering a mechanics course for people who would like to volunteer at Bike Works. While the course is free, on completion you will be expected to provide a minimum of 15 hours of time volunteering at Bike Works. People completing the course will also receive a free copy of the Park Bike Repair Manual. The course will run Thursday evenings starting in March. Please contact John Collier for more information: 780.433.1270 [jbcollier\[at\]shaw.ca](mailto:jbcollier[at]shaw.ca) 

## ROUTE FINDER

Sidewalks along new south LRT route are open! It's possible to go all the way along 111 St on bike path. It's still a bit tricky getting from northbound 111 St over to where it starts up again just south of the School for the Deaf...your best bet there is to cross 61 Ave, head west in the alley just north of 61 Ave, then cross back at the lights where 61 Ave bends north and turns into 113 St.

Thanks to city staff for doing a pretty decent job this year keeping paths clear (compared to previous years). They have had to fight the icing problems like everyone else, but for the more part paths have been quite passable this winter. Let's keep our fingers crossed and hope that it keeps up! 

### Quesnel Bridge Update

Councillor Bryan Anderson reports that in March, construction moves onto the bridge and westbound Fox Drive will be closed completely. Bicycles (and pedestrians) will be prohibited on the bridge during construction. The city will provide shuttle services daily from 7 am until 7 pm operating between the Fort Edmonton Park entrance road and Laurier Drive.


*Want to share your favourite route? Let the Route Finder know by sending an email to: [newsletter\[at\]edmontonbikes.ca](mailto:newsletter[at]edmontonbikes.ca)*

## THREE FOR FREE

*We waste time surfing the net so you don't have to.*

**[www.copenhagenize.com](http://www.copenhagenize.com)** Check out how Copenhagen's cyclists deal with winter. See first hand how well their bike paths get maintained. Here's a hint: "The bike lane snowploughs have been working overtime. You can hear them drone past late at night and they continue through the day. A fleet of small tractors are assisting them in keeping the bike lanes clear and salted." Complete with videos and pictures of attractive Scandinavian people on bicycles. There's a helmet law brouhaha going on in Denmark right now, so if you want any ammo to support your side of the argument you'll find plenty of it up there at the moment.

**[www.teacherontwowheels.com](http://www.teacherontwowheels.com)** Nice travel site of teacher who is spending a couple of years travelling the Americas and Africa. Well written blog with interesting insights....as one might expect coming from an English teacher. If you're thinking of doing some long distance travel, he's very meticulous about describing day to day details that might inform your planning.

**[www.bikeaccess.net](http://www.bikeaccess.net)** This website is a personal, non-commercial attempt to make available the experience of hundreds of individual bicycle tourists who travel some distance to get to a place for their tour. It's for people who travel with their bikes or who rent bikes when they arrive. If you travel on airlines, trains, buses, or ferries to get to a place where you plan to do some cycle touring, then this site can provide you with lots of advice on getting you and your bike there in one piece. Some info might be a bit dated, but it's real advice from real people who have really done it themselves. 



### Womens' Night at BikeWorks

In an effort to make our space more inviting and inclusive, we're reserving the first and third Sundays of each month for women and transgendered persons. That's from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. We'll be closed on remaining Sundays. Everyone is always welcome during all other shop hours.

## ASK DR. COG

Hey Bike Dr dude,

***I'm chillin' to The Bicycles and watchin' the snow fall and wondering to myself when I'll get to ride my damn bike again. Winter's been hard on my bike so far. So during the coming blizzards I figure I should do some maintenance or something. What do you recommend?***

- **Cute Signature #42**

Dear Cute,

OK I hear you. Crappy weather is a good time to do a wee bit of maintenance, especially if you've been riding in the winter. Here's a few things to do while you're waiting for a break in the weather:

1. Clean and lubricate the chain (do this a often).
2. Clean and oil the freewheel by spraying in lots of WD-40 and then dripping oil between the moving and stationary parts - all while madly rotating the wheel.
3. Consider carefully putting a drop of oil at the end of each wheel spoke to slow down corrosion; make sure the rims are clear of oil so that your brakes work.
4. Salt causes wear and tear on a bicycle, mostly due to rust. Try to wipe your bicycle down at the end of the day to reduce salt build up. Brush away snow and slush from the rear derailleur and freewheel; large bristle brushes (like a toilet bowl brush) work well
5. When not in use, keep your bicycle covered but cold. Constant freezing and thawing will hasten its demise.
6. Consider using an inexpensive (beater) bike for the snow. Pick one up at BikeWorks.

