



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Hellespont and Dardanelles: **THE WORLD'S OLDEST SWIM**. It's been said that you can't call yourself a true open water swimmer until you've completed this historic cross-continental swim from Europe to Asia in Turkey. From the challenge of the swim itself to the region's incredible history, this event is a must-do for open water swimmers from around the globe.

No other open water challenge in the world combines as much history, prestige, romance and bragging rights into a single swim as the legendary crossing of the Dardanelles strait, as one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world is closed for the annual 'Victory Day' race.

The Hellespont is celebrated in the ancient Greek myth as the straight which Leander swims across to reach his lover Hero. It was officially swum for the first time by the famous poet, Lord Byron, in 1810 and ever since, it has been considered the absolute epitome of open water swimming and can often be found at the top of any avid open water swimmer's international wish list. As well as its own ancient history, the crossing also holds a special place in SwimTrek's history as the swim which prompted our fearless founder, Simon Murie, to set up a pioneering open water swimming company, 15 years ago.

Entries for this iconic event are **strictly limited** and SwimTrek is the sole provider of all race places for non-Turkish residents. Be quick to secure your place on this unforgettable swimming event in 2019!

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## WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

The Hellespont and Dardanelles crossing is a significant open water swim of 4½ km between Europe and Asia. Conditions during the event may be challenging and swimmers should have a good understanding of open water swimming. They should be capable of swimming 4½ km in the open water and be comfortable swimming in choppy waters and currents prior to the start of the trip.

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## LOCATION SUMMARIES

### Hellespont/Dardanelles/Strait of Çanakkale

This historic body of water is referred to as the Hellespont in Greek, traditional in Turkish it was named the Dardanelles and in modern day Turkey it is known as the Strait of Çanakkale. It has been a natural barrier for invading armies for millenia, used by both King Xeres I of Persia in 480BC and Alexander the Great a century-and-a-half..

In ancient mythology, Hero, a priestess of Aphrodite, lived on the European side of the Hellespont in a high tower by the sea. Leander, a young man from the Asian side, swam every night, guided by the lamp which his mistress lit at the top of the tower, in order to spend the night with his beloved Hero. It was one stormy night when Hero's lamp burned out that Leander lost his way and drowned in the strait.

The poet, Lord Byron inspired by Leander's nightly conjugal powers, swam the Hellespont, along with Lieutenant Ekenhead, on their second attempt in 1810. They became the first known persons since Leander to achieve this feat.



## Gallipoli

Bordering the Hellespont to the north, the Gallipoli Peninsula is a mix of pine forests and farmers' fields interspersed with monuments, cemeteries and battlefields commemorating the Gallipoli campaign, an attempt to remove the Ottoman Empire from the First World War. From the beaches where the allies first landed (Anzac Cove, V Beach), to the high ridges that they endeavoured to take (Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair), the hostility of the terrain makes you wonder why they ever tried at all.

## Troy

With a lineage of over 4,000 years, Troy is often quoted as the centre of ancient civilization. For many years a fabled city, it was only rediscovered in the 19th Century and near modern day Canakkale and is a must visit in order to appreciate the importance of the strait and Troy's position on it.

## TRIP SCHEDULE

DATE	ACTIVITY
<b>Day 1: Wednesday 28 August</b>	From 15:00: Hotel Check-In
<b>Day 2: Thursday 29 August</b>	09:00 - 12:00: Acclimatisation Swim and Briefing
	12:00: Race Registration (Compulsory)
	13:00: Pasta Lunch
	14:00: Boat Tour
<b>Day 3: Friday 30 August</b>	<b>09:00 - 11:00: HELLESPONT RACE</b>
	Awards Ceremony (Time to be confirmed)
	19:30: Post-Race Dinner
<b>Day 4: Saturday 31 August</b>	06:45: Shared Return Transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul (Booked Separately)
	<b>09:00 - 11:00: Alternative Hellespont Race Time</b>
	11:00 Latest Hotel Check Out
<b>Post-Trip (Sunday 1 September)</b>	06:45 Shared Return Transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul for guests staying extra night (Booked Separately)
	Optional Extra Tours, e.g. Gallipoli, Troy, etc. (Booked Separately)

\*Please note that the above itinerary is subject to change during the course of your trip.

## Day One

**Hotel Check-In** Upon arrival in Canakkale, you can check in to your hotel and spend the rest of the day exploring the city and experiencing the local Turkish culture.



