



Eat and Run: My Unlikely Journey to Ultramarathon Greatness

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For nearly two decades, Scott Jurek has been a dominant force—and darling—in the grueling and growing sport of ultrarunning. Until recently he held the American 24-hour record and he was one of the elite runners profiled in the runaway bestseller *Born to Run*.

In *Eat and Run*, Jurek opens up about his life and career as a champion athlete with a plant-based diet and inspires runners at every level. From his Midwestern childhood hunting, fishing, and cooking for his meat-and-potatoes family to his slow transition to ultrarunning and veganism, Scott's story shows the power of an iron will and blows apart the stereotypes of what athletes should eat to fuel optimal performance. Full of stories of competition as well as science and practical advice—including his own recipes—*Eat and Run* will motivate readers and expand their food horizons.

Eat and Run: My Unlikely Journey to Ultramarathon Greatness Details

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From Reader Review Eat and Run: My Unlikely Journey to Ultramarathon Greatness for online ebook

Scott Bischke says

Read this book shortly after completing BORN TO RUN, being inspired by the latter and intrigued with ultra-marathoning, the ultra-marathoning life, and Scott Jurek. Loved reading about his exploits in any of a hundred races, the crazy pain these folks put themselves through. And also greatly enjoyed the way the book talked of nutrition as the basis of his incredible physical feats. Only a tiny downgrade for some self aggrandizing, though given the premise of the book being reviewing his stellar running career, I suppose that might have just been inevitable. Tempted to give it a 4* because of that, but doggone the book really inspired me so I'll stay with the 5*s. And besides, all in all, Jurek sounds like a solid guy with his head and his heart in the right place.

Sara says

A truly engaging and inspiring read. This was more than just a book on eating and running, this was a book on life. On living life free, fun and fast. On living life as kind and as open as you can while chasing the high of the run. Ultramarathoners are unique individuals and I am in awe of Scott's determination and perseverance to finish.

As a runner and a vegan myself, this spoke to me on those basic levels but this again was so much more. Scott's story from early childhood and his first race speaks of endurance, speaks of dedication and speaks of love for the sport of running. A sport that is most often used as punishment through other sports, Scott's dissection of nutrition and the edge where one can push the body before it breaks was breathtaking. The recounts of each race, each obstacle he overcame - injury, location, time, etc. - was told in the way of a seasoned story teller. This book did not read as a manual, or a condescending story of ones arrogance, this read simply as a story from one runner to another. I could imagine hearing tales of The Western States 100, Badwater, the beauty of Greece along the route of the Spartathlon and the time Scott met Dusty (one hell of a best friend and pacer, I want a Dusty of my own) while eating kick ass vegan food and sipping beer around a table. It's that kind of a book; a comfortable and yet informative story that was an easy read to get lost in.

I don't think I have read a book so dedicated to each and every word, hanging on and looking up so much from one story as much as I did Eat and Run. This, was amazing and I am changed. As cliche as that may sound, this has changed me and I can't wait for my next run.

Amory Skaggs says

It's a classic memoir so you won't walk away with much new besides some good running tips and wfpb recipes. But the sheer determination and will to run an ultra over and over is quite inspiring.

Martin Rowe says

I'm a marathon runner and I'm a vegan, so I've a soft spot for Scott Jurek. I've seen him speak twice in person and he seems like a nice guy, and his memoir hasn't changed my opinion of him. He's made an enormous contribution to distance running, and shown that you can be a world champion on a vegan diet! He doesn't shy away from the "v" word, but he doesn't talk much about animal welfare (he initially became a vegan for health and environmental reasons).

I hadn't realized that Scott had grown up in such difficult circumstances. His family was not wealthy, his mother got multiple sclerosis very young, and his father was obviously not able to cope with it and lashed out at everyone. I would have liked to have heard more about the father, but the relationship has obviously broken down completely. Scott was a good boy, got great grades, and took to skiing and then running well. The book describes his runs and the challenges he faced in training and accomplishing his record-breaking feats. He's clearly very competitive and tough (it's clear that you have to be to weather the physical challenges of running 100+ mile races over forbidding terrain), but he's also a quester, humbled by the natural world, and in love with the brother- (and sister-) hood of ultramarathoners.

