

What?

I am going on a little foot journey, mostly running though probably walking here and there. Likely taking at least one ferry. Maybe even getting a lift or taking a taxi where the route says so.

The idea is to run 50km / day for five days, for a total of 250km.

The reality is the route probably won't work out quite like that, partly because the places to stop and rest aren't exactly spaced at 50km intervals, and partly because I have never done these kinds of distances in a sequence like this so there may be a need to adjust.

I am donating \$250 to five charities (one for each day of the journey) - see "Which Charities and Why" below for more info.

Who?

I am running and my friend **Sarah** is biking alongside me.

We'll be staying with friends to rest at night, expecting to stay at **Jocelyn's** (Sunday), **Jamie and Mike's** (Monday), **Dominique's** (Tuesday) and **Val's** (Wednesday).

Jocelyn may join us to run to his place at the tail of the day on Sunday.

Jamie may come and join us for the day on Monday to run from Jocelyn's to her and Mike's place.

And Russell might join us as we travel from Jamie and Mike's to Dominique's, for the middle of that day's route.

I'm going to see if Jeremy can join us on the last day as we point home from Val's, to get us started.

Where?

We'll start from my place in the Old Port of Montreal, and we'll end here.

I'm not pasting a map because there are a lot of options along the way, but generally speaking the plan is:

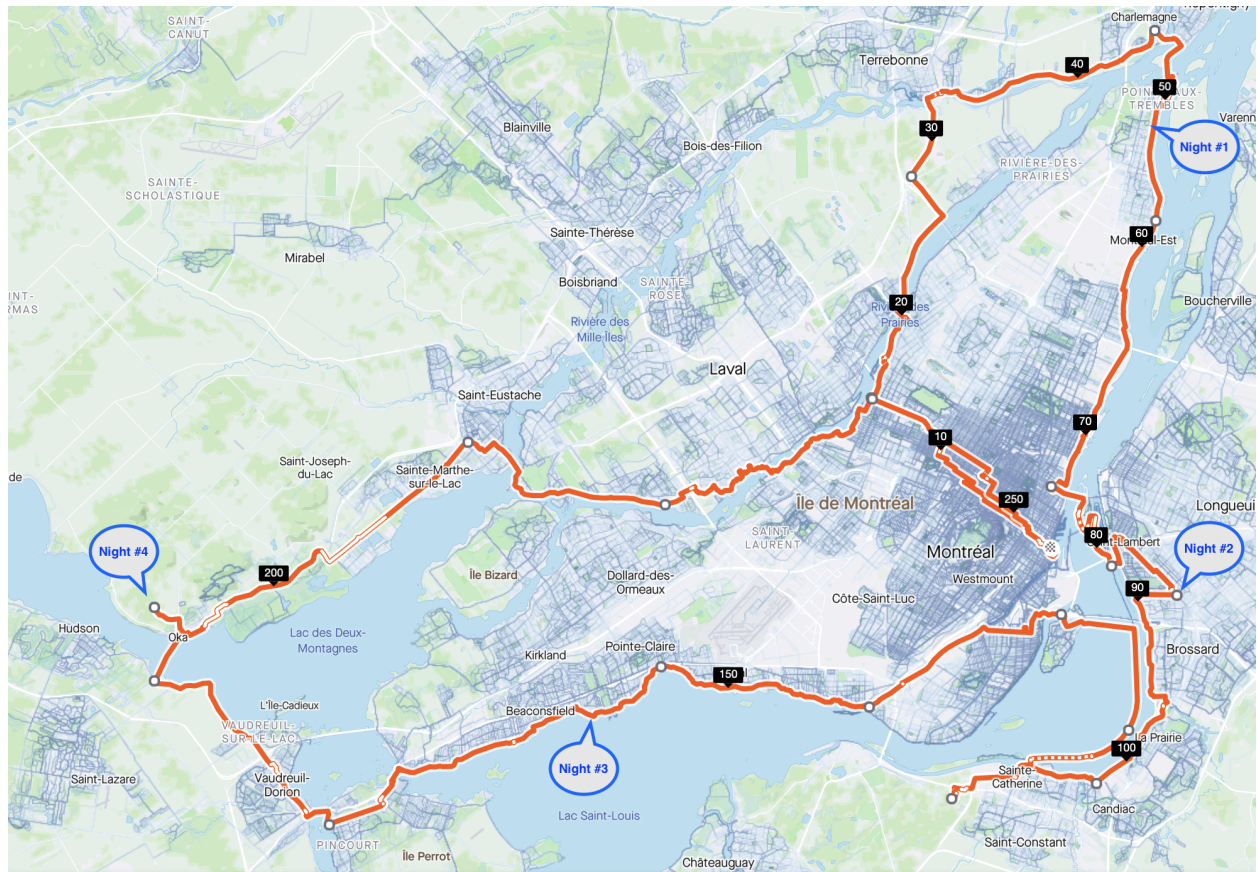
Day 1 - Montreal's Old Port to Pointe aux Trembles

