



# EXPERIENCING GREECE

A culinary journey in Athens & Crete  
Hosted by Chef Kelly Unger  
SEPTEMBER 8—18, 2026

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️  
EST 2014





Chef Kelly Unger invites you to come with her to Greece next year! She is known for her gorgeous The Rooster & The Carrot Cooking Studio in Carversville, PA, radio show on WDVR, and love of learning about culture and cuisine. So join her to discover fascinating Athens and Crete on a culinary adventure with a group of local food and wine enthusiasts.

The tour kicks off with two nights in the vibrant Greek capital and then we'll spend a week on the idyllic Aegean island of Crete, the largest of the Greek archipelago, and one-time center of the ancient Minoan civilization. The island of Crete has everything you are hoping to find in Greece - fantastic fresh food, art, stunning scenery, ancient history and mythology, beautiful beaches, and the famously friendly and fun local culture that makes you feel you've gone back in time.

Our time in Greece has been planned closely with our local tour director, Mirsini (she is an absolute delight). After those first few nights in bustling Athens, take a quick flight to Crete where we'll spend four nights in the lovely little seaside city of Chania and the other half exploring the picturesque mountain interior, everywhere we go surrounded by history, atmosphere and regional flavor.

Experience Greece through delicious meals at both trendy restaurants and village tavernas, with three cooking classes, visits to specialty producers and artisans, a focus on ancient culture and much more. We hope you'll come along... *Yamas!*

## IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Dining on fresh seafood  
with a view of the  
Aegean Sea

Wandering about in the  
minotaur's labyrinth

Cooking dinner outside  
in a wood-fired oven

## Welcome to Greece!

DAY 1: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8

- Meet your fabulous local tour host and fun travel group in the capital
- Learn Greek culinary secrets from a well known cookbook author

Arrive in Athens by midday today and check in at modern and serene Niche Hotel, located in the heart of the city just between the Acropolis and the scenic Plaka neighborhood. When the foundation was dug for the hotel, ancient ruins from circa 300 BC were discovered, so the spa area was built around them and also a glass floor was installed in the lobby so you can look down at them. Between that and the rooftop bar and restaurant with primo Acropolis views - the sense of place is everywhere here!

In the early afternoon our group will meet for a welcome drink at that rooftop bar with Mirsini, your local tour director who was born and raised in Crete and has a father from Athens. Then you are setting off for a cooking class with Meni Valle, a Greek-Australian cookbook author of whose work Kelly is a fan. Meni will teach us about Blue Zones and the health benefits of the delicious Greek cuisine we'll be enjoying this week. And as a bonus, at the pre-trip event at The Rooster & The Carrot Cooking Studio travelers will receive a copy of her newest cookbook, *Thessaloniki*. The cooking class concludes with a delicious dinner!

Meals Dinner

## The Sacred Rock of Athens

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9

- Enjoy local breakfast delicacies with a view of the Acropolis
- Smile for a photo in front of the world's most famous ancient temple

Breakfast is included at each of your hotels every morning of this trip and while you're in Athens you'll enjoy a nice view of the Acropolis with your coffee since the delectable breakfast spread is served at the hotel's rooftop restaurant. Have a filling breakfast because afterwards you're off to visit the Sacred Rock yourself on a guided tour with Mirsini. Once the center of cultural, political and religious life in Ancient Greece, the Acropolis represents the epitome of classical civilization and the advancements in philosophy, architecture and art that occurred in that lauded age. At its heart is the iconic Parthenon, the temple to Athena that was built between 447-483 BCE, and seeing this harmonious and enduring work of ancient architecture up close is a must-do experience you will treasure.

After you've left the Acropolis you'll take a stroll through the beautiful and interesting Plaka neighborhood, including a stop for a casual lunch together. Then the rest of the afternoon and evening is yours to enjoy as you like in the vibrant Greek capital.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

## Onward to the Island

DAY 3: THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10

- Take a quick flight from Athens to the Greek Islands
- Toast your travel group from a boat looking back at the lovely coast

Mid morning the group will transfer to Athens Airport for the quick flight to the Cretan city of Chania. Upon arrival, you'll head to The Chania Hotel, a recently opened 5-star boutique hotel situated just where the Old Town meets the New City. The property has a vibe to match its location: historical reverence mixed with a fresh, modern aesthetic. And here you are in Chania, a deeply fascinating little city with thousands of years of history as a crossroads between "East" and "West." In ancient times it was called Cydonia, and for hundreds of years it was an outpost of the great Venetian Empire. Later Chania (pronounced Hania, from the Turkish: Hanya) was conquered by the Turks to become an Ottoman stronghold, and for many generations it was as culturally diverse a place as existed anywhere.

