



## TRIP OVERVIEW

The Aeolian Islands sit at sea just off Sicily's northeastern coast, featuring a wealth of history entangled with local myths and legends. It's here you'll enter the calm Tyrrhenian Sea and discover the secrets of this seven-island archipelago, edged by black-sand beaches and dotted with steam-topped volcanoes.

Accessible by boat from the port of Milazzo, the seven Aeolian Islands are each distinct, yet similarly wild and boulder-strewn - some even have active volcanoes! This includes Stromboli (the northernmost island) and Vulcano (the southernmost island on which we are based). The islands are also spoilt with some of the best swim locations in the Mediterranean, wrapped in steep cliffs, deep caverns, black sand, and submarine volcanoes too! Pretty whitewashed traditional houses abound on these islands, constructed from local building materials, like stone, lava and pumice.

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## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for Swimmers who enjoy a combination of coastal swims and island-hopping and relish the opportunity to explore crystal clear waters and spectacular vistas and wildlife, both above and below the water.

Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of around 3 km prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 5km (split over a minimum of two swims).

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.

If conditions permit, there are two crossings including the 4½km swim from Lipari to Salina. These crossings can be challenging. You can sit out some of the swims or jump onto the support boats if you want to take a rest at any time.

## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### Vulcano

To the Romans, Vulcano was once home to the fire god Vulcan – today, it is still home to a smouldering volcano (Fossa di Vulcano) and several calderas. The most southerly of the Aeolian Islands, it is well known for its mud baths and hot springs, which are ideal for a spot of R&R after a day in the waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

### Lipari

The largest island of this archipelago, Lipari has a chilled and relaxing feel about it. Lipari Town is charming with narrow flower-strewn alleys, a fortified acropolis and in ancient times it was also home to numerous pumice stone quarries. The island is surrounded by great cliffs which plunge deep down



to the seabed below.

## Salina

Dominated by two extinct volcanoes, Salina was named after the little salted lake of Lingua, where residents used to collect the salt needed to preserve capers and fish. The northeast coast has pumice-stone caves and is the only Aeolian Island covered with vegetation, thanks to its many water sources. It was also the location for the film 'Il Postino'.

## TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Rojas Bahia Hotel <a href="http://www.hotelrojas.com">www.hotelrojas.com</a>
Start Time	19:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Rojas Bahia Hotel
Finish Time	11:00 on Day 7

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during your trip, however, actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilots will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

### Day 1

After your arrival, you will have a chance to relax before meeting in the evening at the hotel for a welcome drink and pre-trip safety briefing in which the week's plan will be discussed in more detail.

### Day 2

Today is an early start with an acclimatisation swim in the bay outside the hotel. Following breakfast, we head out to the uninhabited headland of Testa Grossa. We will also have a technique advice and video playback session with your swim guides, where you will have the opportunity to watch the playback providing valuable feedback on your stroke.

In the afternoon, we embark on a coastal swim into Cala del Formaggio before crossing into Baia di Ponente, passing dramatic rock formations along the way. It's an ideal first swim of the trip as you can see the sea floor throughout the entire coastal swim.

### Day 3

We travel by boat to the stunning northwest coast of Lipari. Starting at Scoglia dell'Innamorata, we undertake a swim along the beautiful coastline to Scoglia La Scarpa, passing imposing cliffs and numerous caves on the way. Once we arrive, we have lunch on the boat and also have a chance to relax and reminisce on the morning's activity. In the afternoon we swim from Punta delle Fontanelle to finish at the black sand beach of Punta di Levante. The boat ride back from Lipari to Vulcano is an excellent opportunity to spot either the bottlenose and/or striped species of dolphins.



## Day 4

Our first crossing of the week sees us swim from Vulcanello (separated from Vulcano by a narrow isthmus) to the rocky outcrops of Faraglioni, just off Lipari's south coast. Our sighting points during the crossing are the tall rock formations which rise from the water. Following lunch, we carry out a coastal swim along the southeast of the island, from Punta della Crepazza to the pretty harbour of Marina Corta, which is a fascinating place to briefly explore before we head back to our hotel on Vulcano, where the day comes to an end.

## Day 5

Today is an exciting one as we travel to Punta di Legno Nero, in the northernmost part of Lipari, to start our biggest crossing of the week in the deep blue shades of the Salina Channel. This swim finishes at Punta Lingua on the island of Salina. The old lighthouse is an ideal sighting point as we carry out the crossing. We arrive near the large salt lagoon, which is a point of sustenance for migrating birds enroute to and from the African mainland. Salina is the Aeolian Island's greenest isle, and home to two dormant volcanoes. The afternoon swim is a stunning coastal journey along Salina's lush eastern coast. There are numerous stopping off opportunities here, so after the morning's exertions you can swim as little or as much as you like.

## Day 6

For today's last full day of swimming, we journey to Rinella on Salina's rugged southwest coast, where we start our swim from the shallow waters of the small harbour northwest to Grotta di Racina. After a relaxing lunch we continue our swim along the coastline to the small hamlet of Pollara, which sits inside an extinct volcanic crater - half of which was washed into the sea long ago. Pollara is home to prehistoric caves as well as the Punta Perciato sea arch, which, if conditions allow, presents a unique swim-through.

## Day 7

We take a leisurely morning swim in the local bay before breakfast to conclude our journey around the Aeolian Islands.

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## TRIP GRADING

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.



