

CRETE

THE ISLAND WITH EVERYTHING

*private
departure!*

An exploration of cuisine,
craft and tradition in Greece
OCTOBER 11—18, 2025

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️
EST 2014



THE HARBOR AT RETHYMNO

Onward Travel is thrilled to add Crete to our repertoire for 2025. We'll spend a week on this idyllic Aegean island, the largest of the Greek archipelago, and one-time center of the ancient Minoan civilization.

The island of Crete has everything you are hoping to find in Greece - fantastic fresh food, art, stunning scenery, ancient history and mythology, beautiful beaches, and the famously friendly and fun local culture that makes you feel you've gone back in time. Join us for a week there, planned closely with our local tour director, Mirsini. The first half of the tour will be spent in the lovely little seaside city of Chania and the other half in a picturesque mountain village called Archanes, both of these are ancient settlements bursting with history, atmosphere and regional flavor.

As you explore Crete with your private group, enjoy fabulous meals from trendy urban bistros to a country hotel where we'll forage for herbs and cook our own bread over the fire. We'll get hands-on with two cooking experiences and an art classes focused on Minoan ceramics. These methods of creation extend all the way back to the ancient civilizations which flourished here and of course we'll be exploring them, too, visiting ancient ruins and an archaeological museum. Enjoying all of this alongside local guide Mirsini will open our eyes to the wonder of this dynamic and beautiful island where ancient history surrounds us and a peaceful feeling floats through the air.



IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Dining on fresh seafood with a view of the Aegean Sea

Making your own ceramic masterpiece

Baking bread over a wood fire

Don't miss Athens or Santorini!

see page 6
for tour extensions

Welcome to Crete

DAY 1: SATURDAY OCTOBER 11

- Meet your local guide, she'll be waiting for you at the ferry port
- Toast your travel group over dinner beside the Aegean Sea

Welcome to Crete! We will assume that most of your group will be arriving on the ferry from Santorini (if not, arrangements will be made accordingly). After a full day in Santorini, the ferry departs at 5pm for a 7:30pm arrival in Rethymno on the island of Crete. Your local host for the week, Mirsini, will meet you at the ferry port, and from here it's about a one hour drive to Chania, our homebase.

We'll stop for a light supper at a seaside restaurant shortly after leaving the ferry port before continuing on to The Chania Hotel, a recently opened 5-star boutique hotel situated just where the Old Town meets the New City. The property has a vibe to match its location: historical reverence mixed with a fresh, modern aesthetic. And here you are in Chania, a deeply fascinating little city with thousands of years of history as a crossroads between "East" and "West." In ancient times it was called Cydonia, and for hundreds of years it was an outpost of the great Venetian Empire. Later Chania (pronounced Hania, from the Turkish: Hanya) was conquered by the Turks to become an Ottoman stronghold, and for many generations it was as culturally diverse a place as existed anywhere.

Get a good night's sleep in your comfortable hotel, tomorrow an exciting day in Chania awaits.

Meals Dinner

Exploring Chania

DAY 2: SUNDAY OCTOBER 12

- Start your day with one of Crete's favorite breakfast foods
- Look back at the Venetian Harbour aboard a private sunset cruise

Breakfast is included at your hotels each morning of this trip, but even though The Chania Hotel has a lovely spread for you it's a good idea to leave a little room because our first stop this morning is at a local bakery to taste a favorite Cretan breakfast: *bougatsa*. This pastry filled with creamy cheese is a local staple and we will take the opportunity to watch the baking process and of course enjoy a slice.

From here we visit our first artisan of the trip - a knifemaker. You'll visit the workshop and learn about their process... and then, a special gift: your own small knife to take home with you. From here we're headed into the heart of the ancient city, towards the Venetian Port, on a fun walking orientation of town led by Mirsini. As lunchtime nears, you'll have free time to get something to eat (she will provide

some good recommendations), do some shopping and enjoy the town as you like. In the afternoon we'll reconvene and head to the harbour to board a boat for a sunset cruise. As we look back at the city, raising a glass to it, we may just feel like we have the same view as the Venetians who dominated this harbour for many centuries. Once we've returned to land it's time for a special dinner together at one of Mirsini's favorite restaurants for upscale, modern food true to its Greek roots all accompanied by wonderful local wines.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Day Trip to Rethymno

DAY 3: MONDAY OCTOBER 13

- Spend the day in the hometown of our local guide
- Taste phyllo pastry prepared by a legendary phyllomaster

This morning we're off to Mirsini's hometown: Rethymno. About an hour down the coast, Rethymno is a significant cultural and economic center on the island and a supremely charming little city to boot. On our way we're making a stop at the archaeological site of Aptera: mentioned in ancient writings as long ago as the 14th-13th centuries BC and in Greek mythology, Aptera was an extremely powerful city-state from the Minoan through the Hellenistic periods. Eventually it was destroyed in an earthquake and today it is of particular interest due to its Roman ruins, restored Byzantine monastery and a nice example of an amphitheatre, all with scenic vistas over the Souda Bay and the White Mountains.

