



TRIP OVERVIEW

Join us on the original SwimTrek adventure on our classic Greek Cyclades swimming holiday. Running since 2003, this island-hopping getaway gives you the chance to swim amongst some of the most beautiful scenery, isolated beaches, and dramatic coastlines in the Mediterranean Sea.

With your very own 40-foot yacht to accompany you on each swim, you will criss-cross your way between five different islands over the course of the week, giving you the opportunity to appreciate the isolation and natural beauty of this spectacular part of the Mediterranean.

In addition to the beautiful scenery above the water, our coastal swims are also the perfect way to experience the area from a truly unique perspective as we explore the sea caves, tunnels, arches and other underwater topography that exist along the shorelines of the various islands that we visit.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is designed for the swimmer who enjoys both coastal swims and crossings on our coastal swims, while staying on Greek islands. Swimmers should have a basic understanding of open water swimming and are capable of completing the average daily swim distance of around 4km.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Schinoússa

Schinoússa is still largely unspoilt and undiscovered by all but the most intrepid tourist. Its claim to fame is the high number of beaches dotted all along the rocky and craggy coastline.

Koufoníssi

Koufoníssi is comprised of two islands, Ano (upper) and Kato (lower). Noted for their sandy beaches and bohemian lifestyle, the islands are only 700m apart.

Keros

Known for its archaeological importance in Cycladic history, Keros is famous for its flat faced marble statues which later inspired the works of Pablo Picasso and Henry Moore.

Náxos

Náxos is the largest and most fertile of the Cycladic islands lying almost at the centre of the Aegean. Meadows running down to vast beaches and cliffs sinking suddenly into the sea give Náxos its natural variety. The peak of Mt Zeus, which is claimed to be the birthplace of the god Zeus, is the highest point in the Cyclades.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Archipelagos Hotel, Schinoússa. www.schinoussa.gr
Start Time	17:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Paradise Hotel, Koufonissi. www.paradisekoufonisi.gr
Finish Time	08:00 on Day 7

Day 1

You arrive into Schinoússa on the Express Skopelitis ferry, the island's only connection with Naxos. After some time to check into your room and freshen up, we meet at 17:00 on the terrace of the Archipelagos Hotel. In the light of an incomparable Aegean sunset you enjoy welcome drinks, introductions and discuss the daily schedule in the pre-trip briefing. Then it's off for dinner at one of the island's beautiful boutique tavernas.

Day 2

A relaxing start this morning with an acclimatisation swim held in the fabulous Tsigouri Bay, accessed by the hotel's own private path. Following this, we hold a coaching session with a focus on open-water technique. After lunch at the beach side café we swim to the uninhabited island of Fidousa, with its steep rocky shore and curious mountain goats. The early evening is given over to a session on video analysis where we play back your stroke from the earlier morning session.

Day 3

Our first significant crossing as you swim out to the island of Iraklia which sits directly opposite Schinoússa's southern coast, finishing in beautiful Mourto bay. Following an onboard lunch and some rest in the bay we continue our swimming to navigate the spectacular underwater cliffs, stone beaches and hidden treasures of Iraklia's southern coastline.

Day 4

Today we have an early start, departing Schinoússa for our new accommodation on the island of Ano Koufoníssi. In true SwimTrek style however, we will be swimming most of the journey! Heading out from Schinoússa's isolated eastern shoreline, we make our way to the tall and foreboding cliffs of Kato Koufonissi ("Lower Cave") Island. After some well earned sustenance you can spend time bathing in the island's remote caves and perhaps enjoy the company of turtles and dolphins which have been spotted here. In the afternoon we'll resume our journey to the upper island of Ano Koufonissi, tracking along the sandy bays and cliffs of Kato Koufonissi's southern shoreline.

Day 5

After breakfast, we set out to make the exciting crossing to the uninhabited island of Keros. This island was once the centre of an ancient Cycladic community and its demise is shrouded in mystery. The island is also known as a site of important archaeological significance with excavations both above and below the water. This day has proven to be a real highlight of the week, as we “open up the sails” on our journey home. In the afternoon you have time for a rest or a spectacular walk to the northern beach of Pori Bay where hidden caves and a secluded lagoon awaits. For those who wish, there is another opportunity to have an optional stroke analysis and technique session with your guides.

Day 6

Today is another day of great swims; coastal or crossings, bays or reefs, it’s a great way to finish your swimming odyssey. The fascinating outcrops of the islands south of Keros is a swimmers paradise with nice sheltered crossings on show. Your swim distances are flexible, so choose to swim as much or as little as you like.

Day 7

We hold an early morning swim before breakfast. We make sure the timing of the morning swim ties in with the Express Skopelitis ferry which departs from Koufonissi at between 0800-0900. It’s a last chance to check with your guides on any swim technique issues before the tour ends at Koufonissi harbour.

