



From  
**£4,667** GBP

Single Room

£5,318 GBP

Twin Room

£4,667 GBP

Prices valid until  
30th December 2024

10 days

Duration

Greece

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

Activity

## Santorini – Crete: Eastern-Mediterranean Islands Short tour

Oct 13 2024 to Oct 22 2024

### Eastern Mediterranean Islands short tour

Eastern Mediterranean Islands short tour. During this short tour we experience the immersion of culture and history that the Greek islands have to offer over the course of 10 days. Our educational tour has a limit



Santorini – Crete: Eastern-Mediterranean Islands Short tour

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>

06-May-2024

of 18 people.

While on this small group tour our professional guides join your program leader to share their knowledge as you explore the islands of Greece and learn about the cradle of Western civilization. You visit Santorini, an ancient civilisation destroyed by a volcanic eruption. Subsequently, you travel to Crete with its famous ancient remains of Minoan palaces. Both islands are amazing with their dramatic scenery.

## Eastern Mediterranean Islands short tour Itinerary

The Eastern Mediterranean Islands short tour begins in Athens, the home of many ancient archaeological sites. Its atmosphere has a mixture of classical Greek, Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern architecture. Ringed by mountains and conveniently located near Piraeus (its Mediterranean port), Athens epitomises both ancient and modern Greece.

Our next stop on the tour is Santorini, a volcanic island that the Minoans colonised in 3000 BC. The island is possibly the lost kingdom of Atlantis. Originally named Thira by the Dorians in the 8th century BC, it was renamed Santorini in honour of St. Irene by the Venetians who conquered the island in the 13th century. Today, the island remains a stunning example of a Cycladic white washed village, clinging to volcanic cliffs above black sand beaches.

Following Santorini we take a short flight to Crete where we stay for the next five days exploring this amazing rocky island. The island is steeped in history both ancient and modern. Crete is the island where the god Zeus was born and where Theseus fought the Minotaur. It also saw the development of the Minoan civilization remembered particularly for the bull leaping frescoes. Finally you spend time with a local guide exploring the ancient Minoan palaces of Knossos and Phaistos.

The Eastern Mediterranean Islands short tour is for the senior or mature couple or solo traveller curious to learn about the ancient civilisation on Santorini and Crete. You can learn more about Greece with our country

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profile where all the other tour departures are listed as well. Odyssey Traveller also offers a 21-day long version of the tour, Santorini, Crete & Cyprus Tour.

For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

## Tour Notes

- Group size is limited to a maximum of 18 participants.

## Highlights

1. Explore the archaeological sites of Akrotiri, ancient Thera, Knossos, and the Minoan Palaces.
2. Learn about the fascinating history of ancient and modern Greece.
3. See amazing ancient remains of magnificent palaces.
4. See the sites of Greek mythology.
5. Explore Santorini, a remnant of a volcanic era.

## Itinerary

### Day 1

**Locations:** Athens

#### Overview:

We will begin our tour in Athens, a bustling modern metropolis, home to many of the world's most famous archaeological sites. The city is a melting-pot of classical Greek, Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern architecture. Ringed by mountains and conveniently located near Piraeus (its Mediterranean port), Athens epitomizes both ancient and



modern Greece. Upon arrival in Athens, we will arrive to the hotel individually. We will have a meeting with our tour leader at the hotel, followed by a welcome dinner.

**Accommodation:**

1 night at Titania Hotel or similar.

**Day 2**

**Locations:** Santorini

**Overview:**

After breakfast we will travel to Santorini. Colonised by the Minoans in 3000 BC, this volcanic island erupted in 1450 BC, forming Santorini's present distinctive crescent shape. The island is widely believed to be a candidate for the lost kingdom of Atlantis. Originally named Thira by the Dorians in the 8th century BC, it was renamed Santorini in honour of St. Irene by the Venetians who conquered the island in the 13th century. The island remains a stunning example of a Cycladic island with white washed villages, clinging to volcanic cliffs above black sand beaches, best explored when the cruise ships have left.

