

(This is an unsolicited article written by customer Gillian Neal, and sent to us presented here verbatim. This is available on our web site <http://www.polepositiontravel.com/planning.htm>)

## **How Easy Is It To Attend A MotoGP Abroad?**

There's nothing like being at a track to experience the full effect of the atmosphere and noise of a MotoGP race. And, despite 2007 being branded by many people as full of boring races, not many would deny that the current level within the championship, with riders and rate of development of the technology involved, means that it's the most exciting time there has been in Grand Prix for a very long time.

In addition, the world is shrinking and the exotic places we only used to see on the television are now turning into real possibilities to visit with more cheap flights than ever before now available. This provides the chance to take a holiday, or even a weekend break, at locations all over the world with attendance at a race being included. This gives you the chance to not only support your home GP but also visit another Grand Prix, in another country, to experience the racing from a different perspective. As tracks, crowds and atmosphere vary enormously all over the world each event is guaranteed to give something new!

Over the years, we've attended many races, using a variety of different methods, and encountering a variety of different experiences along the way. Hopefully I can pass on some of these experiences to help you consider the options available and look at when, where and how you would like to go to a MotoGP abroad.

So how do you decide? We've found that it's best to tackle this in a logical way!

### **When to go**

Firstly, you need to decide when you can and can't go, and figure out how much time you would like to go for. Are you looking for the MotoGP to be the highlight of a two-week holiday, or do you want a weekend break with the MotoGP being the main focus?

Secondly, you need to look at the FIM calendar to see the dates of all the races – this is available on the FIM website. Once armed with this you'll be able to eliminate the unsuitable dates and see what races are left that you could attend.

Finally, it's worth considering whether you want to attend one or two races. Two races are possible if you're looking at a two-week break, and the calendar will help you work out what the possibilities are. For example, in 2007 Mugello then Catalunya made a great two-week holiday!

### **Where to go**

Once you've narrowed the calendar to the list of events you could attend, you're left with some difficult choices! One way to decide is to consider where, how and who!

#### Where

- Are there any countries you've always wanted to visit? If so, could you tie in a visit to a MotoGP with a bit of sightseeing?
- Are you hoping to watch a MotoGP in the sun, or do you not mind if it's a bit cooler?
- Would you like to go to a race with a good atmosphere (i.e. large spectator attendance) or one that's quieter?
- Do you just want to see the MotoGP races (125cc, 250cc and MotoGP) or would you prefer to go to an event with other races included (e.g. Assen 2007 included rounds of the Superside World Championship and Rookies Cup as well as displays by a stunt rider)
- Are you looking for a track with good modern facilities (e.g. un/covered grandstands to give good views and protect from weather) or would you prefer an older, more historic venue?

### How

- how much time do you have available in your trip for travelling?
- do you want to ride or drive to the track? If so, how long would it take, are there decent roads (e.g. something a little less boring than just motorways!), are ferry crossings regular and at decent times?
- do you want to fly? If so, what's the proximity of the airport to the track, would you need to hire car, is there an airport nearby served by a budget airline?
- And for either of these options – would the option chosen allow you to take all your gear with you? E.g. are you camping so need to take more things, or staying in a hotel so can pack on the light side.

### Who

- Are you going in a group or with an individual? This really boils down to are you looking for a relaxing time or are you wanting to party!
- does everyone want to go to the track every day and, if not, is there something to do for those that aren't petrol heads?
- are you taking children? How suitable is it for them, and what else is there to keep them entertained.

Finally, some MotoGP rounds are a lot more expensive than others so this might be a consideration. Pole Position Travel website gives a handy summary of the cost of each round, and ranks them from least to most expensive.

### **How To Go To The Race**

You've decided when to go, where to go, and how you're going to get there. But what about once you're actually there? There are generally two options. Firstly you can travel on your own and make all your own arrangements. Secondly, you can go as part of an organised tour. We've done both numerous times, so I've provided a list of good points and bad points of each (and I'm not part of any tour company, so this is not a sales pitch!).

Good points of going on your own;

- Probably better if you're considering the campsite options.

- freedom to come and go to track as you please.
- possibly cheaper.

Bad points of going on your own;

- someone has to be the organiser, booking tickets, hotels, etc.
- need to source hotels close to track and with the necessary facilities (e.g. secure parking). Tracks are not usually in easy to reach places so this can sometimes be tricky as local hotels are fully booked months in advance.
- problems of getting to track, finding out about travel conditions so you arrive on time, parking, etc, and hazards of contending with mad foreign drivers. Also, no beers at the track for the driver!
- can someone speak the language if there's a problem?
- unless you have access to the Internet, it can be difficult to keep up with track news while there.

Good points of going as part of an organised tour;

- Hotel and transport to track taken care of, so you can relax (or drink more!). Extra days can also usually be added at a good price.
- someone can speak the language.
- They will keep you up-to-date with news from track.
- Like-minded people are on the trip so you're likely to make a few new friends.
- extras and freebies sometimes included, and you can use their experience to find out what's worth visiting locally. For example, sometimes tours of nearest city included as option.
- VIP packages available.
- Tour companies will normally allow you to provisionally book tickets/packages while you arrange flights.