- Dr. Cog 


### Q&A

Have a question for Dr. Cog? Let him know by sending an email to [drcog\[at\]edmontonbikes.ca](mailto:drcog[at]edmontonbikes.ca), by sending a note to the EBC, or best of all, by asking Dr. Cog or one of his helpers at BikeWorks.

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## PLANES, TRAINS, AND BROMPTONS ... continued from pg 5

They did, however, confiscate our small wrench at security, which made it difficult to hop on the bikes once we arrived in Calgary. Luckily we tracked down some tools at a local dollar store.

All in all in it was a great trip, and we learned how easy it is to pack a Brompton onto trains, planes and automobiles. I was so inspired by the freedom that the Bromptons afforded us in each city that I decided to pack my full-size bike into a box and hopped onto the VIA train to Vancouver in August for a family reunion....but I'd love to be able to do that with my own Brompton soon. 

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## CITY TRANSPORTATION UPDATE


by Claire Ellick

### BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN & SIDEWALK STRATEGY

The time has come for a new Bicycle Transportation Plan! The updated document, along with the City of Edmonton's Sidewalk Strategy will look at creating complete cycling and pedestrian networks in the City, in addition to numerous supporting measures that will help make cycling a more attractive transportation option for an increased number of Edmontonians. These plans will be presented to the Transportation & Public Works Committee at City Hall on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 for approval.

### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Through the 2008 budget deliberations, Councillor Iveson made a motion to increase funding for active transportation programs at the City. Specifically, this means an approximate \$10 Million dollar increase for active modes over the next 3 years. This funding will be directed into a program that builds sidewalks, multi-use trails, wooden walks/stairways and curb ramps, and will give us an opportunity to get started on some construction for new facilities from the Bicycle Transportation Plan, once it is approved. Additional projects will include the expansion of the City's bicycle parking program and sidewalk connections to inaccessible bus pads.

For on-road cycling inquiries, contact Claire Ellick at 780-496-2615. City cycling webpage is: [www.edmonton.ca/cycling](http://www.edmonton.ca/cycling). 

## My Trip To China

by Samuel R. Hester

Based on experiences from a trip to northern China in the Spring of 2008.

I had been told that the sea of bicycles didn't exist anymore in Beijing, at least not like the stock pictures I had been inundated with as a child showed. This turned out to be true, but not exactly like how I pictured it. In the core of Beijing cyclists have bike lanes on the outside of the main roads separated by flower beds and nice fencing. It creates a very clear delineation between where cars drive and where cyclists ride. The bike lanes are about as wide as one and a half standard North American lanes and are on both sides of the roadway. Whether or not the law states that cars always have the right of way, it seems to be the prevailing accepted and certainly practised traffic rule. This isn't necessarily bad and, once I had come to twist my brain to this, everything seemed fine and had a predictability to it. This means cars turning right go first before you as a cyclist get to cross an intersection. However in some places this was regulated better as cars are actually stopped for pedestrians crossing at certain intersections, thereby allowing cyclists to cross freely at the same time.

I never saw vast throngs of cyclists on the bicycle lanes, they really should be called bicycle highways, but there was always a steady stream of them. One of the more interesting things was that the majority of cyclists were on electric bicycles. Perhaps this should not be surprising since the bicycle is ultimately transportation, and electric bicycles are easier for people (especially less mobile ones) to use. I didn't collect a lot of data on the percentage of electric bicycles to standard pedal bicycles, but in the several small samplings I took it was significantly more than 50%.


