

London Marathon 2026



Volunteer Runner Interview

Laura

SmellTaste



What does crossing the finish line mean to you personally? SO much, I have worked so hard for so many months. I have never run a marathon before, so there's definitely a big part of myself wondering if I can do this!

What's has training looked like for you, and what's been the toughest part? It's been surprisingly enjoyable, although the winter months saw far too many cold, dark and rainy runs. I have certainly enjoyed it more as the evenings have become lighter and the weather sunnier. The toughest part has been trying to fit all the training in around a busy full-time job (including travel) and two kids.

Have you had any "what am I doing?!" moments? Weirdly not. Once I had decided I wanted to do a marathon - something I'd always said I would never do! - I have been quite single minded about it. I have enjoyed the structure of a training plan.

What keeps you going on the days you don't feel like running? Loud music, the thought of eating a nice treat when I have finished, the knowledge that it always feels good to have done the run even if it's not the best in the moment.

If you'll be listening to music, what's on your marathon playlist? Yes! It's the only way but it's not always the pumping tunes that motivate me but the music that hits the emotions - more like a movie soundtrack than the club. I listen to a lot of Florence, Lorde, Charli xcx, Raye etc. But I have a bit of drum and bass lined up for the final stretch.

What's the strangest or funniest thing that's happened on a training run? Accidentally finding myself in the middle of a race in Victoria Park and wondering why everyone was running in a different direction and looking so serious. Also having to run in different locations/countries -- I had to do several runs in 30°C heat in Nicaragua, which was a challenge.

Favorite post-run treat? Pretzels!

What are you most looking forward to on race day? Finishing! Oh and crossing Tower Bridge at the halfway mark and also seeing the kids cheer me on. I believe they have made "amusing" banners, so no doubt I will be suitably humbled...

Are you aiming for a time, or just to finish? I am aiming for a time, but I am too worried to broadcast it. I don't want to put too much pressure on myself!

What will be going through your head at mile 20? JUST 10KM TO GO! This is when I think it will get really hard and I just hope I'll have energy left to dig in.

Do you have any race-day rituals or lucky items? I've never raced before (apart from Park Run) so I don't but maybe I'll develop some new ones.

What would you say to someone thinking about donating? Please do! Every little counts and it need only be a few pounds but it's going towards a great cause. So little is still understood about smell Taste disorders, but they have such a huge impact on people's lives. What a great thing if we can help fund the quest to raise awareness and find cures.

How does it feel knowing your run is helping others? It feels good. It's definitely a motivating factor and having been affected myself, and been lucky enough to recover, I want to help those who are still suffering. I know how life altering smell taste disorders can be.

If you could sum up your marathon journey in one sentence, what would it be? Long, surprisingly enjoyable and eye-opening – I didn't know my body could run the distances it has!