



## GREECE

# SANTORINI AND CRETE ISLAND ESCAPE (TOUR CODE: 12004)

### STARTS AND ENDS

Athens to  
Chania

### TRAVEL PERIODS

16 Apr 23 - 05 Oct 23

### EXPERIENCE

Beach  
Cultural

### TRAVEL STYLE

Independent Holiday Packages

Marvel at the rugged landscapes, the massive caldera and the mesmeric sunset in Santorini Island. Be charmed by Crete and its Knossos Palace.

## Highlights

- Discover **Athens** boasting many modern and ancient monuments like the Temple of Zeus, the Old Stadium, Syntagma Square, the Parliament and the Tomb to the Unknown soldier, the Academy, the Library, and the National Gardens
- Visit the **Palace of Knossos**, an archaeological site just few kilometers from Heraklion where the emblematic king Minos used to reside and the **Archaeological Museum**, home to a unique collection of artifacts from the Minoan civilization
- Sail from Santorini and visit its many beaches: **Red Beach in Akrotiri**, with the red rocks and the dark pebbles, the **White Beach**, accessible only by boat and the **Mesa Pigadi**, an incredible swimming spot!
- Enjoy a walking tour through the streets of the **Old City of Chania**, considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in the Mediterranean hence why it's been renamed the "**Venice of the East**"
- Travel on the most scenic route with gorgeous sea and mountain vistas along Crete's beautiful northern coast leads to the cute, hustling and bustling town of **Rethymno**
- Uncover the famous **Monastery of Arkadi**, built on the edge of the high plateau and preserving magnificent pieces of art, culture and history of the past colonizations

Explore Athens, a city whose history spans through centuries; your tour of the ancient sites includes the famous Acropolis and House of Parliament and the Panathenaic Stadium, the place from where the Olympic Flame starts its journey to the cities of the Olympic Games.

Sail to the lost city of Atlantis, Santorini, with stunning sunsets and picturesque sugar cubed architecture. Your next destination is the largest city of Crete, Heraklion, must see the Knossos Palace!

Drive to Ag. Nikolaos the capital of Lasithi and home to “Voulismeni” lake, lose yourself in the island’s largest sandy beach found in Rethymno and complete your Cretan journey with Chania; the most beautiful town of Crete.



- ✓ ENTIRE Cooling-Off Period
- ✓ ENTIRE Change of Mind
- ✓ ENTIRE On Ground Support
- ✓ ENTIRE AUD Prices
- ✓ ENTIRE Industry Accredited
- ✓ ENTIRE Australian Owned

## INCLUSIONS

- 2 nights in Athens at Acropolian Spirit Hotel - 4\*
- 3 nights in Santorini at Cliff Side Suites - 4\*
- 3 nights in Heraklion at the Ibis Styles Heraklion Central - 4\*
- 3 nights in Chania at Samaria Hotel - 4\*
- High-speed boat economy ticket from Athens to Santorini
- High-speed boat economy ticket from Santorini to Heraklion
- Private transfers in Athens, Santorini and Crete Island
- Daily Breakfast
- Full-Day Private Tour of Athens including the Acropolis & the Acropolis Museum followed by Walking Food Tour
- Semi-Private Catamaran Sunset Cruise in Santorini Island (5hrs) with dinner included
- Private Half-Day Tour of Heraklion with a Professional English-speaking guide (4hrs) and food tasting
- Private Full-Day Tour of Rethymno with a Professional English-speaking guide (7hrs) & food tasting
- Private Full-Day Tour to Chania with Olive and Wine Tasting (8hrs)
- Entrance fees Athens: Acropolis, Acropolis Museum
- Entrance fees of Knossos & Archeological Museum
- Entrance fees Arkadi: Monastery

## ITINERARY

Day

1

### Athens International Airport Athens

Welcome to Athens the birthplace of Western Civilization, the Capital of Greece!

Upon arrival at Athens International Airport meet with your English-speaking escort and transfer to your hotel.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight stay in Athens at the **Acropolian Spirit Boutique Hotel**.



## Day 2

## Athens

After breakfast, wander **the landmarks of Historic Athens including the Acropolis and the New Acropolis Museum** focused on the findings from the Acropolis.

Ancient yet modern, classic yet creative, traditional yet constantly changing... Athens is a city of memorable contrasts. The past and the present of Athens unfolds before your eyes while driving around the city's highlight spots and monuments like the Temple of Zeus, the Old Stadium, Syntagma Square, the Parliament and the Tomb to the Unknown Soldier, the Academy, the Library, and the National Gardens.

