

## 8 days | FEMININE TOUR OF CRETE

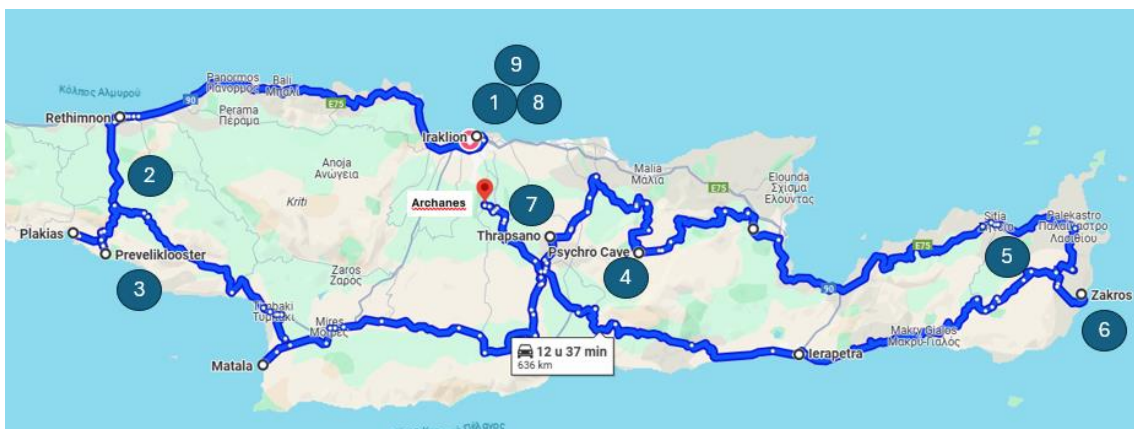
Discover Crete through the lens of **feminine power** on this 8-day self-guided tour with the full support of the local travel agency [Petassos](#). Minoan Crete, a society where women were revered and held central roles, serves as the heart of your journey.



Explore sacred sites dedicated to goddesses, visit the ancient ruins of Knossos, and uncover hidden locations that reflect the island's matrilineal history, where women were honored as leaders and protectors.

This trip offers a deeper connection to the island's landscape, culture, and gastronomy. Meet local women who carry forward Cretan traditions and experience the island's healing foods, crafted to nourish body and spirit.

Perfect for solo travelers, couples, and small groups, this journey invites you to reconnect with your inner strength in a land where the feminine is celebrated.



## The essentials

- 9 days - 8 nights.
- Quality 2-3\* hotels, single or **double** rooms or apartments with breakfast, Wi-Fi, air-condition and hospitable owners.
- Car rental with mix insurance
- *Short olive-oil tasting in a traditional olive-mill (depending on time of arrival in Crete)*
- Short wine-tasting in a winery in the famous wine routes area of Archanes.
- Our constant assistance and especially ... our suggestions for tours that suit your needs.

## The highlights

- Tasting of delicious dishes from the famous Cretan cuisine
- Crystal clear beaches all over Crete
- Easy nature hikes
- Cities of Heraklion, Agios Nikolaos, Sitia and Rethymnon
- Arkadi Monastery
- MOCHLOS island - archaeological site
- Toplou Monastery
- Palm grove of VAI - Protected area by the European legislation
- Archaeological site of Kato Zakros (the 3rd most important Minoan 'palace' in Crete)
- The Minoan tombs at the "Gorge of the Dead"
- NATURAL PARK of Sitia / GEOPARK of Sitia (UNESCO geological heritage)
- Archaeological museum of Heraklion, Cnossos
- Minoan Palace of Knossos
- Sailing trip to the island of Dia by sunset



## So much to see, so much to do

There are many different things you can do and many places you can visit and explore every day. We know that sometimes you will not have enough time to visit all the places. We have decided to indicate the spots that are interesting but for which there might not be enough time (if you decide to do all the “must-sees” of the day) in *ITALICS*.



Venetian, Cretan, Greek, Italian, Arab, French or German ... they lived here and bequeathed their history over the centuries.

