

The Transformation of Che Guevara

July 1952
 Che arrives in Venezuela as a transformed young man. He continues on to Miami without his friend Alberto, and then returns to Argentina to finish his studies. His journey strongly influenced his thought and perspective, as he became one of the most radical and controversial figures in history.



In 1952, 23-year-old Ernesto Guevara set off on a motorcycle journey around South America with his best friend Alberto Granado. What started as a leisurely journey turned into a serious and revolutionizing experience that would have a strong influence on Che, who would later become one of the most recognizable figures in history.

In early July they arrive in Colombia, and Che sees firsthand the repression and police force of the right-wing government. He describes the situation in a letter to his mother saying "a revolution may be brewing."

June 1952
 Arriving in the Amazon at the leper colony of San Pablo, the two work with the medical team to treat leprosy patients. Che is disgusted by the treatment of the sick patients, but quickly befriends many of them. He swims across the Amazon River in order to spend more time with them.

May 1952
 The two arrive in Lima and meet Dr. Hugo Pesce. Dr. Pesce is head of the national leprosy program as well as a local Marxist. They discuss political ideologies and this is when Che first reads books on Marxism.

Che is awestruck by the glory of Machu Picchu as well as the shambles of the remaining Inca people when they arrive in Cusco. He develops a bond with indigenous peasants and once again is affected by the poverty he sees.

March 1952
 Upon arrival in Peru, Che is distraught by the extreme poverty he sees. He quotes Cuban Poet José Martí in his notes: "I want to link my destiny to that of the poor of this world."

In Chuquicamata, they meet a communist couple looking for work in a copper mine. The conditions of the U.S. company's mine as well as the poor couple's struggle and treatment due to their communist views significantly affects Che. He reevaluates his purpose for traveling.

Upon arrival in Santiago, La Poderosa II breaks down for good. This complicates travel for the rest of the journey.

February 1952
 Once the young men cross into Chile, they present themselves as expert scientists on leprosy. They are so convincing that they get a local newspaper to publish a story about them. They later use these newspaper clippings to their advantage during the trip.

January 1952
 Alongside his buddy Alberto Granado, young Ernesto Guevara leaves his medical studies to travel around the continent on an old 1939 motorcycle named La Poderosa II. While Che's parents are displeased that he is taking a break from school, Che is excited for the adventure ahead.

Che's first stop is in Miramar, Argentina to visit his girlfriend Chichina. During a later part of the trip, Chichina breaks up with Che, leaving him broken-hearted.

The progressive transformation of color represents the attitude shift of Che's odyssey. The green signifies the youth and leisure at the beginning of the trip, and as the colors darken it becomes reflective of the seriousness and formative journey that it became.



350 Miles