



I first learned about La Transtica in 2012 when I found out I would be moving to Costa Rica for work. I had run my first 100 mile race earlier that year and was excited to see what races were available in Costa Rica.

I found the La Transtica website and knew that that it was by far the most interesting and the most challenging.

I emailed Bernard and told him that I was interested in the race, but didn't want to pay the registration fee until I was able to get approval to miss work from my bosses after I arrived in country; in this and in everything else Bernard and the race organizers were completely flexible and supportive.

I eventually arrived in Costa Rica, got approval to miss work from my new bosses (who of course questioned the wisdom of my participation in such an event) and four months later met the La Transtica staff and participants at the beautiful beach of Manuel Antonio for race kick-off.

I won't recount the race in its entirety in chronological order, but will instead recount general reflections. I had never really run a stage race before, barring two days of the Balaton Super Marathon in Hungary, and I was a little nervous of how my body would react to 40ish kilometers for five days, figuring out that I could keep going, and even feel stronger towards the end, was one of the highlights of the race.

But the really amazing thing about this race was the camaraderie. We were one American (me) one girl from Singapore, two Argentine brothers, two Spaniards, a group of Ticos (Costa Ricans) and a larger group from France and Belgium. From the very beginning every one really pulled together and supported each other in a very real and earnest way. I'm not one that generally enjoys kumbaya moments, but something about suffering through 42 kilometers of heat and hills forges a real connection.

I also loved the fact that we were not sleeping in nice hotels every night, but were throwing sleeping pads and bags down in community centers, schools and even a barn.

It may sound a little crazy, but it added to the experience. When we weren't running I enjoyed eating, talking and joking with the other participants; for me it was also a pleasure to use practice my Spanish.

When we were running there were times when the distance and the heat and the elevation changes brought me down a bit, but that was definitely a minority of the time.

The rest of the time I was able to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the highlands of Costa Rica.

I can tell you that through this race a person can see parts of Costa Rica that other people visiting this country don't get to see.

Costa Rica is lucky to have so much natural beauty that attracts a lot of tourism, but sometimes it can be difficult to get away from the tourist herd. I was refreshing to see parts of the country untouched by tourism.

The bottom line is that I heartily recommend this race for anyone with the time to participate who has a spirit of adventure, you won't regret it.

At the time of this writing I have been in Costa Rica for about 10 months and I've done a lot of fun things here. I've gone to many beautiful beaches, zip lined above the cloud forest in Monteverde, seen amazing wildlife, but I can tell you in all sincerity that La Transtica has been by far my best experience and when I leave in a few years it will probably be my most treasured memory.

William Solley, USA, Finisher Extreme Race 2013, 194 Km, D+ 7 580 m.