TRIP INFORMATION

Essential 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"/>	Towel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2)*	<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"/>	Waterproof Jacket	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes / Sandals

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

SwimTrek will supply swim hats. We will have a limited supply/range of flippers, rash vests and wetsuits available on the trip, however we cannot guarantee sizes for all. If you have your own flippers, rash vest or wetsuit, we would recommend you bring these with you in order to maximise your enjoyment of the trip. Please note that SwimTrek will 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.

Luggage Recommendation

Due to restricted space on both the ferries and the yacht we recommend traveling with soft suitcases.

Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
May	20-22°C 68-72°F	22-24°C 72-75°F
June	21-23°C 69-73°F	23-25°C 73-77°F
July	22-24°C 72-75°F	27-29 °C 80-84°F
August	23-25°C 73-77°F	29-31°C 84-87°F
September	23-25°C 73 - 77°F	28-30°C 82-86°F

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

Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Schinoússa - Fidousa	2km	Kato Koufoníssi Coastal	1½km
Schinoússa - Iraklia	3km	Ano Koufoníssi - Keros	4km
Iraklia Coastal	2km	Keros Archipelago Island Hop (Megali Plaka-Tssouloufi-Lazaros)	3km
Schinoússa - Kato Koufoníssi	3km	Keros Archipelago Island Hop (Lazaros-Andreas)	2km

Walking Distances

WALK	DISTANCE	WALK	DISTANCE
Schinoússa (Main village to Psili Amos)	2km	Koufoníssi (Main village to Pori Bay)	3km

Please note that 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.

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.

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 and Boat Support

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 support vessel and two inflatable 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

To get to the Archipelagos Hotel in Schinoússa there are a number of different travel options. For most guests, the easiest option is to fly into Athens and then catch either a connecting flight with Olympian Air or a ferry to Naxos and then onward to Schinoússa. You can also fly into a couple of other airports to reach Schinoússa such as Santorini and Mykonos. Please note that overnight stays may be required during transit in order for your flights to match up with suitable ferry departures. 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.

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 the following websites to search for alternative flight and ferry options for this trip.

Flights: www.skyscanner.net

Ferries: www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr

IMPORTANT: While it is recommended that you purchase your ferry tickets online in advance, it is worth mentioning that neither ferry operators nor third party websites will issue an 'e-ticket' at the time of booking, i.e. you will not be able to print your ticket prior to travel. You will have the option to either have your ticket sent to you via courier (upon payment of a postage fee) or to pick up your ticket when you arrive in Greece. Pick-up locations can vary from one ferry operator to the next and often include locations in central Athens, as well as offices which are located at your selected departure port. For any enquiries about ticket collections, please contact the ferry operator or booking agent directly.

Getting There via Athens

The following airlines fly to Athens from various European destinations.

Airline	Departure Airport
Aegean Air	Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Gatwick, Hamburg, Manchester, Paris
Air France	Paris
British Airways	London Heathrow
EasyJet	Berlin, Gatwick, Manchester
Lufthansa	Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich
Ryan Air	Berlin, Stansted

Flights from Athens to Naxos

From Athens airport you can fly directly into Naxos via Olympic Air, if their schedule permits. Once released, flight schedules and availability can be found at www.olympicair.com.

Travelling from Athens (Piraeus Port) to Schinoússa

Whilst there are direct ferries from Athens to Schinoússa, these can be infrequent and may not involve daily departures; in past years these have tended not to match up very well with connecting flights from European destinations. The ferry company is called Blue Star Ferries and ferry schedules, once released, can be found at www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr. Please note that the ferry times are subject to change at any time.

Ferries from Athens (Piraeus Port) to Naxos

At Athens airport, leave the main entrance and turn right. Approximately 200 metres further down is the bus stop for the X96 bus travelling direct to Piraeus harbour (1 hour). For a bus timetable please visit the following website: www.athensairportbus.com/en/timetable/. The ticket booth to purchase your fare is adjacent to the stop and the journey costs approximately €6. At Piraeus, get off the bus at the stop closest to Ferry Gate 7. Depending on the type of ferry, travel time can vary, however as a guide we suggest the trip takes roughly 5-6 hours. The price is €45 - €60 one-way and tickets are available online at www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr or from local ferry agents along the harbour front, such as Alkyon Travel www.alkyontravel.gr. Please note that the ferry times are subject to change at any time.

Travelling from Naxos to Schinoússa

Once on the island of Naxos, there is an 'Express Skopelitis' ferry that leaves for Schinoússa, usually only once a day. Tickets and a full ferry timetable, once released, can be booked via either of the following websites www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr. Please note that the ferry times are subject to change at any time.

Option 2: Travelling via Santorini

The following airlines fly to Santorini from various European destinations. You can then catch a ferry from Santorini to Naxos. This is a faster option than flying into Athens but flights aren't daily, so please bear in mind that this option is suitable if you wish to spend a few extra days in Greece before and/or after the SwimTrek. Some flights will not be available towards the end of the season in late September.

