



# Living with the Greeks





## 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Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full six months beyond the duration of your visit.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](http://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](http://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. You will find the Tour Manager situated just outside the arrivals area, holding a Travel Editions sign.

## Special Requests

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



# Accommodation

## Istron Bay Hotel

Our base for this tour is the friendly **Istron Bay Hotel**, which is a five-star hotel with a private beach situated in a lovely position overlooking the bay of Mirabello.

The hotel has 2 restaurants, a beach bar and a lounge bar. The rooms are all en-suite and have a sea view and include private bathroom with shower/bath, air conditioning, private balcony, satellite TV, hairdryer and safe box.

The half-board restaurant serves traditional Cretan style food as well as international dishes.

For more information visit the hotel website: <http://www.istronbay.gr/>

## Dining

Although all evening meals are included in this holiday, there will be the occasion to eat out at other times when you will have the opportunity to choose for yourselves some of the local cuisine.

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.

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.

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

Half board although one dinner will be arranged in a local taverna during your stay.



# Destination

## Crete

Crete is a fascinating destination for a cultural and historic tour with its wealth of sights reflecting its ancient Minoan culture that dates back some 3,000 years, but it is also an island with a fantastic nature, some wonderful and diverse scenery and an authentic traditional culture, which very much encompasses the local cuisine. The Cretan diet is reputed to be one of the healthiest in Europe with its abundance of locally grown high quality olive oil, pulses, fresh fruit, vegetables, wild greens (horta), rich red tomatoes and, of course, a glass of wine produced from local vineyards!

## Agios Nikolaos

Agios Nikolaos is a medium-size all-year-round working 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 that is found close to the St Nicholas Hotel.

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 planning to visit.

## A little information on the places visited:

### Cretan Olive Farm

Situated in Agios Nikolaos, the traditional Cretan Olive Oil Farm is definitely worth a visit.

To satisfy both your taste buds and your curiosity, take a guided tour around the small, family-run Cretan Olive Oil Farm to learn the history and processes of oil pressing and see exactly how olive oil is produced.

There will be an opportunity to take some tasty treats home with you. You'll find a range of oils, olive pastes, sun-dried tomatoes and honey available to try and buy in the farm's gift shop.

### Kavousi

An historic village in Eastern Crete, meaning "water source" in the Cretan dialect. The village is located in the northern foothills of the Thripti mountain range and claims to have discovered many archaeological sites in the local area. It also boasts a magnificent view over the Gulf or Mirabello and the Isthmus of Lera Petra.

### Mochlos

Mochlos is a small picturesque fishing village located in the gulf or Mirabello in Eastern Crete.

A main feature of Mochlos is the island of the same name that is only 150m from the shore. It was probably still connected to the 'mainland' in Minoan times and was a significant harbour. The site is still being excavated.

### Monastery of Saint George Selinari

The newly founded, male monastery, of Saint George of Selinari and its small old chapel are situated inside the homonymous gorge, just off the new National Road connecting Heraklion and Agios Nikolaos.

The first monastery was built during the second rule of the Byzantine Empire in Crete (961-1205 AD), but was completely destroyed by the pirate Barbarossa in 1538.

According to tradition, after the conquest of Rhodes by the Turks, a monk from Rhodes named Nikolaos, was led to Selinari by God and found the icon of St. George. Nikolaos built a church and lived there until his death.

He was buried in a small cave called Anavlohos which was carved by him.

The cave can be located if you look up the gorge, just opposite the monastery and seek for a big cross.

During the Ottoman occupation, the monastery is believed to have been destroyed, once again, by the Turks. Its small old chapel is considered miraculous, with various legends relating to the healing of the sick.

### **Kalo Chorio**

Meaning “good village”, Kalo Chorio is a small traditional Cretan village just above the area named Istro on the Gulf of Mirabello.

