

# OUT ON THE ISLAND OF CRETE



## **DEDICATION**

*This booklet, originally created by Peggy Bebb, is dedicated to NSA Souda Bay sailors and civilians as well as any visitors to this wonderful island. Please go out and explore all that Crete has to offer.*

# INTRODUCTION

A mere 125 miles north of the African coast rests the beautiful Greek island of Crete. Rich with history, this 3200 square mile island has something to offer everyone.

For history buffs, there are numerous Minoan ruin sites, most notably Knossos Palace, where findings have revealed inhabitants on this site as early as 6,000 BC. Archaeological museums and WWII sites are scattered from one end of the island to the other. Almost all of the larger cities have at least one museum dedicated to the history of the local area and/ or the island. The sun worshippers will be astounded by the numerous beaches strewn along the coast of Crete. You will find beaches that stretch from the far eastern side, Vai Beach, to the extreme southwest to Elafonisi beach. With approximately 15 hours of sunlight and blue, cloudless skies in the summertime, the island is a beach lover's paradise. The outdoor adventurers will be in heaven on the island. From gorges to hike, caves to explore, waters to scuba dive, shallow, rocky areas to snorkel, mountains to trek and in the winter, snow to play in up high in the mountain regions you can easily fill your days with various activities to keep the boredom from settling in.

You will notice a language and alphabet that is tough to grasp at first, however, the good news is that most signs on the main roads are in English as well. Immersing yourself into this ancient culture will give you the opportunity to at least learn some of the basic phrases of the language. You will notice the smallest gesture of 'trying' to speak the native language will bring a smile to the faces of the Greeks you encounter.

Food, food, food, the question is where do we begin? From fresh fish and meats to the best vegetables you'll ever eat, Crete has one of the healthiest diets in the world. Rich in olive oil and fresh, fragrant herbs, one thing you won't do is leave here hungry. In the bigger touristy towns, you will find lots of varieties to satisfy your palate but the best food you will encounter will be in the smaller mountain villages at their local tavernas. Take a seat and it will be yours for as long as you wish to stay there. One thing you won't find on the island is a restaurant or taverna owner trying to rush you and your meal so that they can quickly turn the table over to another customer. This is definitely not the Greek way. You sit, relax, and enjoy your meal at your pace.

One thing we will recommend is keep an open mind, get your adventurous side out and go explore everything the wonderful island of Crete has to offer. Grab your water bottle and sunscreen and have the time of your life.

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## IT'S ALL 'GREEK' TO ME

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Sound</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Sound</u>
<b>A α</b>	Alpha	<b>a</b> as in "f <u>a</u> ther"	<b>Ξ ξ</b>	Xi	<b>ks</b> as in kick <u>ks</u> ; <b>x</b> as in a <u>x</u>
<b>B β</b>	Beta	<b>v</b> as in "v <u>o</u> te"	<b>Ο ο</b>	O-micron	<b>o</b> as in t <u>o</u> te or b <u>o</u> at
<b>Γ γ</b>	Gamma	<b>g</b> as in "g <u>e</u> t"; <b>y</b> as in "y <u>e</u> t" before iota and epsilon; <b>n</b> as in "s <u>i</u> ng" before gamma, kappa, xi, and chi	<b>Π π</b>	Pi	<b>p</b> as in <u>p</u> an or sa <u>p</u>
<b>Δ δ</b>	Delta	<b>th</b> as in <u>th</u> en	<b>Ρ ρ</b>	Rho	<b>/r/</b> more like the Spanish trilled <b>r</b> than the English <b>r</b>
<b>E ε</b>	Epsilon	<b>e</b> as in s <u>e</u> t	<b>Σ σ (ς)</b>	Sigma	<b>s</b> as in <u>s</u> ister
<b>Z ζ</b>	Zeta	<b>z</b> as in z <u>oo</u>	<b>Τ τ</b>	Tau	<b>unaspirated t</b> as in s <u>t</u> op, but not like the t in top
<b>H η</b>	Eta	<b>ee /i/</b> as in m <u>ee</u> t	<b>Υ υ</b>	Upsilon	similar to German <u>ü</u>
<b>Θ θ</b>	Theta	<b>th</b> as in <u>th</u> in	<b>Φ φ</b>	Phi	<b>/f/</b> as in f <u>a</u> n or <u>ph</u> one
<b>I ι</b>	Iota	<b>ee (/i/)</b> as in m <u>ee</u> t, or <b>y</b> as in <u>y</u> et	<b>Χ χ</b>	Chi	Not found in English, like <b>Spanish</b> <b>i</b>
<b>K κ</b>	Kappa	<b>ck</b> as in s <u>ack</u>	<b>Ψ ψ</b>	Psi	<b>ps</b> as in <u>lip</u> s
<b>Λ λ</b>	Lambda	<b>l</b> as in <u>l</u> ight	<b>Ω ω</b>	Omega	<b>o</b> as in t <u>o</u> te or b <u>o</u> at
<b>M μ</b>	Mu	<b>m</b> as in <u>m</u> ouse			
<b>N ν</b>	Nu	<b>n</b> as in <u>n</u> ose			

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Sound</u>
<b>1</b>	ένα	ena
<b>2</b>	δύο	dio
<b>3</b>	τρία	tria
<b>4</b>	τέσσερα	tessera
<b>5</b>	πέντε	pentē
<b>6</b>	έξι	eksi
<b>7</b>	εφτά	efta
<b>8</b>	οκτώ	okto
<b>9</b>	εννιά	enya
<b>10</b>	δέκα	deka

<u>Days of the Week</u>	
<b>Monday</b>	Deftera
<b>Tuesday</b>	Triti
<b>Wednesday</b>	Tetarti
<b>Thursday</b>	Pembti
<b>Friday</b>	Paraskevi
<b>Saturday</b>	Savato
<b>Sunday</b>	Kyriaki
<b>Yesterday</b>	htes
<b>Today</b>	simera
<b>Tomorrow</b>	avrio

## It's All Greek to Me

### Greetings

<b>Hello</b>	Yassas (plural/ polite) Yassou (singular/ familiar) Ya (abbreviated / informal)
<b>Good Day</b>	Kalimera
<b>Good evening</b>	Kalispera
<b>Good night</b>	Kalinihta
<b>How are you?</b>	Ti kanete? (Plural/ polite) Ti kanis? (Singular/ familiar)
<b>Fine, and you?</b>	(in response) Kala esis?



### Getting Around

<b>Yes</b>	ne	<b>Hot/ cold</b>	zesto/ krio
<b>No</b>	ohi	<b>How many?</b>	Posa?
<b>Ok</b>	endhaxi	<b>How much?</b>	Poso?
<b>Please</b>	parakalo	<b>This</b>	afto
<b>Thank you</b>	efharisto	<b>Have you...?</b>	Ehite...?
<b>Very much</b>	para poli	<b>Excuse me</b>	sygnomi
<b>I'm sorry</b>	me syghorite	<b>It doesn't matter</b>	dhenbirazi
<b>It's nothing</b>	tipota	<b>Can I?</b>	boro na...?
<b>When?</b>	Pote?	<b>What time is it?</b>	Ti ora ine?
<b>Where is?</b>	Pou ine...?	<b>I want...</b>	thelo
<b>Small/ large</b>	mikro/ meghalo	<b>Good/ bad</b>	kalo/ kako
<b>Bus</b>	leoforio	<b>Car</b>	aftokinito
<b>Ticket</b>	isitirio	<b>Beach</b>	paralia
<b>Entrance</b>	isodhos	<b>Church</b>	eklisia
<b>Exit</b>	exodhos	<b>Toilet</b>	toualeta
<b>The bill</b>	to loghariazmo	<b>Bank</b>	trapeze
<b>Telephone</b>	tilefono	<b>Market</b>	agora

<b>How much does it cost?</b>	Poso kani
<b>It's(too) expensive.</b>	Ine(poli)akrivo
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	Xerete Anglika?

### Emergencies

<b>Help</b>	voithia
<b>Doctor</b>	yiattros
<b>Hospital</b>	nosokomio
<b>Pharmacy</b>	farmakio
<b>Police</b>	astinomia



# CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

In the Greek culture, customs and traditions play a large part in daily life. Although they do vary from village to village, here are a few traditions that are still practiced by most Greeks, no matter their age.

**Name Day Celebration** – More important than birthdays in the Greek culture, a name day is celebrated by anyone who is named after a



particular religious saint. According to Greek Orthodox tradition every saint celebrated by the church has a particular 'Name Day' dedicated to him/ her. In keeping with tradition, on someone's name day, friends and family visit and say "Hronia Polla", translated means "Many Years" but also means to wish them good health and prosperity. It is up to you to visit your friend who is celebrating their name day. Small gifts are appropriate to give as well. The hostess usually provides desserts and small finger type foods to the guests.

**Engagement** – Greek custom says that in order for a couple to marry, they should get engaged and the man must ask the father for his daughter's hand. The priest will usually bless the engagement rings where they are typically worn on the left hand until marriage where they transfer to the right hand.

**Marriage** – Some Greeks still celebrate the custom of dowries for the women made by other women of the family. These items include sheets, towels and handmade embroideries. Also, traditionally, the father of the bride offers a home to the daughter and new son-in-law as a wedding gift. The bride is kept hidden from the groom on the day of the wedding. As with the tradition in the states, it is considered bad luck for the



groom to see the bride prior to the ceremony. During the ceremony, the Best man and Best woman give the rings to the priest and cross the crowns (Stephana) over each other 3 times and then place them on the couples' heads. After the ceremony, the bridal couple greets guests as they are wished "na zisete" (long life to you). Then everyone heads off to the reception where a restaurant is usually rented for the night. Traditional food and wine is served and they dance all night long. If you ever get the chance to attend a traditional Greek wedding, please note one thing.... Nap during the day as this party will go on for hours and hours. Greeks definitely know how to throw a party.

**Baptism** – This is one of the most important days in a young Greek's life. Usually around or shortly after the first year of birth, a child will be baptized into the Orthodox faith. The baby will be dipped 3 times into the blessed waters laden with olive oil also blessed by the patriarch. At this time, the priest will pronounce the baby's name, which is usually the same as one of their grandparents. Then the baby is typically dressed with

## Customs and Traditions

white clothes and the priest will place a gold chain and cross on his neck. The baby will then take its first Holy Communion. At the end of the ceremony, the parents kiss the godparents' hands and then accept best wishes "na sas zisei" (long life to your baby). A ceremony will typically follow, with traditional foods, dancing and celebration either at the family's home or a restaurant. This is another "Don't Miss" event if you ever have the pleasure of being invited.

**Carnival** – called "Apokries" in Greece, the celebration consists of two weeks of feasting. It starts on the Sunday of Meat Fare and ends at the start of Lent, called Clean Monday or "Kathari Deutera". Everyone wears costumes and parties in the streets and bars where everyone throws colored confetti and shoots silly string at each other. The most famous Carnival on the island is held in Rethymno where the streets get jam-packed with revelers and parade participants.

**Clean Monday** – "Kathari Deutera" is the first day of the Lent season (Saracosti). On this Greek holiday, families picnic and fly kites, usually at the numerous beaches around the island.



**Easter** – "Pasca" is the holiday spent with family and friends. The meal usually consists of Roasted Lamb on a spit, various appetizers and lots of wine, ouzo and raki. This day symbolizes Greeks way of celebrating life to its fullest. Greeks consider this "most important" holiday, even over Christmas.

**Good Friday** – "Megali Paraskevi" is the day of mourning. At the church service, the Epitaphio (the Tomb of Christ) is decorated with flowers then carried by the men of the Church through the streets to the cemetery. A procession will follow and once at the cemetery everyone lights a candle for the dead. The Epitaphio is then carried back to the church where the followers walk past and under the Epitaphio, kissing the image of Christ which is laid upon it.

**Holy Saturday** – "Megalo Savato" – Shortly before midnight, everyone heads to church to attend Resurrection Service. Attendees hold unlit candles while the priest turns off all its lights except the Eternal Flame. The dark church and silent congregation symbolizes the darkness and silence of the tomb. At the stroke of midnight, the priest takes the Eternal Flame and sings out 'Christos Anesti' (Christ has Risen) and lights the candles of those nearest to him. In turn those with lit candles pass the flame along to the others so that in the end, everyone has a touch of the Eternal Flame. Church bells sound off, village men fire shotguns and firecrackers are set off as people tell each other "Christos Anesti" to which is replied, "Alithos Anesti" (He is truly Risen). The candle is carefully carried back to the home where, before entering the house, they make a sign of the cross with the smoke. This usually stays year round and means that the spirit of the Resurrection has been brought into this house. As you travel around, look over some door frames to see if you notice the cross. At home, families share the Resurrection



## Customs and Traditions

Meal which usually consists of Magiritsa soup (a lamb based soup), Tsoureki (Easter cake) and Easter cookies.

**Greek Independence Day** – March, 25. – The day for celebrating Greece’s liberation from Turkey in 1821.

**Protomagia** – May 1 – is a celebration of spring, nature and flowers. Flower wreaths are made from handpicked wild flowers will be hung on the doors of many homes in a way to welcome nature and all things good. The wreaths will adorn the doors of the homes until the day of St. John the Harvester (June 24) when all the wreaths of the neighborhood are gathered and burnt in a big fire, the fire of the saint.

**Bread** – is considered a gift from God. In the villages, older women make the sign of the cross over a fresh loaf prior to slicing it. Greeks consider it a sin to throw away bread therefore if not eaten by human consumption, it is fed to animals.

**Oxi Day** – October 28 – “No Day” – This day is celebrated throughout Greece and is in recognition of this day in 1940 that Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas rejected an ultimatum issued by Italian dictator Mussolini. The ultimatum basically told Greece to allow the Italian forces to enter the country and occupy certain “strategic locations” to which Metaxas simply replied “Oxi” or “No”.



This one word sent Greece into World War II. On this day, annually, Greeks proudly fly their native flag and commemorate by attending parades by military and local students.

**The Evil Eye** – This is an ancient Greek superstition in the Greek islands. Villagers believe that someone can catch the evil eye “matiasma” from someone else’s jealous compliment or envy. If you ‘catch’ the evil eye, you tend to feel bad physically and/ or emotionally. To ward off the ‘eye’, you can wear an eye (a blue charm with an eye painted on it) to reflect the evil. Blue is the color that is said to ward off the evil eye. It is also believed that blue eyed people are givers of the evil eye. The evil eye charm is known the world over and all the touristy souvenir shops on the island sell some sort of knick-knack or jewelry piece with the evil eye on it.



**Knives** – Greeks never hand someone a knife, they always set it down for the person to pick up. They believe that if they hand someone a knife, they will one day have a fight with that person.

**Priests** – Greek Orthodox priests are very revered. It is customary for Greeks to kiss his hand in respect upon meeting one.

## Customs and Traditions

**Spitting** – Some Greeks believe that spitting chases the devil and any misfortunes away. That is why when someone talks about bad news; the others will spit 3 times saying ftou, ftou, ftou.

**Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup>** – As opposed to our Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Greeks say this is their 'unlucky day'

**Touch Red (Piase kokkino** – When 2 people say the same thing at the same time, they will say "piase kokkino" and then they both have to touch something red. Greeks believe that saying the same thing is an omen and that the two will get into a fight or argue if they don't touch something, anything red.

# CRETE “A-Z” PRACTICAL, USEFUL AND INTERESTING INFORMATION

**Airports in Crete** – We have two international airports, Chania’s Ioannis Daskalogiannis airport and Heraklion’s Nikos Kazantzakis airport. There is also a smaller airport in Sitia. Both of the international airports are military airports as well, therefore, photography is prohibited. Year round flights come into and out of these airports, however in the summer time; the airports are very busy with charter flights. Ryan Air and Aegean airlines are the main carriers from Crete to various destinations in Greece. For international flights, you will need to fly via Athens or Ryan Air (out of Chania) unless it’s a charter flight.



**Archaeological sites and museums in Crete** – A big number of archaeological sites, as well as museums, are located on the island. The most famous ones are **Knossos**, **Phaistos** and **Malia**.

**ATMs** – You will find these machines in bigger towns and cities all over Crete. Keep in mind that they are not always refilled during the weekends, so make sure you have enough cash to get you through the weekend. Also note that your mountain villages or those that are off the beaten path may not offer an ATM.



**Beaches** – Crete has many beautiful beaches all over the island. Some are sandy but there are also rocky and pebbly beaches as well. It is recommended at these sights to wear water shoes to protect you from sharp rocks and sea urchins. There are life guards on the bigger beaches, especially those frequented by tourists. The smaller ones usually have a flag warning system: **red**= do not enter, **orange** = enter but stay close to shore and **green**= enter.

At most beaches you will have to pay for a sun bed and an umbrella. This isn't merely someone trying to suck money out of the tourists. On the contrary, it's a job in Greece having a piece of a beach. A man will seek a particular part of the beach every year, and he pays a sum of money to be allowed to put up his sun beds and umbrellas. During the season, it is now his responsibility to keep up his 'part of the beach'. The price you pay will depend on where the beach is located and the facilities (taverna, toilets, and showers). The tourist police regularly check that the owner does his job properly.

Try to avoid overexposure to the sun and do like most locals and avoid the sun from 1200-1500. Use a sunscreen with a high protection factor and if possible, wear a hat and t-shirt to avoid burns.

**Churches** – The big churches are inside the towns but numerous small ones are practically everywhere. Usually white-painted, you will find them on beaches, mountain peaks, in deep gorges or in caves. People of Crete are deeply religious and they build churches to express their gratitude to God or fulfill a ‘tama’ or promise given to God in exchange for a request that they had previously made.



**Credit Cards** – All major Credit Cards are recognized and accepted in most hotels, shops, travel and car rental agencies in Crete. Stickers in the front windows will advise you as to which are accepted. However, keep in mind that not all restaurants, and once you get off the beaten path; you may encounter facilities where credit cards are not accepted. This is especially true in the smaller, outlying villages. It’s always best to travel with cash and ask if credit cards are taken before assuming.

