



CAPTIVATING CRETE

*April 21 – May 1, 2024
and October 3 – 13, 2024*

Tour destinations: Herakleion (Arhanes), Zaros, Rethymno, Hania

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. Average daily mileage is 50 km / day.

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 wine tasting where you visit a vineyard in the heart of Cretan wine country. Cretan cuisine. There is also an olive oil tasting session in a magical olive tree grove.

Consider the Libyan Sea Coast Hiking add-on for a pre-tour hiking in the Samaria Gorge and along the car-free Libyan Sea coast with some villages accessible only by foot or sea.

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

2024 Dates	April 21 – May 1 and October 3 - 13
Duration	10 nights, 11 days
Add-ons	Libyan Sea Coast hike, see Add-on tab
Arrival City	Athens
Arrival transfer	No – see Extras tab
Tour Start Point	Herakleion
Tour End Point	Hania
Minimum Age	18
Minimum Pax	8
Maximum Pax	14
Total Mileage	330 km, 205 miles
Highest Elevation	2345 feet, 715 meters
Rating	Active to Advanced – see Rating System

ITINERARY

Day 1: Athens

Welcome to Athens where everyone spends one night to help get over jet lag before continuing on to Crete. Highlight is the Welcome Dinner .

Day 2: Overnight Ferry to Crete

In the morning we test ride the bikes to your specifications. In the evening transfer to Piraeus port for overnight ferry to Herakleion. Dinner served in the ferry dining room. .

Day 3: Arhanes

The little traditional town of Arhanes is a gastronomical haven for foodies and wine lovers. We'll have a wine tasting session in the evening. The bike ride is mostly rural and stops at the home of Nikos Katzantakis, author of Zorba the Greek. **46 km, 28.50 miles**

Day 4: Arhanes

One of Greece's most famous ancient sites is Knossos, the seat of the peaceful Minoan Empire. A professional archaeology guide will enlighten us of its history. We'll bike to the site and have a **27 km, 17 miles**

Day 5: Zaros

We ascend up to the mountains, climbing as high as 2140 feet. En route we'll stop at the amazing Monumental Olive Tree of Panassos, one of 13 in Crete. If there is time in Zaros we'll take an hour hike in Rouvas Gorge. **52.50 km, 32 miles.**

Day 6: Zaros

Historic points of interest mark today's ride with stops at the Roman ruins of Gortys, said to be Europe's first Parliament. The route descends from 2140 feet to sea level at the Matala caves, made famous by Joni Mitchell's song Cary. And another Minoan palace city at Phaistos. **80 km, 49 miles**

Day 7: Rethymno

Rethymno is Crete's best kept secret. Swim at the city's extensive sea front or explore the Fortezza, the grand Venetian fort that dominates the Old Town. Although the rural route descends from 2148 feet to sea level, it still has a few ascents. **75 km, 46 miles**

Day 8: Rethymno

Cycle a mountain loop up 1500 feet with stops at the scenic dam, precious Arkadi Monastery, the Homer in Crete museum, coffee stop at a ceramics village and lunch at the sea. Highest ascent of the day is at 1647 feet, 502 meters **60 km, 37 miles**

Day 9: Hania

En route to Hani, we'll stop to explore a mysterious Minoan cemetery. Lunch is next to a refreshing river in Vryses, then a really worthwhile detour to ancient Aptera and the Koules Fortress. **87 km, 54 miles**

Day 10: Hania

Morning bike loop up the gorgeous Therisos Gorge, climbing to 2336 feet (712 meters), the highest ascent on the tour. Lunch at a famous botanical park with organic fare. **55.50 km, 34.40 miles**

Day 11: Departure

There are a number of flights from Hania to Athens and your connecting flight home. This is Day 1 for those taking the Libyan Seacoast Hiking add-on. ***COST & INCLUSIONS***

Cost in euros based on double occupancy

10 Nights, 11 Days Tour 3500 euros per person

Single Supplement 700 euros

TOUR INCLUSIONS

10 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.

1 ferry transfer: Overnight ferry, private cabin and bath, Piraeus to Hania

Bikes: Specialized Allez road bike with drop handlebars or Trek FX2 with flat handlebars. Upgrade to a carbon road bike 650 euros for this tour. Upgrade to an electric bike Yucatan 12 with Yamaha motor for 450 euros this tour. Regular pedals or toe clips. 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 who is also a bike mechanic. Vehicle carries spare parts, spare fully pumped wheels, floor pump, ice cooler, water, nutritious snacks, bike tools, first aid kit, day packs, luggage and gives you a lift if you get tired.

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

All Meals:

* Breakfasts are included at each hotel.

* 9 lunches — you choose from the menu.

* 10 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.

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

Cue sheets and cue sheet holders on request

Maps of Crete

Trip packet: useful and interesting information about the regions, packing tips, general travel info for Greece

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

Entrance fees: Knossos and Herakleion Archaeology Museum

Olive Oil Tasting Session: visit a magical olive grove

Wine tasting: takes place in the “foodie” town of Arhanes

CycleGreece jersey: short sleeved, rear pockets, locally made

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

Gratuities & 13% VAT taxes

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- International airfare to/from Greece
- Transfers from Athens Airport to Athens – see Extras tab
- Departure transfer at end of tour from Herakleion to next destination
- Alcoholic beverages (other than house wine and beer)
- 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, Booking Agreement, Waivers

CYCLEGREECE

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