At the end of your excursion (around 2 hours) you will arrive in a district occupied by artists where graffiti and paintings have transformed the rather derelict urban landscape into an open-air gallery. For 3 years these artists have been involved in a project to rehabilitate the old town under a difficult socio-economic context linked to the economic and migratory crisis. Finally, you could choose to have a quality dinner (optional, at an additional cost) in a typical Greek / Cretan tavern/restaurant with a reputation among the locals for its grandma cuisine. In this case, we will order for you a meal around the theme: "Venetian gastronomy or eating habits during the Venetian occupation of Heraklion city".

Or we could organize a marvelous **tasting experience** for you with our expert, in order to be introduced to the world of **olive oil** and the famous Cretan gastronomy. We will visit one of the most traditional olive mills, where they produce an extra extra virgin olive oil and other excellent sub-products of the olive tree. You will have the opportunity to visit the area with a passionate person of the olive mill.



In the evening, you can **dine** in one of the marvelous taverns or restaurants that we could recommend you (if you wish, we can also book one for you).

Included : Accommodation, transfer by taxi to your hotel in the city center, meeting with our representative at the hotel, discussion on the trip and delivery of the travel-documents (detailed road maps and a detailed travel book, specially edited for your day to day trip)

Accommodation: 3-star hotel in Heraklion city center

Not included: Meals/drinks, personal expenses

### **3-star-hotel in Heraklion city center**



The hotel embodies the rich Cretan tradition of warm hospitality. Our guests enjoy a unique combination of high quality services in a friendly, comfortable, modern and luxurious environment. We make sure you have everything you need to meet your vacation needs.

*EXTRA: We can also reserve you a 4\* City hotel in the city center, with breakfast, wifi and air-condition, if you would prefer this.*

## **Day 2: Drive to Rethymnon and the south of the Island**

Today after your breakfast, you will be delivered the car at the hotel. You take your luggage and drive towards the West. Your road trip begins!

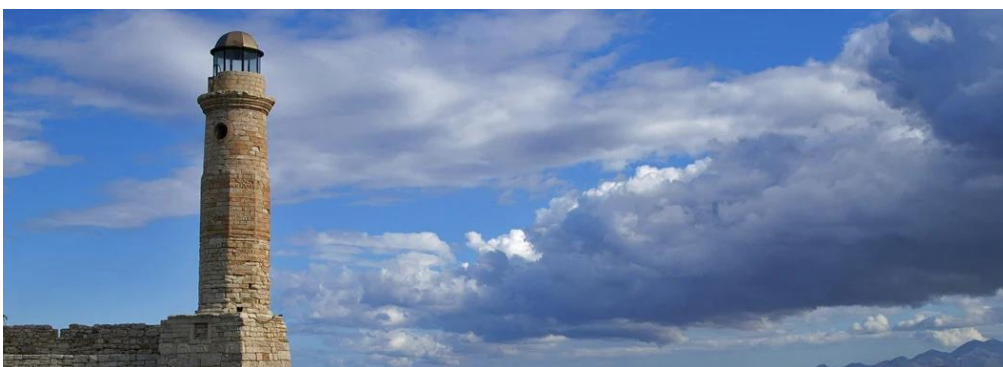
You can enjoy various stops in:

- **The Melidoni Cave** . The rather small but nevertheless impressive stalactite cave impresses with atmospheric lighting, massive stalactite formations and an interesting (albeit tragic) historical background. Illuminated panels provide plenty of information about the history of the cave. The temperature inside the cave is a pleasant 18 degrees (October). There are plenty of parking spaces directly in front of the entrance and along the road. The "Cave" café next door offers snacks and refreshments as well as a fantastic view over the valley and invites you to linger.
- **The Apithano Honey Museum** is nearby the cave. You can buy some tasty honey products in the shop there.  
*The small but beautiful Honey Museum is definitely worth a visit. The free tour (in English and optional) is very detailed and you can easily understand how honey production works with the help of photos and exhibits. The tour is led by a member of the owner's family and ended with a tasting session. So, a visit to the cave can also be ideally combined with a visit to the museum IF you decide to drop another visit later on in the day (otherwise the day will be too short).*
- The village of **Margarites**, where you will be able to shop a variety of pottery and other traditional handicrafts.