In Jinan (Capital of Shandong Province, about 500km South East of Beijing) most of the bicycle lanes were beside the sidewalk, elevated to curb height. They reminded me a great deal of the bicycle lanes in Copenhagen near Tivoli. Here again there were a lot of electric bicycles moving about. Nowhere in either Beijing or Jinan did I see cyclists huffing it like so many commuters here do. They all went at a more relaxed pace similar to what I have seen in European cities.

I decided to visit a few bicycle shops to see what the price differential was for the electric bicycles and standard ones. The first sticker shock was that you can buy a one speed city bicycles with fenders, chain case, bell and rear rack for 100RMB (\$17.50). Granted the breaks are flimsy side pulls, however the bicycles are actually put together by people who know these bicycles well and the feel of the ride never concerned me. The bicycles that were up in the 500RMB (\$85-100) range were nice aluminum framed city bicycles with all the amenities you would expect from any European city bike. Electric bicycles took up about 70% of the floor space in the standard shop and started as low as 2000RMB (\$350). When talking to several shop owners, I found out that very few working people were still buying standard bicycles. Obviously this is good for the shops since the profit margin on a 2000RMB bicycle is much greater than on a 100RMB one.

I did go to one bicycle shop in Jinan that only sold performance bicycles. Beautiful bicycles I recognized from back home, with Deore and Ultegra components. High quality bicycles and knowledgeable staff are available, however expect to pay the appropriate price for them. Bicycles made in North America or Japan cost the same or slightly more in China than they do back in North America.

I came back from China, elated to see another area of the world with large bicycle infrastructure.

Best bicycle items to pick up in China: Tires: 15RMB (\$2.70) each. I've found these to last as long as my standard tires, with no issues. Inner tubes: 3.5RMB (\$0.62) each.

Folding baskets: 10-25RMB (\$1.80-4.48), get the more expensive ones, they are made of much better steel and won't bend after hauling heavy things. Bells: 3-10RMB (\$0.54-1.80) Great, cheap, and come in a many colours and interesting styles. 



## BIKING OVERSEAS

by Claire Roper (The Adventure Travel Company)

In the midst of an Edmonton winter biking can get a little frustrating, unkept roads, freezing conditions that make it hard on bike and owner. At these times we all may think about getting away from it all. A biking trip abroad can offer you the chance to really see a local culture with limited environmental impact (just be sure to buy carbon offsets for your plane trip). There are many places to visit that would offer a great biking adventure from Austria to Vietnam.

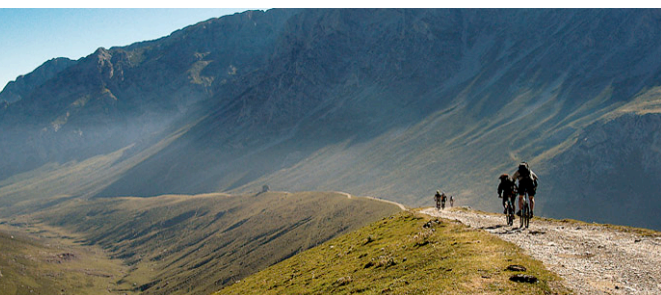
Popular options include bringing your own bike and making up your own agenda, or renting/buying a bike when you get to your destination and making up your own agenda, or signing up with a tour that supplies bikes and letting someone else deal with route, accommodation, etc.

Travelling alone is better if you already have the experience biking on varied terrain and you have the confidence in maintaining your bike. As trying to fix a puncture in the middle of nowhere in a country where no one speaks your language can create an adventure in itself. Some of us thrive on this, others not so much.

Biking independently opens up the opportune moments to change your schedule as you like and really explore what a country has to offer. Good up-to-date maps and an understanding of the country you are visiting are a must, especially in places like Asia or South America.

Full size bikes can be easily transported by most major airlines with handling fees starting at \$50. Bikes should be packed up safely and compact. The airlines won't take responsibility for damage in transit. So if you prefer to leave your bike at home, bikes can be picked up in major cities quite easily but it may take some time out of your vacation to find a good option for the journey you are planning. Be aware that bikes in Asia can be smaller than western bikes and standards vary greatly country to country.

