

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Crete has a wide range of places to stay to suit every taste and budget, from cheap, ultra-basic rooms and well-equipped self-catering studios to traditional village houses and super-luxury resorts. Crete still offers good value accommodation compared to other islands, with the south and the inland villages being significantly cheaper than the north coast. Outside July and August you can pretty much turn up and find accommodation, but booking is advisable at the peak of summer.

## PRACTICALITIES

- Use the metric system for weights and measures (see inside front cover for conversion formulas).
- Plug your electrical appliances into a two-pin adaptor before plugging into the electricity supply (220V AC, 50Hz).
- The main English-language newspapers in Greece are the weekly *Athens News* and the eight-page English-language section of the Greek daily *Kathimerini*, published with the *International Herald Tribune*.
- The English and German newspaper *Cretasummer* is published monthly during the summer in Rethymno. The monthly magazine *Kreta* is on sale in a variety of languages. *Frappe* is published in Hania in German and English. Crete's e-zine *Stigmes* ([www.stigmes.gr](http://www.stigmes.gr)) is also worth a look. *Crete Gazette* is a free monthly newsletter distributed at various outlets and is also available online ([www.cretegazette.com](http://www.cretegazette.com)).
- You can often pick up CNN and the BBC on free-to-air TV, and cable is available at many hotels.
- Greece uses the PAL video system, which is incompatible with the North American and Japanese NTSC system.

The industry is subject to strict price controls. By law, a notice must be displayed in every room (usually behind the door) stating the category and the maximum price they can charge that season. Generally the prices quoted in this book are these official high-season rates (or the higher end of what you are likely to pay, as many places never charge the official rates), but outside the peak July and August period there is often plenty of room for negotiation, especially for longer stays. Spring and autumn are good times to test your bargaining skills.

A mandatory charge of 20% extra is levied if an extra bed is put into a room.

Some domatia owners charge extra for air-conditioning. This is only permissible if the total price is not higher than the advertised maximum (which should include air-con).

Rip-offs do occasionally occur so, if you suspect you've been exploited, report it to either the tourist police or regular police.

Many accommodation proprietors will want to keep your passport during your stay. However, this is not a compulsory requirement – they only need it to take down the details.

## Camping

There are only about a dozen or so camping grounds in Crete. Most are privately run, very few are open outside the summer high season, and the quality is patchy. Most have an attached taverna and some more upmarket complexes have pools and their own caravans and tents for hire.

The **Panhellenic Camping Association** ([☎/fax 21036 21560; www.panhellenic-camping-union.gr](http://www.panhellenic-camping-union.gr); Solonos 102, Athens) website has lists of their member camp sites and facilities. A free booklet on Camping in Greece is also published annually by the Greek national tourist office, Ellinikos Organismos Tourismou (EOT) – known abroad as the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO).

Camping fees are highest from mid-June to the end of August. Most camping grounds charge from €4 to €6 per adult. Children under 12 are normally charged half price and students get a discount. There's no charge for children aged under four. Tent sites cost from €3 to €6 per night, depending on size. Caravan sites start at around €8.

Between May and mid-September it is warm enough to sleep out under the stars, although you will still need a lightweight sleeping bag to counter the pre-dawn chill. It's a good idea to have a foam pad to lie on and a waterproof cover to protect your sleeping bag.

Free (wild) camping is illegal, but the law is not always strictly enforced and some areas are more tolerant and renowned for it, especially along the south coast. It is wise to ask around.

## Domatia

Domatia are the Greek equivalent of the British B&B, minus the breakfast. Once upon a time domatia (also called *pensions*) comprised

little more than spare rooms in the family home that were rented out to travellers, which made for very cheap holidays. Nowadays most are purpose built, and simple (and cheap) older-style basic lodgings are becoming rarer as many have been upgraded into 'studios' and come complete with well-equipped kitchenettes, TVs and air-con. They remain a popular option for budget travellers and are often far more appealing (and sometimes better equipped) than many bland, impersonal midrange hotels.

Domatia are rated under a 'key' system, which determines what owners can charge. Standards of cleanliness are generally high. The décor runs the gamut from cool grey marble floors, coordinated pine furniture, pretty lace curtains and tasteful pictures on the walls, to outright spartan.

