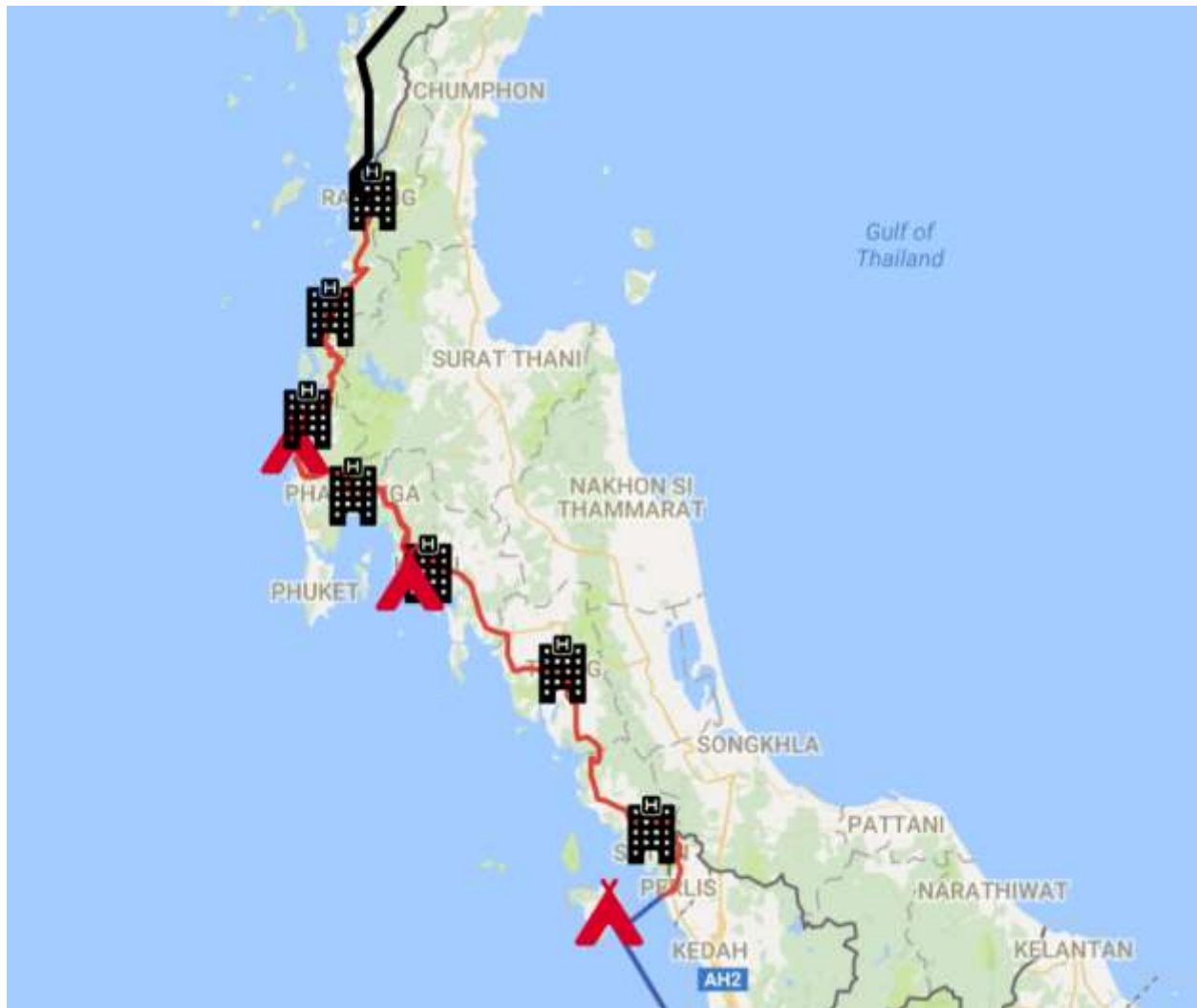


Season 7 – Part 1. Easy days in South Thailand



Sa 16.4.2016, day 279. Long long day! (Khuan Don – Trang, 145 km)

Our first day in Thailand was a long one. We set out good and early. The ride was mostly flat along large roads with a good wide shoulder. I had been a bit worried about biking in Thailand as everyone was saying that it is the most dangerous place on earth to drive. But so far everything was no problem at all, only annoying thing is that they have a habit of parking on the shoulder and you have to be careful overtaking. I really got into a good biking rhythm. It is almost hypnotic and I stopped noticing how the kilometers just tick away, sometimes listening to podcasts, sometimes following my own thoughts and sometimes just leaving my mind go completely blank and falling into a trance. Thailand seems more densely populated than Malaysia and so there are plenty of shops or stalls on the roadside to have a snack or freshly pressed sugar cane juice or whatever.

