

CRETE

THE ISLAND WITH EVERYTHING

An exploration of cuisine,
craft and tradition in Greece
OCTOBER 6—13, 2026

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️
EST 2014



AT OUR FAVORITE FAMILY-OWNED WINERY

Onward Travel is thrilled to return to Crete next year. We'll spend a week on this idyllic Aegean island, 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. Join us for a week there, planned closely with our local tour director, Mirsini (she is an absolute delight). The first half of the tour will be spent in the lovely little seaside city of Chania and the other half in a picturesque mountain village called Archanes, both of these are ancient settlements bursting with history, atmosphere and regional flavor.

As you explore Crete with your small group, enjoy fabulous meals from trendy urban bistros to a country hotel where we'll forage for herbs and cook our own bread over the fire. We'll get hands-on with a cooking experience and an art class focused on ceramics. These creative methods extend all the way back to the ancient civilizations which flourished here and of course we'll be exploring them, too, visiting ancient ruins and an archaeological museum. Enjoying all of this alongside local guide Mirsini will open your eyes to the wonder of this dynamic and beautiful island where ancient history surrounds you and a peaceful feeling floats through the air.



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

***Don't miss Athens
or Santorini!***

see page 6
for tour extensions

Welcome to the Greek Islands

DAY 1: TUESDAY OCTOBER 6

- [Get to know our fantastic local guide for the week while touring Chania](#)
- [Toast your travel group from a boat looking back at the lovely coast](#)

Arrive in Chania by midday today and check in 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.

Our group sets out in the early afternoon with Mirsini, your local tour director who was born and raised in Crete. She will lead an engaging walking tour of this interesting and delightful place, including a visit to our first artisan of the trip - a knifemaker. You'll visit the workshop and learn about their 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 raising 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

Meals Dinner

Exploring Chania

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 7

- [Start your day with one of Crete's favorite breakfast foods](#)
- [Visit a laid back archaeological site with incredible views of Chania](#)

Breakfast is included at your hotels each morning of this trip, but even though The Chania Hotel has a lovely spread for you 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 local 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. We will taste their production accompanied by some local snacks, and Mirsini will introduce us to the history of this tranquil and gorgeous place including the Byzantine chapel and art collection.

By now it's lunch time and we're going to enjoy a fabulous meal of fresh seafood at a restaurant on the beach. After lunch we have one more stop: the archaeological site of Aptera which was mentioned in ancient writings as long ago as the 14th-13th centuries BC and in Greek mythology. Aptera was an extremely powerful city-state from the Minoan through the Hellenistic periods. Eventually it was destroyed in an earthquake and today it is of particular interest due to its Roman ruins, restored Byzantine monastery and a nice example of an amphitheatre, all with scenic vistas over the Souda Bay and the White Mountain back to the peninsula from whence we've just come.

This evening in Chania you are on your own to explore and enjoy this charming place that stays bustling long into the dark hours.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Day Trip to Rethymno

DAY 3: THURSDAY OCTOBER 8

- [Explore a striking Venetian fortification structure](#)
- [Taste phyllo pastry prepared by a legendary phyllomaster](#)

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

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 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 that you'll have time for lunch and strolling. Then we reconvene and our last stop today is 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 tonight those would like to will head out for a simple, delicious dinner together.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Sacred Local Olive Oil

DAY 4: FRIDAY OCTOBER 9

- 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! Enjoy some 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 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 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 local home 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.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner



Mountain Village Life

DAY 5: SATURDAY OCTOBER 10

- Learn about the rustic side of life at a family hotel in the mountains
- Check in to your new lodgings in a picturesque mountain 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. Upon arrival enjoy a cookies and coffee break with a view and then we'll take 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. Next we're visiting the village of 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 evening falls 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. Tonight we're headed out for a fun and casual tavern dinner in the village square. Yamas!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Artisans Ancient and New

DAY 6: SUNDAY OCTOBER 11

- 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. 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.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

The Treasures of Heraklion

DAY 7: MONDAY OCTOBER 12

- 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 local taverna for a casual lunch of meze and salads. And then on to a family-owned winery where we'll learn about their biodynamic farming processes and taste a full range of their delightful wines. 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.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Farewell

DAY 8: TUESDAY OCTOBER 13

Those traveling on to Santorini will leave early this morning for an 8am ferry from Heraklion Port. For everyone else, transfers to Heraklion Airport or city center will be provided based on individual plans. Safe travels!

