



TRIP OVERVIEW

The province of Palawan, in the western Philippines, features over a thousand islands and seascapes to rival any other region of Southeast Asia. At its centre is the Bacuit Archipelago, which features around 45 jagged limestone outcrops surrounded by clear aquamarine waters and idyllic reefs. The islands themselves plunge abruptly into the sea - explore sea cliffs, lagoons, sinkholes and multiple swim throughs. Here you'll find some of the best swimming opportunities in Asia, with waters that are home to a variety of friendly wildlife, including dugongs, long nosed dolphins, manta rays, sea turtles and hundreds of different types of colourful fish.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for swimmers who want to combine spectacular swimming among karst islands with an awe-inspiring, brightly coloured backdrop in a largely untouched environment. Swims include a mix of stunning reef and coastal swims. This trip is also very well suited to non-swimming partners. Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of around 2.5km 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

Miniloc Island

Centrally located within the Bacuit Archipelago, Miniloc is one of the most captivating bodies of land in this island chain - a great base for our SwimTrek trip. Miniloc Island Resort is set within a secluded bay and even has its own in-house reef. Jackfish (they can grow up to 1.5 metres long) swim up close to the resort. The island is a gateway to discovering some of the best local natural sites to be found. It features three of the most stunning lagoons in the area, which can be accessed by swimming directly from the resort.

Matinloc and Tapiutan Islands

Like a submerged crocodile, the islands snake some 8kms along the western fringes of the Bacuit Archipelago. The sheltered strait between the two islands is bordered by coral reefs and interspersed with secluded white sand coves.

Entalula Island

This uninhabited island offers up your classic idea of a remote island escape. Rising majestically over the emerald landscape, the twin peaks of Entalula are identifiable from miles away. The beach on the southern side of the island is an ideal starting point for our circumnavigation. Its north coast features



steep limestone cliffs interspersed with mesmerising beaches.

Palawan Island

A mix of jungles and mountains descending to the sea, Palawan has a bit of everything for the adventurous swimmer. It is home to nature reserves on both land and in the water, with gardens of giant clams nested on white sand beaches, over 600 species of butterflies and thick palm forests.

Lagen Island

Another beautiful island resort. Home to a jungle hiking trail that travels over a ridge, down to a sheltered and secluded cove of white sand and pristine coral reef and fishes.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	El Nido Airport, Palawan, Philippines
Start Time	14:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	El Nido Airport, Palawan, Philippines
Finish Time	11:30 on Day 7

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during the course of 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

On arrival into El Nido Airport you will be met and transferred to Miniloc Island, our home for the week. Once checked in to your room at the resort, we'll hold our welcome meeting and safety briefing before we hop into the stunning waters that characterise the Bacuit Archipelago for a refreshing acclimatisation swim over the resort reef. This is an excellent chance to familiarise yourself with the local conditions before we head back for our first dinner of the trip.

Day 2

Today is a great opportunity for a pre-breakfast swim as we head directly from the resort and into the Big Lagoon. It is the ideal time to visit, as we will have the lagoon all to ourselves. Following a relaxed breakfast, we head to Shimizu Island and swim along its northern shore which features caves and overhangs. From here we carry out a small crossing to neighbouring Inatula Island and carry on to the southern tip.

After lunch we head to Miniloc's north-west shore which features a pristine reef just below the surface. Swimming over it is a real highlight.



Day 3

After breakfast, we head east as we swim to the Secret Lagoon via the isthmus at Payong-Payong. The Lagoon is totally hidden from the sea, except a small opening which you need to swim and clamber through. Once we have finished the swim and enjoyed some snacks and drinks on our arrival beach, we head to Entalula Island, where we will snorkel with our marine guides, who will point out the flora and fauna that you have previously been swimming over in detail.

