

# Bikepacking Report

Ridden by Benny Crowson and Tim Bickersteth

Summer 2023





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# 1 Introduction

May we introduce our awesome bike-packing expedition that we were fortunate enough to go on during the summer of 2023. Totalling 2,200 km and passing through 8 countries, no wonder we had a great time. To anyone planning an adventure of this sort our initial advice - DO IT!

## 2 Our Journey

We initially devised a route that would lead us from Oxford to Bruges, passing through Luxembourg, France, Germany, Austria, and Liechtenstein, culminating at a slacklining festival in Switzerland. Our subsequent plan was to cycle through Bavaria and ultimately reach Milan via the Alps. However, instead of continuing directly to Milan, we opted for a more scenic tour through Southern Germany in order to visit a friend. We boarded a bus in Munich, which took us to Milan, while the remainder of our journey adhered to the original plan. In total, we covered a distance of 2,200 kilometres with an elevation gain of 16,000 metres.

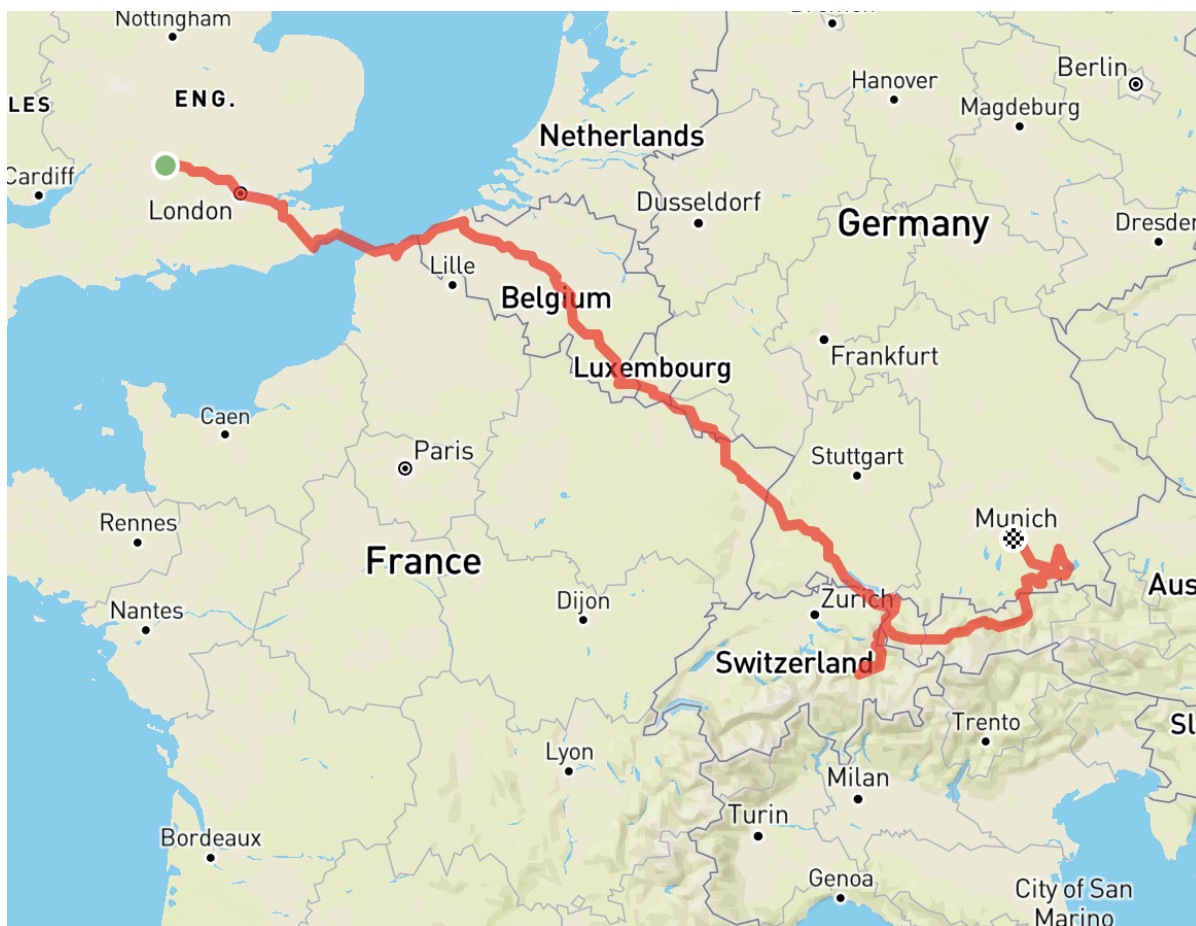


Figure 1: A map of our complete route.

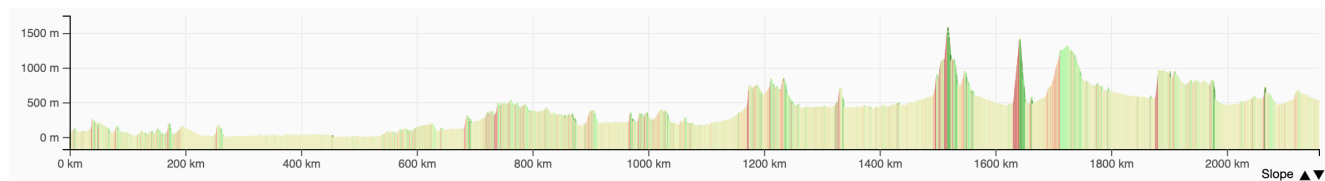


Figure 2: An elevation profile of our route

## 3 Team Biographies

### 3.1 Tim Bickersteth - Team Leader

#### 3.1.1 Academic Background

**2021 - Present** Studying towards an MSci in Earth and Planetary Sciences, Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London

#### 3.1.2 Experience

Tim is a very keen sportsman and outdoor adventurer, having played competitive sports and regularly hiking throughout his teens. He has been on two mountaineering trips to the Cairngorms and a 2-week outdoor camp near Cape Wrath, Scotland which included multiple day hikes and kayaking trips. Primarily he joined Imperial College Mountaineering Club as a way of getting out of London on weekend trips before he quickly became aware that he was attending the climbing wall far more regularly than most.

