

Long-Distance Hiking Roundup

March 8, 2023 Rebecca McPhee

Adventure Travel | Long-distance hiking



Photo: Alexander Campbell/Instagram

Around the world, several long-distance hikes are in progress. One man is retracing the pathways of ancient human migration, while others have embarked on round-the-world expeditions.

Alexander Campbell

On Feb. 12, Alexander Campbell set off from his hometown of Sydney, Australia, and is making his way north through Queensland and the Top End. He will then walk through Malaysia, India, Nepal, China, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkey. From there, he heads across Europe. Then it's over the Atlantic in order to start walking again through Mexico and the United States. Finally, he'll trek through New Zealand before heading back to Australia. In total, he plans to walk 40,000km across 30 countries and four continents.



The route. Image: Alexander Campbell/Instagram

After 15 days, he has covered 547km. In Australia, he is staying with as many friends as possible. The rest of the time, he camps. So far, he has made his way through the Blue Mountains and onto the National Trail, which he follows for a few thousand kilometers until northern Queensland.

"It's been real hot, up to 35 degrees, and the odd storm too," Campbell says. "Lots of flies, cobwebs, and spiders in the face, a wombat, but luckily no snakes yet."

He hopes to use trails, such as Australia's National Trail, as much as possible. These include the Great Himalaya Trail, the Pamir Trail, the Transcaucasian Trail, the Camino de Santiago, the Continental Divide Trail, and eventually, New Zealand's Te Araroa.



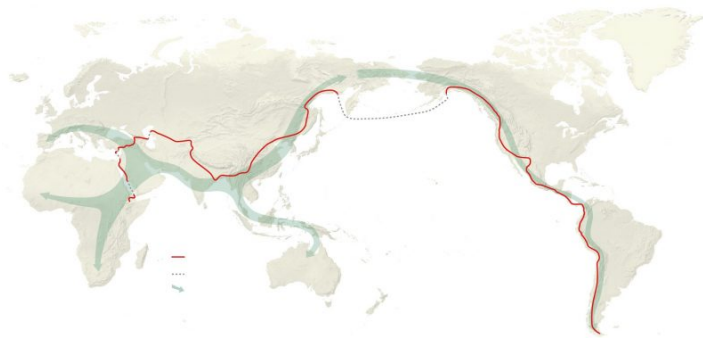


Photo: Alexander Campbell/Instagram

He expects to take four years. He is carrying everything he needs in his backpack and will resupply in the towns he passes through.

Paul Salopek: Out of Eden

Since 2013, Paul Salopek has been walking the original migration route of humans from Africa to the tip of South America. His is the ultimate slow journalism story. He estimates that the 34,000km journey will take him 15 years.

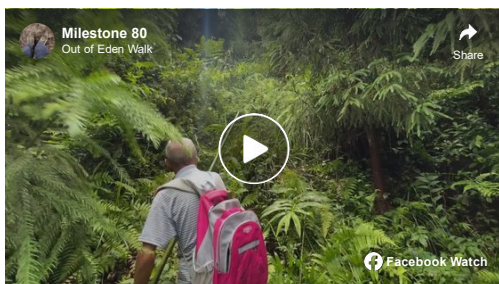


Out of Eden Walk route map. Image: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/out-of-eden-walk/>

Salopek reached China in May 2022, a lot later than he had originally expected. In 2020, he was on hold for a year in Myanmar because of the pandemic. Though he did many short outings in Myanmar, he couldn't progress.

When restrictions lifted, he had to do something that he had never intended to do on the project — take a flight. Crossing borders on foot was too unsafe.

"This left a gap of 251 un-walked miles...251 miles of trailside stories unshared," wrote a disappointed Salopek. "251 miles of discovery lost. Skipping ahead to China also means that two Milestones — which are logged every 100 miles — are excluded forever from the walk's global record of life on Earth along the pathways of the ancestors."



His 5,800km route across China started in Yunnan province. Then Salopek trekked through the high Hengduan Mountains of Sichuan. He is trying to follow the Tea Horse Road, a subsidiary of the Silk Road.

In February 2023, he crossed Milestone 80 of the trip. He is walking through the foothills of Sichuan and heading north along the rim of the Tibetan Plateau.