Meals Breakfast



FOOD PHOTOS FROM MIRSINI: GRILLED LAMB WITH CRETAN FIXINGS & DOLMADES (STUFFED GRAPE LEAVES)



THE ACROPOLIS, ATHENS

TOUR EXTENSIONS

*Experience more of
Greece on your trip*

ATHENS Pre-Tour Extension

2 or 3 nights:
OCTOBER 3 or 4 – 6

- Explore the vibrant capital city of Greece

It's always a great idea to arrive in a destination early to get acclimated, and in this case you can also take the opportunity to get to know the lively, historic capital city of Greece: Athens.

Lodging is a stylish boutique hotel in the historic center of the city, near many monuments, attraction, restaurants and museums. In addition to plenty of time to see Athens how you'd like to, we've arranged some activities for the group to help you get the lay of the land: a gourmet food tour beginning in the afternoon on October 4th and a half day walking tour in the morning on the 5th, including the Acropolis and Parthenon and other historical and cultural highlights of the city.

Included in Athens Pre-Tour Extension Package:

- Lodging at Niche Hotel Athens with daily breakfast
- Gourmet food tour on October 4
- Highlights walking tour on October 5
 - Acropolis entry ticket
- Arrival and departure airport transfers

2 nights: \$600/person | Single supplement +\$170

3 nights: \$800/person | Single supplement +\$250

Rates are based on Double Occupancy

Additional nights and upgrades are available, please inquire

All participants in the Athens Pre-Trip Extension will be asked to book the same mid morning one-way flight to Chania on October 6.

Flight schedules are not yet available at the time of writing. In January Onward will update participants with instructions.

SANTORINI Post-Tour Extension

2 nights:
OCTOBER 13 – 15

- Relax on one of the most iconic Greek islands

After the tour ends, depart Crete on an early morning ferry bound for Santorini, one of the most famous and beautiful of the Greek Islands. Staying at a scenic, luxe resort hotel with great views is a typical way to experience Santorini so we've reserved rooms at Anteliz Suites just on the northern side of Thera, or Fira, the island's hub. With only 14 rooms, this well-tended and appointed boutique property boasts an inviting pool and a gourmet restaurant.

A local guide will pick you up from the ferry port in Santorini and you'll spend the better part of your first day touring the island, including a stop for a fabulous lunch. In the afternoon you can check in at Anteliz Suites.

Included in Santorini Post-Tour Extension Package:

- Lodging at Anteliz Suites with daily breakfast
- Ferry ticket from Heraklion to Thera on October 13
- Guided tour of the island with lunch and wine tasting on October 13
 - Departure airport transfer

Double Room \$825/person | Single supplement +\$360

Superior Double Room \$950/person | Single supplement +\$465

Senior Suite \$1,070/person | Single supplement +\$550

Junior Suite \$1,075/person | Single supplement +\$600

Suite with Whirlpool Tub \$1,100/person | Single supplement +\$600

Infinity Pool Suite \$1,300/person | Single supplement +\$825

Visit www.antelizsuites.com to explore the different room types

Rates are based on Double Occupancy

Double Rooms are the only option available with twin beds

Additional nights can be added, please inquire

Trip Essentials

BEGINS	Chania, Crete, Greece on Tuesday, October 6, 2026 Meet at 2:00 pm at The Chania Hotel Arrival transfer from Chania Airport is included
ENDS	Archanes, Crete, Greece on Tuesday, October 13, 2026 No activities are scheduled on 10/13 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	October 6–13, 2026 Double Occupancy \$3,975 per traveler Single Supplement \$850 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	The Chania Hotel 4 Nights <i>A modern, brand new five-star hotel concept that breathed life back into an iconic 50's-era hotel building in a perfectly central location. With a fitness center, spa and rooftop bar & restaurant.</i> Manili Boutique Suites 3 Nights <i>An atmospheric property built in the local style of Archanes village, with an outdoor pool and a bistro on site. Recipient of the Michelin Key.</i>



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

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 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!

Trip price includes the following:

- Airport or ferry transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities
- 7 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 Chania (CHQ) and end in Heraklion (HER). Travelers will need to book a multi-city flight.

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



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 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

Register now!

Visit 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 15, 2026.



Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:
letsgo@onwardtravel.co
845-293-2729

