

BICYCLING

around the

WORLD



Photos by Paul Jeurissen
Written by Grace Johnson



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Text & design by Grace Johnson

Front cover: Looking out over the desert in Tajikistan.
Left: Rush hour traffic in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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This e-book is dedicated to the many cyclists we have met around the world.

Published by Paul Jeurissen / PaulJeurissen.nl

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First edition 2015
Second edition 2023

ISBN 978-90-833510-0-1

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The photographs in this book and even more bicycle culture and travel images are available at www.pauljeurissen.nl

Special thanks to:
Amaya Williams www.worldbiking.info
Friedel Grant www.travellingtwo.com
Koga Bicycles www.koga.com

Right: Struggling up another steep slope in the American Southwest.





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Left: Thiksey Monastery in Ladakh, India.

INTRODUCTION

Bicycling around the world celebrates bicycle travel and culture around the globe.

Come pedal with us through the icy Himalayas, the barren Pamir Highway, tropical East Africa, and the chaos of Dhaka in search of unique cycling images.

We also show you glimpses of bicycle culture via painted rickshaws, overloaded cargo bikes, and even two-wheelers piled high with cotton candy.

“We” are photographer Paul Jeurissen and his partner Grace Johnson.

In 2010, we set off on a multi-year trip to seek out bike culture, dramatic landscapes, and remote places.

By the end of this book, you’ll surely agree that the world is best viewed from a bicycle saddle.

Right: Family transport in Agra, India.



PHOTO PROJECT

In Amsterdam, I grew up surrounded by two-wheelers. They were just everyday objects that you used to go to the shops, the pub, and school. Later, when I started cycling through other countries, I saw that bicycles meant different things to different people. And that they could be an interesting photography theme.

Then in 2005, it was goodbye to expensive analogue film and hello to digital photography. With the possibility of unlimited shots, I could finally start taking pictures of the subject that now fascinated me - bicycle culture.

- Paul Jeurissen

Right: One of Amsterdam's many bikes.





THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Finally, we were off to Asia with nothing but our trusty bicycles and panniers — crammed with way too much electronic gear. We were both anxious, wondering what the coming years would bring, and at the same time, looking forward to the adventure that lay ahead.



SOUTHERN CHINA



Previous Pages: Crossing the scenic Li River.
Above: Simmering pots help entice new customers.
Right: Snacks for sale in Jinghong.





Above: The neighbourhood cobbler repairs Paul's sandal.

Left: Stopping to admire the view.

Following pages: A bike lane in Chengdu.





CARGO BIKES

Chinese market women adore them because they are lightweight and easy to maneuver. These resourceful ladies use them not only to transport goods but also as product and restaurant stalls, which they can set up on any street corner.



TOUGH GOING

A single downpour was all it took to transform the road into a cyclist's nightmare. The wet clay clung to our wheels and brake pads, bringing us to a standstill. And just when we thought things couldn't get worse, Paul's derailleur decided to throw in the towel with a resounding snap. But then again, isn't that the thrill of the open road? Embracing the unexpected twists and turns, even when they leave you knee-deep in mud.



Above: Posing for the camera in Dali Old Town.

Right: An original Chinese Flying Pigeon bicycle.



WEAPON

The elderly saleswoman became enraged upon discovering that a new girl had taken over her spot. Frustrated, she resorted to drastic action, methodically rolling the front wheel of her cargo bike back and forth over the newcomer's foot until she moved aside.





Above: Waking up from a midday nap.

Right: In Jinghong, a balloon vendor cycles by.





Above: Traditional architecture can still be found in some places.
Left: Pedaling through the karst mountains of Southern China.



SOUTH EAST ASIA



Previous pages: Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar.
Above: A decorated trishaw wheel in Penang, Malaysia.
Right: Chinese tourists take the “grand tour” of Penang.





LIVING ROOM

This Thai chauffeur was proud of his trishaw, adorned with personal memorabilia. For him, it wasn't just a means to earn money; he had literally transformed it into his home on wheels.



Above: Cycling through the ancient city of Angkor Wat.



Above: Family transport in Siem Reap, Cambodia.



BARBIE DOLLS

A must-do in Malacca, Malaysia, is touring the town in a decorated rickshaw. The little girls adored the Barbie-themed one and eagerly tried to convince their parents to choose it for their ride.



