



TRIP OVERVIEW

Staying at the stunning 4-star Hotel Atrium, this is a truly unique swimming holiday experience which takes in the spectacular 24-island archipelago of the Greek Sporades. Located in the Aegean Sea, the islands run along the east coast of Greece and are characterised by their dense vegetation and mountainous terrain.

The Sporades are best known for their beautiful beaches and turquoise-blue seas, and the islands which we explore during this trip form part of the 'National Marine Park of Alonissos Northern Sporades' which, at 2,260km², is the largest marine protected area in Europe. Throughout the course of the week, you will swim along stunning coastlines and island-hop between some of the area's most beautiful and remote destinations.

This Sporades archipelago, which really does live up to its translated meaning of 'scattered', is the perfect Greek Island experience, which gives you the opportunity to explore the area's stunning natural beauty and fascinating local marine life, including possible sightings of the rare and protected Mediterranean Monk Seal.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

If you are both a swim fan and a nature lover, this is the ultimate experience for you; swimming in the protected waters of Europe's largest marine park in a remote part of the Aegean Sea. This trip is designed for the swimmer who enjoys both coastal swims and crossings. Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average daily swim distance of around 5km.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Alonissos

Alonissos is the northernmost island of the Sporades group and the least inhabited of the main islands. Measuring 12 miles long, Alonissos is one of the crucial breeding grounds for the rare Mediterranean Monk Seal. It features a rugged coastline interspersed with idyllic beaches.

Skopelos

Mountains dominate the island with cliffs steeply entering into the sea which makes for strikingly clear water and fantastic swimming. The crossing to Skopelos is one of the highlights of the week. Legend has it Skopelos was founded by Staphylos, a son of the god Dionysus and Princess Ariadne of Crete.

National Marine Park of Alonissos Northern Sporades

At over 2,500 km² this National Marine Park is the largest marine protected area in Europe and was the first designated Marine Park in all of Greece. It includes the island of Alonissos which is our base for the week.



Mediterranean Monk Seal

The Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), which grows up to 2½ metres long and 300 kg in weight, has fewer than 700 remaining wild individuals and is one of the most endangered mammals in the world. Commercial hunting has driven it to the edge of extinction. The Alonissos Marine Park is at the forefront of world efforts to save this endangered species.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Hotel Atrium, Alonissos, www.atriumalonissos.gr
Start Time	17:30 on Day 1
Finish Point	Hotel Atrium, Alonissos
Finish Time	11:00 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

After your arrival on Alonissos you will have a chance to relax before meeting in the evening for a welcome drink and pre-trip safety briefing in which the week's plan will be discussed in more detail.

Day 2

After breakfast, we head out for our acclimatisation swim, followed by our first coastal swim past Alonissos' southern point of Marpounta to Megalos Mourtia. The coastline along the way is craggy with lots of inlets and bays to explore. After lunch on the beach, we continue with our coastal swimming journey as we head to Cape Kókkino Lighthouse below the imposing peak of Mount Kalóvoulos. Later we have the chance to playback underwater video footage from the day and offer technique advice.

Day 3

Today we take our first crossing of the week as we travel to eastern Skopelos. We'll embark on the 4km crossing to Cape Kókkino on Alonissos via the two islands of Agios Georgios and the smaller Mikro. At Agios Georgios, there is a stunning tunnel to swim through if you wish. On Mikro, it's possible to see old ruins and olive trees on this island as you swim past and this stretch is also a common place to spot dolphins. The afternoon is at your leisure and gives you time to explore other parts of the island or go further afield.

Day 4

Today we travel to the small harbour of Steni Vala on Alonissos' east coast. Here we'll undertake our second crossing of the week as we swim to the uninhabited island of Peristera which offers protection to Alonissos' east coast. After this we head off for our Peristera coastal 'shipwreck' swim to Vasiliko Bay, a swim that offers some of the most varied underwater scenery of the trip.



Day 5

We travel by boat a short journey north to start our swim at Kokkinokastro which features tall red rocks and where ancient ruins remain today. We swim between the island of Kokkinonisi and head towards Milia Beach, lined thick with pines, where we'll stop for lunch. In the afternoon, we'll continue south to the secluded beach of Spartines.

Day 6

Today we head off to the islands known locally as the 'Two Brothers', Meghalo Adelphi and Mikro Adelphi. Our first swim is along the rocky coastline of Meghalo Adelphi, with its blue-green rocks complete with resident goats who are known to take an interest in swimmers as we glide past. After lunch, we do the short crossing to Mikro Adelphi followed by a coastal swim along this pretty island.

Day 7

This morning we hold a farewell swim which gives us a chance to say goodbye to each other and the beautiful water of the Sporades. This is also an opportunity for the guides to give you any last minute technique advice to take with you.

