

# CRETE

## THE ISLAND WITH EVERYTHING

An exploration of cuisine,  
craft and tradition in Greece

SEPTEMBER 24—OCTOBER 1, 2025

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈

EST 2014



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 small 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 two art classes focused on mosaics and ceramics. These creative methods 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 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 mosaic masterpiece

Baking bread over a wood fire

***Don't miss Athens or Santorini!***

see page 6  
for tour extensions

## Welcome to the Greek Islands

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24

- Get to know our fantastic local guide for the week while touring Chania
- Toast your travel group from a boat looking back at the lovely coast

Arrive in Chania by midday today and check in 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.

Our group sets out in the early afternoon with Mirsini, our local guide and trip co-host who will travel with us all week. She will lead an engaging walking tour of this interesting and delightful place, which culminates in the harbour where we'll board a boat for a sunset cruise. As we look back at the city and 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 welcome dinner together at one of Mirsini's favorite restaurants for upscale, modern food true to its Greek roots all accompanied by wonderful local wines.

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Meals Dinner

## Exploring Chania

DAY 2: THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 25

- Start your day with one of Crete's favorite breakfast foods
- Begin to meet local artisans: a knifemaker and a mosaic artist

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. Then we're off to a super special destination: a scenic monestary on Chania's northern peninsula where monks are making wine and olive oil according to centuries-old traditions. We will taste their production accompanied

by some local snacks, and Mirsini will introduce us to the history of this tranquil and gorgeous place. By now it's lunch time and we're going to enjoy a fabulous meal paired with a fabulous view of the seaside. After lunch, we visit another local artisan who will teach us to become artisans ourselves... we're going to take part in a mosaic workshop! Mosaics, as the artist says, are the sister of paintings and an art form that endures through the centuries. Here in the land of ancient art, with a panoramic view of the Cretan Sea, we will make our own individual works using age old techniques, and at the end of the workshop they go home with us (don't worry, they weigh only about as much as a bottle of wine!).

What an incredible day it's been in Chania. Continue to discover this special place into the evening as you're on your own tonight.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch

## Day Trip to Rethymno

DAY 3: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 26

- 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 Aptaera: mentioned in ancient writings as long ago as the 14th-13th centuries BC and in Greek mythology, Aptaera 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.

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Meals Breakfast, Dinner

## Sacred Local Olive Oil

DAY 4: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 27

- 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.

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Meals Breakfast, Dinner



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

## To the Forest, to the Village

DAY 5: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 28

- 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.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

A STREET SCENE IN ARCHANES



## Artisans Ancient and New

DAY 6: MONDAY SEPTEMBER 29

- 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.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch



## The Treasures of Heraklion

DAY 7: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 30

- 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.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## Farewell

DAY 8: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 1

Those traveling on to Santorini will leave early this morning for an 8am ferry from Heraklion Port. For everyone else, transfers to Heraklion Airport or city center will be provided based on individual plans. Safe travels!

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Meals Breakfast



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



THE ACROPOLIS, ATHENS

# TOUR EXTENSIONS

*Experience more of Greece on your trip*

## ATHENS Pre-Tour Extension

2 or 3 nights:  
SEPTEMBER 21 or 22 – 24

- Explore the vibrant capital city of Greece

It's always a great idea to arrive in a destination early to get acclimated, and in this case you can also take the opportunity to get to know 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 plenty of 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 beginning in the afternoon on September 22nd and a half day walking tour in the morning on the 23rd, including the Acropolis and other historical highlights of the city.

### **Included in Athens Pre-Tour Extension Package:**

- Lodging at Niche Hotel Athens with daily breakfast
- Gourmet food tour on September 22
- Historic walking tour on September 23
  - Acropolis entry ticket
- Arrival and departure airport transfers

**2 nights: \$650/person | Single supplement +\$80**

**3 nights: \$800/person | Single supplement +\$120**

*Rates are based on Double Occupancy*

*Additional nights and upgrades are available, please inquire*

**All participants in the Athens Pre-Trip Extension should book a one-way ticket on the following flight:**

Aegean Airlines Flight 338

Wednesday 24th September 2025

Depart Athens (ATH) 11:25am | Arrive Chania (CHQ) 12:15pm

## SANTORINI Post-Tour Extension

2 nights:  
OCTOBER 1 – 3

- Relax on one of the most iconic Greek islands

After the tour ends, depart Crete on an early morning ferry bound for 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.

A local guide will pick you up from the ferry port in Santorini and you'll spend the better part of your first day touring the island, including a stop for a fabulous lunch. In the afternoon you can check in at Anteliz Suites. 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
- Ferry ticket from Heraklion to Thera on October 1
- Guided tour of the island on October 1
  - Departure airport transfer
- Assistance arranging activities

**Double Room \$850/person | Single supplement +\$325**

**Superior Double Room \$950/person | Single supplement +\$430**

**Senior Suite \$1,010/person | Single supplement +\$510**

**Suite with Whirlpool Tub \$1,025/person | Single supplement +\$520**

**Pool Suite \$1,050/person | Single supplement +\$540**

**Junior Suite \$1,065/person | Single supplement +\$550**

**Visit [www.antelizsuites.com](http://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*

## Trip Essentials

<p>BEGINS</p>	<p>Chania, Crete, Greece on Wednesday, September 24, 2025 Meet at 2:00 pm at The Chania Hotel Arrival transfer from Chania Airport is included</p>
<p>ENDS</p>	<p>Archanes, Crete, Greece on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 No activities are scheduled on 10/1 Departure transfer to Heraklion is included (airport, ferry port or city )</p>
<p>SUITABILITY &amp; MOBILITY</p>	<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>
<p>TOUR DATES &amp; PRICE</p>	<p>September 6—13, 2025 Double Occupancy \$3,975 per traveler Single Supplement \$900 additional  <i>Contact Onward if you are interested in a room upgrade or adding extra nights.</i>  <i>You are welcome to pay by credit card, a 3% surcharge applies.</i></p>
<p>LODGING</p>	<p>The Chania Hotel   <u>4 Nights</u> 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 &amp; restaurant.  Archanes Lodging   <u>3 Nights</u> 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, four lunches, and five 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

## Air Travel

The tour will start in Chania (CHO) and end in Heraklion (HER).

Please confirm with Onward Travel that the tour is a “go” before booking airfare.

Contact Onward Travel for assistance booking flights.



**Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at [www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo](http://www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo)**



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



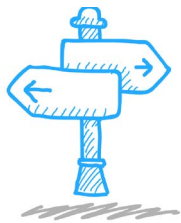
If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) and refer to location number 32-0704.



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* at [www.onwardtravel.co/terms](http://www.onwardtravel.co/terms)

**Register now!**

Visit [onwardtravel.co](http://onwardtravel.co) to complete the registration form and submit payment.

Space is limited to only 14 travelers.

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



**Get in Touch!**

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:  
[letsgo@onwardtravel.co](mailto:letsgo@onwardtravel.co)  
845-293-2729

