Walking on Crete

Trip Code: SGCS

Version:

WALK & TREK	SELF-GUIDED	5 MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike Crete's spectacular canyons and gorges: Samaria, Aradena and Imbros
- Discover stunning coastal paths & idyllic beaches at Marmara, Sweetwater and Loutro
- Explore the historic city of Chania
- Walk in the White Mountains and relax on the Omalos Plateau

AT A GLANCE

- 7 days walking and sightseeing
- Daily departures
- Join at Chania / End in Chora Sfakion

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

With a rich tapestry of culture and history, rugged mountains and canyons, idyllic beaches and incredible cuisine, Crete has so much to offer to its visitors that it's hard to cram it all into one week. On this 9 day self-guided walking holiday, we've included some of the best highlights of southwest Crete to be discovered on foot at your own pace.

Your holiday begins in the historical harbour town of Chania where you will discover romantic Venetian architecture, before travelling high into the White Mountains to hike to the summit of Mt Gingilos (1,980m) and enjoy the peaceful mountain village of Omalos. From the rugged mountains you will hike through the magnificent Samaria Gorge, among the largest in Europe, before you emerge at the remote seaside village of Agia Roumeli and discover the many beautiful beaches on the coast. You will also have the opportunity to hike the dramatic Aradena Gorge and the awe-inspiring Imbros Gorge, both returning you to the coast where you will stay in secluded seaside villages including Loutro and Chora Sfakion, where you can have a real taste of Cretan identity and hospitality. Staying in small hotels and guesthouses on a B&B basis, you will be able to enjoy your choice of fresh and delicious Mediterranean food each night while watching the sun set on your adventure-filled day.

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is perfect for regular walkers looking for an active walking holiday in dramatic terrain, while discovering new cultures and cuisines. Walking an average of 5-6 hours a day, you will be able to take your time and immerse yourself in the beauty of your surroundings. Due to the nature of the terrain, there are days with steep ascents utilising switchbacks, and long descents through canyons from mountain to the sea. The trails are mostly good and easy to follow, but there are some walks where you will encounter open scree and cross rough rocky terrain, such as the ascent of Gingilos and the descent of Aradena Gorge which both call for surefootedness and a head for heights. These routes can also have elements of scrambling with use of hands. Both of these days have alternative route options if you prefer an easier walk. Staying in a selection of perfectly located 2* & 3* local hotels and traditional guesthouses on a B&B basis, you'll be sure to receive warm Cretan hospitality throughout. You will also have the opportunity to enjoy a swim in the turquoise Mediterranean waters at each of the coastal villages you will stay.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Luggage transfers
- Transfer from Chania to Omalos on Day 2
- Transfers from Omalos to Xyloskalo (Day 3 & Day 4)
- Transfer from Chora Sfakion to Imbros on Day 8
- Navigation App and GPX tracks available

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Chania
- Travel from Chora Sfakion
- Visas (if applicable)
- Tourist taxes may apply and are usually under 5 Euros per room per night
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Transfers by local bus or taxi
- Entrance fees
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit and the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook, and all your relevant documents, no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start-date. We will send your documents using a signed-for courier so that you can track your package and know that it is safely on its way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our Sales Team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker, so please remind them to pack it before setting off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start-date, please inform our Sales Team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

GPS Travel App

This holiday includes a GPS navigation app, which contains the routes for you to follow each day, as well as attractions, coffee stops and points of interest along the way. The app does not need to have Wi-Fi connection to work, you simply follow the instructions we provide you to download the app to your personal smartphone device before you leave home and you are ready to go.

While the travel app is running, your phone battery charge can be consumed faster than normal, so we strongly recommend that you pack a power bank with you just in case you require it.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for most of our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, so please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking or cycling holiday for your family, a centre-based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a day's walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool, or visiting museums is calling instead.

Please discuss this further with our Sales Team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts in Chania and ends at Chora Sfakion. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The nearest airport for this trip is Chania with many departures from UK regional airports; it is also possible to fly into/out of Heraklion.

From Chania Airport you can travel to Chania town by public transport or by taxi. Chania Airport is served by KTEL with regular buses to the city of Chania. The journey takes about 30 minutes.

If you are flying to Heraklion Airport you can take the bus from Heraklion Airport to the main bus station in Heraklion, then take the KTEL bus from Heraklion to Chania. A taxi from Heraklion Airport to Chania takes around 2 hours.

At the end of your trip, to get from Chora Sfakion to Chania Airport the journey by public bus takes around 2 hours. To get to Heraklion Airport by public bus the journey via Chania takes around 5 hours.

Bus timetables can be found on https://www.e-ktel.com/en

We can assist with private airport transfers if required, please contact our sales team for a quote.

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

Food in Crete is distinct from Greek food in general, influenced by all the visiting cultures to this island over time. With regional local specialties, Cretan cuisine is undoubtedly some of the best food on offer in the Mediterranean. Ingredients are sourced locally, are seasonal, and proudly reflect the produce of the region.