- The historic monastery of **Arkadi**, Crete's most famous, a symbol of freedom, set in an idyllic location.



- **Rethymnon**, the third largest city in Crete located between Heraklion and Hania, rich in history and beautiful scenery. The **old town**, with its Venetian fortress, lighthouse, fountains, narrow streets and Turkish minaret has a special charm and is worth a visit.
  - Rethymno is the most representative sample of a Cretan Renaissance city. The third largest city in Crete with a population of about 30,000. The old town of Rethymnon is a preserved city that bears elements from both the Venetian and Ottoman periods. In the old town you will come across the Arkadi and Antistaseos street markets. Above the old town, you will see the imposing fortress Fortezza, which once protected Rethymnon.
  - We will here experience a tasty Greek streetfood lunch



- After Rethymno, we will traverse the valley of Amari. Here we visit some typical villages, some archeological sites and the beautiful gorge of **Patsos** with the sanctuary of Ermes.
- *You continue through several other villages such as the charming mountain village of **Spili**, built in the shape of an amphitheatre, almost in the centre of the district of Rethymnon with the characteristic Venetian fountain with lions' heads. Here you can*

*have a small break for a stroll and a coffee under the century-old plane trees. Several traditional watermills are preserved in the village.*

- Arrival at **Plakias**, an old fishing village and now a tourist town. We suggest it for its location, as from here you can make interesting visits at short distances. Plakias is one of the most beautiful coastal towns on Crete's south coast. The small southern coastal town is surrounded by a hilly landscape with several small bathing bays. The most beautiful small bays in Crete are located here. We suggest to have dinner in one of the restaurants near the coast, enjoying the happy sounds of the bouzouki.

**Trip length: Heraklion to Plakias 115km, 1h 50min**

Included : Car rental, accommodation, breakfast

Accommodation: 3-star hotel in Plakias

Not included: Meals/drinks, personal expenses, entrance tickets to museums and archaeological sites

### **3-star hotel in Plakias**

The hotel is located in a quiet street leading to the beach and several taverns, in Plakias. A swimming pool with free sun beds and umbrellas is featured.



## **Day 3: The idyllic palm forest and the old monastery of Preveli**

Today after breakfast you can visit the famous palm beach and the old monastery of **Preveli**.

***Preveli Monastery** is one of the largest, most important and most historic monasteries in Crete. It is located far away from any settlement in the impressive landscape of southern Crete.*



The **palm beach** is not far from the monastery of Preveli, whose name has been passed on to it. Behind the beach, the "Megalopotamos", also called "Kourtaliotis" mountain stream, forms the small pond - or lake of Preveli, which extends into the **gorge** behind it.

In this gorge, the Cretan date palm forms a natural palm grove. Access - either via the car park down 500 steps - or including a 2-hour hike along the river through the nature-protected gorge is a little difficult, but definitely worth the trip! The beach and water are very clean and there is even a small snack station where you can buy drinks and snacks.

*The hiking is optional. You can avoid it by driving to this point **Drymiskiano Ammoudi** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/cXqvxr6rVh9dGPow9> (where you also have a delightful "**Dionysos Rooms Taverna**"). From here it is a 8-minutes-walk to the beach of Preveli <https://maps.app.goo.gl/53HTWq6VkPvG9jTW7> and you can walk for how long you wish along the gorge.*

*For geology lovers that want to spend the afternoon admiring natural beauty, we suggest a visit to **Agios Pavlos** as well. Well-hidden in a sheltered bay, this place is accessible by a narrow road. One can admire the famous multi-colored rock formations that reveal the incredible geological history of Crete as well as the sand dunes. A short but demanding hike will allow you to discover everything: sand dunes, faults, limestone formations...and endless beaches.*

Back at **Plakias**, the approximately 1200-meter-long sandy beach invites you to swim. In the afternoon, the numerous restaurants and cafes entice you to linger and enjoy culinary delights with a view of the bay and the sea. Later in the evening, you can visit one of the bars in **Plakias** and enjoy Greek hospitality until the early hours of the morning.



