

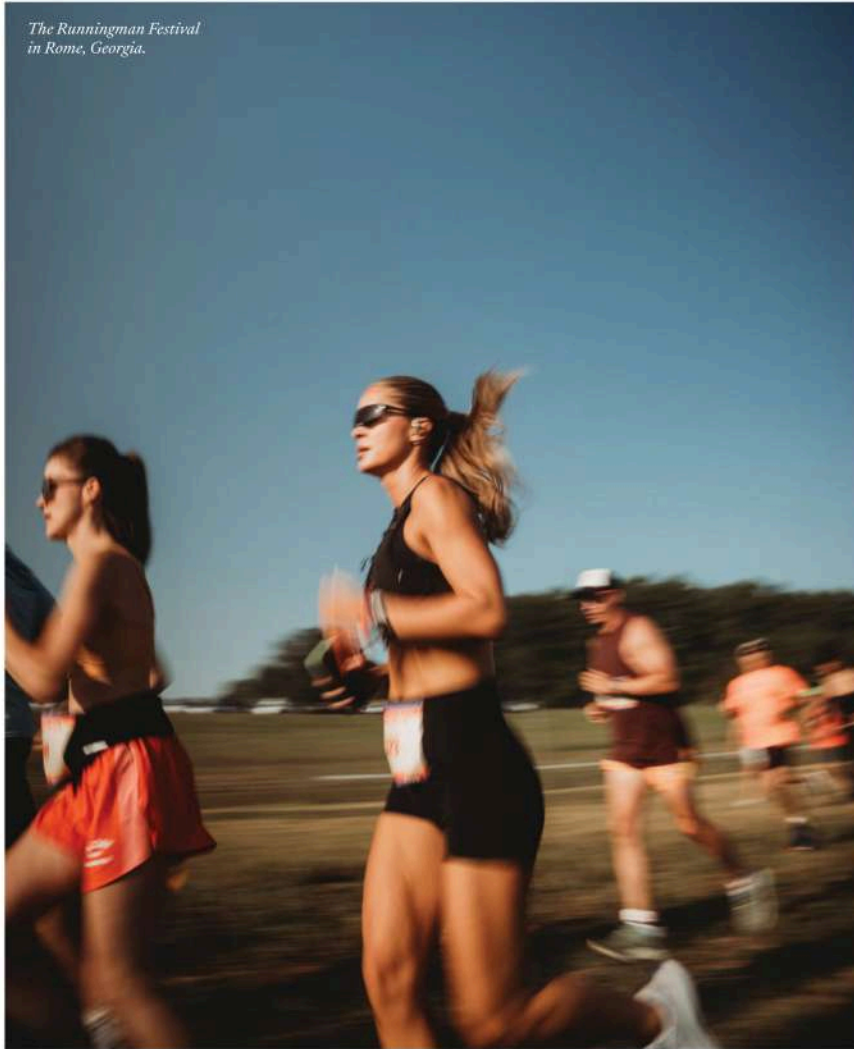
TIPS + TRICKS TO HELP
YOU TRAVEL SMARTER



EDITED BY
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INTELLIGENT TRAVELER

*The Runningman Festival
in Rome, Georgia.*



Going the Distance

The “runcation” has officially gone mainstream. Here’s a look at how to live the trend in 2027—and plan a race-centric trip that’ll light you up without burning you out. **By Kiera Carter**

COURTESY OF RUNNINGMAN

TRAVELANDLEISURE.COM 57



"TRAVEL OPENS YOU up emotionally, and so does exercise," says Jeff Adams, president of **Marathon Tours & Travel**, a company that's been arranging travel for races since 1979. "When you put the two together, it's pretty powerful."

An ever-growing audience agrees, as millions of people of all ages embrace not just running but the "runcation," a trend that involves building a trip around a major race or simply a personal goal. In fact, nearly 1 in 3 marathoners who have used the activity-tracking app Strava traveled internationally for their race, according to the company.

I get the appeal: I've done both local races and runcations, and there's a distinct giddiness that comes with the latter. It feels like everyone on

the plane is traveling for the same event, and everyone careening through the hotel lobby has the same excited energy. There's a community forged by the shared goal—and I feel it most when I'm somewhere foreign. "Running unifies people from all walks of life," Adams agrees. "You can't tell the suit from the college student; they're all just runners."