Drop your bags at the hotel and then you'll head out with Mirsini for an engaging walking tour of this interesting and delightful town, including a visit to our first artisan of the trip - a knifemaker. See the workshop and learn about the significance of knives in Cretan culture and the knifemaking process... and then, a special gift: your own small knife to take home with you. Eventually our group reaches the harbour where we'll board a boat for a sunset cruise. As we look back at the city and raise a glass to it we may just feel like we have the same view as the Venetians who dominated this harbour for many centuries. Once we've returned to land it's time for a welcome dinner together at an upscale, modern restaurant where the food is true to its Greek roots and will be accompanied by wonderful local wines.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

### Arrive Early in Athens!

Arrive a night or two early to enjoy Niche Hotel and the city and rest up before the tour officially begins. Early arrival package includes hotel stay, airport transfer, daily breakfast and a fun and generous foodie walking tour in the afternoon on September 7.

1 Night ~ Sept 7-8: \$250/person (+\$85 single supplement)

2 Nights ~ Sept 6-8: \$390/person (+\$170 single supplement)

*Rates based on double occupancy. Inquire for add'l nights.*

## Exploring Chania

DAY 4: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11

- Start your day with one of Crete's favorite breakfast foods
- Visit a monastery where wine has been produced for centuries

The Chania Hotel has a gorgeous breakfast spread for you each morning, but today it's a good idea to leave a little room because our first stop this morning is at a local bakery to taste a favorite Cretan breakfast: *bougatsa*. This pastry filled with creamy cheese is a Chania staple and we will take the opportunity to watch the baking process and of course enjoy a slice.

Then we're off to a super special destination: a scenic monastery on Chania's northern peninsula where monks continue to make wine and olive oil according to centuries-old traditions. Mirsini will introduce us to the history of this tranquil and gorgeous place including the Byzantine chapel and art collection and then we head into the cellar for a guided tasting of their wine production accompanied by olive oil, local snacks and cheese.

This afternoon take some time on your own to relax at the hotel or explore Chania. In the evening we're headed to a casual beachside restaurant to for a delicious dinner of fresh seafood with a view... grilled octopus or shrimp saganaki anyone?

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Meals Breakfast, Light Lunch, Dinner

## Day Trip to Rethymno

DAY 5: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12

- Explore a striking Venetian fortification structure
- Taste phyllo pastry prepared by a legendary phyllo master

This morning we're off to lovely Rethymno, where Mirsini lives. About an hour down the coast, Rethymno is a significant cultural and economic center on the island and a supremely charming little city.

Once we get to Rethymno, it will be a delight to explore together with Mirsini. First we're going to visit the Fortezza, an imposing citadel built by the Venetians, later taken by the Turks, and a unique and impressive fusion of Medieval European and Moorish architectural styles. It's a thrilling site and Mirsini will bring it to life for you. Afterwards, we're off to the workshop of a famous phyllo master who prepares the pastry meticulously, just as his father and ancestors did, and to stunningly delicious result- of course we'll have a taste of what has to be some of the world's best baklava.

After the phyllo master visit there is a nice break for lunch and strolling and shopping. Then we reconvene and our last stop today: the workshop of a musical instrument master who still creates the three-stringed, pear-shaped Cretan lyra in the laborious traditional way, which we'll learn something about and maybe even hear some music. This stop is so special and you won't soon forget it.

Back in Chania you have a free evening to enjoy the town tonight.

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Meals Breakfast

## Sacred Local Olive Oil

DAY 6: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13

- Taste organic, small batch Greek olive oil straight from the source
- Cook up a feast at a fun cooking class with a local family

It's our last full day in Chania! You'll be happy for a little more time on your own in the city this morning. Grab a quick lunch and then we are headed to an organic olive oil estate in the mountains to learn firsthand about their production methods and of course we have to have a taste. Kat from Onward says this is the best olive oil she has ever had! Then on our way back to Chania we will stop to pay homage to one of (likely THE) oldest olive trees in the world, the Ancient Olive Tree of Vouves, which is somewhere between 2000-4000 years old.

Once we arrive back in Chania we have a special evening in store, cooking together in a lovely courtyard on the edge of the city. Our hosts are a sister-brother duo and they will welcome us like family. This evening we're preparing lamb, roasted for two hours in a wood-fired stone oven, stuffed vegetables and grape leaves or *dolmades*, savory cheese pies and more! And you know the theme of the day will continue on tonight as our hosts explain and demonstrate just how important high quality olive oil is in the Greek kitchen.

