



TRIP OVERVIEW

Join a unique swimming and yoga holiday on the idyllic Greek island of Crete and discover the stunning coastal waters of one of Europe's southernmost destinations. From dramatic limestone cliffs - like the famous 'White Mountains' - to isolated coves, bays and beaches, this island is full of surprises, serving up plenty of spectacular swim spots to seek out and enjoy as well.

Our base for the week is the remote coastal town of Chora Sfakion - right at the heart of the remote and mountainous region of Sfakiá! While our relaxed accommodation is the perfect base from which to enjoy this region's tranquillity.

With a range of coastal swims, stunning natural scenery and a rich history which dates to the Minoan civilisation that once occupied the island (traced to 3,650 BC) , this trip is a wonderful opportunity to discover a truly fascinating part of the world.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for swimmers who enjoy yoga, or who want to explore the benefits of yoga and how it naturally complements and enhances our swimming. We swim twice per day along the idyllic coast. Swims are shorter than an average Swimtrek Trip. So, if you prefer to cover more kilometres per day then you may like to explore the alternative option of our: [Crete Discovery Trip](#)

Swimmers do not require open water experience but should be capable of completing the average swim distance of 1½ km prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 3km (split over a minimum of two swims). No prior experience of yoga is required.

We have given this trip a 'Leisurely' grading designed for people who want to swim at a more relaxed pace and enjoy the scenery.

WHY YOGA AND SWIMMING?

Yoga and swimming are a perfect combination. For swimmers, yoga offers both physical and mental benefits. Yoga increases awareness to breathing, develops strength and increases mobility, especially if you can work yoga into your daily routine. Through meditation, relaxation and stretching, yoga has incredible restorative qualities, relaxing the nervous system and muscular tension. It can help you centre and focus, and to find the perfect rhythm for your swims.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Chora Sfakion

This small, charming fishing town is situated in a bay overlooked by the peaks of the White Mountains, rising to over 2,400m. Famous for its delicious cheese pie, there is a selection of fantastic tavernas and



cafes in the town. While our hotel has sea views across the bay, looking both south and west. The island of Gavdos (Europe's southernmost stretch of land) is clearly visible from within the town.

White Mountains

The White Mountains or Lefka Ori occupy the heartland of western Crete and are the main feature of the region. They are made of limestone and are called the White Mountains because they are covered in snow, until late in the spring. In the summer, you will see light reflected on the limestone summits as well, which also makes them appear white and freshly snow-capped.

Sfakia

Famous over the years as one of the centres of resistance against Venetian, Turkish and German occupying forces, Sfakia is also known for the harshness of its natural environment and the ruggedness of its people.

Frangokastello

A magnificent Venetian castle built in the 14th Century dominates this town. During the Greek War of Independence, the castle witnessed a battle between the forces of the Greek independence leader, Hatzimichalis Dalianis, and the forces of the Ottoman Empire. According to tradition, each May on the anniversary of the battle, shadows of armed Cretan soldiers, who lost their lives, appear to march towards the fortress at dawn.

E4 European Long Distance Walking Path

Starting on the Spanish side of the Strait of Gibraltar, the E4 continues through France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece. It visits Crete as well, and our swim journey is based under its gaze as we wind alongside the dramatic coastal backdrop.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Hotel Panorama www.panoramanew-sfakia.com
Start Time	17:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Hotel Panorama www.panoramanew-sfakia.com
Finish Time	11:00 on Day 7

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims and yoga sessions that may take place during your trip, however, specific activities may vary according to local 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 meet at our hotel, overlooking the harbour of Chora Sfakion, for a safety briefing and a description of our upcoming adventures. We'll enjoy a short yoga practice, covering basic Asanas and learning how



to create 'effortless effort' within our swimming and yoga. This will prepare us for the week ahead. We then make our way down to a local beach for a short acclimatisation swim before a welcome drink and chance to head out for dinner at a local taverna.

Day 2

This morning we will meet for our yoga practice. We will explore how our poses can support us in the water through greater balance, mobility, alignment, and connection to breath. After breakfast, we start our first swim just outside of the marina and head west along the coast, passing several secluded beaches. We stop for lunch before continuing on our coastal swim.

Once we return to the hotel, after a great first day, we have an opportunity to practice restorative yoga. The practice will consist of slow deep stretches which we will hold as we begin to understand the feeling of letting go in a pose.

Day 3

The morning will start with our yoga practice, developing a deeper understanding of the connection between swimming and yoga, as well as how we can sustain a steady rhythm - not only with our bodies, but also our breathing.