Hotels are jumping on the trend. Many Westin Hotels & Resorts offer group runs for guests and activities during major race weekends: during the London Marathon and the Singapore International Marathon, for example, properties set up recovery lounges for runners and poster-making stations for supporters.



COURTESY OF HIGHLAND BASE VERLINGER/SCROLL



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“It’s about more than just the race,” says Charlie Watson, an 18-time marathoner and group leader for the so-called run-concierge program at the **Westin London City** (from \$424). “It’s about the community.”

Resorts and tour operators, meanwhile, have launched their own endurance events in remote locations (see “Trips to Prep For,” page 61). Adams says there are multiyear waiting lists for the Antarctica Marathon, his company’s most off-the-grid race. That could explain his newest event: parallel 13.1- and 26.2-mile races through the Amazon jungle surrounding Puerto Maldonado, Peru.

HOW TO TRAIN FOR YOUR FIRST (OR 15TH) RUNCATION

Whether you’re flying through time zones or pushing your physical limits, here are some expert tips for maximizing performance while reducing injury risk.

1

CHOOSE YOUR CHALLENGE WISELY

Take full stock of the stressors on your body, so you can plan the smartest trip. Race distance is a factor, as are time-zone changes and unfamiliar weather and altitude, says Jimmy Bagley, a professor of kinesiology at San Francisco State University. “And they do all compound,” he notes. This doesn’t mean a full marathon on the other side of the world in hot weather at altitude is out of the question, but you’ll need to dedicate more time to training and acclimation. “Usually the most stressful challenge will be the one that is most different from your norm,” Bagley says.

2

SHIFT YOUR SCHEDULE

It takes one day to adjust for every time zone you cross, says Dr. Cheri Mah, a sleep physician and performance specialist in the San Francisco Bay Area. That means if you live in New York and you’re running the Sydney Marathon, you wouldn’t fully acclimate for 14 days. (Ouch.) But there’s still hope for a good race if you don’t have tons of time. “Jet-lag symptoms are more prominent when you’re short on sleep leading up to the trip,” Mah says. Prioritize sleep a full week before your flight to give yourself a buffer—no late-night packing sessions. “You can also shift your sleep schedule 30 to 60 minutes each day starting several days before the flight,” she adds. Plot it out with the Timeshifter app.

*The 2025 Kerlingarfjöll
Ultra, in Iceland.*



ABOVE The Westin London City has a runner-approved spa.

3

TAP INTO YOUR HOTEL REWARDS

This isn't the time to gamble on an Airbnb with personality. For the first few nights in a new place, your brain is extra-alert for things that could be threatening, Mah says, and it helps to keep your sleeping environment close to what you're used to. So if you often stay at a certain hotel chain, redeem those rewards. "Some carry the same bed in each location, which can help with consistency," she notes.

4

PACK WITH PURPOSE

"I always tell my athletes to pack a travel sleep kit with an eye mask, earplugs, a white-noise machine, curtain clips, and lavender," Mah says. (Using them at home, before the trip, can help you fall into the routine.) Then make sure everything you need on race day, including your sneakers, is in your carry-on.

5

DO SOME LIGHT EXERCISE ON ARRIVAL

Your hamstrings and hip flexors may be tight from sitting in a shortened position on the plane, Bagley says, so stretch them out when

you land. You'll also want to get some light exercise ASAP, since muscles, like the rest of your body, have a circadian rhythm. "Muscle strength and power have been shown to decrease with jet lag," he says. Eating at local time helps, too: "Shifting your meals over can help regulate the muscle clock."

6

USE THE SPA STRATEGICALLY

It's normal to be excited the night before a big race, so don't stress if your sleep isn't perfect. But hitting up the hotel's sauna or hot tub 90 minutes before bed, or drawing a warm bath, can help you fall asleep. People sleep better when they're cool, and the heat temporarily raises your core temperature, making it drop faster and promoting z's.

7

DON'T FORGET RECOVERY

Wait two days after a big race before taking a long flight to reduce the risk of blood clots, Bagley says. That doesn't mean you should sit still: walking is great for recovery, and exploring is a fantastic way to celebrate your accomplishment. —K.C.