**2021 – present** Avid climber and active member of Imperial College Mountaineering Club. Regularly climbing indoors and attending weekend trips to the Peak Districts with the society. Mainly focusing on bouldering but confident in top rope as well as experienced in seconding and cleaning routes.

**September 2022** Further improved his outdoor climbing experience at the Drill and Chill Festival in Bosnia, and slowly improved his confidence in highlining at this festival as well as a subsequent highlining festival in Slovenia.

**March 2022** Completed Fieldwork First Aid and Personal Safety – Level 3 - with Marlin Training. This course meets the first aid requirements of many outdoor bodies. Valid for 3 years.

**July 2021** Two weeks bike packing the Hebridean Way, Scotland. Camping and managing supplies for the majority of the journey. Travelled to and from Oban by train with all his gear.



### 3.2 Benny Crowson

#### 3.2.1 Academic Background

**2021 - Present** Currently studying Physics on the MSci course, Department of Physics, Imperial College London

#### 3.2.2 Experience

Living in the peak district Benny has been a keen cyclist from a young age. He initially took to road biking and would often enjoy competition with his brother who was a few years older than himself.

Benny took part in 100km cycling sportive events around the area. In his later teens, he grew more interested in mountain biking and knows many of the Peak District trails well. He created a challenging off road mountain bike trail in a local woodland that became popular among locals. He has ridden around the bike parks in the Lake District and nationally.

Benny climbed throughout his youth but joined the Imperial College Mountaineering Club at the start of last year and has been enjoying it as well as improving rapidly. He has always enjoyed a wide range of sports including squash, tennis, skiing and





wild swimming. Due to his family's love of mountains he has been on many challenging walking trips in the Alps and Pyrenees.