Once we get to Rethymno, it will be a delight to explore together with Mirsini. First we're going to visit a famous phyllo master who prepares the pastry meticulously, just as his ancestors did, and to stunningly delicious result- of course we'll have a taste. After we've gotten the lay of the land you'll be on your own for lunch and a little wander before we reconvene to visit the Fortezza, an imposing citadel built by the Venetians, later taken by the Turks, and a unique and impressive fusion of Medieval European and Moorish architectural styles. Our last stop today is the workshop of a musical instrument master who still creates the three-stringed, pear-shaped Cretan lyra in the laborious traditional way, which we'll learn something about and maybe even hear some music. Back in Chania tonight we'll have a simple, delicious dinner together.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Sacred Local Olive Oil

DAY 4: TUESDAY OCTOBER 14

- Taste organic, small batch Greek olive oil straight from the source
- Cook up a feast at a fun cooking class with a local family

It's our last full day in Chania! Enjoy some time on your own in the city this morning. Grab a quick lunch and then we are headed to an organic olive oil estate in the mountains to learn firsthand about their production methods and of course we have to have a taste. If you've never done a "professional" olive oil tasting you are in for an experience! Then on our way back to Chania we will stop to pay homage to one of the oldest olive trees in the world, the Ancient Olive Tree of Vouves, which is somewhere between 2000-4000 years old.

Once we arrive back in Chania we have a special evening in store, cooking together in a local home on the edge of the city. Our hosts are a sister-brother duo and they will welcome us like family. This evening we're preparing lamb, roasted for two hours in a wood-fired stone oven, stuffed vegetables and grape leaves or *dolmades*, savory cheese pies and more! And you know the theme of the day will continue on tonight as our hosts explain and demonstrate just how important high quality olive oil is in the Greek kitchen.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner



POSSIBLY THE OLDEST OLIVE TREE IN THE WORLD
Photo by Eric Nagle

To the Forest, to the Village

DAY 5: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 15

- Learn about the rustic side of life, foraging and baking bread
- Check in to your new lodgings in a picturesque mountain village

After an early breakfast we're checking out of The Chania Hotel and heading inland to the mountains, villages and forests of the island where life moves at a slower, more traditional pace. First let's visit a multi-generational family at their mountain hotel restaurant where we will get started with baking bread in the traditional way with special Cretan yeast and a wood-fired oven. While the bread bakes, take a walk in the forest to learn about local flora and fauna and gather herbs. Cretans have a deep connection to their local wild plants which they harvest in abundance for culinary and medicinal uses.

Once we've returned to the restaurant it's time to enjoy a wonderful lunch together including our warm, freshly baked bread. Yum! Sadly then it's time to say goodbye to this wonderful family as we continue our day's journey. Next we're visiting the village of Margarites, renowned as the island's epicenter for pottery and the ceramic arts with its numerous studios and workshops. We will stop in to see a ceramic artist and learn about their works and process and then we'll have some free time to explore the different shops.

By the time we reach our final destination, Archanes, it will be nearly dinner time. Archanes is a mountain village not far from Heraklion and it's a place where time seems to stand still. Flowering bushes and vines frame brightly colored houses, panoramic views extend in all directions, and cafes just beckon you to relax at them. We've reserved rooms at two lovely little properties here in the heart of the village: Carpe Diem Hotel and Inotropes Boutique Suites. Once we've checked in we'll reconvene for a fun and casual dinner together at a taverna just around the corner from the hotels.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

A STREET SCENE IN ARCHANES



Artisans Ancient and New

DAY 6: THURSDAY OCTOBER 16

- Explore the ancient Minoan world hands-on at a ceramic workshop
- Take your new knowledge of ancient iconography to the museum

Here in our little village is an artist whose unique, world-renowned ceramic work is inspired by the ancient Minoan artworks which are woven deep into the cultural fabric of her hometown of Heraklion. This morning she will welcome us into her shop and studio for a hands-on clay exploration of the symbolism, mythology and iconography of the ancient Minoan kingdom which we'll be learning about during these next two days in the Heraklion region, the heart of that legendarily creative ancient civilization. Each of us will create our own ceramic treasure which will be fired and ready for us to take home before we leave Crete. This is sure to be a very special morning and one we'll remember for a long time.

