

## Marathon in the mountains

The Ultra-Trail of Mont Blanc is an extreme marathon held annually (1) ..... 2003 in the mountains of France, Italy and Switzerland. Widely regarded (2) ..... one of the toughest races in the world, the Ultra-Trail takes place in August, (3) ..... temperatures frequently range from over 30°C at the lowest points of the course, to well (4) ..... freezing at the highest.

An Olympic marathon is 42.5 kilometers long, but (5) ..... one is over 160 kilometers in length and includes nine mountain peaks. That involves climbing a total of approximately 9,500 meters, (6) ..... is considerably higher than Everest. In (7) ..... of, or perhaps because of this, the annual event has become increasingly popular with runners, to (8) ..... an extent that the numbers have had to be limited to 2300. Only about half of these, (9) ..... average, are likely to finish the course, in times that typically vary from 20 hours to over 45.