

# ULTRA-TRAIL

AUSTRALIA

UTA100 - Tova Gallagher

The Taper: Grumble grumble. Everything hurts. I feel fat. I can't remember the last time I ran. I think I'm coming down with something. I can't sleep.

The Start: OK here are the nerves! Is that my start group? How many clothes do I really need? Crap, that is my start group, these clothes will do. Easy, easy, not too fast- oooohhhhh there's my friends-hugs! It's OK to walk in the first few hundred metres, there's a long way to go. Is that the next start group passing me already?

Leg 1: OK, the road bit is done, now for the fun bit. I LOVE downhills! Watch how fast I can go down these stairs! OK, I'll wait, no, after you,... The landslide! Thanks goodness no one has fallen over here yet- oh, are you OK? Golden Stairs! Wow, I'm puffing now, think I'll pull over. No, I'm fine, I'm just taking the stairs easy. Geez I'm slow on ups. At the top, I feel great! Why does everyone else look tired already? You are tired already? Ummm, yikes, glad I took it easy on the stairs. Yay a checkpoint! 10% done!

Leg 2: Views! Oh so pretty! I wonder if I have to run down there? Ladders! Cool! I have to do the ladders! OK, getting cold here, I might eat some cheese. My turn! I love the ladders! Oh, it's not flat down here, OK, up, down, up, down, another checkpoint! 30% done!

Leg 3: Ironpot! Wow, it does go up! It's like a coloured conga line into the sky! Rocks! I love rocks! A didgeridoo! Awesome! How cool is this! Downhill sliding on my bum- I love downhill! Oh, it's not flat down here, OK, up, down, up, down, it's hot out here! Another checkpoint! 45% done!

Leg 4: All up. OK, I have sticks, take it easy, eat cheese. I feel good, just don't push yet, it doesn't start until the top of Nellies. I could go faster, eat more cheese instead. Yay, the top of Nellies! I feel good and it's still daylight! I can still trot! Hooray another checkpoint! 57% done!

Leg 5: How cold is it going to get? I've been hot all day. Maybe my fleece? Oh yes, it's colder, gloves back on too. Echo Point! Wow, I just have to stop and catch this sunset! Friends! Hugs! Giant staircase- I LOVE down stairs, watch how fast I can go down stairs in the dark! Oh, it is dark down here. I might actually have to use my torch. Leura Forest! That means up,... maybe I need some cheese? Take it easy, let them pass, don't blow up. Yay- almost the top,... um, no, not yet, is this the top? Surely? Finally! Now the easy bit. Down up, down up, Fairmont, down up, down up, Checkpoint! 78% done!

Leg 6: I feel good. It's way past my bedtime, but I feel good. How did that happen? I LOVE downhill! I can breathe, I feel great, I really don't need this fleece. Up, up, up, down, down, down. Here I am at Leura Falls Creek. OK, here it starts. The Hill. 1km, drink station. 9km up to go. Why so up? Think I need more cheese. Still more up. The sewage works- mud? I can't believe there is mud! I'm tired, more up. OK 3km to go, up. Furber steps! I've got this. These stairs are easy compared to The Hill. The finish: I hear it, I see it, I can still jog! Wow! That was hard! I did it! 100% done! Thank you AROC, thank you everyone! I love you all! Shower. Bed. Now.

The Recovery: I feel amazing! I feel light, I feel strong, I'm sleeping so soundly, I feel so healthy, I feel like a ROCK STAR! I can't wait to do that again!