

# Crete

## White mountains and azure sea



# SUMMARY

---



Greece • Crete



Self guided hike



8 days



7 nights



Itinerant trip



Nothing to carry



2 / 5



CYCLP0001

## HIGHLIGHTS



Chania: the most beautiful city in Crete



The Samaria and Agia Irini gorges



A good mix of walking, swimming, relaxation and visits of sites

# MAP



# PROPOSED ITINERARY

---

Wild, untamed ... and yet so welcoming. Crete is an island of character, a rebellious island, sometimes, but one that opens its doors wide before you even knock. Crete is like its mountains, crisscrossed by spectacular gorges tumbling down into the sea of Libya, to the tiny seaside resorts where you will relax like in a dream.

Crete is the quintessence of the alliance between sea and mountains, many of which exceed 2000 meters, especially in the mountain range of Lefka Ori, (means *White mountains* in Greek - a hint to the limestone that constitutes them) where our hike takes place.

Our eight-day tour follows a part of the European E4 trail along the south-west coast of the island with magnificent forays into the gorges of Agia Irini and Samaria for the island's most famous hike.

But a nature trip in Crete cannot be confined to a simple landscape discovery even gorgeous. It is in fact associate with exceptional cultural discoveries. The beautiful heritage of Chania borrows from the Venetian and Ottoman occupants who followed on the island. Another important discovery: some ancient remains that punctuate your hike such as the site of Lyssos between Paleochora and Sougia or the chapel dedicated to Saint Paul between Agia Roumeli and Loutro.

The icing on the cake, every evening after the walk, you will certainly have the opportunity to discover with delight the original and tasty culinary specialties without forgetting the famous "Cretan diet" which gives pride of place to fruits and vegetables.



Photo 1 Chania - the Venetian Harbour © Nicolas Pagiatis

## D1 • Chania

Arrival in the most beautiful city in Crete (Venetian architecture, Turkish district and janissary mosque, Venetian port, museums...). Chania is a town that is particularly charming and beautiful, where it is very pleasant to wander in the alleys, on the port or simply hang around at the —terrace of a café.



Hotel ([www.arkadi-hotel.gr/en-gb](http://www.arkadi-hotel.gr/en-gb) or equivalent)



Dinner is not included

## D2 • Chania – Paleochora

Regular bus (not included in the price, about 2hrs) to Paleochora, a Cretan seaside village. Check-in at your hotel. Free day to experience the Cretan atmosphere. Swimming and sunbathing on the beautiful fine sandy beach; visit of the village overlooked by the ruins of the Castello Selino, which was built in 1279 by the Venetians.



Photo 2 Paleochora © François Ribard



1 to 2 hrs stroll



+50 m



-50 m



Hotel ([www.arishotel.gr](http://www.arishotel.gr) or equivalent)



Dinner is not included



Photo 3 Lyssos - Asclepios temple © François Ribard

## D 3 • Paleochora - Sougia

This is a splendid hike that starts at the seaside and reaches a plateau, before going down a gorge, towards the antique site of Lyssos. This village is a paradise for those who are really keen on history as there are Greek and Roman vestiges. With its emerald cove and its port, it is an oasis of greenery. It is only accessible via the sea or by foot. You climb to a plateau, then follow the little shady gorge of Selinou, that leads to the beautiful village of Sougia, with its port and beaches.



5 to 6 hrs of walk



+220 m



-220 m



Hotel ([www.syiahotel.com](http://www.syiahotel.com) or equivalent)



Dinner is not included

#### D 4 • Agia Irini gorge - Omalos

Transfer (not included in the price) to the beginning of the Agia Irini gorge (5 km) or walking to that point. You will ascend the Agia Irini gorge, which is wilder than Samaria. The streambed is green and planted with plane trees and oleanders bushes; some years, you can even see water flowing until July. Transfer to the village of Omalos (not included in the price; you must arrange with the hotel prior to departing). Arrival on the plateau among grazing sheep: the sea seems really far... It is possible to keep walking after the Agia Irini gorge, directly to Omalos. In that case, you have to add 2hrs of walk and 400 m of ascent.



