



TRIP OVERVIEW

The iconic Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swim is back in 2020, bigger and better than ever. Complete an unforgettable crossing from Asia to Europe as the Bosphorus Strait in Istanbul comes to a standstill for this annual event. Join more than 2,400 competitors from across the globe as swimmers take over the Bosphorus waters and one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world is temporarily closed to traffic.

2020 BOSPHORUS BALLOT

The best way to secure one of the limited number of places in this heavily oversubscribed international event is to enter the 2020 Bosphorus Ballot.

Please note that entering the ballot does not guarantee your place in the Bosphorus swim.

In previous years we have successfully secured spots for all of our swimmers, up to 300 places. We expect to have a similar number of places in 2020. However, we are unable to guarantee the exact number of places that will be available prior to the completion of the ballot process.

KEY DATES

- The ballot will open on **Tuesday 22 October 2019 at 15:00 (GMT)**.
- The ballot will close on **Friday 27 December 2019 at 15:00 (GMT)**.
- All guests who enter into the Bosphorus ballot will be notified about whether they have been successful in obtaining a place in the Bosphorus event between **Saturday 11 January 2020** and **Tuesday 11 February 2020**.

HOW DOES IT WORK

Competition for places on this iconic swim is stronger than ever, so as done in previous years, in 2020 a ballot system will be running to give as many people as possible a fair opportunity to secure a spot.

The Bosphorus ballot is a system whereby all swimmers who book to take part in the Bosphorus event via SwimTrek will be placed into a draw for a chance to be allocated one of the limited available places in the race.

- To enter the ballot, visit the following link and make a booking on one of the available 2020 Bosphorus packages for all guests that would like to take part in the event:

www.swimtrek.com/packages/swimming-holiday-bosphorus-cross-continental-swim

- To complete your booking, a deposit of 40% of your total booking price is required.



- Once you've made your booking, you must complete the required profile information in your SwimTrek account within 48 hours. **Without this information, we will be unable to enter you into the ballot and your booking may be cancelled.** To complete the required profile information, log in to your SwimTrek account and fill out the 'My Social Profile', 'My Travel Details', 'My Health Details' and 'My Contact Details' sections. If you need help to complete the required profile information, please contact the SwimTrek office.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If I'm successful in the ballot, does that mean that my place in the event is guaranteed?

Almost. Once we've let you know that you've been successful in the ballot, we will send you your official race application form via email. You'll then need to print out the form, complete it (including the swim coach sign off and your declaration from a GP) and post the original copy (i.e. not a scan or photocopy), back to us within six weeks.

Once you return your application form to us, we'll check to make sure that it has been completed correctly. We'll then send you an email to confirm that we have received your application and it will be submitted for the event, so that you can begin making plans for your trip to Turkey.

When should I book my flights and confirm other travel plans?

IMPORTANT: Please do not book any flights or make other travel plans before you receive an email from SwimTrek to confirm that your application form has been completed correctly and submitted for the event.

What happens if I'm unsuccessful in the ballot?

If you are unsuccessful in the ballot, we will notify you no later than **Tuesday 11 February 2020**. Your full deposit amount will then be refunded to your original payment method within seven working days.

What happens if I'm successful in the ballot but then change my mind about taking part in the event? Can I transfer my place in the event to someone else or get a refund?

Unfortunately, once you have been notified that you've been successful in the ballot, your place in the event is non-transferrable and your deposit is non-refundable. For further information about our refund policy, please refer to our [terms and conditions](#).

What if I'm travelling as part of a group?

While every effort will be made to secure places in the event for all members of your group, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

All members of the group who are successful in the ballot will be notified between **Saturday 11 January 2020** and **Tuesday 11 February 2020**. Their place in the event will be non-transferrable and their deposit will be non-refundable.



If a member of your group is not successful in the ballot, they will be notified no later than **Tuesday 11 February 2020** and their deposit will be refunded within seven working days. If unsuccessful, they will not be able to swim in the event this year, but they will still have the opportunity to join the group, as a supporter. Please refer to the 'Practical Information' section below for more information on our Supporters Package.