Above & left: At dusk, Malacca's rickshaws turn on their fairy lights.



BUDDHA

What's special about cycling in Thailand is spotting immense Buddhas in the distance. They seem to float above the trees, casting a serene and awe-inspiring presence over the landscape.

SWEET TREAT

The cotton candy bike was a favorite amongst kids in Vientiane, Laos. They would all peer inside and plead with their mothers to buy them one of the pink and white concoctions.





INDIAN HIMALAYAS



Previous pages: Prayer flags flutter above the Indus River in Ladakh.

Above: The Maitre Buddha statue in Thiksey Monastery.





Previous pages: Stopping to rest near Leh.

Above: Looking out over the Indus Valley from the roof of Thiksey Monastery.



Above: Multicolored peaks near the top of the Baralacha La Pass.



OXYGEN PLEASE!

Wheeze, gasp, wheeze... We sounded like two asthmatic seniors as we pedaled and pushed our bikes up yet another high pass. Sure, the scenery was stunning, but we also longed to be able to breathe.



Above: Cruising down the Nakee La Pass.



Above: Kyi Monastery in Spiti.



PRECARIOUS

After numerous river crossings, we became careless and rushed through yet another swift-moving stream. Suddenly, disaster struck: Paul's foot slipped on a smooth rock, causing him to lose his balance and grip on his bike. His faithful steed sank into the icy waters, but through sheer luck, he managed to snatch it before it plummeted over the cliff's edge.

TENT WITH A VIEW

After dinner, we asked a Ladakhi where we could best set up our tent. He pointed to an opening between two hills and suggested, "Camp in the valley behind. You'll find shelter from the wind there." Arriving at the spot, Paul turned to me and declared, "Tomorrow's a rest day."





Above: Heading down the Baralacha La Pass, a glorious 5,000 ft. descent.



INDIA & NEPAL



Previous pages: Taking a break in Fatehpur Sikri, India.

Above: An ingenious use of pedal power.



Above: A Bollywood film star adorns the fender mud flap.

Right: Indian bicycles can never be too decorated.





JUGAAD

A popular Indian expression is “jugaad,” which roughly translates to “make do” or a “creative hack.” Attaching a gas cooker to your bike’s top tube may seem like an innovative solution for a makeshift kitchen. However, the question of safety inevitably arises — a consideration not to be overlooked.



Above: And Grace thought she carried too much on her bike...



BUMPER CARS

Indian roads swarm with every conceivable mode of transportation. It often felt like we were playing a massive game of bumper cars, except here we tried to avoid colliding with other rickshaws, carts, and pedestrians.



Above: The view from our favourite Agra restaurant.



Above: Cotton candy for sale in North India.

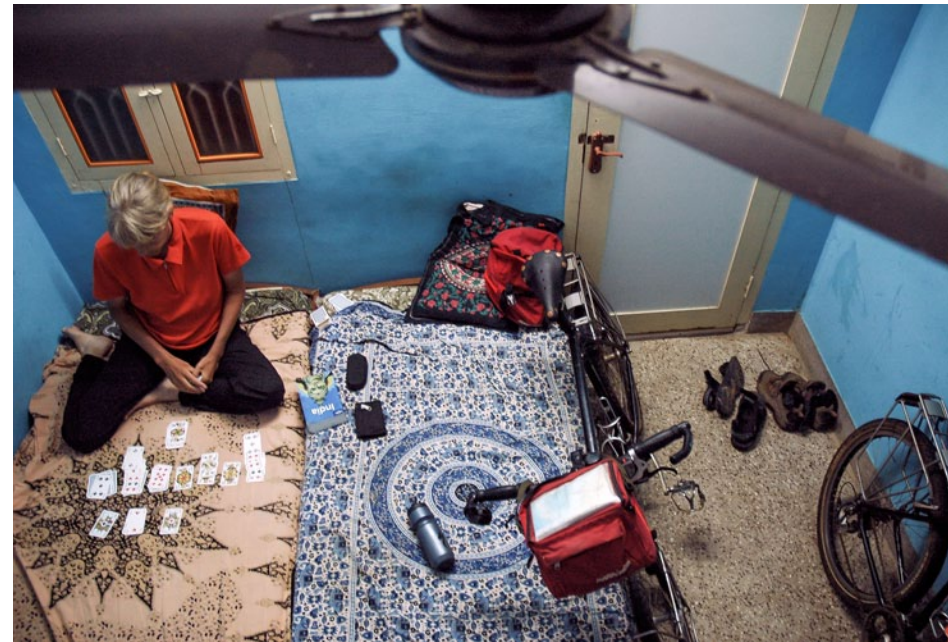
Following pages: A day at the beach isn't complete without some ice cream.