**Cretan Diet** – Chock full of Olive oil, fish, fresh fruits and vegetables, Red Wine, Dairy products from goats or sheep and the fact that there are no additives make the Cretan Diet a phenomenon. You can see locals over 90years old, smoking 2 packs of cigarettes a day and still enjoying rather good health. Studies have shown that their long-life expectancy is closely related to their healthy eating habits.



**Driving in Crete** – This might seem a daunting task at first. Just be careful and very observant. Most signs are bi-lingual. Be vigilant at yield and stop signs as most Greeks merely slow down, if even that, when approaching these signs. Just because they have the stop/ yield sign, does not necessarily mean they will adhere to it. Try to be a defensive driver and you will do fine. Also be aware that the municipal police are very diligent when it comes to violating the “no-parking” or “double parking” rules. Don’t do it or you will, more often than not, find yourself with a ticket at minimum.

**Eating and waiting alone at a taverna in Greece** – A single person sitting at a taverna, can wait quite a long time for a waiter to show up at their table. The waiter will assume that he/ she will be waiting for someone and considers it impolite to ask for the order prior to all guests arriving so they will be hesitant to approach the table. However, in the larger touristy areas, this has changed, especially for the obvious tourists but you can still run into this type of service in the outlying villages of Crete.

**Entering a Greek Church or Monastery** – If you want to be a polite and considerate guest in the country you are visiting, then prior to entering a Greek church or monastery, you must be properly dressed. This includes shoulders and knees covered on both men and women. Please remove hats and ball caps prior to entering as well.

**Fauna** – The most famous of all the fauna located on the island will be the Kri-Kri or Cretan goat. This is the only wild goat species still living in Europe. They are very shy and it is unlikely you’ll see one. Other animals you may run across are the Cretan Wild Cat, the rarest mammal in Europe with only a handful left. The Cretan Spiny Mouse is also only found on the island and lives in dry, rocky areas. You may see dolphins off the coast, as some have been spotted in the Stavros area. Bird wise, Vultures and Golden Eagles are 2 of the big ones found in the mountain regions. Lastly, the rare, Loggerhead Sea Turtles visit the island’s beaches to lay eggs. These beaches, most near Rethymno, Chania and Matala have environmentalists fighting for conservation in favor of the Turtle’s eggs.



**Fires** – August and September seem to be the harshest months for brush and forest fires on the island. This is due to the fact that summers are long, hot and dry here.

**Fishing** – is a popular activity, although you will probably be very disappointed by the size of the fish that you catch. Please remember that you need a fishing license from the port authority.

**Flora** – Spring time brings out the vibrant colors of the wild flowers here on the island from March until May. In the spring and summer months, you can smell herbs in the countryside everywhere. Olives, grapes, oranges and lemons are abundant on the island as well as beehives located in the mountainous areas. Cretan honey is some of the best in Europe due to the fact that the bees love the bountiful wild thyme and other aromatic herbs and flowers.

**Gas Stations** – Are generally open Monday through Saturday from 0600 to 2100 however in the summer; you may find them open a bit later. All offer unleaded fuel and on Sunday, at least one station in each area will remain open. Majority of the island’s gas stations are full service and all offer free air and water for your vehicles.



**Gesturing** – **“No”** – “Oxi” usually a tip of the head straight backwards  
**“Yes”** – a slow, downward movement of the head, slightly closing the eyes as the head is lowered  
**“Come here”** – This gesture is indicated by the waving of the hand; sort of like pawing the air with the fingers and palm. To a non-Greek, this looks similar to someone waving good-bye or someone telling you to move back.  
**“I want to tell you something”** – This is usually done by touching or patting the lower lip with the index finger; kind of like you are being told to be quiet.  
**“Thank you very much my friend”** – This is the “yes” gesture followed by putting the right hand to the heart.

**Greek food and wine** – The Greek cuisine has a large variety of dishes; Different kinds of appetizers (mezedes), followed by the main dishes, either meat or fish n chips. A dessert or sweet usually follows the meal (complimentary) so don't miss the opportunity to try the 'sweet side' of the Greek culture. You should also taste the local wines.



**Greek priest** – You see the Greek priests everywhere, as you can't miss them in their long, black dress and high hat. They are not obligated to wear their priest clothes all the time, but they do, as it's most practical and they are easier to identify this way. The Greek priests can marry and have children. You will never see a woman priest, as this is not allowed by the Greek Orthodox Church.

**Greek social security system** – The Greek social security system (IKA) is still being built up. Having financial problems will first lead you to your very closest family, asking for help. The family will lend you money indefinitely, and it's now a point of honor to pay back the loan.

**Greek toilets** – If in a restaurant or café look for the WC (water closet) sign. Inside you will see little waste baskets as this is where you will discard your toilet paper since the Greek sewer pipes are very delicate and will get blocked from the paper if thrown into the toilet.

**GMT-Time** – In Greece you pretty much live with the GMT-Time or “Greek Maybe Time”. Greeks have a different attitude on time. When the bus is scheduled to come at 10:30, you can expect it between 10 and 11. This is all dependent on the traffic, how many people the driver decided to stop and talk to, and many, many other factors. Or a local might say the bus will arrive after 4pm... this way he hasn't promised much. The Greek people don't live by a clock. They also have different understandings of morning, afternoon and evening. You say “Good Morning” until noon. In Greece, the evening meal is usually no earlier than 9:00 pm. However, 'siesta time' usually between 3pm and 5pm is held sacred and it is very unpopular to disturb someone during this time.

**Houses** – Unfinished buildings are a common sight in Greece. The reason is that Greek people build what they need today and leave the rest of the building unfinished for the future. It may seem that the Greeks are constantly building houses, and they are. Most Greek parents build a house for each daughter, but not for their sons (as they are supposed to marry a girl who will get a house from her parents). Often it is also the daughter that inherits her parent's or grandparents' house when they die.

**Iron Bars** – that stick out from the roof of the houses are there for the only purpose of a later addition to the house. It has nothing to do with the exemptions from taxpaying, as long as the house isn't finished yet.

## Crete “A-Z” Practical, Useful and Interesting Information

**Kafeneio** – the Greek café is a very important part of the social life in Crete. In the past, the kafeneio was more of a gathering and meeting point for generations of men. Presently, you will find some women in there and most of those are usually tourists. In the mountain villages, it is very rare to see women in a kafeneio. You will only find drinks such as wine, beer, raki and coffee and usually a small plate of food. These cafes are typically for socializing and not necessarily for an evening meal.

**Mosquitos** – are, unfortunately, very common on the island. Repellents are available in supermarkets. You will find plug-in anti-mosquito devices with fluid or tablets. Buying and using mosquito nets are not entirely out of the question either.

**Newspapers** – at small newspaper kiosks you will find some English Language newspapers and/ or magazines.

**Paying Cash** – When Greeks go out to dinner, they always pay cash. No checks or Credit Cards. And they always have enough money to pay the bill for their company as well. Not being able to pay would be extremely humiliating to them.

**Ports** – The main ports on the island are located in Souda, Heraklion, Rethymno, Agios Nikolaos and Sitia. From these ports you can catch ferries to Athens’ Piraeus Port. From Crete, there are also high speed ferries that run as well. You may travel to and from other Greek islands from the various ports.

**Questions** – Don’t hesitate to ask a question whenever you need assistance. In most tourist areas, you will find most people speak some English. However, keep in mind that the further you get from the cities, the less likely the chance for finding someone who speaks English. Don’t let this deter you as you may find out that the question may be answered by hand gestures or fumbling your way through it with some humility and hilarity.

**Religion** – The Greek population is composed of approximately 95% Orthodox. The other 5% or so consists of Muslim, Roman Catholic and Jewish.

**Roadside Monuments** – or miniature churches are memorials for people who have been killed in some type of automobile accident at that particular site. They are erected and maintained by the deceased’s family. Inside the monument you will typically find a candle, a photo of the deceased and some type of religious object.



**Rosary or Worry Beads** – The beads that most of the Greek men are holding in their hands while sitting outside the cafes have no religious meaning but is only a way of killing time. Try and buy one, it’s actually much more difficult to swing it than it looks.

## Crete “A-Z” Practical, Useful and Interesting Information

**Sariki** – is the traditional head cover of men of Crete. It is black and wrapped many times around the head. You will most likely see these wherever you see traditional dancers.

**Scorpions** – Cretan scorpions are venomous but is not normally life – threatening. There are 3 different species on the island. A sting from one hurts quite a bit so to be on the safe side, if stung, visit a pharmacy or doctor.

**Smoking** – Crete is one of the last frontiers when it comes to banning smoking. Here it is allowed in most restaurants, bars and many other public places.

**Snakes** – All four species of snakes found on the island (The Leopard Snake, Balkan Whip, Dice Snake and the Cat Snake) are all completely safe and harmless as far as we’re concerned.

**Song and dance** – plays a very important role in the Cretan life. The oldest songs date back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The main musical instruments played on the island today are the Lyra, a 3-stringed ‘upright fiddle’ and the laouto (Lute). The Cretan dances are elegant and fast. If you have the privilege to be invited to a traditional wedding or baptism, you will notice the roles that both song and dance play.

**Souvenirs** – Souvenirs are often leather goods, pottery, jewelry, olive oil and backgammon boards. Leather goods are quite cheap and in Chania, you can find many items in “Leather Alley”. Ceramics can be found all over the island however in the Village of Margarites, there are numerous pottery stores... hence the name “Village of Potters”. Olive oil and backgammon boards are also very abundant.

**Spelling** – of towns and cities around the island in road signs and maps may be a bit confusing at first. You will see different spellings of the same city such as; Heraklion, Iraklion, Iraklio or Chania, Hania or Rethymno, Rethimno, Sitia or Siteia. Let your creative imagination flow.

**Sports and Activities** – On the island, you may enjoy all kinds of outdoor activities, from walking in the countryside to hiking, trekking on mountains higher than 2000 meters, rock climbing, fishing, hunting, bird watching, scuba diving, snorkeling, sea kayaking, windsurfing, horseback riding, even bungee jumping. In Hersonissos there is even an 18-hole golf course for your pleasure.

**Taxis** – in Crete are a convenient and relatively cheap way of moving around the island.

**Theft** – Is rare in Greece. It’s simply considered too humiliating to steal other’s belongings or money. Albeit during tourist season in the summer months, transients do come to the bigger towns as well as gypsies, with that said, be mindful of your surroundings as pick-pocketing is not out of the question.



## Crete “A-Z” Practical, Useful and Interesting Information

**Time** – Greece is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time or seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (East Coast)

**Tipping** – is optional but common at cafes, restaurants, hotel maids, tour guides and taxis. A small amount of money is sufficient.

**Weather** – The weather here in Crete is usually quite sunny and warm in summertime, with extreme high temperatures in July and August. The water temps usually range from 70 – 80 degrees Fahrenheit in summer. The winters however are cold and rainy in contrast to the summer months when typically, there will be very little to no rainfall from May to September.

**White-washed Trees** – Greeks paint the trunks of the trees white mainly to fight ants.

**Working hours** – (Typical)

**Banks:** open 8am to 1430 Mon-Fri

**Public Services:** usually open from 0730-1300 in most cases.

**Shops (tourist areas):** 0800-2200 or later.

**Shops (in the cities):** Monday and Wednesday: 0900-1400

Tues, Thurs. and Friday: 0900-1400, then 1730-2100

Saturday: 0900-1400

Sunday: Closed

**Supermarkets (in cities):** Mon – Fri 0800-2000

Saturdays they close at 1800

Sunday closed all day

**Kiosks:** for cigarettes, snacks or magazines – located everywhere in the cities where several will be open 24 hours.

**Gas Stations:** close at 2100 or 2200. In every city, there is at least one gas station open during the night or on Sundays.

# MUSEUMS IN CRETE

## CHANIA

**Chania Archaeological Museum** – located on Halidon Street in the center of ‘Old Town’ Chania and housed in the Venetian church of San Francesco. Various exhibits include weapons, pottery, stones, coins, jewelry, statues, idols and metal works. Mosaic floors date back to 2 and 3 Centuries AD. One of the scenes depicts the myth of Poseidon. Located on Halidon Street near the old harbor.

**ENTRY:** *Small fee* | **HOURS:** *Please contact at number below for hours* | **CONTACT:** [protocol@keepka.culture.gr](mailto:protocol@keepka.culture.gr) / 28210-90334

**Museum-Residence of Eleftherios Venezelos** – Take a magical journey through time in the favorite residence of the greatest statesman of modern Greece.

**ENTRY:** ? | **HOURS:** *1 Oct – 14 Jun: Mon-Fri 1100-1330, 1800-2000 & Sat – 1100-1330. 15 June – 30 Sep: Mon-Fri 1030-1330, 1830-2100. Sat – 1030-1330.*

**Maritime Museum of Crete** – Located on the Venetian harbor in Chania, the museum showcases exhibits linked with the island’s history.

**ENTRY to MARITIME MUSEUM:** *Normal: €3.00 / Student: €2.00* | **ENTRY to EXHIBITION:** *Normal: €2.00 / Student: €1.00* | **COMMON ENTRY to BOTH:** €4.00 | **HOURS:** *0900-1500 daily, closed Public Holidays* | **WEBSITE:** [www.mar-mus-crete.gr](http://www.mar-mus-crete.gr) | **CONTACT:** [mar-mus@otenet.gr](mailto:mar-mus@otenet.gr) / 28210-91875 | **NOTES:** *Reduced tickets for Students/Large families/ Retired Naval Officers*

**Historical Archives of Crete** – Headquartered in Chania, this museum boasts a rich collection of folklore and material related to the history of the island. The archives are among the largest in the country, second only to the General Archives of the Greek state. The Museum is home to over 1 million documents from as far back as 1821.

**ENTRY:** *Free*

**Historical and Folk Art Museum** – Located in the village of Gavalohori, the museum’s collections include over 5,000 items that were collected from donations, purchases and loans. They are displayed in units; Folk Art collections include weaving, basket weaving, embroidery-laces, costumes, ceramics, metal work, traditional cultivations and occupations, while the historical ones include documents, photographs, maps, weapons, banners and coins.

**ENTRY:** *small entry fee* | **HOURS:** *0900-2000 Mon-Fri, 0900-1900 Sat., 1000-1330 and 1700-2000 Sun.* | **CONTACT:** 28250-23222

**Greek National Football Museum** – Located on Tsouderon 40 (on the street behind the historical indoor market). Take a look back at an extensive personal collection of Greek National Football memorabilia. From jerseys, balls, trophies and scarves, it truly is a collection to see. Housed in a small shop on a side street, it is definitely worth your time if you are truly a football (soccer) fan. The owner of the shop is extremely friendly and definitely knowledgeable.

**ENTRY:** *free*

## Museums in Crete

**Museum of Typography** – Located not far from the city in the Park of Local Industries in Souda. It constitutes the life of its founder, Yannis Garedakis, founder and editor of the newspaper “Haniotika Nea”. Open since 2005, the collection includes hard to find, cast iron printing presses and other machines as well as tools and objects that present the development of typography from birth, in the days of Gutenberg, up to today. On display are rare books and newspapers as well as precious lithographs. During the guided tour, you have the opportunity to print on old printing presses.

**ENTRY:** €4 / +65 = €2 / Children under 15 = free | **HOURS:** Summer = Tues-Thurs and Sunday: 1000-1600, Mon and Sat – closed | **CONTACT:** 28210-51003 (call for winter hours) | **WEBSITE:** <http://www.typography-museum.gr>

**Aptera** – built on a site 9 miles from Chania, this city is one of the most important of ancient western Crete. Located off the National Road, signs point you to this archaeological site. The city walls still stand today along with remains of a 1<sup>st</sup> century BC temple of Demeter, a Roman theatre and vaulted cisterns dating back to the Roman period. Just past Aptera, if you continue on down the road, you will come across the Itzentin Fort. You will get spectacular views of Souda’s harbor from here. This fort is one of the best preserved Turkish Forts.

**DIRECTIONS:** Approximately 7.5 miles from Chania via the National Road. Look for signs directing you toward Megala Chorafia and Aptera. Signs will lead you to the archaeological site. | **ENTRY:** small fee

**Folklore Museum of Chania** – located at the center of old Chania, next to the Catholic church. It includes folklore and traditional exhibits that allow the visitor to have a representative view of the way of life of older residents of the island during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are collections of tools, raw materials and products of a traditional home, handicraft, small industry and rural life. There are also representations of rural occupations, home arts, craft-based work as well as representations of the interior of a rural house. Interesting is the workshop of the museum that revives the Cretan embroidery art and where embroidery paintings are being created. Located near the Old Harbor, on Halidon Street, enter through the Catholic Church’s courtyard.

**CONTACT:** 28210-90816

**Fort Firkas** – “firkas” meaning military unit, was built in 1629. Located by the Venetian port in Chania, this Fort is considered a significant monument in the history of Crete. Today, the fort houses the city’s Naval Museum and a small summer theater. **ENTRY:** free

**Frangocastello Fortress** – Constructed in 1371 to protect the small bay from invasion by pirates. The castle itself has been very well preserved. Legend has it that at dawn each May, ghosts appear inside the castle.

**DIRECTIONS:** Approximately 1.5 hours from Chania, the Fortress is located 16km east of the village of Chora Sfakion, if you take the National Road east out of Souda, exit ramp toward Chora Sfakion and follow the winding road through the villages and around and over the White Mountains. Once passed the village of Imbros on the south side of the island you will see the signs at the bottom directing you toward Frangocastello. You can’t miss the Fortress. | **ENTRY:** free

## Museums in Crete

**Kissamos Archaeological Museum** – houses artifacts that provide a view of the local history through the ages.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road out of Souda toward Kissamos. Exit at Kissamos. Located at Main Square in Kissamos | **ENTRY:** €3.00 | **HOURS:** 0830-1500 daily | **CONTACT:** [protocol@keepka.culture.gr](mailto:protocol@keepka.culture.gr) / 28220-83308

**Lissos** – was the religious center of cities of south-west Crete. Important monuments to see are the Temple of Asklepios (Roman period), Part of a Roman theater and Rock-cut and built chamber tombs.

