

The Silk Route Bike Tour: is it the greatest journey in the world? The company calls it 'the longest, hardest, highest, hottest, coldest bicycle tour in the world'. In eighteen weeks you travel over 12,000 kilometres through seven different countries and have the most exciting ride of your life.

'A thousand years ago people went by camel and did about twenty-five kilometres a day,' says Nate Cavalieri, one of the Silk Route Tour staff. 'But on a bike you do twenty-five kilometres in an hour.' And along the way you see some of the most beautiful places in the world.

From Shanghai, you go across Asia, through Iran and arrive in Istanbul, Turkey, at the end. You travel across the deserts of China and cycle the Pamir Highway to over 4,600 metres, across the 'Roof of the World' in the mountains of Tajikistan. On the way there are villages, markets and ancient buildings.

At night, you stay in ancient roadside hotels or in camps. A chef cooks dinner for about half of the 133 days; on other days cyclists can eat in local restaurants or shop in local markets for their food.

One cyclist blogged, 'The best thing was the friendliness of the people.' And the worst things? 'The snow and the cold in the Pamirs.'

So is it the greatest journey in the world? Cyclist and blogger Miles MacDonald thinks so. 'The Silk Route is a true expedition. It is long and difficult, but it's such an amazing experience that you arrive in Istanbul a completely changed person.'

3 A Read the article. Did you find the answers to your questions?

B Read the article again. Are sentences 1–6 true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 The Silk Route Tour travels through seven countries in eighty weeks.
- 2 A bicycle is faster than a camel.
- 3 The tour starts in Istanbul and ends in Shanghai.
- 4 Cyclists stay in hotels and camps.
- 5 They take turns cooking dinner every evening.
- 6 One cyclist thought the snow and the hills were the best things.