Photo 4 Agia Irini gorge © Nicolas Pagiatis



4 to 5 hrs walking



+500 m



-50m



Hotel ([www.exari.gr](http://www.exari.gr) or equivalent)



Dinner is included



Photo 5 Entering Samaria gorge © Nicolas Pagiatis

#### D 5 • Samaria gorge

Short transfer to Xyloskalo, at the beginning of the famous Samaria gorge, which you will descend down to the village of Agia Roumeli, on the southern coast. Samaria gorge represents a unique and striking 16 km long gorge; it is classified by Unesco. The progressive descend is gorgeous. You can swim when you arrive in the Libyan Sea. **Warning:** opening of the gorge from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Important :** out of the opening period of the Samaria gorge or in case of bad weather (the gorge can be closed due to risk of fire or huge

rain) you will be transferred in the morning to Sougia (about 1h, transfer included) and you will take a ferry (not included, about 12 € / person) to Agia Roumeli (departure at 09h20am, arrival at 10h00am). You can explore the surroundings (coastal walks) during the day.



5 to 6 hrs walking



-1277 m



Family Guesthouse (<http://tarra.ag-roumeli.hotel-crete.net/en/> or equivalent)



Dinner is not included

## D6 • Agia Roumeli - Loutro

Hike on the seashore passing by the site of Agios Pavlos and its chapel dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. According to legend, this is the place where St. Paul was driven ashore during a storm and where he baptized the first Christians in the West. You will reach Loutro, a beautiful village with white houses, totally isolated on the seaside and clinging to the side of the mountain. Several times during the hike, you will have the opportunity to alternate walking and swimming, especially at the end of the stage, in the turquoise waters of Lykos and its little beach with slabs of white marble, or at the ancient Phoenix and its little port, not far from Loutro. At the beach with marble slabs, you will be able to reach Loutro directly with a taxi-boat (not included in the price, to be paid on the spot). You will visit the Venetian fort overlooking the sea and the village. Loutro is only accessible via the sea or on foot.



*Photo 6 Ag. Pavlos church between Agia Roumeli and Loutro © François Ribard*



4 to 5 hrs walking



+200 m



-200 m



Hotel ([www.iliosloutro.gr/en/](http://www.iliosloutro.gr/en/) or equivalent)



Dinner is not included



Photo 7 Crete - Loutro © François Ribard

## D7 • Loutro - Chania

Free time, then boat to Chora Sfakion (not included in the price), then regular bus to Chania (not included in the price).



Hotel ([www.arkadi-hotel.gr/en-gb](http://www.arkadi-hotel.gr/en-gb) or equivalent)



Dinner is not included

## J8 • End of the trip

Free time then transfer to Chania airport

## Optional

### One extra day : the climbing of Gingilos

Gingilos (1,980 m) overlooks the plateau of Omalos and the Samaria gorges, as well as the Aegean Sea in the north and the Libyan Sea in the south. It is a wonderful hike that progressively unveils its most beautiful aspects. The last section is steep but splendid!

This option includes one night with half-board and the round-trip transfer for the climbing.



5 to 6 hrs walking



+900 m



-900m



Hotel ([www.exari.gr](http://www.exari.gr) or equivalent)



Dinner is included

## Route changes

Sometimes we have to make slight changes to the outlined itinerary and programme as local condition can change due to the weather or to the non-availability of our usual hotel or guesthouse, or in case the Greek authorities forbid the use of a path. Be sure that changes are always done in your interest, for your safety and a better comfort

# FURTHER INFORMATION

---

## Level 2 / 5

Moderate. Nothing to carry. Of course, it is necessary to enjoy walking and be in a good physical condition. 3 to 6hrs of walk every day. The maximum difference in height is a descent of 1,100 m in Samaria gorge. The maximum ascent is the climbing of the Gingilos, + 900 m / - 700 m.

## Baggage transfers

You only carry a small daypack with your personal belongings, picnic, water and snacks. You will have to transfer your main luggage during your transfers from / to the airport or the port.

## Group size

From two people

## Duration

8 days, 7 nights, 4 ½ days of walking.

## Departure period

April 15<sup>th</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>

## Travel documents

This is a self-guided trip. You will have no guide with you. We take care of the booking of hotels and luggage transportation. You will be given a travel pack containing all the necessary documents for your trip: a detailed guidebook with the maps, a list of your accommodations and the vouchers. You will either receive your travel pack before you start or it will be given to you at your accommodation on the first night of your trip.