Day 2 - Pointe aux Trembles to St. Lambert

Day 3 - St. Lambert to Beaconsfield

Day 4 - Beaconsfield to Kanesatake
Day 5 - Kanesatake to Montreal's Old Port

Updated With Actual Route (which by small miracle unfolded as planned)



When?

We are leaving on Sunday, October 17 in the morning and we plan to return on Thursday, October 21 in the evening.

How?

Running. Being supported by Sarah and friends along the way. Eating. Resting. Believing.

Why?

To see

To see friends

To see friends seeing friends

To see friends along the river and the river along with friends

To be

To be alive

To be alive and breathing

To be able to continue even when I am unsure of what continuing means

To share

To share stories and ideas

To share knowledge and time and food

To share the journey of seeing and being and continuing

Which Charities and Why?

Shelter Movers <https://www.sheltermovers.com/>

Because there are a lot of women struggling with domestic violence. This organization helps women move. Once upon a time I needed to move out of a violent situation. I was extremely fortunate that a good friend and one of my sisters swooped in to make it happen. If my donation can help someone who doesn't have that good fortune, I will.

Centre d'Art de Prévile <https://centreprévile.org/>

Because this inclusive, creative community centre on Montreal's south shore takes the arts from an elite activity to something where all members of society can benefit, and the results for the children and grown ups alike make the heart all gushy (and because amazing host of night #2 and co-runner Jamie is their incredible dance director!)

Resilience Montreal <https://resiliencemontreal.com/>

Because Montreal is a tough city to be homeless, and many of those supported by RM are from First Nations communities; because the compassion and knowledge of this group is a critical voice in our journey towards truth and reconciliation.

Seeds of Diversity <https://seeds.ca/>

Because these folks have been quietly working away at preserving and disseminating seeds and knowledge for years and the world is just waking up to how key this is; this is one of the first charities I ever donated to many years ago so imagine my delight to learn that the incredible farmer, seed saver and community educator (and delightful host of night #4) Val is on their board!

Unison Fund <https://unisonfund.ca/>

Because even as large industries have somehow increased profits in these last couple years, many of the people who do the hard work and bring the talent — the artists! — have suffered incredible financial hardship and this organization exists to help them out, and because my sister Erin is on their board (and maybe one day she'll host me on a long run ha maybe :-)) and to mash a little Hawksley Workman,

"I hate to break it to you baby but we're the last earth..." *

"...but we will still need a song." **

* "[Baby this night](#)" (From the album *For Him and The Girls*)

** [We will still need a song](#)" (From the album *Lover Fighter*)

Post-run notes - updated on October 22/2021

Total charitable giving:

\$1250

(See “Which Charities and Why?” above)

Distance / time / calories* + a word about “pace”:

People seem to love stats and I often get questions about some of the following so I thought I’d create a tidy set of numbers.

Total distance: 255km (158 miles)

Exact distance will vary a bit between my watch app, Coros, and the online platform Strava where I upload the numbers. Also sometimes I started my watch a bit after getting underway. But generally, the distance should be accurate to within a few 100m or so.

