

## [“Following the Glorious Footsteps”](#)

### “The 300 of Sparta – endurance race

#### How it All Began



A day that I still remember. It was at the end of May – beginning of June, just a few days after the “Olympian Race” -a 180 km distance race from Ancient Nemea to Ancient Olympia- that we took the decision together with Dino and the team of “Arcadian Trails pc” to start working on the ETAPes of “The 300 of Sparta, endurance race”.

The idea was to cover the 378 km of this race within 8 consecutive days, with a pace theoretically based on the limits of the last in line participating racer.



Our feet were really heavy from the previous race, but nothing could stop us start running again, checking thus, step by step, the route that would lead us to our dream.

A brand-new, unique race, designed on the route that King Leonidas and his 300 Spartan soldiers had followed 2,500 years ago, to intercept the Persian hordes that had already started the invasion of Europe.

From the city of Sparta to the narrow passage of Thermopylae, at the gulf of Maliakos.

This was our new bet and we were very optimistic we would make it happen.

An endurance race, made by runners for runners, faithful to one of the most glorious moments of the world history and, due to its historic background and multidimensional route, unique in Europe.



I also remember that, with the exception of a good dinner, our nutrition during each Etape was rather “thrifty”, or better, rather “Spartan”. A sandwich, some cherries, water, orange juice or other fruits. That was all, during the 8-10 hours daily run.



It was June, so, apart from the first couple of days, the temperature was quite high, the sun being our companion throughout the day.



## Here we go...

The majority of the route is unique! With the exception of a few kilometres, the surrounding landscape is fantastic!

Especially in April and May when the race will take place, nature in Greece is at its best. It's the time of the year that, according to mythology, Persephone, the daughter of goddess Demeter, comes back from Hades (the underworld) and the joyful mother offers to people the beauty of green leaves, colourful flowers and endless aromas.

It is also the time of the orthodox Easter celebration, with its interesting particularities. Therefore, the participating athletes, running only during the day, will be the lucky ones to see, smell, enjoy and feel the remarkably enchanting Greek nature that unfolds like a magic carpet full of colours and emotions all the way of this historic route of "The 300 of Sparta".



### **ETAPE 1 Distance 49 km. Route: Sparta – "Tegea"**

The first 49 km of the race are on tarmac, a quite difficult route with many ascents, the 80% of which are met in the first 19,5 km.

On our way, we frequently meet cars and all kinds of other vehicles (-for this exact reason, the organizer has made arrangements for extra support and security.)

As already mentioned, the race starts at the city of Sparta, precisely under the statue of King Leonidas. The very first kilometres are easy, on a flat road.

The ascents start after the 3rd km. Next, we cross the village of Voutiani at the area of ancient Sellasia.

On our right, one can see the mountain range of Parnon and on our left the peaks of Taygetos.



As we continue running up towards Tegea, we feel the characteristic simplicity of the Laconian nature. In antiquity, all the places around us were the territories of Spartan warriors.

We go up the route that crosses Mount Parnon, the highest spot of the 1st Etape, and then we start descending towards Tegea for our first overnight.

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