After breakfast, we ride the boat along the coast and head for the coastal village of Agia Roumeli at the foot of the famous Samaria Gorge. The village can only be reached by boat (or hiking trail) - unless, like us, you plan to swim into town!

Our first swim starts at Furnoti beach and follows sheer cliffs, topped with pine trees, towards Agia Roumeli. During the swim, you'll pass cliffs that are home to the only known '*Hypericum aciferum*' plants in the world - you can see where they grow as you swim by.

We have a longer lunch today to give you time to explore the town. There is a selection of lively Greek tavernas for lunch, or you can stretch your legs as you hike to the Turkish fortress. There are spectacular views of the town and sea from this ridge. Look inland to admire the Samaria Gorge and spot exhausted hikers, making a beeline for a cool dip in the sea.

In the afternoon, we swim from Agia Roumeli to Agios Pavlos Beach, where the apostle St Paul is said to have landed during bad weather on his 1st century AD voyage to Greece. Swimming through the crystalline water, we follow the coastal edge of the Samaria National Park. On return to Chora Sfakion, we take time to restore our bodies with a gentle yoga practice and breathing techniques.

Day 4

This morning's yoga practice will begin with sitting meditation as we prepare for our longest swim of the week. We will then focus on our alignment and the difference this can make when we are swimming in open water. After breakfast, we head down to the water to board the boat and make our way out to the Bay of Finix. We start our swim on a rocky outcrop and head past the remote settlements of Old Pheonix and Lykos, until we reach Marmara beach. Watch the water change colour as you get closer to



the sea caves and white marble pebbles that span the beach.

After our post-swim snacks, the afternoon is free for you to enjoy as you wish. We travel back to Chora Sfakion, where you can spend your afternoon on a neighbouring beach, or head off to explore the local area and pick up some lunch. Before dinner, we will have the opportunity to build on your restorative yoga and body awareness practice.

Day 5

This morning starts with yoga practice before a hearty breakfast. We ride our support boats west and swim back towards Chora Sfakion - the coastline is dotted with a series of interconnected caves for you to explore as well. During our lunch break, there is free time to spend in our base of Chora Sfakion - treats from the bakery in the town are highly recommended!

There's plenty more cave and inlet exploration for us during the afternoon swim, heading east from Chora Sfakion towards Agios Charalambos. This dramatic stretch of coastline is carved with cracks, caves, and caverns. The evening's restorative yoga session will be very welcome after the day's exertions - hiking and swimming.

Day 6

Today our morning yoga practice will be a dynamic flow, building on what we have learnt so far. We then prepare for more stunning coastal swims in the remote region east of Chora Sfakion.

This is a real opportunity to stretch out and put into practice what you have picked up during the trip so far. We start at the sea caves by Filaki and swim down a remarkable stretch of coastline, stopping for lunch in Koutelos at a beach taverna. In the afternoon, we carry on along the dramatic coastline as we swim towards Kritamos.

Day 7

On our last day, we bring everything we have learnt together for our final yoga practice – this is when you learn how yoga trains the mind and body to cope with our everyday lives and enhance what we do. We will also have the time to discuss any of the practices we have done so far. Finally, we take a relaxing swim off a beach near our hotel, before the trip finishes at 11am.

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 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.

Essential Equipment Checklist

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

✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costume (x 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2) *	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sweater / Fleece
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes / Sandals

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

SwimTrek will provide yoga mats however, if you prefer to use your own yoga mat, please feel free to bring one along.

SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water, and electrolyte drinks. Please bring your own water bottle and ensure these are clearly marked to help our coaches identify yours. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest, snorkel, or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

Yoga Practice

Our 1 ½ hour morning practice is designed to help you prepare for the day, energising and invigorating your body for exhilarating swims and walks. This practice may include a mix of standing poses (asanas), back or forward bends. All poses are completely optional, and props may be used for support. The practice will develop stability and alignment for the specific muscle groups we will use when swimming. After our active day, we'll unwind our tired bodies and relax with a restorative evening yoga class. This is a gentle session which will help the mind and body let go and allow you to enter a state of relaxation.

TRIP GRADING

We have given this trip a 'Leisurely' grading designed for people who want to swim at a more relaxed pace and enjoy the scenery.

Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Chora Sfakion - Ilingas Beach	1½km	Ilingas - Sweetwater	1½km
Furnoti beach - Agia Roumeli	1½km	Agia Roumeli - Agios Pavlos	1½km



Bay of Finix – Marmara Beach	3km		1½km
Chora Sfakion coastal	1½km	Agios Charalambos	1½km
Filkaki Caves - Koutelo	1½km	Koutelo - Kritamos	1½km

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

There is a limited amount of walking on this trip, with most walks taking place on recognised paths and tracks. 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 / 70-74°F	24-27°C / 75-81°F
September	24-26°C / 75-79°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.