In the afternoon, we will visit the Prehistoric Museum in Fira, which displays archaeological treasures from Ancient Thera, Akrotiri and Potamos.

**Accommodation:**

3 nights at the El Greco Hotel or similar.

**Day 3**

**Locations:** Santorini

**Overview:**

We will take a morning visit to the town of Oia and lunch at Ammoudi, which is 300 steps below Oia. In the afternoon, we will visit the archaeological site of Akrotiri, which was destroyed by a volcanic eruption circa 1613 BC. Our exploration for the day will end with a visit



to the site of Ancient Thera.

**Accommodation:**

El Greco Hotel or similar.

**Day 4**

**Locations:** Santorini

**Overview:**

We will take a walking tour of Fira. We will visit Agios Stylianos, which is a chapel clinging to the edge of a cliff, and we will visit the Frankish Quarter, which features a maze of arcaded streets. We will then take an excursion to the volcanic island of Nea Kameni in the caldera.

In the afternoon, we will visit a winery and explore the fascinating vineyards on Santorini. Because it can get very windy on the island, the residents weave vines into basket shapes low to the ground instead of tying vines to trellises.

**Accommodation:**

El Greco Hotel or similar.

**Day 5**

**Locations:** Heraklion

**Overview:**

In the morning we will take a coach to the airport and fly across to Heraklion, in Crete. We will arrive in Heraklion, in Crete, and transfer to the hotel. Crete is one of the most beautiful and traditional regions of Greece. Although Cretans have fought generations of invaders, they are a people whose courtesy and hospitality to travelers is legendary.

**Accommodation:**

3 nights at the Ibis Styles Heraklion or similar

## Day 6

**Locations:** Heraklion

### Overview:

In the morning, we will visit Knossos, which was the capital of Minoan Crete. Knossos was inhabited for several thousand years until its destruction in 1375 BC, which marked the end of Minoan civilization. The palace of Knossos was built circa 1900 BC on the ruins of previous settlements. It was destroyed for the first time along with the other Protopalatial palaces around Crete in 1700 BC, probably by a large earthquake or foreign invaders. It was immediately rebuilt to an even more elaborate complex, and until its abandonment was damaged several times during earthquakes, invasions, and in 1450 BC by the colossal volcanic eruption of Thera. A British archaeologist excavated the site in 1900 AD and restored large parts of the palace. According to Greek mythology, the palace was designed by famed architect Dedalos with such complexity that no one inside could ever find its exit. King Minos, who commissioned the palace, then kept the architect prisoner to ensure that he would not reveal the palace plan to anyone. Dedalos, who was a great inventor, built 2 sets of wings so he and his son Ikaros could fly off the island, and so they did. On their way out, Dedalos warned his son not to fly too close to the sun because the wax that held the wings together would melt. However Ikaros, young and impulsive as he was, flew higher and higher until the sun rays dismantled his wings and the young boy fell to his death in the Aegean sea. The palace is also associated with the legend of Theseus killing the Minotaur.

In the afternoon, we will visit the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, which is one of the largest and most important museums in Greece. The museum, located in the town centre, was built on a site previously occupied by the Roman Catholic monastery of Saint Francis, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1856. The museum's building is an important example of modernist architecture and was awarded a Bauhaus commendation. The museum's architect, Patroklos Karantinos, applied the principles of modern architecture to the specific needs of a museum by providing good lighting from the skylights above and along the top of the walls, and facilitating the flow of large groups of people. He also anticipated future extensions to the museum. The museum houses representative artifacts from the Neolithic period to the Roman

rimes. The museum's Minoan collection contains unique examples of Minoan art, many of them true masterpieces.

Later we will take a walking tour of Heraklion, including a visit to the Morosi Fountain, the Bembo Fountain, Venetian Loggia, Agios Titos Church, the Koules Fortress (Venetian), and the if time permits we stop at the local Market.

**Accommodation:**

Ibis Styles Heraklion or similar.