Where can I find out more about the required profile information that I'll need to provide to enter the ballot and the application form that I'll need to complete if I'm successful in the ballot?

For further information about the required profile information and the official Bosphorus application form, please refer to the 'Important Information' section below.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

The Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swim is a significant open water swim and conditions during the race may be challenging. A good experience of swimming in all sea conditions is essential and you should have relevant open water knowledge to be confident if such conditions do arise. Please be aware that this race also involves a mass start, but due to the large number of participants, it is possible to take your time and wait for a quieter period to enter the water.

This trip is only available to be booked through SwimTrek as a complete package (including accommodation). Anyone who would like to take part in the race only must apply via the Turkish Olympic Committee directly. If you choose not to join as a swimmer, there is the opportunity to join as a supporter. There are a limited number of supporters tickets available which include shared accommodation with a race participant and all SwimTrek transfers.

NOTE: Turkish passport holders are unable to register for this event through SwimTrek and must apply via the Turkish Olympic Committee directly.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Istanbul

Istanbul is a city of contrasts with an enchanting blend of Eastern and Western culture giving this vibrant and modern city a truly unique identity.

As Byzantium, Constantinople and finally, Istanbul, it has been the capital of three empires, each leaving their mark in the form of stunning palaces, castles, mosques, churches and monuments. Set in a beautiful location surrounded by the waters of the narrow strait of the Bosphorus and the serene sea of Marmara, Istanbul is uniquely European and authentically Asian at the same time.



Bosphorus

The Bosphorus is a 30 km strait which divides Istanbul and joins the Sea of Marmara with the Black Sea. The width of the strait varies from 500 m - 3 km and its depth from 50 - 120 m. As one of the busiest waterways in the world, the Bosphorus sees hundreds of passenger and commercial vessels travel across and along it every day.

The name Bosphorus comes from Greek legend: Zeus had an affair with a beautiful woman named Io. When Hera, his wife, discovered his infidelity, she turned Io into a cow and created a horsefly to sting her. Io jumped clear across the strait. Thus, 'bous' (cow) + 'poros' (crossing-place) = Bosphorus (Crossing place of the cow).

TRIP SCHEDULE

Friday 10 July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hotel check-in● Early race registration opens● Welcome drinks
Saturday 11 July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Transfer from hotel to race registration● Race registration - *Compulsory* (unless registered earlier)● Boat tour of race course● Return transfer to hotel● Optional sightseeing tour of Istanbul
Sunday 12 July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hotel check-out● Transfer from Hotel to Kurucesme Cemil Topuzlu Park● BOSPHORUS SWIM● Awards Ceremony● Return transfer to hotel

Final Trip Schedules

Please note that the below itinerary should be used as a guide only and a final trip schedule with confirmed timings for all events and activities will be forwarded to all guests prior to the start of the trip.

Day 1

After checking in to your hotel, you'll have the chance to meet up with your SwimTrek guides and fellow swimmers in the evening for welcome drinks and an informal catch-up to kick off your trip.

To avoid long waiting times at race registration tomorrow, we would highly recommend taking advantage of Early Race Registration and registering today, for those arriving early and have free time.



Day 2

In the morning we head to the race village to complete local registration. Please note that the race registration is **compulsory**. Failure to attend this will mean you will be unable to enter the swim. During race registration, all competitors will be given their swim hats, badges and timing chips in preparation for the swim

In the afternoon, we have the option to join the official boat tour of the race course, learning the importance of which route to follow during the swim. The boat tours are organised by the Turkish Olympic Committee and are open to both accredited swimmers and their family and friends.

After this you will have the option of taking some time to relax in preparation for the following day's race or take this opportunity to book an optional sightseeing tour of Istanbul.

Day 3

After an early breakfast and check-out from our hotels, it's time for the main event! At 08:00, all swimmers meet at Kurucesme Cemil Topuzlu Park ready to board the ferries that take us north to the race start point. The race starts at around 10:00 and we swim down the 6½km course, taking in the sights of the city of Istanbul while having the swim of a lifetime!

