

**Fact File:**  
Charging around the world

**Distance:** 19,350 miles. Average daily mileage 90, highest daily mileage 186.

**Route:** Wales to Amsterdam, then across Europe to Athens. Amman in Jordan, across Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, to Dubai. From Mumbai north to Nepal, along the Himalayas to Kolkata. Bangkok to northern Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, then to Singapore. Perth to Sydney. New Zealand, South Island to North. Japan. Los Angeles to New York. Lisbon to Amsterdam to Wales.

**Conditions:** Europe mostly dry. Middle East averaged 40°C, India and Nepal cool, high Himalayas cold. SE Asia was just right. Australia 48°C in the Nullarbor. USA a little bit wet. Road conditions: tarmac good everywhere, good gravel and well-used back tracks. Himalayas, very rough the higher you ascended.

**Bike used:** Yamaha Wabash RT.

**Maps/guides:** Google Maps app on phone.

**Sponsors:** Restrap, Squire, Quoc, Yamaha, Schwalbe.

**I'm glad I had...**

A pair of strong cutlery forks to take off my Marathon Plus tyres.

**Next time I would...**

Be fitter before I left. Plan my day to start and finish earlier. Get a better saddle.

**Further info:** If you want to ride with me on your e-bike in Wales or from London to Istanbul, contact me via my website:

[nicksanders.com](http://nicksanders.com).



yards I heard the clink of food and beer. A warm breeze creased past my helmet. Greasy rain slurped into puddles.

By evening each day, as the gentle Italian sun began to set, a new port would appear: Pescara, Bari, Brindisi. Majestic cranes were sharply outlined against a pure blue sky. I crossed Greece in a similar fashion. Then things changed in a big way.

**MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS**

On 7 October Hamas invaded Israel. At 10am that day I made a last-minute decision to delay my flight to Tel Aviv. By 3pm the news said that the incursion – across my proposed southern route to Aqaba – had left hundreds dead. By 4pm all flights into Israel were cancelled. I decided to re-route to Amman in Jordan and start my traverse of the Middle East there.

Gentle and slow, quietly reflective, e-cycling is the antithesis of the world at large. Had I caught the original flight, I'd have been cycling through Israel, across Sderot and Beersheba, in the midst of human catastrophe. It felt like a guardian angel moment.

The one complication for my journey was that my batteries were stuck

in a customs office in a place I could no longer access. E-bike batteries can't be transported by air without detailed paperwork and can't be purchased in remote places. This meant cycling across the Middle East without any battery assistance.

At roughly twice the weight of a normal touring bike, my e-bike was hard to pedal without assistance, especially uphill into a headwind. But it was give up or go on. Reverting to pure cycling, I rode across Jordan and into Saudi Arabia. Until recently it wasn't possible to cycle across Saudi Arabia during a traverse of the Middle East. Beyond Tabuk, I reached the quieter roads around Al-Ula, a market city in north-west Saudi Arabia that lies on the incense route stretching across the Levant, linking India with the Persian Gulf.

Cities across Saudi Arabia, like cities everywhere, display one face to the traveller arriving overland and a different one to everyone else. Al-Ula had its head in the mountains that drop down to desert plains. Riyadh had tall buildings and fancy streets. There is always a city where you arrive for the first time, and another which you leave never to return.