Expect to pay from €20 to €30 for a single, and €30 to €50 for a double, depending on facilities, the season and how long you plan to stay.

Some domatia have solar-heated water, which means hot water is not guaranteed, though this is rarely a problem. Most operate only between April and October.

## Hostels

There are official youth hostels in Rethymno, Plakias and Iraklio, as well as a few hotels operating as unofficial hostels. The Rethymno and Plakias hostels are well-run and sociable places, with decent facilities.

Hostel rates vary from €7 to €15 and you don't have to be a member to stay in any of them.

## Hotels & Resorts

Crete has some of the best resort hotels in Greece, including some elite spa-hotel developments, but standards vary dramatically. While most of the top hotels are world class and have all the expected amenities, some midrange hotels are little better than domatia. There are some smart boutique-style hotels in the major cities, while Hania and Rethymno have many atmospheric guesthouses in superbly restored Venetian mansions or historic buildings.

The official classification system in Greece has changed from the old letter grading (A–E, plus L for deluxe categories) to a more international star-rating system with much higher standards. What might have qualified as an

A-class hotel under the old system is probably three-star under the new guidelines. Hotels built since 2002 meet the new criteria, but most existing hotels were automatically switched over to the star-rating (L – five stars, A – four stars, B – three stars, C – two stars, D and E – one star). Greek hotels are now in a transitional stage as the slow process of inspecting all hotels to ensure they comply with their classification is still under way.

Overall, quality of hotels and service in Crete varies dramatically and often irrespective of price. Expect to pay about €60 – 70 for a double in a two-star hotel in Iraklio and about €80 – 120 per double in a three-star. There has been a shift towards all-inclusive holiday packages in many of the hotels, which are booked by tour operators and not very appealing to independent travellers. Many hotels offer significant internet discounts.

### Mountain Refuges

Mountain refuges are not plentiful on Crete but there are some lodges scattered around the Lefka Ori, Mt Psiloritis and Mt Ditki run by the mountaineering clubs in the region. A bunk bed will cost around €13 for non members. Further information can be obtained from the mountaineering clubs (p74) and are listed in [www.crete.tournet.gr/outdoor/shelters-en.jsp](http://www.crete.tournet.gr/outdoor/shelters-en.jsp).

### Studios & Apartments

Self-catering studios or apartments are a popular option for travellers on longer stays, or families. Studios are usually two-person affairs, while apartments can normally accommodate two to five people. Facilities usually include a kitchenette, fridge and TV, and many include air-conditioning, heating for winter, a separate lounge area, separate bedrooms and occasionally washing facilities and microwave ovens. Costs for a studio in high season range from €35 to €60 while an apartment for four people in high season will cost between €50 and €80.

### Traditional Houses, Eco-Lodges & Villas

Many historic houses and lovely stone cottages across Crete have been restored and converted into fine accommodation, from rustic studios to upmarket villas with private pools. EU funding for restoration of old villages with buildings of architectural merit has spawned many new rural developments, though most

have gone for the mid- to higher-end market. There are also places where you can stay on farms or rural estates.

Some of the more established examples are at Vamos (p119) and the eco-lodges at Milia (p115) and near Markigialos in the south (p206). Traditional features such as fireplaces, stone kitchens and traditional rustic furnishings provide an atmospheric experience. A traditional house for two to four people in Vamos will cost around €75 to €120, while a small stone cottage for two in Milia will cost around €65 to €70.

Check out [www.agrotravel.gr](http://www.agrotravel.gr) for a list of villas and traditional-style homes.

In recent years there has been a proliferation of new villa developments and restored historic houses across Crete for people wanting to rent an idyllic private place for a week or more. Most of these are in the high end of the market and are rented through foreign companies.

### ACTIVITIES

Crete's adventurous terrain lends itself to a host of activities for the more active traveller. For the full lowdown see the Crete Outdoors chapter (p70).

### BUSINESS HOURS

Banks are open from 8am to 2.30pm Monday to Thursday, and 8am to 2pm Friday.