**DIRECTIONS:** The only way to Lissos is via Sougia, either by boat or a short 1.5 – 2 hour hike up the small Lissos Gorge. The gorge starts out at the harbor of Sougia. If you choose the boat ride, it will take you approximately 20 minutes either direction to get to Lissos. Be advised there will be a fee for the boat ride. | **ENTRY:** free

**War Museum** – Located in Chania next to the Municipal Gardens and built in 1870; the museum is and has been used for various military needs. This museum is a branch of the National War Museum in Athens. On display you will find artifacts from the Balkan and Macedonia Wars as well as from the Battle of Crete and World War II.

**ENTRY:** Free | **HOURS:** 0900-1400 Tuesday – Saturday, closed Sunday and Monday | **CONTACT:** 28210-44156

## Museums in Crete

### **RETHYMNO**

**Archaeological Museum** – This museum contains artifacts from as early as 3500 B.C. These pieces have been uncovered from various caves, buildings and other sites throughout the Prefecture.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda to Rethymno. The Museum is located in the pentagon shaped building next to the main gate of the Fortezza Fortress. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0830-1500 Tuesday- Sunday, closed on Mondays | **CONTACT:** 28310-54668

**Fortezza Fortress of Rethymno** – built in 1573 by the Venetians for protection of the inhabitants by Turkish treat. It is star shaped with three gates and six bastions. In the summertime, there is a Renaissance Festival held here.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda to Rethymno. The Fortress is located on the waterfront, you can't miss it. | **ENTRY:** €3.00 | **HOURS:** 0800-2000 daily (June – October) | **CONTACT:** phone: 28310-28101

**Historical Art and Folklore Museum** – is housed in a restored 2-story Venetian building. The museum displays over 5,000 items of which include laces, textiles, costumes and ceramics.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road out of Souda to Rethymno. The museum is located at 28-30 Vernardou Street. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0930-1430 Monday - Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday

## **HERAKLION**

**Battle of Crete Museum** – located near the city center, this museum chronicles this historic battle on the island. On display here are photos, uniforms, weapons, letters and many other artifacts.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda. Exit in Heraklion and the museum is located in the center of town. | **ENTRY:** Free | **HOURS:** 0800-1500 | **CONTACT:** 28103-46554

**Gortys Archaeological Site** – located 46km south of Heraklion, this city flourished during the Roman era. Excavation here has unearthed ruins of a 16<sup>th</sup> century BC farmhouse, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD residence in which the Roman governor of the province resided and Numphaion (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), site where the Nymphs worshipped. Also located here is the temple of Pythian Apollo, the sanctuary of the Egyptian divinities and the Odeon, where the famous inscription with the laws of Gortys was found. These are the laws in which Plato spoke and were written in a Doric dialect and date from 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Most of the bigger finds are housed in the Heraklion Archaeological Museum.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda to Heraklion. Out of Heraklion, follow the road toward Tympaki. The site is located in the village of Agii Deki. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0800-1800 Monday – Sunday | **CONTACT:** 28920-31144

**Heraklion Archaeological Museum** – Considered one of the most important museums in Europe, it is located in the center of the city of Heraklion. On display are all the finds from the Minoan era on the island of Crete. Pottery, stone carvings, statuettes, gold, metalwork, the marvelous frescoes from the Royal and Little Palaces and villas of the wealthy, and finally, the unique painted limestone sarcophagus from Aghia Trias are all on display here for your viewing.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda to Heraklion. The museum is located in the City Center. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** (April-October) 1300-1930 Monday and 0800-1930 Tuesday through Sunday / (October-April) 1200-1500 Monday and 0800-1500 Tuesday through Sunday | **CONTACT:** 28102-79000

**Heraklion Historical Museum** – boasts exhibits from Byzantine, Venetian and Turkish periods along with historical documents from more recent Cretan history. The museum also displaying a collection of folk art consisting of local costumes, textiles, woodcarvings and embroidery as well as a representation of a typical Cretan house. This museum is home to the only 2 El Greco paintings on the island.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda to Heraklion. The museum is located on Lysimachou Kalokerinou St. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0900-1700 Monday –Friday in the summer | **CONTACT:** [www.historical-museum.gr](http://www.historical-museum.gr) / 28102-83219

**Knossos** – 5km east of Heraklion Knossos Palace is one of the most important archaeological sites in all of Crete, and indeed in the western world and is a must see on any trip to the Island. Titled “Cradle of Western Civilization”, excavation at the site shows that the area was inhabited since around 6,000 BC and was destroyed by the volcanic eruption of Santorini around 1450 BC. Knossos is home to the legend of



## Museums in Crete

the Minotaur, half-man, half-bull, whose mythological labyrinth prison within the Palace of King Minos was invaded by Theseus, who ultimately killed the man-eating beast! The Archaeological Museum of Heraklion houses many of the original artifacts and is a great add-on for this trip.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take National Highway from Souda to Heraklion. There will be signs directing you toward the site. It is located about 3 miles South of Heraklion on Knossos Road. There is a large parking area right beside the site where you can park for free. | **ENTRY:** €6.00 (Free on Sundays between 1 Nov and 31 March) | **HOURS:** 0800-2000 from April – October and 0830-1500 from November – March. Wear comfortable shoes. | **TOUR GUIDES:** Kriti Info can book a guide for you or you can hook-up with one of many at the site looking for additions to their group. All guides are sanctioned by the Greek Cultural Ministry, prices range from €5.00-10.00 (or more, depending on group size). | **CONTACT:** 28102-31940

**Malia Archaeological Site** – Approximately 20 miles east of Heraklion, excavations have uncovered a palace similar to the ones at Knossos and Phaistos. Many of the objects found are on display in Heraklion’s Archaeological Museum.



**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda toward Agios Nikolaos. Approximately a mile and a half past Malia, turn left, and the road to the site leads down to the beach. | **ENTRY:** Ticket | **HOURS:** 0800-1700 Tuesday - Sunday | **CONTACT:** phone: 28920-91315

**Museum of Religious Art** – is housed in the former Church of Agia Ekaterini. You will find a wide collection of frescoes, icons and other items of Religious value. The most impressive of artifacts is the 6 icons painted by Mihail Damaskinos, El Greco’s mentor.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda to Heraklion where you will exit and find the museum is located in the City Center in the former Church of Agia Ekaterini which is located next to Agios Minas Cathedral. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0930-1930 Monday-Saturday from April – October | **CONTACT:** phone: 28102-88825

**Natural History Museum of Crete** – was founded by the University of Crete and is located on the Heraklion waterfront. The museum boasts an interactive area for children. You will also find displays relating to the Island’s flora and fauna, the ecosystem along with caves, coastlines and mountains. **DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road from Souda to Heraklion. The Museum is located on Sofokli Venizelou Ave just west of the port. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0900-1600 Monday – Friday and 1000-1700 Saturday and Sunday | **CONTACT:** 28102-82740 / [www.nhmc.uoc.gr](http://www.nhmc.uoc.gr)

**Phaistos Archaeological site** – 39 miles southwest of Heraklion and about 48 miles southeast of Rethymno sits the second most important palace-city of Minoan Crete. This was the residence of the mythical Radamanthes. The architectural layout was identical to Knossos however, in contrast, the frescoes decorating the walls were relatively scanty and the floors were unpainted. The most famous artifact found on site is the Phaistos Disc. The disc is dated around 1500 BC and is imprinted with numerous symbols that are yet to be interpreted. The disc is now on display at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion.



**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Highway to Heraklion then take the road to Moires and Tymbaki. The site is located in the village of Tymbaki. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0800-1800 daily | **CONTACT:** 28920-91315

## **LASSITHI**

**Agios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum** – contains finds from excavations in eastern Crete from the Minoan through the Roman periods. The museum's most important exhibit is without doubt the “skull of the young athlete crowned with a gold wreath”, found in the 1st century AD Roman cemetery at Potamos. The gold wreath has been preserved as it was, fastened to the skull. **DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Highway from Souda to Agios Nikolaos. The museum is located at 74, Constantine Paleologou Street. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0930-1500 Tuesday - Sunday | **CONTACT:** 28410-24943 / [protocol@kdepka.culture.gr](mailto:protocol@kdepka.culture.gr)

**Gournia Archaeological Site** – 9 miles north of Ierapetra and southeast of Aghios Nikolaos sits the best preserved of all the Minoan settlements and one of the most noteworthy archaeological sites in all of Crete. Dating from 1550-1450 BC, the ruins of the town include small houses and a small palace atop a hill. Even narrow streets and connecting stairways have survived

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Highway from Souda to Agios Nikolaos. From here, head toward Ierapetra and Sitia. The site is located on this road, past Pachia Ammos. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0830-1500 Tuesday - Sunday | **CONTACT:** 28102-26092 / [protocol@kdepka.culture.gr](mailto:protocol@kdepka.culture.gr)

**Sitia Archaeological Museum** – Located in the city of Sitia, this museum houses local and regional finds that date from the Minoan era. **DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Road from Souda toward Agios Nikolaos and head toward Sitia. The museum is located off the center of town on the road headed toward Ierapetra. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0830-1500 Tuesday – Sunday | **CONTACT:** 28430-23917

**Spinalonga Isle** – an islet at the entrance of Elounda Bay near Aghios Nikolaos was built in 1579 and served as a safe refuge for Ottoman families. In 1903, by law of the Cretan Government, it was appointed as the place of stay for the lepers of Crete.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the National Highway from Souda to either Elounda or Agios Nikolaos where you will have to catch a ferry to the island. | **ENTRY:** small fee in addition to the price of the boat trip to the island. | **HOURS:** contact boat operators out of either Elounda or Agios Nikolaos for times. | **CONTACT:** 28102-88394



**Zakros Archaeological Site** – Approximately 73 miles southeast of Aghios Nikolaos sits the site of the 4<sup>th</sup> significant Minoan Palace. A number of finds were unearthed here including Royal apartments, storerooms and various work-shops.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Highway from Souda toward Agios Nikolaos and head toward Sitia. From Sitia, take the road to Paleokastro and follow the signs to Zakros. | **ENTRY:** small fee | **HOURS:** 0830-1500 Tuesday - Sunday | **CONTACT:** 28410-22462



# BEACHES

**TIPS:** *North Coast beaches* are generally shallower and have slightly warmer water. You will find that most north coast beaches have lifeguards. Along here, the north winds create high waves and inexperienced swimmers may have a problem. Always be careful and follow all lifeguard instructions. *South Coast beaches* are generally less crowded and you will notice more campers here. However, officially, camping is not allowed outside approved campsites. Also, along the South coast, the north winds blow from land to sea. During high winds, you will be pelted with sand but the sea will be calm. This generally happens only a few days a year around July and August. **Dogs** have the right to walk the beaches by law unless a sign is posted saying otherwise. With that said, dogs may not swim on the busy, more popular beaches. At the remote beaches, even if there are swimmers, however, dogs may enter the water. **No shark** attacks have ever been reported in Crete. There are sharks in the Mediterranean but they do not approach the shore so swim at your leisure and enjoy. There are no dangerous fish or sea creatures in Crete. Your biggest worry would be if you step on a Sea urchin along one of the rocky shores.

\* **Geropotamos Beach** lies just beyond Rethymno and has seen numerous drownings over the years. This particular beach location is reported to have rough seas and terrible under-tow.

## NEAR BASE

**Marathi and Loutraki Beaches** are within 5-10 minutes from the front gate. They are very clean and family friendly. Tavernas and a water sports area make for a great place to spend the day. Loutraki beach has a decent sized parking lot for your vehicle. There are lounge chair rentals and these beaches are preferred by locals.



**Stavros Beach** is a lovely cove with crystal clear water and white sand. Lounge chair rentals are available. Several tavernas are located within walking distance of the beach for your afternoon snack or early dinner. Bring sturdy shoes for a short hike up to Zorba's Cave, made famous by the movie "Zorba the Greek". It is located approximately 15 minutes from base.

**Tersanas Beach** is a small cove with sparkling blue water frequented by locals. The Sunset Restaurant is located nearby for your dining pleasure. It is located approximately 15 minutes from base.

## Beaches

**Kalathas Beach** is a beautiful cove with snack-bars on the beach. Kayaking, scuba diving, snorkeling, paddle and volley ball are popular here (with your own equipment). Swim out to the little island that sits just off the coast. Beach chairs are available for rental. This is a favorite of the American community. It's located approximately 15 minutes from base.



### NEAR CHANIA CITY

**Golden Beach and Agios Apostolous** are a long stretch of coves and beaches offering a variety of fun in the sun. For music, social action, volleyball, and food and beverage served to you in your beach chair, head to Iguana Beach or Mambo. Drive from downtown Chania is approximately 10 minutes.

**Stalos / Agia Marina / Platanias** beaches are sandy with water sports, lots of souvenir shops, eateries and great nightlife. Rent a kayak for a paddle out to the little Island of St. Theodore to glimpse the native Cretan goat "Kri Kri". Drive from downtown Chania is approximately 15 minutes.

**Maleme Beaches**, a site of WW II's Battle of Crete, are a bit more remote. There are several large resorts in the area. The drive from downtown Chania is approximately 25 minutes.

**Nea Hora** has a series of sandy beaches just west of the Venetian walls of the city. You will find some good fish tavernas and shallow water here.

### WEST OF CHANIA

**Elafonisi Beach** lies at the southern extreme of Crete's west coast and is one of the island's loveliest beaches. It is separated by a short stretch of shallow water from an islet full of low dunes and semi-secluded coves. A breathtaking shore with pink sand beaches put Elafonisi at the top of the must see list. Drive from base is approximately 2 hours.



**Kastelli**, in the region of Kissamos, was a major port during the Minoan period. Relax at one of the many lovely beaches, tavernas, or hotels in the area. Drive from base is about 24 miles or approximately 1 hour.

**Falasarna** is on the West coast of Crete. This is a small resort boasting one of the best-known beaches in the Chania Prefecture that attracts large numbers of tourists every summer. This beach has won prizes for being the most beautiful beach in Crete and is

## Beaches

always one of the top ten beaches in Europe due to its fine white sand and warm, crystal – clear water. There are 2 bars and cafes on the beach for your snacking convenience. You will see some amazing sunsets here. Water sports and beach volleyball are available. NOTE: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of August each year, the youths of the neighboring village of Platanos host a great beach party (since 1995). Entrance to the party is free and drinks are cheap. Lots of people camp overnight on the beach and dance the night away to the sounds of professional DJs.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road to Kissamos (Kastelli). After passing through Kissamos, continue to Platanos and follow signs to Falassarna. You will see the beach over the hill. Be careful since the road along here is fairly narrow and winding. Drive from base is approximately 1-1/2 hours.

**Balos Lagoon** is said to be one of the best beaches in all of Greece. Loaded with white-pinkish sand and broken sea-shells, the lagoon is very shallow and warm. Out of the lagoon, you may swim or snorkel as the water is deep and crystal-clear. There is a primitive café here if needing a quick drink.



**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road to Kissamos then to the village of Kalyvianni. From here you can walk on foot down to the lagoon, which will take around 3 hours. Or if your vehicle can withstand the drive, follow the dirt road from Kalyvianni village to the parking place and then walk 15 minutes down. You can get some beautiful pictures from here. Your best bet for transportation is by boat from Kissamos/Kastelli harbor. The boat departs at 1000 daily and returns around 1745. This boat also visits Gramvousa Island, which it, in and of itself, is worth the trip. You can lay on the beach at Gramvousa, hike to the Venetian fortress or snorkel near an old shipwreck. | **TICKET:** If you take the boat, the fee to both islands is €22.00 with a €5.00 discount if you show your U.S. DOD ID card. | **CONTACT:** 28220-24344 / 693-684-2185.

## EAST OF CHANIA

**7-mile Beach** in the village of Georgoupoli, is a long stretch of sandy waterfront that houses a scattering of tavernas and hotels. Stop on the way back to Chania at the Lake of Kournas, a great place to relax and enjoy lunch or dinner. Drive from base approximately 30 minutes.

**Bali Beach Resort**, popular with families, Bali has excellent beaches. The road going to Bali is a dead-end so there is very little traffic and the nights are pretty quiet. The beaches are very nice and the bay is well-protected against waves making the waters calm and perfect for the little ones to splash around. Various water sorts are available for rent here including pedal boats, canoes, water skis and the like. Experienced swimmers can swim out to the small islands located just off the coast. There are lots of restaurants and tavernas as well as a few supermarkets for your needs. Located between Rethymno and Heraklion, highway signs will direct you to the town.

**Frangokastello Beach**, west past Sfakia, is known for its Venetian Castle and golden sand beaches. Drive from base is approximately 2 hours.

## Beaches

**Georgioupolis Beach** is a popular resort area with some amazing beaches. Ideal for families with children, there is also a large public swimming pool here. The bigger beaches have your typical deck chairs and umbrellas for rent, as well as surfboards and water skis. Drive from base is approximately 50 minutes.



**Hora Sfakion Beach** is 72km from Chania sitting on the blue waters of the Libyan Sea. You will take an awe-inspiring drive through the White Mountains of Crete on your journey. Drive from base is approximately 2 hours.

**Kalives Beach** sits along a charming seaside town at the far edge of Souda Bay. Blue-green waters, golden sand beaches, and a view of the Aptera Ruins are combined with a traditional Cretan atmosphere to make it a perfect place for a day or overnight trip. Nice hotels and great tavernas are within walking distance. Drive from base is approximately 30 minutes.

