



TRIP OVERVIEW

The island of Hawaii (affectionately also known as the Big Island) is the 'Island of Discovery' and there is so much to unearth both along the coast and inland. The youngest and largest island in the Hawaiian archipelago, it is twice the size of all the others combined. The Big Island is less than a million years old and still growing - Kilauea, the world's most active volcano, spews lava down to the sea and this volcanic activity generates a unique landscape of black lava, scattered with lush arable pasture, desert, and moisture laden valleys.

We swim along the island's sunnier west coast, which is shielded from winds by Mauna Loa and offers ideal swimming conditions. Dotted with volcanic rock, the result of frequent volcanic activity over the years, the waters are clear and feature a never-ending aquarium of marine life to swim with. Sea turtles, manta rays, spinner dolphins and monk seals are just some of the species that we may well meet during our journey.

Our base is Kona, the laid-back seaside town, home to the Ironman Triathlon World Championships. It is ideally located in between our swim sites over the week and is a great spot from which to explore the rest of the island, should you wish to do so.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip offers a unique combination of exploration, observation, and swimming. Together, we dive into the big ocean of the North Pacific – an ideal training ground for swimmers who are keen to challenge themselves and explore craggy volcanic coastlines. We will also meet spectacular wildlife, both below and above the water, with fantastic visibility in the tropical waters.

Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of 2.5 km, prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 5 km (split over 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

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Kona

The lush and tropical coastline of Kona spans almost two-thirds of the entire west side of the island of Hawaii, from just south of Anaehoomalu Bay to Kau. Along this section are dotted coffee farms and historic Hawaiian landmarks. In fact, King Kamehameha spent his final years in Kona.

Kealakekua (Captain Cook) Bay

Kealakekua Bay is a piece of paradise, both on land and underwater. The bay holds one of the most abundant coral reefs on the island and is located on the lush and tropical Kona coast. The centre of the



bay is deep, and you can often find a pod of spinner dolphins that use the bay as resting grounds. The bay is where Captain James Cook was killed following an argument with the local inhabitants. We will swim directly up to the Captain Cook Monument, which is situated where he fell all those years ago.

Kahalu'u

The reef at Kahalu'u Bay is a living, breathing ecosystem and home to numerous creatures. The centrepiece of this habitat is the coral reef. As you swim, keep your eyes focused for sea turtles, octopus, sea urchins, eels, and dozens of fish species, including yellow tang, bullethead parrotfish, Hawaiian spotted boxfish, and more...

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Hotel Reception
Start Time	16:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Hotel Reception
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 conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

Day 1

We will meet outside on the pool deck of our hotel. There we will hold our welcome meeting and safety briefing, before hopping into the waters nearby for a refreshing acclimatisation swim in the sea. The swim begins right off Kailua Pier at the start-point of the swim leg of the Ironman World Championships. This is an excellent chance to familiarise yourself with the local conditions before we head back to the hotel and then out again for our first dinner of the trip.

Day 2

Today we start with a journey north along the coast. Leaving close from the hotel, we start exploring the Pawai Marine Reserve. After lunch, we continue North to another spectacular spot of Garden Eel Cove (Manta Ray Heaven). This swim presents a great opportunity to view the spectacular marine life. After a great day of swimming, we return to the hotel for the evening.

Day 3

Today, we are back on our escort boat as we travel north to a stunning reef which lies offshore of Mahai'ula Bay. The reef here is plentiful and full of character and home to countless species. We make our way from the reef towards Makakawena and after a well-deserved rest and spot of lunch, we continue to explore the coastline of Puu Alii Bay .



Day 4

Today, after a slightly earlier breakfast, we start our swim a little closer to home as we undertake the route of the Kona Ironman® swim course. With good visibility, you can see the bottom most of the way. Above the water you can identify the peak of Hualālai laid out in front of you. There are plenty of fish to keep you company and dolphins are also often spotted here. It's a great morning swim!

The afternoon is yours to do what you like with. You may choose to go to Puuhonua o Honaunau National Park, with its historic place of refuge, or maybe up to the start of the hike to Mauna Kea, with its amazing views of the Big Island. For the keen swimmers, there is the Kona Community Aquatic Centre with its 50m pool. In addition, our guides can work with you on your stroke development, should you so wish.

Day 5

Today we get collected at Kailua Pier, directly in front of our hotel, and then head south. Our swims today may well be selected on the day itself. That way we can take advantage of the best conditions, minimum swell and the most interesting wildlife that may be in the vicinity.

Day 6

On our final full day of swimming, we have another great day out on the boat. We travel down to the southern section of the Kona coast, which is sure to be one of the highlights of the week. The first swim is one of the most exposed swims of the week. It feels like we are well away from it all, as we start swimming from Keawekaheka Bay, which contains one of the Big Island's most beautiful reefs. From here we swim along the coast and feel the rolling ocean push us along our course. Lava-formed bays can offer natural stopping off points along the way. The swim culminates with an arrival into the awe-inspiring Kealakekua Bay and a monument on the spot where explorer Captain James Cook fell, in 1779. It's a unique way to arrive at such a significant monument!

After time to hydrate, relax and explore the area around the monument, we then hop back into the water for our crossing across Kealakekua Bay. The bay is surrounded by steep cliffs which makes access from land difficult, so the water is undoubtedly the best way to explore. During the crossing, it is possible to see the bottom most of the way across as the reef comes up close to the surface. Manta rays were spotted here during our recce and if you come across them on this swim it is sure to be a mesmerising experience.

