CAPTIVATING CRETE

May 7-16, 2027

and October 3-12, 2027

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

DESCRIPTION

A highlight of the Captivating Crete tour is Knossos where you 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. Discover the mysterious Armeni cemetery where the graves look like Mycenae tombs.

The most endearing part of the tour is your immersion into the local culture. Experience olive oil tasting at a unique family owned olive grove. Hike to an historical monastery in a cave. Swim at famed beaches. Taste raki, Crete's national spirit akin to Italy's grappa, and it is rude to turn down the first and second offerings. Especially indulge in Crete's local food and you will see why Crete is a leader in the healthy Mediterranean diet movement.

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. Yet, as we say, Greece is flat on an e-bike so no elevation on this tour is intimidating.

Be sure to 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 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

Dates	May 7-16 and October 3-12
Duration	9 nights, depart Day 10
Add-ons	Libyan Sea Coast hike, see Add-on tab
Arrival City	Athens
Arrival transfer	yes, see Extras tab
Tour Start	Athens to overnight ferry to Hania

Point	
Tour End Point	Herakleion
Minimum Age	18
Minimum Pax	8
Maximum Pax	14
Total Mileage	2345 feet, 715 meters
Highest Elevation	608 m 1994 feet (or 496 meters, 1627 feet with transfer)
Rating	Active to Advanced See **Rating System**

ITINERARY 2027 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 cave 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. **52.60 km, 32.60 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 at the acclaimed Botanical Park with organic fare. 6**0 km, 37 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 up into the mountains with stops at the precious Arkadi Monastery, the Homer in Crete museum and lunch at the sea. Highest ascent of the day is at 1735 feet, 525 meters **50.50 km, 31.30 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**.** **78 km, 48 miles**

Day 8 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 Matala caves featured in Joni Mitchell's song Carey, 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 special olive trees in Crete. Lunch in the traditional town of Arhanes, and climax the day with a private tour of the great Minoan palace city of Knossos. Farewell dinner in Herakleion. **62.70 km, 39 miles**

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.

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 350 euros for this tour. Upgrade to an electric bike Yucatan 12 with Yamaha motor for 350 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

Color copies of Distance Elevation Profiles

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

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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