

Kriti Coastline

with local Cretan guide



Crete, or "Kriti" in Greek, is the most southern land in Europe. On a clear day from nearby Gavdos island (Homer called it Calypso) you can see North Africa! On this trip you hike Crete's southwestern coastal footpaths on an E4 path (Europe's trail network) that hugs the Libyan Sea. Several of the coastal villages are inaccessible to cars and only reached by foot or boat.

Gorges are a major geographical feature of western Crete and three are included on this itinerary. You have an opportunity to hike to an ancient Asclepio ruin, known as Lissos, a healing site with a natural spring. There are 15th to 17th century fortresses from the days of the Venetian occupation that you can explore.

Trip Highlights

- Hugging the car-free Libyan Sea coast, Europe's most southern hiking path
- Exploring Lissos, an ancient Asclepio healing site
- Overnight in coastal villages accessible only by foot or boat
- Descending the beautiful Samaria Gorge
- Wandering the Venetian fortress, Frankocastello, said to be haunted

Trip Duration

8 days

Start & End Points

Start: Hania

End: Askifou Plateau

(50 km from Hania)

The best part of Crete is the warm hospitality of the Cretan people. They will insist on sharing a carafe of raki with you – even if it is only ten in the morning! Cretan food is a specialty in Greek cuisine with certain dishes (like dakos) imitated by other Greeks but only made perfect in Crete. Cretan folk music is also a precious genre that is admired throughout Greece. special only to Cretan folks.

Itinerary

Day 1: Omalos

From Hania's pretty harbor, you transfer to Laki, a mountain village with an old path that goes to Omalos Plateau. Only a few generations ago this trail was well-trod, but now with a north-south highway to Omalos, hikers have the route all to themselves. 4 hour walk.

Day 2: Sougia

Hike the famous Samaria Gorge, considered to be Europe's longest gorge. Eleven miles, all downhill, starting out on a steep staircase. Samaria's is Greece's most beloved national park with wild kri-kris, narrow slot passages and rivers. 8 hours

Rating

Moderate: full day hikes, 4 to 6 hours, some steep trails, Samaria Gorge is about 8 hours walking downhill

Day 3: Sougia

Hike to Lissos, an ancient Asclepio healing site that is in pristine nature, no residents nearby. There were some 200 "Cults of Asclepio" in ancient Greece, but only two existed in Crete. A Roman necropolis with scores of tombs from about 50AD can also be found at Lissos. 3 hours walk

Day 4: Loutro

Boat transfer from Sougia to Agia Roumeli from where you head eastward for Loutro. Stop at Agio Pavlos church where St. Paul is said to have washed ashore in a shipwreck and followers erected this lovely church on the beach to his memory. Swim there, jumping from the huge boulder. 5 hours walk

Day 5: Loutro

Hike the Aradena Gorge up to the abandoned Aradena village. If you're brave enough, try bungee jumping from the Aradena Bridge. You are deep in Sfakia territory, the most rebellious in Crete. The Sfakians fought the Turks bitterly and held out for years against the occupation. 5.5 hours walk

Day 6: Askifou

Following the magnificent coastal road dig a hole in the beach at Sweetwater and drinking water emerges. From Hora Sfakia, vehicle transfer to Askifou Plateau with a detour side trip to Frankocastello Castle, whose ghosts of Cretan souls are said to speak on May 18, 1828. Afternoon hike down the easy, 8 kilometer Imbros Gorge. 2.5 hour morning walk

Day 7: Askifou

Vehicle transfer to Plakias for fabulous river walking. Hike around boulders and past palm trees to reach an inviting beach for a full day of swimming at Preveli Beach. 3 hour river walking

Day 8: Departure

Daily flights from Hania to Athens International Airport.

Trip Price

Cost per person in euros

2-4 persons — 1760 euros
5-8 persons — 1675 euros
9-12 persons — 1640 euros

Note: tour prices are based on the euro which is the official currency of Greece. Exchange rates found at www.xe.com

Inclusions

- ◆ Transfer to Omalos from Hania on Day 1; transfer to Hania airport on Day 8
- ◆ Bilingual local guide
- ◆ Best accommodations in region
- ◆ All meals
- ◆ Entry fee to Samaria Gorge
- ◆ Map of Western Crete
- ◆ Trip packet with info about Greece, the region you will visit, interesting articles, phone numbers and other useful information

Exclusions

- ◆ International airfare and domestic air fare (to/from Crete)
- ◆ Travel insurance
- ◆ Walking sticks