### 3.3 Expedition Roles

As a two man team, roles on this trip were very flexible and often changed. We had one chief navigator, which was a duty that really just involved making sure that we did not go too far off route. An easy job as our GPS navigator - the Wahoo - beeped as soon as we made a wrong turning.

Other duties mainly involved setting up the tent and cooking the evening pasta which ended up getting delegated unanimously with Tim on tent duty and Benny on the stove.

## 4 Trip Diary

### 4.1 Setting Off

As Bilbo Baggins says, all stories must start at their beginnings. Here is ours.

Setting off from Oxford was an adventure in itself. The first brake of the tour resulted in a key component falling off Benny's bike. In fact it took us about an hour to complete 500m. However, after solving the initial teething issues, we were soon on our way towards London. We travelled into the heart of London having had an enjoyable (albeit tiring) sunny day.

The next day Benny *hated*. This took us through southeast London to Maidstone where we were planning on camping. This was a much less beautiful day with large parts spent following a motorway in consistent drizzle. The route planner unfortunately decided that the optimal way - at times - was through a series of fields and woodland paths where Tim took a tumble into some brambles (to Benny's amusement).

Thankfully, the weather cleared up and we had a lovely and relatively short next day of cycling to Tim's family friends' mother's, named Steph. Despite arriving rather tired, Steph had planned an afternoon of activities for us which we very much enjoyed - the first of which involved climbing up a lighthouse and then going on the steam train. She cooked us a beautiful Sunday dinner and we went to bed well bathed. Thanks a lot Steph!

We left Steph's in high spirits and cycled to the ferry at Dover. It was easy to get through customs and we were rapidly placed on a ferry. The journey out of the port in Calais was much less smooth and we managed to get lost whilst still inside it.

### 4.2 Arriving in Europe

The next two days were spent cycling through Northern France towards Bruges. These days were spent on flat ground with 30 degree heat and were mostly uneventful.

In Bruges, we were welcomed by Jan and Ria and their son Jaron who are family friends from pre-Tim days. A very kind, fun, and hospitable family. Highlights of our time in Bruges would have to include an amazing rabbit and beer stew, a 13 stage international dance festival around the city, and enjoying much of the local beer. It was tough leaving the great spirits of this family and that of the city too.

Upon leaving Bruges, we took a day to cycle to the outskirts of Brussels and stayed with Dries who we found on the Warmshowers app through a recommendation from his uncle. This was our first experience of the extreme generosity from strangers on the trip. He welcomed us with cold beer and homemade pizzas which quickly moved on to whisky and a sore head. We left Dries the next morning with some of his homegrown cucumbers and black tomatoes, and a desire to meet more people through Warmshowers.



The next few days passed in extreme heat but without mishap. When low on water, we knocked on doors practicing our very poor French. We made sure to stop for swims whenever we could, and Tim (suffering from FBS) made further use of the water to deposit excess pasta and pesto from the evening before. At this time, we were travelling through the Ardennes a county of rolling hills. Despite the hills being relatively short, the quantity of them left our legs feeling worn out at the end of the day.

We travelled through Luxembourg in a day, unfortunately not able to take a scenic route due to time pressures, going through the suburban parts of the country. Kindly, we were offered a free place in a campsite on the border of Luxembourg, but when we arrived we found it to be deserted which was somewhat unsettling. However, after a dinner of solely a rotisserie chicken all seemed well.

As we travelled through the Alsace we had a second amazing hosting experience with a family in a beautiful french farmhouse. Another fellow bikepacker was staying there that night where we had the pleasure of enjoying a great dinner followed by a garden tour which contained running ducks - a first sight for both of us.

The next few days of biking were incredibly hot and we decided to do the majority of our biking by midday. They were very beautiful days through stunning mountain valleys and into the gentle rolling hills of the Blackforest. This part of our journey ended with another Warmshower experience where we were hosted by Matthias and his parents. The table seemed to be countinously piled with food and we spent an enjoyable evening around the fire, enjoying the stars and learning a new game of Speedminton.