Then we're headed in the center of Heraklion for lunch at one of Mirsini's favorite restaurants. After lunch, Mirsini will show us around the city, and after some free time to stroll and shop we'll meet back up to visit the famous Heraklion Archaeological Museum. Thanks to our morning in the ceramics studio we'll already be familiar with some of the imagery, stories and ideas we're going to encounter here so our guided tour of the museum with Mirsini will be extra enjoyable. This evening back in Archanes you'll be on your own to enjoy dinner as you please.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch



The Treasures of Heraklion

DAY 7: FRIDAY OCTOBER 17

- Visit a place immortalized in one of the most famous Myths
- Raise a glass to your travel companions over a delicious dinner

By now we're becoming experts in all things Minoan and our last historical visit this morning is to the legendary Palace of Knossos. One of the most visited tourist attractions in all of Greece, this vast complex of ancient ruins is replete with myths and stories, the most famous of which is that of the Minotaur. Touring the palace ruins with Mirsini will be a fascinating treat.

From the Palace of Knossos we're headed to a local taverna for a casual lunch of meze and salads. And then on to a family-owned winery where we'll learn about their biodynamic farming processes and taste a full range of their delightful wines. In the afternoon we'll return to Archanes for a little bit of free time before we reconvene for our last delicious dinner together at a famous restaurant in the village.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Farewell

DAY 8: SATURDAY OCTOBER 18

Those traveling on to Athens will leave this morning for their flight from Heraklion Airport. For everyone else, transfers to Heraklion Airport, ferry port, or city center will be provided based on individual plans. Safe travels!

Meals Breakfast



FOOD PHOTOS FROM MIRSINI: GRILLED LAMB WITH CRETAN FIXINGS & DOLMADES (STUFFED GRAPE LEAVES)



TOUR EXTENSIONS

Experience more of Greece on your trip

THE ACROPOLIS, ATHENS

SANTORINI Pre-Tour Extension

3 nights:
OCTOBER 8 – 11

- Relax on one of the most iconic Greek islands

It's always a great idea to arrive early in a destination to get acclimated, and in this case you can also take the opportunity to relax and enjoy Santorini, one of the most famous and beautiful of the Greek Islands. Staying at a scenic, luxe resort hotel with great views is a typical way to experience Santorini so we've reserved rooms at Anteliz Suites just on the northern side of Thera, or Fira, the island's hub. With only 14 rooms, this well-tended and appointed boutique property boasts an inviting pool and a gourmet restaurant.

On your first full day in Santorini, a local guide will pick up your group from the hotel and take you on a tour of the island, including a stop for a fabulous lunch. We'll be happy to assist with arranging some additional activities for your time in Santorini, such as wine tours, a catamaran sailing trip or even a helicopter ride.

Included in Santorini Post-Tour Extension Package:

- Lodging at Anteliz Suites with daily breakfast
- Guided tour of the island on October 9
- Assistance arranging activities
- Arrival airport transfer & departure transfer to ferry port
- Ferry ticket from Thera to Rethymno on October 11

Double Room \$1,005/person | Single supplement +\$470

Superior Double Room \$1,160/person | Single supplement +\$625

Suite with Whirlpool Tub \$1,225/person | Single supplement +\$690

Junior Suite \$1,340/person | Single supplement +\$805

Infinity Pool Suite \$1,575/person | Single supplement +\$1,030

Visit www.antelizsuites.com to explore the different room types

Rates are based on Double Occupancy

Double Rooms are the only option available with twin beds

Additional nights can be added, please inquire

ATHENS Post-Tour Extension

2 nights:
OCTOBER 18 – 20

- Explore the vibrant capital city of Greece

After the tour of Crete ends, take a morning flight to the lively, historic capital city of Greece: Athens.

Lodging is a stylish boutique hotel in the historic center of the city, near many monuments, attraction, restaurants and museums. In addition to time to see Athens how you'd like to, we've arranged some activities for the group to help you get the lay of the land: a gourmet food tour after your arrival on the 18th and a half day walking tour in the morning on the 19th, including the Acropolis and other historical highlights of the city.

