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THE END OF THE ROAD

Enrico Monari's journey did not end at North Cape. After 4,711 kilometres and 62 days on the road, reaching the famous **Nordkapp globe** marked an important milestone, but his adventure was not over yet. From there, Enrico set off again together with Roberta, adding another 1,200 kilometres to an experience he recounted to us with great emotion.

Of all the moments he experienced, there is one that Enrico remembers with particular intensity: **the end of the road, in the Lofoten Islands.**

After almost **6,000 kilometres** travelled by bicycle, the hardest moment to accept was not a climb, a rainy day or one of the many unexpected challenges he faced along the way. It was realising that the journey had truly come to an end. The following day, he would take the ferry to Bodø and, from there, fly back to Italy.

"It was like a stab in the heart. Even now, when I think about it, I still get tears in my eyes. Reaching North Cape was incredible, but reaching the end of the road after all those kilometres was **a unique and intense emotion.**"

When he first set off, Enrico imagined sharing his journey on social media through just a few photographs and occasional updates. But as interest in his adventure grew, he began sharing his experiences more regularly, eventually reaching around **11,000 followers** in Italy and abroad.

Some of them started following him after meeting him along the way. One was Benjamin, a thirty-year-old he met while Benjamin was fishing from a bridge. A friendship grew between them, fuelled by their shared passion for adventure. They spent several evenings together by the fire, cooking freshly caught fish. Another was Joaquine, twenty-two years old, whom Enrico met while he was crossing Norway on a Graziella bicycle, heading to Germany to meet his girlfriend.

Different encounters, some lasting only a few hours and others several days, but all of them became as much a part of the journey as the places he travelled through.

When the road gets tough

There was one moment when everything truly risked coming to a halt: in Berlin, when his bicycle broke down.

Enrico had to fly back to San Felice sul Panaro to get a new bicycle and, as soon as possible, he travelled back to Berlin by train. It was only a few days, but they were extremely intense, with very little sleep or food and just one thought in his mind: **to resume the journey** from exactly where it had stopped.

Once he had recovered his tent and equipment, he loaded everything onto the new bicycle and set off again the following morning. That day, he cycled 148 kilometres almost without noticing. Shortly afterwards, however, **Finland** would put him to the test once again.

There, he found himself spending two days in an area completely surrounded by forest. He suffered fourteen punctures and had to carefully ration the very limited supplies he had with him: one bottle of water and a Mars bar divided into four small portions. Around him were lakes, mosquitoes, reindeer, moose, foxes and even signs warning people not to camp in certain areas because of vipers.

These were also the moments that made him realise just how differently travelling by bicycle allowed him to experience everything around him. While cycling, he had time to **observe** his surroundings calmly, **take in** the scents of nature and truly **feel** part of the landscapes he was travelling through. Feelings he would never have experienced with the same intensity in a car or on a motorbike.

From North Cape to the Lofoten Islands

Standing in front of the North Cape globe, after cycling 4,711 kilometres from San Felice sul Panaro, Enrico was **overcome with emotion**. It was an immense feeling, arriving after weeks of cycling, rain, wind and unexpected setbacks, but also encounters, discoveries and achievements.

North Cape also marked the beginning of a new chapter in the adventure. Roberta joined him in Honningsvåg and, from that moment on, they continued **together** towards the Lofoten Islands. Enrico slowed his pace, going from around one hundred kilometres a day to stages of 45–50 kilometres and adapting to a completely different way of travelling. Over twenty-five days, they covered around 1,200 kilometres together.

They spent most nights at campsites but, whenever possible, they camped directly on the beach, just a few steps from the sea. In the evenings, they looked for wood to light a fire, as the cold could be intense, with temperatures dropping to seven or eight degrees. The fire became the simplest way to warm up and bring the day to a close, accompanied by the sound of the sea.

Among the images Enrico carries with him from those days is **a wooden walkway crossing the mountain and suddenly opening out onto the fjord**, one of those places where he felt completely immersed in nature. And then there was the return to North Cape with Roberta: when they reached

the globe, the sky was dark and overcast, but within a few minutes the clouds opened up and the sun appeared. An unexpected moment that made an already meaningful place even more special.

More than just places

From the places he travelled through, Enrico brought home landscapes, scents and silences, but what struck him most of all was the hospitality he encountered along the way.

Several times, he arrived at isolated homes and simply asked whether he could pitch his tent in the garden. The people he met were always welcoming and, once they heard about the “**Una Pedalata per la Vita**” project, they often looked for a way to contribute: some offered him a room, others gave him a discounted rate, while others simply offered a helping hand.

Today, whenever he looks back at the photographs or talks about his adventure, the emotion immediately returns.

“I miss everything. I’d set off again straight away. I left my heart there.”

He misses the road, the landscapes, the unexpected encounters and that everyday life made up of kilometres spent outdoors. **Coming home, however, also meant rediscovering the small pleasures he had missed during the journey:** pizza, fried dough and tigelle.

Now, with winter approaching, Enrico has decided to stop for a while. The idea of collecting his travels in **a book** is still in the back of his mind, but there is already room to start thinking about the next journey — perhaps this time together with a group of companions.

And after retracing almost 6,000 kilometres of road with him, we asked what advice he would like to leave with all of us who followed his journey:

“Do what you feel you want to do and what you believe you can do. If you truly believe in it, you can complete the challenge. It’s your mind that gives you the strength to keep going. Your body adapts. You have to react, let go of what has happened and look ahead.”

Before setting off, he had described himself as “a madman”.

We asked him whether he still stood by that description. He smiled:

“Even more so. I’m much more than a madman.”

And after hearing the story of everything he experienced, we can only agree.