Post offices are open 7.30am to 2pm Monday to Friday. In the major cities the main post office stays open until 8pm, and opens from 8am to 2pm on Saturday.

In summer, shops are open 9am to 2pm and 5.30pm to 8.30pm Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 8am to 3pm Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. They open 30 minutes later in winter, although these times are not always strictly adhered to. Many shops in tourist areas are open seven days a week until 11pm. *Periptera* (street kiosks) open

#### BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com). You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

from early morning until late at night and sell everything from bus tickets and cigarettes to condoms. Supermarkets are generally open until 8pm.

Opening times of museums and archaeological sites vary, depending on when extra staff are hired to cover afternoon shifts. Check if you plan to visit after 3pm. Most sites are closed on Monday.

### CHILDREN

Crete is a safe and relatively easy place to travel with children, especially easy if you're staying by the beach or at a resort hotel. Greeks love kids, to the point of spoiling them, so they are normally welcome everywhere. Greek children join their parents at tavernas or play happily outside in the squares or streets at night in keeping with the local late routine.

There is a shortage of decent playgrounds and recreational facilities across the island. However, there are air-conditioned indoor children's play centres for children in most major cities if you want a respite from the heat.

Don't be afraid to take children to ancient sites. Many parents are surprised by how much children enjoy them.

Hotels and restaurants are usually very accommodating when it comes to meeting the needs of children, although highchairs are a rarity outside resorts. The service in tavernas is normally very quick, which is great when you've got hungry kids on your hands.

Fresh milk is readily available in large towns and tourist areas, but harder to find in small villages. Formula is available everywhere.

Mobility is an issue for parents with very small children. Strollers (pushchairs) aren't much use in Crete unless you're going to spend all your time in one of the few flat spots. They're hopeless on rough stone paths and up steps, and a curse when getting on and off buses and ferries. Backpacks or front pouches are best.

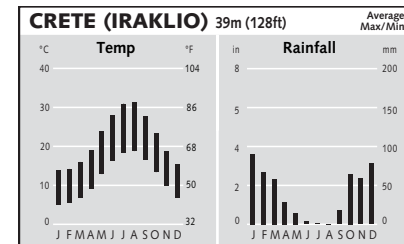
Children under four travel free on ferries and buses. They pay half fare up to the age of 10 (ferries) and 12 (buses); the full fare applies otherwise. On domestic flights, you'll pay 10% of the fare to have a child under two sitting on your knee. Kids aged two to 12 pay half fare.

The Greek publisher Malliaris-Paedia produces a good series of books on Greek myths, retold in English for young readers by Aristides Kesopoulos. *The Moon Over Crete*, by

Jyotsna Sreenivasan and Sim Gellman, is a modern-day story based in Crete, written for young girls but with a mature message.

### CLIMATE CHART

Crete has a typically Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and milder winters. You can comfortably swim off the island's southern coast from mid-April to November.



### COURSES

The **University of Crete** (☎ 28310 77278; [www.philology.uoc.gr](http://www.philology.uoc.gr)) in Rethymno runs four-week summer courses in Modern Greek for foreigners during July. Classes are in the mornings and cater for beginners to advanced level. Contact the university for full details.

UK-based **YOGA Plus** (☎ +44 1273-276175; [www.yogaplus.co.uk](http://www.yogaplus.co.uk)) runs Astanga Vinyasa yoga workshops for one week or longer at its retreat in Agios Pavlos. The courses include accommodation, other activities and wholesome food. The nearby **Triopetra Yoga Centre** ([www.astanga.gr](http://www.astanga.gr)) also runs courses from beginners to advanced levels.

Workshops in Cretan cuisine are offered in around Crete (see p63 for details).

UK-based **World Spirit** ([www.worldspirit.org.uk](http://www.worldspirit.org.uk)) organises a writing and poetry course in the southern village of Loutro in June and September.

### CUSTOMS

There are no longer duty-free restrictions or sales within the EU. Random and cursory customs searches are still made for drugs.

You can bring an unlimited amount of foreign currency into Greece but you can only leave with US\$2500 cash (or equivalent). Any more must be in a bank cheque or money order. Exporting antiquities (anything over 100 years old) is strictly forbidden without a permit. It is an offence to remove even the smallest article from an archaeological site.