In the evening, we are heading for the nearby **Mirthios**. Mirthios is a small village a little more than one kilometre as the crow flies from Plakias. By car from Plakias it is about 4 kilometres up to Mirthios, one has to overcome the almost 200 height metres partly in serpentines. Mirthios has four excellent taverns. The narrow streets are perfect for a short walk. From Mirthios you have a wonderful view on the bay of Plakias.



**Trip length: Plakias to Preveli 11km, 20min**

Hike: 2 hours through Preveli Gorge

Accommodation: 3-star hotel in Plakias

Included: Accomodation, breakfast

Not included: Meals/drinks, personal expenses, entrance tickets to museums and archaeological sites

## **Day 4: The great mountains: where God dwells!**

Today you hit the road that leads to Lasithi Plateau!

We first drive through the extended valley of Messara. It is a fertile plain, surrounded by the most sacred mountains of central Crete, attracted many tribes and civilizations that passed from the Mediterranean the last 10000 years.. The archeological sites found and excavated in the plain of Messara are just... innumerous!

*EXTRA: This day, we recommend you to visit the most important ones and if you desire, we could arrange for you to have a certified English speaking guide so that you have a deep plunge into the history of those sites.*

Visit the archaeological site of **Phaistos**, the second most important archaeological site in Greece after Knossos. Excavations have revealed historical monuments and important remains dating back to the Minoan period, Geometric and Hellenistic times.



You can have a picnic in the former **hippie town of Matala or in Kommos or Kamilari.**



Visit the archaeological site of Gortyn. The ruins of **Gortyna**, one of the most powerful cities of Crete which was the capital of the island during the Roman and Byzantine periods, slightly north of Phaistos between the villages of Agioi Deka and Agios Mitropoli. Its 6000 years old history make it is one of the richest archaeological sites. The ruins of a Minoan villa found near Mitropolis indicate that the entire area has been inhabited since the end of the Neolithic period. You could visit the **mountaineous** village of Zaros either the picturesque lake of Votomos and maybe a part of the gorge of Rouvas or later on in Kamilari

The **Tsoutsouros** beach and surroundings, a charming, tranquil shore. Swimming in Tsoutsouras has been traditionally considered therapeutic and healing by many Cretans, because of its high concentration of salt and iodine, healing musculoskeletal and orthopedic problems.

The **Thrapsano** village which is identified with pottery and particularly with the manufacture of “pitharia”, as its residents are considered descendants of the Minoan potters. Traditionally therefore the Thrapsano resident “Thrapsaniotis” is identified even today with the potter and in particular with the name of “pitharas”. The tradition and the historical identity of the village are maintained through the modern pottery workshops and large production that is carried out.

Along the way to Psychro you can admire the views of the **Aposelemis Dam** and the abandoned village **Sfendyli** and make a stop at the cozy village **Avdou**.

Finally you reach the **Lasithi Plateau** and the surrounding area, a treasure trove well hidden between the great mountains. Situated at an altitude of 850 m, it offers a magnificent panorama and is surrounded by the Dikti mountain range (which rises to 2148 m) and Mount Selena (1559 m). The summits of these two mountains remain snow-capped until spring, and can be seen from different parts of the island...

**Trip length: Plakias to Thrapsano 130km, 2h 35min. | Thrapsano to Psychro 48km, 1h 6min.**

Visit the famous cave with its beautiful stalactites, "**Diktaion Antron**", the mythical cave of Zeus. Tour of the plateau with its typical villages, visit to two famous monasteries, stop at the traditional kafenia (cafes) or go shopping in the craft shops are recommended. <Currently, maintenance work is going on in the cave and it can – unfortunately – not be visited>



When we arrive in Psychro, we will be just in time for visiting the **Mythological Theme Park**. This is an audio visual display that brings Greek Mythology to life in an impressive series of scenes. For anyone who doesn't know their Icarus from their Zeus, this will inform and educate you. And entertain you along the way. It's one of the best of its kind and certainly one of the most entertaining "heritage" attractions on Crete.

