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# "IT IS NOT THAT DIFFICULT!"

*Says friend of evo India, Manas Dewan, of shipping a Ducati Scrambler with India plates to Spain and spending four months riding around Europe. Here's how you too can live the dream*

**T**HERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SAY AND then there are people who do. It's human nature to coax ourselves, to say, "I'll do this someday," and enjoy the temporary dopamine rush. But that's what it remains as. Temporary. The guys who make it happen, however, are of a different breed. Like Manas Dewan. Not that long ago he used to handle press relations for the biggest luxury car brand in India. Now he's trying to get back into the groove of everyday life after having spent four months biking across Europe. Accompanied by his wife, he rode his Ducati Scrambler across Europe and Asia, a journey through 18 countries spanning over 20,000km. We know that you've got a dream along those lines, but with your mind swarming with questions like "Oh, I don't know where to start, I have no clue what documents I'd need, I'll never be able to afford it", that dream trip shall remain what it is. A dream. But fret not. Manas did it and he says, it is not that difficult. Here's how you can follow his tyre tracks.

## You don't have to quit your job to do this

"But in my case I had to. You see, the trip itself was four months long. Preparations took two months, which includes buying the bike, modifying it, then 21 days for the shipment of the bike to Europe. After you return, again, 21 days for your bike to reach back. Again, a month lost. That brings it up to a total of seven months already. And one last month for resettling into your previous life. So what we were effectively looking at was an eight month period which, at my level at that time, wasn't possible. So we said if it's required to quit, we'll quit."

"I put in my papers in the beginning of March and came back to India mid-March, and on the first of April we bought the motorcycle. Within the first 15 days we finished the 1000km run-in and service, and finished the modifications."

