

Tour
Information



Hidden Gems of Eastern Crete





Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full six months beyond the duration of your visit. The name on your passport must match the name on your flight ticket/E-ticket, otherwise you may be refused boarding at the airport.

Visas

Visas are not required for Greece for citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Greek Consulate: 1A Holland Park, London W11 3TP. Tel: 020 7221 6467



Tickets

Included with this documentation is an e-ticket, which shows the reference number for your flight. EasyJet have now replaced all their airport check-in desks with EasyJet Baggage Drop desks. **Therefore, you must check-in online and print out your boarding passes before travelling.** Checking in online also provides the opportunity for you to pre-book seats, if you wish, at an additional cost.

Online check-in is available 30 days prior to travel using the reference number provided. Please see the enclosed e-ticket for more information or visit; www.easyjet.com

Please check that the details on your documentation are accurate and that all names are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your flight ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage Allowance

We advise that you stick to the baggage allowances advised. If your luggage is found to be heavier than the airlines specified baggage allowance the charges at the airport will be hefty.

With Easyjet your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information please visit www.easyjet.com

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Departure Tax

UK Flight Taxes are included in the price of your holiday.

Transfers

On arrival at Heraklion Airport please collect your luggage and exit the luggage area and proceed until you are completely out of the airport building. You will find your tour manager situated just outside the arrivals building, holding a Travel Editions sign. The transfer time is approximately one hour

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Hermes Hotel, Agios Nikolaos

Situated a few minutes' walk from the centre of Agios Nikolaos, the 4-star Dessoire Hermes Hotel is a well-established hotel that has a very convenient location. Positioned on the sea front, it is an easy 5 minute walk to the centre of Agios Nikolaos, which provides the opportunity to wander out, explore and find anything you may need or to enjoy dinner (HB is included but you might like an atmospheric dinner by the lake or the sea during your stay) or drinks in one of the many tavernas and cafes scattered throughout Agios Nikolaos.

The hotel offers comfortable rooms, with town or sea view, (sea view is only guaranteed if you have paid the applicable supplement prior to arrival), balcony, air-conditioning (centrally controlled), TV, bathroom with bath/shower, pool towels, safe box and minibar.

The 'elevated' pool, located on the 5th floor, overlooks the sea. Other facilities at the hotel include the hotel's restaurant, located on the 5th floor, where breakfast and dinner are served, buffet style, combining a selection of Greek and international cuisine. The Bay View pool bar is located on the terrace next to the swimming pool; the Cafe Del Mar Blue, on the ground floor is open throughout the day for drinks and snacks, and the Hermes Bar, on the 5th floor is open in the evening. A small beach can be accessed via a tunnel direct from the hotel and other beaches in the area can be accessed easily on foot.

For more information visit the hotel website: www.hermeshotel.info

Dining

The standard of food in Greece is excellent and offers a remarkable variety of freshly prepared and very tasty dishes, many of which use locally grown products and locally produced olive oil. Although you have half board included in the tour

there will be the opportunity to eat out at local tavernas during the lunch breaks on the tour days.

In Greece, and particularly in Crete, the locals nearly always eat 'Mezedes' style. This generally means ordering several dishes, starters and/or main plates, whatever takes your fancy, to put in the middle of the table for all to share. It's a very sociable way to eat and a great way of tasting lots of different dishes! Don't be shy in the amount you order, or if you only find yourselves ordering starters – any combination is acceptable. The cost of a dinner for two with local wine and local dishes is approximately 35 to 40 Euros.

When ordering fish in Crete you will find the price on the menu relates to a cost per kilo. Don't be put off by this. You are expected to go into the kitchen, choose the fish you want and then it will be weighed in front of you so you know what you will pay.

Nearly all tavernas sell their own 'open' wine, known as village wine. It is something of an acquired taste but it goes well with the local food. The Greeks are very proud of their wine and nearly all Cretans make their own. The white is usually always very drinkable but the red varies quite a lot. If you are unsure you can always ask if you can try the wine before you agree to it. Prices of local 'village' wine are usually between 3 and 5 euros per half litre.

