

Just an Update.

Contributed by Patrick
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As should be obvious by now, we've left Sydney. Our wheels started rolling, the world started spinning, and neither have stopped yet. What's also pretty obvious is I've been laced on these text updates. I don't feel too bad about it, because we've been good with the podcast. But things get left off the 'cast' that are better expressed in writing, where I can bitch a little.

Thing number one. No one appreciates the distance we ride in a day. Now I'll admit we aren't exactly breaking speed records, yet, but dammit if I have to hear one more fat old woman make some silly attempt at being folksy by taking a light hearted jab at our progress, I might have to pretend to be German just to prevent the conversation. 'Yes we only rode 40k, yes we're already tired, and yes that only takes you half an hour in your car - but did you notice the two mountains crossed in that distance?' If I thought those were bad I'll never make over the next ones? Thanks. Ha ha feaking ha.? The truth is I've been very nice about this one, politely grinning and bearing it, even joining in the deprecation - but no more. The guy that slowed down and offered to throw me a tow rope out his window as I was struggling up one of the bigger hills of the trip finally cracked me. The next person to give me crap about not going far/fast enough, gets a real snarky reply. Maybe even a nice juicy 'yo momma?' joke thrown in his face. I always keep a few on file, ready at a moments notice. Yeah, thats how I roll. I hope you can handle it Australia!

Thing the second, politics. Thankfully most aussies are perfectly happy not delving into this one. If they don't bring it up I certainly wont. But of those that do, there are two distinct types. Those who want a conversation and understand that just as everything their gov does is not a direct indication of their opinion, neither is ours. And that this lack of alignment does not equal lack of pride in your own system. These people I don't mind the conversation, and often find it a good learning experience about the aussie way of doing things. Pleasant, informative, occasionally boring but never awkward. The other group are those that want to put bush on trial and need a yank to be his defending lawyer. I know I am capable of voting in American elections. I know Dubya was elected twice. I am not going to defend him. At this point, realizing I'm not going to play the bush defense, they will try to turn to draw me into a mutual mocking of a system that would let him stay. Which is a conversation that holds even less appeal for me. In one extreme case this lead to scott and I walking out of a bar leaving half a schooner of carlton on the counter, just to escape. Thankfully that tragedy only happened once, and most are smart enough to take our bait at changing the topic. A nice sinefieldian 'whats the deal with (insert Australian oddity)?' is very effective.

Thing C is a good thing. As most of you know by now, about two weeks ago I came down with giardia. No, that's not the good part. The good part is how pleased I am with the Australian health care system. It was very easy to find a doctor, and he was able to see us the same day. Infact, it was less than 3 hours from deciding I needed a professionals touch, to having a filled prescription for miracle pills in hand. In despite of having zero medical insurance coverage, either private American or Australian state. I really don't think it would have been that easy at home, and there were 4 hospitals within 10 miles of my apartment in texas. Zero coverage, and the full unsubsidized price of the whole affair was \$85. Fifty-five dollars for the 3.5 minutes with the doc, and \$30 for the meds. I know it wouldn't have been that cheap at home. (and yes the miracle pills worked, I am once again operating at peak efficiency.)

So there's an update. Two bitches and a praise. Now that I have those off my chest, I can tell you about some interesting people we've met. So stay tuned for the next update (I promise to not make you wait a month again), and the exciting tales of the insane german hottie, the restaurateur and his free sandwich, and the Canadian couple!