

# SCOTTSDALE Health

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AND WOMEN

## JENNIFER PURDIE

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RUN MARATHONS ON EVERY CONTINENT!

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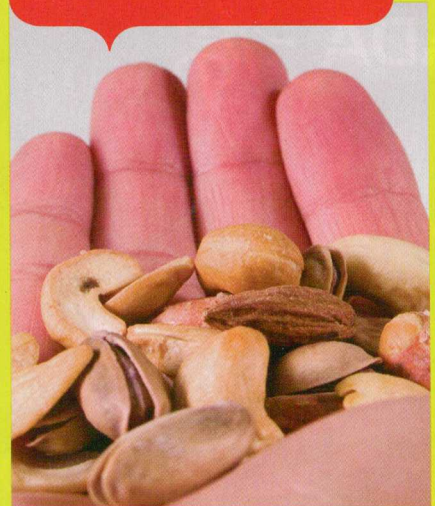
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AROUND THE WORLD IN

# 26.2 MILES

MARATHONER AND IRONMAN COMPETITOR  
JENNIFER PURDIE COMBINES HER PASSION FOR  
TRAVEL AND HER RACING GOALS TO SEE THE  
WORLD IN A UNIQUE WAY

Jennifer Purdie has won a slew of medals while becoming one of less than 400 people to finish marathons on all seven continents.

BY WENDY RUBICAM EVANS

PHOTO BY STEPHANIE HEYMANN OF THOMPSON IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY





# JENNIFER PURDIE

**AGE:** 33

**MOTIVATION:** Purdie says she's always loved staying in shape and loves to eat, especially when feeding her sweet tooth. "I like bettering my time and always staying in shape and being able to eat."

**TRAINING:** "I always have a race that I'm training for—I never stop. I just constantly have a goal."

Purdie runs 4 or 5 days a week before work, 6 to 10 miles per day. She does longer runs and bike rides on the weekend, as well as swimming to cross-train for triathlons. She incorporates weight training and "hardcore" aerobic workouts like the *Insanity* DVDs with friends after work, as well as salsa and ballroom dancing.

**DIET:** She eats a lot of salads and healthy, lean proteins. Purdie prefers organic foods because they are better for you and taste better. She tries to keep her protein intake high with shakes, especially after working out.

When Purdie was training for the Ironman, she took in 3,000 to 4,000 calories per day. She constantly eats when she bike rides, and takes in a lot of gels and replenishing drinks.

**FOOD WEAKNESS:** Sweets—especially chewy, fruity candies like Skittles and Swedish Fish. Purdie enjoys guilt-free sampling of sweets around the world after her races.

**FAVORITE SPOTS TO EAT OUT:** Zinc Bistro (great French fries) and True Food Kitchen.



If you've ever made it across the finish line of a marathon or triathlon, you know you've accomplished something special in your lifetime. There's nothing quite like setting a goal, dedicating yourself to training, and seeing it pay off on race day.

Local runner Jennifer Purdie watched her first triathlon from a distance while traveling in Mexico, and although she couldn't swim at the time, she vowed to one day complete a triathlon herself. That was 10 years ago and since then, Purdie has not only returned to Mexico to complete in that very same triathlon, but has finished a full Ironman and is one of less than 400 runners in the world who have finished a marathon on all seven continents.

Purdie most recently returned from South Africa, adding the last marathon finish needed to reach her goal. She has visited over 30 countries and has run over 80 races worldwide, and she's not done yet. The 33-year-old is currently training for the P.F. Chang's Rock 'N' Roll half marathon, followed by another Arizona marathon in January. She has her sights set on competing in Ironman New Zealand, and upping her international challenges to ultra marathons around the world.

As you can imagine, mixing world travel and marathon running brings unique challenges. The adventure-seeking athlete's first international marathon was in Antarctica, which was quite a change from the desert heat Purdie was used to.

"Antarctica was tough because it's such a different climate and such different elements than what I'm used to running in. I ran through a blizzard and up a glacier, so that was kind of hard," she shares.

The marathon at the Great Wall of China incorporates 5,164 steps into the course





in two passes. Purdie had trained on bleachers before the race, but wasn't prepared for the uneven and rocky steps, some of which were almost chest-high. By the second pass on the stairs at mile 21 and 22 of the race, there was no water left for the runners.

"Most people were crawling up the stairs and trying to find any kind of empty water bottles and sharing what we could find," Purdie recalls. "So there have been some really hard, crazy races."

Despite the challenges, she goes into every race sure that she will finish. "I've never not finished a running race—ever," she declares. "I just go into it knowing that it's going to happen, no matter what it takes, even if it's really hard. And some of them have been extremely hard."

So how does a woman set off on her own to face those kinds of challenges? Purdie has always had a thirst for travel, and says, "I'm fairly introverted, but when you travel you really have to put yourself out there and talk to strangers, so it's good for me."

She stays in touch with the people she meets and now has friends around the globe that she often runs into at international races. "The nice thing about doing these races is that you're around a community of runners and they're all into the exact same thing as you, so you have this camaraderie together," she shares. "You're always kind of laughing together, saying 'What are we doing?' because it's so insane, but it's an experience that not a lot of people will have."

Because of the varying conditions and factors like jet lag and fatigue, Purdie's goal in international marathons is to finish. "With races in Arizona or local races I'm always trying to do better and in some of the smaller races I try to place if I can. But for my traveling races, some of them are so hard...you really

can't go for time."

This attitude frees Purdie up to really enjoy what each foreign land has to offer. Camera in hand, she revels in running through destinations along the race route that are off the beaten track.

"I'm seeing places that I'll never see again in my life, so I stop to take photos and enjoy the smells of the city and seeing parts of the city that most tourists would never get to," she shares. She has witnessed a wedding of fellow marathon runners on top of a glacier, seen wild elephants in Africa and penguins in Antarctica, and been cheered on by children lining the streets of a remote Chinese village.

When asked about her future plans, the list of destinations is a long one. "I'd like to keep traveling and running the world," she says, listing a marathon that climbs Mt. Kilimanjaro, the Paris Marathon, and a possible birthday trip to Great Britain for the London Marathon as possible future races. She lights up when talking about the grueling Ironman New Zealand, pointing out, "That's 140 miles of New Zealand that I'd get to see!"

She knows that she won't be able to do this indefinitely, and is willing to live frugally for most of the year to indulge in travel and achieve her goals. "I wanted to accomplish this goal now, while I'm still fairly young and I still have a healthy body that allows me to do this kind of thing, because I know at any point it could be taken away from me," she admits.

An accomplished journalist and fitness writer, Purdie keeps a blog throughout her journeys, which will form the foundation of the memoir she is writing. With a new goal to conquer each continent again in place, she will undoubtedly be adding new chapters to her story as she continues running to the far corners of the globe.