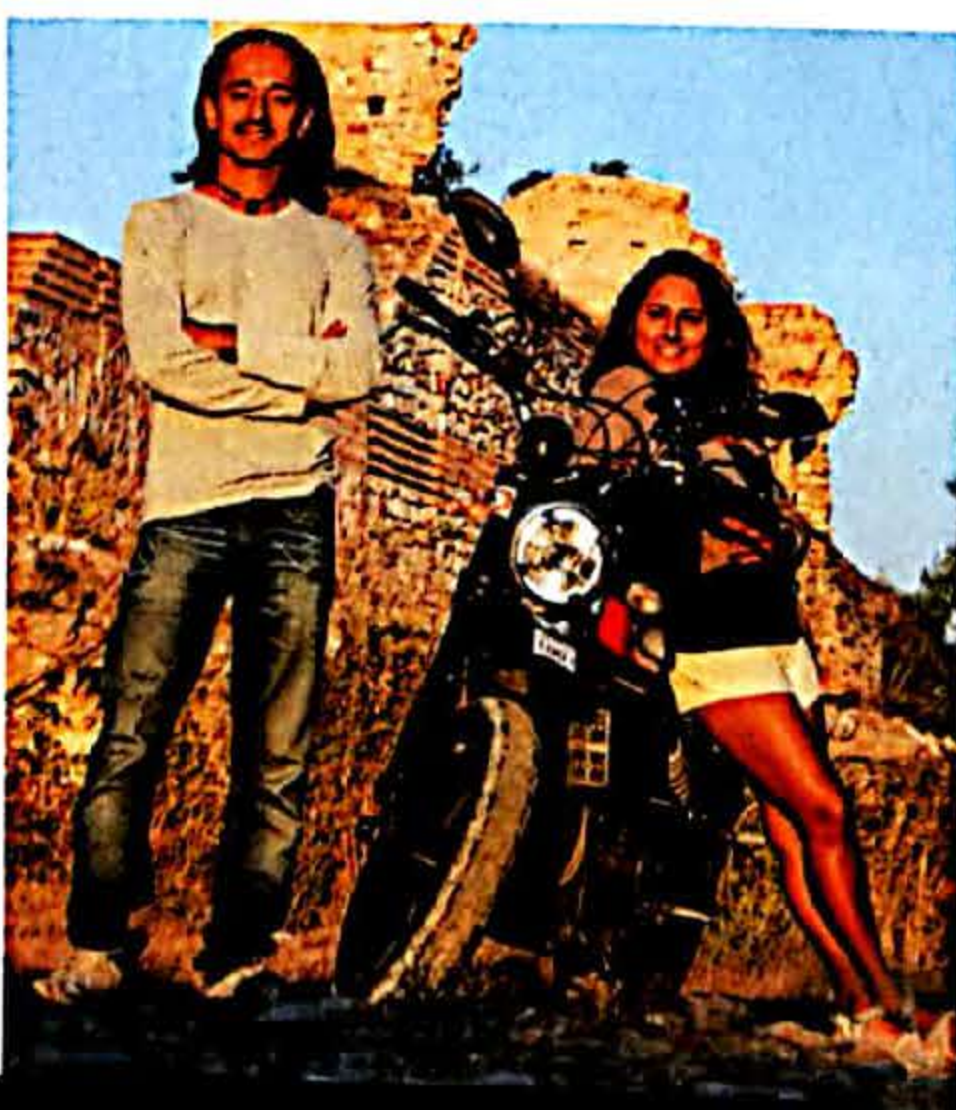
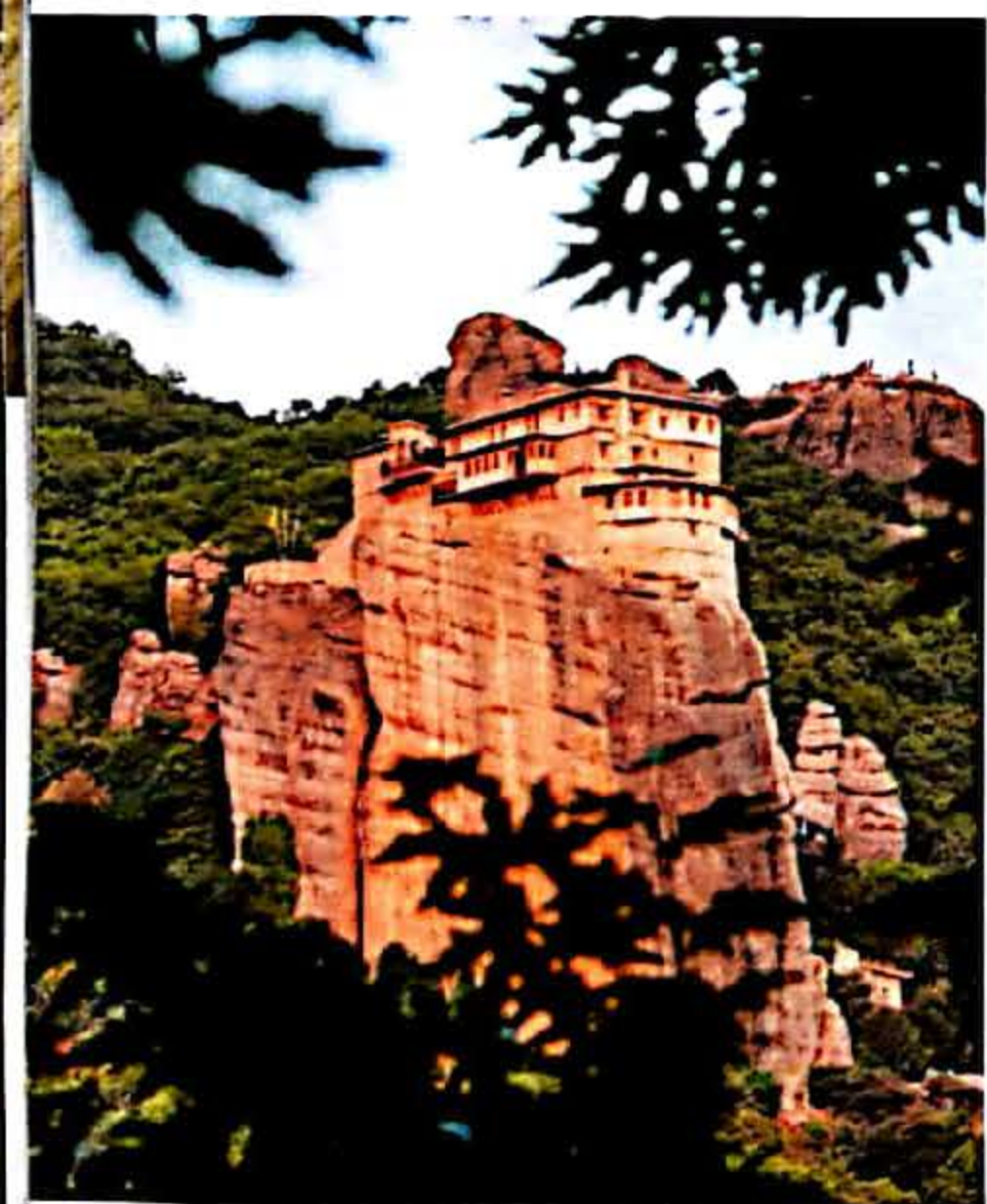
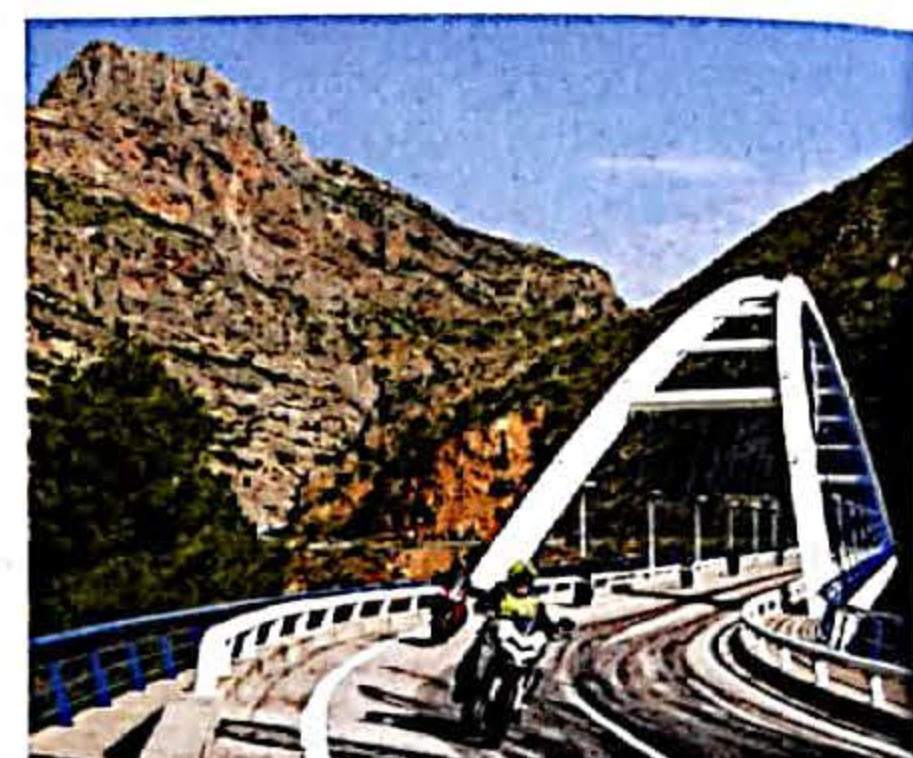
"We created a luggage system for the bike since the Scrambler isn't a touring bike. The seat is also flat with 60 density foam and with a long journey, that would be very uncomfortable. So I designed my own seat with 120 density foam and made it into a step seat so my wife could see over my helmet. And then we just reinforced the bike, the shocks, sumpguard, oil guard cover, and raised the mudguard to make it like an enduro because we would be doing some soft-roading. And that's all."