Thankfully, the book is free of the dudish, macho tone that marred *Born to Run* for me—a function of the fact that Scott clearly doesn't feel the need to puff his chest out over his achievements. *Born to Run* had more science than *Eat and Run*; *Eat and Run* has more recipes, and thankfully less of the tough-guy posturing that unfortunately seems to dominate the language of ultrarunning, in spite of the oft-stated quests for transcendence! Yes, Scott has an assholish friend called Dusty who seems to act as his alter ego and shadow side and spurs Scott onto greatness, but he doesn't overwhelm the book. I, for one, could have used less of the puking and bodily malfunctions (why are readers interested in this?) and more attempts to answer the rhetorical questions that litter *Eat and Run*: particularly, what these runners are trying to prove and what drives them on.

Corey says

The writing is very subpar, but the recipes have been really good so far. The lentil burgers are time-intensive but fantastic and you can make a ton of them at once and freeze them forever. They taste good not even cooked, just eat them raw or whatever.

The book itself is really strange, you can tell that there is a whole lot of information missing (like how we only hear about all of the "amazing" runs he has where he wins the race, but we never hear about the races he doesn't finish). I remember my dad (himself an obsessive ultrarunner, although one who, despite his MANY MANY MANY unforgiveable faults as a person and human being, never dropped out of a race even when his hands would swell up to twice their size at mile 150 of a 200 mile race) complaining once about this guy (I never paid attention when he talked about runners because it was really annoying and I didn't care at all) who everybody thought was like god or something but that this guy would drop out of races where it didn't look like he was going to win...and now I'm pretty sure that this guy is Scott Jurek. I mean, he runs a lot of races, and he does win a lot and he is a fucking unreal runner (not being a runner myself, but spending my entire life up until college being immersed in the ultra world I have an awareness of the whole bizarre thing) but he seems to quit a lot, or at least not finish a lot. My thing, again, is that if he is such a mental hard ass and he does it for the pure joy of running and "sometimes you just have to do things" as he says ad nauseum throughout the book, why doesn't he finish all these races? But, you know, that's his choice and he must have his reasons. It's just weird to mold yourself as this ultimate competitor and then apparently not

compete a lot if you aren't going to win. I don't know, though, maybe he's got other stuff going on and this is entirely inaccurate.

But you know who needs a book? Dusty Olson. That guy is interesting and doesn't seem to be hiding behind some persona that doesn't quite fit, which is how I feel about Scott Jurek after reading this.

Donna says

This is nonfiction and an autobiography of Scott Jurek, an ultramarathon runner. I loved this. I had no idea who he was; the running is what drew me in. He had a hard childhood that had him taking care of his mom and younger siblings. He grew up fast and learned to focus and succeed. He carried that over into his running. He was very impressionable and I like how certain events made such an impact in his life. I also liked how he was so determined to be the best and to do the best he could.

He mentioned the book *Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen* a few times and I remember reading that one awhile ago and I gave it 5 stars too. I am always impressed with those who can not only master something, but also be a positive example in the process.

Christina says

I couldn't decide at first whether to give this book a 2 for its self-absorbed, sticky-sweet, are-you-for-real passages or a 5 for the moments of comedy and enjoyment my kids and I had in reading those same passages to each other. I settled on a 3.

This guy can run. He can run long distances (100 miles, anyone?) and he can win at those distances. And I totally respect him for that. I just wish he could consistently describe those races without the grand-standing and self-congratulatory tone.

Other than some of the early chapters about Scott's life growing up with the extra responsibilities of the oldest son of a hard-nosed dad and a loving mother who develops MS and becomes more and more incapacitated, the book wasn't interesting or inspiring. I hate to say it, but I think Jurek thinks a lot more of himself than most people would, and that includes runners. His life just isn't that interesting and his victories seem a bit hollow because he just doesn't seem like a very likable person.

Scott obsesses about his diet endlessly and while I don't have many qualms about the diet itself, his obsession with eating seems extreme and bizarre, particularly as he cringes as he tells us about times when he accidentally consumed something as horrifying to his body as lard but then turns around in other passages and talks about all the beer he downs with friends. His comment on page 225 that eating has brought him "unmitigated joy" just seems weird. I can see finding enjoyment or even being proud of eating healthy, but unmitigated joy from eating?

