

On the map the Maharlika Highway looks like it would be a modern motorway/highway. On the road the Maharlika Highway is, for hundreds of km, barely fit to be called a road.

Damaged by the rains and typhoons the surface ~~is more of~~ has more in common with the surface of the moon than with a surface ~~was~~ built for modern motoring.

We took the Highway from Manila to Irosin - a distance (including a few detours) ~~of~~ of 650 km, a drive easily achievable in a few hours in Europe. This took us 16 hours including about an hour for stops. In places the craters are several inches deep, and cracks like canyons run across the broken concrete. At one point a Bailey bridge has been erected to replace the one swept away by the typhoon. Evidence of landslips are everywhere, flash floods have devastated the Bicol countryside. Everywhere there are people in vehicles. Few are private cars, many are Jeepney's. Most are Motor-Trikes. The more rural the location, the more people are crammed into, or on, the Jeepney. Inside there will be 18 people plus 3 or 4 in the cab. On the roof ^① will be another 8 people and hanging on the back may be another 4 people. ~~The~~ The motor trike is a small motorcycle (125 cc) with side car. Sometimes the sidecar is an open cage. The whole family can ride on the motor-

trike, usually 3 on the bike part. When going to the market there are often two more hanging on the back and the cage is used to carry the pig to the market for selling. ①

If the passenger carrying sidecar is fitted, then a family of 6 can be transported quite easily.

At night the driving, already nightmarish, is positively dangerous. Few vehicles have correctly aimed lights, many have no lights at all. A Jeepney carrying 20 or more people may only have one, vaguely pointed, head lamp working and no lights of any description whatsoever at the rear. Direction indicators aren't used anyway and ~~the~~ the Jeepneys are liable to stop without warning (or brake lights) at any time to drop off or pick-up passengers.

On the Road

On the map, the Maharlika Highway looks like it would be a modern motorway / highway. On the road, the Maharlika Highway is, for hundreds of kilometres, barely fit to be called a road.

Ravaged by the rains and typhoons the surface has more in common with the surface of the Moon than with a surface built for modern motoring.

We took the highway from Manila to Irosin – a distance (including a few detours) of 650 km, a drive easily achievable in a few hours in Europe. This took us 16 hours, including about an hour for stops. In places the craters are several inches deep and cracks like canyons run across the broken concrete. At one point, a Bailey Bridge has been erected to replace the one swept away by the typhoon. Evidence of landslips are everywhere; flash floods have devastated the Bicol countryside. Everywhere there are people in vehicles. Few are private cars. Many are jeepneys. Most are motor-trike. The more rural the location, the more people are crammed into, or on, the jeepney. Inside there will be 18 people, plus 3 or 4 in the cab. On the roof with the luggage will be another 8 people and hanging on the back step may be another 4 people.

The motor-trike is a small motorcycle (125 cc) with a sidecar. Sometimes the sidecar is an open cage. The whole family can ride on the motor-trike, usually 3 on the bike part. When going to the market, there are often two more hanging on the back and the cage is used to carry the pig to the market for selling.

If the passenger carrying sidecar is fitted, then a family of 6 can be transported quite easily.

Note – *It is common to see 12 on one motor-trike fitted for passengers (not a cage): 4, on the bike part, 4 on the back and sides, 4 in the sidecar: Mum plus 4 children.*

The record I've seen is more than 20 passengers on one motor-trike! Mainly children going to school.

At night, the driving, already nightmarish, is positively dangerous. Few vehicles have correctly aimed lights, many have no lights at all. A jeepney, carrying 20 or more people, may only have one, vaguely pointed, headlamp working and no lights of any description working at the rear. Direction indicators aren't used anyway and jeepneys are liable to stop without warning (or brake lights) at any time to drop-off or pick-up passengers.

Note – *Rarely, one may encounter a driver that does use his indicator lights but they even more rarely indicate the correct direction of turn. Usually, when a turn left is indicated, the vehicle turns to the right – and vice-versa.*