Information for prospective runners:
A guide to registration, the race and the experience

Run the Sahara
27 February 2019
Start at ElAyoun
42 km
Join the race for Saharawi refugee children
Ausourd 21 km mark
10k start
5k start
End at Smara camp
Register by December 15, 2018
info at sandblast-arts.org

SANDBLAST
www.sandblast-arts.org
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“Wonderful people, place and community. A week felt like a lifetime, packed with adventure and unforgettable experiences.” Fleur Hutchinson, runner.
1. INTRO AND BRIEF BACKGROUND

Welcome

So you’ve decided to embark on a weeklong adventure in the Sahara to help raise funds for Saharawi refugee children? Then not only are you a legend, but you can skip to page 10 to sign up.

If however you’re looking for more information, look no further.

‘Run the Sahara’ takes place in the Sahara Desert in South-West Algeria. It is an annual event promoted by Sandblast, in the UK, to raise awareness and funds. It offers a unique immersive cultural experience in the Saharawi desert community.

We facilitate your participation in the race (also known as the Sahara Marathon: now in its 18th year) so that you can help us raise vital funds to continue our work in the refugee camps to give Saharawi children a chance to gain a more creative and well-rounded education.

Since 2009, nearly 100 people have generously offered to run (or walk!) 5km, 10km, half a marathon or a full marathon in support of our projects. All of them have told us time and time again that it was a truly life-changing experience. What we’re asking you today is, are you ready to join them?

A bit about the Saharawi refugees

According to the latest UNHCR report, there are 173,600 Saharawi refugees spread across 5 camps in the region around the town of Tindouf, in SW Algeria. These once nomadic people originate from Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, in NW Africa. More than half of the indigenous Saharawis were displaced to this remote barren desert corner when war broke out in Western Sahara, following the forceful Moroccan annexation of their homeland in 1975. After 16 years of war, a UN-negotiated ceasefire in 1991 was meant to lead to a self-determination referendum for the Saharawis the year after, but endless obstacles, postponements and the lack of international will, means the Saharawis are still waiting for that vote to take place 27 years on.

Today 38% of the refugee population are under 17. A third generation of Saharawis are growing up in exile without ever having seen their homeland. They live in limbo largely forgotten by the world with few prospects to develop and flourish. For a more detailed history of the conflict and current situation updates please head to the website.
2. WHAT ARE YOU SUPPORTING EXACTLY?

When you run with us, the money you raise will directly contribute to the Stave House in the Sahara project. This project currently offers music and English classes to children in one primary school in the smallest camp of Boujdour. Two hours classes are given every day, after school, using the innovative Stave House teaching method based on story-telling and hands-on activities to engage the children and develop their potential. These kinds of creative learning opportunities do not exist in the camps and since the project began, in 2016, we have seen real progress in the children’s music and language skills and a demand for Stave House to expand. Through the project we also support the training of local Saharawi teachers to deliver the programme, the aim being that these teachers will be able to run the project autonomously in the future.

So far more than 50 children have participated in the programme and we’ve helped fund the training for 3 Saharawi teachers. HOWEVER, there’s so much more to be done and this is where you come in! In the next two years we’d like to support Stave House in the Sahara to expand into the other two primary schools in the Boujdour camp. As children in the camps have lots of free time and not many activities to fill that time, the community and local authorities are keen to see this project grow and succeed.

Our fundraising target in 2019 is £40k. By joining the desert race and helping us raise funds, you will ensure we get closer to our goal and make a huge difference to our mission.
3. HOW DOES IT WORK? HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

By now I’m sure you’re thinking: “Ok so, registration, race, visas, flights and transport to the camps, security, translator, food, accommodation and cultural events in the breathtakingly beautiful backdrop of the Sahara Desert…How can I make this happen? How much will I need to pay?”

Fear not. Sandblast is here to guide and support you every step of the way. Your main task is to decide to go, start training, provide us the documents we will need to process your visa and throw yourself into fundraising.