**Komos Beach** lies on the south side of the island. Sitting just south of the village of Kalamaki, the long Komos beach begins. Said to be one of the best on Crete, the beach is approximately 1 ¼ miles long with the first ¾ of a mile or so is dominated by nudists. At the far end, deckchairs and umbrellas are for rent. There is a small beach bar that serves sandwiches and drinks. Just behind the beach is the archaeological site of the Minoan port of Festos. The beach never seems to be overly crowded, even in the height of the summer. This is also one of the beaches where the Loggerhead turtles come to lay their eggs during the summer. Since the baby turtles use the moonlight to find the sea, no lights are allowed on during this time so for this reason, camping, late-night beach parties and campfires are prohibited.

**Moni Preveli Beach** is on the southern coast of Crete on the Libyan Sea. This is considered, along with Vai Beach, as one of the most exotic beaches on the island. Deck chairs and umbrellas are for rent. Within walking distance is the beautiful monastery of Preveli. Drive from base is approximately 2 hours.

**Paleochora Beach** is reachable by both boat, from Sfakia, or car. The main town in Southwest Crete, this is considered a tourist resort. There are two beaches in town, one to the east and one to the west. You can also enjoy the 13<sup>th</sup> century Venetian castle. This is a nice town with a quaint feel to it. You can spend the night and enjoy local cuisine and nightlife or enjoy the lazy days on the sand. Drive from base is approximately 2 hours.



**Sougia Beach**, with its wide curved sand and pebble beach and tree-lined coastal road, has an atmosphere of tranquility. It is ideal for those hoping to “get away from it all”. With its “Clothing Optional” atmosphere, it may not be the best bet for the kiddies. Drive from base is approximately 2 hours.

## Beaches

**Sweetwater Beach** is considered by some to be the best beach in the world. This famous beach is only reachable via walking or taking a small boat from Chora Sfakia. The only building here is a taverna. Camping is tolerated here.



**Vai Beach** is approximately 4.5 hours from Chania on the far eastern end of Crete. This beach sits amidst the “Palm forest of Vai” and is one of the most popular sights in Crete and definitely one of the most beautiful in all of the Mediterranean. The beach is made up of fine sand and pebbles at its north end. There is a large, paid (as of 2009, €2.50), parking lot behind the Palm Forest. There are sun loungers, straw umbrellas and wooden walkways for easy access. Naturally in July and August, thousands of visitors flock here. If on the other hand, you visit Vai at the beginning or end of the tourist season, you will enjoy the scenery and sea a lot more. Located just off the beach and within walking distance are a viewing platform, a restaurant and a cafeteria with chairs and tables set out under the shade of the palms. Toilets and outdoor showers are also available. Water sports, such as jet-skiing, wakeboarding and a banana boat, are there for the offering.



**DIRECTIONS:** Located about 15 miles east of Sitia and about 3 -1/2 miles from Palaikastro. Drive the National Highway toward Sitia and follow the signs toward Toplou Monastery (Moni Toplou) and continue another 8km past the monastery to the palm forest. Approximately 4.5 hours east of Chania. From Sfakia, you may take a boat (5 daily departures) to the postcard perfect beach of **Loutro** or **Agia Roumeli**, which is famous for being the endpoint of the Samarian Gorge hike.

## SIGHTSEEING CRETE

**Agia Galini** – name meaning “Saint Serenity” or “Holy Peace” is a small village built on a steep hillside. Agia Galini is known for being one of the first ‘tourist resorts’ in Crete. The village has a really nice beach as well. In the summer, you will find numerous small yachts and sailing boats docked in the harbor. The village is very hospitable as is most ‘tourist resorts’. Everything is very close together however most of the tiny village streets are not named so it would be best to use landmarks to orient you along the way. Agia Galini is full of tavernas and restaurants so you will not starve while here. They have a rich nightlife as well, however all the bars and nightclubs are clustered near the harbor so as not to disturb people. You can go on dolphin watching excursions, take boats to other beaches or neighboring islets or lounge on the beaches or relax at the cafes.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Follow National Road to Rethymno. From here, continue towards Spili and Agia Galini. Approximately 2 hours from Chania.* | **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** *The village has a KTEL bus stop.*

**Agia Roumeli** – located on the south coast of Chania, is best known as the village at the end path of the **Samaria Gorge** Hike. Thousands of visitors flock to hike the gorge every summer and then end up here in **Agia Roumeli** to catch a ferry to **Paleochora, Loutro, Hora Sfakion** or **Sougia**. This village lives on tourism alone. If you hike the gorge and have an extra day on your itinerary, consider a stay overnight in the village. Enjoy the beautiful scenery and enjoy the beauty of the large pebble beach. Relax at one of the local tavernas and, if you’re lucky, enjoy the company of the taverna owner. There are a few hiking paths from here. One is a very challenging 10 hour hike for very experienced hikers who are not afraid of heights. This will take you along the coast path from Agia Roumeli to **Sougia**. Another is less daunting and not as risky. This 3.5 km hike to the little church of Agios Pavlos. There is no water along the way so make sure you bring some with you.



**DIRECTIONS:** *CANNOT BE REACHED BY CAR, however, you can reach it by foot after hiking the Samaria Gorge, by boat from Hora Sfakion, Sougia or Paleochora. These little ferries arrive in the morning then leave in the afternoon so that you may enjoy the lower part of the Samaria Gorge and the village itself.* | **NOTE:** *Agia Roumeli does not have a safe harbor, only a small jetty, making it hard for ferries to dock. As a result, on bad weather days there will be no trips in or out of the village; please bear that in mind.*

**Agia Trias** – This is the location of ruins of a royal villa which some say was the summer palace of the Phaistos rulers. Located in the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, artifacts from this site include: the larnax, the Harvester Vase, and some impeccably painted frescoes.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Located 2.5 miles from Phaistos, Take the National Highway to Heraklion then take the road to Moires and Tymbaki. The site is located in the village of Tymbaki.* | **ENTRY:** *Ticket*

## Sightseeing Crete

**Agia Triada (Holy Trinity) or Tzagarolon Monastery** – is located very near the base and is one of the most impressive monasteries in all of Crete. The monastery plays a very important role in the local economy by supporting schools in Chania and operating a seminary within its walls. The monastery has produced excellent Organic products to include olive oil, soaps, honey, vinegar, wine and Tsikoudia (raki). The olive oil has won international prizes and is mainly exported. They have a shop on premises where all of these products may be purchased.

**DIRECTIONS:** From the base, take the main road as you would go toward Chania. About a mile and a half or so, you will see a sign to the Monastery. Approximately 3-5 minutes from base. | **HOURS:** 0800 to sunset except in winter time / 0800-1400 and 1600 to sunset. | **NOTE:** Make sure you are appropriately dressed when visiting the monastery.

**Agios Nikolaos** – has transformed into a very popular tourist destination. This small, quaint city has a “Cretan Country Charm”. The center of the city is nestled around a small lake called Voulismeni. Here you will find many cafes, bars and tavernas. In the summer time, live music plays. The town has an archaeological museum that is second only to Heraklion’s in importance. There is also a smaller Ethnological museum that displays artifacts from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. From here you can take daily boat trips to the island of Spinalonga (the old leper colony) which sits off the coast.



**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road toward Rethymno and continue along through Heraklion to Agios Nikolaos.

**Almyrida** – is a seaside resort at the entrance to Souda Bay. The resort is quite small and touristy. On the coastal road running along the beach, you will see clusters of cafes and restaurants along with many shops to suit your needs. This is the ideal place for anyone wanting to enjoy the sea in peace and quiet, far from the major tourist resorts. It is ideal for families with small children as the sea is quite shallow. There are two sandy beaches with beach chairs, umbrellas and lifeguards. However, these beaches are very exposed to the winds, and on windy days, you may see large waves. There’s also a third beach with pebbles just before the village. These beaches are awarded the coveted Blue Flag every year, showing the sea is clean and the beach provides the necessary safety features and customer service facilities. On those windy days, it is a windsurfer’s paradise. Even the most inexperienced can give it a try as they have windsurfing trainers here during the height of tourist season.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road toward Rethymno and exit at Kalyves (Kalives). Go past Kalives and continue another 2km to Almyrida. Approximately 20-30 minutes from Chania. | **PUBLIC**

**TRANSPORTATION:** From Chania Station, there is a daily bus to Kalives and Almyrida and more in the summer.

**AquaWorld Aquarium and Reptile Rescue Center** – The 1<sup>st</sup> aquarium in Crete that displays local sea life and reptiles from everywhere. Hands on interaction with many of the animals are encouraged. Most animals are rescued or were injured.

**HOURS:** 1 APR – 31 OCT annually; Mon-Sat 1000-1800 (last entry 1715). Closed Sundays | **PRICE:** Adults and Teens: €6/ kids: €4. | **LOCATION:** Port of Hersonnisos.

## Sightseeing Crete

**Botanical Park of Crete** – is one of the newest attractions in the Chania Prefecture. The Park is best described as a nature walk with a bit of a scenic hike thrown into the mix. It is home to Butterflies, wild birds, varied plants, herbs and trees spread out among the 200 square kilometers of hillside. Depending on the time of year you visit will determine the plants, herbs or fruit that is visible as they all vary with the months and seasons. The paths are well marked and there is a lake at the bottom that offers you the chance to relax a bit and take in the water fowl. The trail itself is suitable for all reasonably fit and active people with good mobility. The Park is the brainchild of 4 brothers who, after losing much of their land and livelihood destroyed by a wildfire in October 2004, set out to highlight the many plants, trees, flowers and herbs that are native to the island of Crete. There is a restaurant on site that is open throughout the day offering panoramic views of the gardens and surrounding areas. They serve organic, local, fresh, seasonal dishes. Seating is indoors or outside so take your pick and enjoy the views.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road toward Kissamos and take the road toward Omalos. The gardens are located just past the village of Fournes and are only 15km from Chania. | **TICKET:** €6 for over 12; €4 for 6-12 and under 6 is free with parents | **INFO:** March - November open daily from 0900. | **CONTACT:** [www.botanical-park.com/](http://www.botanical-park.com/) / [info@botanical-park.gr](mailto:info@botanical-park.gr) / 697-686-0573.

**Chania** – The largest city close to the base, Chania has many things to offer you. From the large indoor market with merchants selling everything from fresh meats, cheeses, breads and fish to souvenirs to the old port and old town, you will not be the least bit disappointed with the island's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city. In the old town and old port area, you will come across the old Venetian Fort Firkas which presently houses the naval museum. Also, you will see the Chania lighthouse, Church of Agios Nikolaos (the large Orthodox church near the harbor) and the Hassan Pascha Mosque of the Janissaries, built in 1645. On warm summer evenings, around the harbor and port you will find gypsies selling their wares and drivers waiting to take you on a horse-drawn carriage ride. Chania boasts a pretty popular street with tourists called "Leather Alley" where handmade leather goods can be bought relatively cheap. Shopping around the city includes numerous boutiques and souvenir shops. You will be able to find a store for any one of your needs. Don't miss the city's Archaeological Museum housed in an old monastery. There's also a Cretan Folklore Museum near the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Also on Saturday mornings, near City Hall, there is an outdoor market held where fresh vegetables and different wares can be bought.



**Cretaquarium** – Located just past the Heraklion city limits on a former U.S. Air Force base, the aquarium is part of the Thalassocosmos (Hellenic Center for Marine Research) complex. You will come face to face with hundreds of species and thousands of living organisms. The aquarium is the largest in the Mediterranean and is open 365 days a year for your visiting pleasure. Not huge





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by American standards, the aquarium is very nice for children and they will definitely enjoy a day trip there. Inside you will find a snack bar and a souvenir shop as well.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow National Road to Heraklion then follow the large brown signs to Cretaquarium. |

**OPERATING HOURS:** 1 May – 15 Oct 0900-2100 / 16 Oct – 30 Apr 10-1730 | **ENTRY FEE:** €8.00, children 5-17 years old is €6.00 | **CONTACT:** 28103-37788

**The Dikteon Cave or Dikteon Andon** – one of the most important and famous of Crete's 3000 or so caves. Here, legend has it, that Zeus was born among the stalagmites and stalactites, which is why the cave was dedicated to the worship of Zeus (Father of the Gods of Olympus), as the many offerings found here indicate. Many visitors come for touristy purposes but no longer worshippers. The cave is found in the Mount Dicte range in East Crete, on the Lassithi Plateau, which is near Neapoli, Malia, Stalida and Hersonissos. The road is very windy and uphill so you will need 45 minutes or so to reach the Plateau and village of Psychro.

Once in the village, follow the paved path with oak trees on either side. For the more adventurous, at the beginning of the path you will find donkeys to take you up to the Dikteon Cave. At the end of the short path will be the cave entrance. Upon entering, you will immediately notice the temperature change. Roost rock doves and, deeper inside the cave, Long-eared bats reside. Offerings found here include honey, olive oil, wine, wheat and animal sacrifices. The most impressive sight in the Cave is the lake located at the lowest point. To reach the lake, you will need suitable shoes. Remember, the lake is at its lowest level in late September while in the winter it rises noticeably due to rainfall. At the lake you will see the "Mantle of Zeus", a stalactite which hangs over the lake. At the back of the lake you can easily see a small chamber in which it is said that the Father of the Gods was born.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road from Souda through Heraklion. Roughly between Heraklion and Agios Nikolaos the Cave is located in the Lassithi Plateau. You will follow the road toward the village of Psychro.

**Eleftherna** – a little known archaeological site that is packed with ruins from the Dorian, Roman, Hellenistic, and even the Minoan periods. On the ridge are the remains of a Dorian State and on the west side you can follow the path, take a sharp left at the fork where you'll see two large rock cut cisterns. Head north on the path again and a 30 minute walk will lead you to a beautiful Hellenistic bridge. To the west of the ridge you will also see a cemetery from the early Iron Age. To the east side, going toward the valley floor, is a curious double church dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10 centuries. On the valley floor is the remains of a Roman Villa as well as many other interesting things to see. Plan to spend all day if you like to explore, this site is wonderful.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Highway east towards Rethymno. Go past Rethymno to Panormos, and then watch for a sign indicating a right turn to Roumeli/ Perama. Follow this road into Perama, at the fork in the middle of the town, bear right, continuing to **Margarites (Village of Potters)**. From there, go through Kinigiana and Arkhaia Eleftherna, defined by the remains of a tower. Park here. Well-used footpaths will take you to the sites. | **ENTRANCE FEE:** No entrance fee and open year round.

| **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** none. | **NOTE:** Avoid rainy days, it gets muddy. Bring euro to eat in one of the area's many tavernas.

## Sightseeing Crete

**Elounda** – a picturesque fishing village located on the beautiful Mirabello Bay near **Agios Nikolaos**. Elounda has developed into a resort famous for its beautiful scenery and the best and most expensive hotels on the whole island. It is said to be the place with the most 5-star hotels in all of Greece. Elounda often welcomes Arab princes with their large families, film and music stars, Russian tycoons and other VIPs from all over the world. This is part of the magic, as many people dream of spreading their towel on the beaches of Elounda, where some famous person has been swimming. The town has a thriving bar scene. The bay itself is calm and flat which makes its beaches a great destination for families with small children. The beach located next to the dam has won the Blue Flag award numerous times over the years. If you take a walk across the dam, you may see sunken ruins of the ancient city of Olous, which was submerged over 1500 years ago.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Follow National Road toward Agios Nikolaos. Approximately 3-3.5 hours from Chania.*

**Frangokastello** – is a small seaside village that's famous for its Venetian castle and the ghosts that are said to appear at dawn each May. The castle is preserved in very good condition. The village boasts beautiful beaches along with several tavernas that serve delicious food and fresh fish. The beaches provide very shallow water that is ideal for smaller children. To the east of the castle is one of the most beautiful beaches in Crete known as "Orthi Ammos" ("Standing Sand"), aptly named after the sand dunes you have to scramble down to reach the water. The water here is crystal clear and the bottom slopes down gently. To the west of the castle is another beach with pebbles and a rocky seabed, ideal for snorkeling. A small secret of this village is that to enjoy it, you must not come when a north wind is blowing or the sea will be too rough and the sand will pelt you.



**DIRECTIONS:** *Take National Road toward signs to Chora Sfakion. This drive will have you ascending to the Askyfou Plateau and alongside the Imbros Gorge. The before you know it, stretched out in front of you is the Libyan Sea. Drive slowly and carefully. Remember that there may be tourist buses that come upon you in the opposite direction that will need the whole width of the bend to turn. Approximately 1.5 hours from Chania.*

**Gavdos Island** – This Island is well worth the trip if you want to say you've stood on the most southerly point in Europe. The island is about 2 hrs south of Crete by ferry and the day trip allows you about four hours to explore the tiny harbor of Karabe or walk inland to the main village of Kastri. Local folk are known to greet the ferry to provide transportation to the island's best beaches, which lie north or the southernmost tip of the island and of Europe, Tripiti point.

**DIRECTIONS:** *CANNOT GET THERE BY CAR. You will need to take a ferry from Chora Sfakion to reach this island. It is located 26 nautical miles South of the port in Chora Sfakion.*

**Georgiopolis** – a small seaside town that is said to be one of the most attractive tourist villages. The restaurants and tavernas invite you in or encourage you to sit out underneath the Eucalyptus trees. There are many shops as you may stroll the narrow streets. Georgiopolis has a small harbor and a stretch of beaches. There is also a small,

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decorative lighthouse in the Greek colors of white and blue. The most popular sight in the harbor is the chapel of Agios Nikolaos, set on a manmade rock jetty. It's worth the trip and the walk just to get beautiful pictures. This is the ideal place for exploration and excursions to neighboring areas. Also there is something for everyone here. It has tourist amenities and lots of shops to suit all visitors.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take National Road toward Rethymno and exit at the Georgiopolis ramp. It is a pretty popular tourist destination. Approximately 20 minutes from Chania. | **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** Buses usually run to here year round from Chania.