In the afternoon, after lunch back at the resort, we travel North to Matinloc and Tapiutan, which form the Tapiutan Strait and whose walls house some of the best reefs in the archipelago. As well as carrying out a crossing between these two islands, we'll also undertake a coastal swim alongside each of them. Exquisite beaches can be found here, along with something rather special - the rocky shore in the western wall has cracks that can be swum through to discover secret beaches. Add in the stunning white sand beaches, pristine coral reefs, and the abandoned Matinloc Shrine, and it all makes for a very special day of swimming.

Day 4

This morning we head to the isolated islands of Cadlao and Cavayan. These islands are characterised by high peaks and small bays, which make ideal stop off points during our swims. We'll swim along the quieter coasts of the islands for these swims, as they offer stunning views of the remainder of the archipelago. Take the time here to look out for seahorses, ghost pipefish, frogfish and cuttlefish. If we're lucky we might also spot whale sharks, manta rays and even Bryde's whales which are known to roam sporadically in these waters. After lunch on Entula Beach, the afternoon is yours to explore or relax before dinner.

Day 5

After a hearty breakfast, today we travel to the north peninsular of Pagauanan and swim to Snake Island. After a relaxing lunch at Lagen Resort, we take a jungle hike across to a nearby reef where we can enjoy a fascinating snorkel along the reef fringe. For those who prefer not to hike, there is an opportunity to take the boat.

For the afternoon swim we make our way along Entalula. Here we'll swim under overhangs, work our way in and out of coastal caves and see the island's brightly coloured coral before finishing for the day and returning back to the hotel.

Day 6

Today we carry out a full circumnavigation of Helicopter Island (Dilumacad Island) which is rich in vegetation and boasts a dense rainforest. Its imposing bare cliffs face rise sharply out of the deep blue sea and provide a fantastic backdrop to our swim. The morning's efforts are followed by lunch at the hotel before a final coastal to the small lagoon along from Miniloc Resort.

As we head back to our accommodation, we have a last chance to take in the outstanding scenery that surrounds us. It's a wonderful way to finish off a fantastic week of swimming around this beautiful part



of the world.

Day 7

On our final morning, there is a chance for an early morning swim along the Miniloc Resort reef and coastline before breakfast. We then transfer you back by boat back to either the Palawan mainland or to El Nido Airport where you can continue your journey within the Philippines or make connections to your international flights home.



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
Big Lagoon	1km	Shimizu-Inatula	2½km
Miniloc Island Coastal	1½km		
Secret Lagoon	2½km	Tapiutan-Matinloc	2½km
Cadlao Coastal	3km		
Pagauanan Peninsula	2½km	Lagen Cove	1km
Entalula	1½km		
Helicopter Island	2½km	Miniloc Resort	2½km

Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the open water is a fantastic experience, however you should be aware that certain marine life such as jellyfish, plankton, sea lice, sea urchins and coral could be present during the swims and may cause some discomfort. In all cases we will work on reducing your contact with these creatures and that any interactions are managed safely. If you suffer from anaphylaxis, please consult the office prior to booking.

Walking Distances

Whilst there aren't many walks on this trip, there is an optional Jungle Hike which takes between 20 and 35 minutes depending on the speed of your group.

Walking Conditions

The hike is a rocky route over a low ridge at the back of the resort then down the trail to a Cove where we meet the boat then snorkel over the reef. There is a rope guide rail most of the way. We suggest shoes or sandals rather than flip flops for the hike. The hike is optional, guests will be able to travel to the snorkel spot via boat.

Temperatures

Month	Water Temperature*	Air Temperature*
March	26-29°C / 79-84°F	28-30°C / 82-86°F
October	28-30°C / 82-86°F	28-30°C / 82-86°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. As a consequence, 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 groups, based on speed, with each group being accompanied by their own safety escort.

Boat Support

Boat support on this trip includes one outrigger vessel (Banca) a speedboat and two kayaks crewed by local pilots and your SwimTrek guides. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

Extra Activities

Throughout the course of your trip, you as a swimmer will also have the opportunity to take part in a number of extra activities before or after our organised daily swims - some at extra charge. These activities include a menu of treatments in the spa (including Asian, European and international face and body treatments in the Massage Hut), beach & water sports (these include: stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking), island hopping & inland walks, snorkelling and scuba diving. Participation in these activities is optional and does not need to be booked in advance. This trip is also ideal for **non-swimming** partners, who will be able to enjoy these activities during the day while our swimmers are out exploring the beauty of the Bacuit archipelago.

