



Sure, signing up for a run, ride, swim or tri is a great way to get in shape.

But pair it with a fabulous destination and you've got an adventure-filled vacation worth training for.

Now pick an event from our sweatastic short list and get packing!

BY CRISTINA GOYANES

THE AMAZING RACE

NOVEMBER

Aflac Iron Girl Tempe Run/Walk

(3.1-mile run or walk, 10-mile run)

November 14, Tempe, Arizona

\$25 to \$90, free for cancer survivors, irongirl.com

Runners and walkers rock out to live bands and radio stations playing at every mile along the sparkling Tempe Town Lake, just feet from the rolling-hills course. Open lawns around the lake are perfect for spectators at this women-only event, plus there's a postrace breakfast at linen-clad tables. Aflac Iron Girl participants can also choose to raise money for cancer treatment and research.

Where to stay Tempe Mission Palms (from \$149 per night for Iron Girl participants, missionpalms.com). Float in the rooftop pool or indulge in retail therapy at shops on nearby Mill Avenue. Ask the front desk about the free airport shuttle.

Must-do Take a guided tour of the Sonoran Desert's Apache Trail, the historic byway that showcases lakes, canyons and remnants of Arizona's past, including Indian fingerprints from some 700 years ago. (\$80 for a half day, \$140 for a full day, detoursaz.com)

Similar race, different place Head 15 miles west to Phoenix for the Muddy Buddy Ride and Run, a six- to seven-mile off-road obstacle course with mud pits mixed in. (November 14, \$150 per two-person team, muddy-buddy.competitor.com)



DECEMBER

St. Jude Memphis Marathon

(1-mile, 3.1-mile, 13.1-mile, 26.2-mile run)

December 4, Memphis

\$30 to \$100, stjudemarathon.org

Known as the home of the blues and the birthplace of rock and roll, Memphis is full of history and charm, which 15,000 runners experience on this landmark-happy tour (at least one "Elvis" registers for the race every year). Among the places dotting the course, including the National Civil Rights Museum, the most special is St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the beneficiary of the race. As runners pass through its campus, they're greeted by cheering patients.

Where to stay The Peabody hotel (from \$189 per night, peabodymemphis.com). Though this hotel has a lot to offer, its best feature may be the ducks. Every day at 11 a.m., marching mallards cross the lobby to the fountain, where they remain until 5 p.m.

Must-do Aside from music, this city is well-known for its barbecue. Both can be yours on Beale Street: You'll find blues spots, like the original B.B. King's Blues Club (memphis.bbkingclubs.com), and barbecue

joints, like the Pig on Beale (pigonbeale.com). Walk off your meal with a trip to Sun Studio, where Elvis recorded his first hit.

Similar race, different place Try booking it to the much warmer Oahu, Hawaii, to take part in the Xterra Trail Running World Championship, which includes a gorgeous 5K and 10K for all levels. (December 5, \$25 to \$45, xterraplanet.com)