

The Rota Blue Half Ironman and Olympic distance triathlon was great island experience. The day before the race we had a chance to practice in the water with all the other competitors. Robbie mentioned that the swim was the beautiful swim he's ever done. He was right. The swim was beautiful, albeit a little rough, and a bit long for the half IM participants. That's okay; it gave us more time to warm up. Myself, Sandra and John were 3, 5 and 6 out of the water.

The half IM bike course (56m) may have been a bit short by 10K. The half IM rode two loops of the Olympic distance course. We had a nice long climb in the middle, which meant we had a nice fast descent as well. The bike course was fun. It was always good to see Tara on the side of the road with her camera. The wind was mild, and picked up a bit on the second loop. Out of the 5 aid stations, 2 handed out water in a bottle, the other handups were in Styrofoam cups. It worked okay midway up the 2 mile climb, but no way José'8e on the descent, or the fast flat section, unless you wanted to slow down. Who wants to slow down?

The run for the Olympic distance was about 50% road, and 50% dirt. The half marathon run was about 80% on dirt. There were plenty of water stations on the run. Thank goodness, because it was warm. It was a tough run, because the race was small, and the run was not "spectator friendly." I enjoy running off road, and it was a relief to see an aid station every 1K. We had a nice 1.5K climb before the turnaround. The views were amazing, if you bothered to look.

The first time I passed the 8K aid station, they handed me a bottle of warm water, so on my return trip pass them, I asked, "do you have any cold water?" She says, "You want cold water?" "Yes, cold water please," I respond. The volunteer gets up off her bench and goes into the jungle where the cooler is stashed and pulls out an ice cold water bottle and hands it to me. Nice.

The electrolyte drink was lemonade available at the turnaround. No Gatorade. We are spoiled in the "States." I would have been happy with the Asian version of Gatorade, Pocari Sweat, but they didn't offer that. Once I got past the 5K mark and onto the road, Russ graced me with his presence while on his bike. He catered me with good coaching remarks to help me get through the last couple of very hot miles. My legs felt pretty good. Then it was just a matter of getting to the finish line, one foot in front of the other.

Later that evening, they hosted a fantastic fiesta with lots of good food, drink and music and entertainment. I tried Tuba (island moonshine) for the first time. Humm. I'll stick with red wine.