Day in 2021	Distance	Time on Feet	Calories Burned
#1 Sun Oct 17	51km / 31.5 miles	5h 54 min	2660
#2 Mon Oct 18	37km / 23 miles	5h 18 min	2007
#3 Tues Oct 19	76km / 47.5 miles	10h 34 min	4082
#4 Wed Oct 20	30km / 18.5 miles	4h 31 min	1568
#5 Thurs Oct 21	61km / 38 miles	7h 46 min	3383

Regarding pace, for the runners out there who track their time on, for instance Strava ([this is me](#) by the way) I didn’t turn my watch on and off throughout the runs as we sometimes do. I turned it on at the start and let it run till the evening’s destination was reached. So for example when we were waiting to meet up with Russell and visit his farm in Kahnawake at the 120km mark, my pace was 0km/hour. When we were lounging on the shores of Lac des Deux Montagnes having a picnic, my pace was 0km/hour. Etc. So the recorded “pace” is an average of all of that.

But when I was chugging along, not stopped for one reason or another, nor taking a walking break to give my legs a rest, nor some other variable (see “Bathroom Stops” below heh), my pace ranged between 5:45min/km (9:12min/mile) to 6:45min/km (10:50min/mile) *if things were going well.*

In the latter parts of the longer days (#3 and #5) my pace was much slower - 7:30/km (12 min/mile) or slower. Part of that was logistical - for example there were many traffic light crossings in the final km arriving home yesterday - but much of it was discomfort and fatigue. There may have been a bit of weeping. I'm grateful for Sarah's constant encouragement!

** Calorie count is estimated by the Coros app - it could be off because I only recently learned my own height so it's been calculating based on my wrong height (hard to explain that one) and there are so many other variables to calories burned! But this is probably a reasonable guess.

Waterways Crossed

See "Updated with actual route" above for visuals

Rivière des Prairies (x 3)
Rivière des Mille Îles (x 2)
Rivière Mascouche
Rivière L'Assomption
Fleuve St. Laurent (x 2)
St. Lawrence Seaway (x 2)
Canal de l'Aqueduc
Canal de Lachine
Rapides de Ste Anne / Lac St. Louis
Rivière des Outaouais (x 2)
Lac des Deux Montagnes

Bridges Crossed

See "Updated with actual route" above for visuals

(In order of crossing)

Pont Pie-IX
Pont Sophie Masson
Boul. Céline Dion/Notre-Dame des Champs
Pont le Gardeur
Pont Jacques-Cartier
Passerelle du Cosmos (Sarah took Pont les Îles - a funny moment of accidental separation)
Écluse de Saint Lambert
Pont Levant
Estacade
Pont Île des Soeurs
Pont Galipeau
Pont Taschereau

Grand Moulin Dam
Pont Lachapelle

- + One ferry ride from Hudson to Oka

Bathroom Stops:

People often ask, “What do you do if you have to go to the bathroom?” Over a long day of running like these days it’s expected to go to the bathroom at least once. So I thought I’d offer more context and detail for people who like such things. It is funny how frequently this question is asked above all others; we are nothing if not roving metabolisms, I guess?

- A. Estimated # of indoor toilets**: 2
- B. Estimated # of port-a-loos: 10
- C. Estimated # of outdoor pit stops: 10

I prefer to avoid the hassle of going indoors somewhere for such things while out on a run. I dunno know why — I just don’t like it. It’s too jarring on my senses or something. So, as evidenced by the stats above, I didn’t on most days!

Though truth be told my preferred option is in the woods, and though at first glance this adventure looks like an *urban* ultra, there were many miles and pockets of woods.

So with the combination of parks switching to port-a-loos to help people avoid being indoors during covid, combined with numerous construction sites where loos abound, plus all the woods we ran through, I barely had to think, “Hm... I might need to...” and, *voilà!* An option would appear.

** not including when we were being hosted between running days

What’s Next?

There is so much to process from the last five days. Conversations, time spent together in real life and through apps, on farms, in apartments, in houses, on highways and dirt roads and bike paths and river banks and bridges, with friends from as far away as Ethiopia and Brazil and as close as across the hall, connections in my life that predate my birth, and as new as a first meeting during the run. Photographs to sort. Ideas to let settle, let go of, let be.

I can keep you posted if you like. Meanwhile, thank you for coming along. It meant a lot. :-)