



## CRETE SELF-GUIDED

### Bike tours on Greece's largest island

#### WEST TO EAST - HANIA TO HERAKLEION

The West-East route starts in Hania in the west and ends in Herakleion in the east. Choose this route if you want to go to Santorini after the bike tour because only Herakleion has boats to Santorini. In high season there is also air service. Although the West-East rides cover the same terrain as the East-West rides, the ascents are a bit harder when biking eastward.

### DESCRIPTION

With its breathtaking mountains and seascapes, Crete is a dynamic destination for cyclists accustomed to ascents. As Europe's most southern terrain, Crete makes a desirable cycling destination during winter months when colder temperatures prevail in the rest of Europe.

Due to its extensive road network Crete offers a variety of overnight destinations and cycling road choices, not simply the standard routes we have posted in the East to West or West to East itineraries. We work with you to choose the optimum route for your travel schedule and cycling ability.

Crete was the first civilization on European soil with its ancient Minoan palace cities that you can bike to, such as, Knossos, Phaestos or Malia. There are unheralded ruins of equal interest, such as the mysterious Armeni Minoan cemetery and Fourni in Arhanes. Crete is celebrated for its indigenous cuisine that epitomizes the healthy Mediterranean diet. Look in the Extras tab about signing up for a Cretan cooking class or wine tasting, an ancient tradition extending back to the Minoan era. There are wineries to visit throughout the island.

Before or after your self-guided tour, we recommend booking the [Athens Add-on](#) that immerses you in the culture of Athens and the Attica region with exciting activities.

### DETAILS

<b>Dates:</b>	Choose your dates
<b>Duration:</b>	7 Nights 8 Days (ends in Arhanes) OR 9 Nights, 10 Days (ends in Tzermiado) Possible to add or subtract days; minimum 5 nights
<b>Add-ons:</b>	Yes, Libyan Sea Coast Hiking tour, Athens Day Tours
<b>Arrival City:</b>	Athens or Hania
<b>Arrival transfer:</b>	Yes, depending on Itinerary.
<b>Tour Start Point:</b>	Athens (overnight ferry) or Hania
<b>Tour End Point:</b>	Herakleion
<b>Minimum Age:</b>	18
<b>Total Mileage:</b>	453 km, 281 miles for 10 day standard route. Mileage depends on optional routes sought and itinerary destinations.
<b>Highest Elevation:</b>	890 meters, 2920 feet (Tzermiado)
<b>Rating:</b>	Advanced

## **ITINERARY - WEST TO EAST**

Below is our standard West to East itinerary, but it can be adjusted to add or subtract days or substitute overnight destinations, as these examples indicate: Opt for additional cycling days with an overnight in charming little Vamos located between Hania and Rethymno. In Vamos, you can experience a traditional Cretan cooking class.. Or spend two nights in Zaros and on the second day, cycle a loop to Roman ruins, the Minoan palace city of Phaestos and seaside Matala made famous by Joni Mitchell in her song Cary. Consider overnight in Axos with engaging agro-tourism activities at Enagron.

If you travel to Crete by sea via an overnight ferry from Piraeus (Athens' port), you will travel with the bikes. If you travel to Crete by air or by sea from a port other than Piraeus, the bikes we will be waiting for you in Crete with a CycleGreece agent. Leave your luggage in the hotels and it will be transferred to your next destination.

### **Day 1: Hania**

On arrival by air or sea, a CycleGreece agent meets you with your bikes. You are in the area of Akrotiri peninsula, so go cycle there! Descend the stone step path to Catholikon, an abandoned monastery. After exploring Akrotiri, take a back road route to enter the city of Hania. Stroll Hania's beautiful harbor with Venetian architecture. Roam the car-free old city and its Jewish quarter with finely preserved synagogue. **56 km, 35 miles** , (13 km shorter when arriving by air)

### **Day 2: Hania**

Ascend from sea level to 1860 feet through the enchanting Therissos Gorge road. On the return route stop at a family winery for lunch and wine tasting, or visit a delightful botanical park created by two brothers when their cherished olive fields burned down. Take time for shopping in Hania for handmade knives and gold jewelry. **51 km, 31.60 miles**

### **Day 3: Rethymno**

The halfway point en route to Rethymno is the seaside town of Giorgiopolis (Georgetown) whose most alluring feature is its beautiful beach. If you have time, you might want to take a dip. Start swooning when you reach the old car-free city of Rethymno with its dreamy Venetian-Ottoman appearance. Be sure to walk up to the towering Fortezza fortress. **78 km, 48.50 miles**. Instead of biking Hania to Rethymno on Day 3, if you want a shorter "smell the roses" tour and an overnight in a traditional village, you can opt to bike Hania to Vamos and continue the next day to Rethymno. This option allows a detour to Ancient Aptera and Koules Fortress.

### **Day 4: Rethymno**

A bike loop in the lower hills of the Psiloritis Mountains. Visit Melidoni Cave and learn its poignant history. Visit a family owned olive oil farm for olive oil tastings. Visit the ceramics village of Margarites, one of four centers in Crete practicing ancient pottery techniques. Visit a Mycenaean-style tomb. Lunch on the seacoast at Panormos. **67.70 km, 42 miles**

### **Day 5: Zaros**

Back country roads, lots of climbing, breathtaking scenery characterizes today's ride. Very little traffic as you head upward and inward into the Psiloritis Mountain region — don't miss the Monumental Olive Tree in Panasos. This day's climbing is the specific case where the East to West route is easier. There likely won't be enough time today to take an hour hike in the Rouvas Gorge, but consider it before you set off tomorrow. **77.20km, 48 miles**.