Another bikepacker was staying at Matthias' house and luckily was traveling in the same direction as us. We left together, also joined by Matthias who was a very keen cyclist. Unfortunately, we had to depart ways and just the two of us stayed at a host on Lake Konstanz. We enjoyed tropical weather, witnessing an electrifying thunderstorm over the lake as we tried to understand an outdoor comedy event spoken in German (which was later shut down due to the weather).

The next day, we set off to reach our next hosts. We travelled around the lake before biking away from it and embarking on what was, at that point, the largest hill of our trip. As we cycled up, we were accompanied by increasingly beautiful views over the lake and felt a great sense of accomplishment when we reached the top. That night, we were hosted by a highly amusing couple and spent the evening enjoying and laughing at stories of their travels through Africa (especially finding out about the second trunk that elephants have). We left the following day well-rested and with some useful advice on life.

Realising we were ahead on distance we ended up doing a slight detour by continuing around the lake to Lindau. Here we stayed with Prajwal who we can now count as a friend. He took us for a swim, where he was very pleased with Benny's desire to jump off anything. The following day we headed up the Rhine towards the Slacklining festival on a very rainy day. Another night, another host; this night it was Lyon in Feldkirch. This was our last night before the festival and excitement was building.

Arriving at the festival was somewhat underwhelming. Somehow we both envisioned a grand entrance with fan fares. Yet it was another rainy day and the camp mood was also somewhat wet. This changed when the portable sauna arrived and as people began to remove moist layers of clothing so too did spirits rise.

### 4.3 The Festival

The festival was an awesome mix max of activities which could most likely be seen at a circus. From the expected slacklining, to acroyoga, juggling, dancing,





singing, unicycling and all around fun it lived up to expectations. Tim got the opportunity to reconnect with friends and to meet new ones.

It was a week of easy resting, communal meals and great conversations with a little bit of waterlining involved in a very beautiful part of Switzerland. Mountain lakes and rivers surrounded us as well as the tinkling of cow bells. Rejuvenated, we got back on our bikes for the next bit of our journey.



Figure 3: The Transalp Waterlining festival in Flims

#### 4.4 To Aliyas

After returning to a previous host in Feldkirch after a beautiful day on the Rhine Gorge, we crossed our first pass into the Innsbruck valley. This was a sweaty affair and thankfully for Tim we were stopped half way up as it was in-passable for bikes. After a rushed bus journey we were in the valley which would take us into Germany.

After some stunning days of biking which included a day of biking around three lakes we arrived at our first stay with a friend from University - Aliya - just above Lake Chiemsee. This was the start to a few incredible days of rest, with many swims in the lake as well as visits to waterfalls. Aliya tried to integrate us into German culture, through her lovely traditional cooking, meeting family friends, and a visit to Munich where we saw and swam in the Ice Bahn - a river which is famous for its fast currents and surfing on standing waves.







Figure 4: The Three Lake Day!

## 4.5 Celebrating in Milan

Upon leaving Aliya's house, we set off for our last day of biking. We travelled to Munich, feeling very fit partially due to a strong tailwind. This was our last night of couchsurfing, and we stayed with a very helpful family who took us out for a meal and helped with packing our bikes.

Our next stop was Milan, by which we took a bus as we had run out of time and had already planned to meet friends by a certain date. During our time in Milan, we spent much of it sightseeing and seeing another friend from University - Lucia. Milan felt like an amazing way to celebrate the end of our trip.

## 5 Logistics

### 5.1 Training

Training was undertaken individually. The main issues we had regarding fitness was overuse of the knee ligaments which were overcome by just continuing.... - recommendation from a GP. We also had further personal challenges. Tim struggled with the mountains as the Oxfordshire countryside does not have a huge amount to offer in terms of gradients, but the Grindleford Goat Benny Crowson flew up them.

