

Crete Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: European Centre Based

Destinations: Greece, Greek Islands & Mediterranean

Trip code: CRLCL

2 & 3



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Crete is the largest island in Greece; the west of the island is the perfect location for a walking holiday with a classic Mediterranean feel. The island has an immensely varied landscape from sun-kissed beaches and dramatic gorges to rolling olive-tree covered hills and the snow-capped White Mountains. Walks on the island include following winding trails through olive groves and along the stunning coast to look out at the azure blue sea. There's the option to feel truly dwarfed by the enormity of the impressive Samaria Gorge or to enjoy an easier option in the Imbros Gorge. One of the delights of walking in Greece is stopping at a shady taverna or two for refreshments; settle down for a glass or two of home-made lemonade and perhaps a platter of freshly made meze.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A full programme of guided walks with 2 options every walking day
- All transport to and from the walks
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' leaders
- "With flight" holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- 7 nights accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half board - continental breakfast and evening meal

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Complete the dramatic Samaria Gorge walk, 16km long and full of spectacular scenery in the middle of Samaria National Park
- Beautiful foothills, stunning coastline and Minoan heritage will captivate walkers
- Enjoy our luxurious former olive press hotel nestled in a peaceful hamlet near Kolimbari
- Join in with Cretan Dancers during an evening demonstration
- Visit the Venetian city of Chania on your free day

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 2 and level 3 graded Activity, Easier walks: 5 to 7 miles (8 to 11km) sometimes on rugged paths. Up to 1,300 feet (390m) of ascent and 2,000 feet (600m) of descent in a day. Harder walks: 7 to 11 miles (11 to 17½km) over undulating limestone hills and rugged gorges. Up to 2,100 feet (630m) of ascent and 4,000 feet (1,200m) of descent in a day.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel Spilia Village. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: Rodopos Peninsula

Today both groups will visit Rodopos village with its narrow streets, stone houses and beautiful churches.

Option 1 - Rodopos

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Total ascent: 300 feet (90m)

In summary: A short journey to a splendid viewpoint and then our walk starts via olive groves to Rodopos village. Quiet tracks take us back to Kolimbari and a chance to visit the monastery or beach before a taxi ride back to the hotel.

Highlight: The Gonias Monastery and museum, one of the best preserved monasteries on Crete.

Option 2 - Rodopos Peninsula

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 1,400 feet (420m)

In summary: A short journey to the lovely village of Rodopos where we will make our way along old goat paths and quiet dirt tracks through this rocky spine of Rodopos Peninsula to our hotel.

Highlight: Mountain goat spotting, spy them scrambling over the rough, rocky terrain.

Day 3: Sirikari And Polyrinia

Our coach follows the coast road west from Kolimbari towards Kissamos and then drives inland to the rural interior of the island.

Option 1 - Sirikari Gorge And Polyrinia

Distance: 4 miles (6½km)

Total ascent: 300 feet (90m)

Total descent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: Our walk descends steeply into the deep gorge of Sirikari. At the bottom we pass abandoned dwellings on a rocky path that goes beneath high cliffs, home to eagles and vultures. At the end of the gorge we ascend to the ancient village of Polyrinia where there is time to explore before meeting our coach.

Highlight: Sitting amongst the flowers on the terrace of the unique little teashop in Polyrinia and eating a freshly-baked cake – yum!

Option 2 - Sirikari Gorge, Polyrinia, And Kissamou

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

Total descent: 2,000 feet (600m)

In summary: We follow the route of the easier group as far as Polyrinia. From here we continue along a wide open ridge with great views to reach the coast at the town of Kissamos.

Highlight: Stunning views of the turquoise Gulf of Kissamos and beyond to the Aegean Sea. When you reach it, take the chance to dip in a toe, or more, with a swim.

Day 4: South Coast Gorges

Today we offer a choice of the famous Samaria Gorge or the very attractive but shorter Imbros Gorge.

