



2010 Reto de los Volcanes

First let me say that I realize how lucky I am to be able to do a race like this. For Brenda and me this was as much a tour of Costa Rica as a race. We raced hard, but we also made a point to look around and see the sights.

The race involved 3 stages for a total of 150 miles and lots of climbing. If you do not like climbing for hours on end, Costa Rica might not be the place for you. Everyday seemed epic with paved and gravel roads, with double and single track mixed in.

Compared to other stage races, the entry is a very good deal with lodging, breakfast, dinner, transfers, and pick up and drop off from the airport included. The race organization is very supportive of the Americans and our needs, doing things like helping us get spare tubes for our 29-ers that nobody in Costa Rica has yet, to arranging for a shuttle to a resort, etc. Another nice bonus about Costa Rica is you can drink the water.

Many people in Costa Rica speak some English and communication was not a problem. Costa Rica is a beautiful country with friendly people. We got mobbed by school kids for our autography after stage 1. Maybe they were trying to get out of class or something....

We race up and down 5 volcanoes and I do mean UP and DOWN. I am sure I climbed in my granny gear for 2 hours at a time. The aid was great with a station every 1-2 hours. One interesting thing was water, Gatorade or jello in plastic baggies tied with a knot at the top. You just bite a hole in the bag and suck in the contents. The system was actually had some real advantages and I was sold on the idea within a few stops. Brenda had a bit of a learning curve with the water in a bag system – the first time was more like a face bath with only a few drops of water actually in her mouth. She quickly learned not to squeeze the bag so hard next time.

There were 10 Americans at the race. We stayed at the same lodge, ate meals together and traveled to the stage start and finishes together. We all banded together to share information, tools, etc and became fast friends. Hopefully we will have even more people from the US travel to this great race next year.

I have vowed to learn enough Spanish so that next year I can say “good job, keep going, you are doing great, and will this F-ing hill every end??”