



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Join us on our classic Greek Cyclades swimming holiday, a perfect place for quiet coastal swims and to immerse yourself in remote, charming islands. The Cyclades was the site the very first SwimTrek trip, and we're still exploring its enchanting islets and wild natural beauty. This island-hopping getaway gives you the chance to swim amongst some of the most beautiful scenery, isolated beaches, and dramatic coastlines in the Mediterranean Sea.

From our base of Schinoussa in the heart of the archipelago, we have the opportunity to island-hop around the Cyclades, discovering their isolated beaches and breathtaking coastlines, as well as enjoying several crossings. Our beautifully remote Greek adventure will consist of exploring the unspoilt islands of Schinoussa, Fidousa, Iraklia, Kato Koufonisi and Keros.

With a combination of crossings between islands and beautiful coastal swims, you'll have the chance to explore the diverse scenery which exists in this unique island group. From sea caves and tunnels, to arches and islets, there is no shortage of beautiful topography and landscapes to explore, above and below the water.

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## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for the swimmer that is looking for a combination of both island-hopping and coastal swims. Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average daily swim distance of around 5km (split over a minimum of two swims) prior to the start of the trip.

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## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### Schinoussa

Our base for the week, Schinoussa is still largely unspoilt and undiscovered by all but the most intrepid traveller. Its claim to fame is the high number of beaches dotted along its rocky and craggy coastline.

### Iraklia

Iraklia is incredibly charming and photographic with a vast raw natural landscape, calm atmosphere and slow pace of life. It remains situated entirely away from mass tourism, even in high season.

### Koufonissi

Koufonissi is comprised of two islands, Ano (upper) and Kato (lower). We discover and swim the lower island of Kato Koufonissi, an untouched paradise and noted for its sandy beaches & bohemian lifestyle.



## Keros

Known for its archaeological importance in Cycladic history, the uninhabited island of Keros is famous for its flat faced marble statues which later inspired the works of Pablo Picasso and Henry Moore.

## Náxos

Náxos is the largest and most fertile of the Cycladic islands. Meadows running down to vast beaches and cliffs sinking suddenly into the sea give Náxos its natural variety. The peak of Mt Zeus, which is claimed to be the birthplace of the god Zeus, is the highest point in the Cyclades.

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## TRIP SCHEDULE

<b>Start Point</b>	Archipelagos Hotel, Schinoussa. <a href="http://www.schinoussa.gr">www.schinoussa.gr</a>
<b>Start Time</b>	17:30 on Day 1
<b>Finish Point</b>	Archipelagos Hotel, Schinoussa. <a href="http://www.schinoussa.gr">www.schinoussa.gr</a>
<b>Finish Time</b>	09:00 on Day 7

## Daily Itineraries

**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

After arriving into Schinoussa on the Express Skopelitis ferry, the island's only connection with Naxos, you will be picked up by our local hotel partners and transferred to the Archipelagos Hotel. After some time to check into your room and freshen up, we meet at 17:30 on the terrace of the hotel. In the light of an unparalleled Aegean sunset, you'll enjoy welcome drinks, introductions and discuss the daily schedule in the pre-trip briefing. Then it's off for dinner at one of the island's beautiful boutique tavernas.

### Day 2

We begin this morning with a gentle start, easing into the day with a technique analysis session and the option to have your stroke videoed to help you get the most from your open water swims. Following this, we hold our acclimatisation in Tsigouri Bay, accessed by the hotel's own private path. After lunch we swim to the uninhabited island of Fidousa, with its steep rocky shore and curious mountain goats.



The early evening is given over to a session on technique advice and video playback where we review your footage from the morning.

### **Day 3**

Today we board our boat and sail across to the beautiful island of Iraklia which sits directly opposite Schinoussa's southern coast. We'll then spend our morning swimming around its craggy coastline that stretches down into underwater cliffs. Following an onboard lunch and some rest in the bay, we continue our swimming to explore the underwater cliffs, stone beaches and hidden treasures of Iraklia's southern coastline even further.

### **Day 4**

Today we'll carry out our first major crossing of the week and swim out from Schinoussa to Iraklia. There's then time to head onto the island and explore the Castle ruins from 3000 BC. After you've had the time to look around this untouched island, you can board our boat and head back to Schinoussa. If you prefer to stay a little longer, there is the option of staying on Iraklia for lunch and catching the mid-afternoon ferry back to Schinoussa. This afternoon is yours to either kick back and relax or explore Schinoussa and/or Iraklia at your own pace. Please note that lunch is at your own expense today.

### **Day 5**

Today we head out from Schinoussa's isolated eastern shoreline and swim our way to the grand, striking cliffs of Kato Koufonissi ("Lower Cave") Island. After setting foot on Kato Koufonissi, we enjoy a well-deserved lunch and have the chance to explore this remote and virtually uninhabited paradise. This afternoon, we enjoy a coastal swim from the Panagia Settlement to Nero Beach, exploring the beauty of this unspoilt island further, before returning to Schinoussa.