He doesn't seem to have much balance in his life or very many strong human relationships other than the one he has with his mother. His wife gets barely a mention until she leaves him and he has no children, yet he gripes constantly about all the responsibility he's always taken upon himself as an adult, never allowing himself the freedom to be a hippie like all his friends. He fills his book full of platitudes about transcendence and joy, yet he doesn't seem to be doing anything meaningful other than testing his physical limits. It makes

me wonder what he will do in the next twenty years as his body begins to age.

Some of the passages that I found particularly, um, interesting:

p. 74 "I'm a serious vegan. (I usually avoid that word; to many people it connotes a certain crabby, self-righteous zealousness.) And I'm a serious athlete. But I won't starve for my principles. Although I always have protein powder with me, there were a few times in Europe that I ate cheese out of desperation, and there were occasions in remote villages in Mexico when I consumed beans that I knew had been cooked in lard. I once took a snorkeling trip in Costa Rica and was assured that there would be a vegetarian option, but that turned out to be vegetables that had been grilled inside a giant fish! I was hungry and I had a race coming up, so I ate them. On the extremely rare occasions I've diverged from plant-based foods, it's always been a matter of survival, not because I craved animal products or felt incomplete without them."

p. 108-109 "I made smoothies, searched the farmer's markets and my local co-op for more fruits and vegetables. Even though I bought grains, beans and seeds in bulk and attended member appreciation night once a month at Madison Market Co-op so I could save an additional 10 percent, I was spending more than I ever had on food. And I was fairly deep in credit card debt . . . There are a lot of ways to live frugally. I know that better than anyone. But the fuel and medicine -- the food -- I put in my body was not the place to scrimp. My never-better vigor and well-being made the extra investment a no-brainer."

p. 195 "I wanted to be a dirt bag. I wanted to camp out, to drive where I wanted. I wanted to not worry about Leah, to not worry about making a living as a physical therapist and coach while building a career as an ultrarunner. I had been working since I was a kid. I wished I had taken some time for myself. I wanted to keep running, to live in the moment, to explore my limits -- but I wanted to do so with no obligations."

Christopher Ryan says

I'm a longtime admirer of Scott Jurek, both for his athleticism and veganism, and was really looking forward to this book.

Within two pages, however, I was shocked at its simplistic, childish tone and oddly terse sentences. EAT AND RUN is, at times, more difficult to read than a sophisticated piece of literature. It isn't condescending, but comes across as naive and underwritten. I'm not sure if this was his voice or the ghost-writer's, but it was an odd decision. (While I don't know Scott, I once sat beside him in a nearly empty restaurant for two hours; his voice does not resemble that of EAT AND RUN's.)

The writing doesn't really flow or shine until chapter 21, at which point it gets more poetic, free-flowing and convincing. At times the paragraphs cover long spans of time and at others they're broken into short chunks that butt up against one another like ice floes.

I like Scott's sponsors, but the product placement is clumsy and offensive. Pretty much the first time I've seen it in a book (or been so completely aware of it, at least).

The catchphrase "Sometimes you just do things," gets repeated so many times, and means so little, that I chafed at its imminent repetition.

The book does a little of everything but not a lot of anything. I really like Scott and will continue to admire him -- and the book motivated the hell out of me to ramp up my own endeavors -- but I thought it would go a little deeper, hurt a little more, and replicate the feel of a long-ass race, rather than a bunch of sprints.

Maria says

20130327 ♦ I've been a fan of Scott Jurek for many years, so I was pretty excited when this book came out. It's a great story: well-written, courageous, very inspiring. My only issues with it were the descriptions of overt sexism present during some of his competitive runs. Honestly, that's the only reason why I didn't give this book five stars. As a female runner, listening to this book while out running, it was a huge slap in the face to hear some of the degrading insults offered up as "encouragement" to Scott by his pacer during some of his competitive events. Super disappointing.

The narrator read the audiobook with a more aggressive tone than I've heard Scott speak with, so that was a bit jarring -- however, that's a comment on the performance of the audiobook, not the authorship of the autobiography.

