

TRIP OVERVIEW

Montenegro is one of the few locations in the world where you can swim in four different types of open water in the space of less than a week. On this warm-water swimming holiday, you'll have the chance to swim in fjords, lakes, rivers and the sea, as you explore the spectacular scenery and rich history that Montenegro has to offer.

Explore hidden coves, tranquil lakes, and beautiful coastline as we take in some of Montenegro's finest landscapes from a truly unique perspective. With imposing mountains rising out of the area's fjords, this is a unique opportunity to discover the breathtaking natural beauty of such a scenic and historic corner of the European continent. From a swim in the famous 'blue cave' of Plava Špilja to swims across the Bay of Kotor and island hopping between monasteries in Lake Skadar, this trip is filled with amazing swimming experiences which will stay with you long after your last stroke in the water.

At the end of each day, you will have the chance to relax and unwind in a refurbished former palace in the historical town of Perast. The beautiful Perast Palace offers stunning accommodation, with a wide range of room options, an open-air terrace, and picture-perfect views of the breathtaking Bay of Kotor.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is ideal for guests who are keen to swim in a full range of open water types, from lakes and rivers to fjords and the sea. 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.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Perast

A picturesque Venetian town and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Perast is located in the middle of the Bay of Kotor. It has inspiring views over the entire bay and the buildings represent the peak of Dalmatian Baroque architecture. Lying some 400 metres offshore are the two islands; Saint George, home to a 12th century Benedictine Monastery and the island of "Our Lady of the Rocks", home to a 17th century Roman Catholic church.

Kotor

Lying in the south-eastern part of the Bay of Kotor, this former town of merchants and seafarers dates back to the 12th century. The old town is a densely packed triangle of twisting streets contained by the steep slopes of Sveti Ivan to the east. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site and for a small charge, climb the approximate 1.350 steps to the fort for it's impressive panoramic views of the bay.



Gulf of Kotor

The Gulf of Kotor is widely acknowledged as the single most impressive geographical feature anywhere along the Adriatic coast. It consists of two parts; Tivat Bay and, further inland, the Bay of Kotor. Giant mountains sweep straight down into the clear blue waters which form a series of inland fjords and the old historic towns dotted around the shoreline provide a wealth of opportunities for exploring.

Lake Skadar

The largest lake on the Balkan peninsula is split between Montenegro and Albania. The Montenegrin section was declared a National Park in 1983 and is home to over 260 bird species. Numerous sites and monuments show that this was an important cultural and historic centre in the 14th and 15th centuries.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Perast Palace, Perast, Montenegro www.perastpalace.com
Start Time	17:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Perast Palace, Perast, Montenegro
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

We meet at our accommodation which is nestled near the bottom of the hill, a short walk from the water, accessed by a flight of 60 stone steps. After a chance to relax, you will meet your guides and fellow swimmers for a safety briefing and discussion of the week ahead. We will then hold an acclimatisation swim nearby, which will be followed by an optional traditional Montenegrin group meal at the house.

Day 2

After breakfast, our first swim is out to the two islands lying just off Perast; Saint George Island and “Our Lady of the Rocks” Island. It’s an excellent and exciting way to start the trip as we are surrounded by the imposing fjords that dominate the landscape in this area. The afternoon is given over to stroke improvement, where the guides record and analyse your stroke above and below the water, which will be reviewed later in the evening. The second swim of the day is along the coast to the oldest settlement of the Bay of Kotor, the city of Risan. The view from here is unrivalled as the entire Bay of Kotor is laid out before us.



Day 3

We travel out of the Bay of Kotor through the narrow Verige Strait into Tivat Bay, but before we do so, we have time to stop and visit the church on “Our Lady of the Rocks” island. We then go on to swim between the islands of Prevlaka, Sveti Marko and Gospa od Milosrđa. Sveti Marko is known for its flowers and the whole swim is both intriguing and varied. After lunch, near the white-stone village of Bjelila, we swim up the Luštica Peninsula, a sparsely inhabited finger of land dotted with hilltop and seafront villages, finishing at the small fishing village of Franciskovići.

Day 4

This day is significantly different from the rest of the trip as we travel to Lake Skadar, located across the Montenegrin/Albanian border, for a unique experience of lake and river swimming in freshwater. We make our escape from Grmožur, the “Montenegrin Alcatraz,” to the deepest part of the lake, the old fishing village of Raduš. The afternoon is spent swimming upstream in the cooler waters of the Morača River and ending at the 8th century Monastery of St Nikola. On the way back to Perast we have a break from travel to take in the majestic view of the private village and beaches of Sveti Stefan, perched on a rocky outcrop and joined to the mainland by a narrow isthmus.

