

# ✿ MOCHILA MONTHLY ✿

\*\*\*\*\* October 2021 / Amsterdam \*\*\*\*\*

Welcome to the *Mochila Monthly V2I7*. Formerly the *Ken Gazette*, this newsletter is inspired by two other perzine bulletins, *Life Harvester* and *Banana Bulletin*. Enjoy!

## What's up rn:

→ Since this last summer I have only written one issue of the *Mochila Monthly*, a mega summer multi issue. But here I am, back on track, settled into Amsterdam, and tappin' that keyboard!

→ Fall/Autumn has abruptly descended upon this low-lying country and coerced it's inhabitants to put on another layer or two. The dyed in the wool, seven foot tall thoroughbred Dutch have a certain mochismo about the cold. Whereas I am continually surprised by the local culture's aptitude for plain speaking and "mind my own business"-iness, glances and remarks float around at the sight of gloves, any aversion to rain, or an errant "man it's chilly out".

→ I have nothing to prove. I know and remember the feeling of changing a flat tire while working as a messenger at TCB, pouring rain, burning (i.e.: late) jobs, soggy socks, and working a double shift. I don't go around mentioning my rainy day biking experience, but if I want to wear gloves you can bet your bike seat these fingers will be covered and cozy.

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Ask me about new Mochila Zine Corporation stickers!

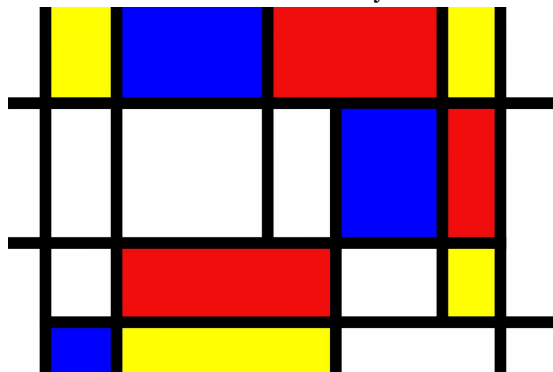
## Secret Spot Review: Mondrian Bench on Eikenplein, Amsterdam center-oost

→ Now I love a good Mondrian-style thing. You know what I mean, modernist painter who did the grids with thick black lines and primary colors. Google it if that doesn't ring a bell.

→ Somebody in San Francisco had a Mondrian meter maid car, I've seen a Mondrian station wagon. Here in Amsterdam there is a Mondrian houseboat. But near Oosterpark there is a Mondrian bench and oh boy, you can sit on it.

→ The corner it's on has a lot of potted plants full of flowers and a handful of chairs. A picnic table occasionally hosts a get-together.

→ So if you find yourself in the area, stop on by and check it out. But if you aren't nearby, consider this as inspiration to put some decorated chairs out on a nearby corner.



## What I've been cooking: This really good chili recipe EK found

→ Elie found a really good chili recipe online.

→ Fortunately, some of the main ingredients were easy to find here. I was able to just walk down to Albert Heijn and get chipotles in adobo in a can.

→ Unfortunately, I couldn't find some of the other dried chilis. I can hardly find more than three types of peppers, and most places only call peppers red or green (here, "rode of groene"). I asked the woman at the Turkish market what this pepper was called. She just said "groene pepper".

→ The chili was really good though. Onions, shallots, "beef" crumbles, chilis in adobo, arbol, kidney beans, and then why not go wild with some carrot and celery. Goes great with homemade flour tortillas.



UK Chili Seeds

"Esas chilis se faltan chili"

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■ ↩↩↩↩↩↩↩↩↩ “Rust never sleeps!” ↪↪↪↪↪↪↪↪↪ ■

## In Other News: Trip to Antwerpen!

→ Well believe it or not EK and I rode to Antwerp from Amsterdam over the course of two days. From our house Antwerp is a little over 100 miles away. That seems a little short for international travel. We did leave the Netherlands and ride to Belgium (call me “Mr. Worldwide”).

→ We set off early Saturday morning, leaving the eastside of Amsterdam and heading for the nearby small towns of Diemen and Weesp. This brought us to the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal, which we followed in a nearly straight line to Utrecht. There we got an okay lunch and learned that sometimes in the Netherlands sandwiches don't need a top bread.