The race and awards ceremony is expected to be over by 13:00, giving us time to catch an evening flight or stay on to enjoy the hospitality of Istanbul.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Required Profile Information

Once you've made your booking, you **must** complete the required profile information in your SwimTrek account within 48 hours. **Without this information, we will be unable to enter you into the ballot and your booking may be cancelled.**

To complete the required profile information, log in to your SwimTrek account and fill out the 'My Social Profile', 'My Travel Details', 'My Health Details' and 'My Contact Details' sections (required information will be highlighted in red). If you need help to complete the required profile information, please contact the SwimTrek office.

IMPORTANT: Please note that the first name and surname on your SwimTrek account **must** match those in your passport in order to take part in the Bosphorus event. If these names do not match, you may not be able to complete the official race registration in Istanbul prior to the event.

Race Application Form and Medical Sign-Off

If you are successful in the Bosphorus ballot, we will send you your official race application form which you'll need to complete and send back to us within six weeks, otherwise we will not be able to confirm your entry into the event.

As part of your application form, you will need to have a medical examination by a certified medical practitioner.



Please Note: *There will likely be a fee for doctor sign off and this may need to be done privately, as not all GPs are able to sign off a declaration. It is your responsibility to book and pay for your medical appointment with sufficient time to complete your form and return it to us before the agreed deadline.*

Once you return your application form to us, we'll check to make sure that it has been completed correctly. We'll then send you an email to confirm that we have received your application and it will be submitted for the event, so that you can begin making plans for your trip to Turkey.

The following forms and other documents will need to be returned to the SwimTrek office:

- 1 x original completed application form (Please note that the Turkish Olympic Committee require the **original application form**. Scanned or photocopied forms will **not** be accepted.)
- 1 x original passport photo taken within the last six months
- 1 x photocopy of the photo page of your passport (with at least six months validity)
- 1 x photocopy of your swimming coach's qualification certificate

IMPORTANT: A qualified swim coach will be required to sign off your registration form in order to confirm that you are 'Fit for participation' in the Bosphorus swim. A copy of this coach's qualification (e.g. certificate from national governing body) will also need to be submitted with your official paperwork in order to register for the event. If you do not have a swim coach, it is your responsibility to enquire with local pools or swimming clubs in order to find a suitable person to assist with this process.

NOTE: All of the above information is required by the Turkish Olympic Committee and no exceptions can be made. The only photocopies which are accepted are the copy of your passport and your coach's qualification. **All other documents, including your official application form, must be original.**

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	<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.

NOTE: Due to the nature of the event and the mild water temperature, wetsuits are not allowed. Jewellery and watches, of any kind, are also strictly prohibited during the race. Compulsory swim hats and ankle bands with timing chips will be given out by the event organisers. You should bring a swim costume, goggles and towel.



Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swim

The world's most concentrated shipping lane is closed to all traffic as we participate in this annual race. You can either race to win it or just go along at your own pace. You should note, however, that conditions during the race may be challenging. Therefore, we advise that you should have relevant open water experience and be confident if such conditions do arise.

Race Organisers

Please be aware that whilst SwimTrek organise the tour part of your package, the Turkish Olympic Committee are the event organisers and are fully responsible for race safety decisions and logistics.

TRIP GRADING

Swimming Distances

Swim	Distance
Bosphorus	6½ km (the swim is current-assisted, which is equivalent to approximately 4 km)

There is a time limit of **two hours** to complete the 6½ km course. The Turkish Coast Guard will remove swimmers from the water if they do not finish the crossing within this time.

Water Flow

An interesting feature of the Bosphorus strait is its curious water flow. On the surface, the Bosphorus usually flows from the Black Sea towards the Sea of Marmara (carrying our Bosphorus swimmers along with it). However, at greater depths, the current flows in the opposite direction, carrying huge volumes of water back towards the Black Sea.

Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience, however you should be aware that certain marine life such as sea lice, jellyfish and sea urchins could be present during the swim. If you suffer from anaphylaxis, please consult the office prior to booking.

Temperatures

Month	Water Temperature*	Air Temperature*
July	22-26°C / 72-79°F	28-32°C / 82-90°F

*Please note that temperatures are based on 2019 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.