We head back to the hotel to reflect on a fantastic day of swimming and enjoy a final group dinner.

Day 7

After the exertions of the week, it is time for a relaxing swim on the beach just by Kailua Pier, directly in front of our hotel, before the trip finishes later in the morning.



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
Pawaii Reserve	2½ km	Garden Eel Cove	2½ km
Makakawena	3½ km	Puii Alii Bay	2 km
Kona Ironman® Course Swim	3.8 km		
Southern Coastal	3 km	Southern Coastal	2 km
Keawekaheka – Captain Cook Monument	3 km	Crossing of Kealakekua Bay (Captain Cook Bay)	2 km

*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

Hawaii's isolation means that roughly 25 percent of its fish species are endemic, which means they are found in Hawaii and nowhere else in the world. Swimming here is a fantastic experience in warm, clear waters crowded with underwater flora and fauna. You need to be aware that certain marine life, such as jellyfish, sharks, sea urchins and coral could be present during the swims. In the areas that we swim, there is a long history of snorkelling and swimming, so sea life is used to human interaction. If you suffer from anaphylaxis, please consult the office prior to booking. Sea swell tends to be bigger than in a lot of places on the US mainland. This only adds to the challenge and fun of the trip, but if you're unfamiliar with these kinds of conditions, please consult with the office before 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, and moving as close to the middle of the boat as you can where the motion of the sea will be reduced.

Walking Conditions

The west coast of the Big Island benefits from the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail which runs in many places along the coast. While the focus of the trip is undoubtedly the swimming, there may be some opportunities to walk small sections of this historic trail, should you wish to do so.

Most walks take place on designated paths and tracks. Please note that comfortable shoes or sturdy



sandals are recommended for all walks and treks.

Temperatures

Month	Water Temperature*	Air Temperature*
April	23-25°C / 73-77°F	23-28°C / 74-82°F
May	24-26°C / 75-79°F	23-29°C / 74-84°F
September	25-27 °C / 77-81°F	24-30°C / 75-86°F
October	26-28°C / 79-82°F	23-28°C / 73-82°F
November	24-26°C / 75-79°F	22-27°C / 72-81°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.

TRIP INFORMATION

Group Size

This trip has a maximum group size of 14. 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 craft crewed by your SwimTrek guides but the allocation of watercraft will vary based on swim location. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

Extra Activities

Around Kailua Bay there are plenty of facilities and activities to keep you busy when not swimming. Take part in rejuvenating paddle board or sit-on-top kayak tours paddling around the bay. Try scuba diving too. Speak to our boat skipper about diving and snorkelling with the manta rays. Visit a Kona coffee farm or live the Hawaii Five-0 opening credits and paddle a traditional Hawaiian outrigger canoe.

Essential Equipment Checklist

For your basic, essential packing list, please visit our [Packing List](#) page on the website and please consider additional items you may wish to bring with you.



SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water and electrolyte drinks. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest, snorkel or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

GETTING THERE

The easiest way to get to the start of your trip is to fly into Kona International Airport (KOA). It is important to remember that the Big Island has two international airports, Kona is on the west coast and Hilo (ITO) on the east coast. For this trip, **Kona International Airport (KOA)**, also known as Keāhole, is the most convenient option for you. Of course, if you are looking to spend time in Hawaii before or after your SwimTrek, then flying into one airport and out of the other may well work.

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 so check out our [SwimTrek Flight Tips](#) page on the website.

Transfer from Kona International Airport to Kailua-Kona

Our accommodation, the Courtyard King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel, is located on the bay at Kailua-Kona. It is around 9 miles south of the airport. For more information on Ground Transport from the airport visit the [Kona Airport Website](#)

ACCOMMODATION

For the duration of our trip, we stay at Pacific 19, a boutique hotel in the heart of Kona. Just minutes away from the beach, the newly renovated hotel offers comfortable, stylish rooms with standard, pool and partial sea view rooms on offer. It is possible to request Explore rooms with a private balcony.

All rooms at Pacific 19 are ensuite with air conditioning, a mini fridge, WIFI, and a hair. Each room style can be confirmed with one king sized bed or two double beds, to meet your needs as a twin, double or single occupancy. All rooms and occupancy types are subject to availability.

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you wish to extend your stay at the Pacific 19 Hotel before or after the trip please contact the hotel directly via email to aloha@pacific19.com and let them know that you are part of the SwimTrek group

Food and Drink

All six breakfasts are included on the trip as well as simple lunches, excluding Day 4 when you have an afternoon off. Dinners are at your own expense.

For more information, please visit our [Food and Drink](#) page on the website.



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 such items as dinners, entertainment, souvenirs, and drinks. The local currency is US dollars (US\$).

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.

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

Passports and Visas

Non-residents of the United States require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. The majority of visitors to the US require a visa to enter the country. Many nationalities can apply online for the ESTA Visa Waiver Program by visiting www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/esta. For further information about US visas, please visit www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html. 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, 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

Wireless internet access is available in the lobby, public areas and guest rooms of our hotel. Many bars and restaurants around town also offer access but signals off-shore may be limited.

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit worldstandards.eu