

# STAGE TRIP - CENTRAL AND WESTERN CRETE EXPERIENCE WITH A CRETAN

**Sunday: Welcome to Crete**

**Individual flight to Crete**

**Meals: Dinner**

**Accommodation: Hotel Petousis or similar**

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

The starting point is Adam's private home, from where we head southwest. We pass many typical and impressive mountain villages. During the tour we visit the oldest (3,000 years old) olive tree in Crete in the village of Panasos. We take a break at the idyllic Lake Zaros and enjoy the shade and the numerous turtles, ducks and carps. Our destination is Agia Galini (Holy Peace), an old fishing village and now a popular holiday destination for many alternative holidaymakers. We finish the tour by enjoying delicious food at the ONAR taverna with sea view.

**Route 62km Time 5 hrs Ascent 990m Descent 1300m**

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

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

From Agia Galini we start in a westerly direction, cycling through the interior and over some mountains through the mountain village of Melampes (560m) until we reach the village of Spili after 24 km. Here we take a break. 25 lion heads from the 16th century provide us with fresh spring water. The ride continues to the picturesque village of Frati and then through Kroutalotiko, one of the most spectacular gorges in Crete. Once past the gorge, the Libyan Sea appears and after 11km we reach Plakias. From here we continue west to Souda beach, where we have lunch, swim and spend the night.

**Route 52km Time 5 hrs Ascent 900m Descent 1030m**

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

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

After the first 3.5km steep uphill we reach the church in the rock of St. Nicolas, right next to the Kotsifos Gorge (Blackbird Gorge). Plenty of water flows here in spring and winter. A narrow-tarred road runs right next to the gorge. After 18km we reach the village of Roustika and from here an hour later we reach Rethymno, the third largest and one of the most beautiful cities in Crete. Here we visit the Venetian fortress "Fortezza" and then cycle leisurely through the narrow streets of the town and along the sea until we reach the taverna right next to the old mosque where we have lunch.

**Route 45km Time 5 hrs Ascent 860m Descent 870m**

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

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## EXPERIENCE WITH A CRETAN

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

The stage from Rethymno to Anogia first leads 10km along the sea to the village of Skaleta and then through the most mountainous region of Crete. After 25km 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. From here to our destination, Anogia, we pass through 15 mountain villages, all famous for livestock and delicious dairy products. The most famous and largest village in the area is our destination Anogia, where you can eat the most delicious lamb and goat meat on the whole island. The way of cooking is unique and is called "Antikristò", i.e. opposite the open fire.

**Route 62km Time 5 hrs Ascent 1500m Descent 800m**  
**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Hotel Aristeia**

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

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

**Route 71km Time 5 hrs Ascent 1130 Descent 1890m**  
**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Hotel Alexander**

### **Saturday: Dyskos at Lentas**

The last tour takes us from one beach in the south to another beach also in the south. We first cycle flat through the fertile Messara plain and then we cycle uphill over the Asterousia mountains. Our destination is Dyskos beach near the fishing village of Lentas. The route there is one of the most beautiful, as we admire the panoramic view of the sea for almost 10km and cycle downhill along a serpentine road. Mrs Voula awaits us in her taverna situated directly by the sea.

**Route 50km Time 5 hrs Ascent 760m Descent 760m**  
**Meals: Breakfast, lunch / Accommodation: Apartments Mythos or similar**

### **Sunday: Farewell to Crete**

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

**Meals: Breakfast**