



CAPTIVATING CRETE

May 4-13, 2026

and September 19-28, 2026

Tour destinations: Athens, Hania, Rethymno, Zaros, Herakleion

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

2026 Dates	May 4-13 and September 19-28
Duration	9 nights, depart Day 10
Add-ons	Libyan Sea Coast hike, see Add-on tab
Arrival City	Athens
Arrival transfer	No – see Extras tab
Tour Start Point	Athens to ferry to Hania
Tour End Point	Herakleion
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 2026 Captivating Crete, 9 nights, depart on Day 10

Day 1 Athens – Welcome Dinner

Meet in the lobby of the tour's designated hotel to walk to Welcome Dinner

Day 2 Athens – Overnight Ferry

In the morning we meet at the Acropolis pedestrian walkway to fit and test ride the bikes. Vehicle transfer to Piraeus port for overnight ferry to Crete, departing 21:00, dinner in the ship's restaurant.

Day 3 Hania

From Hania's Souda Bay port you bike a grand loop on the Akrotiri Peninsula with a pit stop at the impressive Agia Triada monastery. Further up the road is a stone and dirt path that descends to Catholikon, the retreat of St. John the Hermit over 700 years ago. The hike takes about 30 minutes. Lunch is on the beach where scenes from Zorba the Greek were filmed. **54.40 km, 33 miles**

Day 4 Hania

Morning bike loop up the gorgeous Therisos Gorge, climbing to 2336 feet (712 meters), the highest ascent on the tour. Lunch and wine tasting at a family run winery. **55.50 km, 34.40 miles**

Day 5 Rethymno

Cycle Hania to Rethymno **78 km, 48.50 miles**. 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.

Day 6 Rethymno

Cycle a mountain loop up 1500 feet, 457 meters with stops at the scenic dam, precious Arkadi Monastery and a very traditional taverna for lunch. Highest ascent of the day is at 1647 feet, 502 meters **60 km, 37 miles**

Day 7 Zaros

Today's cycling is a long climb up a serene rural road. Very little traffic. If there's time at the end we can take an hour hike in Rouvas Gorge. **77.20 km, 48 miles**

Day 8 Zaros

Historic points of interest mark today's ride with stops at the Roman ruins of Gortys, Matala caves and the Minoan palace city of Phaistos. **78.50 km, 48 miles**

Day 9 Herakleion

Last day of cycling includes a stop at the Monumental Olive Tree of Panassos, one of 13 in Crete. Lunch in the traditional town of Arhanes, and climax the day with a tour of the great Minoan palace city of Knossos. **51 km, 31.60 miles** Farewell dinner.

Day 10 Depart

Self-transfer to Herakleion airport for flights to Athens.

Self-transfer to Herakleion port for morning boat to Santorini and Cyclades islands.

Self-transfer to west to Omalos for add-on Libyan Sea Coast hiking tour

COST & INCLUSIONS -- Cost in euros based on double occupancy

10 Days Tour 3450 euros per person

Single Supplement 800 euros

8 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 overnight ferry transfer: Overnight ferry, private cabin and bath double occupancy, 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, cell phone mount

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: Tour Leader handles tour logistics and cycles with the group.

All Meals:

* Breakfasts are included at each hotel.

* 7 lunches — you choose from the menu.

* 9 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: includes tour of winery

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)
- 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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