

Crete Unveiled

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Known as the "Great Island", Crete holds the title of the largest among all Greek islands, yet its beauty far exceeds its size. Picture mountains rearing straight up from the sea, gorges, and valleys and yet more glorious mountains all set against a backdrop of rich culture, globally renowned gastronomy, and unreal beaches. Crete's rugged terrain is an adventurer's paradise and in many respects the culmination of the Greek experience. This trip offers an in-depth exploration of the island, blending visits to historical sites, leisurely beach time, delightful cuisine, and breathtaking hikes.

Our trip starts in Chania Crete's most captivating city, known for its Venetian quarter, narrow lanes, and picturesque harbor. During our two-night stay, we'll explore the old town and enjoy seaside relaxation. Moving southward, we'll drive across the White Mountains to reach Loutro, a tranquil seaside village. During our two-day stay, we'll hike through Imbros Gorge and along the coastline, discovering hidden beaches and sea caves. Our next destination is Rethymnon, an enchanting city with a Venetian-Ottoman charm, serving as our base for two nights filled with hiking and swimming adventures. The final leg of our tour takes us to Heraklion, where we'll visit the ancient site of Knossos and savor a wine tasting experience. Bid farewell to Greece or join us for an extended stay, venturing to the dreamy Santorini.



Trip Highlights

- Take a dip in the turquoise waters of Balos Lagoon
- Immerse yourself in the rich culture and lifestyle of Crete while learning to cook authentic Cretan dishes
- Explore the three most evocative cities of Crete
- Experience a unique off-the-beaten-path stay in the fishing village of Loutro

Map



Tour Details

Dates: From May to October

Days/Nights: 8 days / 7 nights

Single supplement: Cost based on request. Availability limited.

Condition grading: Easy Active

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrival in Chania and welcome dinner

We love Chania, and we're sure you will too. Chania's ideal setting, framed by the White Mountains, vibrant harbor, remnants of its Turkish and Venetian history, bustling market, and nearby beaches, make it the most sought-after city in Crete. We'll gather in the afternoon at our hotel for an introductory talk and enjoy our first dinner together at a traditional restaurant. Naturally, Cretan cuisine is in the spotlight, thanks to the island's abundant and fertile land, coupled with a favorable climate that yields a variety of produce. From exotic avocados and bananas to tomatoes and the renowned Cretan olives, the island has it all. Of course we've spent numerous hours indulging in countless delicacies during our research into this crucial aspect, carefully selecting the best restaurants for you.

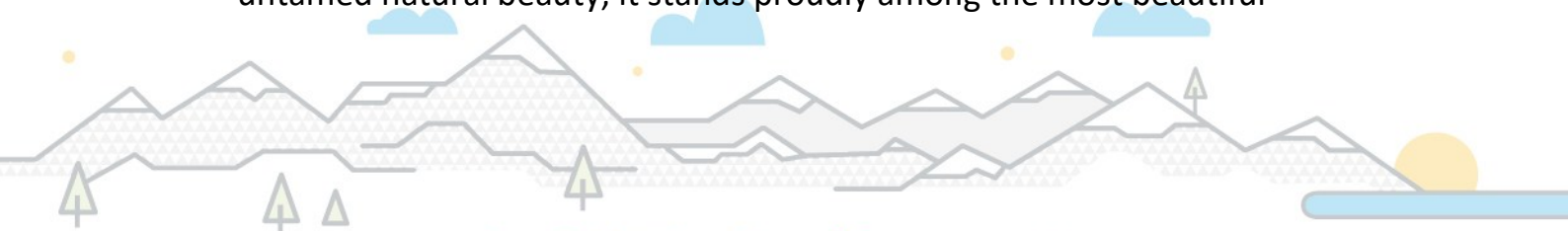
Overnight in Chania in a 4 hotel*

Dinner included

Day 2

Hop into a 4WD and enjoy a swim at the famous Balos lagoon

Today we will hop on a 4WD and drive towards Balos lagoon, one of Chania's most prized gems which cannot be missed. It is an exotic sandy beach of turquoise waters with a unique geomorphological shape located on the northwest side of the prefecture. Renowned for its untamed natural beauty, it stands proudly among the most beautiful



beaches in the country. Take some time to relax and soak it all in before saying goodbye to this coastal paradise.

In the evening, you'll be free to explore more of the Venetian city, wandering along its picturesque streets and checking out numerous local shops before we come together for dinner.