Local drinks are ouzo, raki, metaxa and, of course, Greek wine. Raki is the local firewater! This is distilled from the residue of the grapes after making wine. You will probably find you come across this whether you want to or not, as it is very often served, complimentary, at the end of a meal.

Meals included in your holiday

A buffet breakfast and dinner are included daily. Two lunches are also included during the tour.



Destination

Crete

Crete is a fascinating destination for a cultural and historic tour with its wealth of sights reflecting both its ancient Minoan culture, dating back some 3,000 years, as well as a more recent history. Combined with the island's fantastic natural scenery; picturesque harbours, fertile regions of fruit trees, silver green olive groves, majestic mountains and superb coastline, this tour ensures a diverse and attractive insight into this fabulous island.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Agios Nikolaos

Agios Nikolaos is a medium-size town with a small-town feel. You can walk around it easily and can get to know it and feel familiar with the place very quickly.

The town has 'three faces to the sea': The Lake and port, Kitroplatia beach and the Marina. The lake is a folklore-inspiringly deep body of water which is connected to the sea by a narrow inlet. It is surrounded and overlooked by cafes and restaurants - a busy gathering place for local residents and visitors alike.

The beach at Kitroplatia, on the east side of the town, is one of the few in Crete to provide that town-centre-by-the-sea beach location, together with its own original tavernas and cafes and a handful of hotels and apartments.

A stroll south from the port, up to the square and down the other side of the town, brings you to the marina, where the extravagant...and quite often far less extravagant boats are moored.

Many churches can be found scattered within the streets of Agios Nikolaos - including the small church which lends its name to the town.

There is a good choice of shops with original items on offer, from woven fabrics, to cups, mugs and china wear and a miscellany of clothes, house decor and local food products and delicacies.

Agios Nikolaos - apart from being a summer draw for visitors - is, for the most part, open in winter and so remains, winter and summer, very much a

local's place amidst the tourism of the town, which gives it a very authentic atmosphere.

There is an archaeological museum in Agios Nikolaos but, due to renovation work, this has not been open for the last 3 years. It may be open when you visit but please check with your Tour Manager or the hotel reception before going to visit.

Panagia Kera

The ancient Byzantine church of Panagia Kera, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, has some of the best-preserved and probably the most famous set of Byzantine frescoes found anywhere in East Crete. The church has three naves and dates from the 13th century, as do some of the frescoes.

Lassithi Plateau

One of the highpoints of Crete, both in altitude and atmosphere, is Lassithi plateau. It is a green carpet hemmed in on all sides by the Diktean Mountains. As excavations have shown, this once inaccessible area, encircled by high mountains, has been inhabited since Neolithic times. In 1293 it was such a nest of resistance that the Venetians forced everyone out and built 10,000 white-sailed windmills specifically for irrigating crop on the plateau. Although very few windmills are in use today, it still makes a splendid sight against the mountains.

Today Lassithi is still a solid agriculture area for the residents of the 16 villages that circumnavigate the Plateau.

Malia Palace

Alongside Knossos, Zakros and Phaestos; Malia, set beside the sea on the north coast, is one of the 4 excavated Minoan palaces on the island. It is likely that a first palace occupied the site around 1900 BC, but this was subsequently destroyed in 1700 BC. The 2nd palace, erected soon after, was destroyed at the same time as the other palaces on the island, around 1450BC.

Spinalonga

Fortified by the Venetians in the late 16th century this small island rests quietly in the middle of the beautiful bay of Elounda. It was successfully defended against the Turks until 1715, long after the rest of Crete had succumbed. In 1903 the Cretan authorities founded a leper colony here, which was inhabited until 1957. The 17th century fortress is well-preserved as are the ruins of the village which give a fantastic insight into a past way of life on the island. Our visit here involves a short ride by boat from the port of Elounda to the island.

Mochlos

Mochlos is a small picturesque fishing village located in the gulf of Mirabello in Eastern Crete. It is scenic, quiet and laid back, with only a few restaurants and cafes.

