

THE 100 BEST

RACES ON EARTH

BY BRAD CULP

A good triathlon has to cover all the basics: proper aid stations, a clearly marked course, scenic surroundings, friendly volunteers and all those other little details that make the entry fee feel justified. A great triathlon needs to cover more than just the basics. The scenery has to be so good that you forget about your speedometer for the entire bike leg. The volunteers have to be so friendly that you're inspired to finally volunteer at a race. For a race to be one of the greatest on Earth, participating in it should be a life-changing experience and one that you know you'll never forget.

In this first-of-its-kind feature, we've carefully selected 100 events that stand out from all the rest. We first chose 13 categories of races that represent the full gamut of triathlon—from off-road to women-only to where you can find the best post-race parties. In each category we've selected an overall winner, explained what makes the winner worthy, and also listed a number of "best of the rest" in each category. Whether you're looking to test the limits of your fitness on the hardest climbs in Europe or you're just looking to unwind with an easy swim, bike and run on a tropical island, you'll find your new favorite race here.

10 HARDEST RACES ON EARTH

Picking the hardest race on Earth was a little tricky. Of course, a full iron-distance has to be tougher than a 70.3 race, but we wanted our winner to have the toughest, not necessarily the longest, course. With that in mind it was hard to pick anything other than Maryland's Savageman Triathlon.

Savageman Triathlon

Location: Deep Creek Lake State Park, Md.

2010 Date: Sept. 19

Distance: 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run

Website: Savagemantri.org

★ **Editor's Choice**

Altriman

Location: Les Angles, France

2010 Date: July 10

NOT JUST ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

Kyle Yost was tired of boring, flat triathlon courses, so he created his own. Now in its third year, the Savageman Triathlon has grown to be one of the most popular half-iron distance races on the planet. Why so popular? Two words: It's hard.

BY JAY PRASUHN

The Eastern Continental Divide, which rises from the southernmost tip of Florida up into eastern Canada, climbs to 2,982 feet and there looks out over an expanse of rolling hills that descend into deep valleys. The oak, maple, hickory and sweet gum that blanket the ridgeline make the area in fall look like a rolling sea on fire in beautiful oranges and reds. Historically, the divide represented the boundary between British and French colonial possessions in North America before 1760.

Not quite 250 years later, in early fall of 2009, at the upper passage through western Maryland, the Eastern Continental Divide was the burial ground for many, many four-letter words (none of which can be printed here). Turning my pedals while focusing on balance and steady power (both of which I was

lacking), I launched a tirade here in August near the crest of the divide at Mile 23 of the Savageman Triathlon, a 3-year-old half-iron distance race. And at this point in my race, I was pissed. I did all the right things in gearing my bike with an 11-28 cassette to ascend the 31-percent grade Westernport Wall. But the hills after it were beating me down like a rented mule. "Forget the half-marathon to come," I thought. "I just want this ride to be done—and to get a brick."

Brick? I'll get to that. Back on the bike course, though, others were also going ballistic. Profanity could be heard throughout the bike from breathless athletes passing and being passed while moving at 6 mph. Behind me, a small woman, who I thought could have been a nun, was spouting some very non-nun-becoming words. Souls were audibly cracking.

but nothing compares to the Xterra European Championship in Sardinia, Italy. The event takes place in Orosei, on the island's eastern coast, and tours the nearby Biderosa Natural Park, simply one of the most beautiful places in the world.

Xterra European Championship
Location: Sardinia, Italy
2010 Date: May 30
Distance: 1.5K swim, 32K bike, 10K run
Website: XterraItaly.it
 ★ **Editor's Choice**



Xterra Guam
Location: Piti, Guam
2010 Date: March 27
Distance: 1K swim, 31K bike, 8.2K run
Website: Xterraguam.com

Xterra France
Location: Xonrupt, France
2010 Date: July 11
Distance: 1.5K, 34K, 10K
Website: Xterrafrance.free.fr

Jake's Off-Road Triathlon
Location: Treasure Beach, Jamaica
2010 Date: April 26
Distance: 500m swim, 25K mtn bike, 7K run
Website: Jakesoffroadtri.com

Xterra USA Championship
Location: Ogden, Utah
2010 Date: Sept. 25
Distance: 1.5K swim, 30K bike, 10K run
Website: Xterraplanet.com/Utah

5 MOST FAMILY-FRIENDLY RACES

Sometimes you want your family to see you race. Sometimes your family wants to see you race. Whatever the circumstances, being a tri spectator isn't as easy as watching arena football, Ultimate Fighting, or anything else that involves more contact and takes less time. So you owe it to your support crew to choose races that allow sidekicks to have a little fun. The Rev3 Triathlon Series was launched last year in Middlebury, Conn., and redefined the

meaning of spectator-friendly. The race takes place at the Quassy Amusement Park, which opens its doors to family and friends of athletes on race day. While you suffer on one of the toughest half-iron courses in the Northeast, your loved ones get to enjoy some of the best coasters in the region.

Revolution3 Quassy
Location: Middlebury, Conn.
2010 Date: June 5-6
Distance: 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run/1.5K swim, 40K bike, 10K run
Website: Rev3tri.com
 ★ **Editor's Choice**

Magic Mountain Man
Location: Castaic Lake, Calif.
2010 Date: Oct. 10
Distance: 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run
Website: Renegaderaceseries.com

Hy-Vee Triathlon
Location: West Des Moines, Iowa
2010 Date: June 13
Distance: 1.5K swim, 40K bike, 10K run
Website: Hy-veetriathlon.com

St. Anthony's Triathlon
Location: St. Petersburg, Fla.
2010 Date: April 25
Distance: 1.5K swim, 40K bike, 10K run
Website: Satriathlon.com

Musselman Triathlon
Location: Geneva, N.Y.
2010 Date: July 9-11
Distance: 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run
Website: Musselmantri.com

5 BEST TRIATHLON FESTIVALS

For serious tri addicts, some masochist long ago created the tri festival. A tri fest offers participants the opportunity to race more than one event on a weekend. It's also a great way to travel with a family or group of people each racing a different event. We feel any weekend-long celebration of tri is great, but the greatest