Overnight in Chania in a 4* hotel

Breakfast and dinner included

Hiking distance: 2,4 km / ***Hiking Duration:*** 2 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 160 m & 160 m

Driving distance:

Chania to Balos 50 km / 1 hr 30 min

Balos to Chania 50 km / 1 hr 30 min

Day 3

Hike Imbros Gorge and discover the hidden village of Loutro

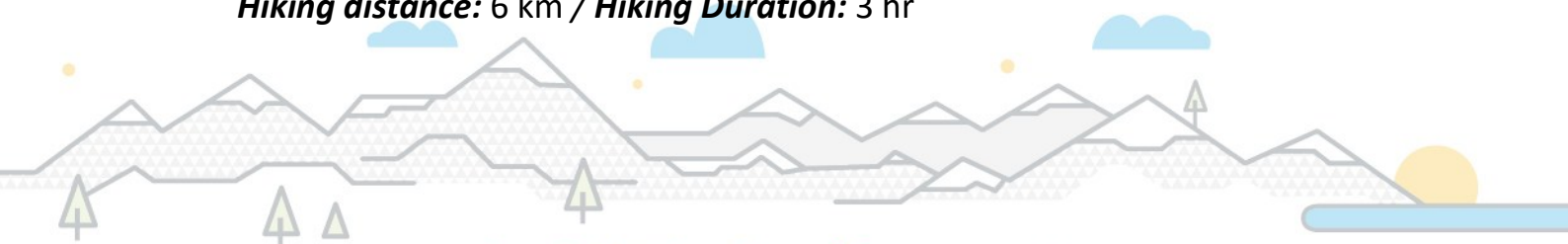
We start early from Chania, driving through the scenic White Mountains to reach Imbros Gorge. This pine tree-lined gorge offers a nice hike with changing widths, leading to the Libyan Sea. While smaller in scale compared to its well-known counterpart, Samaria Gorge, Imbros holds its own allure. With narrow passages, intriguing caves, and a breathtaking natural stone archway, this approximately three-and-a-half-hour descent promises an unforgettable adventure!

After the hike, we will hop on a ferry to the idyllic, tiny village of Loutro, a car-free coastal gem that can be reached only by the water. Known for its pristine beaches and clear waters, this area invites relaxation. Upon arrival, we'll check in and head straight to the beach. For tonight's dinner, we'll treat ourselves to local delights at a family taverna by the sea.

Overnight in Loutro in a boutique hotel

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Hiking distance: 6 km / ***Hiking Duration:*** 3 hr



Elevation gain & loss: 75 m & 700 m

Driving distance:

Chania to Entrance of the gorge: 61 km / 1 hr 20 min

Ferry:

Sfakia to Loutro: 45 min

Day 4

Hike along Crete's Dramatic Coast and swim at the Marble Beach

Southern Crete unfolds captivating mountain landscapes adorned with untouched bays. Exploring the region's south coast poses a unique adventure as most areas are accessible solely by sea or footpaths. Our hiking journey kicks off from Loutro. Along the way, we'll meander through goat-filled pastures, charming farmlands, and quaint villages, eventually reaching Marmara (Marble) Beach—a hidden gem in a picturesque cove where the Aradena gorge meets the sea. While the landscape may not readily divulge its secrets, a swim unveils a series of marble caves along the left side of the beach, sculpted by the relentless sea. Post-swim, a delectable lunch awaits at a nearby tavern. A ferry-taxi will take us back to Loutro, where the rest of the day is yours to savor the peaceful beauty of the surroundings.

Overnight in Loutro in a boutique hotel

Breakfast and lunch included

Hiking distance: 3 km / **Hiking Duration:** 1 hr

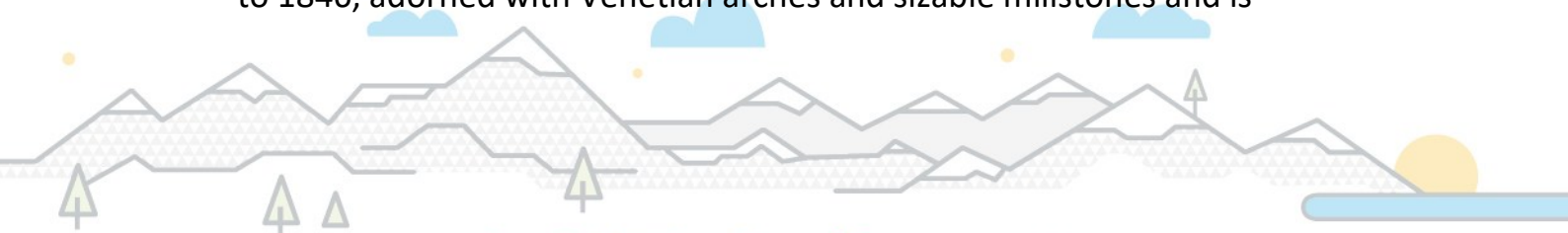
Elevation gain & loss: 180 m & 180 m

Ferry: Marmara to Loutro: 45min

Day 5

Cooking in a village and explore Rethymnon

We say goodbye to our hideaway and we head to the medieval city of Rethymnon. Along the journey, we'll pause at the charming village of Vamos for a cooking class. The class unfolds in an olive press dating back to 1846, adorned with Venetian arches and sizable millstones and is



hosted by Mrs. Koula. A Cretan native, Mrs. Koula carries the culinary wisdom of her family and graciously shares it with us.

