

Foreword

2653 miles.

That's how many miles I'll be walking. Since the trail changes slightly every year, that number is an approximation.

When I say 'the trail,' I mean the Pacific Crest Trail (also affectionately known as the PCT). The uninterrupted footpath from the Mexican to the Canadian border through the United States of America. Through twenty-six national forests, seven national parks, five state parks, and thirty-three federal wilderness areas. Over fifty-seven mountain passes, with about 490,000 feet of elevation gain in total.

A thin ribbon that winds through the country. It will lead you across pebbles, solidified lava, and sand. Over moss, earth, and giant rocks. The only thing you'll almost never encounter is a flat, paved surface. And it's as far away from civilization as you could possibly get.

It sounds like a fool's errand. If you were to drive from Mexico to Canada, you would still cover 'only' about 1430 miles. And it wouldn't take you five months. You wouldn't be away from your friends, family, and the comforts of home for a long time. And you definitely wouldn't be putting yourself in the path of potentially dangerous animals, dehydration, blizzards, thunderstorms, or raging river crossings.

Why would I want to do this? Why could I not get this idea out of my head?

I suppose it is difficult to explain if you don't get it immediately. If you need to ask, there is no way I could explain it.

But perhaps I don't have to explain it to you. Perhaps you understand the pull of such a venture? Or perhaps you understand the need to go out there and risk it all sometimes? To push yourself to your limits and beyond, both physically and emotionally?

When people ask me why, I usually say that I'm doing it 'for the challenge' or 'for charity'. That last one is generally accepted as a good reason that everyone can understand. To make the trip feel a little less selfish and spur me on during difficult moments, I decided to walk for a good cause. More about that later.