Option 1 - The Imbros Gorge

Distance: 4½ miles (7km)

Total ascent: no ascent

Total descent: 2,000 feet (600m)

In summary: We drive to the little village of Imbros, high in the White Mountains. From here we head down the lovely, narrow Imbros Gorge which is usually very peaceful. Leaving the gorge we are met by our coach to make the short journey into the quaint little town of Chorio Sfakion, the capital of the region. As well as cafés and restaurants there is a pretty town beach and an opportunity to take the ferry to the remarkable resort of Loutro.

Highlight: Relax with a boat ride to the delightful resort of Loutro, a pretty blue and white village only accessible by boat.

Option 2 - The Samaria Gorge

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Total ascent: 100 feet (30m)

Total descent: 4,000 feet (1,200m)

In summary: An early start takes us to the top of the Samaria Gorge, high up in the White Mountains with dramatic scenery. This stunning gorge is 10 miles long and descends from the Omalos Plateau to the sea at Aghia Roumeli. We follow a good but rough trail with rest stations, water and basic toilet facilities. We should arrive at the bottom with time to enjoy a drink or a swim in the Libyan Sea before taking the afternoon ferry to Chorio Sfakion.

In April and late October or at times of poor weather the Samaria gorge is closed. In this situation alternative walks will be substituted.

Highlight: The most famous part of the gorge is the stretch known as 'the Gates', where the sides close in to a narrow passage and soar up to a height of 980ft (300m).

Day 5: Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. The more popular options for your free day include:

Chania: Many guests take the opportunity to visit the delightful Venetian city of Chania. The old town is a maze of narrow streets lined with shops, bars and restaurants. The centrepiece of the city is the main harbour, from where there are regular boat trips available. The cafés that line the harbour side are attractive places to have lunch and watch the world go by. Other interesting sights include the Venetian defences and the indoor market – a hive of bustle and activity with lots of local produce.

Spilia Village: For a relaxing day you may prefer to spend time around the hotel and pool or perhaps a stroll in the olive groves or to ancient local churches.

Day 6: Milia & Topolia

Both walks visit the mountain village of Milia. This ancient village was abandoned in 1948 and then rebuilt using the traditional materials of timber and stone in the 1990s. As much of the original village as possible was preserved or recreated and the nearby gorge was reforested. It is now used as a mountain retreat and enjoys wonderful views of the surrounding forested slopes.

Option 1 - Milia & Topolia

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: We ascend steadily to Milia accompanied by great views. Here we may have the opportunity to enjoy lunch in a taverna before taking quiet tracks and lanes to Topolia.

Highlight: Stop at the taverna in Milia for refreshing home-made lemonade, or perhaps lunch, and soak up the magnificent view.

Option 2 - High Country Around Milia

Distance: 9 miles (14½km)

Total ascent: 2,200 feet (660m)

In summary: We too start the day with a steady ascent to Milia. After a short refreshment we will continue to ascend through beautiful wild country to a wonderful plateau for lunch before making our way on good paths and quiet roads to Topolia to join the easier group.

Highlight: Enjoy the feeling of serenity as you explore this wild and beautiful area of Crete.

Day 7: Snowy Mountain Villages

Enjoy dramatic mountain views and a traditional taverna lunch.

Option 1 - Snowy Mountain Villages

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

Total descent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: From the historic village of Theriso we walk up to Zourva using a valley path or a quiet road with dramatic views of mountain villages in the distance. There will be an opportunity for a typical Greek meze-style lunch in Amelia's tavern before turning down into a wooded valley and walking through orange trees into Meskla and a shady taverna.

Highlight: Visit historic Theriso.

Option 2 - White Mountain Approaches

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 800 feet (240m)

Total descent: 1,500 feet (450m)

In summary: From Theriso we follow shepherd's tracks further up into the White Mountains. We will need to take care on a short rocky descent that takes us around the head of the valley before walking briskly to Zourva where we join the easier group for lunch and the walk down to Meskla.