Instead of biking Rethymno to Zaros on Day 5, if you want to split up the mileage and visit Spili to enjoy its fountain with water spewing from the mouths of 19 lions heads, you can opt to bike Rethymno to Spili. Continue the next day Spili to Zaros. If you opt to spend a second night in Zaros, the next day an inviting bike ride awaits you to the Matala caves, Minoan Phaestos and the Roman ruins of Gortyna. **78.50 km, 48 miles**

#### **Day 6: Arhanes**

After so much climbing, it is now time to descend into lower terrain. Head for Arhanes, a town anyone with taste and class will admire, especially its traditional architecture of the “arhontiko,” the preserved old villas. Located only 15 km south of Herakleion, Arhanes is famous for its local cuisine and wines. See the Extras tab for a cooking class and wine tasting. **49.50 km 30.80 miles**

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

Bike a back road to reach Knossos, the capital of the peace Minoan Empire. Admire King Minos’ throne; a replica was made for the chief judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. **25 km 15 miles** by bike but to avoid Herakleion’s urban traffic, we recommend taking a taxi or bus from Knossos to Herakleion Archaeology Museum with its famed Minoan frescos and the enigmatic Phaestos disc. There’s likely time for an afternoon Arhanes loop **24.50 km, 15 miles**

#### **Day 8: Departure or continue to Lassithi Plateau, Tzermiado**

Head east, over mountain ridges, cycling on back roads with goats and donkeys. Listen for the cheery sound of their bells. En route make an optional 4 km detour to the Nikos Katantzakis Museum, home of the author of Zorba the Greek. Tzermiado is the largest village on the Lassithi Plateau, one of the highest farming areas in Greece that once had 20,000 windmills, in use only a generation or so ago. **44 km, 27 miles**

#### **Day 9: Tzermiado**

Make a grand loop of the plateau, stopping at Lassinthos Eco Village and at Diktion Cave to marvel at the gigantic stalactites and stalagmites. Cretans believe Zeus was born in this cave. **25 km, 15 miles** Consider visiting the Minoan palace city of Malia, if you are up for an almost 3,000 foot descent/ascent to the coast. Stop for lunch in Krasi, known for fresh drinking water springs. **54 km, 32 miles**

#### **Day 10: Departure**

A thrilling descent of 2283 feet 695 meters from the mountainous Lassithi region to the coastal areas near Herakleion. A CycleGreece agent meets you at the end of the ride to transfer you to either your Herakelion hotel or the airport or the port, depending on your itinerary. Leave the bikes with the agent. There are daily flights from Hania to Athens Airport, including ones that leave early enough to enable you to make a connecting flight home. Overnight ferries Herakleion to Piraeus depart at 9:00 pm. Leave your bikes and gear at the hotel.

### **Cost in euros based on double occupancy**

#### **1-2 riders**

10 days 2850 euros per person  
8 days 2220 euros per person

#### **3 riders**

10 Days – 2700 euros per person  
8 Days – 2100 euros per person

#### 4 riders

10 Days – 2580 euros per person

8 Days – 2010 euros per person

#### Single Supplement

10 Days – 900 euros per person

8 Days – 750 euros per person

The above costs are based on the standard itinerary. Cost may vary if itinerary varies.

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. See [Accommodations tab](#) to request more info about tour's accommodations

**Arrival Transfer:** West to East, no transfer needed if arrive by port or airport. CycleGreece agents meet you to take your luggage. If arrive by port from Piraeus, the bikes are with you and start first day's ride from the port to the hotel. If arrive by airport, bikes are delivered to you at the airport from where you start first day's ride to the hotel. Option to transfer on Day 1 directly to hotel.

**Departure transfer:** Transfer arranged for any itinerary to port or airport.

**Luggage transfers:** All luggage transfers based on itineraries listed (cost may change depending if transfers change)

**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 [Our Gear](#)

**Bike gear:** 2 water bottles, helmet, handlebar pouch, odometer, lock, rear rack on request. For hygienic purposes we encourage you to bring your own helmet.

**Bike tools:** hand pump, patch kit, tire irons, spare tube, multi-tool. One set per group.

**Bike routes:** Options (1) RideWithGPS tour routes to upload to your iPhone or Android with voice narration – bring your own bike mount (2) GPX tracks to download to your device – bring your own bike mount

**Meals:** Breakfasts are included at each hotel.

**Cue sheets and cue sheet holders** turn by turn directions plus distance/elevation profiles

**Bike Routes** Options: (1) RideWithGPS tour routes to upload to your iPhone or Android with voice narration – bring your own bike mount (2) GPX tracks to download to your device – bring your own bike mount (3) we provide you a Garmin Oregon 450 GPS device with programmed routes, no narration, plus bike mount.

### **Maps of the region**

**Mobile phone:** one per couple with 10 euros phone card. One phone per group.

**Trip packet:** useful and interesting information about the region, including recommended places to eat

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

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

### **Gratuities, tips and VAT taxes**

### **TOUR EXCLUSIONS**

- International airfare to/from Greece
- Arrivals to or departures from Crete
- All meals except breakfasts
- Private licensed guide at Knossos
- Additional GPS device, 50 euros per device
- Travel insurance

### **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**

**New York:** 244 Fifth Avenue Suite C214, New York, NY 10001-7604, Tel: +1 800-867-1753

**Athens, Greece:** 5 Demertzi, Paleo Faliro Greece 17562, Tel: +30 210-921-8160

**Colleen McGuire, Managing Director** Mob: +30 693-715-0108

[www.CycleGreece.com](http://www.CycleGreece.com) [info@CycleGreece.com](mailto:info@CycleGreece.com)