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Meals Breakfast, Dinner

THE ANCIENT OLIVE TREE OF VOUVES





## Mountain Village Life

DAY 7: MONDAY SEPTEMBER 14

- Learn about the rustic side of life at a family hotel in the mountains
- Go out for a fun evening of tapas and raki in Mirsini's home village

After an early breakfast we're checking out of The Chania Hotel and heading inland to the mountains, villages and forests of the island where life moves at a slower, more traditional pace. First let's visit a multi-generational family at their mountain hotel restaurant in the scenic Amari Valley. On our way there we'll drive by famous Mount Ida, where mythology tells us Zeus was born and raised.

Once we get to Thronos we'll roll up our sleeves, get kneading and bake some bread in their traditional wood-fired oven. Then there's time for a cookies and coffee break with a view before setting off for a walk with the family patriarch in the greenery around the village to learn about local flora and fauna and gather herbs. Cretans have a deep connection to their local wild plants which they harvest in abundance for culinary and medicinal uses.

Once we've returned to the restaurant it's time to enjoy a wonderful lunch together, the food here is traditional and delicious. Sadly then it's time to say goodbye to this wonderful family as we continue our day's journey. We aren't going too far, just to the nearby village of Gerakari where we'll rest our weary heads tonight at the Alexander Mountain Resort. But we're not weary yet! Relax and maybe take a swim in the pool. And then... this is the village where Mirsini was raised and tonight she's going to take this lucky group out on the town, or... out on the village... for tapas and raki. *Yamas!*

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Mountain Village Life

DAY 8: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15

- Step into a home kitchen for a vegetable-centered cooking class
- Check in to your new lodgings in a picturesque mountain village

After breakfast our journey through Crete continues and we're off to the home kitchen of Xenia Skoula. Xenia lives in a stone house among the olive trees, of course those trees produce the oil you'll be using today, and she is excited to share the secrets of Cretan cooking that she has learned from the generations before her. Together the group will prepare a traditional Cretan vegetarian meal and then you'll relax amid the stunning natural scenery of Xenia's place and enjoy lunch together.

After lunch, head just down the road to Margarites, renowned as the island's epicenter for pottery and the ceramic arts with its numerous studios and workshops. We will stop in to see a ceramic artist and learn about their works and process and then we'll have some free time to explore the different shops.

As the day ends we'll reach our final destination, Archanes, a mountain village not far from Heraklion where time seems to stand still. Flowering bushes and vines frame brightly colored houses, panoramic views extend in all directions, and cafes just beckon you to relax at them. We've reserved rooms at a stylish little place called Manili Boutique Suites, the property has a Michelin Key and you'll enjoy the swimming pool and little onsite bistro. When you're ready, try dinner there or venture out into the village square and pick one of the many restaurants there.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch



## Artisans Ancient and New

DAY 9: WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- Explore the ancient Minoan world hands-on at a ceramic workshop
- Take your new knowledge of ancient iconography to the museum

Here in our little village is an artist whose unique, world-renowned ceramic work is inspired by the ancient Minoan artworks which are woven deep into the cultural fabric of her hometown of Heraklion. This morning she will welcome us into her shop and studio for a hands-on clay exploration of the symbolism, mythology and iconography of the ancient Minoan kingdom which we'll be learning about during these next two days in the Heraklion region, the heart of that legendarily creative ancient civilization. Each of us will create our own ceramic treasure which will be fired and ready for us to take home before we leave Crete. This is sure to be a very special morning and one we'll remember for a long time.

Then we're headed in the center of Heraklion for lunch at one of Mirsini's favorite restaurants, a trendy farm to table gem. After lunch, Mirsini will show us around the city, and after some free time to stroll and shop we'll meet back up to visit the famous Heraklion Archaeological Museum. Thanks to our morning in the ceramics studio we'll already be familiar with some of the imagery, stories and ideas we're going to encounter here so our guided tour of the museum with Mirsini will be extra enjoyable. This evening back in Archanes you'll be on your own to enjoy dinner as you please.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch

## The Treasures of Heraklion

DAY 10: THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17

- Visit a place immortalized in one of the most famous Myths
- Raise a glass to your travel companions over a delicious dinner

By now we're becoming experts in all things Minoan and our last historical visit this morning is to the legendary Palace of Knossos. One of the most visited tourist attractions in all of Greece, this vast complex of ancient ruins is replete with myths and stories, the most famous of which is that of the Minotaur. Touring the palace ruins with Mirsini will be a fascinating treat.

From the Palace of Knossos we're headed to a family-owned winery with an incredible view for a wine tasting paired with a light lunch featuring some of the tastiest cheeses you'll ever have. In the afternoon we'll return to Archanes for a little bit of free time before we reconvene for our last delicious dinner together at a famous restaurant in the village that has become a destination in itself.

