



A bike by subscription

Brompton's subscription service provides you with an immaculate machine (mine was almost brand new), ready to ride, for only £50 on a pay-monthly basis. If you commit to a year and pay by direct debit, the fee comes down to £35 per month. The bike is delivered in a box. Pop the saddle on, unfold, and you're ready to go.

If you plan to take one abroad, however, note that the Brompton Hire Agreement (as of December 2024) says: "You must not take or use the bicycle outside the UK without our prior written consent."

If you don't need one for a month, Brompton Bike Hire has a network of lockers from Oban to Paris. At these, you can use your phone and the Brompton Bike Hire app to get a bike for £5 per day. I use one now when visiting London instead of taking the Tube.

[subscription.brompton.com](https://www.brompton.com/subscription)

We wound our way along the road less taken (by cyclists, anyway), through Sivas, where the Turkish bath was to die for, and not just because of the pummelling we got from the 18-stone attendant. We wild-camped by the Kizilirmak River, eventually fetching up in the Silk Road city of Erzincan, having plummeted down the mountain roads, gleefully overtaking lorries as we went.

Talking Turkey

As we reached the far east corner of Turkey, the roads climbed higher, with

white-capped mountain ranges in the distance on either side of us. Yet there was never a time when, as I had feared before going out there, I might slow down the intrepid explorer's progress. Or worse: have to get off and push.

"When do we get to swap?" said Jacob, as he zigzagged his way to the summit of the Kızıldağ Pass (2,190m), where I stood ready to snap the moment for posterity. He was carrying four panniers, it has to be said. And the tent.

The best thing about cycling in this wild part of Turkey is that, while the scenery might remind you of a Western one moment, the Appalachian Trail the

next, and then the Mongolian steppe after that, wherever you go the people treat you like a minor celebrity. Unbending their backs from the turnip fields to wave and smile, saluting from their tractor

seats, or tooting their horns in appreciation as they overtook with solicitous care, people seemed genuinely pleased to see us.

Here again the Brompton was a conversation starter. First: "Why does it have such small wheels?" Often followed by: "Would you like to drink

"An old man at a service station eyed me warily and asked me why I was riding a child's bike"

some çay (Turkish tea) with me?"

So it went, from the curious pensioners sunning themselves beneath the portrait of Atatürk in the main square of the tiny town of Şakışla, who insisted on paying for our tea, to the family selling honeydew melons and sunflower seeds who stopped us and stuffed a carrier bag of their wares, before sending us on our way with handshakes and smiles.

The borrowed Brompton had given me the very essence of a cheap and cheerful adventure. I was sold. 🍷