## There's something about the perfect bike

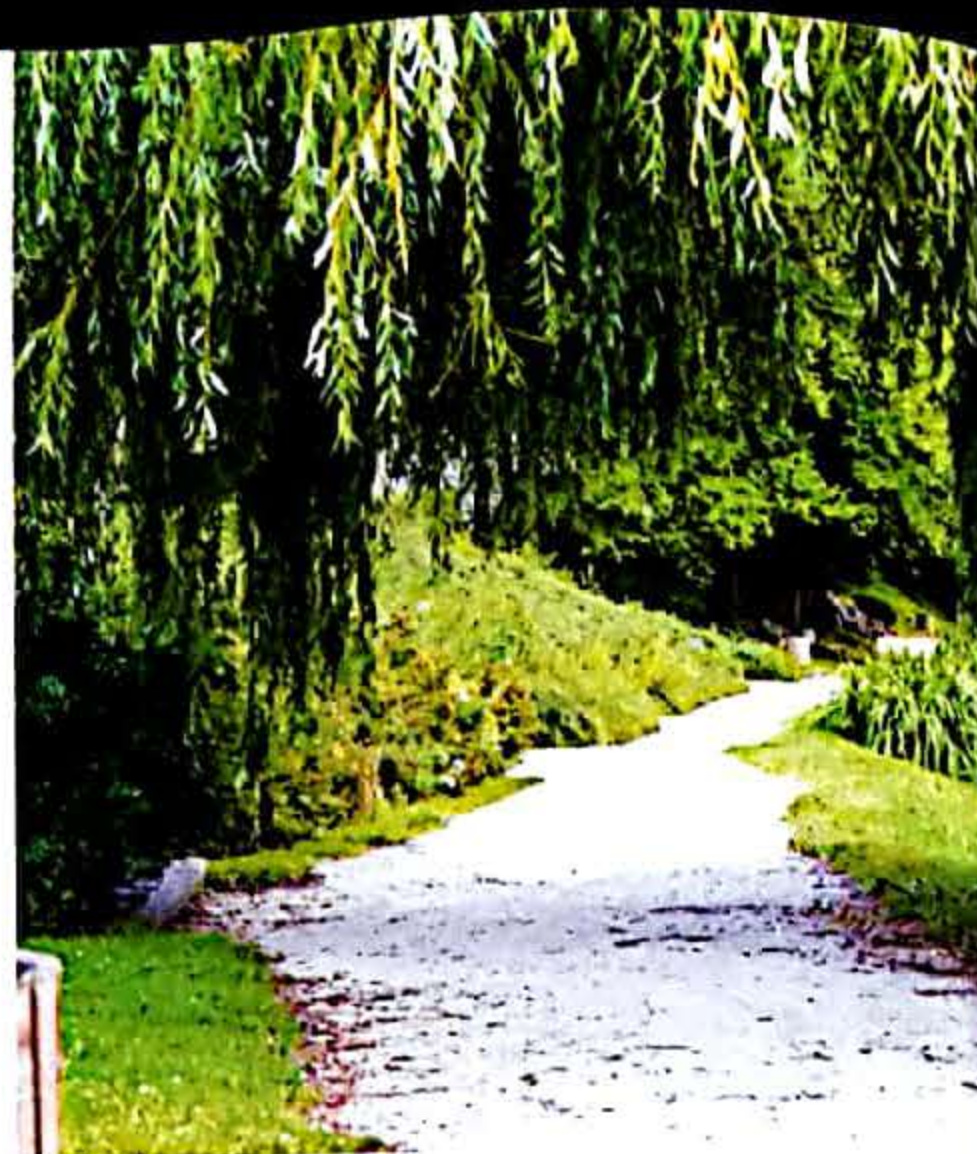
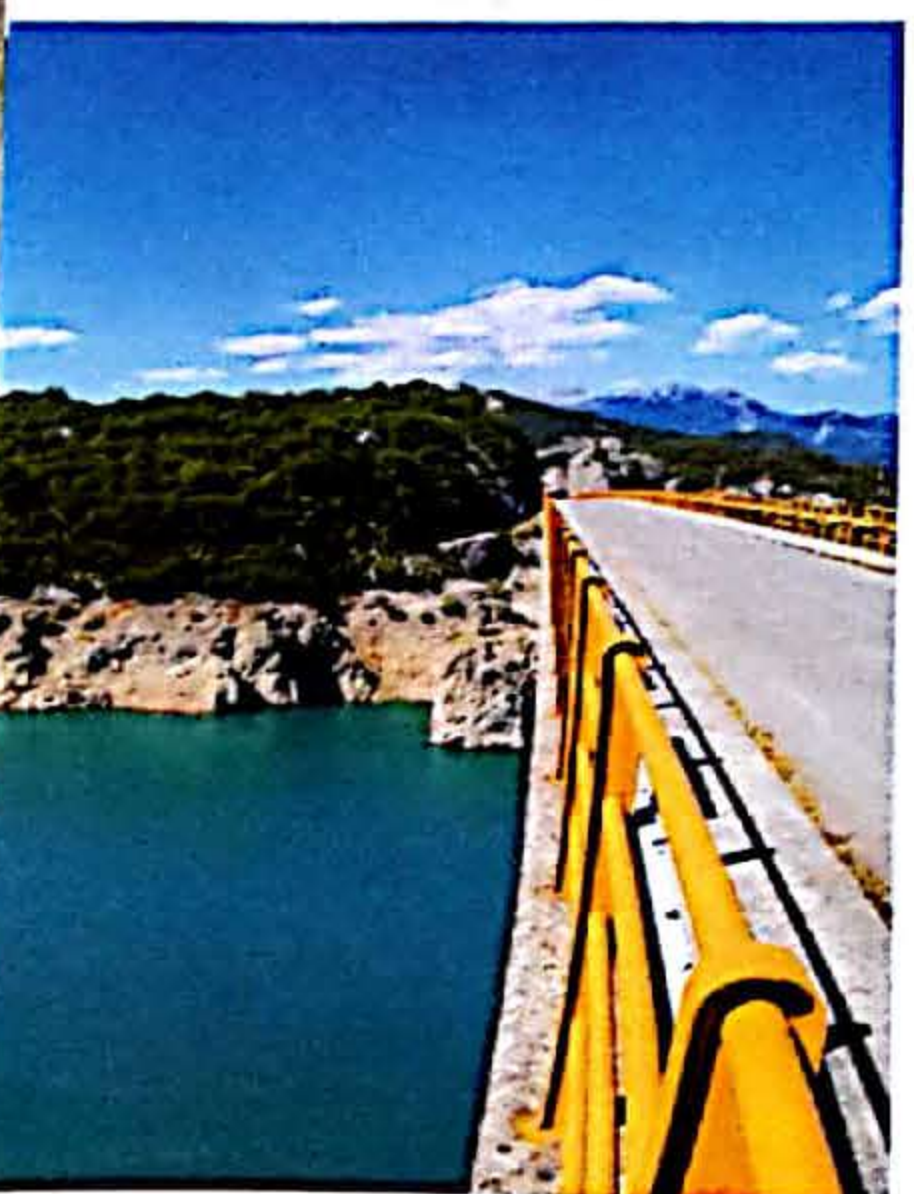
We were curious as to Manas' choice of the Scrambler for this trip, and not a big GS or Multistrada. "There were three factors we were looking at, first being height as my wife and I aren't very tall. That ruled out the GS and Multi. The other thing was the weight and we didn't want a heavy bike that, if it falls, picking it up would be a challenge. So all things considered and also the riding position, the Scrambler somehow felt right. I can talk about the logic behind this bike, but really it was an emotional decision."

