



TRIP OVERVIEW

Discover some of the most breathtaking landscapes in North America with this truly unique swimming holiday amongst the rivers, lakes and canyons of Arizona's stunning Salt River region. This is a jaw-droppingly beautiful trip with an action-packed itinerary which takes in the remarkable natural scenery and local wildlife that exist in the area.

Taking in the dynamic landscapes of the area, where the Salt River flows through the Tonto National Forest, this really is a SwimTrek adventure like no other. The river is chiselled between deep canyons, steep lakeside cliffs, and a meandering river course through Arizona's Sonoran Desert, creating a lake and river setting that will have you telling stories of 'swimming in the Wild West' for years to come. Over the course of the trip, we swim the length of entire canyons, with mountain peaks reaching high up above as we pass by.

It's not just the swimming that makes this a trip of a lifetime, though. Our incredible itinerary see us explore the surroundings of Saguaro Lake, Canyon Lake and Apache Lake as our journey takes us through Arizona's Tonto National Forest, with panoramic views of the surrounding canyons, often described as some of the most impressive in the whole of the United States.

We stay at the secluded Saguaro Lake Ranch, which is a comfortable, rustic base for the duration of the trip and has echoes of a bygone era of gold prospecting, cattle drives and gunfights.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for the swimmer who relishes the idea of swimming in beautiful freshwater in one of the most visually stunning landscapes in North America, while escaping the hustle and bustle of everyday life on a truly unique swimming holiday. Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average daily swim distance of around 5 km (split over a minimum of two swims) prior to the start of the trip.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Saguaro Lake

Saguaro Lake was formed when the Stewart Mountain Dam was completed in 1930. The Lake has high rimmed canyon walls which make the views from the water stunning. Bald Eagles, Osprey, Falcons and Harris's Hawks are common visitors to its shores. It's eastern end is a mix of gorges and cliff faces.

Canyon Lake

Canyon Lake is undoubtedly the most nonlinear of all the lakes; it twists and turns from the start, at the base of Horse Mesa Dam, to its finish at Mormon Flat Dam. Many species of migratory songbirds nest in the area, such as Black-chinned and Costa's Hummingbirds, Vermilion and Ash-throated flycatchers. Its entire length is full of jaw dropping vistas.



Apache Lake

The Apache Lake separates the Four Peaks of Wilderness from the Superstition Wilderness and is located near the Apache Trail near Tortilla Flat, Gila County, Arizona. It is the largest and one of the most stunning lakes that we visit. It is worth pointing out that you won't be the only ones near the water's edge; Bighorn sheep, Deer, Coyotes, Raccoons, Skunks, and other wildlife may be seen on the hillsides or surrounding water edges.

Tonto National Park

The Tonto National Park embraces almost 3 million acres of rugged and spectacularly beautiful country. Its vegetation ranges from Saguaro cactus-studded deserts to pine-forested mountains beneath the Mogollon Rim. The lakes are within the Superstition Wilderness Area of the park with high levels of federal land protection for nature conservation.

Saguaro Lake Ranch

Our 'base' is ideally located on the banks of the Salt River, underneath the imposing Bulldog Cliffs which rise up above it. The ranch was created out of the work camp built in 1927 to facilitate the construction of the nearby Stewart Mountain Dam.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Saguaro Lake Ranch , Saguaro, Arizona
Start Time	16.00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Sky Harbor Airport, Phoenix, Arizona
Finish Time	18:00 on Day 6

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 at the Saguaro Lake Ranch, you will have time to check in to your accommodation before meeting in the ranch's living room at 16:00 for a welcome drink and safety briefing in which you'll have a chance to meet your fellow SwimTrekks and SwimTrek guides.

Depending on the water release schedule from the Saguaro Lake Dam, we will either swim in the Salt River or head to Saguaro Lake for our acclimatisation swim. Following our swim, it's time for the first of our delicious camp cowboy cookout dinners at the ranch.



Day 2

We start the first full day of the trip swimming at Saguaro Lake. We jump aboard our escort boats and head to the far end of Saguaro Lake to Wallace Beach, which is a few hundred metres down from Mormon Flat Dam which divides Saguaro and Canyon Lakes. From Wallace Beach, we swim down between narrow canyon walls until we reach Bagley Point, which is an ideal lunch spot.