A big moment this year came on Jan. 11. It marked 10 years on the road and 21,000km covered.

Yann Busnel: From Cape Hope to Cape Horn

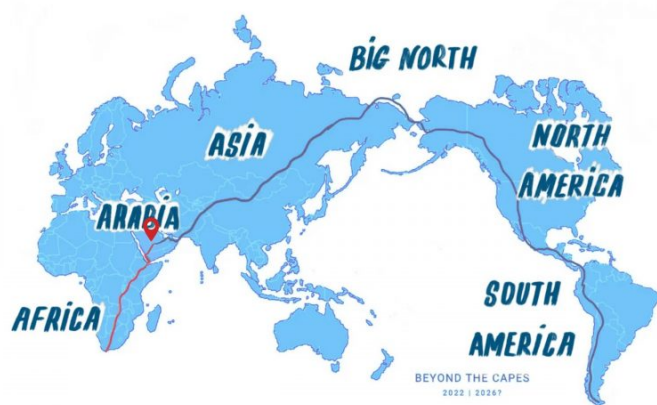
Yann Busnel is traveling 50,000km from Cape Agulhas, the southern tip of Africa, to Cape Horn, South America. He has tried to choose the longest land route in the world but admits that he will have to do a few sections over water for safety reasons.





Photo: Yann Busnel/Instagram

He has already crossed South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. After passing between Eritrea and Yemen, he is now in Saudi Arabia, crossing the Rub'al Khali desert with his camel Rahoul.



Beyond The Capes route map. Image: Yann Busnel

Progress is slow and arduous across the sand, and his camel has also been ill. He has had to stop multiple times to allow his animal companion to recover. They camp most of the time but did spend a few days resting at a farm in the desert.

Like Campbell, Busnel carries everything he needs, restocking in towns. In the desert, the camel carries all of their equipment: 130kg of water, food, and camping gear.



Photo: Yann Busnel/Instagram

Unsurprisingly, the biggest issue crossing the desert has been the lack of water.

"Dehydration has caused dizziness, smooth muscles, and lack of energy for me and Rahoul," he wrote recently. "The few

sips of water that I drink are no longer enough. The mental struggle is enormous and heat stroke is nearby...We are 110km from the nearest life point...Continuing is unthinkable."

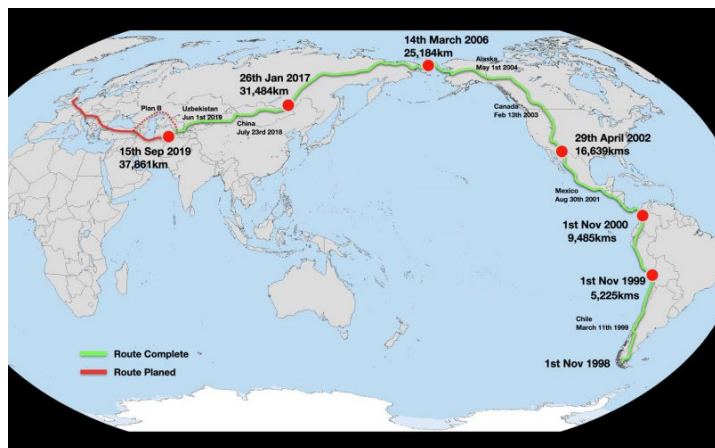
Luckily, he managed to contact a friend who drove out to them during the night with enough extra water to keep them going until the next town.

Karl Bushby and Angela Maxwell

Karl Bushby began his Goliath Expedition in 1998 with two rules: He was not allowed to use any form of transport and he was not allowed to go home until he finished. Two decades later, the ex-paratrooper is still not back in the UK.

Bushby started in Punta Arenas, Chile. From here, he walked the length of the Americas, then through Russia and Mongolia. In 2017, he joined with some other adventurers (including Angela Maxwell, also on a solo walk around the world) to trek across the Gobi Desert with camels.

After 1,130km, a number of disagreements fractured the group, and Bushby continued into China by himself. In 2018, he crossed Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Here, his journey came to a premature halt when he was unable to secure a visa into his next country, Iran. The pandemic also set in around this time.



