

Marathons in the US

America's Most Scenic Marathons

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Whether you're a marathon virgin or veteran, why submit to the challenge in your own hometown when you can combine fitness and vacation for the adventure of a lifetime? Most countries and US states boast at least one marathon of their own, giving runners a myriad of options should they choose to take the plunge. Read on to discover Travel Channel's picks for North America's most scenic runs.

[New York City Marathon](#)

New York, New York

Diehard runners hope their name is picked in the lottery to join the 45,000 runners on a 26-mile tour of all 5 boroughs. Racers take off from Staten Island and head through Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and Bronx past crowds soaring to 2 million. The race loops back into Manhattan for the final stretch into Central Park. The fun—and recovery—continues into the next day with Marathon Monday Mania, featuring plenty of opportunities around the city to stretch your legs including complimentary yoga classes for race finishers around the city. Swing by esteemed jewelry store Tiffany at the Fifth Avenue or Wall Street locations for official marathon memorabilia, packaged in the classic baby blue box with the signature white ribbon.

[Steamboat Marathon](#)

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

Snow-capped peaks and lush, green valleys surround runners as they make their descent from this marathon's starting point high in the Rocky Mountains at historic Hahns Peak Village to the

Routt County Courthouse in the resort town of Steamboat Springs far below. The route offers views of a myriad of mountain wildlife and a handful of working ranches and covers an overall drop of 1,400 feet along the 26.2-mile route. The rolling hills and high altitude will take their toll on runners, and participants should practice running in the mountains beforehand.

While most visitors know Steamboat Springs as a mecca for skiers, it also boasts plenty of summer activities. At nearby Strawberry Park, just 7 miles outside town, runners can unwind after the race by enjoying the therapeutic wonders of the park's natural hot springs. If you're a nature lover, take advantage of the area's outdoor opportunities by swimming in Fish Creek Falls or tubing along the Yampa River. The historic downtown of Steamboat Springs is worth a gander; because it's a ranching community, the streets are wide enough to accommodate a cattle drive.

Mayor's Marathon

Anchorage, Alaska

Anchorage's Mayor's Marathon takes place the day after the summer solstice, when runners can revel in a solid 19 hours of daily sunlight. Much of the marathon course follows a dirt-packed road -- meaning you'll dodge rocks and boulders along the path -- so racers should train with this in mind. The race begins along a bike path that winds around toward a golf course before beginning an 8-mile stretch through the serene wilderness. After a climb, the course heads back down toward the University of Alaska campus, where it connects onto a municipal trail through the heart of Anchorage and ends at a local high school near a lagoon. The race's half-marathon follows a different route that passes through Earthquake Park. Wolves, bears, foxes and moose are common residents in the area, though many will scatter when they hear runners approach. In collaboration with the race, [Logistics, L.L.C.](#) offers participants and spectators half-, full- and multiday tours of Alaskan hot spots. Excursions include a nighttime Midnight Sun Glacier hike, fly-fishing, white-water rafting, glacier cruises, paragliding, horseback riding and flight-seeing. If you have a few days to spare, cruise through the Kenai Fjords, explore Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Reserve, or take the train up north to Denali.

Kona Marathon

Keauhou-Kona, Hawaii

Doubling as the site for one of the world's most revered Ironman competitions, Kona offers runners the chance to race in paradise. The marathon commences at Keauhou Beach and follows the coast along Alii Drive -- the primary road that runs parallel to the western beaches of the Big Island -- before turning at Kuakini Highway, continuing on Queen Kaahumanu Highway, then looping around and covering the same course back. Along the way, runners will have clear views of Hawaii's emerald waters, black-rock beaches and palm-fringed coastline. After your sweat has dried and you've removed your running shoes, spend a couple of days in quaint Kailua-Kona. You can snorkel at Kahaluu Beach (where you may just spot a sea turtle or 2), rent a kayak and paddle out to the Captain Cook monument south of town, and eventually make your way to Kilauea and Volcanoes National Park to witness glowing lava formations firsthand.

San Francisco Marathon

San Francisco, California

The hills will be the first of many challenges that await runners in one of America's most beloved

cities; keeping focus on the path ahead while passing through San Fran's stunning scenery will be another. Beginning along the Embarcadero, the marathon course passes Pier 39 and runs down to Fisherman's Wharf along San Francisco Bay. Admire the lavish townhouses in the yuppie Marina district, before passing through the Presidio en route to the Golden Gate Bridge. You'll cross the iconic monument before looping around at Vista Point and coming back. Don't forget to take a peek at the city's remarkable skyline when making your way back over the bridge and downtown. Once you reach the Presidio, you'll change directions and travel through the verdant Golden Gate Park. Upon leaving the park, the gritty Haight-Ashbury district comes next, followed by the Latino-inspired Mission. At the promenade of the AT&T Park, you'll know you're in the homestretch: The race finishes inside the Giants' stadium. After crossing the finish line, spend a couple of days taking in the city's sights -- at a more leisurely pace this time -- before making your way east to Yosemite or south along the scenic Pacific Coast Highway to one of many notable seaside towns like Monterey or Santa Barbara.