



Chania, Crete

Wildflowers, Wine and History in Crete

19 – 24 April 2021

5 nights in Chania



Jon Baines
tours



Visiting Crete is a sensory adventure filled with the scents of rosemary, thyme, sage, lavender, and chamomile. An island brimming with beautiful flowers and stunning landscapes, there are around 2,000 species of plants, about 10% of them endemic to Crete. The peak explosion of wildflowers occurs from March to May, when wild orchids and tulips are joined by chamomile, poppies, anemones, iris, field gladiolus and much more.

Crete's natural beauty is equalled only by the richness of its history. The island is the birthplace of the first advanced society on European soil, the Minoans, who ruled some 4000 years ago. At the crossroads of three continents, Crete has been coveted and occupied by consecutive invaders. Evidence of this long history can be seen in Chania, where mighty fortresses preside over labyrinthine lanes and where beautifully restored Renaissance mansions rub rafters with mosques and Turkish bathhouses.

In Crete, 'locavore' is not a trend but a way of life. Rural tavernas often produce their own meat, cheese, olive oil, raki and wine, and catch their own seafood. This tour takes you across this wonderful island and looks at history, both ancient and contemporary. Explore Crete's rich botany, beautiful landscapes and delicious food and wine, and learn how all of these intertwine.

Tour Leaders

Valerie and Clive have spent their working lives in education at all levels, with adults and children across the age range. They have lived and worked abroad and have travelled extensively. Since retiring, they have lived in Crete, building a house and garden on a wild and windy hillside. In her capacity as the Branch Head of the Mediterranean Garden Society on Crete, Valerie organises a variety of events on the island and hosts visitors to her garden from as far afield as Australia and California. Clive, as a tour leader, has led groups of walkers on Crete, mainland Greece and other islands. Both have joined previous Jon Baines Tours trips and enjoyed the cultural, historical and local emphasis that is at the heart of the philosophy of the company, along with the camaraderie



of fellow tour members. The tour on Crete will emulate this, including the delights of Cretan cuisine.

Knossos Palace





Tulipa doerfleri (endemic wild tulips)

Itinerary 19 – 24 April 2021

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

Day 1: Chania (Mon, 19 April) **D**

Pm: Arrival and transfer to the Porto Veneziano Hotel.

Eve: A brief background on the tour. Welcome dinner at Salis, which grows most of its own produce and uses local, seasonal ingredients, with local wine.

Day 2: Chania (Tues, 20 April) **B D** **Landscapes, food and wine of Crete**

Am: Explore Chania's old town on a walking tour with Clive. See the city's impressive 14th-century harbour and 16th-century lighthouse. Learn of Crete's Egyptian, Venetian, Ottoman and more recent influences walking the narrow streets, with free time for lunch.

Pm: Drive out to the foothills of the White Mountains and visit the Botanical Park of Crete. The park is spread over 20 hectares with microclimate, allowing a

wide range of plants and wildlife to thrive including fruit trees, herbs, medicinal and ornamental plants. Meet with the owners and learn how Crete's history and landscapes influenced its cuisine and wine. There will be time to explore the park with an expert in Mediterranean plants.

Eve: Learn about the food and wine of Crete. See a cooking demonstration (with the option to take part). A wine specialist will talk about the endemic Cretan grapes grown in the park, with the opportunity to sample the different wines they produce. Enjoy dinner at the park's restaurant where all ingredients are locally sourced, including those grown on site.

Day 3: Chania (Wed, 21 April) **B L** **Minoans and Crete's classical history**

Am: Drive to Heraklion and visit the world-

renowned Bronze Age Palace of Knossos with a specialist guide.

Pm: Following lunch visit the Heraklion Archaeological Museum which includes important finds from the island, including the Phaistos Disc and Minoan frescoes. Dinner is at leisure but Clive and Val will be happy to accompany people to a local taverna.

Day 4: Chania (Thurs, 22 April)

B L

Wildflowers and the Real Crete

Am: An early start to visit the Arkadi Monastery. Drive up to the Plateau of Gious Kampos and see its endemic wild tulips, wild orchids and a host of other wildflowers.*

Pm: Spend some time at the attractive village of Spili and have lunch at a local taverna. Drive west along the southern coast and stop at Frangokasteli, where there are options to visit the castle, have a drink or swim from a lovely sandy beach. Return through the White Mountains to Chania.

Day 5: Chania (Fri, 23 April)

B D

The Battle of Crete and *Ill Met by Moonlight*

Am: With a specialist guide take part in a tour tracing Operation Mercury (the German invasion of Crete) and the Battle of Crete. Visit Maleme and Souda Bay, the war cemeteries, war memorial and museum.

Pm: Learn of the British SOE and Cretan partisans and the story of the kidnap of General Heinrich Kreipe, later written up by the writer Patrick Leigh Fermor and made into the film *Ill Met by Moonlight*.

Eve: Farewell dinner at Manousakis Winery, with its lovingly tended organic vines, with tastings of Cretan wine.

Day 6: Chania (Sat, 24 April)

B

Am: Depart Chania.

* As a general note, there can be no guarantee about precise flowering times, due to the nature of spring.