Funny side note: there's a section of vegan recipes at the end of the book, and the narrator reads them out loud for 45 minutes. I skipped listening to them -- hello tedious! However, I'm looking forward to checking them out with a paper copy from the library.

Jon says

Jurek not only runs ultra marathons, he wins them--repeatedly. Does that mean he should write a book. Yes. Absolutely. Get it all out on paper, get it published, make some money. You earned it.

Now, do you want to read this? Let's do this old school:

[page 17]

You're jogging along in mile 42 in an ultramarathon and hobo standing on top of a cactus offers you a drink out of a caldron full of laundry. He has a chicken on his shoulder and points to a calendar floating in the air. On the 23rd of Fig Newton it reads "JUREK." That gets you thinking, "Does that have something to do with Scott Jurek? And isn't my birthday Fig Newton 7th?"

If you're one of Jurek's running buddies who wants to see if he mentioned you in print turn to page 50. If not, turn to page 23.

[page 23]

You see a tent and a giant pinata in the distance. Man! A pinata! And it's as big as a mountain! the lizard on your shoulder takes off his tiny hat, points at the tent with his cigarette, and says, "Buen cumplenos, my friend."

When you reach the tent, you're forcibly hydrated and the hallucinations stop. You drop out of the race. You're sort of happy, but you were really looking forward to that pinata, and miss your lizard buddy. You're

still partially convinced that your birthday is the 9th of Fig Newton.

If you're an old friend of Jurek's who lost touch and the hallucinations were a reminder to read up on his life before you meet him for coffee next week, turn to page 50. If not, turn to page 51.

[Page 50]

Definitely read this book.

[page 51]

You're at home. You're reading a book. You're bored because it lacks an arc. There are vegan recipes jammed in there in case you get hungry while reading about someone you don't know who wins ultramarathons. The recipes might look good if you had an extra \$300 a week to shop at Whole Foods and there weren't already a spoon sticking out of a tub of store brand cookie dough ice cream.

You might run, but you will never win an ultramarathon. You might meet a hobo with a chicken, but you will never meet Scott Jurek. You like vegetables, but will probably never be a vegan.

If you give up on the book, turn to page 107. If you read it to the end, turn to page 108...

[page 107]

You shrug, give up, and return the book to the library. You use the extra time to catch up on all those choose your own adventure books that you forgot existed. While you're entranced, you're eaten by a tiny lizard with a small hat and a big appetite. The end.

[page 108]

You shrug and return the book to the library. You're happy for Jurek for writing a book, but sad for yourself for reading it. A lizard known as *Varanus tristensis* ("sadness lizard") smells your sadness and eats you after you've fallen asleep. The end.

Riannon says

I really could relate to Scott Jurek, when he wrote about running for the love of running, with childlike joy at the experience. I've never run an ultra, but have completed 2 full marathons and 16 halfs. The way he wrote about running was inspiring. I could almost imagine that I was running while reading this book, and I did run quite a few more miles than usual this week, which I attribute to this book. It was nice to get a few recipes as well, some of which I plan on trying out.

My only letdown was that I really wanted to know the answer to the "why" that he kept asking himself. Especially when he started backing off from running a bit and taking it easier. Why would he drive himself so hard, and why stop for a time? The only semi-answer that arose was the phrase that kept cropping up throughout the book, "Sometimes you just do things." I didn't find that entirely satisfactory, but I respect honesty and I suppose he can't really give us an answer that he doesn't have himself. My curiosity remains unsatisfied though.

C.E. G says

Reading this book is like getting stuck in a one-sided conversation with the most boring dude at the party. In this particular case, the offender is an ultra-marathoner who's discovered the miracles of a vegan diet. As much as I love veganism and running, turns out I can't stand the person who's most famous for living/promoting the two.

I'm actually too irritated about the time I wasted with this book to give it a lengthy review. I can't even make the vegan recipes in it because he uses such expensive ingredients.

La Petite Américaine says

And now a summary of this book.