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Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## Farewell

DAY 11: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18

Travel home with lots of great new memories, friends and recipes! Transfers will be provided to Heraklion Airport or the ferry terminal. From here it's easy to take the ferry and end your trip with some relaxing time in Santorini, contact Onward for more info. Bon Voyage!

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Meals Breakfast



STUFFED TOMATOES AND DOLMADES, DELICIOUS HEALTHY CRETAN DISHES



BEGINS	Athens, Greece on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 Meet at 2:00 pm at Niche Hotel Arrival transfer from Athens Airport is included
ENDS	Archanes, Crete, Greece on Friday, September 18, 2026 No activities are scheduled on 9/18 Departure transfer to Heraklion is included (airport, ferry port or city)
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<u>This tour includes walking for up to 30 minutes at a time, plus stairs, uneven natural terrain and cobblestones. Travelers should be able to walk a mile at a comfortable pace.</u> If you have limited mobility, we may be able to accommodate you, but it is essential to let us know at the time of registration. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided.
TOUR DATES & PRICE	September 8–18, 2026 Double Occupancy    \$5,550 per traveler Single Supplement    \$1,150 additional  <i>Contact Onward if you are interested in a room upgrade or adding extra nights. Limited twin bedrooms available.</i>  <i>You are welcome to pay by credit card, a 3% surcharge applies.</i>
LODGING	Niche Hotel   <u>2 Nights</u>   <i>A well located, serene retreat in the bustling metropolis of Athens with a great spa.</i>  The Chania Hotel   <u>4 Nights</u>   <i>A brand new five-star hotel concept that breathed life back into an iconic 50's-era hotel.</i>  Alexander Mountain Resort   <u>1 Night</u>   <i>Casual retreat with mountain views and a pool in the village of Gerakari.</i>  Manili Boutique Suites   <u>3 Nights</u>   <i>A stylish property built in the local style in Archanes village, with an outdoor pool.</i>



**The Onward  
Travel Tour  
Director  
for this trip  
is *Mirsini***

personal experiences related to the way of life and culture in Crete. Passionate about history and archeology, from a people's perspective... she is always exploring new stories and myths to share and draw inspiration from. Mirsini lives in the picturesque coastal town of Rethymno and often spends time at her village in the mountains helping out with the family orchards (cherries, apples, walnuts etc). She looks forward to meeting and traveling together with you!

Mirsini Iliopoulou is a local professional guide passionate about the island of Crete. After nearly a decade away from home, working and studying in the U.K. and in Spain, she came to appreciate the perks of living on a small (although not that small!) island... especially the relaxed pace of life, proximity to nature, opportunities for spontaneity and good food.

Mirsini loves to share her knowledge and

- Trip price includes the following:
- Airport transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities
  - 10 nights private en suite accommodations
  - Most meals: daily breakfasts, four lunches, and five dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences planned, wine & local beverages included, of course!
  - A local tour director to help you truly understand Crete who will be at your service throughout the tour
  - Activities, tastings, cooking classes, art classes, and tours as detailed in the itinerary
  - Taxes and gratuities

**Air Travel**

The tour will start in Athens (ATH) and end in Heraklion (HER). Travelers will need to book a multi-city flight.

Travelers will also need to book a specific one-way flight from Athens to Chania on 9/10. Onward will provide guidance once the date is available for booking.

Please confirm with Onward Travel that the tour is a “go” before booking airfare.

Contact Onward Travel for assistance booking flights.



**Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at [www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo](http://www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo)**



Once Onward Travel receives your registration form, we will send you an **invoice** with instructions to pay the **deposit**.



If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) and refer to location number 32-0704.



Four to six weeks before the tour **we will mail you a packet** with a packing list, traveler directory and other useful info.



Make sure you know where your **passport** is now! For travel to Greece it should be valid for six months beyond your return date.



**Onward Travel's cancellation policy in a nutshell:**

- \$250 of your initial deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 90 days and the full deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 60 days and 50% of total trip fee is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 30 days and the full trip fee is nonrefundable

See the full *Terms & Conditions* at [www.onwardtravel.co/terms](http://www.onwardtravel.co/terms)

**Register now!**

Visit [onwardtravel.co](http://onwardtravel.co) to complete the registration form and submit payment.

Space is limited to only 14 travelers.

\$1,500 deposit due upon booking, balance due by July 1, 2026.



**Get in Touch!**

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:  
[letsgo@onwardtravel.co](mailto:letsgo@onwardtravel.co)  
845-293-2729

THE ACROPOLIS

