



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 that Leander swam 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 in 2003.

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 2020!

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.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Hellespont/Dardanelles/Strait of Çanakkale

This historic body of water is referred to as the Hellespont in Greek, historically 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.

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 near the modern city of 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
Day 1: Friday 28 August	From 15:00: Hotel Check-In
Day 2: Saturday 29 August	09:45 - 12:00: Acclimatisation Swim & Welcome Briefing (<i>Compulsory</i>) 12:00: Boat Tour & Safety Briefing (<i>Compulsory</i>) 14:30: Race Registration (<i>Compulsory</i>)
Day 3: Sunday 30 August	08:30 - 10:30: HELLESPONT RACE 12:00 - 14:00: Awards Ceremony 18:45: Post-Race Dinner
Day 4: Monday 31 August	06:30: Shared Return Transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul (<i>Booked Separately</i>) 08:30 - 10:30: Alternative Hellespont Race Time 11:00: Latest Hotel Check Out Optional Extra Tours, e.g. Gallipoli, Troy, etc. (<i>Booked Separately</i>)
Post-Trip: Tuesday 1 September	06:30: Shared Return Transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul for guests staying extra night (<i>Booked Separately</i>)

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

Day 1

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 & Welcome Meeting (Compulsory) - 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.

Boat Tour & Safety Briefing (Compulsory) - It is important that you join us on the boat tour & safety briefing as it is the opportunity to travel the swim route, see the swim start point and hear suggested strategies for your crossing.

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.

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 sometime after the race finishes.

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.

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 **Sunday 30 August at 08:30**, however, in the unlikely event that conditions are so unfavourable that the race time is changed, it will be run on **Monday 31 August at 08:30**. *Please keep this in mind when booking your return travel from Turkey.*

On Friday 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. As of 2020, participants are **not** permitted to wear smart watches or smart bands during the race. 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 while 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.



Group Size and Boat Support

The Hellespont and Dardanelles crossing is a mass start event. Boat support on this trip includes a flotilla of small boats arranged by the event organiser, some of which SwimTrek guides will be aboard. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

TRIP GRADING

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.

Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
August	23-25°C / 73-77°F	29-32°C / 84-90°F

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

Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, the event organisers rely on decent weather conditions in order to carry out the swim. In the event of bad weather and the swim being cancelled, there are no reserve/alternative times or days available after August 31st.

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 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. Turkish Airlines operates an afternoon non-stop direct flight from/to Istanbul-Canakkale once a day, with a journey time of just over an hour. However, please note that other flights between Istanbul and Cannakkle usually include a stopover in Ankara with a total journey time of 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 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.



Shared Transfer from Istanbul Airport to Canakkale | Friday 28 Aug 2020

A shared transfer service from Istanbul Airport 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.

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.

Connecting Flights from Istanbul to Canakkale

To search for available flights between Istanbul International Airport and Canakkale, please visit www.skyscanner.net. Turkish Airlines operates a non-stop direct flight once a day. Further information can be found at www.turkishairlines.com/en-jp/flights/flights-to-canakkale.

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 | Mon 31 Aug & Tues 1 Sep 2020

A shared return transfer from Canakkale to Istanbul is also available at the end of your trip on either Monday 31 August or Tuesday 1 September 2020. The departure and arrival times for this transfer service are as follows:

FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES
Canakkale Hotels	Istanbul Airport	06:15	Approx. 13:30
Canakkale Hotels	Sultanahmet (City Centre)	06:15	Approx. 14:30
Canakkale Hotels	Sabiha Gokcen Airport	06:15	Approx. 16:00

To book your place on this shared transfer at the end of your trip, please visit www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

Your SwimTrek booking includes three nights' accommodation from Friday 28 August - Monday 31 August 2020 at one of the following hotels in Canakkale:

HOTEL NAME	STAR RATING	LOCATION
Çanak Hotel	3-Star	City Centre
Artur Hotel	3-Star	City Centre
Kule Hotel	3-Star	City Centre
Akol Hotel	4-Star	City Centre
Truva Hotel	4-Star	City Centre
Kolin Hotel	5-Star	5km 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.

All of SwimTrek's 3-star 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: Acclimatisation Swim & Welcome Meeting, 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.

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you require additional nights' accommodation before or after your SwimTrek trip, this can be arranged via our partners [Wilusa Travel](#).

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.

Food and Drink

All breakfasts are included as part of your trip price, as well as the post-race celebration dinner on Sunday 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 Activities

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 <https://www.wilusa.net/en/hellespont-swimming-race.html>.

Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

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 (TRY) and ATMs are plentiful in Canakkale.

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.

Please note: As of 2nd March 2020, UK and EU Citizens **no longer require a visa** to enter Turkey and stay for a period of up to 90 days. Citizens of other countries including the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand require a visa to enter Turkey. Most foreign nationals entering Turkey must purchase a visa before entering the country. It is important that you purchase your visa through the official website, www.evisa.gov.tr and avoid purchasing through third-party providers, as these can be considerably more expensive.

Please note that visa regulations are subject to change and we advise that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel. For a full list of visa requirements, please visit www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa.

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.

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. 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/>.