Over the past years, naturally with tourism, part of the village has grown up nearer the beach, Istro has many archaeological points of interest. The new village of Istro sits on the site of the ancient town of Istrona, remains of which are still being uncovered to date. Because of this, the land closest to the sea has a conservation order and no new building may take place, which leaves the beaches uncrowded and unspoilt. The delightful beaches of Istro Bay are regularly awarded a Blue flag for cleanliness. Kalo Chorio offers a village atmosphere away from the sprawling concrete resorts usually found in Crete, allowing visitors to enjoy Crete as it once was.

### **Pano Karouzanos Cretan Evening**

This is a superb evening, where you will be entertained with the sounds of the traditional bouzouki and lyra, and served with an original Cretan dinner with wine.

The venue is in a beautiful village called Pano Karouzanos nestled in the mountains high above the seaside resort of Hersonissos. Guests will be treated to a performance of traditional Greek dances accompanied by live music. You will also be invited to join in and have a chance to learn a few steps of traditional dances, turn yourself into a Zorbas for a night and keep this wonderful night in your memory forever.

Dinner is buffet style and consists of many mouth-watering Greek dishes that must be tried.

There is no better way to experience traditional Greek entertainment and hospitality.

### **Elounda**

Elounda is a seaside town on Crete’s northwestern coast. It’s an up-and-coming retreat that revolves around a colourful harbour and the main square just next door. The place is packed with authentic Greek tavernas and friendly bars and cafes – it also comes with a sandy beach that looks out to the intriguing Spinalonga Island.

Elounda's harbour, known as the Gulf of Korfos, is a natural, beautiful lagoon which is bordered by rugged peninsulas, and with the island of Spinalonga a good guard at the harbour entrance, it's like a shelter within a shelter with crystal, turquoise waters that is enclosed within the wider blue waters of the Gulf of Mirabello.

Elounda hosts two very important archaeological sites of Cretan history, the relics of the ancient sunken city of Olous and the Venetian fortress on the island of Spinalonga.

### **Spinalonga**

A small arid and barren island near Elounda with an area of 8.5 hectares. Spinalonga was also known as the Leper Island as that is where lepers from Crete and the rest of Greece were quarantined until 1957.

Although it is small and known as the island of the outcasts, Spinalonga has a rather interesting story to tell. The island forms a natural defence “mechanism” for Elounda harbour, and in 1579 the Venetians built a mighty fortress here on the ruins of an ancient acropolis. The Venetians kept control of the island even after the rest of Crete fell to the Ottomans in 1669 and it remained under their control for almost another half a century until its capitulation in 1715.

### **Your guide**

Your guide is Bianca de Klein. Bianca, who is Dutch, came to Crete 20 years ago. While working as a tour guide, she not only fell in love with this beautiful island but also her Greek husband Giannis. She has lived and worked in the Mirabello region for the last 17 years. She is fluent in five languages and loves introducing visitors to the unspoilt nature and authentic way of life in the region she lives in, accompanied by her own personal experiences of ‘life on the island’



## The Basics

**Climate** – The weather in Greece at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but evenings can be quite 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.

**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. ATM machines are available in Agios Nikolaos and can be accessed on foot from your accommodation. You can use a UK debit card, using the same pin number you use in the UK, to withdrawn 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 at 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.

**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 the local shops and very reasonably priced.

**Shopping** - There are plenty of mini-markets scattered throughout Kalo Chorio 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. There are also excellent herbs and mountain tea. 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.

**English newspapers** – These can usually 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 dialing 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.



## 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](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

### Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your Tour manager/guide if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a Doctor. 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, more often than not, will 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 hours please telephone our emergency staff on:

0030 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 dialling 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](mailto: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.

### Travel Editions

3 Youngs Buildings, London, EC1V 9DB

Tel: 0207 251 0045

Email: [tours@traveleditions.co.uk](mailto:tours@traveleditions.co.uk) [www.traveleditions.co.uk](http://www.traveleditions.co.uk)