**Gouverneto Monastery** – one of the oldest monasteries in Crete, as it was built in 1537. Also known as “Our Lady of the Angels”, the monastery is located approximately 4km from **Agia Triada Monastery**. The monastery itself resembles a castle and is dedicated to the Virgin. Next to the church is a chapel dedicated to the founder of the monastery, St. John, the Hermit, whose cave is in the nearby Avlaki Gorge (where a paved footpath leads you from the Monastery down to the sea).



**DIRECTIONS:** Located very near the base, Follow signs to Agia Triada Monastery and instead of entering the parking area of the monastery, continue on the road that winds its way around the hillside. Be very careful driving up the hillside to the Monastery as the roads are not in the best shape and can be very rough in spots. | **NOTE:** Entrance into the Monastery is prohibited to people inappropriately dressed in shorts, swimwear or sleeveless blouses. Smoking is prohibited inside the monastery as well as use of video and cameras. | **OPERATING HOURS:** With very strict opening hours, you must choose your days and times carefully. The monastery is officially closed on Wednesdays and Fridays. Open from 0900-1200 and 1700-1900 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Open at 0900-1100 and 1700-2000 on Saturdays and Sundays.

**Heraklion** – the largest city in Crete and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in Greece and is commonly called the “Athens of Crete”. This is where McDonalds and Pizza Hut are located, which happen to be the closest to the city of Chania. In the city, you will find in Eleftherias Square, the Archaeological Museum which is by far the most important of museums on Crete based on its many artifacts from the nearby Knossos Palace. Korai Street is the café district. Lions Square or (Eleftheriou Venizelou Square) is the site of the Morosini Fountain, the famous Venetian fountain with the lions. The main Heraklion Market is located 1866 Street. You will also find Saint Minas, the cathedral dedicated to the patron saint of the city. The Venetian Loggia is the most elegant Venetian monument in the city. 25<sup>th</sup> of August street is arguably the most beautiful street in Heraklion. And lastly you will find Koules, the Venetian fortress at the entrance to the harbor. From Heraklion’s port, you can catch high speed ferries to Santorini and other Greek islands as well as ferries to mainland Greece. If you travel the coast road, you will find the city’s nightlife, the Dominican churches of Saints Peter and Paul, the Natural History Museum, Talos Shopping Center and the Pancretan Olympic Stadium.



**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road to the city. Located approximately 2-2.5 hours from Chania.

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**Hersonissos** – One of Crete’s biggest resort areas, you will find a variety of people here. There are lots of beaches located in and around here and the ones in the town itself are very, very crowded in the summer months. You will find your typical bars, cafes, tavernas and souvenir shops along the waterfront. The town boasts a small port that houses fishing boats and, from time to time, will host yachts.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Located 20km east of Iraklio and 10km west of the resort town of Malia.*

**Hora Sfakion** (Chora Sfakia) – one of the most beautiful and interesting counties in Crete as it is centered on the White Mountain range, or “Lefka Ori” in Greek. The seaside capital of Sfakia, it is coastal village located on the Southwest coast of Crete, 70 km from the city of Chania. Hora Sfakion has an enclosed picturesque harbor and is famous for being one of the headquarters of the resistance against occupying forces of both the Venetians and the Turks. After the Battle of Crete during WW II, the locals helped the Australian and New Zealand armies escape from Sfakia on the night of May 31, 1941. Sfakia is also an ideal base for sea and mountain excursions to neighboring villages and sandy beaches of southern Crete. Boats leave from Sfakia throughout the day in the summer months to **Agia Roumeli, Loutro, Paleochora, Sougia** and Marmaras.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Highway east towards Rethymno. At the 33<sup>rd</sup> km mark, turn right at the sign for Vrisses and Sfakia. Drive thru Vrisses and follow the signs to Sfakia. This will start an impressive trip to the east side of the White Mountains crossing the mountainous area of Sfakia, located in the plateau of Askifou. The ride from Askifou is dramatic, as the road hugs the western slope of the **Gorge of Imbros**. The view of the gorge and the Libyan Sea is breathtaking. | **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:** Buses depart the Chania station at 0830, 1100, 1400. Cost is around €10.*

**Ierapetra** – on the southeast end of the island, Ierapetra is the most southerly town in Europe. Aside from being a charming old town, you shouldn’t miss the chance of seeing the mosque, the old fishing port and the 17<sup>th</sup> century castle. You can also visit the town’s archaeological museum with the exhibit of the 1.5m Madonna of Ierapetra. This is a 1<sup>st</sup> century statue that has been well preserved and was discovered by a local farmer.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Highway toward Agios Nikolaos and look for signs headed toward Ierapetra. The city is located South of Agios Nikolaos and Southwest of Sitia.*

**Komitades** – at the end of the Imbros Gorge, this village was once quaint and quiet. However, as the popularity of hiking the Gorge has grown, so has the need to service the walkers. Walkers beware of the high priced restaurants and tavernas here. You would be much better off walking the main road (take the right turn) for ten minutes to the center of the village of Komitades.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Road toward Rethymno and exit toward Chora Sfakia. This village is located between Chora Sfakia and Plakias.*

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**Kournas Lake or Lake Kournas** – The touristy section of the village of Kournas, the freshwater lake has a perimeter of 3.5km. It used to be full of eels but is now known for turtles and tourists. With the White Mountains reflecting in the smooth waters, the lake is a safe place to have a dip. You can walk around the lake or ride the pedalo on the waters.



**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road toward Rethymno and keep a keen eye out for the sign to Kournas village, as it is before the Georgiopolis exit. If you pass Georgiopolis, you've gone too far. Follow signs to Kournas Lake and Village.

**Koutsouras** – a small town approximately 20km east of Ierapetra and is best visited during the springtime to see the Valley of Butterflies. At this time, millions of butterflies descend upon the town and is definitely a sight to behold.

**DIRECTIONS:** Koutsouras is located on the road that passes between Ierapetra and Sitia.

**Loutro** – a seaside resort on southwest coast of the island near Hora Sfakia (Sfakia) that lies in the embrace of a cliff that towers some 600 meters above the village. Loutro is a unique spot for Crete for many reasons. Its white buildings and blue windows remind you of the island of Santorini. There is NO ROAD to Loutro. Entry is only by scheduled boat service from Sfakia or by foot. Also, there is no road in Loutro itself or cars or motorbikes with the exception of one car that transfers supplies from the boat to the hotel. All houses are just a few meters from the water's edge and the sea is always calm. The northeasterly winds (meltemia) are virtually unknown. Dozens of boats visit the harbor daily which is the only means of communication with the surrounding areas. You rarely need to walk more than a few yards to find a taverna or the beach. The pace will be slow and lazy making you wonder how you could possibly have lived so long in a busy, stressful city. All you will need is a pair of flip-flops for the beach, shorts and a t-shirt, a swimsuit and sunscreen. Anything else seems completely unnecessary in Loutro. If you are feeling adventurous, you can take a 30 – minute hike to the neighboring Phoenix for a coffee and dip in its tiny beach or continue on past to Marmara beach and the exit of Aradena Gorge. At Marmara there is a small taverna and a beach laden with umbrellas.

**DIRECTIONS:** by boat from Hora Sfakia. | **NOTE:** The only facilities available in Loutro are a few minimarkets. There is no ATM. Camping and topless bathing are prohibited. Spear fishing isn't allowed either. Loutro is usually crowded in August so pick a different month to make your visit more enjoyable. A different adventure option is to take a boat trip out to admire the sunset over the sea and, if lucky, some dolphin spotting.

**Maleme** – ideal for anyone interested in the recent history of Crete and especially the Battle of Crete during World War II when Maleme became famous for its airfield. Thousands of German paratroopers were killed trying to take the Maleme Airfield and have been laid to rest in the German War Cemetery at Maleme. There is a beach in Maleme worth mentioning as well. It is wide, sandy and quite long. Most of the beach is unorganized and the only umbrellas and chairs are in front of the hotels and cafes. You

## Sightseeing Crete

will also find some nice pottery shops in Maleme where the potter himself is working out of the shop.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road toward Kissamos. Exit at Platania and follow signs to Maleme.

**Malia** – an old potato town turned into one of the hottest spots for tourists on Crete especially if you're seeking the 'nightlife' and party scene. The city is loaded with hotels, tavernas and bars. Late at night it is not uncommon to find the beach strewn with drunken bodies. Malia is definitely not your typical 'family' resort town. The atmosphere here is rough where fights are commonplace and where hung-over twentysomethings stumble out into the streets in the middle of the day. Tourism created this town with two different faces. One like the Old Malia with its narrow streets, houses with bougainvilleas and little tavernas echoing live Greek music. On the other side is the coastal resort with its bars, nightclubs and frenzied nightlife of young tourists. Depending on the type of tourist you are will depend on if you stay in Old Malia or venture into the frenzy of the coastal area after dark where endless partying awaits you nightly. You will also find another McDonald's restaurant here along with a Subway Sandwich shop and KFC. There are different cultures represented at the many restaurants in the city. To visit the Malia Archaeological site, leave the town heading towards Agios Nikolaos. 2-3 km out of Malia, turn left. The road leading to the Palace of Malia continues down to the sea and beach.



**DIRECTIONS:** Follow National Road from Chania past Heraklion on toward Agios Nikolaos. Located approximately 30km east of Heraklion. Approximately 3 hours from Chania.

**Margarites** – the "Village of Potters" as it is also known is one of Crete's four historic pottery villages. The village itself is laden with tiny shops owned by potters who are more than willing to sell you their wares. This is definitely a 'must see' if you want something traditional and original from the island that will last a lifetime. Well worth the trip to the village.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Highway east towards Rethymno. Go past Rethymno to Panormos, and then watch for a sign indicating a right turn to Roumeli/ Perama. Follow this road into Perama, at the fork in the middle of the town, bear right, continuing to the village.

**Matala** – a seaside village in south Crete near **Phaistos**, the second-largest Minoan Palace in Crete. The city became famous in the sixties and early seventies when the flower children and hippies came here from all around the world to live in and near the famed **Caves of Matala**. The likes of Janice Joplin, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan spent many days and nights under the Cretan sky here. However, with that said, Matala is no longer the city of hippies. Tourists flock here from all around to see the lovely beaches and archaeological sites and sample a bit of a traditional Cretan atmosphere. No longer a place for wild nightlife, you can still have a



## Sightseeing Crete

drink and listen to music by the sea. History buffs will get excited as the likes of the Minoan Palace of **Phaistos**, the Minoan Villa of **Agia Triada** and the ancient city of **Gortys** are located close by.

**DIRECTIONS:** *located 71km south of Heraklion on the Bay of Messara. From Chania, take the National Road to Rethymno and then head toward Spili. Continue past Spili to Agia Galini and Tymbaki. After Tymbaki you will go through Phaistos the to Matala. Approximately 1.2-2 hours from Chania.*

**Moni Arkadi Monastery** – located some 20km from Rethymno, this monastery is said to be the most famous on Crete. It was the center of resistance against the Turks on November 9, 1866 and many Cretans view it as a symbol of their independence. During the invasion of the monastery by the Turks, the Cretans retreated to the arsenal, a room filled with gunpowder, and the moment the Turks breached the monastery walls, the monk, Konstantinos Giaboudakis shot the powder to ignite it. The subsequent explosion killed all Cretans within and the vast majority of the Turks. It is believed that around 1000 men died this day making this one of the biggest mass-suicides in history. Shortly afterwards, the Turks, feeling pressure from outsiders, were forced to leave Crete. The monastery is quite large and monks still reside inside, so be respectful please. There is a small souvenir shop, museum and memorial hall on site; which in the latter, bones of the dead are displayed.

**DIRECTIONS:** *20km from Rethymno, take the national road and follow signs toward the monastery.*

**Moni Gonia Monastery** – is dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin and was originally founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The monastery was heavily damaged by Turkish bombardment on various occasions throughout history. The cannon ball lodged in the monastery wall is evidence left behind from these attacks. Today, the Orthodox Academy of Crete, an important religious and spiritual academy, is located here. The monastery is still resided by monks.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Road to Kolymbari. The Monastery is located some 26km west of Chania and 2 and a half km from Kolymbari.*

**Platanias** – one of the most popular tourist resorts in Crete. Please note that we are talking about the Platanias in the Chania Prefecture as opposed to the Platanias in Rethymno's area. This resort area is lively, busy and you certainly won't be bored here. Platanias has a busy nightlife, bars, restaurants, a large sandy beach and countless hotels along the seafront. This city boasts one of the largest beaches in Crete, 7km long that stretches east and west of Platanias. This is the ideal destination for twenty-somethings looking for some wild fun; however, you will also see families with small children out and about as well. This place has amenities to suit every taste, including many family-friendly restaurants and hotels.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Road toward Kissamos. This is a major tourist destination so there are detailed signs. Exit from the National Road at Platanias and follow signs toward the resort area.*

## Sightseeing Crete

**Rethymno** – the old town is one of the best-preserved towns of the Renaissance. Here you will find a very nice leisurely walk around the harbor where you will come across fishing boats, the famous lighthouse, the Venetian Fortezza and many shops and tavernas waiting for you to enter. In the city itself, you will find Rimondi Fountain, the church of Our Lady of Angels and the Historical and Folk Museum of Rethymno. One of the big attractions of Rethymno is the annual Carnival parade that dates back almost a century.



**DIRECTIONS:** *Take National Road to Rethymno and follow signs to Port or Old Town.*

**Sitia** – Located on the far Eastern corner of the island, Sitia is a quiet yet busy town. There is a small archaeological museum that displays Minoan era artifacts through present day findings. The museum itself is well worth a visit. Not much tourism flows through the city so if you are looking for some quiet time, you can find it here or use it as a home base to venture out to all the other sites on the East side of the island. Sitia does have a nice sandy beach that is chock full of cafés and bars that are normally full of locals.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Follow the National Road toward Agios Nikolaos and follow signs toward the city.*

**Souda** – is a port town where you can catch ferries to and from Athens daily. This is the area that the base is named for based on the fact that there is a NATO pier located in the bay. In Souda you will find a WWII cemetery with graves of mostly British servicemen who died defending Crete. This cemetery, just itself, is worth the trip to Souda.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Leave the base and head toward Chania and then follow signs to Souda. Located approximately 20 minutes from the base.*

**Sougia** – a small seaside village lying at the mouth of the Agia Irini gorge. It boasts a large, beautiful beach that is never too full. Sporting a relaxed and carefree atmosphere, Sougia is popular with the younger crowd. There are lots of tavernas, hotels, cafes by the sea, mini markets and a kiosk. Sougia has a bit of a night life. There are a few bars. The beach is filled with small pebbles.... And the further east you go, the fewer the people. However, bear in mind that at the far eastern end of the beach is the nudist hangout. You may also walk to the neighboring village of Lissos, walk down the gorge of Agia Irini or even take a bus to the Omalos Plateau where you can walk down the Samaria Gorge and at the end, take the boat back to Sougia.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Road toward Kissamos and exit at the signs directing you toward Sougia. Follow the narrow and winding road. Approximately 1.5 hours from Chania.*

**Spinalonga** – a small island near **Elounda** in East Crete. Also known as the Leper Island, this is where lepers from Crete and Greece were quarantined until 1957. Its claim to fame is to be the last leper colony in Europe. Hundreds of people lived and died here until its closure. To get to the island you must take a boat from Elounda or Agios Nikolaos. This is an active Archaeological site that has ruined buildings and a cemetery.



## Sightseeing Crete

This is definitely an inspirational stop. The island is 2<sup>nd</sup> only to Knossos Palace in tourism visitors annually.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Either from Agios Nikolaos port or Elounda port take one of the many boats available in the summer time (for a fee). Some offer lunch and a swim off the beaches behind the Kolokytha Peninsula.*

**Toplou Monastery** – located at the northeastern tip of Crete. Toplou is said to be one of the most beautiful and important monasteries in Crete with its imposing, 33meters high belfry. This monastery is well worth the drive as the beautiful palm forest of **Vai** is located nearby. Toplou Monastery is the only surviving Monastery still standing in the Sitia area. On display are 15<sup>th</sup> century icons which are priceless, along with Copperplate and Folk Engravings. Today only 4 monks reside here. The monastery produces excellent organic products such as wine, raki, and olive oil, sold under the brand name, “Toplou” and sold at the monastery.



**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Road to Sitia. Approximately 4.5 hours from Chania. Be advised that the road from Ierapetra to Sitia is narrow and winding. | OPERATING HOURS: Open daily from 0900-1300 and 1400-1800 | NOTICE: Since this is a monastery, you should be appropriately dressed and remember that photography is prohibited inside the museum and church.*

**Vamos and Gavalohori** – two traditional Cretan villages. Visiting Vamos will give you the opportunity to enjoy authentic Cretan culture. Walking the paths of alleys in the old town you will have the chance to see the traditional architecture and get a feeling for real Cretan life. Stop by the ‘Partenagogio’, an old restored girl’s school, built in 1863, now used as a guesthouse. Visit the old grocery store with many local products. In the district of Vamos, is the Venetian village of Karidi of Agios Georgios, with its Venetian villa, the Monastery of Agios Georgios, and the largest oil factory in the prefecture of Chania. Gavalohori, with its traditional architecture is officially protected by the government for landmarks such as an 18<sup>th</sup> century two-roomed arched olive oil factory, the temples of Panagia and Agios Sergios, the old school, and the unique folklore museum. Watch the technique of lace making, (kopaneli) in the square (platia) of the village.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Take the National Highway toward Rethymno. 5 miles from Souda, look for the sign to Kalives (old road), turn left and go thru Kalives. Follow the sign to Vamos, go through Vamos and at the end of the village, look for the sign to Karidi, turn right and about 2 miles on the left is the Karidi Monastery. Take the same road back to Vamos, and by Bloomosifis Taverna, take the right alley and walk to the old part of the town. Take the same road back to Chania and approximately 2 miles from Vamos you will see a sign to **Gavalohori**. Follow sign directions. Visit these villages year round. Bring euro for lunch and shopping and swimsuit and towel if you want to go to the beach in Kalives at the end of your visit.*

# WINERIES OF CRETE

20% of the Greek wine production comes from Crete. Crete has the most traditional vineyard of Europe. Grape cultivation has taken place in Crete since the Minoan era some 4,000 years ago. The vineyards of Crete can produce white, rose and red wines as well as raisins. Here are some of the private wine producers of Crete.