On the natural fortress of the **Acropolis**, reinforced by the hand of man, stand the Propylaea, the temple of the Winged Victory, **Erechtheion** with the Porch of the Caryatids and, towering overall, and the majestic Parthenon. A winding path leads to the treasure of antiquity. Visible are the relics of the civilization of which we are the proud inheritors. A few meters away from the Acropolis entrance and the Ancient Theatre of Dionysos, the **New Acropolis Museum**, built on pedestrian walkway of Dionysiou Areopagitou Street, looks like hanging between the past and the present of Athens.

Designed by Bernard Tschumi and Mihalis Fotiadis, the **new Acropolis Museum** has a total area of 25,000 square meters, with exhibition space of over 14,000 square meters. Made of stainless steel, glass, marble and concrete, materials typical of the Athenian environment, the new museum has a direct view of the Acropolis. With bioclimatic planning, which gives ideal lighting and heating conditions, the New Museum offers all the amenities expected in an international museum of the 21st century.

Proceed **on foot** to visit different spots taste local products like **olive oil, honey, cheese, wine, vinegar, liquor, and sweets**, all made by small producers from all over Greece. Next, it's a treat from the street, as you sample a **koulouri**, one of the all-time classic snacks on the go and then a cup of authentic Greek coffee in a wonderful old café. After this, get ready to duck into a boisterous visit to the central fish and **meat market**, where butchers and fishmongers compete for the attention of Athens' serious food shoppers. The old **Central Market of Athens (Varvakios Agora)** is located exactly in the heart of the city, and learn from your guide about the city's culinary history. You'll next visit **specialty food stores to try local produce cold cuts**, and discover some of the hidden stores to purchase tantalizingly **fresh fruit, Greek olives, cheese, ham** and other alluring deli produce, local wine, aged aromatized vinegar, organic olive oil and honey. Around the corner is the famous **spice street of Athens**, lined with traditional herb shops that also carry amazing specialty meats and other traditional delicacies. After that you will end up having lunch, tasting the **famous Greek souvlaki!!** & traditional spinach pie. Finally, a last stop to taste of the Greek specialty **loukoumades (Greek doughnuts with honey syrup and almonds)** and return to your hotel.

Overnight stay in Athens at the **Acropolian Spirit Boutique Hotel**.

Breakfast



Day **3**

## Athens Santorini

After breakfast, transfer to Piraeus Port for embarkation to the high-speed boat for Santorini Island.

Upon arrival in Santorini, meet with your English-speaking escort and transfer to your hotel.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight stay in Santorini at the **Cliff Side Suites**.

Breakfast



Day **4**

## Santorini

After breakfast, the morning is at leisure to relax and discover what Santorini has to offer.

In the afternoon around 15.30hrs, transfer from your hotel to the port and depart for a **Semi-Private Catamaran ride up to 14 pax**. Your Sunset Cruise includes:

- Welcome drink
- Snorkeling gear
- Towels
- Dinner on board: Seafood, chicken fillet, salads, open bar with local white wine, beers, beverages, fruits (Vegetarian meal available upon request).

Set sail from the picturesque Marina of Vlychada and enjoy sailing along with the magnificent coastal scenery of Santorini. Your first photo shooting stop is at the Red Beach in Akrotiri, one of the most beautiful beaches of the island with the red rocks and the dark pebbles. Move on and reach the White Beach – accessible only by boat – and the Mesa Pigadia swimming spot and snorkel in the crystal-clear blue waters with the rich underwater environment and reefs.

Then sail past the Indian Rock, the Venetian Light House of Akrotiri. Pass by the Aspronisi Island and marvel at the glorious views of the Caldera and the cliff-hanging white houses. Sail around the must-see Volcano coast and stop at its' hot springs, where you can treat yourself to a natural spa in the thermal mixed volcanic mud waters. One more stop follows up, this time to a secluded private bay and plunge in the majestic waters as our attentive crew prepares for you a delicious meal.

At the end of this unique sailing experience, head back to the Marina of Vlychada.

Overnight stay in Santorini at the **Cliff Side Suites**.

Breakfast, Dinner



Day **5**

## Santorini

Day at leisure to discover what the stunning island of Santorini has to offer.

Overnight stay in Santorini at **Cliff Side Suites**.