## Day 2

**Acclimatisation Swim** On the morning of Day 2, there will be a welcome briefing as well as an opportunity to take part in an acclimatisation swim on a private beach, a short walk out of Canakkale's bustling centre. This is a great chance for you to get used to the swimming conditions.

**Race Registration (Compulsory)** At the race registration, you will be given your swim hats and timing chips in preparation for the next morning's swim. Please note that registration is compulsory in order to take part in the event.

**Pasta Lunch** This basic pasta buffet meal is put on by the local Rotary Club and offers you an opportunity to meet up with Turkish swimmers prior to the swim.

**Boat Tour** Whilst optional it is highly recommended that you join us on the boat tour as it is the opportunity to travel the swim route, see the swim start point and hear suggested strategies for your crossing.

## Day 3

**HELLESPONT RACE** For further information about the Hellespont and Dardanelles Swim Race, please see the below section about 'Race Information'.

**Awards Ceremony** The official race awards ceremony will take place near the race finish some time after the race finish (time to be confirmed).

**Post-Race Dinner** A post-race celebratory dinner will be held for all SwimTrek guests, including non-swimmers. This is a fantastic opportunity to kick back and relax after completing an epic open water swim and to chat with your fellow swimmers about your Hellespont experience.

## Day 4

**Shared Return Transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul** If you are booked on the designated SwimTrek return transfer to Istanbul, this will leave early this morning. Further information on booking this transfer can be found under the 'Getting There' section.

**Alternative Hellespont Race Time** Should the race need to be rescheduled due to bad weather, a contingency date is factored in to attempt the swim.

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## RACE INFORMATION

### Pre-Race Medical (Compulsory)

The race organisers require a signed medical form from a doctor/medical practitioner prior to the race. This form will be forwarded to all participants after they have completed their booking.

### Race Distance

The total distance of the Hellespont swim is approximately 4½km, however, the swim is current-assisted, which makes it equivalent to swimming approximately 3-3½ km.



### Race Time

The Hellespont is a major strait dividing Europe and Asia. As a natural body of open water, it is affected by local weather conditions, which can vary considerably from one day to the next. In order to complete the swim in the most favourable conditions, there are two different options for when the race may take place. The preferred option is to conduct the race on **Friday 30 August at 09:00**, however, in the unlikely event that conditions are so unfavourable that the race time is changed, then it will be run on **Saturday 31 August at 09:00. Please keep this in mind when booking your return travel from Turkey.**

On Wednesday 28 August, the event committee will meet and will make a decision about when the race will take place. If neither of the above options are suitable, an alternative coastal swim will be organised and you will be offered a reduced entry for the Hellespont event the following year.

### Race Time Limit

There is a time limit of two hours to complete the race. For safety reasons, any swimmers who do not complete the race before this time will be removed from the water and escorted back to land by the Turkish Coast Guard.

### Race Equipment

Swimmers are allowed to wear wetsuits during the crossing, however, please note that using a wetsuit will mean that you are ineligible for any of the race awards. Compulsory swim hats will be given out on the day of the race by the event organisers. You should also bring a swim costume, goggles and a towel.

### Race Organisers

Please note that whilst SwimTrek organise the tour part of this package, The Canakkale Rotary Club are the organisers of the swim and are fully responsible for race safety, logistics and contingency planning.

## 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 Sun Cream
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles* (x2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunhat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack

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

### Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
August	23-25°C / 73-77°F	33-35°C / 91-95°F

\*Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.



## 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.

## GETTING THERE

There are several options for travelling to Canakkale at the start of your trip. The easiest option is to fly into Istanbul Airport and then book a private transfer with our partners in Turkey which will take you directly to your accommodation in Canakkale. You can also fly in to Sabiha Gokcen Airport and take transport to Istanbul Airport to join the transfer.

It is also possible to catch a connecting flight from Istanbul to Canakkale, however, please note that these flights often depart Istanbul late at night and arrive into Canakkale in the early hours of the morning. They usually include a stopover in Ankara with a total journey time is 3-6 hours.

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 [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) to search for alternative flight options for this trip.

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.