We arrived in Trang at dusk, checked into a hotel, had a nice dinner and took a stroll through the night market. When we got back we found the receptionist fast asleep with our key lying on the desk in front of him. I love the relaxed attitude!

















Su 17.4.2016, day 280. My birthday!! (Trang – Krabi, 130 km)

Again we had quite a long day ahead of us, so we got up early, Siria went down to get me a coffee and also brought me a cake with an improvised candle. What a great start to my birthday!

The ride was at first very beautiful passing through landscapes with bizarre steep limestone outcrops poking out through the green trees. Then we got onto the highway which was not very pleasant as there was construction going on, the road was being widened. So we found ourselves riding on the edge of the road right beside a 50cm vertical drop down to the bed of the future lane.

We made good time to Krabi and checked into a very nice hotel Siria had booked to celebrate with pool and everything. We munched on some salty nuts and sipped a beer by the poolside. My birthday present was a compilation of video clips of all of my friends either singing happy birthday, sending me good wishes or even baking a cake for me (that I unfortunately did not get to eat). Watching the video I felt so close to everyone that it made me a bit homesick.









Mo 18.4.2016, day 281. Waiting for wind... again! (Krabi – Ao Nang Beach, 25 km)

Windguru had indicated that there might be enough wind for kitesurfing at close by Ao Nang beach, so we decided to have a day on the beach. Just as we were arriving, a local guy stopped his car in front of us and waved us down. The usual “where are you from”, “where are you going” ended with him inviting us to some fruit smoothies. He then took us to a bar on the beach, run by a friend of his, where he said we could camp. His friend didn’t seem too enthusiastic about this plan, but didn’t seem to mind, so we ended up dumping all our stuff at his place, taking a tour of the very touristy beach promenade and finally we had a great BBQ right on the beach with all-you-can-eat salad bar.

We put up the tent in the dark and devised an ingenious way of mounting only the inner tent and tying it to our two bikes. In spite of only having the inner tent the night turned out to be very hot indeed. But it was better than being eaten alive by the mosquitos and black flies...













Tu 19.4.2016, day 282. Another nice biking day. (Ao Nang – Phang Nga, 90 km)

We were up quite early, found a place to have breakfast and were on our way. Again it was a great ride through an outlandish landscape. Again the short stretch we had to bike on the highway no. 4 was quite a bit of a balancing act, as again they were adding an additional lane to the road and there was a cliff like drop down to the bed of the future lane.

In Phang Nga we found a cheap little hotel. Just as we were getting ready to go and have some dinner the heavens opened up and rain came pouring down. As we were sitting there watching the water gushing down from the heavens we saw a scooter hit the back of a truck and the two riders of the scooter flew through the air, landed and continued sliding along the road right past us. It all happened so fast I didn't even realize what had happened. Miraculously the two young guys managed to get up by themselves and seemed more or less unhurt. But it was certainly a stark reminder for us, how fast something can happen!









We 20.4.2016, day 283. Again waiting for wind on a beautiful beach (Phang Nga – Khao Lak, 95 km)

Again we were hoping that there might be enough wind to do some kitesurfing. So we got up early and made good time to Khao Lak. There we headed for a place called Memories Beach Bar that was on a part of the beach reserved for surfing. Apparently they had bungalows for about 5\$ per night. We finally found the place after a long bumpy ride along a gravel road. It was absolutely heavenly! There was a simple bar with more or less reasonable prices and a fantastic empty beach. The only thing that was missing was wind!

All the bungalows were already booked but they told us it was no problem to pitch our tent, so we chose a spot that looked nice in under some trees. We pitched our tent and dumped all our bags inside, so we wouldn't have to worry about them.

Siria went for a stroll and I lay down to have a little snooze beside the tent. Soon afterwards I was rudely woken up by a very polite and apologetic security guard who informed me that this particular spot was part of a luxury resort and we most definitely could not spend the night here! So everything was packed up again and we finally pitched the tent on the beach volleyball next to Memories Beach Bar.

We spent the evening in in the bar having some fresh fruit smoothies and some spicy Thai curry while listening to the resident singer / guitarist and watching the sun set.

