



## CAPTIVATING CRETE

Europe's most southern terrain  
guided, vehicle support

**September 16-23 2018**

Groups of 8+ riders, choose your own date for a guided tour

### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Pit stop at **Monumental Olive Tree** needing 4-5 people to encircle it

Explore **Knossos**, ancient Minoan palace city with its fine frescos

Drink **Cretan wine** and beloved raki, the national spirit you cannot refuse

Bike slowly up the **Therissos Gorge**, a marvelous ascent through nature

Experience first hand why **Cretan hospitality** is so famous

### DESCRIPTION

Biking guided tour to Minoan ruins, a highlight of the Captivating Crete tour. At Knossos you will learn from the professional guide that the peaceful Minoan empire was the first civilization on European soil and King Minos' chair was replicated for the chief judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Throughout the tour you encounter Minoan ruins left and right.

This tour is for cyclists accustomed to climbing ascents ranging from 1500-2500 foot (450-760 meters). Captivating Crete has flat sections hugging the sea coast, hilly sections near the sea and mountains in the rural interior where passing vehicles are less frequent.

The most endearing part of the tour is your immersion into the local culture. In a Greek language class you learn to greet the locals, "Kali Mera!" There is a cooking class where you learn to prepare healthy Cretan cuisine. Tasting raki, Crete's national spirit akin to Italy's grappa, is unavoidable. Indeed, it is rude to turn down the first and second offerings. You can pass when a third round is extended.

Be sure to consider the [Libyan Sea Coast Hiking add-on](#) for a post-tour hiking in the Samaria Gorge and along the car-free Libyan Sea coast with some villages accessible only by foot or boat.

Before departing for Crete, take an opportunity to get used to your bicycle by booking one or more warm-up rides in the Attica region surrounding Athens. These day tours are guided with vehicle support. See [Athens Day Tours](#)

### DETAILS

<b>2018 Dates</b>	April 22-29 and Sept 23-27
<b>Duration</b>	7 nights, 8 days
<b>Add-ons</b>	4 Night Libyan Sea Coast Hiking.

	1 day Samaria Gorge Hike. See Add-on tab
<b>Arrival City</b>	Athens or Chania
<b>Arrival transfer</b>	in Athens, no. In Chania, start biking from port
<b>Tour Start Point</b>	Chania
<b>Tour End Point</b>	Arhanes (south of Herakleion)
<b>Minimum Age</b>	18
<b>Maximum Pax</b>	14
<b>Total Mileage</b>	368 km, 229 miles
<b>Highest Elevation</b>	2345 feet, 715 meters
<b>Rating</b>	Active to Advanced – see <a href="#">Rating System</a>

## **ITINERARY**

Arrive the day before the tour starts to test ride and fitting of the bikes on the Acropolis Walkway in Athens. That evening we rendezvous at Piraeus port to take the overnight ferry (private cabins) to Chania, arriving at 6:00 am.

Bike mileage listed for each day is that day's standard bike route. Depending however on the cycling level of the participants, routes may vary by adding mileage or minimizing mileage with vehicle transfers.

### **Day 1: Chania**

From Chania's Souda Bay port we bike to the Akrotiri Peninsula to the end of the road to the Gouvernatou monastery. The stone path descends to Catholikon where St. John the hermit retreated over 700 years ago. The hike takes about 30 minutes round trip (1 mile) and roundtrip cycling to and from Souda Bay is 40.60 km, 25 miles. From Souda Bay, bike a back road to the old city of Chania. 13.80 km, 8 miles **54.40 km, 33 miles**

### **Day 2: Chania**

Morning bike loop up the gorgeous Therisos Gorge, climbing to 2336 feet (712 meters). Choice of lunch at a family run winery or a family run botanical park with organic meals. **55.50 km, 34.40 miles**

### **Day 3: Rethymno**

Today is the longest and hardest cycling day of the tour going from Chania to Rethymno with a pit stop at Georgiopoli Beach and an optional detour to Koules Fort and Ancient Aptera whose residents engaged in "bloodless wars." Rethymno is Crete's best kept secret with its Venetian-era buildings, including the Fortezza fort dominating the city. **78.00 km, 48.50 miles**