A taverna in Chania



The Hotel Porto Veneziano

Hotel Porto Veneziano

Fronting Chania's glorious Venetian harbour, Porto Veneziano Hotel offers romantic views and an attractive bar and café. Superbly run, this comfortable hotel is an excellent base from which to explore Chania's history and delights.

Economy Single Rooms are 12 square metres. They come with a Japanese style queen-size bed, wardrobe, en suite bathroom, hair dryer and a private balcony. All rooms have views of the flower filled patio, while the rooms on the third floor have views of the blue sea.

Classic Double Rooms are 15 square metres and come with a double king-size bed or with two single beds, wardrobe, private balcony, en suite bathroom, and hair dryer.

Room Upgrades. All rooms only available upon request.

Sea View Classic

As Classic Doubles, as well as views of the sea and of the famous Egyptian Lighthouse. Additional cost per room for the five nights **USD \$254.**

Junior Sea View Suite

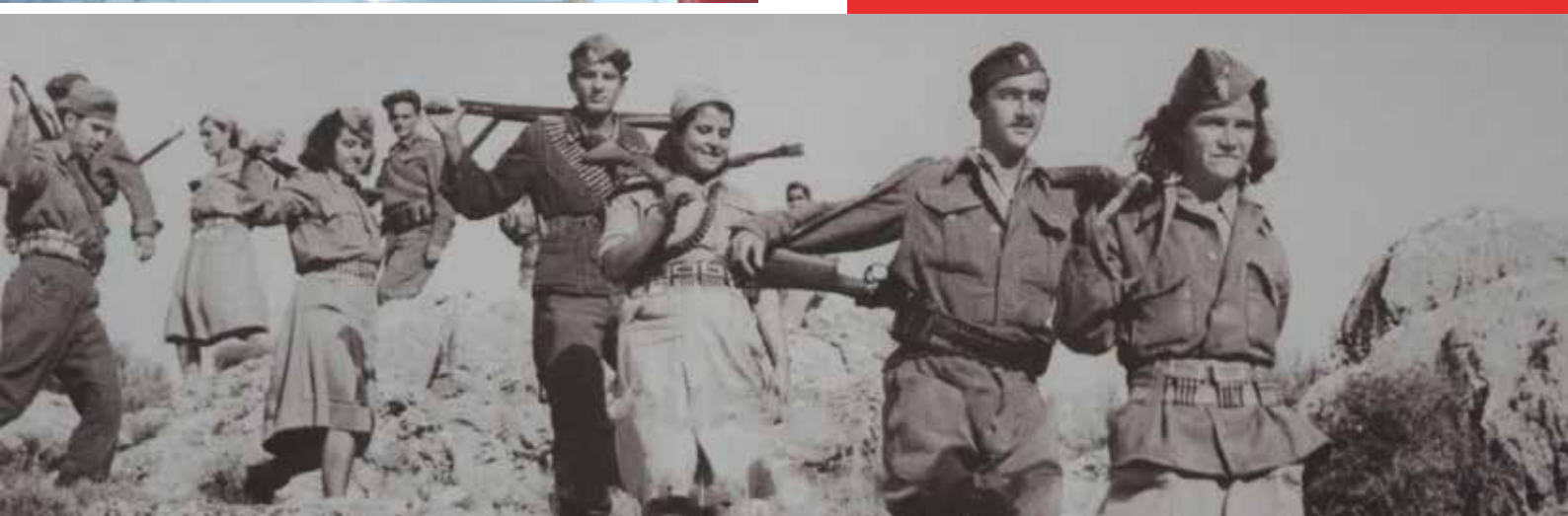
Junior Suite are 32 square metres and consist of a bedroom and a living room and a double balcony with sea views. It is suitable for up to 3 guests. The third guest can stay on the sofa bed. Additional cost per room for the five nights **USD \$462.**

Superior Sea View Suite

Located at the corner of our hotel, these spacious suites (42 square metres) offer an amazing panoramic view of the old town and the Venetian port, Lefka Ori Mountains and the Cretan Sea. Each suite has a separate spacious living room. Additional cost per room for the five nights **USD \$694.**



The Egyptian lighthouse



Wildflowers in full bloom (top); Sample the wines of Crete; Frescoes at Knossos Palace; The local resistance during the Battle of Crete (above)

**The cost of the tour is
USD \$1,904 per person sharing**

The cost includes:

- Five nights' accommodation in twin- bedded rooms at the medium grade Porto Veneziano Hotel based on a twin or double classic room

The single room supplement is USD \$221 (economy single room)

The single room supplement is USD \$330 (double classic as single)

- Tour Leaders Val and Clive Whittington
- Specialist local guides and speakers on days 2, 3 and 5
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- All breakfasts
- Dinners with wine on days 1, 2 and 5, lunches on days 3 and 4
- All internal transport
- A full programme of cultural visits
- All admission fees
- Tips

**Additional cost per room per night
USD \$182 subject to availability**

The cost excludes:

- International flights and arrival airport transfer
- All personal extras such as portorage, laundry, inoculation fees, and drinks
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance
- Visas, if applicable

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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In the botanical garden (top); Blue vistas of Crete;
A Flower-filled street in Chania (above)



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