For some, a cycling tour can be a good option. The route is pre-arranged along with the accommodation, a support vehicle on hand and local guides. Group sizes average 10 people and trips are offered with various levels of challenge. Whether it be a leisurely break exploring a region or the challenge of longer distances on varied terrain. There are a range of companies that offer varied destinations. Regional bike tours are offered in countries such as Ireland, Italy, Cuba, China, Morocco, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Tibet. The tours will cover the major highlights of the region and they will take you through varied landscapes and stunning scenery, without the worry of getting lost which is important when you have a flight to catch.



Some companies also offer self-guided tours that involve having the trip planned ahead of time including accommodation, maps, route information, and transportation of bags between hotels. This is a great in-between option for someone who wants to travel independently but has minimal time.

If you're not sure where to start talk to an experienced bike traveller (there are plenty who are EBC members) or contact me (Claire) at The Adventure Travel Company in HUB Mall at 780-492-2756 or [croper\[at\]atcadventure.com](mailto:croper[at]atcadventure.com) for more info. 

### Bikes on Planes

Folding bikes in bags are not likely to incur any costs if you keep quiet about what's in the bag.

Tools will be required to remove pedals, turn handlebars and possibly remove wheels. Take some air out of the tires in case the cargo hold loses pressure. Bungies and clear packing tape are useful for attaching loose bits to the bike.

Check with each airline you plan on using about their rules...every airline is different. If they fly out of Edmonton, it's even worth visiting them at the airport before you leave and picking up a box or a bag early.

If the airline offers the big plastic bag option, take it. The baggage handlers will see what they are dealing with and will be less likely to chuck it around like they do with boxes.



**Edmonton Bicycle Commuters**

PO Box 1819 STN MAIN  
 Edmonton, AB T5J 2P2  
 Phone: 780-433-BIKE (2453)  
 Web:  
 www.edmontonbikes.ca  
 Email:

newsletter[at]edmontonbikes.ca - for newsletter related items  
 info[at]edmontonbikes.ca - for general inquiries

**THE EBC MISSION**

To promote and facilitate cycling as everyday transportation to Edmontonians by providing bicycle services and resources.

**NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Cyclist's Vehicle is published by the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters' Society. Want to contribute ideas or articles to the Cyclist's Vehicle? E-mail or snail mail your contributions any time.

The opinions expressed here are not necessarily the opinions of the EBC Board of Directors or editorial staff.

**BIKEWORKS FALL/WINTER HOURS**

433-BIKE (2453) - call ahead for changes to hours.  
 10047 - 80 Avenue (in the alley) Winter Hours:

**Saturday noon-5 pm**

**Monday 6 pm-9 pm**

**Wednesday 6 pm-9 pm**

Call or check the website for up to date hours info.

Would you like to volunteer at BikeWorks? CALL!

**JOIN THE EDMONTON BICYCLE COMMUTERS! or RENEW YOUR ANNUAL EBC MEMBERSHIP!**

Join the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters in person by dropping by **BikeWorks at 10047 - 80 Ave (in the alley)** or by mailing this form and a cheque to **PO Box 1819, Main Post Office, Edmonton AB, T5J 2P2.**

Today's Date _____ Name _____ Address _____ City _____ Postal Code _____ Phone Number _____ Email Address _____ New Member or Renewal? _____ Do you want to volunteer? _____ Newsletter? <input type="checkbox"/> Bike Parking? <input type="checkbox"/> BikeWorks? <input type="checkbox"/> Bikeology? <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Membership Costs and Benefits</b></p> Family: \$25.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual: \$20.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Low Income: \$15.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Member: \$55.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Donation: \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter delivery preference: Email (pdf) <input type="checkbox"/> Canada Post <input type="checkbox"/> EBC members low-volume email list preference: No emails! <input type="checkbox"/> Email me <input type="checkbox"/>
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Printed on recycled paper.

Happy Cycling!