Tour manager

Your Tour Manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operates according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him/her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and ensure you get the most out of your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Greece at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but evenings can be cool and there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared. Layers are useful as is a light rain jacket and small umbrella.

Time – GMT +3 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 2 (Standard time Nov-Mar). This means, summer or winter, Greece is 2 hours ahead of the UK

Language – Greek

Religion – Greek Orthodox

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports and other spots. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros other than bringing euros with you from the UK.

Banks in Crete are open Monday to Friday 8am – 2pm. Agios Nikolaos has plenty of ATM machines easily accessed in the town. You can use a UK debit card, using the same pin number you use in the UK, to withdraw cash. The instructions are in English. Just look for signs on ATM's for Delta or Cirrus.

Credit cards – Crete is very much a cash society, so credit cards are not widely accepted, however more places are accepting these nowadays but it is best to check first in restaurants and shops that they accept credit cards, if you wish to pay by card. Varying amounts of commission can be charged for credit card payments and you may like to check these with your credit card supplier before travel. Most hotels will accept payments by credit card.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink although you should check at the hotel if the bathroom water is safe to drink as it could be tank

water rather than mains water. Bottled water is readily available to buy in all of the local shops and very reasonably priced.

Shopping - There are plenty of mini-markets in Agios Nikolaos for any basic supplies you might need. The mini-markets are usually open from early in the morning until late in the evening seven days a week. Cretan olive oil, olives and local honey are all excellent produce if you are interested in taking a little bit of Crete home with you. You may see people advertising honey on the side of the road or in Kafenions when you are out and about, this will usually be their own home produce and is often the best and most pure you can buy.

Stamps - In most places **you can purchase stamps at the same time you purchase postcards**. This is much easier than trying to find a post office!

Plumbing - Unless there is information to the contrary please do not put toilet paper down the toilet. As you may know this is common practice in Greece due to the narrowness of the waste pipes. Please dispose of the paper in the bins provided, which will be regularly emptied by the hotel.

English newspapers – These can be found in various outlets in the town.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in Greece, depending on your operator and contract. If you are calling the UK from a mobile in Greece, you will need to prefix the number with the international code 0044.

Tipping –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that, when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services.

Walking shoes – as you are visiting archaeological sites that can be rocky underfoot, we recommend that you take good shoes which have good gripping soles such as trainers or walking shoes.



Health

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit for Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a Doctor if necessary. There is normally a charge of about 60 Euros for calling out a doctor (or more, depending on the distance the doctor must travel) and there is also a charge to visit a Doctor.

Keep any receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

The nearest hospital is in Agios Nikolaos. Your Tour Manager/hotel reception will assist if you need to visit a hospital during your stay.

Keep any receipts for insurance claims.

Inoculations

No compulsory vaccinations are required for travel in Greece.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies throughout Greece are generally well-stocked and have knowledgeable staff who will, more often than not, speak good English. Pharmacists will often be able to give advice and medicine for minor ailments. Pharmacies are open Monday to Friday but not on Saturdays.



Insurance

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

It is essential to carry an EHIC card with you as this will assist you if you are admitted to a hospital in Greece.

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad. If you require medical assistance whilst abroad it is essential that you contact the emergency number of your insurance company to advise them of the situation. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of action whilst in resort.



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045 (Mon-Fri 0900-1700),

Outside the above office hours please telephone our emergency staff on:

00 30 6977 465 892 (Greek resort manager) or

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you are calling a Greek number from a UK mobile, you should prefix the number with the Greek international dialing code 0030.

If you find that you need consular assistance during your holiday:

British Vice Consulate Crete

Candia Tower

17 Thalita Street, Ag. Dimitrios Square

71 202 Heraklion

Crete Greece

Email: crete@fco.gov.uk

Open to the public - by appointment only

Tuesday to Thursday, 9am to 1pm

Please note that an appointment is not necessary for emergency cases requiring consular assistance.

Telephone enquiries - Monday to Friday, 8am to 3pm

In an emergency outside these hours please call the British Embassy Athens switchboard number: +30 210 7272600 and follow the automated instructions.

Travel Editions

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Email: tours@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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