

The Hellespont is arguably the most iconic swim in the world. It is geographically, historically & culturally significant, whether it is swimming between continents or following in the tradition of Leander and Byron. Based in the port town of Çanakkale, you will be racing in the annual Turkish Remembrance Day Hellespont Swimming race which is fast becoming an institution and which is normally closed to foreign entrants.

SwimTrek has arranged with the local authorities to be the sole provider of race places for all overseas competitors.

Location Summaries

Hellespont

Historically the crossroads from Asia to Europe, it has been a natural barrier for invading armies. Both King Xerxes I of Persia in 480BC and Alexander the Great a century and a half later crossed the strait on a bridge of boats and throughout history the Hellespont was the first line of defence for Constantinople.

Hero, a priestess of Aphrodite, lived on the European side of the Hellespont in a high tower by the sea. Leander, a young man from the Asian side, swam every night guided by the lamp which his mistress lit at the top of the tower, in order to spend the night with his beloved Hero; and before dawn, he returned to his city by the same means.

The poet, Lord Byron amazed at Leander's nightly conjugal powers swam the Hellespont on his second attempt in 1810. He became the first since Leander to achieve this feat.

Gallipoli

Bordering the Hellespont to the north, the Gallipoli Peninsular is a mix of pine forests and farmers' fields interspersed with monuments, cemeteries and battlefields commemorating the Gallipoli campaign, an attempt to remove the Ottoman Empire from the First World War.

From the beaches where the allies first landed (Anzac Cove, V Beach), to the high ridges that they endeavoured to take (Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair), the hostility of the terrain makes you wonder that they ever tried at all.

Troy

With a lineage of over 4000 years, Troy is often quoted as the centre of ancient civilization. For many years a fabled city it was only rediscovered in the 19th Century and is located near to Çanakkale and certainly worth a visit.

Trip Schedule

Trip Timetable

28th August

1000 - 1400	Coaching clinic (<i>pre-trip optional event</i>)
2000	Welcome drinks

29th August

0930 - 1200	Acclimatisation swim
1800	Race Briefing (<i>compulsory</i>)
1900	Pre-Race dinner

30th August

0830 - 1030	Race registration (<i>compulsory</i>)
1300 - 1430	Hellespont Swim
1500 - 1600	Awards ceremony
1900 - 2200	Post swim dinner

31st August

0700 - 1100	Hotel check out.
-------------	------------------

Compulsory Events:

In the above trip timetable, both the race briefing and the race registration have been listed as compulsory. Failure to attend either of these events will mean you will be unable to enter the competition.

Coaching Clinic:

If you arrive early in Çanakkale you have the opportunity to attend a special Hellespont coaching clinic with your SwimTrek coaches. They will analyse your stroke and offer some advice just in time for the big race. There will be drill sessions and demonstrations, a great way to improve your technique.

Welcome Drinks:

Held in a central Çanakkale location, this is a chance to meet your fellow swimmers, event staff and receive further details of the event.

Acclimatisation Swim:

This takes place on a private beach just a short walk from the centre of town. It is a chance for you to get used to the conditions and the temperature in the Hellespont prior to the big day.

Race Briefing:

Held by the Turkish Rotary Club at the local university, the race course, registration process and swim logistics are explained in full. This is also an opportunity to ask any questions/queries you have about the swim.

Pre-Race Dinner:

This is a “basic” dinner put on by the local Rotary Club and offers you an opportunity to meet up with Turkish swimmers.

Race Registration and Medical:

Race registration takes place at the Naval Museum overlooking the Hellespont. You will receive your official race caps and timings chips here.

N.B. The race organisers will also be giving a short medical to each competitor.

The Hellespont Swim Race:

The world’s most concentrated shipping lane is closed to all traffic as we participate in the annual Turkish Remembrance Victory Day Hellespont Swimming race.

You can either race to win it or just go along at your own pace and enjoy swimming in the wake of Leander & Byron.

Post Swim Dinner:

This complimentary dinner for all competitors gives you a chance to celebrate your achievement with your fellow competitors at a locally renowned restaurant.