In the afternoon, we reach Rethymnon. It is the only city in Crete built on a cape, is eloquently described by local writer Pantelis Prevelakis as being "on the boundary between calmness and fierceness." To the east lies a vast sandy beach, while the western coastline is rocky. Unlike Herakleio or Chania, Rethymno never had a large port that would have made it a center of trade. But it does have a wonderful old harbor, full of color, lined with Venetian and Ottoman buildings that have for centuries been reflected in its calm waters.

Overnight in Rethymnon in a 4* hotel

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Driving distance:

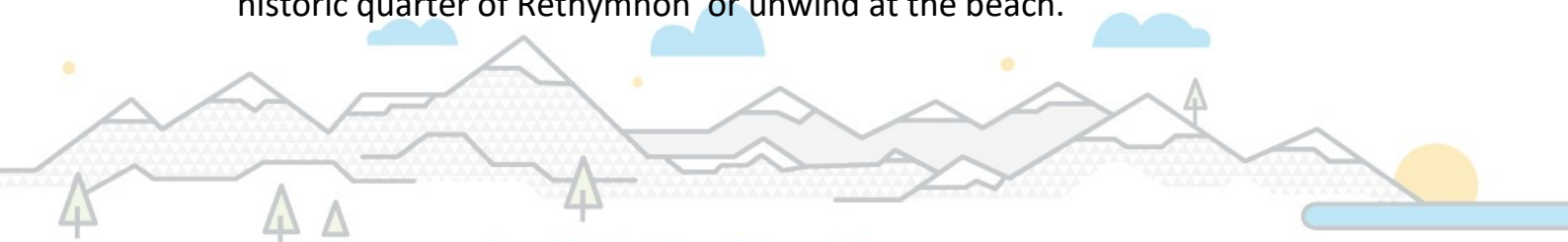
Chora Sfakion to Vamos: 42 km / 1 hr

Vamos to Rethymnon: 40 km / 45 min

Day 6

Ancient Eleftherna hike and pottery visit

Nestled in the foothills of Crete's highest mountain, Psiloritis, lies Ancient Eleftherna—a Dorian settlement celebrated by the Archaeological Institute of America as one of its top discoveries in 2009. Our journey begins at the town's ancient Acropolis, leading us through fascinating sights: from the remarkable Roman cisterns carved into the hill's west side to the Necropolis and a 3rd-century BC ancient bridge. The hike concludes in the charming village of Margarites, renowned for its pottery. The tradition of pottery spans many generations in this village, with pieces crafted from local Cretan earth and "lepida" (a special potter's clay), using natural pigments from the mountains. The ceramics, polished with pebbles and adorned with a sheep's wool brush, draw inspiration from both ancient and modern Cretan pottery. The remainder of the day is free to explore the labyrinthine lanes of the historic quarter of Rethymnon or unwind at the beach.



Overnight in Rethymnon in a 4* hotel

Breakfast and lunch included

Hiking distance: 6 km / ***Hiking Duration:*** 3 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 223 m & 308 m

Driving distance:

Rethymnon to Ancient Eleftherna 30 km / 45 min

Margarites to Rethymnon 30 km / 40 min

Day 7

Visit the Palace of Knossos and discover the local wine varieties

We depart from Rethymnon and journey to Heraklion to explore the Palace of Knossos, the renowned capital of Minoan Civilization, which held strategic and cultural significance around 4000 years ago. The site features impressive ruins, including a vast palace, courtyards, private apartments, baths, and vibrant frescoes.

Transitioning from culture to cultivation, we head to the wine country of Heraklion. In this picturesque landscape of hills and valleys, we'll visit a family winery established in 1966, renowned for producing high-quality wines, focusing on rare local varieties and crafting single-variety wines. Following our wine tasting experience, we make our way to Heraklion. In the late afternoon, we'll explore this bustling city, ranking as the fifth-largest in the country, before coming together for our farewell dinner.