Non-EU residents can bring 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars; 1L of spirits or 2L of wine; 50g of perfume; 250mL of eau de Cologne and gifts with a value of up to €175.

Importation of works of art and antiquities is free, but they must be declared on entry, so you can take them with you.

Importing codeine-based medication is illegal without a doctor's certificate and it is wise to have a doctor's certificate if you are taking any medication. Dogs and cats must have a vet's certificate.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Crime, especially theft, is low in Crete but keep track of your valuables on public transport and in markets. Do not leave luggage unattended in cars. The vast majority of thefts from tourists are still committed by other tourists; the biggest danger of theft is probably in hostels and at camping grounds. If you are staying in a hotel room, and the windows and door do not lock securely, ask for your valuables to be locked in the hotel safe.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

### Senior Cards

Card-carrying EU pensioners can claim a range of benefits such as reduced admission charges at museums and ancient sites and discounts on trains.

### Student & Youth Cards

The most widely recognised form of student ID is the **International Student Identity Card** (ISIC; [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org)). These cards are widely available from budget travel agencies (take along proof that you are a student). Holders qualify for half-price admission to some museums and ancient sites. There are no travel agencies authorised to issue ISICs in Crete, so arrange for one before leaving home or get one in Athens from the **International Student & Youth Travel Service** (ISYTS; ☎ 210 323 3767; 2nd fl, Nikis 11, Athens).

Some travel agencies in Greece offer student discounts on organised tours. Olympic Airways gives a 25% student discount on domestic flights that are part of an international flight.

If you are under 26 years of age but not a student, the **Federation of International Youth Travel Organisation** (FIYTO; [www.fiyto.org](http://www.fiyto.org)) card gives similar discounts. Many budget travel agencies issue FIYTO cards.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Remember that you are bound by Greek laws. Your embassy will not be sympathetic if you end up in jail after committing a crime locally, even if such actions are legal in your own country.

In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance, but only if other channels have been exhausted. If you need to get home urgently, a free ticket is highly unlikely – the embassy would expect you to have insurance. If you have all your money and documents stolen, it will assist with getting a new passport.

### Greek Embassies & Consulates

Some Greek diplomatic missions abroad:  
**Australia** (☎ 02-6273 3011; [greekemb@greekembassy-au.org](mailto:greekemb@greekembassy-au.org); 9 Turrana St, Yarralumla, ACT 2600)

**Canada** (☎ 613-238-6271; [www.greekembassy.ca](http://www.greekembassy.ca); 76-80 MacLaren St, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0K6)

**Japan** (☎ 03-3403 0871/2; [www.greekemb.jp](http://www.greekemb.jp); 3-16-30 Nishi Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 304-5853)

**New Zealand** (☎ 04-473 7775; [info@greece.org.nz](mailto:info@greece.org.nz); 5-7 Willeston St, Wellington)

**South Africa** (☎ 12-430 7351; [embgrsaf@global.co.za](mailto:embgrsaf@global.co.za); 1003 Church St, Hatfield, Pretoria 0028)

**UK** (☎ 020-7229 3850; [www.greekembassy.org.uk](http://www.greekembassy.org.uk); 1A Holland Park, London W11 3TP)

**USA** (☎ 202-939-1300; [www.greekembassy.org](http://www.greekembassy.org); 2221 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008)

### Embassies & Consulates in Greece

The **UK embassy** (☎ 2810 224 012; Papalexandrou 16) in Iraklio is the only foreign embassy in Crete. The rest are in Athens and its suburbs.

**Australia** (☎ 210 870 4000; Kifisias 1, Ambelokipi)

**Canada** (☎ 210 727 3400; Genadiou 4, Evangelismos)

**Cyprus** (☎ 210 723 7883; Irodotou 16, 10675)

**Ireland** (☎ 210 723 2771; Leoforos Vasileos Konstantinou 7, 10674)

**Japan** (☎ 210 670 9900; Ethnikis Antistaseos 46, Halandri)

**Netherlands** (☎ 210 723 9701; Vasileos Konstantinou 5-7, 10674)

### COPIES

All important documents (passport data page and visa page, credit cards, travel insurance policy, air/bus/train tickets, driving licence etc) should be photocopied before you leave home. Leave one copy with someone at home and keep another with you, separate from the originals.