### 5.2 Travel Arrangements

The serious benefit of travelling by bike is that there doesn't need to be many, if any, travel arrangements. The only tickets we booked in advance were our bus and ferry tickets. Unfortunately, we were not made aware after our



first journey on FlixBus that they do not take anything in cardboard and as our bikes were boxed in cardboard Tim was refused entry onto the bus. Thankfully as Benny was travelling the next day he managed to find an alternative bike bag.

### 5.3 Expenditure

Description	Expected	Actual
Bike Spares/Parts	£200	£630
Ferries	£100	£60
Food	£700	£641
Accommodation	£300	£652
Travel	£240	£390
Festival Tickets	£144	£100
Insurance	£200	£330
Total	£1,884	£2,803

As shown in the table, we were above our initial budget by approximately £1,000. Thankfully, we had found further funding and so managed to complete the trip without racking up too much debt. The largest discrepancy was in the bike spares/parts department, potentially due to the fact that we decided to invest in better equipment, such as clip-less pedals which could also be walked in, in order to enjoy a more luxurious trip. Travel was over budget due to Tim being denied access onto the bus and unfortunately flying home instead and accommodation was a lot more expensive than initially expected. Camping costs are high throughout the alpine parts of Europe and especially high in Switzerland. On one occasion, being unable to find anywhere else, we had a night costing £58 and were only there for 12 hours. Our most useful find was the Warmshowers app, which saved us a large amount of money and gave us some great experiences - we hugely recommend it to any fellow bikepackers!

### 5.4 Equipment

We were kindly lent a Hubba Hubba NX tent, a Primus Omnifuel stove, Trangia, a solar power pack, a water bladder, and a water filter by the Imperial Exploration Board. With consideration of space, we decided not to take the water filter or bladder but the rest of the given kit was very useful - especially the tent which is very lightweight. We each took a coat and waterproof trousers, two pairs of cycling shorts, two cycling tops, one pair of trousers, 4 pairs of socks and underwear, one pair of normal shorts, two T-shirts, a jumper, and a puffer coat (which doubled up as a pillow). We felt that this was the right amount of clothing when taking account of space and weight. Both of us brought a lightweight sleeping bag and roll mat, a portable charger and plug adapter, as well as bike lights and a helmet. Everything that we took was used and we did not feel as though we should have taken anything more. The GPS navigator (we used a Wahoo) was also very handy. Tim also carried a climbing harness with him which was required for mid-lining. We would also like to give a special mention to chamois cream, which helped massively with chafing related issues.

### 5.5 Permits

As we were only travelling around Europe we did not need any permits although this is set to change... However, we needed to be conscious of overstaying our 90 days in every 180 days we are now allowed to stay in Europe as we had both travelled prior to the trip.

### 5.6 Insurance

Tim bought insurance earlier in the year which covered him for a climbing trip in April. This extended to cover the bike-packing trip and would have also insured him had we done any climbing at a total cost of £200. Benny insured himself just for the bike-packing trip. We both had cover in the event of our bikes getting stolen as well as theft or loss of equipment, phones, passports, and travel cancellation. It also covered medical fees and body recovery in the event of a death. Fortunately, we did not need to use the insurance for any part of our trip.

## 5.7 Food and Accommodation

As one may be able to imagine, the food we cooked on the camp stove was not highly imaginative at all. Dinners usually consisted of pasta and a variety of pesto we had on rotation. This seemed to keep Benny remarkably happy, on the other hand Tim was very relieved when we ended up staying as a guest and there was something else on the table. Through the generosity of people we met through the WarmShowers App we had some very memorable meals. Specific highlights have to be an incredible, seemingly endless feast, in the Blackforest or an amazing "British inspired" jacket potato and tuna dish.

Breakfasts were as conventional but deeply sombre affair whilst camping. To start with we made porridge but after a particularly disastrous morning porridge which could have been used to plaster walls we switched it up. Thankfully there was a relatively high density of supermarkets on our trip and so every morning we would buy a packet of cereal and some milk and eat it directly out the bag outside the stores. Although this drew some concerned looks from some members of public, it greatly improved our mood as the milk craving was satisfied.