**Boutari Wines** – “Crete’s Haunted Winery” is located inside an estate vineyard called Fantaxometochos, which translates into “Haunted Cottage”. Legend has it that in the 1880s, a local farmer began telling stories of hearing strange sounds and sights around the cottage at night. Most believed he was just trying to scare off the young men who were raiding his farmland for food, others claim it’s the ghosts of ancient Minoans. Viewable from the tasting area is a small path with a sign chained up that says “Do Not Enter”. Beyond the sign is an ordinary building but don’t be fooled by the fact that it doesn’t look haunted. It is merely the 2<sup>nd</sup> story that was built upon the original, much older and supposedly haunted cottage. Visitors can tour the production facilities, an underground wine cellar, see a multi-media show of the history of winemaking in the region and more.

**DIRECTIONS:** 8km from Heraklion just outside the village of Skalani on the road towards the village of Mirtia. | **CONTACT:** [crete.winery@boutari.gr](mailto:crete.winery@boutari.gr) / [www.boutari.gr](http://www.boutari.gr) / 28107-31617 | **OPERATING HOURS:** Daily Mon-Fri from 0900-1700 and by appointment. Weekends by appointment.

**Douloufakis Winery** – a family-run winery since being established by grandfather Dimitris Douloufakis in 1930. Grandson, Nikolas Douloufakis is, today, continuing the business. Participating in Organic farming, the winery is equipped with the latest technology.

**DIRECTIONS:** Located in the village of Dafnes in the Heraklion Prefecture. Contact the winery directly for operating hours and specific driving directions at: | **CONTACT:** [www.cretanwines.gr](http://www.cretanwines.gr) / [wines@cretanwines.gr](mailto:wines@cretanwines.gr) / 28107-92017 | **OPEN:** Year round by appointment from 1000-1530

**Dourakis Winery** – located 32kms before Rethymno and surrounded by an amazing natural habitat, you will discover the stone winery. In business since 1986, the winery is very popular with tourists and groups from the base. You will find that the family is very welcoming which makes for a fun relaxing day at the winery. Tastings are available as well as the ability to purchase wine directly at the gift shop.

**DIRECTIONS:** Contact the winery directly for specific directions and Tour and Tasting times.  
**CONTACT:** 28250-51761 / [info@dourakiswinery.gr](mailto:info@dourakiswinery.gr) / <http://dourakiswinery.gr>

**Karavitakis Winery** – Continuing an 80 year family legacy, this boutique winery is located in the Pontikiana Village of Chania. Situated on 150 acres of vineyards, they use local and international grape varieties. With modern equipment they have 2 tasting areas and a small church on the grounds situated on the hilltops of Kolimbari area.

**CONTACT:** [www.karavitakiswines.com](http://www.karavitakiswines.com) / 28240-23381 / [karavitakiswines@hotmail.com](mailto:karavitakiswines@hotmail.com) | **PRICE:** €4.00 per person for tasting; however, you can book tastings with various options through the website for additional prices.

## Wineries of Crete

**Lyrarakis Winery** – has been a family run winery since 1966. On your visit you can see the medieval wine-presses of the area (Karaoula wine-press), tour the vineyards and cellar and taste the various wines served alongside dishes of cheese and bread in the cellar of the estate.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road to Heraklion and head south toward Arkalochori/ Viannos. After 18km, you will reach the winery village of Algani. Follow the brown “Lyrarakis” signs along the road and you will end at the cellar. | **CONTACT:** Email: [visit@lyrarakis.gr](mailto:visit@lyrarakis.gr) Website: <http://lyrarakis.gr> Telephone: 281-028-4614 | **OPERATING HOURS:** normally in summer time from 1000-1300 but verify with winery prior to visiting.

**Manousakis Winery (Nostos Wines)** – situated on the hills just outside the village of Vatolakkos at an elevation between 1000 and 1800 feet.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Chania, take the road towards Omalos and Alikianos. You will pass the villages of Vamvakopoulo, Oasi, Agia and Episkopi. At approximately 12km, you will come to an intersection with signs to Alikianos and Vatolakkos. Turn right at the sign and go over a single lane bridge. Continue 4km and turn right into Alikianos. Go through the village center, staying on the main road towards Vatolakkos for approximately 2km. Once at the village square (small church of St. Peter and Paul with a clock tower), continue on the main road approximately 1km. You will come to a sharp left turn on the road and a small white house on the right. The winery is on the family home grounds. | **CONTACT:** [info@manousakiswinery.com](mailto:info@manousakiswinery.com) / <http://www.manousakiswinery.com> / 28210-78787 | **OPERATING HOURS:** During tourist season, daily from 0900-1700 / see website for tour booking, including for non-tourist season bookings.

**Minos Cretan Wines S.A. of Miliarakis Brothers** – This 8<sup>th</sup> decade family run winery is located near Heraklion. A tour of the winery will include the following: a visit to the medieval wine-presses of the area (Karaoula wine-press), Tours of the vineyards and cellar, Wine tasting at the cellar of the estate in front of the main vineyard. Along with the tasting of 5 wines, normally, an accompaniment of cheeses and bread will be served.

**DIRECTIONS:** Drive south from Heraklion (toward Arkalochori/ Viannos). After 18km you will reach the winery village of “Alagni”. Follow brown “Lyrarakis” signs along the road. This will lead to the cellar. | **CONTACT:** Telephone: 28102-84614 or 28107-41482 / <http://www.minoswines.gr> / [info@minoswines.gr](mailto:info@minoswines.gr) | **OPERATING HOURS:** Normally summer hours are 1000-1300 but verify via email or phone.

**Peza Union Winery Museum** – located at an old wine bottling factory, the museum can host up to 400 visitors daily. It showcases local agricultural products and their production methods and some Cretan hospitality. Visitors can watch a 10 minute video about the Union, and then take a tour at 4 different exhibit areas. Finally proceed to the wine testing area where you can try different kinds of wine with traditional dishes accompanied with olive oil. At this same place, there is a small market where Peza Union products are sold.

**DIRECTIONS:** 15km from Heraklion. Located a few km past the Peza village on the left side of the road to Agies Paraskies village. | **OPERATING HOURS:** Monday to Saturday 0900-1700 and any other time upon arrangement.

# ALL THINGS FOOD AND DRINK

**Arni** – Lamb, the main food at holidays, such as Easter.

**Agouri** – Cucumber

**Anginares** – Artichokes

**Apakia** – Pork pieces cut into chunks then smoked. Very delicious.

**Arakas** – Peas

**Avgolemono** – A chicken broth soup made with egg, lemon and rice.

**Baklava** – layers of honey-soaked flaky pastry with walnuts.

**Bifteki** – Large beef meatballs or sometimes referred to as our “ground beef” similar to an American ‘hamburger patty’

**Briam** – A mix of roasted potatoes, eggplant, onions, garlic, tomato sauce and olive oil baked in the oven.

**Brizole** – usually a skirt steak and more often than not, served well done.

**Calamari** – Squid, mostly served grilled or fried

**Courgette** – is zucchini slices deep fried in olive oil.... Fried Aubergine (eggplant) is made the same way and just as tasty.

**Dolmadakia** – grape leaves stuffed with rice and vegetables

**Fasolada** – a white bean soup with parsley and tomato sauce. This is a healthy choice and is very popular on the island. Eaten with bread, this soup can be a main course.

**Fasolia** – Green beans

**Feta Cheese** – The famous Greek cheese sometimes served as an individual appetizer topped with oregano and olive oil.

**Frappe** – Strong cold, instant coffee served over ice and is loved in all of Greece.

**Fresh Fish** – Common fish you will find at restaurants are: red mullet “barbouni”, sea bream “lithrini”, swordfish “xifias”, sole “glossa” and tuna “tonnos”. Octopus, squids, shrimps, and mussels are also easy to find and they taste great.

**Garides** – are shrimps. They are usually boiled or “saganaki” with tomatoes and cheese.

**Gazoza** – is the “Sprite of Crete”. It is still produced by small companies all over the island and you will find it at cafes in the villages.

**Gemista** – One of the more popular vegetarian dishes on the island, gemitsa is stuffed vegetables. Typically tomatoes and Green or Yellow peppers are stuffed with rice cooked with onions, salt, pepper, dill, parsley and olive oil then baked.

**Gigantes** – Large beans cooked in tomato sauce.

## All Things Food and Drink

**Giovetsi/Guvetsi** – is a very small pasta resembling rice and is made from wheat. Usually eaten with meat and cooked with onion, garlic and tomatoes in a clay pot.

**Graviera** – a hard cheese made from sheep's milk.

**Gyros** – Basically slices of grilled pork or chicken with yogurt, red onion, tomato and French fries wrapped inside round 'pita' bread. These gyros are considered the 'fast food' of Greece and you can find them almost everywhere, however, the best will be found in the small corner shops.

**Herbs** – Sage and Thyme are everywhere here on the island and the air is full of the aromatic smell. A lot of different herbs grow all over the island and you can buy them everywhere. Herbs have been used for ages by the Cretans as medicines. Try a tea of chamomile and sage if you have a sore throat. If you don't dislike the sweet taste, you may add some honey to it. If your nose is blocked and you cannot breathe easily, try a tea of thyme.

**Honey** – of excellent quality is produced on the island. Thyme honey is considered to be the best. You can buy local honey at many stores and supermarkets all over the island but for the best honey, you will need to get it straight from the local producer.... As in one you would find on a roadside stand on the way to one of the mountainous villages.

**Horiatiki** – is your typical "Greek Salad" made from fresh tomatoes, cucumber, olives and feta cheese. Add some oregano, vinegar and plenty of Greek olive oil and you have a tasty, fulfilling dish.

**Hortas** – Boiled wild greens with olive oil, salt and lemon.

**Imam Baldi** – is basically stuffed eggplant (aubergines). There are two versions, one with meat and one without so Vegetarians may want to ask prior to ordering as to which is available. This dish can be served cold as a starter (meze) or warm as a main dish.

**Laxanosalata** – A cabbage salad.

**Kalimari** – is deep fried squid that is a very popular on the island.

**Karota – Carrots**

**Katiafi** – shredded wheat filled with chopped almonds and honey.

**Keftedakia** – Fried beef meatballs flavored with garlic and spices.

**Kleftiko** – A big pastry filled with meat (mostly lamb), vegetables and potatoes then baked. You may also find vegetarian or chicken kleftiko as well.

**Kouneli** – Rabbit that can be prepared many, many different ways.

**Koukouvagia** – is round Cretan rusk twice baked bread similar to Zwieback) made from barley. The rusk is served with grated tomato, lots of olive oil, some salt and herbs. Sometimes you may see feta cheese over the top as well.

**Kotopoulo** – Chicken that has been grilled roasted or broiled.

**Ktapodi** – stewed octopus with white wine, potatoes and tomatoes

## All Things Food and Drink

**Lamb meat** – The best meat you can have on the island comes from the young lamb or young goat meat from animals raised in the mountainous areas.

**Loukoum** – A honey-flavored fritter.

**Marides** – little fish or whitebait served fried.

**Melitzanasalata** – the name refers to this as an eggplant type salad however it is more in line with an eggplant dip. Next to tzaziki, this is considered one of the best dips on the island. It is a combination of baked and mashed eggplant, lemon juice, olive oil, onion, salt and garlic and is served cold.

**Melitzanes Tiganita** – is thin slices of eggplant (aubergines) that has usually been battered then fried.

**Mizithra** – is a fresh soft white cheese. It contains lower fat and cholesterol than yellow cheese and is made from sheep's milk.

**Moussaka** – Famous Greek dish based of potatoes and topped with eggplant, sometimes zucchini, minced beef then covered with a béchamel sauce and baked.

**Octopus** – Deriving its name from the Greek words Okto (eight) and podi (feet), this is a very popular Dish on the island. It comes grilled, boiled or fried and usually served with fries and a bit of a salad. In the summer time, along the harbors you may find an octopus hanging out to dry after being freshly caught that morning.

**Olive Oil** – is used today for medical and religious purposes as well as an being an essential ingredient of a healthy diet. Olive oil is a good source of antioxidants and does Not have the cholesterol-raising effects of saturated fats. Extra-Virgin Olive Oil is the 'Granddaddy' of all olive oils. To make things simple, stay away from the following types of olive oils: Pomace Oil, Extra Light Olive Oil, Light or Lite Olive Oil, Pure Olive Oil, Refined Olive Oil, Olive Oil Cake Refined and Olive Oil.

**Ouzo** – The famous Greek alcoholic drink that tastes of black licorice and is known the world over.

**Pagato** – Ice Cream, usually served in scoops, as in other countries.

**Pastitsio** – Another well-known Greek dish consisting of spaghetti topped with ground beef, onions, tomato sauce and covered with a béchamel sauce. This dish is similar to Moussaka but made with Spaghetti instead of the vegetables.

**Papoutsakia** – translated, it means "small shoes". This is a dish of eggplant (aubergines) stuffed with a minced meat (typically ground beef), garlic, tomatoes and parsley then topped with a béchamel sauce and baked. This dish is becoming more popular with tourists.

**Paximadi** – is the traditional Cretan way of preserving bread for a long time. It is hard dried bread that gets soft when water is added to it. It comes in various forms and sizes and made from wheat or barley, with or without yeast, whole grain or not. Pour some

## All Things Food and Drink

olive oil over a piece of paximadi, add some grated tomato, oregano and feta cheese and you will have a very tasty appetizer called “Dakos”.

**Pitta me meli** – Honey cake

**Psarossoupa** – Fish soup made with parsley, potatoes and carrots. This is one of the best fish dishes on the island and can be eaten as a main course even though it is a ‘soup’.

**Raki** – This is the famous local drink of Crete. It is produced in late October or early November and is distilled from the grape skins. It is transparent, very strong and it is served cold in the summer time. Raki has a very high alcohol content so be careful when beginning to partake in this drink. It is usually served at the end of your meal along with a dessert. Sometimes the server or taverna owner will pour a small glass full for himself and toast you “Yamas”. This is similar to what we Americans know as “Moonshine”.

**Retsina** – is a wine that has been matured in pine casks. Has an acquired taste and you either love it or hate it.

**Saganaki** – This dish is basically fried cheese. Different cheeses can be used and is excellent with a squeeze of lemon over it. The acidic lemon juice cuts through the strong cheese. You can also find saganaki with seafood; mussels, shrimp and the occasional lobster saganaki are also worth a try. This is definitely not a low-fat dish

**Salingaraia** – snails

**Sardeles** – Sardines, usually served fried.

**Skordalia** – A potato dip with a strong garlic flavor.

**Souvlaki** – is considered the most famous Greek dish and is Skewered pork, swordfish, lamb or chicken meat. This is prepared on a grill and usually served with French fries, some salad, tzaziki or yogurt.

**Spanakopita** – A pastry filled with spinach and cheese. This is very popular.

**Stifado** – braised meat with onions in a red sauce. The dish usually consists of beef, lamb or Rabbit.

**Spanaki** – Spinach.

**Spanakopitakia** – Small spinach pies with feta cheese.

**Taramosalata** – cod roe paste blended with garlic, olive oil and lemon juice and onion. Served cold as a meze (starter)

**Tiropitakia** – are small cheese pies, usually made of feta or kasseri cheese.

**Tzaziki** – Greek yogurt mixed with finely chopped cucumber, garlic and olive oil. It is typically eaten with fresh bread, fried potatoes or fried meatballs.

**Vegetables** – Crete produces many different vegetables and they taste better than most that you would find in U.S. Supermarkets.

## All Things Food and Drink

**Village Wine** – more commonly called wine from the barrel. This is usually the house wine and typically locally grown.

**Xifias** – Swordfish, mostly served like a steak; fresh and not too expensive.

**Yemista** – a meatless dish consisting of tomatoes, eggplant or bell peppers stuffed with rice and a vegetable mixture or oven – cooked vegetables in a tomato sauce.

**Yaourti** – Natural yogurt with honey occasionally served with fruit. This will sometimes be served as your “after-dinner” dessert.



# OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

## MISC

**LABYRINTH THEME PARK** – Inspired by the Minoan Culture of Crete. Immerse your family into this park chock full of activities from the Labyrinth maze to the Cretan Labyrinth to riding of quads, mini golf, archery, pottery making, horse riding, Escape Atlantis, as well as the new laser maze in the Trojan horse. You could truly spend quite a few hours here. Fun for all.

**LOCATION:** *Hersonnissos, near Heraklion GPS Latitude – 35o 17'40, 41"B and Longitude 25o 21'27, 26"A* | **PRICES:** *to the park/labyrinth: Adults and over 10: €10.00/ kids 4-10: €6.00/ Children under 4 and disabled are free. The other activities have additional prices.* | **OPERATING HOURS:** 10:00-20:00 | **CONTACT:** [www.labyrinthpark.gr](http://www.labyrinthpark.gr) / 28970-29297

**FABULOUS CRETE** – A website that outs “Alternative Tourism” networking where you can easily and quickly find activities to do around the island (Chania/Rethymno/Heraklio/Agios Nikolaos are covered) from safari tours, wine & Gastronomy, Historical and Archaeological, Cultural and Historical Heritage, Countryside Life, Hiking & Cycling Adventures, Horseback Riding and Climbing, Scuba Diving and Sea Experiences, Ecotourism and Nature Walks, Private Cruises & Amazing Beaches, Water & Extreme Sports, City & Mainland Tours as well as Religious Tourism.