"I'm Scott Jurek. I am so great. I'm vegan. I'm Scott Jurek. I am so great. I'm vegan. I'm Scott Jurek. I am so great. I'm vegan. I'm Scott Jurek. I am so great. I'm vegan. I'm Scott Jurek. I am so great. I'm vegan. I'm Scott Jurek. I am so great. I'm vegan. I'm Scott Jurek. I am so great. I'm vegan."

Look. I like Scott Jurek. We all do. He's a great runner and he just seems like a really nice guy. But you'll need the willpower of an ultra marathoner to get through this one...and getting the to last page will probably feel like crossing the finish line in a 100-mile ultra, too.

Here's the thing. I don't really care about a book that's nothing more than an ongoing list of Jurek's trail-running triumphs, broken up by the occasionally interesting vegan recipe. And while I do buy into Jurek's plant-based diet thing, it's really not going to stand between me and my weekly cheeseburger. Though Jerker never gets too douchebaggy about his diet, he does get irritating. I mean, his whole claim that eating cows and chickens is bad because the animals are injected with hormones and antibiotics? Well, dude, you're probably right, but let's not forget that your prized vegetables are doused in pesticides ... unless they're organic, in which case they're fertilized with feces. *Yummay*.

And isn't it just such Western snobbery to refuse food and get all crampy about your diet? I mean, you don't see Kenyan running champion Samuel Wanjiru following a special diet. Oh wait, that's right, he got wasted and fell from a balcony to his death, so he actually doesn't give a fuck about his diet at all. Never mind. The point is, shut the fuck up, eat, and enjoy life.

The parts where the book momentarily borders on interesting are too few and far between. Example? His wife finally up and leaves him (perhaps because our fair Jurek was too busy training, racing, and winning) because she's in love with another man. Now, any non-moron knows who the guy is, but not only does Jurek frustratingly refuse to dish out the dirt, he doesn't even give us an inkling of emotion. Come on, Scottie! Call her a skank! Call her a cheating hooker and tell us how you went out and banged her best friend for revenge! Give us something we can USE for Chrissakes! But alas, no, it's only depression and more running.

Something like a narrative arc follows when Jurek talks about losing his mother and falling out with his best friend, but it's always the running, the running, the running. See, instead of telling us how he feels, we just learn that Jurek's bad mood leads him to lose races that he should have won. The moral of the story? Jurek comes to understand that winning isn't everything. Sigh. Fuck me.

Unlike my other reviews where I rip the book to shreds and take the author down with me, I actually *like* this author and wanted to like this book. It didn't happen. But I don't want my money back. Hey, That's a first.

Sucked. But Scott Jurek doesn't suck. Just hire a ghost writer next time, buddy.

Elizabeth says

I was very disappointed in this book though maybe it is my own fault. I wanted to learn about ultras and was very curious about his diet but the book felt flat to me. Jurek seems very invested in this dual narrative that he is just an ordinary person who has a stronger will than everyone else and that he achieves because he lives so outside the mainstream.

He was awfully sneery about the modern lifestyle considering this lifestyle is what allows his to exist.

I enjoyed hearing about Dusty and then he was just gone. Either make him part of the story or don't.

I am sure we were all supposed to hate his wife but I couldn't help but think how much she must have invested in his career to have him be gone all the time and well it would have been interesting to read about that. Instead we got some lines about how she turned him vegetarian and then bam she doesn't think I am funny and loves some one else.

The best parts are the bits about racing and if you can get past the indulgent language it is well worth the read.

J.R. Newell says

Before I read this book, I had never heard of Scott Jurek. I checked it out of the library based on an article I had read in a running magazine and thought the premise sounded interesting. And it was -- but the writing was not. The book did not flow well at all. While what Scott Jurek as accomplished as an ultramarathon runner is AMAZING, he doesn't know how to craft his rather rough childhood into an interesting and compelling story that could inspire others. He didn't touch on how he balanced his running career with work and family (although he would always reassure the reader that he run ten miles to work each way everyday). The book lacks any sort of deep personal reflection by the author.

I am training for my first full marathon and this is one of several running books I've read recently. But it was the only one that failed to move me in any sort of meaningful way. Still, I wish Scott Jurek the best in his future races. He is an extraordinary athlete and I am pleased to now be familiar with his career.