Baguettes and sandwich fillings were our lunches which greatly improved during our journey as we ended up really packing them out - the tip is coleslaw (or some french mustard mayo which improved with age).

At the start of the journey we were seriously calorie deficit and our first dinner was an abomination of carbs. And we quickly learnt that snacks consistently spread throughout the day were really important to prevent an energy crash.



(a) A classic supermarket breakfast



(b) A rotisserie chicken straight out of the bag

Figure 5: Some of our cuisine highlights

We think that a really incredible part of our trip was the people that we met along the trip and who allowed us to spend the night with them. One of our objectives was to link our bike route to where we had friends in Europe. So thanks to the generosity of friends we had many a comfy night in a bed.

As mentioned previously we used an app called WarmShowers which can be described as couchsurfing but specifically for bike-packers. We had some really unique experiences through this app and it was a great way of travelling and meeting local people who advised us on the best bike routes.

The rest of the time, which was roughly half the nights, we spent camping. Our prior research suggested that camping would be cheap. However, this was not always the case and we had some ridiculously expensive nights in not that nice camp sites. After one particular night we ended up spending some time each day researching camp sites for the evening which worked much better and we found more affordable (and nicer) campsites.

## 5.8 Communication

We were able to communicate with the outside world for free while in the EU countries of Europe. To ensure our ability to do this, especially in case of emergency, we always had at least one phone with power which was made possible through the portable charger. On a more wild trip, we would recommend a solar power charger as well, however unfortunately ours did not work. While in Switzerland at the festival we could have called emergency services on our phones, but did not have access to the internet (which was fine).



## 5.9 Medical Arrangements

Prior to embarking on our trip, we made sure that we had up to date first aid knowledge. Tim had already had first aid training and Benny went on a day course to refresh his first aiding. We made sure we had a fully stocked first aid kit at all times, in a place where it could be easily accessed. Thankfully, we never required the kit, however it is a vital piece of equipment to ensure that one is as prepared as possible in case of an emergency.

## 6 Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

To say we contributed towards any social movement is a serious stretch of the imagination. However, we had the privilege of staying with many amazing hosts who have now become friends. Plans have already been set to meet again in curry houses in London or as hosts this time. So we hope the social impact of our trip has been to increase European post-Brexit bike relations and to reconnect with international slacklining friends.

In regards to our Environmental Impact, one of our goals was to minimise our impact on the planet by avoiding flying back. Unfortunately as mentioned above, Tim had a chaotic journey home where he ended up flying back in order to avoid missing a family wedding. This truly was a real shame and will be written about in our recommendations for future trips.

Another personal goal decided on the journey was to pick up litter. Through this we saw that German road sides were pretty clean of litter and we later learnt that they have a fantastic recycling scheme in which the customer gets money back for every plastic bottle or can returned! We hope this scheme comes to the UK soon as it was very effective. Our only - accidental - littering experience was that we lost a cucumber on a descent which we hope someone else enjoyed for lunch, whether man or beast!

## 7 Risk Assessment

### 7.1 Bike Related Hazards

Hazard	Consequences	Control Measures	Response	Severity	Probability	Risk
Breakdown of the bike/theft of bike	Unable to continue trip/stranded with broken bike in rural area	Bring spare parts and ensure that both of us are confident in our ability to do basic repairs. Never leave bikes unattended and unlocked	Attempt to repair damage. If bike has serious problem travel to the nearest repair shop by any means possible.	2	1	2

Bike crash/accident	Injury and/or damage to the bike/equipment	Always wear a helmet when cycling. Stick to cycle paths/less busy roads when possible. Wear lights if biking during dusk and be conscious of other vehicles. Do not bike at night	Assesses the extent of the injury/damage to the bike. Follow the protocol for the injury. If injury is serious either ring the local ambulance service or travel to the nearest train/bus station in order to seek medical attention quickly	3	2	6
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## 7.2 Weather Related Hazards

