

Dear friends of the world bicycle tour,

we hope you had great Christmas days and – in contrast to us – spent lots of time with your family ;). Here, as always at the end of the month, comes the latest version of our newsletter!

1) Postcard update

First of all a little update about the world travel post: if you check our website every once in a while you may have already discovered it: „Swap a meal against a postcard“! So from now on it's possible to donate us a meal and in exchange receive a handcrafted long distance postcard from wherever we are :). More about the swapping you can find [here](#)! Apropos postcards: for everyone who is waiting for a postcard from Iran – it's on its way since around four weeks (aaaah!!) and will hopefully arrive soon!

2) Arrived in paradise!

We planned it for a looong while, and now we're finally there: on Masirah island in Oman! Here we're taking a few weeks break, are staying at a kitesurf school and are fiiiiiiinally back on the water again (especially Manu, haha!). But we're not only kiting on the water: here on Masirah Manu has time, the necessary space and finally also all the equipment to try something he



has been thinking of for quite a while now. Isn't it possible to kite with the loaded bike and thus really save energy? Hahaha – it is! And yessss, Masirah is a really good place to recover after all these busy days in Dubai. What busy days in Dubai you may ask yourself now – you'll find the details below :)!

3) What happened during the last month?

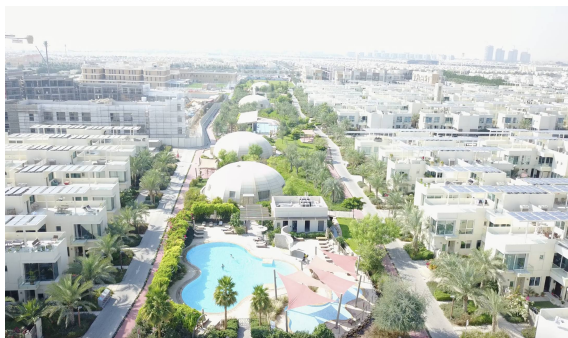
After we arrived on Hormuz Island in the very south of Iran, we took a ferry boat from **Bandar Abbas** to **Dubai** and arrived on the other side of the Persian Gulf. It was pretty messy to find a good office to buy a boat ticket and even more chaotic to get through the emigration process of Iran and the long immigration procedure of the Emirates. But the ferry ride itself was really great!



With ten other cyclists (five of them we knew already!) and one backpacking girl we had a funny evening on the boat and afterwards a surprisingly good sleep in our bunk bed. More details about the ferry ride, especially for cyclists that are planning to take the boat as well, can be found [here](#) in the new category „world cycling hints“ on our website.

Once arrived in **Dubai** we couldn't believe what we got to see: Incredible skyscrapers, a giant choice in the supermarkets and most of all a ski centre in

the desert – after all the weeks in Iran it really seemed as if we would have arrived in another world. Our host family picked us up at the harbor, with a red Porsche Cayenne. We sipped sundown drinks on their roof top together and slept in a guest room with en-suite bathroom and amazing view on the community pool. The life in Dubai was really unreal!



From **Dubai** we took the Al-Khudra desert bike track into the direction of **Oman**. Usually we avoid to cycle in the darkness, but since in the Emirates all the streets are perfectly equipped with bright street lights we made an exception and enjoyed the mild temperature after sunset. However, the decision to cycle at night triggered some crazy coincidences: first of all a big Mercedes SUV



passed by and pulled over right in front of us. Then a sheik hopped out of it (seriously!), and invited us to come to his farm instead of finding a camping spot in the dark. The “farm” turned out to be a big house on the countryside, with a private chef cook and several other employees. Then we found out that the sheik actually was Sheik Awad, the head organizer of the Emirates Travelers' Festival that was

going to start 10 days later. And to top it all, Sheik Awad spontaneously invited us to give a talk about our bike tour on the festival stage. Of course we couldn't and also didn't want to refuse his invitation. So we accepted. But: Oh. My. Gosh. How crazy was that series of surprises?!