**Day 7**

**Locations:** Heraklion

**Overview:**

This morning we will go to the Nikos Kazantzakis Museum, which pays tribute to the important intellectual, author, thinker, philosopher, politician, and traveler, Nikos Kazantzakis, author of "Zorba the Greek." The museum is made up of a cluster of buildings in the central square of the historical village of Varvari, now known as Myrtia. The museum was founded by set and costume designer Yiorgos Anemoyiannis, a pioneering figure in Greek theatre. His fundamental aim was to preserve the author's memory and promote his work and thought. Significant assistance was offered by Eleni Kazantzaki, the author's second wife.

The Museum holds manuscripts and notes by the author; samples of his correspondence with major thinkers, politicians and authors of his time; first editions of his works in Greek and other languages; rare photographic material; souvenirs from his travels; personal effects; models, costumes and other material from theatre productions of his works in Greece and abroad; portraits and sculptures of the author; and dozens of foreign-language editions of his works from all over the world.

We will stop for a wine tasting and lunch. After lunch, we will visit the Minoan Palace of Malia. This is the third-largest Minoan palace in Crete, built in a wonderful setting near the sea on the road linking eastern and central Crete. This palace, which was first constructed circa 1900 BC, was the mythological seat of Minos's brother Sarpedon. The palace was destroyed and rebuilt numerous times, and today we can walk around the actual palace, just as it was uncovered by archaeological excavations. Most of the ruins visible today belong to the Neopalatial

complex – the second palace – whose rooms are set around 3 courts: the Central Court, the North Court and the Tower Court. The majestic size and complex plan of the palace make it a fascinating place to visit.

**Accommodation:**

Ibis Styles Heraklion or similar.

**Day 8**

**Locations:** Chania

**Overview:**

We will visit the Minoan Palace at Phaistos. The Palace of Phaistos lies on the east end of Kastri hill at the end of the Mesara plain in Central Southern Crete. To the north lies Psiloritis, the highest mountain in Crete. On the slopes of Psiloritis is the Kamares cave, which was likely a religious or cult centre for Phaistos and the Mesara plain. A very fine pottery style was discovered in this cave from the Middle Minoan period, which has been named Kamares Ware after the cave in which it was found. Kamares Ware has only been found at palace sites like Phaistos and Knossos, suggesting that it was specially produced for whoever was based in the palaces.

A couple of kilometres to the west of Phaistos is the important Minoan site of Ayia Triadha. To the south of Phaistos are the Asterousia mountains beyond which lies the Libyan Sea. To the southwest is Kommos, the ancient port of Phaistos, and to the east, the vast Mesara plain which is the single largest fertile area in Crete and was populated with small settlements and distinctive tholos tombs in Minoan times. We will also visit the mountain village of Zaros which is famous for its natural spring water, and see the Moni Agios Nikolaos at the mouth of the Rouvas Gorge.

**Accommodation:**

2 nights at Hotel Kriti or similar.



## Day 9

**Locations:** Chania

### Overview:

We will take a full day excursion along the west coast. Our first stop will be Rethymo, where we will visit the Venetian fortress and the Old Quarter, including the Rimondi Fountain and the Venetian Loggia.

We will visit Chania to explore Venetian fortifications. We will see the Church of Agios Nikolaos, which the Ottomans converted into a mosque in 1645 until it was returned to an Orthodox Church in 1918. We will also experience the Agora, or covered market. Our final visit for the day will be to the Allied War Cemetery at Souda Bay.

### Accommodation:

Hotel Kriti or similar.

## Day 10

**Locations:** Chania

### Overview:

The tour will conclude today after breakfast.

## Inclusions / Exclusions

### What's included in our Tour

- 9 nights accommodation.
- Meals as indicated.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local English speaking guides.
- Transport, internal flights and field trips as indicated.
- Touring by comfortable and modern coach.
- Service charges and gratuities.

- Services of an Odyssey tour leader.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

#### **What's not included in our Tour**

- Return international airfare and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Meals not included in the itinerary.
- Items of personal nature like phone calls and laundry.

#### **Level 2 - Moderate**

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.