CURIOSITY

*"Where are you from? Where are you going?"
The schoolgirls were curious to learn all about us
and why we were traveling on bikes.*





Above: Passing the time in an Indian hotel room.

Left: Transporting lungis to the market.



Above: Father and son push their overloaded rickshaw.

Right: A traveling knife salesman near Chandigarh, India.





Above: Bollywood mud flaps are for sale in a Kathmandu bike shop.



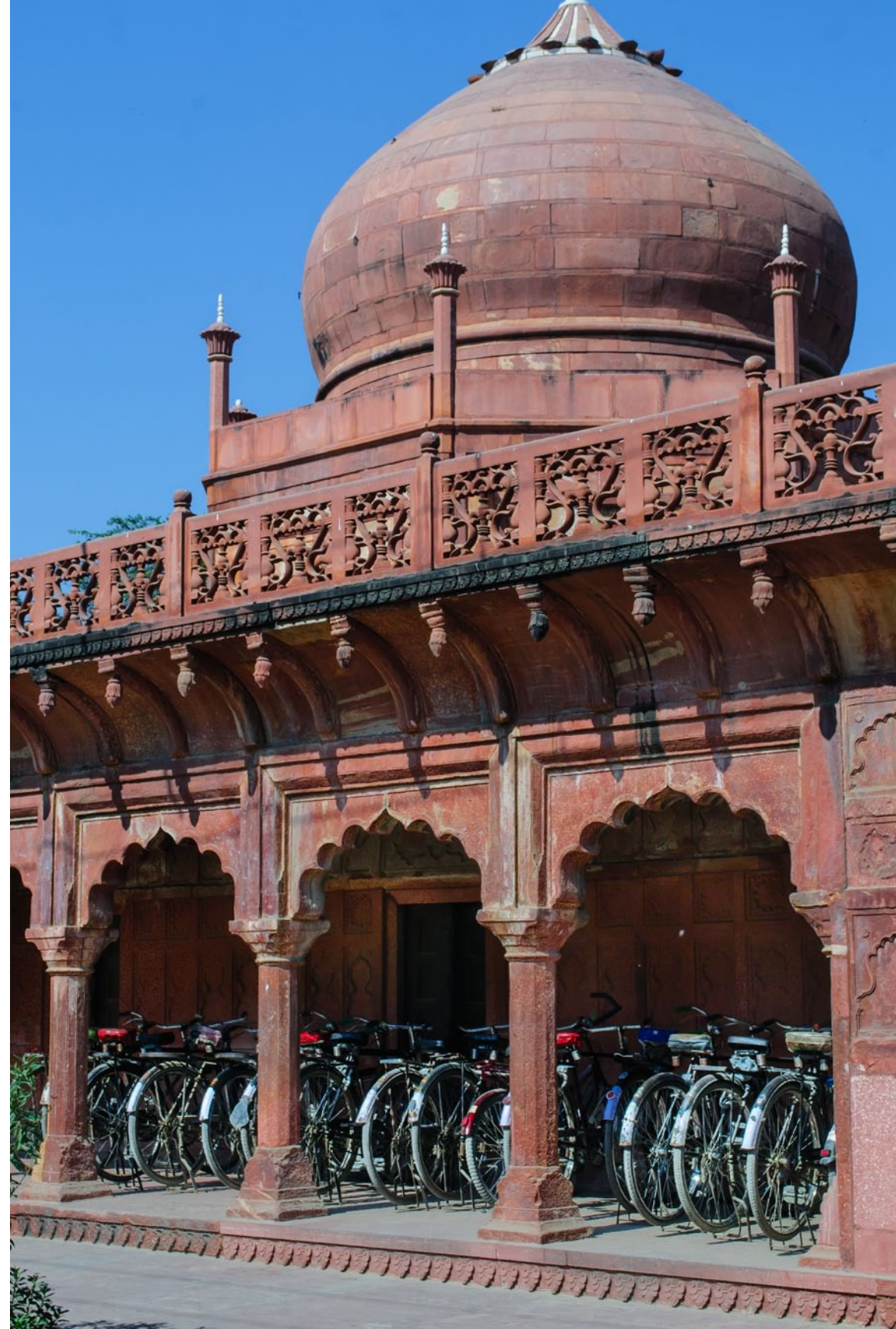
CLAUSTROPHOBIC

We stopped for some chai and biscuits, but our break was short-lived. In no time, a crowd of curious onlookers surrounded us, eager to catch a glimpse of the foreigners in their midst.



