



ANCIENT ISLANDS: CRETE

ADVENTURES IN ATHENS & CRETE

OCTOBER 15TH - 24TH 2020

The Island of Crete has an ancient and fascinating history stretching back into the mists of time. It is said that the mighty Zeus was once enchanted by the beauty of Europa, the daughter of Agenor, king of Tyre. He took the form of a white bull and carried her on his back across the sea to Crete. Here she settled and founded the dynasty that was later named for her son, King Minos – the mysterious and enigmatic Minoan civilization that flourished here between about 1700 and 1400 BCE.

Whatever the truth of its founding, we will come face to face with the evidence of Minoan wealth, power and sophistication as we visit the remains of their fabulous palaces and cities at Knossos, Festos and Gournia.

We'll start our journey with a two-night stop in Athens, where we'll visit the Acropolis and the fabulous New Acropolis Museum located at its base. From there, we'll take the short flight to Crete and make our base in the lively capital of Heraklion. We'll explore a variety of sites in a series of day trips, encompassing the whole history of the island from the Minoans to the present day. This fall, why not plan an epic odyssey on the Island of Crete.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15TH - Evening departure from your chosen gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16TH - Your arrival in Athens will be met for a short drive to our hotel. There will be free time to unpack, relax and begin to explore the neighborhood. We'll meet for dinner and drinks at the hotel this evening. Welcome to Greece. **(D)**

OVERNIGHT: ATHENS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH - A leisurely start this morning includes a guided visit of the new Acropolis Museum. This is followed by a tour of the Acropolis itself, the main site of Classical Athens dominating the ancient city center. The afternoon is free to wander through the Plaka, the old part of the city with narrow winding streets bursting with stores and cafes. This evening we'll have dinner at a local taverna. **(B, D)**

OVERNIGHT: ATHENS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18TH - We return to Athens Airport this morning for the short flight to Heraklion, the capital of the island of Crete. We'll check in to our hotel in the center of the city and then have free time to find lunch before we enjoy a guided tour of the National Archeological Museum of Crete, located just around the corner from our hotel. Dinner is included this evening.

(B, D) OVERNIGHT: HERAKLION



THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (INCLUDES INTERNAL FLIGHTS): **\$3690**
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: **\$ 870**

Airfares are available from many U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

AIRFARE: Round trip air from Athens to Crete, including all airport taxes and customs fees
HOTELS: 8 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels, including all hotel taxes and service charges
COACHING: All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
MEALS: Breakfast daily, 2 lunches, 4 dinners
GUIDES: Discover Europe tour director throughout, local guide at all historical sites
EXPENSES: Portage of one large suitcase per person
ENTRANCES: Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

OPTIONAL SANTORINI EXTENSION: The cost of the Santorini Extension is \$990 per person, double occupancy (\$360 single supplement) including all flights, hotels, meals and inclusions as listed.

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be mailed to each registrant on receipt of deposit.





MONDAY, OCTOBER 19TH - Today we visit the Palace of Knossos. Forever associated with King Minos and the fabled Minotaur, Knossos is the largest and best-preserved palace of the Minoan civilization, dating from between 1700 and 1400 BC. After an extensive visit of this large site we will return to Heraklion for a free afternoon. The evening is also free to sample a local restaurant. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HERAKLION**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20TH - Our excursion today takes us south across the island to the ancient Minoan site of Festos, second only to Knossos in terms of size and importance. We'll stop for lunch in the seaside resort of Matala, famous for the Roman burial caves, carved into the cliff sides. After lunch we'll visit the fabulous Roman remains of the city of Gortys. We'll return to Heraklion for a free evening. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: HERAKLION**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21ST - This morning a short drive out of the city brings us to the Monastery of Arkadi. Built during the last Venetian period (completed in 1587), the monastery has become a symbol of freedom to the Cretan people, due to the events in 1866 when it was destroyed during a siege by the Turkish Army. From here we will visit the nearby village of Margarites, known for its traditional Cretan village architecture and its local pottery industry. We return to Heraklion and have the rest of the afternoon free – you may like to visit the local history museum or take a stroll around the city walls. The evening is free to explore the city and dine on local cuisine. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HERAKLION**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22ND - The day begins with a visit to the Minoan site at Malia, the third-largest on the island. From here we drive up into the mountains and onto the 3,000-ft-high Lasithi Plateau, green, fertile, and irrigated by white-sailed windmills. We'll stop here for lunch, and pass close to the Dicteon Andron, the cave where his mother, Rhea, hid the crying infant Zeus from Cronus, his father. On our way back to Heraklion we'll visit the 13th-century church of Panaghia Kera, with its frescoes from the late Byzantine period. The evening is free in Heraklion. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: HERAKLION**



A LASITHI PLATEAU WINDMILL



ATHENS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23RD - Our excursion today is to the Minoan city of Gournia, discovered and excavated around the turn of the last century by the American archeologist Harriet Boyd-Hawes. A beautiful drive along the coast brings us to the town of Sitia, where we'll visit its delightful museum, known for its collection of Linear A tablets (the writing of the Minoan people). We'll return to Heraklion with time to freshen up before we gather for a farewell dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: HERAKLION**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24TH - Morning transfer to Heraklion Airport for the short flight to Athens, where you connect for your return flights for the US. Or you may wish to stay on for an optional 3-night stay on the magical island of Santorini. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HOME**

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch, D - dinner

OPTIONAL SANTORINI EXTENSION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24TH - You will connect in Athens to the short flight to Santorini. On arrival we will transfer to our hotel. After time to check in and have lunch we will gather for an afternoon visit to Akrotiri, one of the most important prehistoric sites in the world, showing evidence of settlement from as early as the 4th millennium BCE. Like Pompeii, much of the site was preserved as a result of a volcanic eruption covering it in a layer of ash – however, the eruption at Akrotiri occurred 1,650 years earlier! Dinner is included this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: SANTORINI**



FIRA, SANTORINI

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25TH - This morning we take a panoramic tour of the island villages with their distinctive architecture, and stop to view one of the famous black-sand beaches. In the afternoon, you may choose to climb to the top of the active volcano for stunning views of the island. The evening is free. **(B) OVERNIGHT: SANTORINI**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26TH - A free day. You may take an optional boat trip around the volcano crater to view the island from the water. **(B) OVERNIGHT: SANTORINI**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27TH - Morning transfer to Santorini Airport for a short flight to Athens, where you connect with your return flights to the US **(B) OVERNIGHT: HOME**