“We are a small but energetic group cycle tourists united club. We would like to find friends in the USA in order to establish relations (exchange of information and experience/or organize bike rides). Does the idea appeal to you? Contact: Morkovkine A. Gregor...”

Crimea:
This compact region has a lot to offer: ranging from mountains and plateaus to historic sites from the Black Sea coast. A night-time ride from Kirov to Kherson, the jumping-off point from here, one ride south to either Demerdzhi or Bender, a 110-kilometer-long sand bar that encloses a lagoon, Northern Crimea is flat, but once south of Simferopol you’ll encounter mountains rising from 1,000 to 1,500 meters. The most exciting long-distance ride is southwest along the spectacular coastline of the Black Sea from Feodosia into the mountains to ascend Simferopol, then down to the Black Sea at Yalta. Here you can begin a loop through Bakhchisarai and Sevastopol, which takes in coves and untouched countryside by following the rivers through Torba, Tatar, and Jewish. Greeks. Morkovkine recommends this sector to mountain bike riders in 1978 for its scenic beauty, its safety, and its abundance of tourist facilities. Lodging: campgrounds and hotels.

Siberia:
Gruss, high waters, big waves, and rivers crossing ranges of mountains are some of the more difficult roads. Some of the more difficult roads are what club members Vladimir A. Gavrilov endorsed in 1978 to visit the unexplored, 900-meter high “forest wilderness” by Lake Teletskoe. This nearly untouched region is deserved from Novosibirsk, the largest city in Siberia.

August is Agamov's month of choice to ride and the lakes, forests, and rivers of the Ural Mountains are a great place to ride in summer. In summer, if possible, you can ride in 24 hours of daylight, where northern riders enjoy their "white nights." From Murmansk, you take the St. Petersburg or Moscow by train or airplane, alternatively, bike tour to Kirovets, Poland. Lodging: hotel rooms, camping, and worker lodges.

Lake Baykal:
Many consider this lake, which contains 20 percent of the world's freshwater, the most beautiful natural marvel in the C.S.S.R. To the remote location in southeastern Siberia is kept in near purity, ensuring a safe home for inland fishes and deltaic fishes. The coves and cycles from there on roads which get progressively better as you reach the finish of the two-week loop. From Irkutsk, he takes the train to Novosibirsk, where he enjoys the pleasures of cosmopolitan Siberia's summer night, which is both cold and beautiful, and performance of one of Russia's best known language companies: lodging, hotels, camping, worker lodges.

Alma-Ata to Kirghizistan:
More steep than people, one of the largest and deepest alpine lakes in the world. It crosses a crossroads on the old Silk Route to nearby China; the southern plains of the C.S.S.R., the largest of the major lakes in Europe. They’re situated with occasional, stormy, and frontal weather. The tour begins with a surprise tour four to five-day off road adventure over the Tian Shan Range, 500 kilometers of lakes, 3,000 and 4,000 meters deep, before dropping to Lake Issyk-Kul. The lake, 118 kilometers long, is graced with the occasional, shore-front space companion. After a heavy week’s ride around the lake, Dera heads from its southern tip to Finke, the regional capital, to conclude this two-week tour. Lodging: camping, worker lodges, tent camping, and worker lodges.

Almaty to Tadjikistan:
The club members agreed this was their most exotic and most difficult tour. Flying to Tashkent, the capital city in central Asia, they began a two-week ride which climbed four thousand meters high. Along the way they explored the 1,200-year-old Silk Road city of Samarkand, where its mosques, tombs, and one of the fine hotels in central Asia. Crossing into Tadjikistan, they visited the ruins of the 6-century-old city of Penzhen, then pushed their bikes up the 3,727-meter Arzob Pass, before crossing to Dushanbe for a day's rest. From there, it was back over the Arzob and another pass, then to Khorog, and one more pass before descending back into Tadjikistan. Lodging: camps, worker lodges, hotel rooms, camping, worker lodges.

Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan:
The club members agreed this was their most exotic and most difficult tour. Flying to Tashkent, the largest city in central Asia, they began a two-week ride which climbed four thousand meters high. Along the way they explored the 1,200-year-old Silk Road city of Samarkand, where its mosques, tombs, and one of the fine hotels in central Asia. Crossing into Tadjikistan, they visited the ruins of the 6-century-old city of Penzhen, then pushed their bikes up the 3,727-meter Arzob Pass, before crossing to Dushanbe for a day’s rest. From there, it was back over the Arzob and another pass, then to Khorog, and one more pass before descending back Into Tadjikistan. Lodging: camps, worker lodges, hotel rooms, camping, worker lodges.
Nuts and Bolts

After riding 400 kilometers along the lake's shoreline, you come to Ulan-Ude, a center of Buddhism (and home to the world's largest Lenin head!). Along the way you'll pass colorfully painted wooden houses and baboykaas working in their abundant summer gardens.

When you get overwhelmed from working the steep hills, try braving the deep, cold waters of Baykal. From Ulan-Ude you can climb aboard the train to go back to Irkutsk, and other ports on the western Trans-Siberian line, or travel for eastern lines to Mongolia or China. Lodging: hotels, worker lodges, free camping.

Despite what we hear about how bad the economy is in the CIS, the industrious citizens have worked out ways to survive in relative comfort. I was amazed how, on a daily basis, residents' involved in for everything from tea and bread to full-blow, impromptu hangouts of freshly picked pears, pickles, cabbage salad, steaming potatoes, cheese, apple pie, salami, cafe, tea, waffles, the ever-present vodka, and more. The generous people of this poor land reach out to help the individual and foreign travelers, in an expert I've experienced few other places in the world.

David Ginsburg is a ten-year-member of Adventure Cycling.

![Image of landscape]

MONEY: Travellers check are notorious to cash, but joint-venture hotels and Western restaur-ants like Pizzà Hitt in Moscow sometimes take credit cards, plan to bring enough cash for your entire visit. One-dollar bills can be helpful for making purchases in hard currency shops or to give as gifts to kids at the boudoirs. American Express has offices in Moscow (21, 2 Vavilova Street) and in St. Petersburg (27, Ul. Mikhailovskaya).

SHARING FRIENDS: To arrange for international exchanges with folks in CIS, Ukraine, and nearby any other country of the world, join Trans-Siberian-Cycle, an international peace association for cyclists. Contact: U.S. Trans-Siberian Committee Inc., 11 John St., New York, NY 10038, (212) 267-0252.

BICYCLES: Mountain bikes are uncommon in the former USSR, so you'd better prepare to ride a 26-inch tube anywhere. Bring spare tubes, all the tools and spares you would bring on any long tour, and more. Keep in mind that, although replacement parts are not readily available, the locals tend to be very resourceful in getting repairs.

If you plan to ride with a CIS cyclist, bring some hand-me-downs or gifts for your appreciative new friends; even old tests, panties, and cycling shoes. Currently all members of the Cycle Trans-Siberian Club make their own panties and cramping equipment.

SAFETY: Not going to the CIS because of, say, a riot in Moscow is about as rational as not touring America because of a riot in Los Angeles. Your chances of being caught in a violent coup attempt while you're not looking past Cusino rain or a Siberian bear are minimal at best. Here's the extent of my bad experiences: in a Moscow pedestrian underpass near the Kremlin, I was assaulted, unzipped, from augging by a band of weaseling Gypsies; also, an easily removable mirror was taken from my unattended bike in Ulan-Ude.

Aside from these, all my experiences in the CIS were positive. Thieves tend to prey on foreigners in the larger cities, especially around crowded places like train and bus stations. Take the same precautions in Russian cities that you would in any large American city, plus always carry valuables in a money belt under your clothes; lock your bike in hotel rooms and store it in a file easily removable tape when checking it or leaving it unattended. Hide a spare photocopy of your passport and a stack of cash and travelers checks in your packs and/or on your bicycle, and carry supplementary identification and emergency medical instructions in your pocket.

![Image of cyclist]

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Thanks!