### Flights to Istanbul

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

### Shared Transfer from Istanbul Airport to Canakkale | Wed 28 Aug 2019

A shared transfer service from Istanbul Airport in Istanbul to our various accommodation options in Canakkale is offered for all SwimTrek guests on Day 1 of your trip. The departure and arrival times for this transfer service are as follows:

FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES
Istanbul Airport	Canakkale Hotels	14:00	Approx. 20:45
Istanbul Airport	Canakkale Hotels	20:00	Approx. 02:00

To book your place on this shared transfer at the beginning of your trip, please visit: [www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html](http://www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html)

### Private Transfer from Istanbul to Canakkale

If your flight arrival does not coincide with the shared transfer service and you would like to arrange a private transfer from Istanbul to your accommodation in Canakkale, this can be arranged through various online providers. You can also book directly with our partners in Turkey, Wilusa Travel. To book your private transfer, please visit: [www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html](http://www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html)



## Connecting Flights From Istanbul to Canakkale

To search for available flights between Istanbul International Airport and Canakkale, please visit: [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net). Please note that these flights often depart Istanbul late at night and arrive into Canakkale in the early hours of the morning. They usually include a stopover in Ankara with a total journey time of 3-6 hours.

## Public Transport from Istanbul to Canakkale

There are various public bus services which run from Istanbul to Canakkale with a journey time of approximately six hours. For bookings, timetables and further information, please visit: <http://busticketline.com/>

## Shared Return Transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul | Sat 31 Aug and Sun 1 Sep 2019

A shared return transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul is also available at the end of your trip on either Saturday 31 August or Sunday 1 September 2019. The departure and arrival times for this transfer service are as follows:

FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES
Canakkale Hotels	Istanbul Airport	06:45	Approx. 13:30
Canakkale Hotels	Sultanahmet (City Centre)	06:45	Approx. 14:00
Canakkale Hotels	Sabiha Gokcen Airport	06:45	Approx. 15:00

To book your place on this shared transfer at the end of your trip, please visit: [www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html](http://www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html)

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Accommodation

Your SwimTrek booking includes three nights' accommodation from Wednesday 28 August - Saturday 31 August 2019 at one of the following hotels in Canakkale:

HOTEL NAME	STAR RATING	LOCATION
<a href="#">Canak Hotel</a>	3-Star	City Centre
<a href="#">Artur Hotel</a>	3-Star	City Centre
<a href="#">Kule Hotel</a>	3-Star	City Centre
<a href="#">Akol Hotel</a>	4-Star	City Centre
<a href="#">Truva Hotel</a>	4-Star	City Centre
<a href="#">Kolin Hotel</a>	5-Star	5 km from City Centre



Accommodation is based on twin share rooms with en suite facilities, on a bed and breakfast 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 your SwimTrek trip, please visit: [www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html](http://www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html)

All SwimTrek's 3 and 4-star hotels are located within 10 minutes walk of each other in the city centre. If you choose to stay at the 5-star Kolin Hotel, transfers are available to and from the following events: Welcome Drinks, Acclimatisation Swim, Boat Tour, Race Registration, Race Start, Post-Race Dinner. If you prefer to return to the hotel outside of the normal transfer timetable, you can catch a local taxi for approximately €8.

### **Supporters Package**

There are a limited number of supporters packages available which include shared accommodation with a race participant, as well as entry into all non-swimming events. We cannot guarantee that supporters will be able to travel to the start of the race on the European side, however, in previous years this has usually been possible. In general, it is more advisable for spectators to stay on the Asian side and view the race from the finish line.

### **Meals**

All breakfasts are included as part of your trip price, as well as the pasta lunch on Thursday 29 August and the post-race celebration dinner on Friday 30 August. All other meals are at your own expense, which gives you a fantastic opportunity to explore and experience the local cafes and restaurants of your choice over the course of your trip.

### **Extra Expenses**

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as entertainment, meals and any additional tours that you book during your time in Turkey. The local currency is the Turkish Lira (YTL) and ATMs are plentiful in Canakkale.

Additional tours, such as trips to Troy and Gallipoli, can be organised through our partners in Canakkale, Wilusa Travel, at an additional cost. For bookings or further information about these tours, as well as booking additional nights accommodation before or after your SwimTrek trip, please visit: [www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html](http://www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html)

### **Passports and Visas**

Turkey is not part of the European Union. Non-residents of Turkey require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Citizens of most countries require a visa to enter Turkey, however, some there are some exceptions For a full list of visa requirements by country, please visit: [www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa)

If you do require a visa to enter Turkey, you must apply for this before you travel via: [www.evisa.gov.tr](http://www.evisa.gov.tr) as self service e-Visa kiosks and Wi-Fi areas where visitors can apply for an e-Visa on arrival are no longer available in Turkish airports. 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 Turkey, 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 <https://www.worldstandards.eu/>.