**The total cost for the week-long trip including everything is £850.**

The great news is that if you raise £3000 worth of donations by 15/01/2019, it will be absolutely free for you to join the race. **However, we really want to make it as financially attractive as possible for you to join us, so we have set other goals too:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funds raised</th>
<th>Costs runners need to pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£3000</td>
<td>None!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£2500</td>
<td>£350 (£250 for accommodation/race registration + £100 for Sandblast registration fee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£2000</td>
<td>£600 (£500 for flights organised by Sandblast + £100 for Sandblast registration fee)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, we believe in you so much that if you reach any of the fundraising targets in the chart above, even after the race, we’ll still reimburse you. It’s that simple.

So the deal is, if you fundraise enough you will have an adventure for free and give more Saharawi children the opportunity to benefit from the Stave House project. What’s not to love? All payment details are at the end of this pack.

4. REGISTRATION FOR RUN THE SAHARA

To join us in 2019, you will need to register by **December 15th 2018** and pay a £100 registration fee. This will be reimbursed if you reach the £3000 fundraising target. **The registration form is at the end of this pack.**

**Travel and race dates**

To get to the camps you will travel from London to Algiers and then take an internal flight from Algiers to Tindouf. All runners will need to put aside a week of their time to participate in **Run the Sahara** between the dates of **February 23 or 24 and March 3, 2019**. The race will take place on 27/02/19.
Visa and flights

While Sandblast will take care of all bookings and payments for the flights from London to Tindouf and back, we will need your cooperation for the visa applications for Algeria. All visa applications must be supported by an invitation letter from the Saharawi representation in the UK (the Polisario), but that is something we will obtain on your behalf. It is essential for us to have your completed registration form in order to get the invitation letter for you.

The day after the registration deadline on Dec 15, Sandblast will be in touch with all the runners via email about the documentation they will need to provide for the visa application. This will give you time to prepare the necessary documentation for early January when all the runners will need to have their documents ready along with their passport to submit personally to the Algerian consulate in West London. Normally the visa application takes 10 days to be processed. Upon request Sandblast will be more than happy to collect the passports with the visas on behalf of the runners. Any journalists wishing to participate should contact us immediately for advice on the visa.

5. IN THE CAMPS: ARRIVAL AND YOUR STAY

The moment you land in Tindouf, the Sahara Marathon organisers and the Saharawi camp authorities will be there to pick you up from the airport and take you to Smara camp, about 45 minutes away. We will have already arranged your stay with a Saharawi family so, once in Smara, your host family will come to the central reception centre to pick you up and take you to your new ‘home’ for the week. Living with a family will give you the chance to learn their story and experience the legendary hospitality of the Saharawi people. You’ll revel in the food they manage to make with just humanitarian aid supplies, learn about their tea traditions and partake in visits to schools, hospitals and museums. You don’t have to worry if you don’t speak any Arabic, French or Spanish as local friendly Saharawi translators will be on hand to aid with the communication.

During the week, you’ll live in a tent or adobe building and share your accommodation with four or five other UK participants. We will try to ensure that friends and family stay together. Accommodation is basic and clean with mattresses, pillows and blankets will be provided. We advise you to bring your own sleeping bag.

Many people also bring a gift for their host family. Gifts in the past have included honey, games and toys for children, olive oil and dried fruit. Avoid bringing sweets, as diabetes is a big issue in the camps. Please also bring euros should you wish to shop for any local goods.
**Essentials to bring:**
A sleeping bag, towels, sunglasses, sun cream, hats, a torch, toilet paper, wet-wipes, and anorak or warm sweater as temperatures drop during the night. Daytime temperatures will range between 20 and 28 degrees Celsius in the daytime. There are occasional sandstorms around this time of the year.

**Health and safety**
- No vaccinations are required for this trip.
- Although the camp water is potable, bottled drinking water will be provided.
- There are hospitals and medical professionals in the camps but we strongly advise bringing basics like headache and diarrhoea relief tablets.
- For the Saharawis, ensuring the well-being and safety of their guests is sacred. In the camps, there is a comprehensive security system in place and together with the families looking after you will be very safe. In the 18 years since the race began, there has never been an incident affecting the safety of any of the participants.