Breakfast



THE BREATHTAKING ISLAND OF SANTORINI

## Day 6 Santorini Heraklion

After breakfast, the morning is at leisure.

Transfer to Santorini Port for embarkation to the high-speed boat for Heraklion in Crete. Upon arrival private transfer to your hotel.

Overnight stay in Heraklion at the **Ibis Styles Heraklion Central**.

Breakfast



HERAKLION

## Day 7 Heraklion

After breakfast, drive to **Knossos** the ancient capital of the **great king Minos**.

The original palace of Knossos was constructed around 1.900 B.C. Some two-hundred years later it was destroyed by an earthquake and rebuilt on a grander scale. The final catastrophe occurred around 1.500-1.450 B.C. with the eruption of the

volcano in Santorini. Despite this blow, people continued to live there for another fifty years, until a fire swept throughout the city circa 1.400 B.C. Your guided tour will take you through the fantastic ruins of the ancient palace complex, which served as the administrative and religious centers for the whole region. The restoration undertaken by Sir Arthur Evans, though criticized by some for its modernity, helps the tourist to both visualize the palace as it was and understand its **labyrinthine complexity**. The living quarters of the king and queen and members of the royal court, rooms for state occasions, theater area, store rooms and potters' workshops are all within the palace complex.

**The Archaeological Museum** houses a unique collection of artifacts from the Minoan civilization. The displays of idols made of terra cotta, marble and alabaster, collections of gold, jewelry, ivory, figurines, sarcophagi and frescoes will give you an insight into this artistic-minded civilization and complement your visit to Knossos.

After the visit you will have the chance to walk around Heraklion city and **taste the famous cream pie!**

Overnight stay in Heraklion at the **Ibis Styles Heraklion Central**.

Breakfast



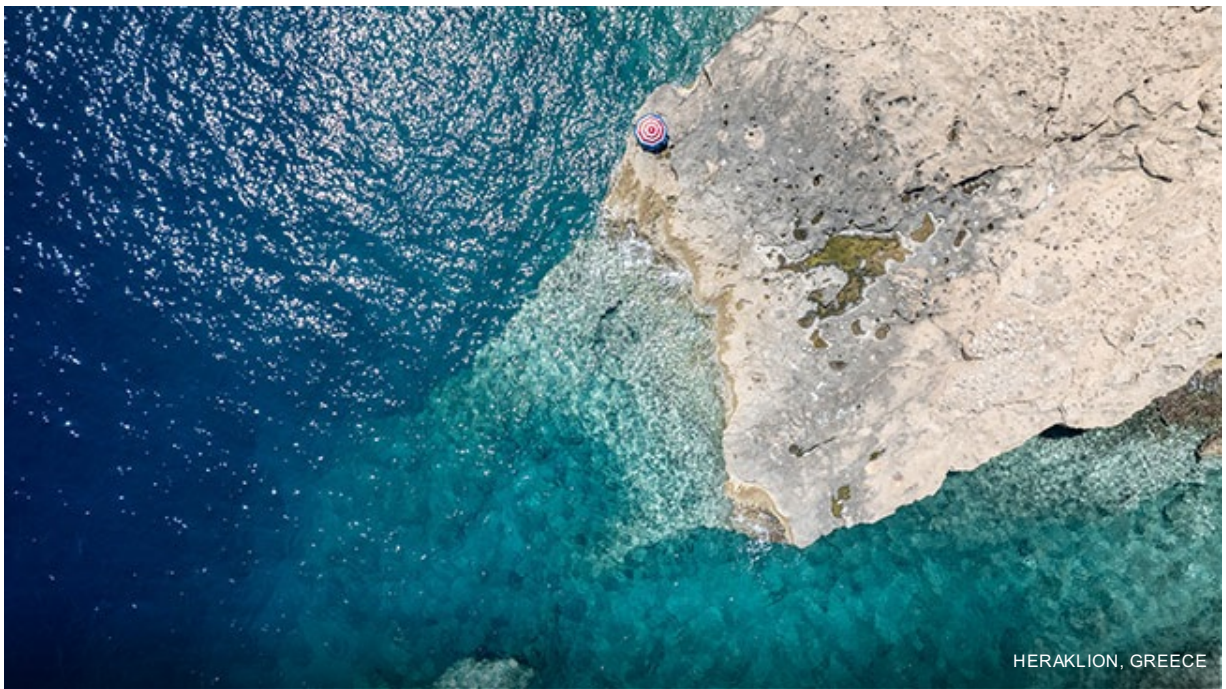
Day **8**

## Heraklion

Day at leisure to relax and recharge!