Included: Accommodation, breakfast, car rental

Accommodation: Guesthouse in Lasithi

Not included: Meals/drinks, personal expenses, entrance tickets to museums and archaeological sites

Hotel : our splendid 3\* hotel is located just next to the Theme Park. [More](#)

## **Day 5: Elounda and the peaceful southeast Crete**

In the morning, we drive from Psychro to **Elounda**.

You could go for a walk around the harbor of Elounda and discover abandoned salt mines of the recent past with the remnants of the mills and other stone-constructions.

*There is a possibility of swimming in several places that we will suggest you. You could even take a snorkel dive in Olous, a submerged ancient Minoan harbor city off the coast of Elounda.*



When we proceed on the road eastwards after Elounda, you could have several stops in **amazing places** like *the stunning archeological site of Lato, and/or the incredible frescoes of the famous church of traditional Kritsa (close to the small gorge of Kritsa) as well as the legendary lake of Agios Nikolaos (where you - depending on your mood – can enjoy a juice).*

*EXTRA: NAXOS-ELOUNDA - The ancient OXA- A visit off the beaten track - with an archeologist  
Amazing view to all the bay of Merabelo and Elounda. Full of ancient constructions*



Further down the road, you can visit *the ancient olive tree of 3200 years old, the site of Azorias, the amazing beaches around the Istro region (e.g. **Voulisma beach**), a **Panorama bistro** with a beautiful view of the island of Pseira and the charming fishing village of **Mochlos** in the gulf of Mirabello.*

Eventually, you find yourself at an incredible area at the east extremity of Crete... In particular, after a short visit (*maybe lunch*) *at the charming city of the poets, to the city of **Sitia**, you continue to the Monastery of **Toplou**, an architectural ornament in the desert-like landscape of East Crete. At Toplou, except from the visit to the monastery and its winery, where you can participate in a wine and olive oil tasting. You can also visit the strange Tiffany formations at a nearby gorge that belongs to the Unesco Geopark routes, important for the geological heritage.*

**Trip length: Psychro to Fourni 48km, 1h | Fourni to Voulisma beach 28km, 30min. | Voulisma beach to Mochlos 24km, 30min. | Mochlos to Sitia 33km, 45min. | Sitia 44km, 1h**

5 min from the monastery of Toplou and its olive groves and wine production, the incredible sandy beach of **Itanos** pops up, with the ancient ruins dispersed everywhere... Like in Fairytales.

Last but not least, you think you are in an oasis : a route with palm trees takes you to the beach of **Vai** from where you can admire the palm forest and the sand-dunes of the nearby beach. Vai is a Natural Park, a magnificent tropical grove, which belongs to Unesco's network of geoparks.



Eventually, you reach **Kato Zakros** where you will spend two nights exploring the region.



Included : Car rental, accommodation, breakfast

### **Traditional Apartments in Kato Zakros**

This family traditional apartment is situated at the exit of the majestic gorge of Dead, inside an impressive garden with over 30 big trees and many flowers.

Outside every apartment, there is a wooden canopy and comfortable seats, as well as hammocks and areas for daydreaming...The interior as well as the furniture are wooden, while the beds are either made of stone or of a combination of wood and stone. In the kitchen, one can find all the comforts required for the preparation of meals. There is also air-conditioning, communal washing-machine and iron, necessary things when one's vacations last long. The breakfast is offered at a communal open-air kitchen and it is self-service (the apts offer the material –marmelade, honey, butter, olive oil, coffee, tea and other local herbs and fresh bread every morning at 8h30).



reached by walking one hour from Kato Zakros. The height at the entrance is 105m. The whole area is commonly known as Pelekita, which name is derived from the quarry, which is below the cave, close to the sea, from which stones have been extracted. Under the cave one can see the sea as if viewing it from a plane. You will see wonderful shapes of stalactites along the path in the cave.

