



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Join us on an unforgettable expedition through some of the most stunning scenery in the British Isles in Scotland's breathtaking Inner Hebrides. Staying on the 102-foot tall ship, the 'Lady of Avenel', this swimming adventure offers a unique opportunity to explore the dramatic landscapes of this picturesque corner of the world.

From craggy mountain tops to spectacular volcanic features, this tour takes in the most beautiful parts of this remarkable collection of islands. Our expedition explores the lochs, sounds, islands, coves and skerries of the Inner Hebrides, while also providing an opportunity to experience an abundance of local wildlife throughout the week.

Our home for the week, the 'Lady of Avenel', includes our very own on-board chef, while taking in the sunset from the deck offers the perfect end to each day's swimming.

---

## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is made up largely of coastal and loch swimming, along with some crossings, including the fabled crossing of the Gulf of Corryvreckan. A good experience of swimming in challenging sea conditions is a must for this trip.

Swimmers should have a sound understanding and experience of swimming in strong sea conditions and be capable of completing the average swim distance of 2.5km. The average daily swim distance is around 4km (split over a minimum of two swims) prior to the start of the trip. Due to the nature of this trip, there is a minimum swimming speed of 30 min/km (40 min/mile).

We have given this trip a '[Challenging](#)' grading. These trips are for experienced open water swimmers who want to push themselves.

No sailing experience is required - however, the ship's crew are happy for you to assist with onboard duties as much or as little as you like.

---

## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### The Isle of Mull

Our swimming and sailing adventure circumnavigates the Isle of Mull with diversions to some of the best swimming locations in the Southern Inner Hebrides. Mull is the third largest island in Scotland, with 300 miles of coastline. The island has been inhabited since the last ice age and has a rich cultural heritage of Bronze Age stone circles, Iron Age fortified duns and traditional medieval castles.



## Iona

Iona Island is the symbolic centre of Scottish Christianity. Saint Columba founded a monastery here in 563 and it became the heart of the familiar churches and religious settlements which have been scattered across the west of Scotland for centuries.

### The Gulf of Corryvreckan

The narrow strait between the islands of Jura and Scarba acts as a funnel when the massive tidal currents sweep through, hitting a basalt column which rises to within 30 metres of the surface. This creates a whirlpool at certain times of the tide, which is reputed to be the third biggest in the world. We carry out the swim at slack water when the crossing is at its calmest.

## TRIP SCHEDULE

<b>Start Point</b>	The Lady of Avenel, North Pier, Oban
<b>Start Time</b>	13:00 on Day 1
<b>Finish Point</b>	The Lady of Avenel, North Pier, Oban
<b>Finish Time</b>	10:00 on Day 7

Part of the appeal of our Lady of Avenel trips is the unpredictability of the wild areas in which we will swim. We sail when the winds are favourable, meaning a degree of flexibility is required as to when we may sail out.

Please note that the below itinerary is an example of the swims that may take place during your trip, however, actual swim locations and distances can vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will let you know swim plans as soon as possible. Sailing a tall ship by its nature brings the excitement of the elements.

### Day 1

The 'Lady of Avenel', our ship and accommodation, awaits you at the North Pier in Oban. We enjoy on-board welcome drinks and are given a tour of our classic rigger. Following a safety briefing and a discussion of the plans for the week, we set sail to Loch Aline in the Sound of Mull.

The panoramic Loch Aline is the venue for our acclimatisation swim. This sheltered loch offers ideal conditions for our first swim. Back on board the ship, we enjoy a welcome dinner prepared by our very own on-board chef.



## Day 2

Take in the sights and sounds of the Scottish coast this morning as we sail to Loch Sunart. Our first swim of the day is a coastal swim in the loch. Woodlands of birch and oak line our route as we shake out our swim muscles and make our way to Salen, a sheltered inlet.

After our swim, we continue to explore the loch; this time from above the water line as we follow the narrow coastal road which hugs the lapping waters of the loch as the road skewers its way out into the peninsula. Keep your eyes open for deer, which are often spotted in this area.

It's back to the ship for lunch, before our afternoon swim across Loch Sunart. From the island of Oronsay we strike out for Glenborrodale Castle on the northern coast. We take in some of the deepest parts of the loch as we cross waters which are often visited by schools of dolphins.

