



TRIP OVERVIEW

Hellespont and Dardanelles: **THE WORLD'S OLDEST SWIM**. It's been said that you can't call yourself a true open water swimmer until you've completed this historic cross-continental swim from Europe to Asia in Turkey. From the challenge of the swim itself to the region's incredible history, this event is a must-do for open water swimmers from around the globe. We're thrilled to offer the chance to complete this epic race as part of a wider trip which will see us exploring around Troy as well as Istanbul.

This extended Hellespont Race trip begins in Istanbul, with time to explore Turkey's largest city before travelling to the historic region of Troy. There's also time to visit Çanakkale's significant war sites and ancient archaeological ruins, before taking on your swim challenge.

No other open water challenge in the world combines as much history, prestige, romance and bragging rights into a single swim as the legendary crossing of the Dardanelles strait, as one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world is closed for the annual 'Victory Day' race.

The Hellespont is celebrated in the ancient Greek myth as the strait that Leander swam across to reach his lover Hero. It was officially swum for the first time by the famous poet, Lord Byron, in 1810 and the crossing also holds a special place in SwimTrek's history as the swim which prompted our fearless founder, Simon Murie, to set up a pioneering open water swimming company, in 2003.

Entries for this iconic event are **strictly limited** and SwimTrek is the sole provider of all race places for non-Turkish residents. Be quick to secure your place on this unforgettable swimming event in 2023!

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for those who are looking combine a swim race with additional travel around Turkey. The trip allows guests to visit multiple cities and take in different types of tours, from war memorials to archaeological sites. The Hellespont and Dardanelles crossing is a significant open water swim of 4½ km between Europe and Asia. Conditions during the event may be challenging and swimmers should have a good understanding of open water swimming. They should be capable of swimming 4½ km in the open water and be comfortable swimming in choppy waters and currents prior to the start of the trip.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Istanbul

Istanbul is a city of contrasts with an enchanting blend of Eastern and Western culture giving this vibrant and modern city a truly unique identity. As Byzantium, Constantinople and finally, Istanbul, it has been the capital of three empires, each leaving their mark in the form of stunning palaces, castles, mosques, churches, and monuments. Set in a beautiful location surrounded by the waters of the narrow strait of the Bosphorus and the serene sea of Marmara, Istanbul is uniquely European and authentically Asian at



the same time.

Hellespont/Dardanelles/Strait of Çanakkale

This historic body of water is referred to as the Hellespont in Greek, historically in Turkish it was named the Dardanelles and in modern day Turkey it is known as the Strait of Çanakkale. It has been a natural barrier for invading armies for millenia, used by both King Xeres I of Persia in 480BC and Alexander the Great.

In ancient mythology, 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, swam every night, guided by the lamp which his mistress lit at the top of the tower, in order to spend the night with his beloved Hero. It was one stormy night when Hero's lamp burned out that Leander lost his way and drowned in the strait.

The poet Lord Byron, inspired by Leander's nightly conjugal powers, swam the Hellespont, along with Lieutenant Ekenhead, on their second attempt in 1810. They became the first known persons since Leander to achieve this feat.

Gallipoli

Bordering the Hellespont to the north, the Gallipoli Peninsula is a mix of pine forests and farmers' fields interspersed with monuments, cemeteries and battlefields commemorating the Gallipoli campaign, an attempt to remove the Ottoman Empire from the First World War. From the beaches where the allies first landed (Anzac Cove, V Beach), to the high ridges that they endeavoured to take (Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair), the hostility of the terrain makes you wonder why they ever tried at all.

Troy

With a lineage of over 4,000 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 near the modern city of Çanakkale and is a must visit in order to appreciate the importance of the strait and Troy's position on it.



TRIP SCHEDULE

DATE	ACTIVITY
Day 1: Mon 26th August	Meet at Gate 14, 16:00 Istanbul Hotel Check-In
	First Night in Istanbul
Day 2: Tues 27th August	Istanbul City Tour
	Second Night in Istanbul
Day 3: Weds 28th August	Transfer Istanbul to Gallipoli
	Gallipoli Tour
	Gallipoli to Çanakkale Hotel Check-In
Day 4: Thurs 29th August	09:45 - 12:00: Acclimatisation Swim & Welcome Briefing (Compulsory)
	12:00: Boat Tour & Safety Briefing (Compulsory)
	14:30: Race Registration (Compulsory)
Day 5: Fri 30th August	08:30 - 10:30: HELLESPONT RACE
	12:00 - 14:00: Awards Ceremony
	18:45: Post-Race Dinner
Day 6: Sat 31st August	Private Troy Tour Private Transfer from Çanakkale to Istanbul Last Night in Istanbul
Day 7: Sun 1st September	Istanbul Hotel Check Out Return transfer time 09:00

*Please note that the above itinerary is subject to change during the course of your trip.