### **Day 6**

After breakfast, we set out to sail across from Schinoussa towards the uninhabited island of Keros. This island was once the centre of an ancient Cycladic community and its demise is shrouded in mystery. It is also known as a site of important archaeological significance with excavations both above and below the water.

We begin our swims in amongst the fascinating outcrops of the islands south of Keros. The route is a swimmer's paradise, providing sheltered crossings and giving a fantastic sense of achievement. Swim distances are flexible, so you can choose to do as much or as little as you like. After lunch onboard our boat, we reach Keros and swim a section of its wonderfully deserted coastline, before returning once again to Schinoussa.

### **Day 7**

We hold an early morning swim in Tsigouri Bay before breakfast. It's a last chance to check with your



guides on any swim technique issues before our remote swimming adventure ends at Schinoussa Harbour. Here, you can catch the morning ferry to Naxos.

## TRIP INFORMATION

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

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

Please note that SwimTrek will supply swim hats and provide water and electrolyte drinks in shared water bottles on your safety boat. If you prefer to use your own drink bottle, please feel free to bring one along. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

### Luggage Recommendation

Due to restricted space on the ferries, we recommend traveling with soft suitcases.

### Group Size and Boat Support

This trip has a maximum group size of 11. 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 on this trip includes one main 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.



## TRIP GRADING

### Swimming Distances\*

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Tsigouri - Fidousa	2km	Schinoússa - Kato Koufonissi	3km
Almia Bay	2½km	Kato Koufonissi Coastal	2km
Iraklia Coastal	2km	Keros Archipelago Island Hop (Megali Plaka-Tssouloufi-Lazaros)	3km
Schinoússa - Iraklia	3½km	Keros Coastal	1½km

\*Please note that these swims are an example of what may take place during the course of your trip and should be used as a guide only. Actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions.

### 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 Distances

WALK	DISTANCE
Schinoussa (Main Village to Psili Amos)	2km

### Walking Conditions

Please note that 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	22-26°C / 72-79°F
July	23-27°C / 73-81°F	24-27 °C / 75-81°F
August	23-27°C / 73-81°F	23-27°C / 73-81°F
September	22-25°C / 72-77°F	22-26°C / 72-79°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.

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## GETTING THERE

The trip will start and finish at the Archipelagos Hotel on the island of Schinoussa. Please ensure that your travel is arranged accordingly.

While there are a number of travel options to get to Schinoussa, SwimTrek recommends flying into Athens and arriving into Schinoussa by travelling via Naxos island, one of the largest islands in the Cyclades. The recommended options are:

1. Flying into Athens, then flying from Athens to Naxos (the nearest airport to Schinoussa) and taking a ferry from Naxos to Schinoussa.
2. Flying into Athens, taking a ferry from Athens to Naxos, & another ferry from Naxos to Schinoussa.

Please note that the ferry from Naxos to Schinoussa leaves only once per day, usually at 14:00, so it is important to book this journey in advance and arrive in time to board the ferry in order to ensure that you reach the island of Schinoussa on the first day of your trip. In some cases, you might need to stay overnight in Athens or Naxos in order to catch this ferry on the first day of your trip: <http://www.smallcycladeslines.gr/en/routes-times/>

While we have outlined various travel options below, they are subject to change and should be used as a guide only. Other travel options are available, such as from Santorini, and guests are welcome to contact our team if they want to consider other options. Whichever route you choose to take, we recommend confirming your flights and other travel arrangements as early as possible in order to avoid price rises and availability issues. We suggest that you use the following websites to search for alternative flight and ferry options for this trip.

**Flights:** [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net)

**Ferries:** <https://www.bluestarferries.com/en/> or [www.danae.gr](http://www.danae.gr)

**IMPORTANT:** While it is 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. Pick-up locations can vary from one ferry operator to the next and often include locations in central Athens, as well as offices which are located at your selected departure port. For any enquiries about ticket collections, please contact the ferry operator or booking agent directly.



## TRAVELLING VIA ATHENS

### Flights to Athens

To search for available flights into Athens International Airport, please visit [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net).

### Flights from Athens to Naxos

From Athens airport you can fly directly into Naxos via Olympic Air. Once released, flight schedules and availability can be found at [www.olympicair.com](http://www.olympicair.com) or [www.skyexpress.gr/en](http://www.skyexpress.gr/en).

### Ferries from Athens to Schinoussa

While it is possible to catch a direct ferry from Athens (Piraeus Port) to Schinoussa through Blue Star Ferries, please note that these run infrequently throughout the season and don't always offer daily departures. It is worth noting that in past years these ferries have often not matched up well with incoming flights from European destinations. Ferry schedules, once released, can be found at [www.openseas.gr](http://www.openseas.gr) or [www.danae.gr](http://www.danae.gr).