Hazard	Consequences	Control Measures	Response	Severity	Probability	Risk
Sun/heat	Heat Stroke, sun burn	Apply sunscreen and lip balm regularly. Minimise exposure to midday sun. Wear high UV rated clothing	Cover affected area. Apply burn soothing gel and protective cream immediately.	1	3	3
Rain/moisture	Slipping off bike and causing injury/damage, hypothermia	Low chance of consistent rain in August/September. Check the weather forecast regularly. Be cautious in wet conditions and slow down or stop all together. Wear appropriate waterproof clothing	Stay warm, apply more layers/change out of wet clothing. Drink and eat regularly. If necessary, stop and find shelter	1	1	1
Strong Winds	Risk of falling, tiredness	Check weather forecast for wind speed and direction. Wear windproof clothing. Understand that cycling into a head wind will reduce speed	Seek shelter or find alternative route if necessary.	2	2	4



Lightning/storm	Struck by lightning leading to burns or possibly death	Check weather forecast regularly. Do not ride in a thunderstorm. Find a shelter as fast as possible. If no shelter found find a low point and move away from the tall objects.	If struck by lightning, check it is safe to touch the person. Follow emergency procedure and dial emergency services	4	1	4
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### 7.3 Health Hazards

Hazard	Consequences	Control Measures	Response	Severity	Probability	Risk
Serious injury	Unable to continue the journey	Be cautious at all times; always wear a helmet, wear lights during dusk, don't bike when it is dark. Reduce speeds on downhills and consider pushing bike instead. Be willing to change the route if it seems too risky and always be within eyesight of one another.	Both of us will be proficient in first aid skills and will know what to do in case of an emergency	5	1	5
Minor injury	Reduced or no mobility for a period. Team required to go stop or reduce pace.	Be cautious at all times; always wear a helmet, wear lights during dusk, don't bike when it is dark. Reduce speeds on downhills and consider walking instead. Be willing to change the route if it seems too risky and always be within eyesight of one another.	Both of us will be proficient in first aid skills and have a fully stocked first aid kit. Consider impact on realistic daily distance with injury	2	2	4

Hypothermia	Continued shivering, pale, cold and dry skin - lips may turn blue, fatigue, slurred speech, slow breathing, tiredness or confusion, loss of life	Check weather forecast regularly for temperature and wind chill. Add warm layers including gloves, hats etc. If wet, change into dry clothes.	Immediately stop and put up tent. Remove wet clothes and get in the tent with warm layers and sleeping bags. Do not warm the person too fast. Give person warm liquid to drink	4	1	4
Hyperthermia	Tiredness, dizziness, headache, feeling sick, vomiting, excessive sweating, rash, cramp in arms, legs and stomach, fast breathing and heartache, high temperature, continuous thirst, weakness. Heat exhaustion may lead to heat stroke with potential for loss of life	Protect from heat. Take frequent breaks, drink plenty of water. Wear appropriate clothing. Find shade if needed and stop cycling if too hot	Reduce body temperature by removing clothing, moving to the shade, bathing in cold water. If serious follow emergency plan	4	1	4
Dehydration	Headaches, dizziness, stumbling	Regular drink breaks. Drink at least 2 litres a day. Break in hottest hours of the day if needed. Carry at minimum 5 litres of water between the two team members	Stop. Take on plenty of water. Take isotonic tablets to replace vital salts	2	1	2
Navigation	Team gets lost, or changes route	Regularly check maps to assess route. Use GPS to map. Make sure we both know the route. Take paper maps in case GPS fails	Return to last known location. Ask locals for help	1	1	1