Day 1

Hotel Check-In - Upon arrival in Istanbul, we will meet at the airport where you will join the group transfer to your comfortable hotel for a two-night stay. You can then spend the rest of the day exploring the city and experiencing the local Turkish culture.

Day 2

Today we enjoy a walking tour of the Old Town of Istanbul. Huge monuments and mega structures that were constructed many centuries ago still impress tourists today. While unrest and war has altered



many of the core sights over the centuries, Old Town Istanbul has remained an amazing melting pot of cultures and architecture that you can't find anywhere else.

Day 3

Today we check out of our hotel and transfer by road towards Çanakkale by road with breakfast on the way. We'll arrive in the small coastal town of Eceabat around midday and head directly to a small local restaurant for lunch. After lunch we depart for our fully guided Gallipoli tour. Highlights of the tour include Anzac Cove, Jonston's Jolly and Lone Pine Australian Cemetery.

We'll return to Eceabat in the late afternoon before taking the ferry across the Dardanelles Strait to Çanakkale . Upon arrival in Çanakkale , you can check in to your hotel and spend the rest of the day exploring the city and enjoy a late evening stroll along Çanakkale 's promenade.

Day 4

Acclimatisation Swim & Race Meeting (Compulsory) - On the morning of day 4, there will be a welcome briefing as well as an acclimatisation swim on a private beach, a short walk out of Çanakkale 's bustling centre. This is a great chance for you to get used to the swimming conditions.

Boat Tour & Race Briefing (Compulsory) - It is important that you join us on the boat tour & safety briefing as it your opportunity to travel the swim route, see the swim start point and hear suggested strategies for your crossing.

Race Registration (Compulsory) - At the race registration, you will be given your swim hats and timing chips in preparation for the next morning's swim. Please note that registration is compulsory in order to take part in the event.

Day 5

HELLESPONT RACE - For further information about the Hellespont and Dardanelles Swim Race, please see the below section about 'Race Information'.

Awards Ceremony - The official race awards ceremony will take place near the race finish sometime after the race finishes.

Post-Race Dinner - A post-race celebratory dinner will be held for all SwimTrek guests, including non-swimmers. This is a fantastic opportunity to kick back and relax after completing an epic open water swim and to chat with your fellow swimmers about your Hellespont experience.

Day 6

This morning we start the day with a tour of the ancient city of Troy. This tour offers up the chance to see incredible mythological and archaeological sites, where legend and history blend into one. Highlights of the tour include visiting the centuries-old city walls and the Temple of Athena. From Troy we cross back over the Dardanelles strait one last time and drive up the coast of the Gallipoli Peninsula to Istanbul for our final night.

Day 7



After breakfast, we'll say our final goodbyes before checking out of our hotel and joining the group transfer to the Airport.

TRIP GRADING

Swimming Conditions

The Hellespont is a major strait dividing Europe and Asia. As a natural body of open water, it is affected by local weather conditions, which can vary considerably from one day to the next. In order to complete the swim in the most favourable conditions, there are two different options for when the race may take place. The preferred option is to conduct the race on **30 August at 08:30**, however, in the unlikely event that conditions are so unfavourable that the race time is changed, it will be run on **31 August at 08:30**. Please keep this in mind when booking your return travel from Turkey.

On **28 August**, the event committee will meet will make a decision about when the race will take place. If neither of the above options are suitable, an alternative coastal swim will be organised, and you will be offered a reduced entry for the Hellespont event the following year. 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.

Race Distance

The total distance of the Hellespont swim is approximately 4½km, however, the swim is current-assisted, which makes it equivalent to swimming approximately 3-3½ km.

Race Time Limit

There is a time limit of two hours to complete the race. For safety reasons, any swimmers who do not complete the race before this time will be removed from the water and escorted back to land by the Turkish Coast Guard.

Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
August	23-25°C / 73-77°F	29-32°C / 84-90°F

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

Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, the event organisers rely on decent weather conditions in order to carry out the swim. In the event of bad weather and the swim being cancelled, there are no reserve/alternative times or days available after August 31st.



TRIP INFORMATION

Race Organisers

The race organisers of the swim and are fully responsible for race safety, logistics and contingency planning.

Group Size and Boat Support

The Hellespont and Dardanelles crossing is a mass start event. Boat support on this trip includes a flotilla of small boats arranged by the event organiser, some of which SwimTrek guides will be aboard. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

Supporters Package

There are a limited number of supporters packages available which include shared accommodation with a race participant, as well as entry into all non-swimming events. We cannot guarantee that supporters will be able to travel to the start of the race on the European side, however, in previous years this has usually been possible. In general, it is more advisable for spectators to stay on the Asian side and view the race from the finish line.

Extra Activities

Additional tours, such as trips to Troy and Gallipoli, can be organised through our partners in Çanakkale, Wilusa Travel, at an additional cost. For bookings or further information about these tours, as well as booking additional nights' accommodation before or after your SwimTrek trip, please contact our local partners on info@swiminturkey.com

Race Equipment

Swimmers are allowed to wear wetsuits during the crossing, however, please note that using a wetsuit will mean that you are ineligible for any of the race awards. Participants are **not** permitted to wear smart watches or smart bands during the race. Compulsory swim hats will be given out on the day of the race by the event organisers. You should also bring a swim costume, goggles and a towel.

Equipment Checklist

In addition to your daily non-swimming clothes, we also recommend that you bring the following items:

✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costumes (x2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles* (x2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunhat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack

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



GETTING THERE

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 Flight Tips](#) page on the website to help you get the best deals for your flights

Istanbul airport is the closest airport.

Shared Transfer from Istanbul Airport to Istanbul Hotel | 26th August

A shared transfer service from Istanbul Airport to our accommodation in Istanbul is offered for all SwimTrek guests on Day 1 of your trip. Please meet at gate 14 in the airport terminal.

To book your place on this shared transfer at the beginning of your trip, please contact our local partners on info@swiminturkey.com

Shared Return Transfer from Istanbul Hotel to Istanbul Airport | 1st September

A shared return transfer from your Istanbul Hotel to Istanbul Airport is offered for all SwimTrek guests on Day 7 of your trip. The time will be dependent on your return flight so to book onto this, please contact our partners on info@swiminturkey.com

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

Your SwimTrek booking includes six nights' accommodation from 26th August - 1st September at the following hotels:

HOTEL NAME	STAR RATING	LOCATION
Armada	4 - Star	Istanbul City Centre
Aspen	4 - Star	Çanakkale City Centre

There are a limited number of single supplement 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 before or after your SwimTrek trip, this can be arranged via our partners [Wilusa Travel](#).

There are many activities and tours to enjoy in Istanbul which can be booked locally if extending your trip before and after the tour.

Food and Drink

All breakfasts are included as part of your trip price, as well as lunch on Day 3 and the post-race celebration dinner. All other meals are at your own expense, which gives you a fantastic opportunity to explore and experience the local cafes and restaurants of your choice over the course of your trip.



Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as entertainment, meals and any additional tours that you book during your time in Turkey. The local currency is the Turkish Lira (TRY) and ATMs are plentiful in both Istanbul and Çanakkale .

Passports and Visas

Turkey is not part of the European Union. Non-residents of Turkey require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay.

Please note: UK and EU Citizens **do not require a visa** to enter Turkey and stay for a period of up to 90 days. Citizens of other countries including the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand require a visa to enter Turkey. Most foreign nationals entering Turkey must purchase a visa before entering the country. It is important that you purchase your visa through the official website, www.evisa.gov.tr and avoid purchasing through third-party providers, as these can be considerably more expensive.

Please note that visa regulations are subject to change and we advise that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel. For a full list of visa requirements, please visit www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa.

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

Pre-Race Medical (Compulsory) The race organisers require a signed medical form from a doctor/medical practitioner prior to the race. This form will be forwarded to all participants after they have completed their booking. It is also available via this link www.swimtrek.com/Hellespont-medical-form

For comprehensive health information for people travelling to Turkey, including all recommended and required vaccinations, please visit 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.

Travel Plugs & Electricity

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit <https://www.worldstandards.eu/>.