

The Hellespont is arguably the most iconic swim in the world. On the 3rd of May 1810 Lord Byron was the first recorded person to swim this stretch of water from Europe to Asia. The port town of Çanakkale will come alive as it hosts this once in a life time cultural and sporting event, celebrating the poetic and athletic achievements of an international hero. The festivities culminate in reenacting Byron's feat 200 years to the day as we follow in his and Leander's tradition.

Week Schedule

Saturday 1st May

We meet at our 3* hotel in Çanakkale in the late evening where you have a chance to relax before we meet for drinks with the other members of the trip.

Optional Coaching Clinic: 11am—2pm

If you arrive early to 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, all before the trip starts at 8pm.

Sunday 2nd May

In the morning there is an opportunity to swim at a private beach, a short walk out of Çanakkale's bustling centre. Here you can get used to the conditions and take advice from our swim coaches on any last minute preparations. You will have some leisure time, giving you a chance to relax and enjoy Çanakkale or explore the ancient city of Troy. We meet again in the late afternoon for the celebration to commemorate the Bicentenary of Byron's swim and his passion for open water swimming, this unique festival will be held at the University of Çanakkale near the shores of the Hellespont. A cultural experience with poems, stories, seminars and films, depicting the importance of Byron and the influence this swim had on his poetic writing and the legacy it has left 200 years on.

Monday 3rd May

Everyone will gather in the morning for the compulsory race briefing before the world's most concentrated shipping lane is closed to all traffic as we participate in Lord Byron's Bicentennial Hellespont Swim. You can either race to win or swim at your own pace and enjoy the experience of swimming in the wake of Leander & Byron. The swim route is elliptical as we compensate for the left sided current. Following the swim there will be an awards ceremony and the SwimTrek post race dinner held to commemorate this unique Byron celebration.

(N.B. The race briefing is compulsory for all swimmers).

Tuesday 4th May

A relaxing morning to recover from the previous days

exertions, departing at your convenience. You will have the option of taking a tour to the Gallipoli Peninsular, where it is possible to swim off its beaches.

Location Summaries

Hellespont

Historically the crossroads from Asia to Europe, it has been a natural barrier for invading armies. Both King Xeres 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 was so determined to spend the night with his beloved Hero that he swam every evening guided by the lamp which his beloved mistress lit at the top of the tower. Before dawn Leander returned to his city by the same means.

Gallipoli

Bordering the Hellespont to the north, the Gallipoli Peninsular is a mix of pine forests and farmer's fields interspersed with monuments, cemeteries and battlefields. These are all testaments to the Gallipoli campaign; a futile attempt to remove the Ottoman Empire from the First World War. Whether you visit the beaches where the allies first landed (Anzac Cove and V Beach), or the high ridges that the Allies endeavoured to take, (Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair) the hostility of the terrain makes you wonder that they ever tried at all. Never was the expression "Lions led by donkeys" more apt.

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.

Practical Information

Start Point: Çanakkale

Start Time: 8pm on Saturday 1st May 2010

Finish Point: Çanakkale

Finish Time: 10am on Tuesday 4th May 2010

Temperatures:-

	Water Temperature(°C)	Air Temperature(°C)
May	16 - 18	19

Getting There:

There are a number of scheduled services operating to Istanbul from various British and European cities. From Istanbul you can either fly or take the bus.

Flying

Turkish Air flies directly from Ataturk International Airport on Thursday and Sunday at 1615. <http://www.thy.com/>

SwimTrek Bus

Departs from Ataturk(1400 & 1700) and Sabiha Gokcen(1315) airport on Saturday 1st May and will go direct to Canakkale.

Return (4th & 5th May)

Departs Canakkale at 0645 and will drop off at Ataturk, Istanbul Town Centre and Sabiha Gokcen. When booking return flights look at departures around 1500-1600 for Ataturk and 1630—1800 for Sabiha Gokcen.

Local Bus

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

Passports and Visas:

You require a full passport, that should be valid for 6 months beyond the expected length of stay. You should check if you require a visa. British, Irish, US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand citizens do require a visa which can be purchased for around €15 before passport control. Some EU members do not need a visa. Visa regulations do change. Please check!

Vaccinations:

There are no essential vaccination requirements for Turkey. Although the risks are low you may wish to obtain vaccinations against typhoid and hepatitis A and check that your polio and tetanus vaccinations are up to date.

Medical Criteria

The race organisers will be carrying out a medical examination of all swimmers on the morning of the event. Please contact us if you have further questions on this.

Accommodation:

In order to maximise the enjoyment of the tour, our accommodation is a 3* hotel, based on twin-share (single rooms at an additional cost of £100) 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.

Meals:

All breakfasts are included as well as the post race dinner on Monday. Other lunches and dinners are not included, but this gives you the ability to choose when, where and with whom you would like to dine.

Swim Event Type:

This event is a swim race organised by local authorities and is not organised by SwimTrek. 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.

In the event of bad weather and the swim being cancelled, there are no reserve days available but there is an opportunity for an alternate coastal swim route.

N.B. The safety cover for the event is provided by the local race organisers and other relevant local authorities.

SwimTrek assume no responsibility for the safety of this event. You will be required to sign a waiver document during registration to confirm that you understand and agree to this.

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 Turkish Lira (YTL)

Additional Tours

The two tours to Troy and Gallipoli are optional and at an additional cost, which can be organised through our agent in Turkey Wilusa Travel. <http://www.wilusa.net/>

Swimming Distances:

<u>Swim</u>	<u>Distances</u>
Hellespont	4½km (Swim is current assisted, which is approx equivalent of 3-3½ km).

Wetsuit Availability:

Due to the nature of the event and the amicable water temperature, wetsuits are not available from SwimTrek. However you are welcome to bring your own.

Essential Equipment:

In addition to “normal” daily clothes, you will need to bring the following:

Swimming Costume (2 of)	Sweater/Fleece
Swimming Goggles (2 of)*	Sun Hat
Towel	Waterproof Sun Cream
Waterproof jacket	

** Try to bring 1 clear lens and 1 tinted lens for different light conditions.*

Please note that the race organisers will supply numbered swim hats. You may of course bring any other kit that you want.