**a Cave.** The cave is located



*EXTRA: While walking to the cave, you will see notice the many wild herbs of Crete . A local agronomist-producer will introduce us to these aromatic and healing herbs.*

Hiking to the "**Gorges of the Dead** with the old caves (tombs of the Minoan era). The gorges connect the villages of Zakros and Kato Zakros effortlessly. The gorges got their name because of the ancient tombs that have been discovered here and you can observe the traces through the gaping holes on the rock walls throughout the valley.

You could start at the town of **Zakros** (Ano Zakros = high in contrast to Kato Zakros = low). (Ano) Zakros has about 1000 permanent residents, while in summer the population



increases mainly due to tourism. Even today the rich water springs, which supply a very large area and extensive olive cultivation in dry-thermal Eastern Crete, are the driving force for the development of Zakros. The village of Zakros itself was originally developed as a mill village that served the needs of the entire province. Unlike the rest areas of prefecture Lassithi, which were dominated by windmills, due to the lack of water, Zakros housed mainly water mills. Dozens of watermills were operating incessantly for grain milling, wool processing and olive grinding.

Now that the watermills are no longer in operation, the area attracts thousands of visitors each year to explore the natural beauties. Folklore museums, restored watermills and an information center - museum for Sitia Geopark, operate in the settlement.

At the end of the excursion, you pass near the **Minoan Palace** of Kato Zakros, one of the largest and most important in Crete. A brief visit to the archaeological site is strongly advised!



**Trekking | walking time:** Between 1 & 2h30 (depending on you wishes).

An alternative hike is the walk through the fantastic gorge of **Chochlakies** with a great beach at the end. Not a relaxing walk but one that requires agility and balance for boulders jumping along the riverbed. Decent walking shoes are a must. It takes 1.5 hours to the beach and 1 hour back.

There might be still time to visit Xerokampos after your hike. **Xerokambos** is a village located close to Kato Zakros. The long sandy beaches are simply gorgeous, the turquoise colors of the sea water are beautiful to look at. It is spread out along wild coves that have not yet been invaded. Swimming at one of the most beautiful beaches in south-east Crete with fine sand, famous for its shallow crystalline waters and wetland with many birds and a particular biodiversity.

*If you are physically on top of your game, you might consider **even more challenging options**:*

- *Drive to the nice little village of **Chochlakes**. You will pass the olive groves and the gorge of Karoumes to reach the secluded, beautiful beach of Karoumes after an hour and a half. From here, you will continue along the coastal path, past the sacred Minoan cave of **Pelekita**, to the village of Kato Zakros. Duration 9 km / 15 min drive, 6h hike*
- **Gorge of the Dead – The large TOUR : 4h**
- **Climb to Minoan Caves** : for those who can manage a medium difficulty climb (no climbing gear needed)



*If on the contrary, you prefer a **lighter menu**, you might consider this:*

- *Only the start of the hike through the "**Gorge of the Dead**", with its ancient caves (burial sites from the Minoan era).*
- *Stay on the **beach in Kato Zakros***

**Driving time:** Kato Zakros – Xerokampos (30 min by car)

**Included :** Car rental, accommodation, breakfast

**Accommodation:** Holiday apartment rental in Kato Zakros

**Not included:** Meals/drinks, personal expenses, entrance tickets to museums and archaeological sites, optional private tour with mountain guide

## **Day 7: From Kato Zakros to Archanes**

Today marks your return towards the Heraklion region. We are driving from Kato Zakros to Archanes, a pretty long ride.

*At the beginning of our road trip, you can optionally pay a visit to the **Karidi plateau** where the centre of the Unesco Natural Park/Geopark is located. The area is part of the Sitia Geopark, which includes the Sitia plateau and the east coast and boasts a unique geophysical wealth of gorges, caves, rocks and rare fossils.*

Further down the road, the **Medieval village of Voila** can be visited. It is a deserted and protected village. Passing through the village's alleys you can still see the ruins of old houses and their rooms, their venetian features and through this sacred silence of the place you have the impression that you hear the Byzantine king, the medieval knight or the Turk fighter gallop away.