Overnight stay in Heraklion at the **Ibis Styles Heraklion Central**.

Breakfast



HERAKLION, GREECE

Day **9**

## Heraklion Chania

After breakfast, enjoy a **full day tour exploring Arkadi & Rethymon (7hrs)**.

A most scenic route with gorgeous sea and mountain vistas along Crete's beautiful northern coast leads to the cute, hustling and bustling town of **Rethymno**. Explore the beautifully preserved **Old Town** with your guide and see all the major sites and monuments, including the 1630 **Rimondi fountain**, exquisite facades of Renaissance mansions and the famous Nerace Mosque with its' 100ft tall minaret!

**Arkadi** is a place of special historical interest, known for the events that took place during the revolution of 1866. The monastery is built on the edge of the high plateau. This is one of the most important monuments of Crete.

Overnight stay in Chania at **Samaria Hotel**.

Breakfast



ARKADI, CRETE

Day **10**

## Chania



After breakfast, depart from your hotel at around 08.30 towards and head towards **the olive mill and factory**.

A local family business that **extracts the olive oil in the traditional way**. The heavy stone mills are crushing the olives and through the press the extra virgin olive oil is produced. There are always analytic descriptions and tour of the facilities but live extraction process during the harvesting months (Autumn). Olive oil tasting is following and an incredible taste will fill your palate. After the visit head towards the German war cemetery in Malame. It contains 4,465 graves.

Continue your journey towards a **private winery**, get an inside look at the winemaking process, as well as to the story of it. Walk through the fermentation room, check out the state-of-the-art equipment and get intoxicated by the smell of wine in the barrel room... Wine has always defined Cretans and Chania wine paths can give you unforgettable memories with a lifelong aftertaste. You will be introduced to the secrets of Cretan wines and you can explore, meet and feel where the Cretan heart of wine beats. You will taste different expressions of Cretan and international varieties. Wine-makers with specialized knowledge and fresh ideas of modern processes of farming and wine production will introduce your different labels of wines. Diving deep into nature's miracle, tasting awarded labels of wine and experience the local Terroir will offer you unforgettable experiences and beautiful memories from your trip.

After the visit of the winery head towards **Ally Cemetery**. The cemetery was built and is preserved by the Common State Commission of Military Graves, and was constructed after the war to contain the remains of all the Common State soldiers that fell in the Cretan battlefields.

**Last visit is the town of Chania** on foot! Chania is the most ravishing and quaint city of Crete that ceased to be its capital after 686 years, in 1971. It was an important Minoan city and is considered to have been the "mother of all the other Cretan cities" by the ancient writers. The city is divided in two sections: the Old City, where the gorgeous harbor is situated and the New City, which is located beyond its Venetian fortifications. The Old City of Chania is considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in the Mediterranean and it is called "**Venice of the East**". Throughout the whole city we can witness samples of all the civilizations that have passed from here: archaeological Minoan sites, Turkish minarets and mosques, Muslim neighborhoods, Venetian fortresses and dockyards, fountains and squares, arches and mansions, the famous Loggia and of course the landmark of the city, **the renowned Lighthouse**.

Overnight stay in Chania at **Samaria Hotel**.

Breakfast



OLIVE TREES IN CHANIA

## Day 11 Chania

Day at leisure to relax and recharge!

Overnight stay in Chania at **Samaria Hotel**.

Breakfast



PICTURESQUE VIEW OF CHANIA

Day **12** Chania Chania Airport

After breakfast, transfer to Chania Airport for your departure flight back home.

Breakfast



CHANIA CITY VIEW

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Greek

## LOCAL CURRENCY

Euro(€)

- Ferry times are subject to change and they will be re-confirmed with documentation.
- We work with a selection of hotels in each location. All bookings are subject to availability, which means our team will confirm your specific hotels upon confirmation and payment of deposit. The package price is based on 4-star accommodation.

## Excluded

- International airfares and taxes
- Domestic airfares and taxes, unless otherwise specified in our holiday package
- Visa expenses, processing and issuance fees
- Meals other than as specified in our holiday package
- Travel Insurance or expenses of a personal nature (mini-bar, phone call, laundry, etc.)
- Tips or gratuities to guides, drivers, porters, hotel, restaurant or boat staff, etc.
- Or any other travel expense that has not been included in our holiday package