Race Information

Pre-Event Medical :

The race organisers require a signed medical document from a doctor / medical practitioner prior to attending the race. This will be forwarded to all participants on booking.

There is also a limited facility to undertake the medical in Çanakkale on 29th August. Please contact us to reserve a place.

Swim Distances

	Water Temperature(°C)	Air Temperature(°C)
August	26	34

Temperatures

Swim	Distance
Hellespont	4½km (Swim is current assisted, which is approx equivalent of 3-3½ km.)

Temperatures based on 2011 temperatures and are indicative only .

Race organisers:

Please be aware that whilst SwimTrek organise the tour part of the package. The Çanakkale Rotary Club are the organisers of the swim and are fully responsible for race safety and logistics.

Time Limit:

There is a time limit of 1½ hours to complete the course. The Turkish Coastguard reserve the right of removing swimmers from the water if they do not finish the crossing by this time.

Race Equipment:

Due to the nature of the event and the amicable water temperature, wetsuits are not available from SwimTrek and in previous years, they have not been permitted by the organisers.

Compulsory race hats will be given out on the day of the race by the event organisers. You should bring a swim costume, goggles and towel.

Weather Caveat

In the event of bad weather and the swim being cancelled, there are no reserve/alternative times or days available but there is an opportunity for an alternate coastal swim route organised by SwimTrek

Practical Information

Getting There:

There are a number of scheduled services operating to Istanbul from various British and European cities:

Airlines that fly from London to **Istanbul Ataturk Airport:**
British Airways (www.britishairways.com)
Turkish Airlines (www.turkishairlines.com)

Airlines that fly from London to **Istanbul Sabiha Airport:**
EasyJet (www.easyjet.com)
Pegasus Airlines (www.flypgs.com)

From Istanbul you can either fly or take the bus:

Flying

There are two options:

- Turkish Air flies directly from Ataturk International Airport.
<http://www.thy.com/>
- Anadolu Jet fly from Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen daily.
<http://www.anadolujet.com/aj-EN/> . They also have daily flights to Çanakkale from Ankara.

Private Hellespont Participants Bus:

If your travel plans coincide with the times of private Hellespont bus, we would advise you booking onto it as public transport has proven to be a little unreliable in previous years.

Istanbul - Canakkale (all buses depart on Tuesday 28th August)

Ataturk Airport: Buses depart at **1400 & 1700.**

Sabiha Gokcen Airport: Bus departs at **1315.**

Canakkale - Istanbul (buses depart on both 31st August & 1st Sept)

Canakkale: Bus departs at 0645

Ataturk Airport: Arrives approximately 1330.

Sultanahmet: Arrives approximately 1400

Sabiha Gokcen Airport: **Bus arrives approximately 1500.**

To book a place on these buses please contact info@wilusa.net
You can book using this link [Wilusa Travel](#)

Local Bus

Takes approximately 6 hours from Istanbul to Canakkale. You need to catch a bus from the "Otogar" just 10km west of the centre of Istanbul. The "Otogar" is on the same Metro train line as Ataturk International Airport, where most international flights come into.

Accommodation:

In order to maximise the enjoyment of the tour, our accommodation is a 3* hotel, based on twin-share (single supplement availability is limited) and en-suite facilities. To accommodate the large numbers on this trip, we are spread across 4 - 5 hotels that are within 5 minutes walk of each other.

We do also have limited availability at a 4* hotel (The Akol) which is available for a small additional supplement.

Meals:

All breakfasts are included as well as dinner on the Monday and the post-race celebration dinner on the Tuesday. Other lunches and dinners are not included but this gives you the option to choose where and who you eat with.

Extra Expenses:

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as entertainment, meals and any of the additional tours etc...
Local currency is the Turkish Lira (YTL).

Additional Tours

Tours such as Troy and Gallipoli can be organised through our partner agency in Canakkale at an additional cost. Please contact info@wilusa.net for more information.

Race Day Medical

In addition to the Pre-Event Medical (see page 2), the race organisers will be carrying out a medical examination of all swimmers on the morning of the event. In previous years this medical has included a blood pressure test and listening to your heart. Please contact us if you have questions on this.