

When the tour around the world is on two wheels

Couple leaves Holland three and a half years ago to start an adventure that passes through Rio Grande.

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Rio Grande: The adventure of Australian teacher Sonya Spry (45), and her husband, snooker player Aaldrik Mulder (43), started three and a half years ago. They sold all their possessions and left: cycling from Holland to...the rest of the world.

They have now cycled more than 1000 days and 46,000 kilometres. They have been to 43 countries on every continent of the planet. And that's not all: there is still two and a half more years to go to complete the whole trip.

photograph: Marcus Maciel DP



Aaldrik and Sonya have already cycled through 43 countries in 5 continents.

The trip started in the south of Europe. The adventure went by train to Italy and further into Spain and Portugal. Later, they arrived in Asia, where they began from the Turkish side of the continent and then pedalled through Iran, China, India, Nepal, Japan and South Korea. From there they left for Canada, going down through the US and Mexico. Then they started to go through South America. Here, they began in Colombia and went south via Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina and Uruguay.

And on Wednesday they arrived in Brazil. The first Brazilian city was Chui, but the initial resting spot was Rio Grande. “We like what we have seen so far. The people are very hospitable and curious”, says Mulder. According to him, within a few minutes after arriving in Rio Grande, people stopped to ask where they came from and where they would go. As they even offered help.

They met – it was inevitable – on a vacation. They were both in San Francisco in the US in 1994 and then they parted again. The goal of this adventure, which had been planned since 2002, is to get to know the world and to find a place where they want to live.

Until then, they will sleep in tents, prepare their food on a little stove that works on petrol and drink a lot of water to support the almost 100 kilometres a day of cycling.

The next stop is Viamão. First, they will take the boat to São José do Norte and stay at a friend's house, who they met while cycling. “I recommend [travelling by bicycle], without a doubt: the rider sees and smells everything and you can stop whenever you want. It is difficult sometimes, but with all we experience, it is definitely worth it”, says Sonya.