GETTING THERE

Istanbul is a popular travel destination and there are a wide range of scheduled flights operating to the city's two main airports, Istanbul Airport and Sabiha Gokcen International Airport, from all around the world.

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 [Skyscanner](https://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.

SwimTrek Transfers

SwimTrek will provide transfers between your accommodation and the race village for registration and the boat tour on Saturday 11 July, as well as to and from the race meeting point on Sunday 12 July.

Flights to Istanbul Airport (IST) and Sabiha Gokcen (SAW) Airport

To search for available flights into the two major airports in Istanbul, please visit www.skyscanner.net.

Istanbul's new airport, 'Istanbul Airport' replaced Istanbul Atatürk Airport as the city's International Airport in 2019. Istanbul Airport is located north of the now permanently closed Atatürk Airport, on the European side.

Private Transfer from Istanbul Airport to Hotel

If you would like to book a private transfer from Istanbul Airport to your hotel, this can be arranged via our partners in Turkey; Wilusa Travel (www.wilusa.net).

Taxi from Istanbul Airport and Sabiha Gokcen Airport to Hotel

Taxis are readily available from both Istanbul Airport and Sabiha Gokcen Airport to Istanbul city centre for approximately €25 - €30 (160TRY - 200TRY).

Public Transport from Istanbul Airport and Sabiha Gokcen Airport to Hotel

The cheapest way to get from both airports into the centre of Istanbul is by using public transport, although this can be a more complicated option.

From Istanbul Airport, central Istanbul is currently only reachable by public transport through IETT buses or HAVAIST shuttles. For further information on public transport from both airports, please visit: <https://www.iett.istanbul/en/main/pages/access-to-airports/798>.

The city has a well-renowned metro and tram system, However, the new metro line (M11) from Istanbul Airport to Levent in central Istanbul, is currently under construction. It is due to be completed in 2020 and should provide much shorter journey times.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

Your SwimTrek package includes two nights' accommodation on Friday 10 July and Saturday 11 July at one of the below hotels which are located around the Sisli area of Istanbul. Our accommodation is based on twin-share rooms with en suite facilities. There are a limited number of single supplement rooms which can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability.

HOTEL	WEBSITE
4-Star Divan City Istanbul	www.divan.com.tr/divan-istanbul-city/en
5-Star Point Hotel Barbaros	www.pointhotel.com/point-hotel-barbaros-home.aspx
5-Star Mercure Istanbul The Plaza Bosphorus	https://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-A477-mercure-istanbul-the-plaza-bosphorus/index.shtml

Please note, although the official check-out time at the hotel will be around 12:00, it is important to check-out prior to leaving for the race on Sunday 12 July due to the fact that you will not arrive back at the hotel until after the race at about 13:00.

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you would like to extend your stay in Istanbul and need to book additional nights' accommodation before or after your trip, please either contact our partners at Wilusa Travel (www.wilusa.net) or get in touch with the hotels directly using the links above. Please note that when booking extra nights, it may not be possible to reserve the same room and you may be required to check out and check in to a different room before or after your SwimTrek trip.

Supporters Package

There are a limited number of supporters tickets available which include shared accommodation with a race participant and all SwimTrek transfers. Please note that, on the day of the event, supporters will be at the finish line and will not be able to see the start of the race live, however, several big screens at the finish point will broadcast the race start for supporters to see.

Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as dinners, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs, etc. The local currency in Turkey is Turkish Lira (TRY). Cash machines, bars and restaurants are plentiful in Istanbul city centre.



In addition to the race and accommodation, those that would like to take advantage of a guided city tour of Istanbul can book this through our partners in Turkey (at an additional cost). Please visit www.wilusa.net for more information on prices and availability.

Please note that, while Wi-Fi is available at all SwimTrek hotels, as Turkey is not part of the European Union, extra roaming charges will apply for European guests who choose to use a SIM card from their home country while they are in Turkey. Local SIM cards are available for purchase upon arrival at both major airports in Istanbul, as well as throughout the city.

Please Note: As an extra expense prior to your trip, it is your responsibility to book and pay for your medical appointment, in order to obtain sign off from your GP, as part of your application.

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.

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 worldstandards.eu/.