## Day 3

We have a longer swim of island hopping this morning. The Sound of Ulva is dotted with islets, skerries, rocks and beaches. We start with a crossing from Little Colonsay island before weaving our way between the islets of the Sound. Our zig-zag swim route explores the channels, coves and inlets of Ulva. After lunch, we trek to Loch Ba for a short fresh water swim. This beautiful loch is nestled in a valley of oak woods and moorland slopes under the imposing Ben More mountain, the extinct volcano responsible for much of the topography of the area. Our walk is a great time to sight for the Golden Eagle, one of Scotland's most admired birds. The eagles live in the high country and are sometimes spotted hunting hares on the mountain side.

We will spend the night in Ulva, where, following our group dinner, we will have the opportunity to visit the local pub 'The Boathouse'.

## Day 4

This morning we circumnavigate Staffa island. This pillar island with its great basalt columns, formed by The Mull volcanic eruption 60 million years ago, is a truly breathtaking swim location. The swim concludes in the awe-inspiring Fingal's Cave. Within the cave, the intricately curved and distorted columns reflect the morning light.

From here, we raise the sails and make our way to Loch Scridain for our afternoon swim. From the Ross of Mull we cross the mouth of the loch to another stunning ancient volcanic feature, MacCulloch's Fossil Tree. Take in your surroundings at the end of the swim and you will notice the vertical impression of the ancient tree trunk that managed to stay upright after it was engulfed by lava.

We have an evening walk after dinner. From the old observatory you can admire the Lady of Avenel, tucked in the sheltered anchorage of Tinker's Hole. Vistas of the island of Iona, the Paps of Jura and the



setting sun illuminating the pink granite make it well worth the hike.

### Day 5

Our morning swim today takes us to the pilgrimage island of Iona. Setting out from Kintra on the Isle of Mull, we cross the sheltered channel heading towards St. Columba's monastery and its Celtic High Crosses, which make an iconic sighting point.

Our lunchtime walk is like stepping back in time as we explore the home of the Columban monks and the birthplace of the Book of Kells. We wander past Iona Abbey, St. Oran's Chapel and ruins of the Iona nunnery before walking to the west of Iona for our afternoon swim.

We leave the sandy beach of Camus Cuil an t-Saimh and head south past Iona's Spouting Cave, a blowhole which sprays salt water across the coast in wintry westerly storms.

### Day 6

Today is an action-packed day as we start with an early crossing of the famous Gulf of Corryvreckan, finishing under the imposing 400ft cliffs on Scarba. Before lunch we fit in a second crossing as we depart from Scarba and head towards Luing. Lunch today is well earned!

In the afternoon, we grab our shoes to hike across the island to the fishing village of Toberonochy. Here we hop back in the water and continue our journey with a short crossing of Shuna Sound, finishing up at Shuna island. We journey by boat north to Ardentallan Bay where we spend our last evening.

### Day 7

After breakfast, we enjoy our final full swim of the week, a crossing from Lerags to Knipoch. Perhaps a local basking shark will join you on this last swim as this is a busy time for basking shark encounters in the Hebrides.

Sitting on deck for our to sail back to Oban is an excellent finale to our tour of the Scottish Inner Hebrides. The Lady of Avenel moors at the North Pier in Oban where our trip concludes.

---

## TRIP INFORMATION

### Group Size

This trip has a maximum group size of 12. The group will be split into two groups, based on speed, with each group being accompanied by their own safety vessel/escort.

### Boat Support

Boat support on this trip includes one main ship and two inflatable boats to be piloted by your SwimTrek guides and a local boat pilot. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed



## Extra Activities

No sailing experience is required; however, the ship's crew are happy for you to assist with onboard duties as much or as little as you like. Between swims guests like while away their time wildlife watching - a small set of binoculars and a sketchbook may be helpful for this.

## Equipment Checklist

For your basic, essential packing list, please visit our [Packing List](#) page on the website. For additional, **location specific items**, please see the information below

✓	Item	✓	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costume (x 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thermals/Sweater/Fleece/Thick Socks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wetsuit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small pack towel (x 2)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long Trousers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Woolly Hat and Gloves
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes / Aqua Shoes / Sandals

**Important:** It can be cold both during and between swims, so we advise all guests to bring appropriate swimwear and clothing to be as comfortable as possible in these conditions. We recommend that all guests bring plenty of layers which can be added and removed as required. We also recommend gaiters/rubber bands for protection from ticks when trekking.

SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water and electrolyte drinks and refill your bottle. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest, snorkel or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you. Please note, there are no safes in the cabins on the Lady of Avenel, so valuables and other belongings are brought on board at your own risk.

## Luggage

Due to the limited space in the cabins on board the Lady of Avenel, we strongly recommend that guests bring soft, duffle-style luggage and that it is restricted to a maximum size of 40 x 70 x 40cm.

---

## TRIP GRADING

We have given this trip a 'Challenging' grading. These trips are for experienced open water swimmers who want to push themselves.



## Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Loch Morar	1½ km	Ardvasar - Aird of Sleat	4 km
Spar Cave - Prince Charles's Cave	2½ km	Loch na Cuilce Island Hop	2 km
Isle of Skye - Isle of Soay	2 km	Isle of Canna - Isle of Rum	3½ km
Eigg Coastal	2 km	Muck - Horse Island	2½ km

## Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience, however you should be aware that certain marine life such as jellyfish may be present during the swims. In all cases we will work on reducing your contact with these creatures, however if you suffer from anaphylaxis, please consult the office prior to booking.

Sea sickness is a possibility, and guests that are prone to this often bring along some sea sickness tablets. Some more easy ways to ward off any nausea are ensuring you are well rested, avoiding screen time, getting plenty of fresh air, looking off at the horizon and moving as close to the middle of the boat as you can where the motion of the sea will be reduced.

## Walking Distances

WALK	DISTANCE	WALK	DISTANCE
Loch Nevis - Loch Morar return	3 km	Loch Coruisk	5 km
Isle of Soay	2 km	Rum/Eigg Traverse	5 km
Massacre Cave (Eigg)	3 km		

## Walking Conditions

Most walks take place on recognised paths and tracks, however there may be cases where we walk along trails or other unsealed surfaces, and care should be taken in these areas. If you do not wish to walk any of the trails, you are welcome to remain on board the ship.

## Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
July	12 - 15°C / 54 - 59°F	13-16°C / 54-69°F
August	13 - 16°C / 55 - 59°F	13-16°C / 54-69°F

\*Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.

## Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, we rely on decent weather conditions when carrying out our swims. Therefore, open



water swimming holidays require a certain degree of on-trip flexibility which can result in changes to the planned itinerary. These changes often add a touch of uniqueness to your trip and will be communicated to you by your SwimTrek guides as quickly as possible.

Given the location of this trip, the weather will play a key factor in all our swims and crossings. It should be assumed that changes will be made to the planned itinerary based on local conditions.

---

## GETTING THERE

While we have outlined various travel options below, they are subject to change and should be used as a guide only.

As SwimTrekks come from all over the world, and join our swimming holidays in numerous destinations, we don't currently offer flights as part of our SwimTrek packages. We do however want to do as much as we can to ensure that our guests get the best deals when travelling to one of our trips so check out [SwimTrek's tips to help you get the best deals for your flights](#) page on the website.

### Option 1: Fly through Glasgow

The easiest way to get to Oban is by plane to Glasgow International Airport and then catching a train directly to Oban. The Lady of Avenel's mooring place is in the centre of Oban so very is easy to find. The North Pier is just 400m along the beach from the train station.

### Option 2: Coming from the East Coast

If you're coming from the East coast, Edinburgh or the UK you will need to first travel through Glasgow. Once in here the best form of travel is via train. Oban is also serviced by regular buses, the bus stops right outside Oban train station, when you exit the train station, follow the water's edge with the sea on your left for 400m and you will see the 'Lady of Avenel' waiting in all her beauty at the quay.

### Option 3: Driving to Oban

Another option to get to Oban is by car, you can reach the city center from the A82 which skirts the west side of Loch Lomond. From here, you need to join the A85 at Tyndrum which takes you right to the centre of Oban. When the A85 reaches the coast, you will see the 'Lady of Avenel' moored on your right as you look to sea. Parking is available at Oban train station, but there is a daily fee of £3.

