

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

Self-Guided Walking in South-West Crete

8 days

Greece - Trip code **WSCR**



Self-Guided Walking in South-West Crete

Explore south-west Crete on this self-guided walking holiday that takes in an impressive coastline, the beautiful White Mountains and the famous Samaria Gorge. Hike at your own pace and enjoy the changing scenery of natural beaches, fir forests, mountains and gorges. En route walk into the quiet car-free village of Loutro and enjoy meals at seaside and hillside tavernas as you hike down time-worn trails.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Coastal trails** - Walk along Crete's impressive southern coastline
- ★ **Omalos** - Beautifully situated village, surrounded by the White Mountains
- ★ **Samaria Gorge** - Hike along Europe's longest gorge
- ★ **Loutro** - Relax in this car-free village by the sea
- ★ **Natural beaches** - Enjoy the idyllic, unspoilt beaches of southern Crete

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Arrive to Paleochora

Accessible from both of Crete's airports by public transport or taxi, your first two nights' accommodation is in the small seaside town of Paleochora, on Crete's south-west coast. After checking in to your friendly hotel you may have time to take a stroll around this pleasant town, exploring its Venetian fortress and beaches. Details of how to reach the start point of your holiday can be found on our website in the tour specific dates and prices section by clicking on 'Joining Info' and then the 'Show More' button.



Accommodation: Aris Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walk along the coast from Elafonissos to Paleochora

After enjoying a relaxing ferry journey from Paleochora to the enchanting Elafonissi Lagoon, your walk back towards Paleochora takes you along the coast. En route, you will pass beautiful, remote sandy beaches - ideal spots from which to enjoy a refreshing dip. The walk ends at Kryos Beach, where a taxi will pick you up for the transfer back to your hotel. (The ferry runs several times a week from mid-May to mid-October. If it is not running an alternative walk is offered. We provide a taxi to take you to Azogiros village from where you walk back to Paleochora). You can expect both of today's 10 kilometre walks to take approximately three to four hours.



Accommodation: Aris Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Walk to Sougia via the ancient port of Lissos

Today's walk starts from your hotel, following a dirt track into an undisturbed natural wilderness, before continuing along a stunning coastal path overlooking the sea. You will pass ancient Lissos - an important harbour for the Dorian city of Elyros, which boasted a population of 30,000 at its peak. In ancient times, people came to Lissos to be cured by the local waters. You can enjoy a picnic lunch on this historic spot and swim in the curative waters before continuing your journey east. The final part of the trek

takes you along a spectacular and narrow gorge to the small and laidback seaside resort of Sougia. Here, your night's accommodation is positioned just 200 metres from the beach. You can expect today's 15 kilometre walk to take approximately five hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Santa Irene (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Trek through spectacular gorges to the Omalos Plateau

Today, you traverse two impressive gorges, from sea level up to 1000 metres. The first part of your walk takes you through the impressive Irini Gorge along a well-made path. The ascent is demanding but not too steep. You then head into the steeper Figou Gorge, from which stunning views can be enjoyed in the higher sections. The walk ends at a chapel, 'Agios Theodoros', where the hotel minibus will pick you up. Tonight's accommodation is on the Omalos Plateau, surrounded by the spectacular summits of the White Mountains. Depending on the route you take today's walk will be between 12 and 21 kilometres, and take approximately six to eight hours.



Accommodation: Neos Omalos Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Trek through the famous Samaria Gorge

Today's walk takes you through Europe's longest and most famous gorge - the Samaria Gorge. You can either start very early or later in the day, avoiding the crowds of people who walk the gorge as a day trip. During quieter hours, you'll enjoy the true beauty of this spectacular gorge all the more. You will be transferred to Xyloskala, the entrance of the gorge, and the start of your walk. Please note that the Samaria Gorge is usually closed until the end of April - Opening depends on the amount of rain the area is receiving. At any time of year if there is heavy rain the Gorge can also be closed. In this event arrangements will be made for you to travel to Sougia and take the ferry from Sougia to Agia Roumeli. From there, there is a optional walk to the 'Kastro' (approximately 10km). Tonight's accommodation in the seaside village of Agia Roumeli is positioned at the very end of the gorge, which leaves you as much time as you need for the walk. No organised trips to the gorge include an overnight stay here, so it remains peaceful in the evenings. Your modern style accommodation is just 200 metres from the beach. Upon arrival, you may choose to have a relaxing swim in the crystal-clear Libyan Sea, before enjoying dinner at one of the local taverns. You can expect today's 16 kilometre walk to take approximately five to six hours.