Anyways, first of all we continued our plan to cycle to Oman. Always along the coast, passing **Sohar** and **Suwaiq**, where we stayed with some lovely south-African expats, we made our way to **Muscat**. There we had promised to several kids and teenagers to drop by with our school project, right in time before their winter holidays started. And of course we didn't want to disappoint them because of the festival. In Muscat we organized to leave our bicycles in the garage of a German family and took an overnight bus back to Dubai. Busy, busy days!



The Festival was as crazy as it can only be in **Dubai**. In **Mushrif park**, a big public park a bit out of the city, Sheik Awad's team set up several Bedouins' tents, a red carpet had been spread out in the sand dunes and a huge stage with a giant screen, big spot lights and all the technique you expect from a rock concert had been prepared. In total he had invited around 20 “travelers”, some of them were flown in from pretty far away places: a Chinese mountaineer who



climbed Mt. Everest with leg prostheses, a really funny Italian guy that lost his sight during an accident but nevertheless backpacked through 90 countries all by himself, a Canadian guy that crossed the African continent by foot, and many more. During the mornings Sheik Awad had organized sightseeing trips through Dubai and in the afternoon we went together to the festival area, where live music, travel presentations and other program were held on stage. We enjoyed the four days of hurly-burly and action – exciting but exhausting times!

And things kept being exhausting: In order to not spend Christmas just somewhere alone in our tent, we speeded up and arrived just in time for the Christmas Eve in **Ras Al Hadd**. There we had organized an international Christmas gathering at a lonely beach with a total of 11 participants (9 other cyclists and 2 backpackers from Germany/France/Spain/Czech Republic).



Together we cooked a seriously amazing "international Christmas dinner". With grilled local fish, potatoes, feta and vegetables from the fire, samosas and everything our camping stoves could provide. And then we had the chance to observe two giant turtles in the moonlight that were struggling to get their heavy bodies from the ocean to the beach, where they lay their eggs in the sand. A clip about it will soon follow on Patreon!

Now we are lucky to be here on **Masirah Island** to recover from all the busy days. We can stay for free in the caravan of the kitesurf school, just 200m "far" from the lagoon. In exchange we teach Zaal kitesurfing, an Omani fisherman that drives the schools' rescue boat in summer. It is wonderful to have a proper home again, to cook in a kitchen and especially to be the only kitesurfers on the whole lagoon!



4) What's the school project doing these days?



Well, it's doing great! Although we just stayed for a few days in Dubai, we found time to visit the famous World Academy. It's an incredibly giant international school, where kids learn from smartboards and use iPads instead of paper. The future of technology...! In Oman we visited the Indian international school as well as an Omani primary school and a German toddler group. And the schools welcomed us with so much enthusiasm: the Indian teenagers prepared a touching honor speech about our travels so far, on a stage in their assembly hall. And the

young Omani pupils even danced and sang songs about bicycles only for us (see picture below!). It was so cute!

5) Start the new year with a good deed!

Because schools full of smartboards and iPads most definitely are an exception in this world, we launched a Patreon page some weeks ago. The idea is to extend our school project into a little charity organization for schools in need. And at the same time Patreon offers everyone a possibility to return something for all the time and effort that we invest into the newsletter, into facebook and instagram posts and into our website ;). We really love to share our experiences, but unfortunately it is not cheap to pay the website provider, mobile data and accommodations with wifi and plug. We are so happy and thankful to the wonderful people that support us on Patreon already – but of course every additional helping hand is welcome and very much appreciated. So just think about drinking one coffee less in the city the next time and instead check out our Patreon page [here](#)! Everyone who supports us on Patreon does not only make us really happy and improves its karma, but also receives many exclusive information like exotic recipes (that we learn from locals on the road) or unpublished video clips (if we visit special places). Like for example [this clip](#) here, a cycle trip/drone flight through beautiful Yazd/Iran. Anyways: we are really really happy about every little support on Patreon!!



Okay, that's it, for this time! A very exciting year comes to an end – we wish you a smooth start into another year full of great experiences and special encounters! And take care to spend the upcoming 365 days doing what truly makes you happy. This is much more important than any money on this planet!

We're sending best regards and some Omani sun – and you'll read from us again in 2019!

Magda und Manu