The easiest way to get to Mallaig at the start of your trip is to drive or catch a train directly to Mallaig. When you reach Mallaig, the Lady of Avenel will be moored in Mallaig Fishing Harbour, just 400m along the beach from the train station at the beginning of your trip.

As SwimTrekks come from all over the world, and join our swimming holidays in numerous destinations, we don't currently offer flights as part of our SwimTrek packages. We do however want to do as much as we can to ensure that our guests get the best deals when travelling to one of our trips so check out [SwimTrek's flight tips](#) page on the website.



---

## ACCOMMODATION

### Accommodation

The Lady of Avenel is a 102-foot Brigantine square rigger ship with 12 berths in 6 guest cabins. Originally built in Poland in 1969 as a tug vessel, she was refitted in 1992 and the ship made her film debut in 2016 in 'Alice Through the Looking Glass', the sequel to Tim Burton's 'Alice in Wonderland'.

All cabins on the Lady of Avenel include duvets, pillows and bed linen. Spaces are offered on a twin share basis and include bunk beds. All guests and crew use shared bathroom facilities with two bathrooms located close to the cabins on the lower deck and a toilet located on the upper deck.

Due to the limited number of cabins on board, there are restricted single occupancy and non-swimmer places available, both of which need to be booked directly with the SwimTrek office.

\*Please note sleeping at sea is an entirely different experience to dry land as lapping waves may affect sleeping patterns. Most people will adjust quite quickly but we would advise light-sleepers to bring earbuds.

\*\*Please also note that the exact details of the liveaboard and facilities may vary without notice.

### Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

Occasionally we operate consecutive trips on Lady of Avenel and if you are booking both it may be possible to leave luggage or even stay aboard between trips. It is never possible for us to confirm extra pre and post nights aboard Lady of Avenel.

### Food and Drink

All meals are included on this trip and are prepared by our very own on board chef. With years of experience working on various vessels, our chef offers a high standard of food which will keep you well fuelled for your swims during the trip.

### Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as trips to the occasional island pub and shopping on the few islands that have towns. The local currency is British pound (£).

In some countries tipping (gratuities) is not part of the culture. In others, it has become an expected norm. We believe that tipping is done entirely at your discretion. If you have been provided with excellent service, it may be something you wish to do. Your SwimTrek guides can advise on local norms for service providers like boat crew, waiters, or taxis. Nothing is expected for your SwimTrek guides, but many groups like to present something to the guides at the end of the trip.



## Responsible Travel

SwimTrek is conscious of the importance of protecting the world's natural wonders. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to not only take care of the natural environments which we are lucky enough to explore, but also to educate our guests about the importance of conservation efforts and responsible tourism. It's for this reason that we have worked so closely with our partners to ensure that our trips are conducted in the most responsible and sustainable way possible, working tirelessly to minimise the impact of our presence on local marine life and the natural habitat.

## Passports and Visas

Non-residents of the U.K. require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Citizens of all EU member states, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are given 'leave to enter' the UK and do not need to apply for a visa.

Please note that visa regulations are subject to change, and we advise that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

## Travel Insurance

We consider comprehensive travel insurance to be essential, and we strongly recommend that you purchase insurance which includes, but is not limited to, cover for illness, accident, emergency repatriation, ambulance, air ambulance, helicopter rescue services, cancellation, lost luggage and delays. Your travel insurance should also cover you for open water swimming and any other activity listed in your trip itinerary (including races and competitions, where applicable). Please read your policy details carefully and remember to take them with you on your trip for your own reference. For further information about travel insurance, please visit: [www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance](http://www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance).

## Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations

For comprehensive health information for people travelling to the UK, including all recommended and required vaccinations, please visit [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries). Please note that this information is subject to change, and you should re-check this site regularly prior to your trip.

## Internet Access, Electricity and Travel Plugs

There is extremely limited Wi-Fi and mobile phone reception on board the Lady of Avenel and it is entirely dependent on our exact location and signal strength. To be safe, it should be assumed that you will have no access to 3G, 4G or wifi for the duration of your trip.

The Lady of Avenel features UK-style power points in some cabins and in communal areas.

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit [worldstandards.eu/](http://worldstandards.eu/).