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Fig 1: Smara, where you will be living during your stay

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6. THE RACE

The marathon starts from the Al-Ayoune camp, the half marathon from Ausserd camp and the other two distances start at 10km and 5km from the finish line in Smara. The racecourse is marked with piles of stones, flags and other temporary markers. The terrain is mostly compact earth, sand and rocks with some areas of soft sand. The marathon itself follows a course that is largely flat apart from a series of sand dunes that occur towards the middle of the race route (near the half way mark and where the half marathon begins). Water stations will be provided every 3km and four-wheel drive vehicles will follow the course to provide assistance if required.

The route: (See cover page)
7. FUNDRAISING

Once you’ve signed up, the best way to start fundraising is by using an online platform. We are registered with JustGiving so make sure you follow the link below to link your page with Sandblast’s. If you require any tips or ideas please feel free to get in touch. Don’t forget that if you are working in a company there may be a match funding scheme you could tap into. Also very importantly, please make sure you ask your donors to add GIFT AID whenever they can.

For all off-line fundraising you can send either a cheque or transfer using the following details.

Send cheque to: Sandblast Ltd, 8 Gravesend Road W12 0SZ, LONDON or

BANK TRANSFER
Account name: Sandblast Ltd.
Sort Code: 60-07- 31
Account number: 46536337
Reference: RTS2019, followed by YOUR NAME.

From abroad: If you are making a bank transfer from abroad you will need our IBAN/ BIC details, which are listed below:

Sandblast Ltd 8 Gravesend Road W12 0SZ, LONDON
BANK TRANSFER
Account name: Sandblast Ltd at NATWEST
IBAN: GB81 NWBK 6072 0549 7250 33 BIC: NWBK GB 2L
Account number: 49725033

https://www.justgiving.com/sandblast

And that’s it!

So now you have all the information about Run the Sahara 2019, the only thing now is to fill out the registration on the next page! What are you waiting for? We look forward to seeing you on the dunes!

An enormous thank you to everyone that takes the time to support this event. Your support has and will have a life-changing impact on the lives of Saharawi children and for that, we’re eternally grateful. Thank you.

Sandblast is the official UK representative for the SaharaMarathon

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www.sandblast-arts.org

SAHARA MARATHON
REGISTRATION FORM
RUN THE SAHARA 2019
Registration deadline: December 15, 2018

- Please complete and email to info@sandblast-arts.org or post to
- 8 Gravesend Road, London W12 0SZ
- One form per participant. Must include £100 registration fee.

1. Personal information
   - Last name: _________________________
   - First name: _________________________
   - Middle name(s): _________________________
   - Age: _________________________
   - Do you speak Spanish, Arabic or French? If so which and to what level?
     ____________________________________________
   - Dietary requirements:
     ____________________________________________

2. Contact details
   - Email: _________________________
   - Mobile number: _________________________
   - Daytime contact number: _________________________
   - Profession: _________________________
   - Organisation/ Company: _________________________
   - Occupation and title: _________________________
3. **Passport details (for visa purposes)**
   
   - Exact name as it appears on passport: ___________________________
   
   - Nationality: _______________________
   
   - Passport number: ___________________________
   
   - Expiration date: ___________________________
   
   - Place/authority of issue: ______________________
   
   - Date of birth: ___________________________
   
   - Place of birth: ___________________________

4. **The race**

   **Which race do you intend to participate in? Please circle as appropriate (this can be changed at a later date and we won’t hold you to it!)**

   - Full marathon (42km)
   
   - Half marathon (21km)
   
   - 10km
   
   - 5km

5. **Registration fee**

   **This £100 represents a small part of the trip costs and will be refunded once you reach the fundraising target of £3000**

   This can be made payable via cheque or bank transfer.

   **Cheques**
   All cheques should be made payable to **SANDBLAST LTD AND POSTED TO 8 GRAVESEND ROAD, LONDON W12 0SZ.**

   **Transfers/ Please include your surname and RF19**

   Account name: Sandblast Ltd.
   Sort Code: 60-07-31
   Account number: 46536337
   Reference: RTS2019, followed by YOUR NAME.
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BANK TRANSFER
Account name: Sandblast Ltd at NATWEST
IBAN: GB81 NWBK 6072 0549 7250 33 BIC: NWBK GB 2L
Account number: 49725033

6. How did you hear about ‘Run the Sahara’, please circle as appropriate

• Email
• Word of mouth
• Social media (please specify in the space below)
• Cards
• Other (please use space below)