Bad points of going as part of an organised tour;

- Sometimes more expensive.
- can be restricted occasionally, e.g. if you want longer or shorter at track.
- still have to organise flights (but company can advise).
- can be irritating people on group (but the group is usually big enough to avoid them).
- Can be tiring if you attend all the organised events!

To help further, here's some approximate costs using both options to travel to the 2007 Catalunya MotoGP from the Friday to the Monday, including Saturday and Sunday attendance at the race. The costs in the first column could decrease if the amount of the group increased (e.g. three in hotel room or splitting taxi costs).

	On Own (Euros)	With Tour (Euros)
Flights – London to Barcelona	From 140 Euros	From 140 Euros
Hotel (3 star including breakfast)	280 Euros	Part of package
Taxis to track (car hire or train might be cheaper option). Approx 60 Euros each way and split between	120 Euros	Part of package

party of two travellers.		
Race tickets (Saturday & Sunday grandstand tickets)	80 Euros	80 Euros
Evening entertainment. Assume 60 Euros per night. With package Friday night opening party is included.	180 Euros	120 Euros
Package (3 nights, double room including breakfast, transfers to track & opening party)	N/a	500 Euros
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>800 Euros</b>	<b>840 Euros</b>

Finally, although all the tour companies we've used have been great, here are a few things we've learnt to look out for if using this option;

- make sure the hotels location is where you prefer, i.e. city for nightlife or country for quietness.
- compare prices with different companies but take note of nights included and grade of hotels offered so you're comparing accurately. Ask if alternatives available.
- ask for details of what's been organised and what's included in price, e.g. welcome parties, etc.
- ask if airport transfers included.
- ask for advice on whether to choose grandstands or general admission tickets.
- make sure you leave plenty of time to catch flights, especially on the way home, as you might be very tired!
- Finally, once there take a photo of the bus. Then, if you drink too much and can't remember what it looks like, you can look back on your digital camera to remind yourself!

### **Once the Decision is Made!**

You've decided, so what next? Well, now you need to plan your trip properly and, if using a tour company, surf the net to assess which company will best meet your needs and your price range. And finally, you need to get it booked. This can be a dilemma as it's never clear whether you should book flights first then race tickets, etc or race tickets, etc first then flights. And don't forget accommodation, which can often be booked up months in advance for popular races. But whichever order you book, be aware dates can change, so don't organise too early or leave it too late!

So the choice is yours! Hopefully this will provide a rough guide of things to consider so you can get booking and enjoy a MotoGP on foreign shores. Whichever one you choose, enjoy!

## **Our weekend in Misano!**

Over the years we've travelled to races on our own and used a number of different tour companies including Pole Position, MotoEvents (no longer in existence) and PMH Sports Travel. To give you an idea of what a weekend with a tour company includes, here's a rundown of our Misano 2007 trip.

Monday to Thursday - As Italy is our favourite country, we travelled to Rome first for a few days before heading to Rimini and the resort of Riccione. All flights and transfers were booked ourselves.

Thursday - Arrived at the 3 star Hotel Romagna, organised as part of our package with Pole Position. Rest of the day to ourselves to look round resort, and sunbathe on the beach, before meeting the Pole Position reps for a welcome drink in the evening and to collect our tickets. As well as a few drinks, plenty of advice was given on what to go and see on Friday, ways of getting to the track, etc. This turned into quite a late night!

Friday - Practice day, which we thankfully decided not to go to as it was cancelled due to the rain! Did a bit of sightseeing and spent the afternoon in Tavullia – Rossi's hometown. In the evening went to the Pole Position opening party (included as part of our package). This consisted of drinks, pre-dinner food, guest speakers (at this event it was the 250cc Team Angaia), more drinks, dinner, more drinks, disco and a few more drinks! I think we crawled home at about 2am!

Saturday - Breakfast, then Pole Position bus to the track at 8.30am for Practice day. We had grandstand tickets, but Misano was unusual as you couldn't walk round the track and you were only limited to the section of the track your grandstand was located in. However, this problem was solved by swapping tickets half way through the day with some of our new friends from last night! The bus took us back to the hotel about 4pm, then we had the rest of the evening to ourselves (although there was an option to go for a meal with the group at a local brewery for an additional cost).

Sunday - Breakfast, then Pole Position bus to the track at 8am. Plenty time to see all the races, get a few drinks, buy merchandise and look about, before getting bus back to hotel at 4.30pm. In the evening the closing party was a meal at an excellent local restaurant (additional cost). Again the 250cc team came out with us, and it turned into another late night with some of the local nightlife being sampled!

Monday - We flew home on Monday morning, but Pole Position did have an optional tour (additional cost) to the Ducati Factory in Bologna, then Tavullia.

We had a great weekend and felt it was excellent value for money – plus we made quite a few new friends!