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*def: a subject of conversation or discussion*

**Weekend detours**

# Human evolution shows running is in our genes

SO THE Botanic to Bridge is just around the corner so it's time to start running. Yep, that means you! Contrary to popular belief you don't have to be an elite athlete to be able to complete a fun run.

Anyone in good health can train and finish the 8km event, even those who claim they are just not made to run.

I often hear comments such as "I'm not a runner" or "I just don't 'do' running."

I'm pretty certain that when the human body evolved around 2 million years ago, it came with a built-in ability to run.

After all, back then our protein needed to be hunted and our veggies were manually gathered.

However there is also evidence to suggest that endurance running and its demands may have been instrumental to the evolution of the human body.

In their research article "Endurance running and the evolution of Homo", Bramble and Lieberman outline the diverse array of features that give humans their endurance-running capabilities.

Compared to other bipedal primates, humans evolved to have longer legs, narrower waists, shorter toes, the store and release of energy in lower limbs, larger gluteus maximus and spinal extensor muscles that contract strongly to stabilize the trunk in running.

Such structural features along with an unmatched ability to sweat and dissipate metabolic heat may have been a major contributing factor to the evolution of the human body to its current form.

So, we are all built to run. The question is whether we want to.

If you want to, check out the offi-



cial 6-week run training program now available at [www.botanictobridge.com.au](http://www.botanictobridge.com.au).

I have had the pleasure of preparing this program for the event and have made it suitable for anyone with basic levels of fitness participating in either the 8km or 3km events.

The sessions can be used as a guide to give your training more direction and to give each session you do a purpose.

I encourage you to get out and enjoy your running as a form of exercise and recreation. But remember, its roots just may be as ancient as the origin of the human genus.

*Bec Josey is a journalist and qualified personal trainer. Bec now supports others to get in shape for life as well as events and can be contacted at on 0424 080 321 or via [perfect.fit@bigpond.com](mailto:perfect.fit@bigpond.com). For more information visit [www.perfectfit-training.com.au](http://www.perfectfit-training.com.au)*



**INBUILT INSTINCT:** Bec Josey competes in a fun run.

Photo: Chrissy Harris GLA220411RUNN

# Nymph's paradise

By **CHELSEA CHAPMAN**  
**TRAVELLING TALES**

SEMUC Champey is a place where nymphs once would have frolicked, where fairies still live in the surrounding forest and a lost traveller would believe that they had died and gone to heaven.

This oasis hidden away, among the mountains in the middle of Guatemala can hardly be portrayed through words, none the less I shall endeavour.

Semuc Champey is a series of magical pools, with a river running underneath and its surrounded by luscious rainforest and mountains.

The pools, are filled with delightfully, pure turquoise water that has come directly out of the closest mountain via waterfalls, deep enough to be able to jump in, there are also smoothened rocks for you to stand on, but beware if you stand still for too long. Little fish will start to nibble at the dead skin on your feet. When swimming in the pools it can feel like all your sins along with the sweat and dirt from the bumpy truck ride there are being washed away; it is hard not to be taken to a distant fairy tale land when visiting this place.

Running under the pools, so that the water here is separate from the water in the pools is a gushing river, that sounds like it should be the gates to hell. This river runs down towards the



**CALM SERENITY:** Semuc Champey has beautiful swimming holes.

Photo: Contributed

caves. Not for the faint-hearted or claustrophobic, a five-minute walk down the hill from the pools are caves, willing you to explore them.

To explore fully would take four or more hours. We explored for about 40 minutes before having to turn back. It was some of the most challenging 40 minutes ever. This escapade required us to swim through the caves holding our candle above the water, squeeze through small ledges, climb over slippery rocks, shimmy as close as possible to the cave wall to avoid the waterfall, or climb through the waterfall using only a rope and small grooves in the wall to heave yourself up. Once we got to a reasonable point for us to turn back we rested there for a while before jumping into a

surprisingly deep pool and "drifting" back with the current attempting to avoid the many sharp rocks.

But this isn't the end of the adventure, included in the price for entry of the caves, which requires you to take a guide; he also takes you tubing down the fast moving river, encourages you to jump off an 8m high bridge and then points you to a rope swing, all in all a very tiring few hours.

The fact that it is the rainy season can be both a pro and a con, it definitely increases the height and speed of the river, meaning that tubing is a lot more fun. I also explored another series of caves. These ones are so extensive that the end has never actually been reached despite many years of attempts. These caves are fun in the sense that they are the home to millions of bats and around sunset they start to fly out of the small entrance; this is where we crowded around, not really knowing what to expect. After they turn off the lights, you sit there not really aware of anything going on around you, except maybe for an occasional feeling that something just flew very close and fast past you.

It's only when the flash from someone's camera lights up the area that you see the many, many bats flying out. Since then I have a new appreciation for Batman and any other person brave enough to stand in the middle of their path so that the bats pass so closely to them.



**UNEXPLORED:** The mysterious Semuc Champey caves. Photo: Contributed





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