### Ferries from Athens to Naxos

From Athens airport, you will need to catch a bus to Piraeus Port in order to catch a ferry to Naxos. For airport bus timetables, please visit [www.athensairportbus.com/en/timetable/](http://www.athensairportbus.com/en/timetable/). For information on taxis from the airport to Piraeus Port, please visit <https://www.taxi-athens.net/>.

Depending on the ferry service that you book from Athens to Naxos, the journey time can vary significantly, however, in general the trip takes approximately 5-6 hours. The price of the ferry is approximately €45-€60 for a one-way trip and tickets are available to purchase online at [www.openseas.gr](http://www.openseas.gr) or [www.danae.gr](http://www.danae.gr), or from one of the local ferry agents who are located along the Piraeus Port harbour front.

### Ferries from Naxos to Schinoussa

Once on the island of Naxos, you will need to catch the 'Express Skopelitis' ferry to Schinoussa. Please note that this ferry usually only departs from Naxos **once per day** at 14:00, however, this is subject to change and should be confirmed at the time of making your ferry booking. Tickets for this ferry, once released, can be booked online via either [www.openseas.gr](http://www.openseas.gr) or [www.danae.gr](http://www.danae.gr).

If you arrive in Schinoussa on the Express Skopelitis on Day 1 of the trip, you will be met for a transfer to the Archipelagos Hotel. If you are on an alternative ferry, please contact Panagiotis on [hotelarchipelagos@gmail.com](mailto:hotelarchipelagos@gmail.com) to arrange a free private transfer.

If you are unable to catch the 'Express Skopelitis' ferry at the beginning of your trip, private water taxis



can be arranged by contacting Panagiotis on the email above, however, please note that these cost approximately €200 and are subject to availability.

### **Return travel from Schinoussa**

The trip will finish on the morning of Day 7 and the most popular option is to take the morning 'Express Skopelitis' ferry back to Naxos and make your onwards journey from Naxos to Athens. Alternatively, there may be ferries from Schinoussa to alternative locations in Greece, so please check [www.openseas.gr](http://www.openseas.gr) or [www.danae.gr](http://www.danae.gr) for ferry route options, schedules and tickets, once they are released.

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## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

### **Accommodation**

Our accommodation in the Cyclades is on the island of Schinoussa at the simple and the locally owned Archipelagos Hotel. Located on the south side of the island, it lies only a few hundred metres from Schinoussa's most popular beach, Tsigouri. The hotel is beautifully secluded and traditionally designed. The local village is situated only 700 meters away making this an ideal stay in Schinoussa. The rooms at the Archipelagos Hotel vary significantly from one room to the next, so please pay attention to the room description (including the room size) during the booking process. Rooms are based on a twin-share and have en-suite bathroom facilities. 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 accommodation at Archipelagos Hotel prior to your trip, please contact Panagiotis via e-mail [hotelarchipelagos@gmail.com](mailto:hotelarchipelagos@gmail.com).

### ***Staying in Naxos***

Naxos is an ideal island on which to stay either prior to or after your trip. We recommend the Hotel Grotta, a superb family-run hotel only 10 minutes walk from the ferry terminal and with lovely views over the islands of Mykonos and Paros. It has been SwimTrek's home away from home on Naxos for many years. You can book rooms at Hotel Grotta via [www.hotelgrotta.gr](http://www.hotelgrotta.gr).

### ***Staying in Athens***

The Hotel Phidias is a great hotel if you need to stay overnight in Athens prior to or after your SwimTrek trip. A free shuttle service to the hotel is available for all guests from the airport, port, metro or railway station. To book this shuttle, please ensure that you contact the hotel prior to travelling, by emailing



[mphidiasgr@otenet.gr](mailto:mphidiasgr@otenet.gr) or calling +30 210 4296 480. For further information on getting to the hotel, please visit [www.phidias.gr](http://www.phidias.gr).

### **Food and Drink**

All breakfasts and lunches (except lunch on day 4) are included in your trip price, however, dinners are at your own expense. This gives you a fantastic opportunity to sample the abundance of traditional family-run tavernas over the course of your trip. The average cost of dinner is between €20 - €30.

### **Extra Activities**

As well as swimming, the unspoilt and idyllic nature of our trip makes it an ideal setting for trekking either side of our swims. Walks to local beaches, villages and historical landmarks allow you to take in the captivating views and wild landscapes that these islands have to offer. Otherwise, the locations we encounter are ideal for relaxing and enjoying the hot sun, during free time.

### **Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping**

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as dinners, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs and your ferry transfers to and from Schinoussa at the start and at the end of the trip. The local currency in Greece is Euro (€). A single ATM machine is available on Schinoussa but can be unreliable, so we suggest withdrawing money before your departure or in Naxos.

### **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](http://www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance).

### **Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations**

For comprehensive health information for people travelling to Greece, 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.

### **Travel Plugs & Electricity**

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit [www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plug-voltage-by-country/](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plug-voltage-by-country/).