Above: Chicken transport in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Right: The best parking spaces in Agra are reserved for bicycles.





Above: Navigating through the chaos in Southern India.



WEDDING BIKE

In an Indian wedding procession, the dazed groom sits atop a majestic white horse. Behind him, enthusiastic family members dance to tunes belted out by a brass band. And no procession is complete without the neon wedding bike, trailing along and injecting a burst of color into the festivities like a mobile disco on wheels.



PAMIR HIGHWAY



Previous pages: Cycling through the vast Pamir landscape.

Above: Setting up camp near Sary Tash, Kyrgyzstan.

Right: Curious kids came to check out our tent.





DAUNTING

After acclimatizing in Sary Tash, we set off towards the mountains. The snow-capped “Pamir wall” appeared impenetrable, and we wondered how on earth we were going to get over it.





Previous pages: An icy river crossing near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border.

Above: The dusty, desolate town of Karakul.



Above: Cheap Chinese goods abound in Murgab's main market.



Above: Posing for a self-portrait in Tajikistan.

Left: Cycling through an endless sea of grey.





Previous pages: Taking a rest near the Chinese border.

Above: A lone outhouse beside the Pamir Highway.

VAST

Enormous, vast, immense — these are just some of the adjectives used to describe the Pamir scenery. To truly appreciate it, you have to pedal through it yourself.





BICYCLE TRAVELERS

The highway was a hub for long-distance cyclists, and stopping to chat with fellow riders became a cherished ritual — a chance to swap tales, trade tips, and connect over our shared love for the road.





Above: The scenery was straight from a Dali painting.



Above: We could see for miles in the distance.



BANGLADESH



Previous pages: Dhaka's rickshaw graveyard.
Above: Paul smiles for the camera.
Left: An early morning traffic jam.
Following pages: Parked rickshaws line Dhaka's streets.



GLAMOUR & GUNS

Birds, flowers, automobiles, and even airplanes adorn rickshaw bodies. However, our favorite theme was “Glamour & Guns,” which captures the essence of the Bollywood film industry.







Previous pages: Local traffic in the countryside.
Above: Dhaka rickshaws are piled full of passengers.
Left: A curious chauffeur.



GOOD FORTUNE

After placing a coin in the elephant's trunk, the elephant blessed Grace by gently patting the top of her head with its trunk.



WINTER CHILL

During the cold, damp winter months, the chauffeurs wrap themselves up in every blanket, scarf, and tea towel they can find.



Above: How did they load it up in the first place?

Right: Too heavy to pedal.

Following pages: Main street in Mymensingh.





EXPERTS

In the West, you have backseat drivers. But in Bangladesh, you have backseat bicycle repairmen. They crowd around you, offering advice on the best way to repair your flat tire.



MAGIC POTION

He began by shaking his stick of bells, then proceeded to pour various liquids into the cup. With a bit more jingling and mixing, the potion was ready. Pure magic!





Above: Technicolor rickshaws in Dhaka.



MOROCCO & OMAN



Previous pages: Heading towards an oasis in Morocco's Draa Valley.

Above: The Djemma el Fna square in Marrakech.

Right: Pedaling towards the stunning Anti-Atlas Mountains.





MOROCCAN TEA

Forget about dried-out, mass-manufactured tea bags. Fresh mint tea was a taste revelation. Paired with the simple pleasure of sitting on a café terrace, watching local life, we were sold on Morocco.



Above: Moroccan kasbahs are architectural masterpieces.

Right: Cycling past yet another verdant oasis.





ASPHALT FURNACE

We often wondered what it would be like to ride through the Sahara. Yet, once there, all we could think of was: "It's hot, scorching hot..."

