**SPARTATHLON**

**Spartathlon** is a 246-kilometre [ultramarathon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ultramarathon) that takes place in [Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece) every year.

The Spartathlon traces the footsteps of [Pheidippides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheidippides), an [Athenian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens) messenger sent to [Sparta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sparta) in 490 BC to seek help against the Persians in the [Battle of Marathon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Marathon). Pheidippides, according to an account by Greek historian [Herodotus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodotus), arrived in Sparta the day after he departed.

Based on this account, John Foden, an officer of the [Royal Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Air_Force) and a long distance runner, went to Greece in 1982 with four officers to test whether it was possible to cover the nearly 250 kilometres in a day and a half (36 hours).Three of them were successful in completing the distance: Foden himself in 37 hours and 37 minutes, John Scholtens in 34:30, and John McCarthy in 39:00.The following year a team of enthusiastic supporters of British, Greek and other nationalities organised the running of the first Open International Spartathlon Race. Forty-four men and one woman from twelve countries participated in the first Spartathlon in 1983. Dušan Mravlje from Slovenia (former Yugoslavia) participated in the race and finished second. He completed the race in the second place in 1984, 1985 and 1996.

The Spartathlon is usually held around late September. Runners have 36 hours to run 246 kilometres, roughly the equivalent of six consecutive [marathons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathon), between [Athens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens) and [Sparti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sparti), the site of [ancient Sparta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_sparta). Runners have to deal with the Greek heat in the day, the cold of the night, and the mountainous terrain. There are 75 checkpoints along the way, where runners are disqualified for safety reasons if they fail to meet time cut-offs. Many runners have crews that support them during the race, such as helping them resupply at the checkpoints. Any non-finishers are picked up by a bus and taken to Sparta together.

The race begins at 7:00 am, roughly when dawn breaks, at the foot of the [Acropolis of Athens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acropolis_of_Athens), near the [Odeon of Herodes Atticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odeon_of_Herodes_Atticus) and the [Agora of Athens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agora_of_Athens).The runners head westwards and the first major checkpoint is at 80 kilometres, at the [Corinth Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corinth_Canal) that connects the [Peloponnese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peloponnese) to mainland Greece. Runners then proceed to the site of [ancient Corinth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Corinth).

Runners ascend the 1,200 metres high Sangas mountain pass on [Mount Parthenion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Parthenion), and then descend towards [Tegea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tegea), which is about 200 kilometres from the start of the race. The rest of the race is a 50 kilometres downhill segment to the town of Sparta.

The end of the race is a statue of [Leonidas I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonidas_I), the Spartan king who died at the [Battle of Thermopylae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Thermopylae) fighting the Persians ten years after Marathon, which is placed at the end of the main street in Sparta. Runners who finish the race receive a [laurel wreath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurel_wreath) and water from schoolgirls dressed in [chitons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiton_%28costume%29), and have access to medical tents. The national anthem of the winner is also played.

No monetary award is given to any of the finishers, but winning the race is considered prestigious and generates publicity that is helpful in attracting sponsors. Unlike [Pheidippides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheidippides), none of the runners have to make the return run back to Athens.

[Yiannis Kouros](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiannis_Kouros), who won the first Spartathlon, still holds the record time at 20:25:00. Kouros competed in four Spartathlons, won all four and holds the four fastest times ever recorded. In 2005, he decided to trace the steps of Pheidippides completely and ran—out of competition—the Athens–Sparta–Athens distance.

**1. Answer shortly the following questions:**

1. How long is the Spartathlon race? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who was [Pheidippides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheidippides)? ­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. When was the first Spartathlon held? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. How many runners took part in the first race? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. What results did Dušan Mravlje reach? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Where does the race begin? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. What marks the end of the race? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. What does the winner get at thr finish line? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. Does the winner get any money? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10. Who still holds the Spartathlon record time? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**3. With the help of the dictionary translate the highlighted words into Slovenian!**



crew - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

dawn - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ascend - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

descend - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

laurel wreath - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

national anthem - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

monetary award - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

publicity - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

seek - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

account - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

distance - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

supporter - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

consecutive - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

site - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

mountanious - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

cut off - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_