## There are only five papers you need

This is the biggest headache, the paperwork involved in such an endeavour. "It took a long time for me to figure out what goes into it but bottom line is, there are only five papers you need. One is the registration of the bike in India. Second, international driving license. Third,







vehicle's insurance for India. And the fourth is something called a Carnet."

"Obtaining the Carnet isn't difficult. You'd need the original and photocopy of your passport and visa just to prove that you'd be able to travel to these countries. And since it's a personal bike transfer, you have a fee which is kept as a deposit and get back at the end of the trip. The Carnet takes seven days. If they (WIAA, the issuing body in Mumbai) know that you're serious and you have your documentations clear, they're very fast. There's no physical inspection required of your vehicle. You just need to hand them your documents."

"Now with the Carnet, you apply for the shipping line permit. This is the fifth paper you need. This comes last because the shipping line needs all above documents for custom clearance."

"Once that is done, then we apply for customs clearance."

We need all of these, and a few other details like your shipping vessel, shipping line, so there are a few technicalities there. More in terms of cost versus benefit equation. Like do you book a full container for a small bike, or do you book a part of a container. If you book just a part, it might go through a few ports. Therefore, what is the shipment time? How much would it cost? I booked a part of a container because I didn't want to spend more money than I needed to."

So with the bike shipped to Valencia, their journey began. But unfortunately for them, they faced their first major hurdle right at the port in Spain. "The Carnet document is valid for 30-35 countries. But Spain is a country that doesn't obey the Carnet. For them, it's just a piece of paper. The customs guys said that as far as they're concerned, this is a used imported bike which is being brought into their country. They asked us to register the bike, pay the local taxes, take insurance, and they'd be happy to let us go. We lost two weeks behind this tangle, and at one point it felt like our journey was not going to happen. After a lot of research, I found a fine print in their importation guidelines which said that a vehicle can be imported into the country for touristic purposes under the self-declaration of the tourist himself, and remain in the country for six months. So all I had to do was give a declaration, and I'd be able to ride out. But the thing is absolutely no one knew about it. So with that done, my bike got back on its wheels. But before it could pass through the port gates, on came the next hurdle. Insurance. Just like in our country, you need insurance to ride around in Spain. The problem was the

issuing office was at the border, where they inspect your bike and issue the insurance. But how would I take my bike there? Again after a lot of discussions and research, we found out about this small office in Valencia where the government has set up a body that can issue you the green card (insurance). And that's how we finally rode out. So apart from the five documents required, insurance is the sixth one". To make sure something like this doesn't happen to you on your dream trip, properly research the country you're travelling to.

**We had like 11 lasers pinpointed on each of us. And that's a scary feeling**

A journey like this is not without its adventures, but for the only mechanical issue to crop up at a border crossing, that's just terrible luck. "We crossed from Greece to Turkey and that was one really dramatic scene. Turkey is heavily militarised. So on one hand you have Greece where you can't spot a fly and on the other hand you have Turkey with an entire army in military fatigues. And there's a river which you need to cross to get over to Turkey. While we were crossing that bridge, the bike breaks down. Not just breaks down, it makes the loudest noise I have ever heard from a bike, like 'boom boom boom!', and I realised it's coming from under me. And you know how in the movies they show the guns with lasers on you? That actually happened and we had 11 lasers pinpointed on each of us."

"My wife got off the bike, took off her helmet, trying to talk to those guys and letting them know we aren't gonna blow ourselves up! And then they lowered their guns. I tried starting the bike, and again the bike made a huge explosive sound and the guns were again on us. So finally we shut the bike down and pushed our way through the border"

Long story short they eventually got into Turkey, the dealer sent a service van, got the bike sorted out under warranty and completed their journey before shipping their bike back to India.

So how much does an adventure like this cost? Manas says he spent 30 lakh rupees in total for the two of them for four months in Europe including the cost of the bike, registration, the shipping, everything. It's an adventure you can read more of in our sister magazine **Fast Bikes India**. What we are here to tell you is that living your dream is not impossible – not in terms of logistics and not so much the costs either – as long as you have the adventure bug and the will to do it. x

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