



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Take part in a truly unforgettable expedition through some of the most stunning scenery in the British Isles, exploring Scotland's world-famous Inner Hebrides. Laying anchor around the Isles of Skye, Rum, Eigg and Muck, on board our 102-foot-tall ship, called the 'Lady of Avenel', this swimming adventure offers a unique opportunity to explore dramatic Scottish landscapes and uncover those far-flung spots that swimmers' dreams are made of.

From craggy mountaintops to spectacular volcanic features, this tour finds some of the most beautiful parts of this collection of islands, including the spectacular Cuillin Hills. Our trip sees us roaming the lochs, sounds, islands, coves and skerries of the Inner Hebrides, while also providing an opportunity to experience an abundance of local wildlife.

This trip also allows us to get to know the islands of the Inner Hebrides intimately, swimming in stunning waters and taking on wild coastal swims. We'll journey to the islands on a more sustainable form of transport, eating freshly cooked meals in our downtime from our own onboard chef. From sunsets on the ship's deck, to trying your hand at crewing the Lady of Avenel herself, this truly is an epic expedition and an exciting opportunity for adventure swimming and sailing alike.

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## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is made up largely of coastal, freshwater loch swimming, along with some crossings, including the crossing from Canna to Rum. Conditions will be challenging, yet extremely rewarding.

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.

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## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### The Isle of Skye

Our swimming and sailing adventure will follow Skye's rocky southern shore with diversions to some of the best swimming locations in the Inner Hebrides. Skye is Scotland's second largest island and is a patchwork of jagged mountains, towering sea cliffs, abundant wildlife and lochs covered by sun glitter.

### The Isle of Rum

Owned by Scottish Natural Heritage, Rum is undoubtedly one of Scotland's finest National Nature



Reserves. It is of international importance for its flora and fauna and sightings of seals, deer, otters and eagles can be expected. The coastline itself is craggy and is fascinating to swim along.

## The Isle of Eigg

The Isle of Eigg is dominated by the 393-metre peak of An Sgurr, a dramatic pitchstone ridge and the largest of its kind in Europe. It is clearly visible and recognisable from the mainland. The locals pride themselves on being among the most eco-friendly places in Britain as the island runs almost entirely on renewable energy.

## TRIP SCHEDULE

<b>Start Point</b>	The Lady of Avenel, Mallaig Fishing Harbour, Mallaig
<b>Start Time</b>	17:00 on Day 1
<b>Finish Point</b>	The Lady of Avenel, Mallaig Fishing Harbour, Mallaig
<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 for the week, awaits you at Mallaig Fishing Harbour in Mallaig. We enjoy onboard welcome drinks and are given a tour of our classic rigger, followed by a safety briefing and a discussion of the plans for the week. We then set sail to Loch Nevis and the small hamlet of Knoydart - one of the most remote communities in the British Isles as it's only accessible by boat.

For the acclimatisation swim, we swim to 'The Old Forge' pub which overlooks the loch. This sheltered loch offers ideal conditions for our first swim. Back on the ship, we enjoy a welcome dinner prepared by our very own onboard chef.

## Day 2

Take in the sights of the Scottish coast this morning as we sail on to Tarbert on Loch Nevis.

We travel a short distance in our tall ship to the hamlet of Tarbet, which separates the sea loch of Nevis from the freshwater loch of Morar. On arrival we carry out a short hike across the isthmus that separates



the lochs. The view along Loch Morara is stunning. In fact, Loch Morar is the deepest freshwater body of water anywhere in the UK with a maximum depth of 310m. We carry out a coastal swim to the small community of Swordland before returning to Tarbert and our ship for lunch.

After lunch, the ship crosses Loch Hourn and arrives off the southeastern coast of Skye at Ardasar. For our afternoon swim, we head down the coast towards Aird of Sleat. The coastline is a mix of sandy white beaches and craggy shorelines, featuring underwater kelp forest gardens.

