



TRIP OVERVIEW

This is a truly unique swimming holiday experience which takes place in the spectacular 24-island archipelago of the Greek Sporades. Located in the Aegean Sea, the islands run along the east coast of Greece and are characterised by their dense vegetation and mountainous terrain.

The Sporades are best known for their uninhabited islets, beautiful beaches and turquoise-blue seas. The islands we explore form part of the 'National Marine Park of Alonissos Northern Sporades' which, at 2,260km², is the largest marine protected area in Europe. Throughout the course of the week, you will explore stunning coastlines and island-hop between some of the area's most beautiful and remote destinations. Lunch is taken in beachside tavernas, where we stop off during our days out to give you an opportunity to relax before our afternoon swims.

This Sporades archipelago, which really does live up to its translated meaning of 'scattered', is the perfect Greek Island experience. You will have plenty of opportunities to discover the area's stunning natural beauty and to also meet the fascinating local marine life, including possible sightings of the rare and protected Mediterranean Monk Seal.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

If you are both a swim fan and a nature lover, this is the ultimate experience for you - swimming in the protected waters of Europe's largest marine park in a remote part of the Aegean Sea. This trip is designed for the swimmer who enjoys both coastal swims and crossings.

Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of 3km 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.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Alonissos

Alonissos is the northernmost island of the Sporades group and the least inhabited of the major islands. Measuring 12 miles long, Alonissos is one of the crucial breeding grounds for the rare Mediterranean Monk Seal. It features a rugged coastline interspersed with idyllic beaches.



Skopelos

Mountains dominate the island with cliffs steeply entering the sea. This makes for strikingly clear water and fantastic swimming. The crossing to Skopelos is one of the highlights of the week. Legend has it Skopelos was founded by Staphylos, a son of the god Dionysus and Princess Ariadne of Crete.

National Marine Park of Alonissos Northern Sporades

At over 2,500 km² this National Marine Park is the largest marine protected area in Europe and was the first designated Marine Park in all of Greece. It includes the island of Alonissos which is our base for the week.

Mediterranean Monk Seal

The Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), which grows up to 2½ metres long and 300 kg in weight, has fewer than 700 remaining wild individuals and is one of the most endangered mammals in the world. Commercial hunting has driven this animal to the edge of extinction. The Alonissos Marine Park is at the forefront of world efforts to save this endangered species.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Hotel Levantes , Alonissos,
Start Time	18:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Hotel Levantes , Alonissos
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 pilot 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 on Alonissos, you will have a chance to relax before meeting in the evening for a welcome drink and pre-trip safety briefing in which the week's plan will be discussed in more detail.

Day 2

After breakfast, we head out for our acclimatisation swim, followed by our first coastal swim past Alonissos' southern point of Marpounta to Megalos Mourtia. The coastline along the way is craggy with lots of inlets and bays to explore. After lunch on the beach, we continue with our coastal swimming journey as we head to Cape Kókkino Lighthouse below the imposing peak of Mount Kalóvousos. Later, we have the chance to playback underwater video footage from the day and offer technique advice.



Day 3

Today we take our first crossing of the week as we travel to eastern Skopelos. We'll embark on the 4km crossing to Cape Kókkino on Alonissos via the two islands of Agios Georgios and the smaller Mikro. At Agios Georgios, there is a stunning tunnel to swim through if you wish. On Mikro, it's possible to see old ruins and olive trees on this island as you swim by - this stretch is also a common place to spot dolphins. The afternoon is spent at your leisure and gives you time to explore other parts of the island or travel further afield.

Day 4

Today, we travel to the small harbour of Steni Vala on Alonissos' east coast. Here we'll undertake our second crossing of the week as we swim to the uninhabited island of Peristera which offers protection to Alonissos' east coast. Here we enjoy a traditional Taverna lunch, sampling the local cuisine. After this we head off for our Peristera coastal 'shipwreck' swim to Vasiliko Bay - a swim that offers some of the most varied underwater scenery of the trip.

Day 5

We travel by boat a short journey north to start our swim at Kokkinokastro which features tall red rocks and where ancient ruins remain today. We swim between the island of Kokkinonisi and head towards Milia Beach, lined with densely crowded pines, where we'll stop for lunch. In the afternoon, we'll continue south to the secluded beach of Spartines.

Day 6

Today we head off to the islands known locally as the 'Two Brothers', Meghalo Adelphi and Mikro Adelphi. Our first swim is along the rocky coastline of Meghalo Adelphi, with its blue-green rocks complete with resident goats who are known to take an interest in swimmers as we glide past. After lunch, we complete the short crossing to Mikro Adelphi followed by a coastal swim along this pretty island.