**New Zealand** (☎ 210 692 4136; Kifisias 76, Ambelokipi)

**South Africa** (☎ 210 680 6645; Kifisias 60, Marousi, 15125)

**USA** (☎ 210 721 2951; Vasilissis Sofias 91, Ambelokipi)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The Greek year is a succession of festivals and events, some of which are religious, some cultural, others an excuse for a good feast, and most a combination of all three. The following is by no means an exhaustive list, but it covers the most important events, both national and regional. If you're in the right place at the right time, you'll certainly be welcome to join the revelry.

In summer, cultural festivals are staged across Crete. The most significant include the annual **Renaissance Festival** in Rethymno (p126), which features art exhibitions, plus dance, drama and films, and the **Kyrvia Festival** in Ierapetra (p203), which includes a range of musical, theatrical and artistic presentations.

Iraklio's **Summer Arts Festival** (p154) runs from July to September and attracts international artists as well as local singers and dancers, while the **Lato Cultural Festival** in Agios Nikolaos (p183) features traditional and modern works performed by local and international orchestras and dance troupes. Sitia's **Kornaria Festival** (p195) presents music, theatre, art exhibits and a beach volleyball competition.

### January

**Feast of Agios Vasilios (St Basil)** The year kicks off with the New Year's Day festival. A church ceremony is followed by the exchanging of gifts, singing, dancing and feasting; the *vasilopita* (New Year pie) is cut and the person who gets the slice containing a coin will supposedly have a lucky year.

**Epiphany (the Blessing of the Waters)** On 6 January, Christ's baptism by St John is celebrated throughout Greece. Seas, lakes and rivers are blessed and crosses are thrown into the water. The brave soul who retrieves the cross is blessed for the year.

### February/March

**Shrove Monday (Clean Monday)** On the first day of Lent, people take to the hills throughout Greece to have picnics and fly kites.

### March

**Independence Day** The anniversary of the hoisting of the Greek flag at Moni Agias Lavras in the Peloponnese is celebrated on 25 March with parades and dancing. It

marked the start of the War of Independence. Independence Day coincides with the Feast of the Annunciation, so it is also a religious festival.

### March/April

**Easter** The most important religious holiday in Greece is Easter (which most years fall at a different time to non-Orthodox Easter because the date is calculated using a different formula and calendar). On Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Easter), worshippers return from church services with a cross woven of palm and myrtle. If you are in Crete at Easter you should endeavour to attend some of the Easter services, which include a candle-lit procession through the streets on Good Friday evening and fireworks at midnight on Easter Saturday.

**Feast of Agios Yiorgos (St George)** The feast day of St George, patron saint of Crete and of shepherds, takes place on 23 April or the Tuesday following Easter (whichever comes first). The most elaborate celebration is in Asi Gonia, where thousands of goats and sheep are gathered at the town church for shearing, milking and blessing. Fresh milk accompanies the ensuing feast.

**Hohliovradia (Snail Night)** Vamos celebrates the popular Cretan delicacy with a festival of cooked snails, washed down with wine and *tsikoudia* (a grape distilled spirit).

### May

**May Day** On the first day of May there is a mass exodus from towns to the country. During picnics, wildflowers are gathered and made into wreaths to decorate houses.

**Battle of Crete** During the last week of May, the island commemorates the Battle of Crete with athletic competitions, folk dancing and ceremonial events in Hania, Rethymno, Iraklio and key battle memorials at Souda Bay, Stavronas and Preveli monastery. Representatives of Commonwealth countries attend the ceremonies each year.

### June

**Navy Week** Celebrated during the last week in June in even-numbered years, it commemorates Crete's relationship with the sea. In Crete's harbour cities there is music and dancing on land and swimming and sailing competitions on the water.

**Feast of St John the Baptist** This feast day on 24 June is widely celebrated. Wreaths made on May Day are kept until this day, when they are burned on bonfires.