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"/>	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 supply swim hats. We will have a limited supply/range of flippers, rash vests and wetsuits available on the trip, however we cannot guarantee sizes for all. If you have your own swim fins, rash vest or wetsuit, we would recommend you bring these with you in order to maximise your enjoyment of the trip. Please note that SwimTrek will 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.



Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
June	21-24°C / 70-75°F	23-26°C / 73-79°F
July	24-27°C / 75-81°F	25-29°C / 77-84°F
August	24-27°C / 75-81°F	25-29°C / 77-84°F
September	23-26°C / 73-79°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. 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.

Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Patitiri - Megalos Mourtia	3km	Megalos Mourtia - Cape Kókkino	2km
Skopelos - Alonissos	4km	Alonissos - Peristera	1½km
Peristera Coastal	3km	Kokkinokastro - Milia	2½km
Milia - Spartines	1½km	Meghalo Adelphi	2km
Mikro Adelphi	3km		

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.

Group Size and Boat Support

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 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.



GETTING THERE

There are various options for travelling to Alonissos at the start of your tour, however please note that an additional night's accommodation is often required during transit in order to match up your flight arrival time with a suitable ferry departure to the island. We recommend confirming your flights and other travel arrangements as early as possible in order to avoid price rises and availability issues.

While we have outlined various travel options below, they are subject to change and should be used as a guide only. We suggest that you use the following websites to search for alternative flight and ferry options for this trip:

Flights: www.skyscanner.net

Ferries: www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr

IMPORTANT: We highly 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. For any enquiries about ticket collections, please contact the ferry operator or booking agent directly.

Travelling via Skiathos

The easiest travel option to get to the start of your trip is to fly to the island of Skiathos and then catch a ferry to Alonissos (Patitiri Port). Direct flights into Skiathos, operate from a number of European airports. It may be that you have to fly via Athens where there is the option to catch a connecting flight with [Olympic Air](#) or [Sky Express](#) to Skiathos and then follow the steps below in 'Travel from Skiathos Airport to Alonissos Port (Patitiri).'

Please note that flights into Skiathos generally arrive on Fridays throughout the season, meaning that you will need to book an additional night's accommodation, in either Skiathos, Skopelos or Alonissos, prior to the start of your trip.

To search for available flights into Athens and/or Skiathos, please visit www.skyscanner.net.

Travel from Skiathos Airport to Alonissos Port (Patitiri)

From Skiathos airport you will need to make your way to Skiathos ferry port. This is approximately a 10-minute taxi journey. Ferries run from Skiathos to Alonissos regularly throughout the year and the journey takes approximately two hours. Tickets and a full ferry timetable, once released, can be booked via either of the following websites: www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr. Please note that ferry departure and arrival times should be used as a guide only as they can vary through the season.

Accommodation During Transit

As mentioned above, flights into Skiathos generally arrive on Fridays, which means that it is necessary to book an extra night's accommodation prior to the start of your trip. The following options are all possible, depending on your flight arrival time into Skiathos and your ferry departure time:



- Catch a ferry to Alonissos on the same day that you arrive and book an extra night's accommodation at the SwimTrek hotel, Hotel Atrium. This extra night can be booked through our partners in Alonissos, Albedo Travel, by emailing info@alonissosholidays.com.
- Catch a ferry to Skopelos on the day of your arrival and spend the night there before catching a ferry to Alonissos the following day.
- Stay in Skiathos on the night of your arrival and catch a ferry to Alonissos the following day in time for your welcome meeting in the afternoon of Day 1 of your trip.

Transfer from Alonissos Port (Patitiri) to Hotel Atrium

A free transfer service from Alonissos port to Hotel Atrium is available for all SwimTrek guests. In order to take advantage of this service, please provide Christina at Alonissos Holidays (incoming@alonissosholidays.com) with your ferry arrival time and boat name (e.g. Flying Cat 5) **48 hours before arrival** and a transfer from the ferry port to the hotel will be provided upon arrival.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

We stay at the 4-star Hotel Atrium, set on the hills overlooking the harbour town of Patitiri. The hotel is roughly a 15 minute uphill walk from the harbour. All rooms are well-decorated, equipped with air conditioning and en suite bathrooms and are sold on a twin share basis. There are a limited number of single supplement rooms which can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability.

If you require additional nights' accommodation before or after the SwimTrek tour, this can be arranged directly through the Albedo Travel via e-mail info@alonissosholidays.com

Meals

All breakfasts and lunches are included in your trip price, however 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 dinner in a local restaurant is €20-€25.

Extra Expenses

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as dinners, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs, etc. The local currency for the islands is the Euro (€).

Please note, the Greek Ministry of Tourism has introduced an Overnight Stay Tax. This is payable upon arrival at the accommodation at a rate of €1.50 per room, per night.

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.



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. 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/.