Popular Greek appetisers called mezedes can be a meal in itself, to be shared together at the table. Mezedes are representative of the local produce; if you are eating by the sea you can expect seafood dishes, or if you are in a mountain village you can expect cheeses, pies and meat dishes. You can experience a wonderful variety including olives, cheese, local bread and olive oil, dips of refreshing tzatziki or taramosalata, kefetdakia (meatballs), calamari, dolmades (stuffed vine leaves), gigandes (lima beans in a tomato sauce), kalitsounia (snack sized traditional pies stuffed with cheese, that can be either savoury or sweet)... the combinations are endless!

Fresh Greek salads are abundant, generously dressed with quality locally produced olive oil and topped with delicious Cretan cheese. For those that enjoy meat dishes you can also find delicious souvlaki (barbecued meat) and kleftiko (slow cooked lamb), as well as moussaka formed of layers of sliced aubergine, potatoes and minced meat.

Regional specialities include chaniotiko bourteki - vegetable pie from Chania consisting of layered filo with slices of vegetables, potatoes and cheese; Sfakianopita, layers of unleavened dough and soft cheese, flattened like a crepe or pancake and fried until golden and crispy. This snack is believed to have been created by shepherds from Sfakia, hence its name. You might choose to sample the Cretan delicacy of hochlioi bourbouristi (fried snails) - eaten fresh in the summer months, enjoyed with a side of crusty bread and a glass of ouzo or raki. When you are by the coast you can find plentiful fresh seafood including squid, octopus and cuttlefish. Fish is often grilled whole and drizzled with lemon and oil dressing. Delicious saganaki can be with prawns or mussels, fried on the skillet and typically served with a tomato sauce and cheese.

For a sweet treat you can be tempted by baklava inherited from the Ottomans, formed of layers of filo pastry, nuts and honey; bougatsa, a traditional breakfast food of pastry stuffed with custard or cheese and sprinkled with powdered sugar; or xerotigana, deep fried pastry with honey and nuts. Yum!

Accommodation

For this holiday we have selected a combination of local 2* & 3* hotels and small traditional guesthouses, each chosen for its excellent location and warm welcome. Many have restaurants on-site where you can enjoy freshly cooked traditional dishes made with locally sourced ingredients. Additionally many of the accommodations in the coastal villages have rooms with sea views and lovely terraces from which you can watch the sunset, and are just a short hop from the sea so there is plenty of opportunity for swimming in the crystal clear waters of the Mediterranean. All our accommodations are booked in twin or double rooms on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the flexibility to sample the local cuisine in your choice of restaurant or taverna.

It is possible to arrange additional nights' accommodation if you would like to extend your stay in Crete. Please speak to our Sales Team for further details.

During high season you may be booked into an alternative accommodation of a similar standard in the area.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided walking holiday is that you decide the pace however, getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable your walks will be. You should be comfortable with walking 5 to 6 hours for consecutive days on rugged paths. Some of the routes will take you on rough terrain with rocky sections and scree slopes or on coastal cliff paths where surefootedness and a head for heights is required to enjoy the views.

Climate

Crete has a temperate Mediterranean climate with mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. The best time of year for hiking on Crete is in the late spring (May to June) and early autumn (September and October). At these times daytime temperatures can range from low to high 20's Celsius, dropping at night to 10 degrees C in the mountains and 15 degrees C on the coast. Temperatures during the summer months of July and August are hot, reaching up to 30 degrees C during the day and with little chance of rain, and warm evenings.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

Lonely Planet: Crete

A History of Crete - Chris Moorey

Crete: The Battle and the Resistance - Antony Beevor

My Wife Suggested Crete - Hugh Fernyhough

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good-grip soles

- Hiking socks
- Long / short hiking trousers
- Functional base layer top and leggings
- T-shirts
- Fleece / extra warm layer
- Windproof jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Hat, gloves, and neck gaiter
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Sunhat
- Small first aid kit inside your rucksack
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Camera (and batteries / memory card)
- Reusable sealable picnic boxes for picnics

- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Walking poles
- Headtorch with spare batteries
- Personal wash kit
- Your self-guided route notes
- Rucksack (approx. 20L)

Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons in double or twin occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers - contact our Sales Team for a quote.

When considering your travel dates, you might like to investigate any seasonal opening times of attractions and points of interest.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights' accommodation before or after your self-guided trip - ask our Sales Team to find out more about this.

Our Sales Team will be happy to provide you with a quote for scheduled flights, or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

This itinerary is unique to KE, combining the very best highlights of south west Crete. Discover Chania, the White Mountains, the spectacular gorges of Samaria, Aradena and Imbros, and the beautiful coast with secluded beaches and peaceful seaside villages. The flow of this itinerary enables you to go at your own pace while exploring the iconic sights of Crete on foot.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 11/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change