## Swimming Distances

Swim	Distance	Swim	Distance
Testa Grossa-Baia di Ponente (Vulcano)	2½ km	Scoglio dell'Innamorata-Scoglio La Scarpa (Lipari)	3½ km
Fontanelle-Levante (Lipari)	2 km	Vulcano-Lipari crossing	2 km
Crapezza-Corta (Lipari)	3 km	Lipari-Salina crossing	4½km
Rinella-Grotta di Racina (Salina)	2km	Santa Marina-Lingua (Salina)	3km
Grotta di Racina-Pollara (Salina)	2km		

\*Please note that these swims are an example of what may take place during your trip and should be used as a guide only. Actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions.

## Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a great experience, and our SwimTrek trips offer some amazing marine life for you to swim amongst. However, you should be aware that certain marine life such as jellyfish and sea urchins are likely to be present during your swims. Whilst we work with our local boat pilot and team to reduce the chance of you encountering these creatures, we strongly advise that you bring protective swimwear such as a long-sleeved rash vest or wetsuit as some swims may require all swimmers to wear protection. Importantly, if you suffer from anaphylaxis, you must consult the office prior to booking.

## Walking Conditions

While walking is not a significant part of this trip, it does help us reach some of the swim sites. Any walks we undertake are on either waymarked paths or mixed ground, which can sometimes be challenging and tricky underfoot.

## Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
October	21-23°C / 70 -73°F	22-24°C / 72-75°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. Consequently, 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.



## TRIP INFORMATION

### Group Size

This trip has a maximum group size of 15 guests. The group will be split into a maximum of three 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 boat and two support 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

Explore the 500-metre-wide crater mouth 'Cratere della Fossa', enjoy the scenic views and spot the fumaroles, the only sign of volcanic activity. Take good walking shoes as the 390-metre climb, over volcanic sands, takes around an hour.

Mud Baths. On arrival in Vulcano you will notice the smell of sulphur emanating from the fumaroles. Close to the village the 'Pozza' are areas of bubbling warm mud pools. After your mud bath rinse clean in the 'Acque Calde', waters warmed by submarine fumaroles emitting high pressure steam.

### Essential Equipment Checklist

For your basic, essential packing list, please visit our [Packing List](#) page on the website. There are no **additional, location specific** items but like other Mediterranean locations, you may want to consider a rash vest or wetsuit.

SwimTrek will also provide water and electrolytes at every location and refill your bottles.

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## GETTING THERE

The nearest international airport to the Aeolian Islands is Catania. From Catania you'll then need to make a road transfer to one of two ports and a ferry crossing to Vulcano island where we are based. You can also fly to Palermo, although it is a longer transfer.

As SwimTrekkers 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.

### Catania Airport to Vulcano

From Catania airport you must travel by road to Milazzo port which takes about 2 hours. This transfer can be taken by train or bus (<http://www.giuntabus.com/>) but please note timetables do reduce after September, often to just one in the morning. Ensure you check transfer options for your trip. A good



website to use for transfers is [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com).

From Milazzo Port the Siremar line (<https://carontetourist.it/it/siremar>) offer Ferry crossings to Vulcano (the Hydrofoil by Liberty Lines only operates at certain times of the year)

Ferries arrive in Vulcano at Porto Levante from where it is a 5–10-minute walk to our accommodation.

For assistance in arranging your travel to Vulcano contact Hotel Rojas [info@hotelrojas.com](mailto:info@hotelrojas.com)

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## ACCOMMODATION

The simple Hotel Rojas has views across the sea and of the Fossa Volcano and is a short walk from the departure point for our daily swims. Rooms have a terrace or balcony with either a sea view or volcano view. The ensuite bedrooms are air-conditioned with satellite TV, safety box, small fridge, hairdryer and telephone. Rooms are offered on double or twin-share basis. There are a limited number of single occupancy spaces which can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability.

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

If you require additional nights' accommodation before or after the SwimTrek tour, this can be arranged directly through Hotel Rojas [info@hotelrojas.com](mailto:info@hotelrojas.com)

### Food and Drink

Six hotel breakfasts are served buffet style on the panoramic sea-view terrace. Then five lunches are included on this trip. This Dinner for the first night is normally a group meal arranged at a restaurant located next to the Hotel, is a great way for you to get to know your guides and fellow swimmers and avoids the need to book somewhere suitable on arrival. This is optional and paid for locally. Vegetarian and vegan options are available upon request. Please add special dietary requirements to your profile on booking.

Other dinners are not included, allowing you to experience the local restaurants of your choice over the course of your trip. The average cost of dinner in a local restaurant is €30-35. For more information, please visit our [food and drink](#) page on the website.

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## TRAVEL ADVICE

For more information on any of the following sections please visit the [Travel Advice](#) page of our website

### **Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping**

You should bring extra money with you to cover items such as entertainment, dinners, snacks, and souvenirs. The local currency in Italy is the Euro (€).

In some countries tipping, gratuities, is not part of the culture, whilst in others, it has become an expected norm. We believe that tipping is 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.

For more information, please visit our [Responsible Travel](#) page on the website.

### **Passports and Visas**

Non-residents of the EU require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Citizens of the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not currently require a visa to enter the EU. Please note that visa regulations are subject to change, and it is important 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, please visit our [Travel Insurance](#) page on the website.

### **Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations**

Here at SwimTrek we pride ourselves on our focus on safety and the well-being of all our guests. As we operate in some beautiful and remote locations medical facilities are not always easily accessible.



SwimTrek Guides, and many staff working for our local partners, are first aid trained. However, we ask that you read our [Travel Health](#) page to ensure that you are informed about general Travel and Swim Health precautions.

### **Internet Access, Electricity and Travel Plugs**

Due to our remote location, mobile signal around the islands can be limited. The hotel offers free Wi-Fi in all public rooms.

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