



CAPTIVATING CRETE

Europe's most southern terrain
guided, vehicle support

Spring: May 4 - 12

Autumn: September 9 - 17

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

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

2019 Dates	May 4 – 12 and Sept 9 – 17
Duration	8 nights, 9 days
Add-ons	4 Night Libyan Sea Coast Hiking. 1 day Samaria Gorge Hike. See Add-on tab
Arrival City	Athens or Chania
Arrival transfer	in Athens, no. In Chania, start biking from port
Tour Start Point	Chania (for west to east route)
Tour End Point	Arhanes (south of Herakleion)
Minimum Age	18
Maximum Pax	14
Total Mileage	368 km, 229 miles
Highest Elevation	2345 feet, 715 meters

Rating Active to Advanced – see [Rating System](#)

ITINERARY

Day 1: Athens – Overnight Ferry

In the afternoon we meet at the Acropolis pedestrian walkway to fit and test ride your road bikes. After the technical business is taken care of, then there's the Meet & Greet at a roof top bar with stunning views of the Acropolis. After socializing and a discussion of tour logistics, by 20:00 we transfer by vehicle to Piraeus port for the overnight ferry to Crete, departing 21:00.

Day 2: 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 3: 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 4: Rethymno

Today is the longest and hardest cycling day of the tour going from Chania to Rethymno with a pit stop at Georgiopolis 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 5: 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. Take a cooking class with local chef learning traditional Greek recipes. **34.90 km, 21.70 miles**

Day 6: 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 7: Axos

Optional early morning quick short loop past Sfondoni village **16.30 km, 13 miles** Afternoon hike in the Psiloritis Mountains with local shepherd.

Day 8: Herakleion

Bike from Axos to Herakleion coming down to the 803 meters, 2634 feet to sea level **49 km, 30 miles** In Herakleion a professional guide leads you through the Herakleion Archaeology Museum holding the

famous Phaestos Disc. Then a transfer to Knossos, the greatest of the Minoan palace cities. Our farewell dinner is in the lovely traditional town of Arhanes for wine tasting and farewell dinner.

For those doing the Libyan Sea Coast Hiking add-on, you will not stay in Herakleion tonight. Instead, after the farewell dinner there is a transfer to Omalos, the village start point of the hike.

Day 9: 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	2690 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

7 nights 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. Triple chain ring, 27 gears, carbon fiber fork. Carbon Tarmac bikes are available as an upgrade for 400 euros. Electric bikes are available as an upgrade for 350 euros. Regular pedals or toe clips on request. You are welcome to bring your own clip-in pedals and shoes. See [Our Bikes](#) and [Our 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.

All Meals:

- Breakfasts are included at each hotel.
- Seven lunches — you choose from the menu.
- Eight dinners consisting of 2-3 appetizers and salad chosen by us and shared by the group. You are offered an entrée choice, usually a meat, fish or vegetarian dish. Dessert, house wine or beer, water or beverage.

Cue sheets

GPX tracks for those bringing their own Garmin device

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

Entrance fees: Knossos and Herakleion Archaeology Museum

Cretan Cooking Class: led by local chef

Wine Tasting Session: wine tasting in Arhanes, a region famous for its vineyards

CycleGreece jersey: short sleeved, rear pockets, locally made

CycleGreece lite backpack: 17" x 13", 43cm x 33cm

Trip packet: useful and interesting information about the region

Gratuities & VAT taxes

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- Airfare to/from Greece
- Departures from Crete
- Transfers to/from Athens airport to Athens, see Extras tab
- Alcoholic beverages (other than house wine)
- Drinks and coffee at café pit stops
- Travel insurance – required. We are official Travel Guard agents and can book a policy or provide a quote for U.S. citizens. See Extras tab

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

CYCLEGREECE

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