**Casa dei Mezzo Music Festival** Classical, Cretan and world music in Makrigialos.

### July

**Feast of Agia Marina (St Marina)** Celebrated on 17 July in many parts of the island, this feast day is a particularly important event in Agia Marina, outside Hania.

**Feast of Profitis Ilias** Celebrated on 20 July at hill-top churches and monasteries dedicated to the prophet.

**Wine Festival** This Rethymno festival is held in the municipal park with wine tastings and local cuisine.

**Yakinthia Festival** The mountain village of Anogia stages an annual week-long cultural and musical extravaganza in the last week of July. There are poetry recitals, talks, exhibitions and outdoor concerts featuring Cretan music.

**Renaissance Festival** Rethymno's main festival is held during July to September, and features performances by Greece's leading theatre companies, as well as dance, music and acts from around Europe.

**Summer Arts Festival** International guest orchestras and dance troupes as well as local talent appear in Iraklio from July to September, with the main events held in an immense open-air theatre.

## July/August

**Kornaria Festival** In Sitia, this festival runs from mid-July to the end of August, with concerts, folk dancing and theatre productions staged in the *kazarma* (fort) and other venues.

**Lato Cultural Festival** Agios Nikolaos hosts this festival, which includes concerts by local and international musicians, Cretan music played on traditional instruments, folk dancing, *mandinades* (improvised rhyming couplets) contests, theatre, art exhibitions and swimming competitions.

**Kyrvia Festival** Ierapetra's main festival includes concerts, plays and art exhibitions.

## August

**Wine Festival** In Arhanes, 15 August is the merry conclusion of a five-day festival celebrating the excellent local wine.

**Assumption Day** Greeks celebrate Assumption Day (15 August) with family reunions. This prompts the big annual summer exodus, so it's wise to avoid public transport in the days before and after.

**Traditional Cretan Wedding** In late August, the village of Kritsa puts on a traditional Cretan wedding complete with songs, dancing, traditional food (and a happy couple).

**Sultana Festival** Sitia celebrates its superior sultana raisins with wine, music and dancing in the last week of the month.

**Potato Festival** Lasithi produces superior potatoes, a product which is celebrated in a three-day festival at the end of August in Tzermiado.

## September

**Genisis tis Panagias (the Virgin's Birthday)** Celebrated on 8 September throughout Greece with various religious services and feasting.

## October

**Chestnut Festival** The village of Elos stages a chestnut festival on the third Sunday of the month, when every-

one is offered roasted chestnuts, chestnut sweets and *tsikoudia*.

**Oh! (No) Day** Metaxas' refusal to allow Mussolini's troops free passage through Crete during WWII is commemorated on 28 October with a number of remembrance services, military parades, folk dancing and feasting.

## November

**Anniversary of the Explosion at Moni Arkadiou**

This is one of the most important holidays in Crete, commemorated at the monastery from 7 to 9 November.

## December

**Christmas Day** Although not as important as Easter, Christmas is still celebrated with religious services and feasting. Nowadays much Western influence is apparent, including Christmas trees, decorations and presents.

## FOOD

For information on Greek and Cretan cuisine, see p55. For large cities and towns, restaurant listings in this book are divided into budget (under €15), midrange (€15 to €24) and top end (over €24) for two courses. Note that the separate 'cover' charge that used to be added to the bill for each person no longer applies, though some places still charge for bread.

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

While there is no legislation against homosexual activity in Greece, it is wise to be discreet and to avoid public displays of togetherness.

Unlike islands such as gay-friendly Mykonos, Crete does not have a thriving gay scene. Homosexuality is generally frowned upon and there is no overtly gay nightlife.

A number of venues in Iraklio are quietly gay-friendly, as are relaxed resorts such as Paleohora and most nude beaches.

The *Spartacus International Gay Guide* (Bruno Gmunder, Berlin) is widely regarded as the leading authority on the gay travel scene and has a wealth of information on gay venues around the Greek Islands. There's some information on Crete on [www.gaygreece.gr](http://www.gaygreece.gr), as well as limited English sections on [www.gay.gr](http://www.gay.gr) and [www.lesbian.gr](http://www.lesbian.gr).