COURTESY OF THE WESTIN LONDON CITY



Trips to Prep For

Running vacations that are worth the stretch.

FOR MUSIC FANS

RUNNINGMAN FESTIVAL

This annual three-day event in Rome, Georgia, outside Atlanta, combines live music, motivational speakers, strength training, and movement classes to forge a vibrant atmosphere alongside a "choose-your-own-distance" race, ranging from 3.1 to 31.1 miles (5–50 km). There's also an enormous sauna, glamping tents, food trucks, and a swimming pool. From \$375.

FOR NATURE LOVERS

KERLINGARFJÖLL ULTRA

Highland Base Kerlingarfjöll (from \$449), a remote resort in the Icelandic Highlands, recently launched a July race series that starts and ends at the property. Athletes can tackle out-of-this-world terrain, gaining more than 1,500 feet of elevation while running rugged routes that range from 7.5 to 37.3 miles (12–60 km). From \$131.

FOR AN ICONIC COURSE

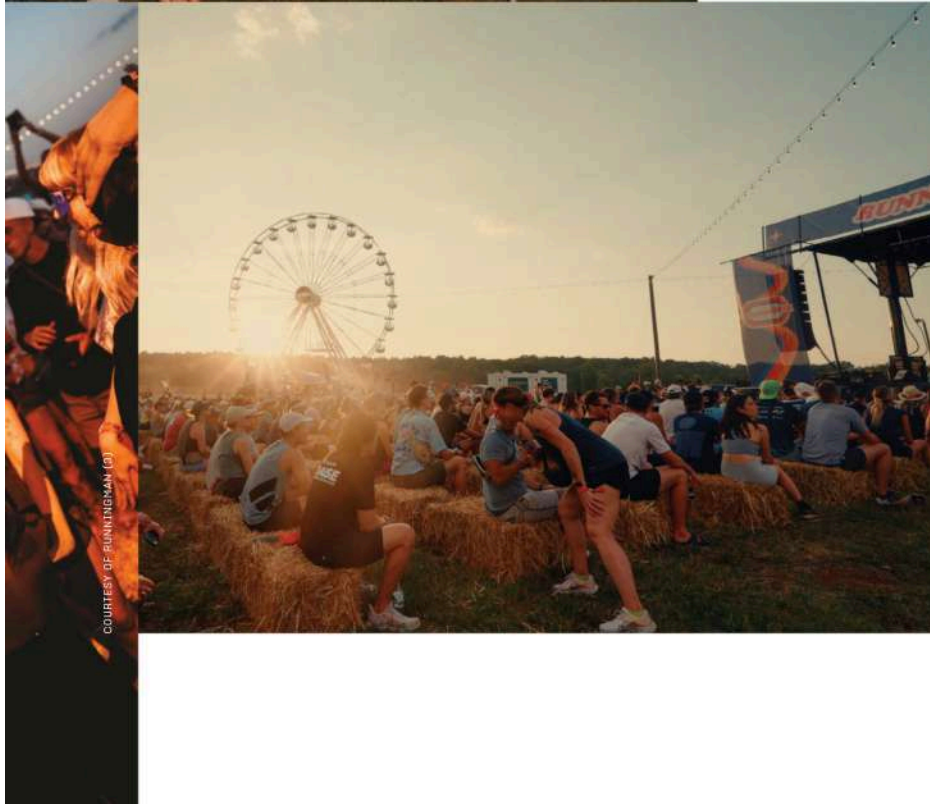
LONDON MARATHON

The event will expand to two days in April 2027, making room for 100,000 runners to tackle a course that goes past Buckingham Palace and over the Tower Bridge across the Thames. The **Westin London City** (from \$424) is the place to stay: organized group shake-out runs, a poster-making station for your cheer squad, and a post-race recovery room loaded with Hyperice equipment are all included. Entry costs vary.

FOR HISTORY BUFFS

ARCHEORUNNING

Explore Rome on foot any time of year with one of this brand's tours of the Eternal City; most routes cover around 3 miles (5 km). Led by an art historian, the runs can take you past landmarks like the Colosseum, as well as lesser-known sites (like the Villa Doria Pamphili), and down quiet streets at a pace that works for you. From \$58. —K.C.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

The mile-long loop at the Runningman Festival; the festival's main stage; Runningman attendees.