

EXPLORE!

Walking in Crete

8 days

Greece - Trip code CR



Walking in Crete

Explore the coastal and mountain terrain of Crete on this walking holiday, discovering isolated beaches, secluded coves and impressive canyons. Walk in the White Mountains, hike through the Samaria and Zaros gorges and experience rural Cretan hospitality and the beauty that this wonderful island has to offer.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Omalos Plateau** - Beautiful walks in the White Mountains.
- ★ **Samaria Gorge** - Hike through Europe's longest gorge.
- ★ **Ayia Roumeli** - Scenic ferry journey along the coast.
- ★ **Loutro** - Traffic free traditional coastal village.
- ★ **Preveli** - Cliff-top monastery.
- ★ **Zaros** - Beautiful gorge walk in the Idi Mountains.

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.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip Chania

Arrive Chania and check-in at our hotel. Chania is a beautiful old Venetian walled town, with a bustling harbour and lively tavernas - A great place to start your introduction to Crete.



Accommodation: Arkadi Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walking tour of Chania; drive to Omalos Plateau

This morning we will take a walking tour around Chania. We will walk around the harbour and through the winding back streets, home to the traditional cobblers who make the very traditional Cretan leather boots. This afternoon we take a bus up the winding roads to the Omalos Plateau (1082m). This wild plateau is situated in the middle of the massive White Mountains, poised on the edge of a titanic split in the rock and the gateway to the longest and perhaps most beautiful ravine in Europe, the Samaria Gorge. The isolation of the plateau made it an historic refuge for Cretan revolutionaries against the Turks. Today's 2km walk is expected to take around 1.5hrs, no ascent or descent.



Accommodation: Neos Omalos Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Optional walks in the White Mountains

We spend the day exploring the peaks and plateau of the White Mountains on foot, with walks available to suit all abilities. A challenging optional walk is to the summit of the mighty Mount Gingilos (2080m, about 7-8 hours walking) for spectacular views of the north and south coasts. Alternatively, ascend to the refuge at Kallergi mountain. You can enjoy lunch at the refuge and take in the wonderful views. Today's 8.5km walk is expected to take around 6hrs with an ascent and descent of 940m



Accommodation: Neos Omalos Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Hike Samaria Gorge; ferry to Loutro

Today we walk through this spectacular gorge. To make the complete 15km descent to the fishing village of Ayia Roumeli may take anywhere from 6 to 8 hours. We follow a steep zig-zag path, some 760m down into the gorge itself, past high cypress trees and many different alpine shrubs - and if we're very lucky, we may catch a glimpse of the wild Cretan Ibex (Kri Kri) leaping from ledge to ledge. In midsummer, the river dries to a trickle, but there are still stretches of water to be crossed with handy stepping stones. After walking for roughly 3 hours from the entrance at Xiliskalo, we stop at the now uninhabited village of Samaria, where the Venetian Church of Holy Mary with its old Byzantine mosaics and inscription over the front door can be seen. Now the gorge really starts to close in around us, and the river often disappears underground. After passing below the Church of Apendis Christos, we hike through the narrowest part, the sidheroportes (the 'iron gates', only 4 metres wide, but over 350m high), and continue along the rocky riverbed into the small village of Ayia Roumeli. Depending on the departure time of our ferry to Loutro, there may be time for a refreshing swim in the Libyan Sea. Today's 15km walk is expected to take around 6.5hrs with 1250m descent



Accommodation: Madares Pension (or similar)



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Exploring Loutro

This quaint seashore village, perched on craggy rocks and nestled in a cove, affords an opportunity to experience life in a less accessible part of the island. Most houses are the very traditional white with blue shutters providing a harmony of architecture. We'll spend the day here, perhaps taking a walk along the coast or inland, swimming or simply relaxing. An optional boat trip by water taxi can often be arranged to Marmara or Finix beach. Alternatively, you may prefer something more active such as a full day or half day walk behind the village, up to the historic village of Anopolis or perhaps down the Aradena Gorge enjoying spectacular views of the coast en route. In the evening you may care to try the delicious fresh seafood caught by local fishermen.



Accommodation: Madares Pension (or similar)



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Morning relaxing; ferry to Chora Sfakion; drive to Zaros

Today we get the ferry along the coast to Chora Sfakion. A pleasant coastal village with a few hundred inhabitants and an old reputation as a lair of brigands, smugglers and pirates. The Sfakians cherish their independence and see themselves as Sfakians first, Cretans second and Greeks third! As a rallying point for revolutionaries, there are many sea caves in the area which were used as great hiding places during disputes. We then journey by bus to Zaros in the rugged Idi Mountains. We'll pause en route at Preveli cliff-top monastery. Perched high above the sea, its fame was capped in World War Two when the monks sheltered allied troops who were stranded on the island after the Battle of Crete and helped them to escape from the beaches nearby. The views from here are magnificent. We also break the journey for a short while in the pretty Greek village of Spili. We plan to arrive in the village of Zaros in the early evening.



Accommodation: Hotel Idi (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Hiking Zaros Gorge

Deep in the heart of Crete are the Idi Mountains. This region is very scenic and is particularly noted for its spring waters, which are bottled and sold throughout the island. Our primary reason for visiting Zaros is to walk in the surrounding mountains, and we set off after breakfast to explore the dramatic Rouvas Gorge. Local vehicles take us to a steep rough track from where we'll descend the dramatic 5km long gorge on foot enjoying spectacular views of the Psiloritis range as we go. The afternoon is left free for you to explore the surrounding area. Located in a peaceful setting overlooking the Koutsoulidi valley, this is an ideal spot to relax. Today's 5.5km walk is expected to take around 4.5hrs with a 540m descent.



Accommodation: Hotel Idi (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive to Heraklion airport where trip ends

We leave Zaros today to drive to Heraklion airport where trip ends.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES



Optional Walks

Walking grade

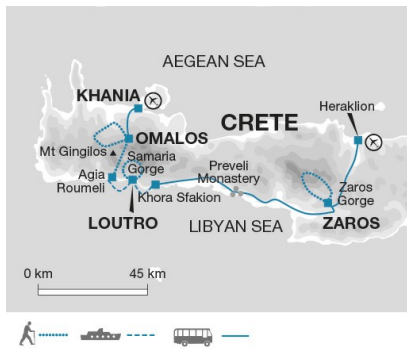
Moderate

Trek details

We walk for 4 days for between 4 and 7 hours each day (including one optional day). We generally trek on quite rocky trails with some occasional short, steep ascents.

Max walking altitude (m)

1400



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus
Ferry
Taxi



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)



Accommodation

2 nights
3 nights standard hotel
2 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

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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

Optional activities

Loutro - Water taxi to nearby beaches €4. Sea Kayaking - €5. Cooking Lesson - €12.

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

Please bring sandals and trainers for relaxing in the evenings.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself. A daysac for use during day walks is essential (your main luggage will be transported by support vehicle whilst on the walks). Therefore, please use a soft bag for ease of packing.

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.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

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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

Bus, Ferry, 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.

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)

1400

Non refundable permits

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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.
