

# EXPLORE!



## Why book this trip?

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This island walking holiday on Crete provides the best that the region has to offer. Discover isolated beaches, secluded coves and impressive canyons walking in the White Mountains and through the Samaria and Zaros Gorges.

- **Samaria Gorge** - A rewarding hike through Europe's longest gorge
- **Cretan hospitality** - Welcoming villages and delicious fresh seafood
- **Loutro** - Boat trip along the coast to stay in this traffic free traditional village



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 7



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader  
Boat Crew  
Driver(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Ferry  
Taxi



**ACCOMMODATION**  
2 nights  
4 nights standard  
hotel  
1 nights simple  
hotel



**WALKING GRADE:**  
Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## 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)

**Grade: 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 two kilometre walk is expected to take around one-and-a-half hours along a flat route.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Neos Omalos Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 3 - Hike Samaria Gorge to Agia Roumeli**

Today we walk through this spectacular gorge. To make the complete 15km descent to the fishing village of Agia 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 Agia Roumeli.

Today's 15 kilometre walk is expected to take around six-and-a-half hours with 1,250 metres of descent



ACCOMMODATION:  
Paralia Rooms (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 4 - Coastal walk to Loutro

Today we take a beautiful walk along the coast, following the well marked cliff path we walk through pine woods, passing by secluded beaches. At Ayios Pavlos we will see an old chapel situated on a ledge above the water, built on the spot that Saint Paul is said to have first arrived at in Crete. Inside the somewhat crumbling facade are frescos dating to the thirteenth century.

For those who would prefer not to walk today there is the option to have a relaxing morning in Roumeli and then take the ferry to Loutro (not included).

Today's 15 kilometre walk is expected to take around five-and-a-half hours with 275 metres of ascent and descent.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Madares Pension (or similar)

Grade:



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## 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.

Today's optional 12 kilometre walk is expected to take around five hours.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Madares Pension (or similar)

Grade:





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **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)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **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 five-and-a-half kilometre walk is expected to take around four-and-a-half hours with 540 metres

of descent.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Idi (or similar)

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Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 8 - Drive to Heraklion airport where trip ends

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



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

#### Greece

##### 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	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Orthodox	Greek

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Loutro - Water taxi to nearby beaches €4

Ferry from Agia Roumeli to Loutro - €7.5

Cooking Lesson - €12

### Clothing

Bring light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. It can become cool, especially at night, so bring warmer layers. Tops made from wicking materials which keep you drier, a warmer fleece is recommended as a mid layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans.

- Breathable wind and waterproof jacket
- T-shirts
- Long sleeved tops
- Sunhat
- Long trousers
- Shorts (if you prefer to walk in them)
- Swimwear and towel
- Midlayer Fleece/pullover
- Socks (liner and thicker pair)
- Insulated jacket

### Footwear

We recommend you bring lightweight walking boots with ankle support, make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of luggage and a 20-30 litre day sack is recommended. You will need to carry what you need for the day which may include a raincoat, jumper, camera, sun-cream, water and picnic lunch. On hot days you will carry fewer clothes but more drinking water. You will be carrying only your day bag

during the walks and main luggage shall be transported from hotel to hotel by car.

## Equipment

- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Small Torch (with spare batteries and bulb)
- Camera
- Walking poles (if you usually use them)
- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit - On each walk a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials.
- Insect repellent
- Small waterproof dry bag (for items such as your mobile phone)
- Reusable water bottle (minimum 1 litre) - Get 15% discount on a Water-to-Go bottle [www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore](http://www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore)
- Lunch bag/Tupperware (for packed lunches)

## 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.

## Greece

### 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	Beer price	Water price
£12.00 - 16.00	£3.5	£0.9

### Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Euro	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.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus, Ferry, Taxi

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## **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.

### **Price Guarantee**

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 and Passport 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](http://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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## 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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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

## **Ability to swim**

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

## **Greece**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory but we recommend protection against tetanus and polio. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## **Walking and Trekking information**

# DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2	2km	1.5hrs
Day 3	15km	6.5hrs
Day 4	15km	5-6hrs
Day 5	12km	5hrs
Day 6		
Day 7	5.5km	4.5hrs

 Optional Walks

### Walking grade

Moderate

### Trek details

Walks on 4 days for between 1.5 and 6.5 hours each day. Trails are quite rocky with some occasional short, steep ascents.

### Max walking altitude (m)

1400

 <p><b>AWARD WINNING EXPLORE LEADERS</b></p>	 <p><b>PRICE GUARANTEE PROMISE</b></p>	 <p><b>AIRPORT TRANSFERS</b></p>
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