We will stop at the picturesque town by the sea **Ierapetra** and **Mirtos** for a walk along the beach or lunch.



**Pyrgos** is an archaeological site of the Minoan civilization near **Myrtos**. This site has had a long history due to its valuable location and geography. The settlement includes a courtyard, many rooms, a country house and a tomb.



We will continue to the village **Alagni** for the next visit of the day: a quality family winery, in an idyllic setting, offering you the perfect opportunity to enjoy nature and discover local wines of distinctive character.

Later, depending on the time of your arrival in **Archanes**, you can stroll around the village and enjoy a good dinner in one of the numerous traditional taverns.



We will spend our night in **Apartments in Ano Archanes**.

**Trip length in total: Kato Zakros to Archanes 180km, 3h 10min.**

Included: Accommodation, breakfast, tasting in a winery, car rental



Accommodation: Holiday rental in Archanes

Not included: Meals/drinks, personal expenses, entrance tickets to museums and archaeological sites, optional farewell wine degustation/ dinner

### **Apartments in Ano Archanes**

Traditional apartments on a hillside overlooking Archanes Youhtas sacred mountain.



## Day 8: Discovering the great Minoan Civilization: Knossos and Museum

In the morning you meet your guide for an interesting private tour in the most significant archeological area of Crete: the famous palace of **Knossos**.



Also you can visit afterwards the **Archaeological museum of Heraklion**, one of the most important in Greece.



In the afternoon, we will take a sailing trip to **Dia**, where Dionysos finds Ariadne!

The half-day trip in the afternoon is perfect for people who want to take a trip out to sea while experiencing the sunset. In a small group of up to 10 people you will spend the trip on a sailboat with qualified and entertaining skippers who will also cook and serve drinks upon arrival of the bay at Dia. All in the family, no clearance. You can have a good chat with people, go snorkeling or lie on the boat in the sun.



*Alternatively, you could start exploring the lively **city center of Heraklion** and maybe have a drink at one of the typical Greek taverns.*

We will then head for the **Strafilo Winebar**. The Winebar is a unique space with a variety of labels and fair prices. The vinyl collection gives a distinct identity. The pinsa is excellent, worth standing next to the good wine. Unique wine varieties and warm place ! After the winebar visit, we propose you to dine in **one of the marvelous restaurants** that we could recommend you (if you wish, we can also book one for you).



We will then make sure you return safely to your hotel in Archanes.

**Trip length: Archanes to palace of Knossos 10km, 15min.**

Included: Accommodation, breakfast, rental car

Accommodation: Holiday rental in Archanes

Not included: Meals/drinks, personal expenses, entrance tickets to museums and archaeological sites, sailing trip to Dia

## Day 9: End of the trip - Bye bye Crete!

[For a cherry on the cake](#), you could join us early in the morning for a walk on **Mount Juktas**.

Breathtaking view of the blue infinity of Aegean sea, over the olive trees-dotted hills, extensive vineyards, Cretan wild herbs and fresh air ... God Zeus knew what he is doing by choosing Mount *Juktas* as his final resting place. So did Minoans when erecting right here their first ever peak sanctuary on Crete. The peak of Mount Juktas, referred to also as Sleeping Zeus mountain, is the most remarkable natural feature of central Crete. Throughout the millennia this sacred mountain has been a place of worship - first venerated by Minoans and then churchgoers. Erect high above the terrain of the island, it reveals an awe-inspiring panoramic view over Crete's North coast - there is no better place to enjoy that kind of grand sight anywhere within vicinity.



We will have our last Cretan Breakfast in our villa in Archanes.



Then, for most it will be preparing to get back to Heraklion to catch the flight home after what undoubtedly will have been extremely fulfilling holidays in Crete.

Arrival in the airport of Heraklion, where you drop off the minivan and departure.

We hope you had a wonderful time and will return home with many happy memories! Goodbye!

**Trip length: Archanes to Heraklion Airport 14km, 24min.**

Included: breakfast

Not included: Meals/drinks, personal expenses