**CONTACT:** <https://fabulouscrete.com>

**CRETE URBAN ADVENTURES** – A site that offers tours and adventures all over the island and provides knowledgeable local guides on your tours.

**WEBSITE:** [www.creteurbanadventures.com](http://www.creteurbanadventures.com)

### **TOUR TYPES:**

1. *Street Stories of Chania (4 hours)* – Experience the real Crete with a walk through one of its most picturesque cities, Chania. Escape the tourist traps and dive into secret corners and local neighborhoods. Each stop has a story to tell. You time travel through layers of Crete’s history as you listen to myths and tales of Old Town. Watch local artisans work and try your own skills in their workshops. Wander through the 100-year old market selling local Cretan products. Visit the Ottoman neighborhood and the Jewish Quarter, walk along the “Street of the Knives” and explore corners not found in guide books all with a local English Speaking guide. PRICE: From €70.00

2. *Rethymnon Conquered (4 hours)* – Conquer the historical city of Rethymnon and hear tales of previous conquerors. Navigate the labyrinth of Venetian and Ottoman streets like a local. Visit craftsmen and artisans as they work in their workshops. Learn about local wines at a unique tasting. Sample unique Cretan flavours of traditional koulouri, Greek coffee, Cretan pastries, olives and cheese and wander through layers of history and cultural influences, listening to tales, myths and legends. PRICE: from €70.00.

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3. *Heraklion Bites and Sites (4 hours)* – Learn Heraklion’s history and visit legendary churches, fountains and monuments. Learn the secrets of the Cretan diet by sampling its best products at a local market. Admire art collections in unique locations and indulge in local flavors of meze (appetizers) and raki all with an English speaking guide. PRICE: From €70.00.

4. *Heraklion Locals on Tap (2 hours)* – tap into local culture in Heraklion by joining in for a casual meet up with fellow travelers and in-the-know locals who can tell you what to do , where to go and how to make the most of your time on the island. English speaking guide. PRICE: From €25.00.

5. *Chania Locals on Tap (2 hours)* – see above for details

6. *Gourmet Trail of Rethymnon (4 hours)* – Taste your way through the old city of Rethymnon on this evening food tour that uncovers the hidden spots not found in guidebooks. Eat and drink the best products of the region, talk to local vendors, and find out why Crete is a foodie’s paradise. See crete urban adventures website for Minimum age Requirements. PRICE: €140.00

7. *Foodies Feast of Heraklion (3-3.5 hours)* – Come experience the city like a local and explore the neighborhoods where residents live, eat and shop all while snacking away on the best local treats on the island while being led by an English Speaking guide. PRICE: €92.00

8. *Bohemian Sunset Tour* – If wine, good food, strong spirits and mythical tales hidden down back alleyways are your thing then this is the tour for you. Visit a secret spot to watch the sunset, discover the bohemian side of Crete from funky workshops to cool cafes. Venture into the city’s alley ways and back lanes to discover vibrant cultural spaces. Participate in a one-of-a-kind wine tasting event and learn about local varieties as well as enjoy organic ice cream and a shot of Raki. English speaking guide. See website for Minimum Age requirements. PRICE: €111.00

9. *Crete Private Tour* – Book a private tour to suit your needs – contact website

10. *Antiquity and Adventures Tour – (11.5 hours)* –Ultimate adventure on the south coast of Crete where you’ll explore an off-the-beaten-path coastal village with an English Speaking guide. Set out on a 90 minute hike through a gorge that offers surreal views, some peace and serenity. Discover mystic wonders of an unknown ancient city with “healing waters”, embark on a fishing boat to a stunning secluded beach and swim in the waters of the Med. Sea. And also try your hand at cooking local Cretan dishes. See website for AGE RESTRICTIONS. PRICE: €140.00

11. *Bygone Crete Adventure – (11 hours)* – Spend the day with an English speaking guide in the great outdoors exploring the Cretan culture, villages and hiking trails. Visit a medieval town, pass through the oldest olive groves in the Mediterranean, see iconic historic sites, bake bread in a wood-fire oven, explore an abandoned monastery and even trek through a gorge. PRICE: €142.00

12. *In Focus: Natural Treasures of Crete – (4 hours)* Taste pure olive oil, organic wines, locally produced chese to a unique smoked apaki, You’ll be headed to a training center dedicated to sustainability by supporting small-scale family businesses. Taste some treats, learn about local flora and pick up a few tips for making your everyday life more environmentally friendly. PRICE: €112.00

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13. *In Focus: A Night with the Gods Stargazing Tour – Chania – (4 hours)* – Dive into ancient Greek mythology and astronomy on this star-studded, food-fueled adventure. Pair star-gazing with your stomach as you learn to read constellations before digging into a traditional Minoan meal. PRICE: €132.00

14. *From Stomp to Sip! Vineyard and Harvest Experience – (8 hours)* – Learn about the traditional way of life in Crete during grape harvesting season by picking and stomping grapes then participate in a hands-on cooking class in a picturesque mountain village.

15. *The Best of Far West Crete – (11 hours)* – Head to Sfakia and visit local family owned yogurt and cheese factory for breakfast. Follow in the steps of the ANZAC soldiers and hike through Imbros Gorge. Participate in a hands-on cooking class and enjoy a lunch of traditional dishes and local wines at a unique local winery. PRICE: €158.00

16. *Crete Countryside Adventure – (7 hours)* – Journey into the heart of Crete for an unforgettable taste of country life that has barely changed for centuries. Enjoy a special Cretan lunch cooked over open fire in the countryside. Learn how to make raki. OFFERED AS A PRIVATE TOUR IN AND AROUND AGIOS NIKOLAOS: PRICE: €167.00

17. *Crete from Gorge to Gulf – (7 hours)* – Hike through one of the prettiest gorges on the island with a local guide. Hop on a speedboat to explore a Venetian fortress island in the Gulf of Elounda. Learn the art of making dolmades and eat the fruits of your labor during lunch. AGIOS NIKOLAOS AREA – PRICE: €192.00

18. *In Focus: Healing Nature Tour – (7 hours)* – This tour shines a light on the problems facing the Cretan countryside after a series of devastating fires rocked the island. Visit one of the affected areas where you will plant a tree to support the reforestation process. Enjoy a picnic in an ancient forest. AGIOS NIKOLAOS AREA PRICE: €161.00

## **BOAT TOURS (Chania)**

**Captain Nick's Aphrodite Glass Bottom Boat** – 25 years experienced boat captain/owner takes you on a simple boat trip of swimming/ snorkeling or for private hire/ special occasions, Capt. Nick provides a trip to remember. From grabbing an octopus to show everyone to swimming/snorkeling at Lazaretta Island, Captain Nick genuinely cares about his passengers.

**LOCATION:** Found at the old harbor in Chania, you can book from the kiosk or via the info here. | **PRICE:** Varies on the trips you take. Discount prices for children | **CONTACT:** [www.captainnickchania.com/](http://www.captainnickchania.com/) / [Nikos@captainnickchania.com](mailto:Nikos@captainnickchania.com) / 28210-86732

**Notos Sailing** – Sailboat cruises in the bay of Chania, Gramvousa and Balos Lagoon offering a romantic sail or sit back and enjoy the speed and action of a motorboat. Cruises are usually private with small groups of 8-10 persons however, they do offer the possibility of multi-day cruises upon request. The trip is usually an all-day event leaving from morning and coming back in the late afternoon offering several swimming stops and light refreshments/wine.

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**CONTACT:** 694-718-1990 / [notosmail@gmail.com](mailto:notosmail@gmail.com)

**Orizon Sailing** – A 3 cabin Sail boat offering day or 3-day adventures in the Aegean and Cretan Seas. Offering sunset trips (4-hrs) with champagne and fruits as well as island/beach trips where you see hidden, secluded beaches. See website for more details.

**CONTACT:** [www.orizonsailing.gr](http://www.orizonsailing.gr) / 697-216-8832

## **BUNGEE JUMPING**

**Liquid Bungee** – is a company from Athens which does bungee jumping from the Bailey bridge over the Aradena Gorge with a drop of 138 meters or roughly 453 feet. This bridge is the highest on the island and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in Greece. Located near Sfakia. All jumpers have to be over 18 years of age or for those under, with written consent from an adult relative.

**CONTACT INFO:** [liquid@bunqy.gr](mailto:liquid@bunqy.gr) / [www.bunqy.gr/en](http://www.bunqy.gr/en) / 21097-04435 or 693-761-5191 | **HOURS:** Every weekend from the first of July through the end of August. September is by pre-bookings only. 1200-1800 | **INFO:** For groups of 10 or more, will provide jump dates for any date during the year and offer transportation from Chania and back. | **PRICE:** €100 (includes jump from 138 meters, commemorative certificate, digital photos, video)

## **CULTURAL SAFARIS/ TOURS**

**Safari Adventures** – Organizing year round guided tours, daytrips and activities in Crete. Specializing in Adventure, hospitality, professionalism, visits to pure untouched areas and unique views of some of some of Crete's beauty by promoting the Cretan culture, history, values and traditions away from the city lights and fast-paced touristy beaches and cities by offering visitors tastes of local products while giving history lessons on all-things Crete. Offering hiking, jeep safari and ribb boat tours.

**CONTACT:** [www.safariadventures.gr](http://www.safariadventures.gr) / [info@safariadventures.gr](mailto:info@safariadventures.gr) / 693-724-5450

**Natour Lab** – A cultural experience by taking the “road less travelled” to activate your senses. Offering day tours through gorges, white mountains, culinary and cooking tours. In addition, will offer tailor made and multi-day tours by request.

**CONTACT:** 695-100-2502 / [info@natour-lab.gr](mailto:info@natour-lab.gr) / [www.natour-lab.gr](http://www.natour-lab.gr)

**Chania Food Tour** – A 3-hour food tour combining walking through some picturesque Chania while stopping and tasting traditional/ authentic foods in shops along the way. The guide provides an experience blending culture, tradition and history while experiencing the city with your senses. Group size of no more than 14 persons with tour given in English; other languages by private tour only)

**CONTACT:** <http://www.athenswalkingtours.gr/chania-food-tour> | **PRICE:** Adults: €38, Students/kids €33.

**Tour Crete with Lefteris Nikiforakis** – Lefteris “Lefty” offers English and German spoken taxi tours around Chania and Heraklion. He offers up his vast knowledge of History and

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the Greek Culture so that “when you leave my island, you will be surprised at how much you have seen and have learned, no matter how short your visit”.

### **TOURS:**

1. Four Hour Tour of Heraklion
2. Full Day Tour of Heraklion and Agios Nikolaos
3. 5-6 Hour Tour of Chania

**PRICES:** Contact Lefty via webpage: <http://grecetravel.com/crete/taxitours/>

## **CYCLING**

**Olympic Bikes** – is a cycle tour company based in **Rethymno** that caters tours around the island. Guides are multi-lingual, to include English, highly trained, experienced and passionate about cycling. Services are offered for all skill levels to include children. They offer comfortable downhill riding for the whole family or the more difficult off-road mountain biking for the more fit and experienced. They offer bikes for everyone to include children.

**CONTACT:** [www.olympicbike.com](http://www.olympicbike.com)

## **ESCAPE / MYSTERY GAMES**

**Clue Wars** – An ‘escape room’ adventure in the city where a team of 3 to 6 people assume made-up identities and get “locked” in a room for a pre-determined amount of time after which the door ‘unlocks’ and the game ends. The goal is for the team to navigate through a live scenario that contains a complex set of events including physical and mental challenges that take place and reach the end of the story before time runs out. Various rooms offer time limits of 60-70 minutes for escape and offer different prices based on the room difficulty and number of people in the ‘team’.

**COST:** Can run from €9-20 per person. | **CONTACT:** <http://cluewars.com> / 28210-52036 / [info@cluewars.gr](mailto:info@cluewars.gr)

**Mysteries-Chania** – A 1-hour, 2-6 person team, multiple ending adventure where you are given clues to try and solve various scenarios, riddles and get to the end of the story.

**CONTACT:** [www.mysteries.gr](http://www.mysteries.gr) / 28210-88744 / [chania@mysteries.gr](mailto:chania@mysteries.gr)

## **GOLF**

**The Crete Golf Club** – An 18-hole championship golf course is located at The Crete Golf Club in Hersonissos. Just about a ½ hour out of Heraklion airport you will find this Bob Hunt designed desert style golf course. The beautiful clubhouse sits atop a hill that overlooks the first 9 holes of the course. The clubhouse features a restaurant and bar as well as a Very well stocked Pro Shop. You can rent clubs or purchase equipment, clothing and/ or souvenirs here.

**CONTACT:** [info@crete-golf.gr](mailto:info@crete-golf.gr) / For tee times contact: Ms. Niki Maragaki at 28970-26000

## **GO-KARTING**

**Mega Drive Go-Karts** – 30 minutes from NSA Souda Bay, will give DOD discount with ID. Offers adult and child go-karts and has a small playground and café-bar.

**CONTACT:** 282-109-7533 or call Kriti Info at 266-1288 / [http://www.meqadrive-gokart.gr/home\\_en.html](http://www.meqadrive-gokart.gr/home_en.html)

**HOURS:** 1100-2300 daily

**Pista Park** – Go Karting for the whole family in Varipetro, just outside Chania near the Limnoupolis Water Park. Large winding track that on occasion is also used for drift cars.

**CONTACT INFO:** 28210-31771

## **HIKING**

**Samaria Gorge** – named after Saint Maria of Egypt, Samaria is the longest gorge in Europe and the most famous as well. During the season when the gorge is open to the public, thousands upon thousands flock here to hike it. For some, this is the only reason for their trip to the island. Bring plenty of water with you. There are a few watering holes to refill but not too many. The beginning of the hike begins in Omalos and you will follow the wooden staircase down. In the first 2 miles of the trek you will have descended 3,200 feet. With that said, be careful and observant as to not fall and always stay on the path. About 2-1/2 miles in, there is a rest point at the chapel of Agios Nikolaos. From this point, the hike is not as steep. The gorge hike is approximately 12 miles long so it will definitely be an all day trip. It is only open during the summer months when the river that runs through the gorge has little or no water. Note that it is strictly forbidden to enter the gorge when it is not open. As well, you are given a ticket at the entrance of the gorge that is to be returned to Park officials as you exit at Agia Roumeli. This is to ensure that no one is left stranded in the gorge overnight. Fines are very steep if rules are broken so keep that in mind. Don't forget to take food with you; there are absolutely NO places to get any type of food inside the gorge. So be prepared. At the end of the gorge is the village of Agia Roumeli with her black sand beaches that lead into the Libyan Sea. There are tavernas and supermarkets for you to refuel. This is also where you will catch the ferry over to Sfakia for your trip back to Chania.

**NOTE:** *Since there are no roads between the start and end of the gorge hike, your best bet is to take city transportation out of Chania. The bus terminal has daily early morning departures for Omalos. Don't forget that once you get into Sfakia you will need a bus ticket to get back to Chania as well. There are multiple buses and departures back to Chania but please be sure to check the timetables on the day you wish to hike so as you don't miss the last shuttle home.* | **ENTRANCE FEE:** Ticket

**Omalos / "Gingilos"** – The impressive mountain that rises vertically above the Samaria gorge is said to be quite easy to climb. The view from the summit (6800 feet) is one of the best mountain views on the island. You will be able to see the Aegean Sea to the north and the Libyan Sea to the south all while standing in the same spot. If you choose not to make it to the summit, you can rest at the spring of Lino Seli or at the saddle below the summit. **NOTE:** The Mountain can only be climbed when the weather is clear and stable with no clouds in the sky.

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**DIRECTIONS:** Take the National Road from Souda west toward Kissamos and exit toward Omalos and follow signs to the Omalos Plateau and park in the parking area below the taverna at the entrance to the Samaria Gorge. You will climb up verses climbing down the gorge.

**The White Mountains / “Lefka Ori”** – is the biggest and most famous mountain range on the island with peaks breaking the 5600ft mark. The mountains are very popular with hikers, however, keep in mind that the region is sparsely populated due to the rugged landscape and narrow valleys. Going off by yourself to hike the wilderness should be left for the more experienced hikers. As usual, make sure you take plenty of water and snacks with you. It can be very cold at night, even in the summer time and the weather can change at a moment’s notice so dress accordingly or take extra clothing as needed. Don’t hike alone as the area is minimally populated. You can get lost easily and mobile phones, more likely than not, will not work up there.

**Mt. Idi or Ida** – is the highest mountain on Crete measuring over 8,000 feet. If you plan to hike here, be forewarned that the main part of the mountain is treeless and rocky with no water source in sight. With that said, make sure to bring a good pair of trekking boots, 2-3 liters of water and a hat and sunscreen. There are 4-5 different routes to take on the mountain but I will list the easiest. This path starts from the Nida Plateau located about 1 -1/2 hours from Heraklion. Once at the Plateau, park your car at the restaurant, the only building there. Then follow the well-marked dirt path. With all the signs and postings along the trail, it makes it difficult for you to get lost. Mt Idi is also the final part of E4 (or 4<sup>th</sup> European) path. This is a path that starts in Portugal and goes through Spain, France, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and ends in Crete. The path actually crosses Crete from end to end.

**DIRECTIONS TO NIDA PLATEAU:** Take the National Highway toward Heraklion. Exit the National Highway at “Gazi” or “Anogia”. About 4km later, you will turn left toward Anogia (should be signposted). Follow this scenic but winding road for approximately 22km into Anogia. Here you will follow signs toward Nida Plateau where you will begin your trek.