Day 5

Starting in the Bay of Kotor we complete a crossing to the picturesque hamlet of Stoliv nestled on the Gulf’s remote western shore. From here, there is an *optional* 45-minute walk to the Church of Gornji Stoliv located on the slopes of Mt Velji Vrh. The views from 300m above the Gulf are truly breathtaking. After lunch, you have some free time to either relax at Perast Palace or catch a bus or taxi to the nearby town of Kotor where you can wander around and take in the charm of this UNESCO World Heritage Listed site which dates back as far as the 12th century.

Day 6

Travelling through the Verige Strait, we head to the Adriatic shoreline of the Luštica Peninsula and to the coastal village of Žanjica, which is only 4km from the Croatian border. Lunch is on the land today, with the opportunity to buy a local Taverna lunch and explore the village. From Žanjica we head from Rose along the coast to Prstan, stopping to explore the WWII submarine tunnel. The afternoon is taken up swimming in and out of caves along the Adriatic coast and ending in the largest and most famous cave in Montenegro; “Plava Špilja” (“Blue Grotto”). The cave is over nine metres high the water temperature inside is often a few degrees warmer than the outside sea temperature.

Day 7

After breakfast, there is time for a final morning swim in Perast before the trip finishes at our accommodation at 11:00.

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 Costumes (x2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles* (x2)	<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"/>	Insect Repellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes / Sandals

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

Note: There is no need to pack towels as the accommodation provides both bath towels and beach towels that can be used outside of the house.

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.

Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Perast – St. George/Lady of the Rocks	1½km	Morača - St Nikola (Lake Skadar)	2½km
Risan Bay Swim (Bay of Kotor)	3km	Perast - Stoliv (Bay of Kotor)	1½km
Prevlaka - Milosrđa (Bay of Tivat)	3km	Rose - Prstan (Adriatic Sea)	3½km
Bjelila - Franciskovići (Bay of Tivat)	2½km	Veslo - Plava Špilja (Adriatic Sea)	2km
Grmožur - Raduš (Lake Skadar)	3km		

**Please note that these swims are an example of the swims that 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

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. On Day 5 there is an optional 45-minute walk to the Church of Gornji and should you wish to visit Kotor, there is also the option to take the climb up the 1,350 steps to the Kotor Fort.

Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
June	20-24°C / 68-75°F	22-24°C / 72-75°F
July	22-26°C / 72-79°F	23-27°C / 73-81°F
August	24-27°C / 75-81°F	26-29°C / 79-84°F
September	22-24°C / 72-75°F	23-26°C / 73-79°F

**Please note that these temperatures relate to the Bay of Kotor and should be used as a guide only. Water temperatures in the lakes and rivers in which we swim may be 3-5°C cooler than these temperatures.*

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.

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 on this trip includes one main boat 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 several ways to travel to Perast, however, the most common route is to fly into Dubrovnik Airport in Croatia and book the shared transfer service which leaves between 12:30 and 13:00 on Day 1 of your trip.

It is also possible to fly into Tivat Airport in Montenegro, which is located closer to Perast but is a smaller airport than Dubrovnik and has fewer international flight arrivals. Please note that flights are often not available on Saturdays, so you may need to book an extra night's accommodation at Perast Palace prior to the start of your trip.

While we have outlined various travel options below, they are subject to change and should be used as a guide only. Whichever route you choose to take, we recommend confirming your flights and other travel bookings as early as possible in order to avoid price rises and availability issues.

Option 1: Travel via Dubrovnik

Flights to Dubrovnik;

To search for available flights into Dubrovnik Airport, we suggest that you use www.skyscanner.net.

Transfer from Dubrovnik Airport to Perast

Dubrovnik Airport Carhire offers a shared transfer service from Dubrovnik Airport to Perast Palace in Montenegro which coincides with morning flight arrivals into Dubrovnik and must be booked directly with the transfer company by emailing Mihajlo on: info@dubrovnik-airport-carhire.com. Please note that this is a shared transfer service and may include up to eight fellow travellers.

The transfer leaves between 12:30 and 13:00, depending on the flight arrival times of the guests who are booked on the transfer, and takes approximately two hours to reach Perast Palace. It is worth mentioning that this journey time could be significantly longer due to possible delays at the Croatian-Montenegrin border.