After lunch, we swim in a horseshoe direction from Bagley Point to Ship Rock, situated directly in the middle of the lake. On this swim, the landscape starts to open up and we get our first glimpses of Browns Peak and the other summits of the Four Peaks Wilderness Area.

In the evening we have a swim coaching session in the ranch's own swimming pool, followed by a video session with your swim guides where we play back and analyse your stroke.

Day 3

It's a full day today as we venture to Lake Apache to explore the most distant lake in the Salt River system. Our drive takes in incredible mountain views as we traverse the Tonto National Forest and Lake Roosevelt. This scenic drive along parts of the Apache Trail is like stepping back in time; you can almost see the prospectors searching for gold. This isolated lake is the longest of any of the Salt River's lakes.

Our morning swim ventures into the narrow Alder Creek from where we strike out west towards Long Canyon. The views on this swim are some of the most visually stunning of the whole week as we swim through a landscape eerily reminiscent of the Grand Canyon.

After time to rest and have lunch in Long Canyon, the afternoon sun warmly lights the inspiring Painted Cliffs rock formations as we make our way by, swimming near the Horse Mesa Dam which separates Apache from Canyon Lake. On this swim, there is an opportunity to take in the vibrant gold light as we conclude our Apache Lake swimming.

On the return journey, time permitting, there is an opportunity to stop off at Jake's Bar in Mud Spring, for a refreshment or two.

Day 4

We embrace our Wild West setting this morning as we drive to Canyon Lake. Cacti line our route, which passes Goldfield Ghost Town, deserted mines and magnificent mountains. From our Canyon Lake launch point of Labarge Point, we can clearly see Mormon Flat Dam in the distance. We enter the lake at Fallacy Cove and swim north-eastwards on one of our longest swims of the trip. We take in Russ Cove and Bass Creek before exiting the water at The Point, from where we have stunning views of the mountain peaks above.

In the afternoon, we undertake a shorter swim from The Point to Crucifix Gorge, which features a lake crossing, followed up by a swim down the gorge's entire length, which offers a nice contrast to the main lake.



Day 5

It's an early start today for our second day on Canyon Lake. Today's swims take us deep into the more remote eastern section of this meandering lake. The canyon looms large overhead and it is an impressive site from the water. From Skull Cove, which lies next to Crucifix Gorge, we journey past Waterfall Lagoon, Blue Tank Cove and Seucito Point before arriving at Eagle Rock.

Today's lunch is enjoyed on the sandy beach beyond Eagle Bend. After lunch, we undertake the last leg of Canyon Lake and explore the beautiful tributary of Fish Creek. The Creek is like a labyrinth of side channels and is a great way to finish our time at Canyon Lake.

In the evening, the ranch hosts another cowboy cookout, which is a fitting last dinner underneath the impressive canopy of Arizona stars.

Day 6

We head back up to Saguaro Lake and set off on this morning's semi circumnavigation of the Tonto Peninsula, of which Mt Pinter dominates the skyline. We start from Ship Rock and go via Razorback Point and Campers Cove before finally landing at Peregrin Cove, located on the Butcher Jones Trail. If time allows, there is an opportunity to have a short walk along the track at the end of our swim.

In the afternoon, it's our final swim of the trip, as we complete the length of Saguaro Lake by swimming towards Saguaro Del Norte. It's an easy place to spot as sheer cliffs rise above the beach below, and it is a fitting finish to our trip in this pristine land of gorges and canyons.

After completing our last swim, we have our final chance to take in southwestern scenery on our drive back to Phoenix, where we drop you at Sky Harbor Airport in order to catch an evening flight, rent a car or extend your stay in Arizona.

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"/>	Sweater / Fleece
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insect Repellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel		

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



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
Wallace Beach - Bagley Flats	3½km	Bagley Flats - Ship Rock	2½km
Alder Creek - Long Canyon	3km	Long Canyon - Horse Mesa Dam	2km
Fallacy Cove - The Point	3½km	The Point - Crucifix Gorge	1½km
Skull Cove - Eagle Rock	2½km	Eagle Rock - Fish Creek	3km
Ship Rock - Peregrin Cove	3km	Peregrin Cove - Del Norte	2km

Walking Distances

There is a limited amount of walking on this trip, mostly around the ranch and on the Butcher Jones Trail around Saguaro Lake. 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.