## Comfort

### Accommodation

In 2\*\* hotels, equipped apartments or comfortable family guesthouses, in double/twin bedrooms with bathrooms. It is possible to have a single room according to availabilities with extra charge.

### Catering

Breakfasts are included as well as the dinner in Omalos. A dinner is 15 to 20 euros p/p. For your packed lunch, you can easily find local products in all the villages. There are several local tavernas and it is a real pleasure to try and find the one you will choose for a meal.

Please let us know when you register if you have allergy or if you need a special diet; we will do our best to adapt your meals.

## Beginning / End

### Beginning

D1 in the airport of Chania.

### End

D8 in the airport of Chania

If you land in Heraklion and if your flight lands too late to reach Chania on Day 1, we offer you the possibility to stay overnight in a hotel in Heraklion. The transfer from Heraklion airport to the city center is included. On day 2 you will have to reach Chania (on your own expenses) to take the bus to Paleochoira. It is also possible to spend the night on day 7 in Heraklion and take a bus in Hora Sfakion to Chania (about 8,50 € / person) and a second bus from Chania to Heraklion (about 16 € / person).

## Convening notice

You will receive about two weeks before your departure, a convocation precisising the time and place of the transfer from the airport, and the address of the first accommodation.

## Extend your stay

If you wish to visit the archeological site of **Cnossos**, near Heraklion, you can take a return flight from Heraklion: the return trip from Hora Sfakion takes about the same time to go to Chania or to Heraklion.

## Swimming

This program includes several swimming opportunities during or at the end of the hikes. It would be a pity not to make the best of it. However, we would like you to note that you are the only one who can estimate whether it is advisable to swim or not. Hence, these activities are your sole responsibility and entirely at your own risk.

# KIT LIST

---

## Hiking equipment

- Good quality waterproof walking boots with a moulded sole and deep tread and which provide good ankle support are essential for the walking programme on this holiday
- Hiking poles (telescopic) are very useful to ease your walk in the steep or rocky part of the paths

## Picnic lunches

- Bowl, box or plate
- Cutlery (spoon, knife...)
- Water bottle (1,5 to 2 litres per day and per person)

## To protect you from the sun and the rain

- High SPF sun block
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat
- A rain jacket or an umbrella

## For the evening

- A pair of light sport shoes
- Spare clothes and personal clothes
- A mini toilet bag and a towel
- A bathing suit (it is often possible to swim)

## Clothes

### For hiking

- Comfortable walking socks
- A fleece jacket
- Comfortable hiking trousers (technical material drying quickly)
- Technical shorts, tee-shirt and underwear (material drying quickly)
- A shirt with long sleeves (technical material drying quickly)
- A first-aid kit: personal medication, disinfectant, plasters, blister treatment, antiseptic etc.

Note: Synthetic technical clothing is very efficient. New merino wool clothing has also appeared; they are very efficient and pleasant to wear, and have the advantage of not developing the smell of perspiration! (Icebreaker brand, Ruka, etc ...).

## Baggage

- A small and comfortable daysack (from 30 L) with a waist strap to carry your personal belongings, water and picnic during the day.
- The main baggage that will be transferred every day : a rucksack, a travel bag in good condition or a not bulky suitcase. **Only one bag per person**, 20 kg maximum

# USEFUL INFORMATION

---

Country : Greece (Hellenic Republic)

Population : 10 757 292 inhabitants

Capital city : Athens

Island : Crete

## Documents

Travelers from the European Union, including children, must have a valid identity card or a passport.

Do not forget your social security card (European Health Insurance Card). You can get it from your health insurance company, at least two weeks before your departure.

## Climate

Hot and dry. The weather is usually very pleasant in Crete. However, there may be thunder storms sometimes. The wind is frequent and the proximity of the sea moderates the midday heat; this is the moment during the day when you should avoid walking. In spring and in autumn, take warmer equipment for the night. In Omalos, the temperature can be much cooler than in the seaside.

## Language

Speaking Modern Greek is a definite advantage to get in touch with a very friendly population. English is universally spoken.

## Currency

Euro = €



**Kélifos**  
TREK & NATURE  
BY **Grand Angle**

Liapades square  
(Platia Liapadon)  
49083 Corfu, Greece