→ Did I mention it was chilly and foggy? Our ride along the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal was foggy, mysterious, and involved a “slecht fietspad” (bad bike path, that's what the sign said).

→ We spent the rest of that sunny afternoon crossing two rivers on gigantic bridges and crisscrossing farmland complete with big clouds, spinning windmills, spotted sheep, and grazing cows before stopping for the night in Breda. A small city, it seemed more interesting than we were led to believe, and we intend to go back some other time. Before getting to our hotel, a Google-maps disaster struck: an unlabeled dirt road. The only losses were a little bit of time and one of Elie's spokes. (Don't worry, the wheel is rideable!).

→ Bright and early the next morning we ventured out into the frozen fog. Elie's rear wheel was wobbling, our fingers were numb, and the Belgian border was nearby. The only differences we noticed was the diminished quality of the roads and bike paths and more trees. Cows and sheep continued to be our most frequent neighbors.

→ By noon thirty we rolled across a bike bridge into central Antwerp and were greeted by a running event that crisscrossed the city streets. We got hipster bahn mi and shared a bowl of pho watching certified athletes™ go elbow to elbow with weekend warriors and average joes under the nineteenth century brickwork and Catholic street corner shrines.

→ On the train home we watched a full weekend of riding pass us by in two hours.

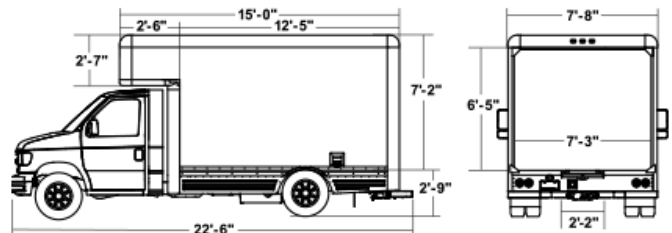
## Gratitude list: Honda Civic Hybrid Edition

→ At the end of May, upon leaving our Berkeley apartment, EK and I left for Southern California. Dart and Karen were very helpful when I asked them to adopt boxes full of zines and a skateboard. The neighbors were more than eager to accept our sidewalk donations of dishes, shelves, and clothes. With my dad we loaded up a U-haul and hit the road after giving the apartment one last scrub.

→ On our way down, near Monterey on the 1, our beloved 2003 Honda Civic Hybrid made contact with pallets that extended over the edge of a truck in the lane next to us. In one second the windows on the driver side shattered, my door flailed open, and the car filled with glass.

→ After talking with a CHP who saw us pulled over, a helpful tow truck driver named Jose Luis on the road, and the sole proprietor of a U-haul/cell phone/money wiring/party supply shop in Salinas, we were able to rent a tow dolly. EK and I drove the Honda an hour and a half with the door tied shut and from Paso Robles to San Diego four humans and a medium sized dog crunched into a U-haul cab.

→ Twelve step programs have a slogan that “God” sets the timeline, not me, and Andre 3000 said “you can plan a pretty picnic, but you can't predict the weather”. Even with the best laid, well executed plans, outcomes are beyond our control thanks to outside influences. But with a lot of luck and help we made it to San Diego and eventually out here to Amsterdam.



## Snack Reviews:

→ Jelle Snelle: An accidentally vegan cake-like thing I got at a Coop, one of the cheaper grocery chains in the Netherlands. Rating: it's alright. Tastes weird because it has chocolate but low on sugar and they used rye flour for some reason.

→ Chocolate and Coconut Trek Bars from Albert Heijn: These store brand protein bars have decent flavor and are filling. In comparison to the Trader Joe's Clif bars however, they are not as cheap, coming in at a little over a euro each. But they get the job done. Rating: good.

→ Vegan Sour Pickle Haribo: Not actually pickle flavored, or that sour. I quickly learned that no matter what the flavor, whether bbq, sour, spicy, what have you, in this country it will always be of low magnitude. This is not a place for extremes. But the part you want to know: chewy, dust of sugar, nice classic “fruit flavor”, big bag for one euro. Rating: must for a long day riding.