### **Day 4: Rethymno**

A bike ride into the low portions of the Psiloritis Mountains takes us to the Melidoni Cave and learn its poignant history. Lunch on the seacoast at Panormos, swimming optional. Then return to Rethymno's cycling along the city's fourteen kilometer sandy coast. **34.90 km, 21.70 miles**

### **Day 5: Axos**

Cycle from Rethymno to Axos via Arkadi Monastery with its tragic history. Bonus stop at a Mycenae-like ancient tomb. Final destination is Enagron in Axos, a precious agrotourism center. **64 km, 39 miles**

#### **Day 6: Axos**

Choice of Axos short loop with a stop at the wondrous Sfendoni Cave **16.30 km, 13 miles** or Axos long loop **31.30 km, 19.40**. Afternoon hike in the Psiloritis Mountains followed by a traditional Cretan cooking class.

#### **Day 7: Arhanes**

Bike from Axos to Herakleion coming down to the 803 meters, 2634 feet to sea level **49 km, 30 miles** In Herakleion we are treated to a professional guided tour of Ancient Knossos and Herakleion Archaeology Museum before transferring to the traditional town of Arhanes.

#### **Day 8: Departure**

Transfers to Herakleion airport for flights to Athens or to Herakleion port for those taking the boat to Santorini.

### ***COST & INCLUSION***

Cost in euros based on double occupancy

Captivating Crete Tour Cost	2580 euros per person
Single Supplement	750 euros
Libyan Sea Coast Hiking Cost	1300 euros per person
Single Supplement	300 euros

See [daily exchange rates](#)

### **TOUR INCLUSIONS**

**Accommodations:** 3-4 star hotels, primarily family owned and operated, ranging from boutique hotels to seaside upscale hotels. Tasteful, clean, air-conditioned, private bath, abundant hospitality, comfort. All accommodations are standard doubles with option for upgrade. All accommodations serve breakfast, usually buffet style. Tour prices are based on double occupancy. Check single supplement price for a single room.

**Bikes:** Specialized road bike or hybrid bike. Triple chain ring, 27 gears. Road bike has carbon fiber fork. Hybrids have front suspension. **Electric bike or carbon Tarmac bike** are available as an upgrade on request. Regular pedals or toe clips on request. You are welcome to bring your own clip-in pedals and shoes. See [Our Bikes and Gear](#)

**Bike gear:** helmet, water bottles, handlebar pouch, odometer

**Support vehicle:** "Sag wagon" with bilingual driver. Vehicle carries spare parts, floor pump, ice cooler, water, nutritious snacks, bike tools, first aid kit, day packs, luggage and gives you a lift if you get tired. The driver is also a bike mechanic.

**Tour Leader / Bike Guide:** the Tour Leader handles all the tour logistics and rides with the group.

**Meals:** Breakfasts are included at each hotel. Dinners are generally at trusted establishments within walking distance of the hotel. Dinner consists of 2-3 appetizers and a salad shared by the group and chosen by us. You are offered an entrée choice, usually a meat, fish or vegetarian dish. Dessert, house wine, water or a beverage for those who don't drink wine.

#### **Cue sheets**

**Trip packet:** useful and interesting information about the region

**Archaeology tour:** Private tour with professional licensed guide at Knossos and Herakleion Archaeology Museum

**Entrance fees:** Knossos, Herakleion Archaeology Museum

**Cretan Cooking Class:** takes place in Axos, led by local cook

**Arhanes transfer:** transfer from Arhanes to Herakleion port or airport on Day 8

**CycleGreece jersey:** short sleeved, rear pockets, locally made

#### **Gratuities & VAT taxes**

#### **TOUR EXCLUSIONS**

- Airfare to/from Greece
- Arrivals to and departures from Crete
- No transfer from Athens Airport to Athens hotel on arrival or from central Athens to Piraeus port for evening ferry to Chania — see Extras tab for transfer options
- All lunches
- Alcoholic beverages (other than house wine)
- Travel insurance – see Extras tab
- Tips for CycleGreece guides and drivers, at your discretion

#### **TAKE NOTE**

- Participants are required to sign our [Waiver](#)
- Participants are required to agree to the [Booking Agreement](#)
- Travel Insurance is required as a condition for participation in a CycleGreece tour

*See the website for more details about ACCOMMODATIONS, EXTRAS, ADD-ONS, MAP and BOOKING AGREEMENT*

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