

# STAGE TRIP - CENTRAL AND WESTERN CRETE

## EXPERIENCE WITH A CRETAN

**Sunday: Welcome to Crete**

**Individual arrival to Crete**

**Meals: Dinner**

**Accommodation: Adam's House or nearby**

**Monday: Agia Galini, an impressive fishing village**

We start from Siva towards the southwest and drive past many traditional and impressive mountain villages. During the tour, we come across the 3000-year-old and thus oldest olive tree in our region in the village of Panasos. We take a break at the idyllic lake of Zaros with its numerous turtles, ducks and carps. Our destination Agia Galini is an old fishing village and meanwhile a popular holiday destination for many alternative holidaymakers. We end this stage with the enjoyment of delicious traditional food in the taverna ONAR with sea view.

**Route 62 km - Time 5 hrs - Ascent 970 m - Descent 1300 m - Dirt road 1.8 km**

**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Apartments Romantika or similar**

**Tuesday: Plakias, the long sandy beach in the southwest**

From Agia Galini we start in a westerly direction and cycle along the beach where possible. The route is fascinating and varied. Shortly before the palm forest Preveli, a secluded bay invites you to swim and refresh yourself. From here the route continues west to the village of Plakias and on to Souda beach. Here we have lunch and spend the night.

**Route 52 km - Time 5 hrs - Ascent 950 m - Descent 950 m - Dirt road 2 km**

**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Hotel Horizon or similar**

**Wednesday: Rethymno, the picturesque town on the Cretan Sea**

After the first 3.5 km of steep uphill, we reach the Church of St. Nicolas in a rock, right next to the Kotsifos Gorge (Blackbird Gorge). Plenty of water flows here in spring and winter. A narrow, tarred road runs alongside the gorge. After 18 km we reach the village of Roustika, from where we reach the town of Rethymno two hours later. It is the third largest and one of the most beautiful cities in Crete, also with student flair. Here we pass the Venetian fortress "Fortezza" and then cycle slowly through the narrow streets of the town and along the sea until we reach the taverna right next to the old mosque, where we enjoy lunch.

**Route 45 km - Time 5 hrs - Ascent 860 m - Descent 870 m - Dirt road 0 km**

**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Hotel Aristeia or similar**

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### **Thursday: Anogia, the village of shepherds and musicians**

The stage from Rethymno to Anogia leads first 10 km along the sea to the village of Skaleta and then through the most mountainous region of Crete. After 25 km we reach the village of Margarites, which is famous for its ceramic workshops. The experienced pottery makers give us the opportunity to watch them at work. We pass through 15 mountain villages, all famous for cattle breeding and excellent dairy products, until we reach the most famous and largest village of the area, our destination Anogia. Here the most delicious lamb and goat meat on the whole island is prepared. The method of preparation is unique and is called "Antikristò", i.e. cooked opposite the open fire.

**Route 62 km - Time 5 hrs - Ascent 1500 m - Descent 800 m - Dirt road 0 km**

**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Hotel Prasini Folia or similar**

### **Friday: Over the mountains to the south coast to Kalamaki**

From the north side of Mount Ida or Psiloritis, we ride on its south side to the village of Gergeri and further to the south coast to Kalamaki beach. This stage first takes us 18 km uphill towards the south. Shortly before the Skinakas observatory at 1600 m altitude, there is a long descent through the holm oak forest of Rouvas to Gergeri, where we take a longer break. We then continue to the village of Zaros and past the Faneromeni dam. The road through the Messara plain then leads us to the coastal village of Kalamaki. Here, after 71 km, the Libyan Sea and well-deserved Cretan delicacies await us.

**Route 71 km - Time 5 hrs - Ascent 1130m - Descent 1890 m - Dirt road 14 km**

**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Adams Accommodation or nearby**

### **Saturday: Farewell to Crete**

**Drive to the airport and return flight home**

**Meals: Breakfast**