Overnight in Heraklion in a 4* hotel

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Driving distance:

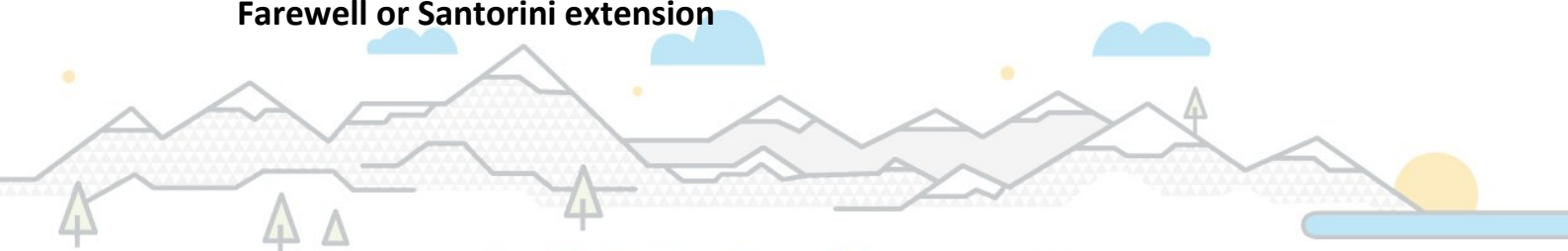
Rethymnon to Knossos Palace 80 km / 1h 20min

Knossos Palace to winery 20 km / 25 min

Winery to Heraklion 26 km / 35 min

Day 8

Farewell or Santorini extension



Breakfast is at your leisure at the hotel and following that, your Tripin Adventures trip in Greece concludes with independent departures to the airport or other areas of Greece. If you feel like continuing travelling, join us for an extension to the breathtaking island of Santorini!

Breakfast included

What's included

Price includes:

All accommodations as listed (or similar) based on double occupancy
Hotel taxes and service charges
All transportation during the trip
Entrance fee for the Archaeological site of Knossos
Tourist guide for the Archaeological site of Knossos
Services of a guide throughout the tour
Cooking class
Wine tasting
Transport and handling of one reasonably sized suitcase and one carry-on per person

Included meals: Breakfasts, lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary

Not Included:

Domestic and/or international air fare
Medical expenses
Travel or emergency evacuation insurance
Gratuities for leader/guide or driver
Alcoholic beverages and meals other than outlined in itinerary
Visas if needed
Transfer to and from the airport/port
Other items of a personal nature
Anything not mentioned in above program

Itinerary Changes



We are constantly updating our unique itineraries based on new information and experiences available. The walks, accommodations, and visits listed may be adjusted. The itineraries presented are subject to modification and change by Tripin Adventures. We reserve the right, without penalty, to make changes in the published itinerary whenever, in our judgment, conditions warrant, or if we deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience, or safety of participants.

Terrain

This trip level is Easy active and is suitable for most people that are in fairly good physical condition. The itinerary includes walking tours in cities and villages, and four days with hikes of 1-3.5 hours.

Although the paths are quite well-kept the terrain often tends to be very stony and rocky, during the gorge-walking. You will mostly be walking on footpaths, mountain trails and on some tarmac roads.

Condition Grading

Easy active

Trips designated “Easy Active” are perfect for first-timers, or travelers looking for a mild physical challenge. A typical day will consist of 1-3.5 hours of activity.

Starting point and getting there

Starting point is: Chania

Finishing point is: Heraklion

Getting There & Away:

Chania Airport is located about 20 minutes (14 km) from Chania. Chania Airport operates domestic flights to and from Athens Airport, Thessaloniki Airport and other airports in Greece. From April to early November, there are many direct charter flights to Chania Airport from the UK, Germany, Scandinavia and other European countries.

Heraklion Airport is about 5km east of the city center. There are many



flights that connect Heraklion airport with Athens. Moreover, there are many direct flights from various cities in Europe. Heraklion ferry port is located 500m east of the city center and is connected with major ports in Greece including Piraeus (Athens port), Mykonos and Santorini.

Getting around: We can arrange for a transfer from the airport or the port to your hotel. If you want to come by yourself there is a bus line connecting the airport to the center of the town and there is also the option of the taxi.

Food

Simple, nutritious and flavorful, the food is one of the pleasures of travel through Greece. Rustic Greek Cuisine reflects the history and bounty of its diverse regions and relies in the fresh, seasonal home-grown produce and generally simple, unfussy cooking that brings out the rich flavors of the Mediterranean.

Greece's relaxed and hospitable dining culture makes it easy to get into the local spirit. Greeks love to eat out and share impossibly big meals family style. Given the long summers and mild winters, alfresco dining is central to the dining experience. Service could be slow by Western standards, but why being in rush either way.