Day 7

This morning we hold a farewell swim which gives us a chance to say goodbye to each other and the beautiful water of the Sporades. This is also an opportunity for the guides to give you any last-minute technique advice to take with you.

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
Patitiri - Megalos Mourtia	3km	Megalos Mourtia - Cape Kókkino	2km
Skopelos - Alonissos	4km		
Alonissos - Peristera	1½km	Peristera Coastal	3km
Kokkinokastro - Milia	2½km	Milia - Spartines	1½km
Meghalo Adelphi	2km	Mikro Adelphi	3km

Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience, however you should be aware that certain marine life such as sea lice, jellyfish, sea urchins and coral could 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.

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.

Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
June	21-24°C / 70-75°F	23-26°C / 73-79°F
July	24-27°C / 75-81°F	25-29 °C / 77-84°F
August	24-27°C / 75-81°F	25-29°C / 77-84°F
September	23-26°C / 73-79°F	24-27°C / 75-81°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 15. The group will be split into a maximum of three swim 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 safety vessel 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

Alonissos is perfect for hiking with all levels of grading and a good network of sign posted paths. There is car/scooter/quad or bicycle hire on the island. There are also excursions that take you to see the church of 'Mama Mia' in the nearby island of Skópelos and there is diving available in the National Marine Park.

Equipment Checklist

For your basic, essential packing list, please visit our [Packing List](#) page on the website. For this location there are no **additional, location specific** items required.

GETTING THERE

The only way to reach the island of Alonissos is by sea. The Hotel Levantes sits on a low rise overlooking the harbour and ferry Port of Patitiri. There are various options for travelling to Alonissos. There are ferry, catamaran and hydrofoil connections from Volos, Skiathos, Skópelos and Salonika

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 our [SwimTrek flight tips](#) page on the website.

Travelling via Skiathos

The closest airport to Alonissos is Skiathos, 1 hour 20 minutes by hydrofoil or 2 hours 40 minutes by ferry. Direct flights into Skiathos, operate from several European airports. It may be that you must fly via Athens where there is the option to catch a connecting flight to Skiathos and then follow the steps



below in 'Travel from Skiathos Airport to Alonissos Port (Patitiri).' An additional night's accommodation is often required during transit to match up your flight arrival time with a suitable ferry departure to the island.

Travel from Skiathos Airport to Alonissos Port (Patitiri)

From Skiathos airport you will need to make your way to Skiathos ferry port. This is approximately a 10-minute taxi journey. Ferries run from Skiathos to Alonissos regularly throughout the year and the journey takes approximately two hours. Tickets and a full ferry timetable, once released, can be booked directly with one of the 3 ferry operators www.sne.gr www.seajets.gr or www.bluestarferries.com. Please note that ferry departure and arrival times should be used as a guide only as they can vary through the season.

IMPORTANT: We highly recommended that you purchase your ferry tickets online in advance. It is worth mentioning that neither ferry operators nor third-party websites will issue an 'e-ticket' at the time of booking (i.e., you will not be able to print your ticket prior to travel). You will have the option to either have your ticket sent to you via courier (upon payment of a postage fee) or to pick up your ticket when you arrive in Greece. For any enquiries about ticket collections, please contact the ferry operator or booking agent directly.

ACCOMMODATION

The Hotel Levantes is a small family run hotel sitting on a low rise overlooking the harbour of Patitiri. The hotel is situated a short walk from the closest beach, restaurants, cafés and bars. The buffet breakfast is taken on the terrace with views of the harbour below. Ideally located and famous for their warm hospitality. Most rooms have a single double bed, a limited number of rooms available for single occupancy and twin share basis rooms 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 on Alonissos before or after the SwimTrek tour, this can be arranged directly through the Albedo Travel via e-mail info@alonissosholidays.com. If flying from the UK into Skiathos flights often arrive on Friday, so travelling this route an extra night's accommodation prior to the start of your trip may be necessary either in Skiathos or on Alonissos.

Food and Drink

All breakfasts and lunches are included in your trip price. The lunches are taken in beachside tavernas where you have a chance to sample the local cuisine in-between swims. Dinners are at your own expense. This gives you a fantastic opportunity to explore and experience the local cafes and 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.

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, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs, etc. The local currency for the islands is the Euro (€).

Please note, the Greek Ministry of Tourism has introduced an Overnight Stay Tax. This is payable upon arrival at the accommodation at a rate of €1.50 per room, per night.

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 own 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

Greece is part of the European Union. Non-residents of Greece require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Citizens of all E.U. member states, U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not require a visa to enter Greece.

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.

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.

Travel Plugs & Electricity

There is complimentary Wi-Fi internet access in the public areas. For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit www.worldstandards.eu/.