Airline	Departure Airport
EasyJet	Gatwick, Manchester, Geneva
Condor	Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich
Thompson Airlines	Birmingham, Gatwick, Manchester
Norwegian Air	Gatwick, Edinburgh

For more flight information, we recommend visiting www.santoriniairportguide.com/airlines.

Ferries from Santorini to Naxos

From the airport you can take either a taxi or shuttle service to the port. Please note that there is no

public bus connection between the airport and port. This takes roughly 15-20 minutes. It's worth pointing out that there is no ticket office at Santorini Airport. However, the ticket offices at the port open one hour before any departure. For ticket availability and ferry schedules, once released, please visit either www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr. Please note that the ferry times are subject to change at any time.

Travelling from Naxos to Schinoússa

Once on the island of Naxos, there is an 'Express Skopelitis' ferry that leaves for Schinoússa, usually only once a day. Tickets and a full ferry timetable, once released, can be booked via either of the following websites www.danae.gr or www.openseas.gr. Please note that the ferry times are subject to change at any time.

Option 3: Travelling via Mykonos

The following airlines fly to Mykonos from various European destinations. You can then catch a ferry from Mykonos to Naxos.

Airline	Departure Airport
Aegean	Brussels
British Airways	London City
EasyJet	Gatwick, Manchester, Geneva
Volotea Airways	Munich

Ferries from Mykonos to Naxos

From the airport you can take a taxi to Mykonos port, which takes approximately 15 minutes. To arrange this booking please visit: www.taxireservations.gr. Travel time can vary, dependent on the ferry type, a guide duration is roughly 1½ - 2 hours to Naxos. The price is between €35-€45 one-way. For ticket availability and ferry schedules, once released, please visit either www.openseas.gr or www.danae.gr. Please note that the ferry times are subject to change.

Travelling from Naxos to Schinoússa

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Accommodation Whilst Traveling

Staying in Naxos

Naxos is an ideal island on which to stay either prior to or after your tour. We recommend the Hotel Grotta, a superb family-run hotel only 10 minutes walk from the ferry terminal and with lovely views over the islands of Mykonos and Paros. It has been SwimTrek's home away from home on Naxos for the last 13 years. You can book via the following website www.hotelgrotta.gr.

Overnight in Athens

The Hotel Phidias is a great hotel if you need to stay overnight in Athens prior to or after your trip.

Guests arriving at the port, metro, railway station and X96 airport bus stop, can be picked up by the Hotel Phidias free of charge by a shuttle bus service.

To benefit from this service it's important to contact the hotel first, by email: mphidiasgr@otenet.gr or call on +30 210 4296 480. For information on how to find the hotel just click on the location section of the hotel's homepage www.hotelphidias.gr/location.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

During your stay in the Cyclades we use basic, locally-owned hotels. The accommodation is based on twin-share with en suite facilities, with a small number of single supplements available. It is worth mentioning that due the nature of this trip, rooming options may vary slightly from one hotel to the next. This is explained within the booking process, however, if you have any questions at all, please feel free to call the SwimTrek office.

Archipelagos Hotel, Schinoussa: www.schinoussa.com

The first three nights are spent on the island of Schinoussa at the Archipelagos Hotel which is located on the south side of Schinoussa near the most popular beach on the island Tsigouri. The local village is also only 700 meters away making this an ideal stay in Schinoussa. The rooms at the Archipelagos Hotel vary significantly from one room to the next, so please pay attention to the room description (including the room size) during the booking process. If you require additional accommodation at Archipelagos Hotel prior to your trip, please contact Panagiotis via e-mail: hotelarchipelagos@gmail.com

Paradise Hotel, Koufoníssi: www.paradisekoufonisi.gr

The last three nights are spent on the island of Koufoníssi at the Paradise Hotel which is only 200 meters from the port and like the Archipelagos boasts some of the island's most and beautiful beaches right on their doorstep. If you require additional accommodation at Paradise Hotel at the end of your trip, please contact Manos via e-mail: info@paradisekoufonisi.gr

Meals

All breakfasts and lunches (except Day 4) are included in your trip price, however dinners are at your own expense. This gives you a fantastic opportunity to sample the abundance of traditional family run tavernas over the course of your trip. The average cost of dinner is between €20 - €30.

Extra Expenses

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as dinners, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs and your ferry transfers **both to Schinoussa at the start of the trip and Koufonissi at the end of the trip.** The local currency in Greece is Euro (€). A single ATM machine is available on both islands you stay on but these can be unreliable so we suggest withdrawing money before your departure or in Naxos.

Passports and Visas

Greece is part of the European Union. Non-residents of Greece 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, including all E.U. member states, U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not require a visa to enter Greece. Please note that visa regulations are subject to change and we advise that you

check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

Vaccinations

There are currently no essential vaccination requirements for Greece, however it is advisable to re-check this information eight weeks before you travel. You should also ensure that your immunity to tetanus and polio is up-to-date.