As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There's no obligation to do this though. Wherever possible we will cater for dietary needs for any included meals, but there may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own. Note that alcohol and soda are not included.

Weather

Spring, summer and fall in Greece are sunny and warm. The daytime temperatures average 25-30 C though temperatures in the 35s are possible in the summer months. Nighttime temperatures cool off slightly to 20° C. Rain showers are rare in the islands, but it's often breezy and rainy on the coast.



Gear Checklist

Greece has a temperate climate. Base your clothing on the “layering system”, if it is hot you can “peel off” layers quickly, if it is cooler and windy you can quickly “dress up”. The lighter you travel, the easier you travel. Use your best judgement and pack as lightly as possible. You will appreciate light luggage towards the end of your trip

Please consider taking along the following items on your trip.

Official Papers

- ✓ Valid passport
- ✓ Airline tickets

Luggage

- ✓ Duffel bag or rolling luggage
- ✓ Daypack to carry camera, water bottle and snacks etc.
- ✓ Luggage locks and tags

Outerwear

- ✓ Midweight polar fleece sweater
- ✓ Rain jacket and rain pants, or poncho

Clothing

- ✓ Hiking shorts
- ✓ Casual clothing made of light-weight fabrics
- ✓ T-shirts
- ✓ Long-sleeve shirt
- ✓ Hiking pants, loose and easy to move in
- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Swimsuit

Clothing Accessories

- ✓ Sun hat or baseball cap



Footwear

- ✓ Lightweight and supportive hiking boots, broken-in with good ankle support
- ✓ Beach sandals
- ✓ Casual, comfortable shoes for evening

Accessories

- ✓ Sunscreen and lip protection
- ✓ Sunglasses and retainer strap
- ✓ Beach towel

Optional Accessories

- ✓ Security pouch or money belt
- ✓ Trekking poles or walking staff
- ✓ Camera, memory and batteries
- ✓ Reading and writing materials
- ✓ Watch with alarm or travel alarm
- ✓ Travel pillow
- ✓ Motion sickness remedies
- ✓ Personal first-aid kit
- ✓ Insect repellent (low risk)
- ✓ Electric adapter plug/converter

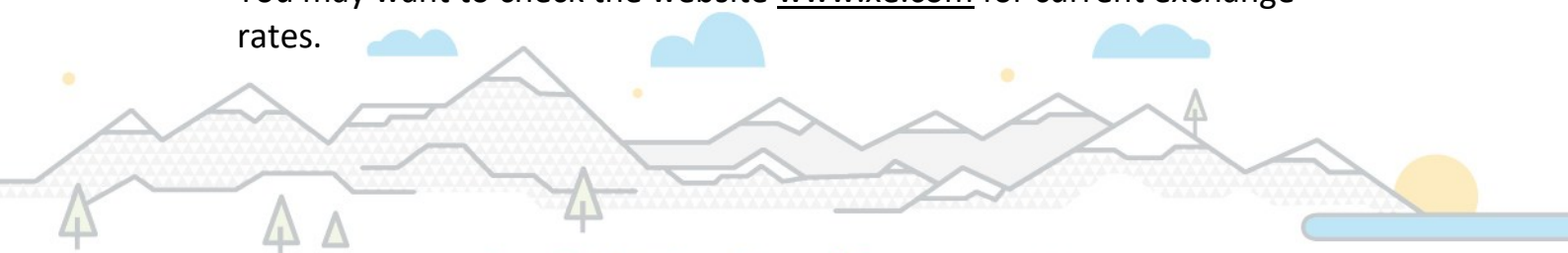
This is not a fixed list, but more of a guideline, so feel free to add and remove items as you see fit.

Currency & Banking

Greece has adopted the Euro as its currency. The easiest way to obtain local cash is from an ATM. Greek ATMs accept cards bearing the Cirrus, EC, Euro card, Visa and Plus symbols. If you take cash, US or Canadian Dollars can be easily exchanged at banks. Most major credit cards, Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted.

It is advisable to have some Euros with you upon arrival to be used for a taxi if necessary.

You may want to check the website www.xe.com for current exchange rates.



Passports

You must have a passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the conclusion of your trip. Please make sure that you have blank pages in your passport for your visa (if required), entry and exit stamps (one for each). Please make a copy to take with you in the event yours is lost or stolen and keep it separate from your actual passport.

Visas

Currently a Greek Tourist Visa is not required for citizens of Canada, United States, Britain and Australia. If you hold another passport, please check online <http://visacentral.com/visas.php>