Temperatures

Month	Water Temperature*	Air Temperature*
September	21-24°C / 70-75°F	26-29°C / 79-84°F
October	21-24°C / 70-75°F	26-29°C / 79-84°F

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

Swimming Conditions

These lakes have some of Western America's cleanest fresh water, however, as with any lakes around the world, water quality can vary. If you do feel unwell at any stage after the trip, you should go to your GP immediately and let them know what you have been doing.

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 14. The group will be split into a maximum of two groups, based on speed, with each group being accompanied by their own safety vessel/escort.

Boat support on this trip includes two pontoon boats to be piloted by your SwimTrek guides. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.



GETTING THERE

The easiest way to get to the start of your trip is to fly into Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and then catch the designated SwimTrek transfer to our accommodation. The airport is serviced by a large selection of domestic and international flights and is located 32 miles from Saguaro Lake Ranch. It has also been dubbed 'America's friendliest airport.'

It is also possible to travel via Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, which is located just 25 miles from Saguaro Lake Ranch, however, please note that there are limited flight arrivals into this airport.

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.

Flights to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport

To search for available flights into Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, please visit www.skyscanner.net.

SwimTrek Transfer from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport to Saguaro Lake Ranch

A designated SwimTrek transfer departs Phoenix Sky Harbour Airport at 13:30 on Day 1 of your trip. The cost of the service is £20 per person. To book this transfer, please contact the SwimTrek office with your arrival details into Phoenix Sky Harbour Airport. The transfer will be added to your booking and will need to be paid for via your SwimTrek account prior to the start of your trip.

Taxi from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport to Saguaro Lake Ranch

There are limited public transport options to Saguaro Lake Ranch. If your travel plans do not coincide with the time of the private SwimTrek transfer or the maximum number of passengers has already been reached, it's possible to catch a taxi from outside the airport arrivals hall. The journey time to Saguaro Lake Ranch is approximately 40 minutes and costs around \$80-\$120. Parking is available at the ranch, if necessary.

Flights to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport

To search for available flights into Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, please visit www.skyscanner.net. For further information about travelling via this airport, please visit: www.phxmesagateway.org.

Return Transfer to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport

After your final swim on the last day of your trip, you will be transferred back to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, where your trip will come to an end. Please note that this transfer will arrive at approximately 18:00 and is included in the cost of your trip.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

Saguaro Lake Ranch, on the banks of the Salt River, is our home in Arizona's Tonto Wilderness National Park. The accommodation is in rustic cabins in the shadow of the majestic Bulldog Cliffs, with panoramic views of the Four Peaks Wilderness. After our action-packed days of swimming, the ranch is a secluded oasis where you can relax and unwind with your fellow swimmers under idyllic star-lit skies.

Our accommodation is based on twin-share cabins with private bathrooms, air-conditioning and heating. There are a limited number of single supplement rooms which can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability.

If you would like to extend your stay at Saguaro Lake Ranch and need to book additional nights' accommodation before or after your trip, please contact the hotel directly via: info@saguarolakeranch.com

Meals

All breakfasts, lunches and dinners are included. Our meals are wonderfully prepared from scratch in the ranch kitchen using fresh ingredients. A hearty, buffet-style breakfast is served in the unique dining room, with tables and chairs surrounding a giant Saguaro cactus skeleton. We take a good lunch with us on each day and enjoy a delicious dinner at the ranch on each night of the trip.

Extra Expenses

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as souvenirs and drinks. The local currency is US dollars (\$US). Beer and wine are available on site at the ranch, payable locally. There is no ATM at the ranch or at the Saguaro Lake marina, so we recommend bringing cash with you to cover these expenses.

Gratuity for your accommodation and meals is included in your package. We suggest a tip of between 5-10% for services such as transfers or taxis.

Passports and Visas

Non-residents of the United States require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. The majority of visitors to the US require a visa to enter the country. Many nationalities can apply online for the ESTA Visa Waiver Program by visiting: www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/esta

For further information about US visas, please visit: www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html

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 the US, 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/electricity/plug-voltage-by-country/.

Other Information

If there is any further information that you require before your trip, or if you have any questions whatsoever, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us using the contact details at the bottom of these Trip Notes.

Happy swimming!