**Agia Eirini Gorge** – located to the West of the Samaria Gorge; Agia Eirini Gorge is less popular than the touristy Samaria. At the entrance of the hike, you will notice a sign posted that lists points of interests on the walk. The hike is about 4-1/2 miles long and should take approximately 3 hours to walk. As soon as you leave the main road and start walking toward the riverbed you will come across a small café where you can enjoy some shade and a nice cup of coffee before proceeding. This will mark the first km of the hike. There is a stone placed at each of the 4 km markers providing an opportunity to judge how far you’ve been and how much further to go. The trek is hilly and at the 2 km marker there is a shaded picnic area for you to relax. So be sure to bring plenty of water and a few snacks to enjoy. In the middle of the gorge there will be a 2<sup>nd</sup> picnic area with restrooms as well. As soon as you reach the end of the gorge, there will be another café for you to relax at. After here, you will still trek along the dry riverbed to the main road that leads to Sougia.

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**DIRECTIONS:** *Your best bet would be to either drive to Sougia or take one of Chania's Daily buses there, then take one of the early morning buses to the start of the gorge. Drive up the night before, spend the night in Sougia and start the venture the next morning.*

**Koutsouras / Oreino Gorge** – is located in the southwest corner of the island. From the coast at Koutsouras you'll head North West for a few kilometers which can take upwards of 4 hours depending on your pace. If you are lucky enough to travel during the springtime, you may see waterfalls or springs just before reaching the village of Oreino. In the village of Oreino, there is a small café for you to rest your weary legs before descending the gorge.

**DIRECTIONS:** *located at the village of Koutsouras on the south of the island past Heraklion.*

**Imbros Gorge** – is small gorge that many like to hike instead of or in addition to the more famous Samaria Gorge. The starting point is at your discretion so it's your choice to climb up or hike down. Most folks drive down to the village of Komitades and then catch a very pricey taxi to the top to the village of Imbros. The actual hike down the gorge is well marked and makes it nearly impossible to get lost. The hike itself should take a few hours so take your time and enjoy the scenery.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Follow National Highway and get off the exit toward Sfakia. Stay on this road until the village of Imbros. Or if you plan to park at the bottom and hike up, continue down the hill to Komitades.*

**Zorba's Cave (Cave Lera)** – is located on the hillside overlooking the cove at Stavros Beach. If you look up to the hillside, you will see the cave and a well-worn path leading to it. Bring sturdy shoes for the hike is a bit rocky. This is the famed cave from the movie "Zorba the Greek". Located approximately 15 minutes from base in Stavros.

**Bear Cave / Katholiko Monastery** – This hike down and back is relatively easy for the most part. You start out outside Gouverneto Monastery and proceed along the footpath down the hill. Approximately 10 minutes down toward the sea, you will encounter Bear's Cave. According to local legend, a bear once lived in the cave and drank the water dripping from the stalactites into a hole in the rock. The monks, who were suffering from thirst, prayed to the Virgin Mary for aid. The Virgin heard their prayers and turned the bear to stone, thus being the stalagmite we see inside the Arkoudospilios today. Further down the footpath you will come to the ruined Katholiko Monastery or Monastery of St. John the Hermit. These buildings date to around 1600. However, legend has it that another monastery was located here making it the oldest on the island. Next to the monastery is the cave of St. John the Hermit. The cave itself is over 100 meters long and covers over 1500 sq/m. Legend has it that toward the end of his life, St. John the Hermit was weak and no longer to stand upright. One day a hunter mistook him for an animal and injured him with his arrows. The saint returned to the cave and breathed his last breath lying on a rock, now known as "St. John's bed". This rock is supposed to have healing powers. If you follow the path further down you will finally come to the beautiful aquamarine sea nestled in a tiny, deep cove.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Located very near the base, Follow signs to Agia Triada Monastery and instead of entering the parking area of the monastery, continue on the road that winds its way around the hillside. Be very*



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*careful driving up the hillside to the Monastery as the roads are not in the best shape and can be very rough in spots.*

**E4 EUROPEAN WALKING PATH** – is a walking, hiking and trekking path that begins in Tarifa, Spain and ends here on the island of Crete on the eastern end of the island in Kato Zakros. The total E4 path is almost 6500 miles long and was created by the European Ramblers Association. It passes through 11 countries including France, Austria, Hungary and others. Crete's part begins in the village of Kissamos/ Kastelli and is a total of 198 miles. This trek (if done in its entirety is for experienced trekkers only). The paths are not always marked so be very careful and always, always travel with others. Below are a few of the paths on the Western end of the island: There are too many to list here however you may find the others that take you across Central and Eastern Crete on the internet.

### **Kissamos to Chrisoskalitissa**

Length of trek: 35 miles

Difficulty: Easy pathway with small bends and some village streets

Total Time: 12-13 hours

### **Chrisoskalitissa to Sougia**

Length of trek: 22 miles

Difficulty: Path without too many difficulties and some village streets

Total Time: Chrisoskalitissa – Elafonisi 1 hour: Elafonisi – Paleochora 7 hours:  
Paleochora – Sougia 6 hours.

### **Sougia to Agia Roumeli**

Length of trek: 12.5 miles

Difficulty: Very Difficult

Total Time: Sougia to Tripiti 4 hours: Tripiti to Agia Roumeli 7 hours. **REQUIRES LOTS OF WATER FOR THIS TRIP.**

### **Sougia to Agia Irini Gorge**

Length of trek: 12.5 miles

Difficulty: Medium in some spots and difficult in others.

Total Time: 8 hours

### **Sougia to Koustogerako to Omalos**

Length of trek: 12.5 miles

Difficulty: Koustogerako to Omalos is very difficult

Total Time: 9 hours

### **Omalos to Agia Roumeli**

Length of trek: 10.5 miles

Difficulty: easy

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Total Time: 7 hours

### **Agia Roumeli to Frangokastelo**

Length of trek: 20.5 miles

Difficulty: Medium difficulty with some village streets

Total Time: 8.5 hours

### **Omalos to Askifou**

Length of trek: 21.5 miles

Difficulty: Very Difficult, you will be at a mountaineering altitude without trees for shade. Requires increased quantity of water.

Total Time: Approximately 19 hours total.

### **Askifou to Imbros to Frangokastelo**

Length of trek: 11 miles

Difficulty: easy

Total Time: 6.5 hours

### **Frangokastelo to Kallikratis to Asi Gonia**

Length of trek: 11 miles

Difficulty: easy with some village streets

Total Time: 6.5 hours.

## **HORSEBACK RIDING**

**Deres Horse Riding** – Located in Deres, Kissamos Crete this riding stable offers a variety of horse riding activities and are capable of catering to disabled clients as well. Open for business from April to November.

**CONTACT:** Ms. Marente Stern: 697 384 5862 | **LOCATION:** Deres, Kissamos, Crete | **TICKETS:** €20/hr, or €15/hr with military ID or €10 for half hour session.

**Zoraida's Horse Riding** – This stable offers beach rides, mini safaris and relaxing day trips as well as beginner's walks or ones for the non-experienced. Some of the possible sights include the surrounding green hills, goat tracks, olive groves, herbs and wild flowers, Kournas Lake, waterfalls in Argiroupoli and many small villages and fantastic beaches. Located in Georgiopolis which is well known for its long sandy beaches. There are daily early morning and evening rides at 3 different levels: Beginners, intermediate and advanced.

**LOCATION:** Georgiopolis, Chania. Take the National Road from Souda toward Rethymno and look for the signs for Georgiopolis. | **CONTACT:** Ms. Kristi Gryllakis at 282 506 1745 or 694 718 5656

## **PAINTBALL**

**Paintland Chania** – Located near Souda and Chania is an 11 acre ground that provides 3 exciting fields for paintball enthusiasts. They also offer Laser Tag for ages 6+. By appointment only. See website for pricing and hours of operation.

**CONTACT:** [www.paintlandchania.gr](http://www.paintlandchania.gr)

**Platanias Paintball** – Located west of Chania, you will find 12 acres of grounds dedicated to 3 fields of play, 1 speedball and 2 recreation areas. This business has been in operation since 2003 and will supply you with all of your required equipment.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Located in the village of Platanias, you will have to contact the business for specific directions. Approximately 1 hour from base.* | **CONTACT:** 698-212-1255 / [platanias-paintball@hotmail.com](mailto:platanias-paintball@hotmail.com) | **COST:** €20.00 which is discounted for U.S. DOD card holders and it includes 100 paintballs and all the necessary equipment. **RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE.** | **HOURS:** 1300 to 2300

## **PARAGLIDING/PARATRIKE**

**Power Fly** – Tandem Paragliding and Paratrike experience in and around Chania.

**CONTACT:** 697-593-7593 / [info@paraqliding-crete.gr](mailto:info@paraqliding-crete.gr) / [www.paraqliding-crete.gr](http://www.paraqliding-crete.gr)

## **SAILING**

**Sailing Club of Chania** – runs a school many times throughout the years for those wishing to learn to sail. Groups can be taught in English if arranged in advance. They offer the basic sailing class as well as an offshore sailing school.

**CONTACT:** [www.iox.gr/gr/index.htm](http://www.iox.gr/gr/index.htm) (all in Greek) / [ioxanion@yahoo.gr](mailto:ioxanion@yahoo.gr) / 28210-40265 or 28210-98117 or 699-703-0133 / **Offshore Sailing school** contact is: [www.makisvasilakis.com](http://www.makisvasilakis.com) / [sailing@makisvasilakis.com](mailto:sailing@makisvasilakis.com)

## **SCUBA DIVING AND SNORKELING**

**Blue Adventure Diving** – a PADI 5\* Certified Dive Shop that will cater to your every diving need. They offer discover scuba courses where you take a day to learn the basics and see if scuba diving is for you. In addition, they offer everything from your open water certification through the master diver certification. They also offer boat trips almost daily for divers and their families. They are very family oriented.

**CONTACT:** [www.blueadventuresdiving.gr](http://www.blueadventuresdiving.gr) / Spiros Papakastritsios at 28210-40608 or 28210-40403 / [bdiving@otenet.gr](mailto:bdiving@otenet.gr)

**Chania Diving** – is a SSI Certified and DAN Europe dive center located in Kounoupidiana and is organized and equipped to offer courses and dive opportunities. They offer open water up to trimix dives. All dive trips are led by local divers near and around the city of Chania. Offers lodging/diving combinations as well.

**CONTACT:** [www.chaniadiving.gr](http://www.chaniadiving.gr) / [info@chaniadiving.gr](mailto:info@chaniadiving.gr)

## Outdoor Adventures

**Snorkeling** – Crete is an ideal place for snorkeling for many different reasons. There is excellent visibility in the waters which in the summertime can reach down to around 90 feet. The water temp in the summer hovers between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. There is a wide variety of fish for your viewing pleasure. The Rocky seabed and little current makes going snorkeling a very exciting sport here. FYI: Stay away from rocky beaches for the better sea life. Move away from crowds and noise as these tend to scare off the fish. Southern beaches are more preferable than Northern beaches. The best time to snorkel is early morning or 1-2 hours prior to sunset in the late afternoon. The most optimum months for snorkeling is September and October. Snorkeling is offered at most dive clubs. Around the major city harbors, you may find boats offering day snorkeling tours as well. In Heraklion you can catch a boat to the island of Dia, which sits about 9 miles off the coast, for excellent snorkeling opportunities. **WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR:** If in rocky areas, keep your eyes out for sea urchins. You definitely don't want to be stung by one. Don't play with the moray eels. It may bite you if it gets spooked or scared. Scorpion fish and Weevers have poisonous spines that cause lots of pain and severe swelling. The Scorpion fish lives on rocks and the Weevers live on sandy or muddy floors. Lastly, if you are taking the Balos/ Gramvousa ferry out of Kissamos/ Kastelli port, there is a ship wreck to snorkel around. For snorkeling adventures, there are various boats along the Venetian harbor offering boating/snorkeling services like Captain Nick's Glass Bottom Boat.

## **SEGWAY TOURS**

**Chania Segway Tours** – Segway tours of Chania for individuals or small groups of up to 5 people. Various tours to choose from. Located near the Old Harbor in Chania for groups of 2 or 3-6 people offering a bottle of water and complimentary photos.

**TOUR PRICING:** 10% Discount for children under 16 y/o

1. Old City and Harbor Tour (75 minutes): €39.00 per person
2. Old City and Harbor Combo Tour (2 hours): €59.00 per person
3. Splantzia and Koum Kapi Tour (75 minutes): €39.00 per person
4. Halepa Tour (90 minutes): €45.00 per person
5. 1 Hour Freestyle Tour (3-6 persons) (60 minutes): €30.00 per person  
(only complimentary bottle of water, no complimentary photos)
6. Night Tour (3-6 people) ( 90 minutes): €49.00 per person (only complimentary bottle of water, no complimentary photos)
7. Private Tours – contact them arrange private tours.

**LOCATION:** 25 Episkopoy Chrisanthou St. Venetian Port, Chania | **OPEN:** April – end of October with tours available Monday-Saturday. If requesting tours outside these times, contact for private tour set-up. |

**CONTACT:** [www.chaniasegwaytours.com](http://www.chaniasegwaytours.com) / 694-459-7159 / [info@chaniasegwaytours.com](mailto:info@chaniasegwaytours.com)

## **SKY DIVING**

**Skydive Crete** – is a company that offers accelerated free fall (AFF) for the experienced skydiver and tandem jumps for the inexperienced. For the tandem, you will be strapped

## Outdoor Adventures

to an experienced instructor and exit the aircraft at 14,000 feet. This will give you a rush like you've never experienced and you will get a breathtaking view of the island that only few get to see. Open 365 days a year.

**CONTACT INFO:** <http://www.skydive-crete.gr/en> / [info@skydive-crete.gr](mailto:info@skydive-crete.gr) / 697-0366 800 | **LOCATION:** Maleme Airport Chania, Crete | **COST:** A tandem ticket is €210.00 and photos/videos of the jump is €88.00.

## WATER PARKS

**Limnopolis** – is one of 4 water parks on the island and is the one closest to the base. Located on the outskirts of Chania, the park offers your basic facilities as well as a first aid center. There are thrill rides to suit all ages and athletics. From the lazy river and pools to the moderate and super slides, everyone should be able to find something to do. There is a children's pool area with mini slides and waterfalls. There is a swim up bar in the larger pool as well as a sit down restaurant and a fast food type restaurant as well as snack and pool bars.

**DIRECTIONS:** In Varipetro, Chania which is approximately 8km from the city center. Take the National Highway from Souda toward Kissamos and exit toward Omalos and follow signs to the park. | **COST:** Discount for all U.S. DOD Cardholders. Children under 3 free and seniors over 60. Adults: €25.00/ Kids 4-12: €18.00/ Pool Usage (no waterslides): €16.00/ Afternoon Entry (after 15:00): Adults: €17.00/ Kids 4-12: €14.00/ Pool Only, no waterslides: €12.00. | **HOURS:** 1000-1800 ( may stay later depending on time of year) | **CONTACT:** [www.limnopolis.gr](http://www.limnopolis.gr) / 28210-33246

**Watercity** – is the largest water park on the island and is packed full of fun for everyone. With over 30 different activities for you to partake in, you should definitely not be bored here. Supposedly to host some of the best rides of any of the island's 4 water parks, you will be able to choose from the likes of Kamikaze, sidewinder, cyclone body slide, the turbo cyclone and of course, everyone's favorite, the lazy river. There are numerous facilities her to include changing rooms, gift shops, ice cream kiosks and fast food cafes and bars. The park is very child friendly with 2 kiddy pools along with kiddy slides.

**DIRECTIONS:** Starting from Chania you take the National road to Heraklion. 5 minutes or so past Heraklion, on your way to Agios Nikolaos and while you are about in the middle of a large straight stretch, you will see a gas station on your right hand side. After that you take the exit that is to your right and at the end you first turn left and immediately right in order to take the old National road. You follow the road to Gouves and 5 minutes later you meet the settlement of Kokkini Hani. There in your left side is **Super-Market of Hatzis** and in your right side a street with some signs that you will follow. Very few minutes after the ramification you arrive at the unique and unprecedented Watercity. | **TICKETS:** €25.00 for adults, €17.00 for anyone between the heights of 35" and 55". Less than 35" is free. | **HOURS:** 1000-1830 | **CONTACT:** [www.watercity.gr](http://www.watercity.gr)

**Aquaplus** – located near the golf course in Hersonissos, This is known for being the first water park in the region. A lot of time and energy has been put into the beauty of the park as well as the entertainment value. You will find slides running underneath weeping willows and games passing between palm trees, bougainvilleas and French marigolds. Located on a hill, you get a great vantage point of all it has to offer. There are slides, pools and a lazy river spread out on the 57 acres. Your basic facilities are here as well as café's bars, restaurants and areas for kids.

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**LOCATION:** 25 minutes from Heraklion airport in the city of Hersonissos. Follow National Road through Heraklion and look for signs for the park. | **TICKETS:** €26.00 for adults and €17.00 for kids up to age 13. (if you by online, there is a decent discount on ticket prices. | **CONTACT:** [www.acquaplus.gr](http://www.acquaplus.gr)

**Star Beach** – is a small water park that prides itself on the atmosphere and other activities available more than water slides. FREE ENTRY however you may have to pay for a few rides and the extras like Bungee jumping and the like. You will find reasonably priced food and drinks. There are lots of things to do, such as a lazy river, slides, a family area that has baby pools and mini slides, bungee jumping, bars and food service facilities. You can also catch some water sports off the beach. One note is that this park gets very busy during the high season.

**DIRECTIONS:** 30 minutes East from Heraklion airport. | **TICKETS:** Free entry with the possibility of paying for some of the bigger rides. | **CONTACT:** [www.starbeach.gr](http://www.starbeach.gr)

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Please note: The following websites were used to gather most of the information used here in this publication as well as “free to use and share” photos that are intended for personal use and nothing more.

[www.explorecrete.com](http://www.explorecrete.com)

[www.winesofcrete.gr](http://www.winesofcrete.gr)

[www.discovercrete.net](http://www.discovercrete.net)