It is possible to take part in an introductory or a standard dive at the following approximate rates:

- From 5,800 PHP per person for an introductory Discover Scuba Dive, including equipment
- 3,000 - 4,100PHP per dive (depending on dive site), excluding equipment
- From 2,500PHP per night dive, excluding equipment
- 1,320PHP full equipment hire per dive

If you intend to participate in scuba diving (other than the Discover Scuba Dive), you must be a qualified diver in possession of a dive certification card and log book.



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 table below.

✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes / Trainers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream and SPF lip balm (Factor 50 or higher or zinc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes / Sandals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insect Repellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lycra Suit or Rash Suit		

Towels are provided at the hotel so packing one isn't essential.

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

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

Flights into the Philippines are widely available from most international destinations. Due to its remote location, upon arrival in the Philippines, a domestic flight is required to reach Palawan.

As our recommended option, the fastest and most direct way to reach the start of your trip is to fly into Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL), commonly known as 'NAIA' or Manila airport, before catching an onward flight to El Nido Airport (ENI). You will be met at El Nido Airport on Day 1, in time for a road and boat transfer to our accommodation on Miniloc Island.

Alternative international routes include flights into Cebu (CEB). Domestically you can fly into Puerto Princesa airport (PPS) on Palawan Island. Then make your own way to the El Nido Resorts Jetty Lounge where you can join the boat transfer which is included in your trip price.

Flights to El Nido Airport, Palawan

Airline 'AirSWIFT' offers daily flights from Manila (Domestic Terminal 4) to El Nido, Palawan. Travel time is approximately 1 hour 25 minutes. Light aircraft have strict luggage allowances so you should ensure you are familiar with these and stay within these limits.

In order to arrive for the SwimTrek welcome meeting, please choose a flight that will arrive by 14:00. Please visit www.air-swift.com for further information on direct flights from a number of airports in The Philippines (including the main international airports - Manila and Cebu) into El Nido. To book,



please contact AirSWIFT directly via info@air-swift.com.

On arrival in El Nido, at Lio Airport Terminal, you will be brought to our care lounge to undergo health and sanitation procedures. Once done, our front office associate will hand over your key cards before you proceed to the jetty port for your land/boat transfer to the island.

Transfer from El Nido Airport to Miniloc Island

On Day 1, there are scheduled transfers departing, to coincide with each flight. A scheduled transfer is included in the price of your trip. If your flight arrives after 14:00, it will mean that you miss the welcome meeting in resort and you may also have to arrange a private transfer at your own expense directly with El Nido Resorts via psanchez@elnidoresorts.com.

Upon arrival at El Nido Airport, you will be welcomed by the resort's airport representative, who will guide you to the terminal exit. It is a 10-15 minute drive to the El Nido Resorts Jetty Lounge, where we catch a boat across to Miniloc Island which will be a 30-45 minute boat ride, depending on tide and weather conditions. The total journey time from El Nido Airport to our resort is approximately one hour.

If you are arriving before Day 1 or are arriving by any other means than an AirSWIFT Flight, please contact Pio at El Nido Resorts via psanchez@elnidoresorts.com. You must provide SwimTrek with your El Nido Airport flight arrival and departure times, or your expected time of arrival at the jetty, no later than 14 days prior to your trip.

Return SwimTrek Transfer to El Nido Airport

At the end of your trip, you will be transferred back to El Nido Airport, where your trip ends. Please note that this transfer is **included** in the cost of your trip. There are some return transfers scheduled in the morning, however, we suggest that you do not arrange to depart Miniloc Island Resort before 10am. The return airport transfer takes around 1 hour, so your flight should depart no earlier than 11:30.