Wildlife	Injury, scratches, bites, infection	Be conscious of wildlife in each country, especially in rural areas. Choose an appropriate place to camp each night - not near stagnant water bodies where biting insects are likely to be present. Be vigilant about bears in remote areas.	Apply anti-histamine cream to bites, disinfect scratches immediately and cover them with a plaster/bandage. Do not make eye-contact or make fast movements when encountering a bear.	3	1	3
General Illness/discomfort	Diarrhoea and Vomiting, discomfort, chafing. Reduction in travel distance	Be conscious of storing food with short shelf lives, eating food that is not regularly in your diet etc. Regularly check we are not experiencing rubbing from our seats	Take immodium pills if necessary, take regular stops to drink and rehydrate as well as making sure to maintain salt levels with isotonic tablets if necessary. Apply chafing cream	2	2	4

## 8 Emergency Plan

### 8.1 Useful Numbers

- UK Emergency Services: 999
- European Emergency Services: 112
- NHS overseas telephone number: +44 191 218 1999
- Bosnian Emergency Services: 124

### 8.2 Procedure in an Accident

1. Assess the situation: Quickly assess the situation to determine the nature and severity of the emergency. If someone is unconscious or not breathing, call for emergency medical assistance immediately.
2. Call for help: If possible, use a mobile phone or other communication device to call for emergency medical assistance or the local authorities. Provide your location and the nature of the emergency.
3. Provide first aid: Provide appropriate first aid until medical assistance arrives. Focus on stabilizing the injured person and preventing further harm.

4. Secure the area: If necessary, secure the area to prevent further accidents or injury. This may involve blocking traffic, putting up warning signs, or moving the injured person to a safe location.
5. Wait for medical assistance: Wait for medical assistance to arrive. If possible, provide the responding medical personnel with information on the nature of the emergency and the steps taken thus far.
6. Document the incident: After the emergency has been resolved, document the incident, including the steps taken, any relevant information about the injured person, and any other details that may be important for future reference.

## 9 Conclusion and Recommendations for future trips

We learnt a lot from this trip, from the things that we did well to the things that we did not so well. So here are our recommendations for future bike-packing planners.

Prior to starting our journey we did some fitness training. However, we both had busy early summers, getting jobs and catching up with family. If we were perfectly honest we would have to say that we were not quite fit enough. Tim, as an Oxfordshire boy, was not too used to climbing and Benny, as a mountain goat, was not too used to the distances. So recommendation number 1 would be do a variety of bike rides with varying elevations and distances to make sure fitness levels are up-to-scratch.

Where we did well in was our packing. As you can see from some of the photos we packed relatively light for a 42 day expedition. When planning a trip think about where you are travelling through and so what is accessible en route and what is absolutely necessary to be carrying.

Another priority should be food and water. In general we did well on the quantity of food we ate and carried each day but always have spare food! It is quite a surprise how much one can eat after a day of biking. For water, make sure you always have at least one litre of water each and stop frequently for refills if necessary - it is not fun going thirsty! And we both enjoyed the ion tablets which one can pop into water; they kept us going a few days.

It can get very hot in the middle of summer in Europe (of course) so another bit of advice would be to not push yourself too hard on daily distances as the weather may be a big factor involved in how much you can do. Plan appropriately for the climatic conditions and make sure water proofs are packed - they do come in useful even in summer.

If you are going to use the WarmShowers App - which we both advise - always plan at least two or three days in advance where you are going to be staying for the best possibility of having a bed. This can be very hard as plans change but we found any less and we would struggle to find a host.

When camping look at the prices and reviews! We had some very expensive nights in campsites because we did not research them. Other than community camp sites they can be more expensive then expected, so take into account when budgeting.

A thing that we learnt the hard way was that FlixBus does not accept cardboard. Although this may seem confusing our bikes were boxed so we could bring them home. Tim was leaving a day earlier then Benny and was not let on the bus. In order to get home he flew instead so be conscious of this when planning a route back!

## 10 Acknowledgements

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- Fred and his family in the Alsace



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- Lise and her family in Offenberg
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- Elisabeth and Hinnerk in Tyrol
- Inna and her son in Osterhofen
- Jan and his family in Wasserburg
- Barbara in Rosenheim
- Aliya in Bavaria
- Chris and his girlfriend in Munich

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## 12 Appendix

### 12.1 Our hosts









## 12.2 Old friends

