

USA TODAY™ WEEKEND

THE NATION'S NEWS

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LIFE 3D

10 BEST: Relax – with a scenic 5K run

Work in a workout on your next vacation with a scenic 5K. Runs through wilderness areas, historic sites and big cities combine fitness with sightseeing, says **Michael Epstein** of MESP, executive producer of September's Nautica Malibu Triathlon (nauticamalibutri.com). While triathlons are demanding, many runs in spectacular areas feature less-daunting 5-kilometer (3.1-mile) courses. "You've got a lot of people running, or even walking," he says. Epstein shares favorites with **Larry Bleiberg** for USA TODAY. (Register early, because many sell out.)



RUNROCKNROLL.COM

5K runners race down the middle of the Las Vegas Strip in the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon.

ROCK 'N' ROLL LAS VEGAS 5K

What better way to experience Sin City than running down the middle of the Strip? "It's at night and under the lights. And the finish line is right at the volcano at the Mirage. It's pretty cool," Epstein says. Past post-race concerts have featured entertainers such as Macklemore, the Goo Goo Dolls and Pitbull. Race date: Nov. 12-13. runrocknroll.com

HAM RUN HALF MARATHON AND 5K GRAND MARAIS, MINN.

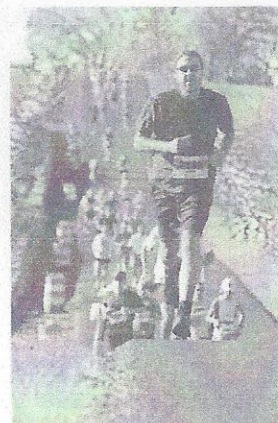
You might have moose or eagles watch you on this run along the Gunflint Trail National Scenic Byway through the Superior National Forest. The course passes granite outcroppings and stands of pine, aspen and birch. "It's basically miles from the nearest town through the wilderness," Epstein says. Race date: May 2017. cookcountymymca.org/healthyliving/ham-run-half-marathon/

FREEDOM'S RUN SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.VA.

Runners follow the trail of Civil War soldiers on this Blue Ridge Mountain route, near four national parks and several battlefields. Area sites include Harpers Ferry, where abolitionist John Brown led a slave rebellion, and Antietam, Md., site of a notoriously bloody Civil War battle. Race date: Oct. 1. freedomrun.org

FALLEN HEROES 5K RUN/WALK NEW CASTLE, DEL.

Participants run through history on cobblestone streets through this 17th-century Delaware River city. "It's an old colonial village, one of the most historic places in America," Epstein says. The run honors former resident US Air Force Senior Airman Elizabeth Loncki, who was killed in Iraq. This year's race is done, but another is planned for next year. Race date: May 2017. oldnewcastlerun.com



FREEDOMSRUN.ORG

Follow in the footsteps of Civil War soldiers on Freedom's Run in West Virginia.

MORE 10BEST TRAVEL.USATODAY.COM
See lists for travel ideas online.

RUNNING WITH THE BALLOONS READINGTON, N.J.

Runners may have difficulty watching the road because of the distractions floating overhead at this event about 50 miles west of New York City. It's part of the annual QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning, which features mass ascensions of up to 100 hot-air-fueled craft. "The finish line is right in the middle of the festival," Epstein says. "Balloons decorate the sky, and the male and female winners each get a free ride." Race date: July 31. balloonfestival.com

RUN CRAZY HORSE CRAZY HORSE, S.D.

This Black Hills race, centered on the still-unfinished Crazy Horse Memorial, puts runners in the middle of the Black Hills. "It's Indian country, it's spiritual and it's an incredible part of our nation's landscape," Epstein says. And the 5K is all downhill. Race dates: Oct. 8-9. runcrazyhorse.com

CREDIT UNION CHERRY BLOSSOM 5K RUN/WALK WASHINGTON

Nobody will notice your colorful workout gear when Washington's cherry blossoms are in full flower. "For a runner, this is just incredible. It doesn't get more beautiful," Epstein says. The route passes near major monuments and crosses the Potomac River on the Arlington Memorial Bridge. Registration is by lottery. Race date: April 2, 2017. cherryblossom.org

LAKE OF THE WOODS 5K KLAMATH FALLS, ORE.

This run in the Cascade Mountains of southern Oregon centers on a natural lake. "It's crystal-clear and you can see right down in the water," Epstein says. "It's absolutely beautiful." The route on paved paths takes runners through the Fremont-Winema National Forest. Race date: June 2017. linkvillelopers.org

CHARDONNAY RUN SAN DIEGO

Although it might seem an odd pairing, Epstein says it makes perfect sense to finish off a race with a crisp Chardonnay, particularly when it's on scenic Mission Bay. "The slogan is Wine at the Finish Line," he says. The race often draws women running in groups, who relish the chance to "get exercise in the outdoors and feel good about celebrating because they've basically earned their glass." Race date: Oct. 30. thechardonnayrun.com

FORT LAUDERDALE A1A MARATHON, HALF MARATHON, 5K, KIDS RACE

The oceanside run is conveniently scheduled for February. "It's not so hot in Florida and it's freezing everywhere else in the country, so it's a great time to come," Epstein says. "The course is fast and flat." The day following the 5K, an affiliated 6K Run for the Pink, benefits breast cancer research. Race dates: Feb. 18-19, 2017. alamarathon.com