Please note, if you plan on departing Miniloc Island earlier than 6am, there may not be a scheduled transfer and you may have to arrange a private transfer at your own expense directly with El Nido Resorts via psanchez@elnidoresorts.com.



Travel Via Puerto Princesa International Airport, Palawan

As an alternative to flying via Manila, it is possible to fly direct into Puerto Princesa International Airport on mainland Palawan, from a handful of international and a wide range of domestic destinations. Please note, SwimTrek will **not** be operating a transfer from Puerto Princesa to Miniloc Island. There are various land and boat travel options from Puerto Princesa to El Nido, however this involves a considerably longer journey (approx. 6 hours).

For those who are not taking AirSWIFT flights, you can still take advantage of the boat transfer to our resort. This boat departs the El Nido Resorts Jetty Lounge. You should plan to arrive one hour prior to the scheduled boat departure. You must provide SwimTrek with your expected time of arrival at the jetty no later than 14 days prior to your trip.

ACCOMMODATION

Miniloc Island Resort in El Nido, northern Palawan, is the perfect destination for the adventurous swimmer. The resort is tucked in a beautiful cove with a stunning backdrop of sheer limestone cliffs. Reminiscent of a coastal village, Miniloc Island Resort's quaint charm is complemented by calm and shallow turquoise waters, teeming with vibrant marine life. From your doorstep, guests can swim alongside giant trevallies and hundreds of sergeant majors, damselfish, fusiliers, and other multi-coloured tropical fish. Between swims, there are non-motorised water sports equipment available for use, at no extra charge, including paddle boards, windsurf boards, kayaks, snorkelling equipment as well as escorted tours by kayak and for snorkelling.

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you would like to book additional nights accommodation at the start or end of your trip at either Miniloc Island Resort or any of the other El Nido Island Resorts, please contact El Nido Resorts directly psanchez@elnidoresorts.com. *A return transfer from El Nido to Miniloc Island will still be included, if you choose to book onto one of the resorts scheduled transfers.*

Food and Drink

All breakfasts, lunches and evening meals are included for the duration of your stay at Miniloc Island Resort from Day 1 until breakfast prior to departure on Day 7. Brewed coffee and tea are included at the Clubhouse Restaurant and fruit juices are included at breakfast.

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 drinks, entertainment & souvenirs, etc. The local currency in the Philippines is the Philippine Peso (PHP). While USD are widely accepted, the conversion rate when in the Philippines is not as favourable as using local currency, so you may prefer to exchange some PHP before you travel. Debit and credit cards are not widely accepted in the Philippines and it is suggested that you carry enough cash with you for your daily expenses.

All visitors to El Nido are required to pay an environmental fee of 200PHP per adult for the duration of stay. This fee is collected by the Municipality of El Nido for various conservation projects and is paid at the resorts upon check-out.

All visitors to the big and/or small lagoons are required to pay a fee of 200PHP per person, per lagoon visit for the Protected Area Office (PAO) of El Nido-Taytay. The funds collected will be utilized solely for the conservation and management activities of the islands in Bacuit Bay & the protected areas involved, and is paid at the resorts upon check-out. The total may vary depending on your week's completed swims.

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. In some countries, tipping (gratuities) is not part of the culture - in others it has become an expected norm. 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. El Nido Resorts do not allow personal tipping as they have a centralised tip deposit box at the front desk. They would encourage any generous guests to make use of this centralised box instead.

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 Philippines require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Visitors can enter the Philippines without a visa for an initial period of **30 days**. If you are intending to stay longer, it is possible to obtain a tourist visa



from the Philippine Embassy before you travel, which will allow an initial 59 day stay. Please note that visa regulations are subject to change and we advise that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

Our Partners in the Philippines have made us aware that you are no longer required to obtain an S Pass or Travel pass through permit (TPP) to travel to El Nido/ Palawan.

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.

Travel Plugs & Electricity

Miniloc is not entirely but close to 'off the grid'. Public spaces have free Wi-Fi but do not expect that you will be able to stream your favourite sitcom, wait until you get home!

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