Accommodation: Pachnes Taverna (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Walk to beautiful, car-free Loutro via Marmara

Today's splendid coastal walk offers lots of variety. After walking along the beach to the Byzantine church of Agios Pavlos, you then take a higher elevation through fir forest, before continuing on to the beach at Marmara. You may choose to relax at the tavern here, enjoying the views of the mountains and the sea, before your final hour's walk along the coast to the car-free village of Loutro. Widely regarded as one of the most romantic villages on Crete, it is only accessible by boat and on foot and will be your base for the last two nights of your holiday. Your pension accommodation here overlooks the surrounding white-washed houses, mountains and sea. You can expect today's 15 kilometre walk to take approximately five to six hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Kyma (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Enjoy a circular trek through the Aradhena Gorge

Today's circular route starts with a steep zig-zag path up to the village of Anopolis. From here, you walk further on to ancient Aradhena, situated at the edge of the impressive Aradhena Gorge. You then follow a spectacular path down into the Aradhena Gorge and all the way to the coast. The last leg of your walk takes you along the coast back to Loutro. As an alternative, it is possible to do a shorter version of this walk, via the tiny village of Livaniana, before descending into the Aradhena Gorge. If you are leaving Crete tomorrow depending on your flight departure time, you may need to travel back to Chora Sfakion by ferry today, for your return to Chania or Heraklion Airport. You can expect today's 16 or 9 kilometre walk to take approximately seven or four hours, respectively.



Accommodation: Hotel Kyma (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Loutro

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end. After returning to Chora Sfakion by ferry, you have the choice between returning to Chania or Heraklion Airport by pre-booked transfer or public transport.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCE



Optional Walks

Walking grade

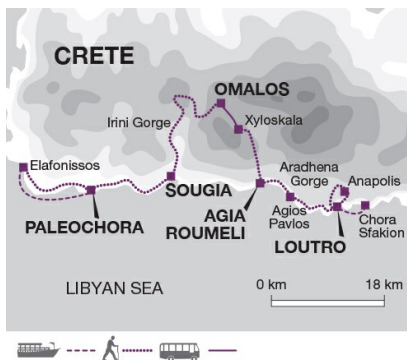
Moderate

Trek details

On this journey you walk for 5 to 7 hours on 6 days, mainly on unsurfaced tracks, footpaths and mountain trails. The distance covered is a minimum of 92 kms (an average of 15 km per day).

Max walking altitude (m)

1222



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Taxi



Accommodation

1 nights simple guesthouse
4 nights standard hotel
2 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Climate

Greece has predominantly hot, dry summers, May - October with temperatures reaching into the mid thirties in July and August. May and October themselves can be less predictable and may have some rain and cooler evenings. Wild flowers bloom in April and May adding much colour to the trails. At the beginning and end of the season the villages tend to be very quiet. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up to date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Orthodox

Language

Greek

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Light clothes suitable for walking in warm weather are recommended. However early and late in the season (May/June/September/October) also bring warm clothing in case of drops in temperature or the odd shower. In high places like Omalos nights can be cold, so a fleece jacket is a good thing to have at any time of year.

Footwear

Well worn, sturdy walking boots with good ankle support are essential for the walks. Sandals and trainers are recommended for relaxing in the evenings.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage during transfers by public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. Luggage transfers may be done using ferries rather than vehicles, but again the hoteliers will manage this. (If the ferry between Sougia and Agia Roumeli is not running but the Samaria Gorge is open then it may be necessary to carry one nights essentials with you). When travelling on public transport or on a ferry you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between hotels.

Equipment

Bring a personal water bottle (at least 2l capacity) and sun protection for use during the walks. You may find a trekking pole useful over the downhill sections. You may also wish to take a swimming costume and towel. Please note: 2 x 1:25,000 maps are provided on arrival in your welcome pack. These cover Samaria-Sougia-Paleochora and Lefka Ori-Sfakia / Pachnes.

Tipping

Local fees

Entrance fee for the Samaria Gorge 5€. Entrance fee for Irini Gorge 2€. The ferry from Loutro to Chora Skafion at the end of your trip is not included. This takes 20 minutes and is currently 5€. For further information please see www.anendyk.gr. Private taxi boats may also be available.

Country Information

Greece Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price
£12.00 - 16.00

Beer price
£3.5

Water price
£0.9

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange
GBP Sterling or US Dollars, cash.

Where To Exchange
We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports

ATM Availability
Cash can be drawn from ATMs from all types of cards in most areas in Greece, including the islands.

Credit Card Acceptance
In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques
Banking hours may make exchanging Travellers Cheques more difficult.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Taxi

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click here

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Greece: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the

relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

1222

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but we recommend protection against tetanus and polio. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