Karl Bushby's route so far. Image: westboundhorizons.com/goliath-expedition

Forced to override his initial rules, he flew to Los Angeles to figure out his next steps. As the relationship between Iran and the West deteriorated, it became clear that walking through that country was no longer an option. Grounded by the pandemic, Bushby moved to Mexico, where it was cheaper.

Eventually, he learned in 2022 that Kazakhstan would reopen its borders, but civil unrest had made walking through bordering countries dangerous. So Bushby and Maxwell, who had now rejoined him, have turned to a rather odd plan B. The pair will fly to Bukhara, Uzbekistan, and walk across the Kyzylkum desert together until the Caspian Sea. There, they will attempt to swim across it before walking through Europe and back to the UK.



Bushby and Maxwell train in Mexico for their swim. Photo: @westboundhorizons

Where it all changed

Angela Maxwell began walking the world in 2014. Unlike Bushby, she knew it would be in stages and she would take flights when needed. She walked across America and Australia, then headed across South East Asia.

She made it to Mongolia when everything changed horribly. She had been hiking for two weeks and set up her tent as normal. That night, a stranger forced his way into her tent and raped her. She walked for a day and a half to find a village and a room.

Despite the trauma, she continued her project but flew to Georgia, from which she walked to Turkey. She continued around Europe and the UK, stopping periodically to talk about her experience and reach out to women who had gone through similar abuse. Though she did not complete a circumnavigation, she walked over 32,000km across four continents and 14 countries.

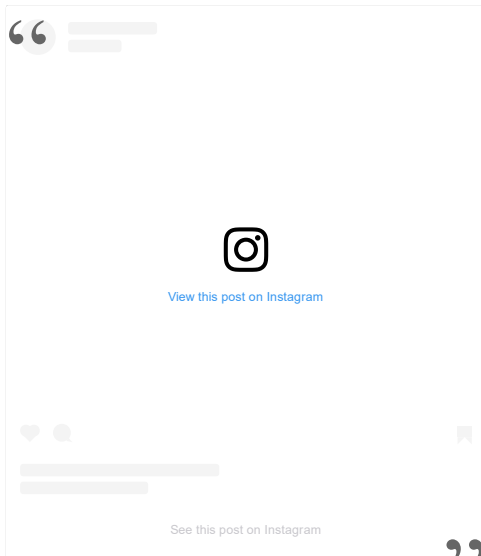


She and Bushby first met in 2014, when she joined him for three days to prepare for her own circumnavigation. They had stayed in touch ever since and worked well together in the Gobi.

Maxwell had finished her project and was back to her day-to-day life. But she continued to help Bushby brainstorm his next steps. The Caspian swim, though admittedly "crazy," intrigued her. Now the duo is training in Mexico for the Caspian swim.

Juls Stoden: Every bothy in the UK

In June 2022, **Juls Stoden** started hiking to every bothy in the UK. "Is this a ridiculous idea?" she asked rhetorically before setting off. "Yes. Yes, it is. But God loves a trier and we'll see how far I get."



She started in Hawick, a town in the Scottish Borders, and began making her way around the 103 bothies. As the blue points on the map below illustrate, most of these basic huts are in the mountains of Scotland, but there are also some in Northumberland, the Lake District, and Wales. All of them are off the beaten track and can only be accessed by hiking, biking, or kayaking.



She started in southern Scotland and walked west before heading up to Loch Lomond. To avoid the Scottish winter, she traveled to Wales and started checking off the bothies there. From here, she traveled to Northumberland and hiked through the North East to Cumbria. So far, Stoden has ticked off 66 of the 103 bothies and is now on the border between England and Scotland.





Rebecca McPhee

Rebecca McPhee is a freelance writer for ExplorersWeb.

Rebecca has been writing about open water sports, adventure travel, and marine science for three years. Prior to that, Rebecca worked as an Editorial Assistant at Taylor and Francis, and a Wildlife Officer for ORCA.

Based in the UK Rebecca is a science teacher and volunteers for a number of marine charities. She enjoys open water swimming, hiking, diving, and traveling.

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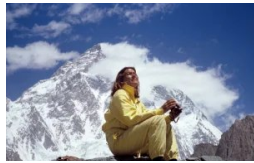
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