Highlight: Both walks can linger over a typical Greek meze-style lunch with a view in the acclaimed Amelia's tavern – a great way to celebrate the holiday.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

ACCOMMODATION

Spilia Village - Crete

Spilia Village is a luxury 4-star hotel situated in a peaceful location, nestled into the landscape surrounded by citrus orchards and olive groves and just 3km inland from the village of Kolimbari. This family-owned hotel has been lovingly restored in a traditional way using local stone and wood. The main building of the hotel was formerly a factory and then an olive oil processing plant. Today the original millstones of the plant are on display in reception. There is an outdoor pool and indoor pool, steam bath, sauna and gym and free Wi-Fi throughout.

Accommodation Info

Rooms

Spilia Village has 30 comfortable en-suite rooms. All have free Wi-Fi, air conditioning, direct dial phones, two channel radio, satellite TV, mini bar, safe deposit box, laundry service, and hairdryer.

In common with most European hotels, tea and coffee making facilities are not available in the bedrooms; however hot drinks can be purchased from the bar/café. Twin rooms comprise one double bed and a day bed/sofa bed.

Facilities

Spilia Village has two swimming pools: an indoor and an outdoor pool in a garden setting.

There is a pool bar, open during the daytime.

The hotel has its own gym, sauna and hammam.

Internet access and Wi-Fi are free of charge.

Food & Drink

Our holidays at Spilia Village are on a Half Board basis and include breakfast and evening meal.

Breakfast

A self-service buffet is available each morning including a wide range of options.

Lunch (Payable Locally)

Ingredients for your picnic lunch can be bought from the local shops. On some walks it will be possible to eat in a local tavern; your leaders will advise. The hotel can also provide a packed lunch which can be added to your bill.

Evening Meal

Dinner is served in the traditional Taverna "Halara" (a structure dating from the Venetian period). The Taverna serves local style cuisine with ingredients sourced from local farms and villages. Jugs of tap water, tea and coffee are served with the evening meal.

Drinks

The hotel has a well-stocked bar serving beer, wine and spirits.

Your Evenings

The friendly atmosphere of our Guided Walking holidays continues into the evening.

We'll enjoy a leisurely meal and then you may also like to join your leader for an evening stroll, listen to local musicians, relax with a book in a quiet lounge or linger after dinner with a drink purchased from Reception.

One evening there is an opportunity to learn about local olive oil and honey and its products.

TRAVEL DETAILS

THE HASSLE-FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' from Gatwick to Chania airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 1 hour to the Hotel Spilia Village.

THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. However, below are some suggestions to help you reach your destination:

- We can book you a seat on the **HF Holidays' transfer coach** from Chania airport. This is timed to meet the
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HF Holidays' flights* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £15.50

- Why not let us book you a **private taxi transfer** at a cost of £60.00 per single taxi journey?

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Essential Information

Passport Requirements

You may need to renew your British passport if you're travelling from 1 January 2021.

On the day you travel, you'll need your passport to both:

- have at least 6 months left
- be less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left)

Use the [government website](#) to see if your passport is valid for this holiday

EHIC Cards

The UK government has officially launched the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), which will replace the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). UK residents can now apply for one of the GHIC cards, which will gradually replace the EHIC cards as they reach their expiry dates. Every family member travelling requires a GHIC. You can make an application for yourself and on behalf of your partner and any dependent children under the age of 16. Both cards will offer equivalent protection for emergency and medically necessary healthcare needs when in the EU on a temporary stay, which includes holiday, study and business travel. Necessary healthcare includes things like

- emergency treatment and visits to A&E
- treatment for long-term or pre-existing medical conditions
- routine medical care for pre-existing conditions that need monitoring
- oxygen and kidney dialysis

The public only need to apply for their free GHIC cards when their current EHIC expires. The process is likely to take two weeks. For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>.

The GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. We advise all holidaymakers to also invest in travel insurance that covers healthcare, so they are covered for other issues that may arise, as well as cancellations and lost luggage.

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).

- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

Useful Information

The local language is Greek.

Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a Greek number 0030

Local Currency

The local currency of Crete is the Euro.

Electricity

220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

ATM Availability

There are several ATM machines in nearby Kolimbari where you can obtain money.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

Document produced: 21-09-2021