Prices for this transfer service are as follows and are payable directly to your driver upon arrival:

NUMBER OF GUESTS	TRANSFER PRICE
1-3 Guests	€90 to be split between all passengers (one way)
4-6 Guests	€30 per person (one way)
7+ Guests	€25 per person (one way)

IMPORTANT: To book your place on this transfer, you must email info@dubrovnik-airport-carhire.com with your flight arrival details at least 7 days prior to your arrival. Please note that your transfer will not be confirmed until you have received a written confirmation from Dubrovnik Airport Carhire.

Private Transfer from Dubrovnik Airport to Perast

Private transfers from Dubrovnik Airport to Perast are available at the above rates for guests whose flights do not coincide with the shared transfer at 12:30-13:00. To make your booking, please contact Mihajlo at: info@dubrovnik-airport-carhire.com. Alternatively, you can visit the Peugeot rent-a-car office at Dubrovnik Airport, located in front of the arrivals terminal, to get a quote on location.

Public Transport from Dubrovnik to Perast

There is a bus service which runs from Dubrovnik's main bus station to the town of Kotor, which is situated just 12 kilometres from our base in Perast. Please note that Kotor is the closest scheduled stop on this service, so you will need to ask the driver to let you off in Perast. Once released, the bus timetable can be viewed at www.libertasdubrovnik.com, however, please note that it is subject to change without notice.

Private Transfers While Staying in Dubrovnik

If you are planning to stay in Dubrovnik before or after your trip and need a transfer between the airport and your accommodation (including to meet the shared transfer on Day 1), please email Mihajlo with your arrival details or travel plans: info@dubrovnik-airport-carhire.com.

Option 2: Travel via Tivat

Flights to Tivat

To search for available flights into Tivat Airport, we suggest that you use www.skyscanner.net.

Private Transfer from Tivat Airport to Perast

Private transfers are available from Tivat Airport to Perast for €25, which can carry up to three passengers and take approximately 30 minutes. To book this transfer, please email Liliana: lilianaglyn@hotmail.com.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

Perast Palace, known locally as *Palata Mrshe*, is a beautiful former palace which has been totally refurbished in a traditional Montenegrin style and which is booked exclusively for SwimTrek's use during our trips. The Perast Palace is a home away from home and is situated up a flight of steps, just metres from the water's edge on the banks of the Bay of Kotor. The house features a large lounge, separate dining room and TV room as well as wireless internet and an outdoor terrace in the heart of Perast.

Please note that there are a range of bedroom/bathroom options at Perast Palace. The majority of the rooms are offered on a twin share basis and have en suite facilities, however, please be aware that there are two bedrooms (Rooms 2 and 5) which have a shared bathroom. Please ensure that you select the correct room type at the time of booking and be aware that all rooms are subject to availability. Due to the limited number of rooms at the house, there is only one single supplement available on each departure, which is often booked very early. If the single supplement is still available for the departure that you are interested in booking, it will be available to select during the booking process.

Full details on Perast Palace and photos of the bedrooms and living spaces can be found at www.perastpalace.com.

Extra Nights at Perast Palace

It is possible to book an extra night at Perast Palace before or after your SwimTrek trip, which is a fantastic way to extend your stay in this beautiful accommodation. If you would like to book an extra night, please contact Liliana by emailing: lilianaglyn@hotmail.com

Finding Perast Palace

The Perast Palace is known locally as 'Palata Mrshe', so if you are asking for directions, it is often helpful to use this name. If you arrive into Perast from Kotor, the steps leading up to Perast Palace are just after the fire station on the right-hand side. If you are coming into Perast from Risan/Herceg Novi, the steps leading up to Perast Palace are just before the fire station on the left-hand side.



Meals

All breakfasts and lunches (excluding lunch on day six) are included on this trip. On the first night, an optional 3-course welcome dinner is held at the Perast Palace at a cost of €20 per person. This meal is always a great way for you to get to know your guides and fellow swimmers over a delicious, homemade meal, however, if you wish **not** to be included, please let the SwimTrek office know prior to your departure. Vegetarian and vegan options are available upon request. Please do get in contact with the SwimTrek customer team to let them know of any dietary requirements.

Other dinners are **not** included, allowing you to experience the local restaurant 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 entertainment, meals etc. The local currency in Montenegro is the Euro (€). There is one ATM located in Perast, as well as others nearby in Risan (3 km from Perast) and Kotor (12 km from Perast). Please be aware that the currency in Dubrovnik is Croatian Kuna, **not** Euros, so it's best to get Euros and Kuna prior to travelling.

Passports and Visas

Non-citizens of Montenegro 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 Montenegro for less than 90 days. 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 Montenegro, 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/.