### Day 3

Today we head up Skye's west coast. Our first stop is at Spar Cave - an astonishing, cathedral-like structure that is roughly 50 metres long, with a marble-esque flowstone staircase and huge columns formed from centuries of water dripping through limestone base layers. . From here, we swim to Prince Charlie's Cave, where - after the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Culloden - the prince hid in this cave to evade enemy forces.. The swim is dotted with islets, skerries, rocks and beaches.

After lunch, the boat travels onto Loch na Cuilce which is at the gateway to Loch Coruisk, situated in the heart of the Cuillin Hills. The notorious hanging slab "Bad Step" juts over the sea and offers a spectacular view. The islets in Loch na Cuilce are inhabited by a large population of seals which makes for some great swims here. Following the last swim (time permitting), there may be the opportunity to walk around Loch Coruisk before we spend the night in the bay, where we have spectacular views of the Cuillins.

### Day 4

This morning we swim across from Skye to the small Isle of Soay. On arrival, we walk up to the highest point, which offers striking views of the morning and afternoon swims. In the past this island has been well known for its basking shark populations, so there may be opportunities to witness them while we are here.

After a sumptuous lunch on board our square rigger, we raise the sails and make our way to Loch Briddle for a restful afternoon out of the water in preparation for tomorrow's big crossing. The loch is where the world-renowned trials cyclist Danny MacAskill filmed his spectacular film "The Ridge", which is well worth watching prior to the trip. The sweeping slopes of the surrounding mountains plunge into the loch, offering startling views as we stretch our legs off the ship for the afternoon.

Once back on board, we head across to the Small Isles and our first stop, the Isle of Canna, where we stay offshore for the evening.

### Day 5

Our morning swim today takes us on our longest crossing of the trip as we swim from the Isle of Canna to the Isle of Rum. Orval Peak, situated on Rum, guides our way and kelp forests are visible well before we reach the Rum shore. Once we are dry, and have had some lunch, we have a chance to walk on Rum



and discover some of the world-famous wildlife.

After the exertions of the morning's crossing, there is an opportunity to explore the islands of Rum and Eigg by foot in the afternoon. In the evening, we will aim to moor at Eigg Pier where we will have the opportunity to explore this unique island. Eigg also has its own brewery, so the evening may be spent at the Galmisdale Bay Bar.

### Day 6

Today is our last full day of swimming and we aim to swim sections of the coastlines of both Eigg and Muck. On Muck, we attempt a circumnavigation of Horse Island which lies off Muck's northern coast. The landscape here is especially stark, while underwater you'll spot kelp forests with the odd inquisitive seal. On Eigg, we can walk to Massacre Cave - the scene of a clan massacre of nearly the entire island's population in the 16th Century.

Sitting on deck for our sail back to Mallaig is an excellent finale to our tour of the Scottish Inner Hebrides. Mallaig is where we spend our last evening on board the Lady of Avenel before our departure tomorrow.

### Day 7

Before breakfast, there is an opportunity for a final early morning swim of the week. There is time for packing and farewells before we disembark the Lady and depart.

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## 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.

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## GETTING THERE

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 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.

### Public Transport from Glasgow to Mallaig

From Glasgow, you can either catch a train or a bus directly from the airport to Mallaig. Catching the train is a convenient and scenic way to get to Mallaig and journey times from Glasgow are approximately 5-6 hours. For timetables and tickets, you might like to use <http://www.thetrainline.com> or <http://www.scotrail.co.uk>.

If you prefer to travel by bus, there are services which run to Mallaig from Glasgow and various other UK cities, however, journey times can be very long. For timetables, tickets and further information about bus services to Mallaig, you might like to use [www.citylink.co.uk](http://www.citylink.co.uk).

### Driving to Mallaig

If you choose to drive to Mallaig, the postcode for the fishing harbour is PH41 4QD. For further information about getting to the harbour, visit the Travel to Mallaig section of the Mallaig Harbour Authority website [mallaig-harbour.com](http://mallaig-harbour.com)

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## 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 Avenal.

### **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/).