Included in Athens Post-Tour Extension Package:

- Lodging at Niche Hotel Athens with daily breakfast
- Gourmet food tour on October 18
- Historic walking tour on October 19
- Acropolis entry ticket
- Arrival and departure airport transfers

2 nights: \$600/person | Single supplement +\$125

Rates are based on Double Occupancy

Additional nights and upgrades are available, please inquire

All participants in the Athens Post-Tour Extension should book a one-way ticket on the following flight:

Aegean Airlines Flight 305

Saturday 18th October 2025

Depart Heraklion (HER) 9:35am | Arrive Athens (ATH) 10:30am

Trip Essentials

BEGINS	<p>Chania, Crete, Greece on Saturday, October 11, 2025</p> <p>Pick up from Rethymno Ferry Port for 7:20pm arrival</p> <p>If travelers are coming to Chania first instead, arrangements will be made accordingly</p>
ENDS	<p>Archanes, Crete, Greece on Saturday, October 18, 2025</p> <p>No activities are scheduled on 10/18</p> <p>Departure transfer to Heraklion is included (airport, ferry port or city)</p>
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<p>This tour includes walking for up to 30 minutes at a time, plus stairs, uneven natural terrain and cobblestones. Travelers should be able to walk a mile at a comfortable pace. If you have limited mobility, we may be able to accommodate you, but it is essential to let us know at the time of registration. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided.</p>
TOUR DATES & PRICE	<p>October 11–18, 2025</p> <p>Prices are based on number of participants, see sidebar</p> <p>Contact Onward Travel for room upgrades or extra nights.</p> <p>You are welcome to pay by credit card, a 3% surcharge applies.</p>
LODGING	<p>The Chania Hotel 4 Nights A modern, brand new five-star hotel concept that breathed life back into an iconic 50's-era hotel building in a perfectly central location. With a fitness center, spa and rooftop bar & restaurant.</p> <p>Archanes Lodging 3 Nights We've reserved rooms at two comfortable and stylish properties in the heart of Archanes village: <i>Inotropes Boutique Suites</i> and <i>Carpe Diem Hotel</i>. The hotels are about five minutes walk from one another.</p>



**The Onward
Travel Tour
Director
for this trip
is Mirsini**

Mirsini Iliopoulou is a local professional guide passionate about the island of Crete. After nearly a decade away from home, working and studying in the U.K. and in Spain, she came to appreciate the perks of living on a small (although not that small) island... especially the relaxed pace of life, proximity to nature, opportunities for spontaneity and good food.

Mirsini loves to share her knowledge and personal experiences related to the way of life and culture in Crete. Passionate about history and archeology, from a people's perspective... she is always exploring new stories and myths to share and draw inspiration from. Mirsini lives in the picturesque coastal town of Rethymno and often spends time at her village in the mountains helping out with the family orchards (cherries, apples, walnuts etc). She looks forward to meeting and traveling together with you!

Trip price includes the following:

- Airport or ferry transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities
- 7 nights accommodations
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, three lunches, and six dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences planned, wine & local beverages included, of course!
- A local tour director to help you truly understand Crete who will be at your service throughout the tour
- Activities, tastings, cooking classes, art classes, and tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Taxes and gratuities

Tour Price

Rates are based on double occupancy

With 8-9 Participants:
\$4600/person

With 10-11 Participants:
\$4150/person

With 12-14 participants:
\$3975/person

In all cases, the single supplement is an additional \$900



Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo



Once Onward Travel receives your registration form, we will send you an **invoice** with instructions to pay the **deposit**.



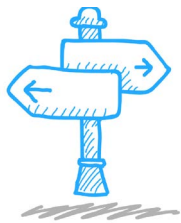
If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit www.travelexinsurance.com and refer to location number 32-0704.



Four to six weeks before the tour **we will mail you a packet** with a packing list, traveler directory and other useful info.



Make sure you know where your **passport** is now! For travel to Norway it should be valid for six months beyond your return date.



Onward Travel's cancellation policy in a nutshell:

- \$250 of your initial deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 90 days and the full deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 60 days and 50% of total trip fee is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 30 days and the full trip fee is nonrefundable

See the full [Terms & Conditions](http://www.onwardtravel.co/terms) at www.onwardtravel.co/terms

Register now!

Visit onwardtravel.co to complete the registration form and submit payment.

Space is limited to your private group.

\$1,500 deposit due upon booking, balance due by August 1, 2025.



Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:
letsgo@onwardtravel.co
845-293-2729