Why didn't we bring more water?"



Above: We woke up covered in sand.

Left: Wild camping in Oman.



REFRESHMENTS

Omani coffee shops were the highlight of a day's ride through the hot, barren desert. They served Indian curries, chicken burgers, and most important of all — ice-cold soft drinks.



Above: A lone grocery store in Oman.

Left: We had excellent internet reception that evening.



EAST AFRICA



Previous pages: Clowning for the camera in Malawi.

Above: That must have been quite a balancing act.



Above & right: Bike taxi plates in Malawi.





CHARCOAL BOYS

The locals cook on charcoal stoves, and the charcoal boys were busy day and night transporting it to the villages. Despite their heavy loads, they still managed to pedal up some of the hills. They even helped Grace push her bike up a few of the steeper inclines.

UNENDING

The road lay over the subtropical landscape like a never-changing ribbon. The only reason to stop was for a chat and cold cokes in a nearby village.







Previous pages: In Uganda, the department store comes to you.
Above & right: Enthusiastic school kids in Malawi.



TOUR DE SCHOOL

Our tent leaked, so as dusk approached, we were eager to find somewhere dry. We often sought refuge under school roofs. Upon arrival, the headmaster would warmly welcome us, provide a key to a classroom door, and then give us a tour of the buildings.



TAXI CHAUFFEURS

The chauffeurs hang out together, exchanging smiles with female passersby and tuning in to their radios. But don't be fooled by their laid-back appearance. They can pedal fast when need be, even while carrying a big African mama on the back seat.







Previous pages: A bicycle taxi speeds to its destination.

Above: Banana transport in Uganda.

Right: Still pushable despite being overloaded.



FRESH FISH?

They were for sale, but their freshness was questionable. The vendor untied one from his handlebars and began hitting a tree with it. The fish was so stiff that it didn't bend an inch.





Above: Older sisters can be annoying at times.
Right: Bike taxis cruise down Malawi's M5 highway.





THE AMERICAS



Previous pages: Heading across Uyuni's salt lake.

Above: Freezing cold + washboard + sand = cycling the Bolivian Altiplano.

Left: Stopping to visit a local church.

DESOLATE

We often came across cemeteries on the Altiplano, which left us wondering why anyone would want to live there in the first place.





Above & left: Locals enjoy a day out in Sucre, Bolivia.





Previous pages: A cold night camping on the Salar de Uyuni.

Above: Old beaters live on in Bolivia.



Above: Street art in Salta, Argentina.

Left: The road twisted and turned like a carnival ride.



Above: We expected the stagecoach to arrive at any moment.



FOLK SAINT

Argentines leave children's bikes at one of the many Gauchito Gil roadside shrines, to give thanks for the miracles he has performed – and to ask for more.

OTHERWORLDLY

We were still on Earth, or were we? The lunar landscape of the American Southwest felt like cycling on a different planet.





Above: Camping on Lone Rock Beach, Utah, USA.

THE END?

Like Argentina's Ruta 40, our bicycle photography project is never-ending. Even after a decade, it is still an exciting theme. We decided to celebrate this milestone by bringing out a photo book. We hope you have enjoyed looking through it.

- Paul Jeurissen & Grace Johnson





ABOUT

PAUL JEURISSEN was born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In 1981, he pedaled across the U.S.A. Along the way, he met his future wife Grace and discovered a passion for photography. Since then, he has specialized in bicycle imagery. His pictures have been used around the globe in cycling and travel publications.

GRACE JOHNSON grew up in Seattle, then moved to Holland in the 1980s. Her background is in architectural drafting, and in her free time she enjoys photo editing and graphic design.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS in this book, along with additional bike culture and travel images are available at www.pauljeurissen.nl

MORE VISUAL STORIES from our bicycle journeys can be found at www.bicyclingaroundtheworld.nl

SHARE THE LOVE OF BIKES. This photo e-book was freely given, and we encourage you to keep the spirit of giving alive. Why not share it with a cycling friend or review it on [Goodreads](#) so that others can discover it?

Left: Paul & Grace pedaling the Pamir Highway.

Back cover: A young chauffeur in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

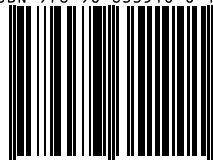
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ISBN 978-90-833510-0-1



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