The night was significantly cooler than two days ago and I slept really well...





Th 21.4.2016, day 284. Short ride through resort country (Khao Lak – Bang Muang, 20 km)

We were actually thinking of having a rest day on the beach, however we couldn't leave the tent where it was and there was also no good place to leave our bikes and all our stuff so we wouldn't have to worry about them. So finally we decided to pack everything up and move on. We rode along the beach for a bit and found that the place was very different than we had expected. All the hotels were huge resort type things. Apart from these, there was nothing, no shops, bars, restaurants, nothing. So we continued on, back onto the main road and into the next village. There we stopped at an information board outside of a police station. It took me a moment to realize what the place was, but then it became clear that it was a bicycle rest stop, complete with bike pump, water, even a WiFi hotspot! We were absolutely baffled. Just then a guy came running, who I assume set up this whole thing. Well he did an absolutely splendid job!! Unfortunately, he didn't speak a word of English, and our Thai is still pretty dismal, but I think we made it clear to him what a great job he had done!

We finally decided to stay in a small bungalow by the side of the road and ended up doing precious little for the rest of the day, apart from snoozing and eating.







Fr 22.4.2016, day 285. Great Beach! (Bang Muang – Praphat, 88 km)

Had breakfast of oatmeal, milk and mango on the veranda of our bungalow, then we headed off. The day passed very quickly, biking was easy with nice shoulder, not much traffic and also at times nice tailwind. About midway through the ride we saw a touring bicyclist coming the other way. We (of course!) stopped for a chat. It was a Swiss girl, who had rented a bike in Bangkok and was riding to Phuket. It sounded as if she was having a great time...

We had great noodle soup and fried rice at a little eatery by the roadside. Ordering the food was an adventure, like always, as the ladies there spoke no English whatsoever. It is then always a bit of a surprise to see what food arrives.

We followed a sign saying In-I resort, room for 350B (about 12\$), it turned out to be a very nice place with large garden, pool and a nice restaurant, so we took it. We quickly unpacked and headed down to the beach that was 3 km away. The beach was absolutely stunning! Some decorative islands lying off shore, lush forest reaching down to the beach and lovely fine sand. There were some locals strolling up and down the beach, but not a tourist in sight. In retrospect it would have been nice to camp on the beach, but we were both glad to have a shower and air con. Creature comforts!

I stayed down at the beach to climb around some rocks, look at crabs doing what crabs do (fascinating!!) and watch the sun set. A real pity there was (again!) no wind...

We had dinner in the hotel that was very nice but also very spicy! And then spent the rest of the evening on the internet thinking about how our journey should continue. The next step will be Myanmar, and it looks as if it will be quite an adventure!

















Sa 23.4.2016, day 286. Last day biking in Thailand, at least for now... (Prapat – Ranong, 99 km)

It took us a while to get started as we went to bed quite late the night before. We were finally packed up and went to get the free coffee offered by the resort. There was a large group of Thai motor bikers having breakfast. We chatted a bit and we saw them admiring our bikes and taking photos. The admiration was mutual: I was also admiring their bikes. Fantastic machines! Mostly Ducati, but some nice BMWs and a very nice Harley. All top of the range and almost brand new.

They gave us some of their left over breakfast, mango sticky rice and other types of sticky rice. Free calories, great!

And so we headed out, taking it really slowly, stopping to have another break for more breakfast and coffee and stopping again to buy water.

We were both not feeling very fit, no health problems whatsoever, but there are just days when your legs feel “empty” and today was one of those days. We did 40 km, stopped for a simple lunch of chicken and rice for 40 B each (about 1\$) and then found a lovely place for some Mocha Frappuchino. They even had internet, so we got bogged down a bit.

The remaining 60 km we did more or less in one go. It was a very nice ride, great road, nice villages and scenery, but somehow it was tough going. We arrived in Ranong in good time and did a couple of circles before we found a nice hotel with very friendly staff for 350 B.

Then headed off to the night market to stuff our bellies ☺.







Su 24.4.2016. day 287. Day in Ranong. (0 km)

We somehow had the feeling that there was a lot of organization we still needed to do before heading off over to Myanmar. Would we need US \$? What about hotel? Does the boat we want to take out of Kawthoung run? The only thing we finally did was laundry. The internet is so full of contradicting information about Myanmar that I soon gave up even trying to collect useful facts.

So our last day in Thailand was spent lounging around, eating and just generally having a nice and relaxing time.