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.

The trip is based in Chora Sfakion, just a 1½ hour drive from the nearest international airport. The easiest way to reach the hotel is to fly into Chania International Airport and then take a public bus or local taxi to our accommodation in Chora Sfakia. It is also possible to fly through Athens to Chania, however, please note that this option results in a significantly longer journey time compared to travelling direct Chania.



OPTION 1: TRAVELLING VIA CHANIA

Transfer from Chania International Airport to Chora Sfakion

If you would like to arrange a private transfer from Chania airport directly to Chora Sfakion this can be arranged through Eleni at info@taxisfakia.com. The cost of this service depends on the number of passengers (please see the table below) and is payable locally on departure. The driver will be waiting in the arrivals hall where you collect your luggage, holding a sign with SwimTrek clearly displayed.

NUMBER OF PASSENGERS	TOTAL PRICE
1 – 4 Passengers	€95
5 – 6 Passengers	€140

Public Transport from Chania International Airport to Chora Sfakion

You can also take a bus from Chania Airport to Chania town which takes 30 minutes and costs approximately €3. From here you will need to change buses for your onward travel to Chora Sfakion (the duration and cost is approximately 2 hours and around €9). You can find more up to date information on www.e-ktel.com or calling the travel office on +30 2821 091288.

OPTION 2: TRAVELLING VIA ATHENS

Travel from Athens International Airport to Chania

From Athens airport, you will need to make your way to Piraeus port either by taxi or the subway. The easiest way to reach the port is by local taxi, with the journey taking approximately 45 minutes and costing between €45 and €65 depending on when you travel.

Alternatively, you can travel via the subway. The station is a 200m walk from the airport and you will need to take the M3 line from Proastiakos Stathmos Aerodromiou to Monastiraki Metro Station (this takes 45 minutes), then the M1 line from Monastiraki Metro Station to Pireaus. Once here, make your way to the 826 lines to AG. Dionysios. From here, the port is approximately a 15-minute walk from the station. For ticket information, please use the following website <https://www.oasa.gr/en/>.

Once at Piraeus Port, Anek Lines run an overnight ferry to Chania that departs at 21:00 arrives at 06:00 the next morning. Tickets costs from €85 for a return ticket. For guests who choose this option, we recommend that you arrive in Athens on the Saturday in time for the evening ferry departure. Ferry timetables are available at: www.anek.gr/en/

Transfer from Chania to Chora Sfakion

If you would like to arrange a private transfer from Chania directly to Chora Sfakion this can be arranged through Eleni at info@taxisfakia.com. The cost of this service depends on the number of passengers (please see the table below) and is payable locally on departure. The driver will be waiting in the arrivals hall where you collect your luggage, holding a sign with SwimTrek clearly displayed.



NUMBER OF PASSENGERS	TOTAL PRICE
1 – 4 Passengers	€95
5 – 6 Passengers	€140

ACCOMMODATION

Our accommodation for the week is set back overlooking the water and our small remote town of Chora Sfakion. Hotel Panorama offers comfortable rooms with partial or full sea views. All rooms are well-decorated and equipped with air conditioning and en suite bathrooms. There are a limited number of rooms for single occupancy which can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability. The hotel also features its own terrace with pool overlooking the water. It's important to note that the hotel is on quite a hill that leads down to the bay – it may not be suitable for those with reduced mobility, if you are unsure, please contact our customer team directly.

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, please contact Rena at Hotel Panorama directly via email: panoramanew21@gmail.com

Food and Drink

All breakfasts are included in your trip price as well as one lunch, however the other lunches and 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 a two-course dinner in a local restaurant is €35-€40. Please note, the hotel and many restaurants may not be able to cater for gluten free so ensure you bring any personal snacks with you. For those with other strict dietary requirements please speak to our customer team so that we can ensure your preferences are communicated to the hotel and our guides. 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 lunches, dinners, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs, etc. The local currency is the Euro (€). Please note that there is one ATM available in Chora Sfakion, where you can withdraw local currency out. It is advised that you withdraw local currency before arriving in Chora Sfakion, as many bars and restaurants only accept payments in cash.

Please note, the Greek Ministry of Tourism has introduced an Overnight Stay Tax. This is payable upon arrival at the accommodation at a rate from €0.50 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 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

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 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 always 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, 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

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