



The Royal Villa at the Amiranades Grecotel Boutique resort in Heraklion. Right: Crete offers hiking through its historic lands.

## Crete – A Feast for the Senses

MODERN LUXURIES AMONGST ANCIENT RUINS IN GREECE

GREECE HAS BEEN one of the most popular post-pandemic travel destinations and on the “must see” list is the Island of Crete. The largest and most populous of the Greek islands will satisfy the history buff, food and wine aficionado, and sunworshippers and partygoers alike! Crete has temps in the mid-60s in the winter and high 80s in the summer with just enough rain to keep things green.

Crete is an ancient land and true Mecca for history buffs. The Olympian God Zeus was said to have been born on Mount Ida. The first references to the island date back to the 18th century B.C. The Minoan Civilization offers the earliest traces of a developed and literate culture. Crete has been ruled by many entities including the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and the Ottomans. Crete was forcibly occupied by Germany during World War II. Today, Crete is a peaceful gem in the ocean.

Crete is one of the largest wine producing regions in Greece. Creating the Cretan wine is an ancient process dating back to the Minoans. Some

wines are still made with human smashed grapes and poured into large clay pots called Amphora Jars for the fermentation process. Although times are changing, with a new wave of winemakers bringing more sustainable and advanced techniques to the region, most wineries are still family owned. Raki is a traditional house-made Cretan drink which is consumed on every occasion.

Start your day on Crete with a morning walk into town for fresh, strong Cretan coffee and Balla bread. Next, take in some history with a visit to the city of Knossos dating back to 8,000 B.C.—a fascinating look into centuries of civilizations built, destroyed, and rebuilt one on top of the other. Or hike through the incredibly scenic Samaria Gorge.

In the afternoon, it's time to head to one of the beautiful beaches. The pink sand of Elafonisi, considered one of the world's best beaches, makes a striking view next to the perfectly clear waters. Reserve a spot at one of the wonderful beach clubs which offer lounge chairs, live music, and organic cocktails.

The five cities adorning the North Coast of

Crete offer shopping, dining, and nightlife. Dine at a traditional Greek tavern with Cretan music and of course plenty of Raki. Chania, the foodie capital of the island, has some of the best restaurants and late-night clubs. Cretan specialties include roasted octopus, stuffed squash flowers, and creatively prepared fresh seafood.

There are comfortable to luxury accommodations on Crete such as The Blue Palace, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa with private pools and sun-drenched terraces overlooking the sea. Or the Amiranades Grecotel Boutique resort in Heraklion, which is styled after the sprawling palaces of the Minoan kings and Venetian nobles who once ruled Crete. Your stay will surely be one of easy elegance and true European luxury. 

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