## HOLIDAYS

All banks and shops and most museums and ancient sites close on public holidays.

Greek national public holidays observed in Crete:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Epiphany** 6 January

**First Sunday in Lent** February

**Greek Independence Day** 25 March

**Good Friday** March/April

**(Orthodox) Easter Sunday** March/April

**Spring Festival/Labour Day** 1 May

**Feast of the Assumption** 15 August

**Oh! Day** 28 October

**Christmas Day** 25 December

**St Stephen's Day** 26 December

## INSURANCE

It's wise to have travel insurance to cover theft, loss and medical problems. Be aware that some policies specifically exclude dangerous activities such as scuba diving, motorcycling, even trekking. Check that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home.

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later, ensure you keep all documentation.

## INTERNET ACCESS

Crete has a reasonable number of internet cafés in major towns and tourist resorts and, apart from more remote areas, most are gradually using broadband. Access costs range from €2 to €4 per hour. Many larger hotels also offer high-speed internet access, while some towns such as Agios Nikolaos have free wireless hot spots downtown (Sitia and Ierapetra were about to follow suit at the time of writing). Travellers with their own laptops or personal organisers can arrange internet roaming with their local ISP. You can also buy prepaid internet cards from *periptera* (kiosks) from €3 to €20.

If you need to access a specific account, rather than web-based email such as Yahoo or Hotmail, you'll need to know your incoming (POP or IMAP) mail server name. You should then be able to access your email from anywhere in the world.

Travellers from the UK must have an adaptor for the modem line as the phone jack in Greece is different.

## LEGAL MATTERS

Greek drug laws are the strictest in Europe. Greek courts make no distinction between possession and pushing. Possession of even a small amount of marijuana is likely to land you in jail.

## MAPS

Mapping is an important feature of this guide. Unless you are going to trek or drive, you probably won't need additional maps. Do not rely on the free maps handed out by tourist offices, which are often out of date and not particularly accurate. The maps below are widely available in bookshops and tourist shops in Crete.

Excellent up-to-date road and hiking maps published by **Anavasi** (☎ 210 321 8104; [www.anavasi.gr](http://www.anavasi.gr)) are GPS compatible. Anavasi has three separate road maps covering Crete – *Hania, Rethymno and Iraklio*, and *Lasithi* – at a scale of 1:100,000 (€7.50). It has also produced the most accurate walking maps at a scale of 1:25,000 for the *Lefka Ori* (Sfakia and Pahnes), *Samaria/Sougia, Mt Psiloritis* and *Zakros-Vai*.

**Road Editions** (☎ 210 364 0723; [www.road.gr](http://www.road.gr)) produces the comprehensive 1:200,000 blue-covered *Crete* map (€6), which has handy maps of the major cities. There are also dedicated 1:100,000 *Eastern Crete* and *Western Crete* maps (€8).

Iraklio-based trekker Giorgos Petrakis of **Petrakis Editions** (☎ 2810 282630; €5) has produced trekking and road maps for each of the four prefectures at a scale of 1:100,000. They include the E4 trail and all the mountainous routes of Crete, and are widely available on the island.

The German-published **Harms Verlag** (☎ 07275 8201; [www.harms-ic-verlag.de](http://www.harms-ic-verlag.de)) 1:100,000 *Kreta Touristikkarte* maps cover the east (*Der Osten*) and the west (*Der Westen*) of Crete.

## MONEY

The unit of currency in Greece is the euro (€). Coins come in denominations of one, two, five, 10, 20, and 50 cents. Banknotes come in €5, €10, €20, €50, €100 and €500.

## ATMs

There are ATMs in almost every town large enough to support a bank – and certainly in all the tourist areas. If you've got MasterCard or Visa/Access, there are plenty of places to withdraw money. Cirrus, Plus and Maestro users can make withdrawals in all major towns and tourist areas.

AFEMs (Automatic Foreign Exchange Machines) are common in major tourist areas. They take all the major European currencies, Australian and US dollars and Japanese yen.

**Cash**

Nothing beats cash for convenience, but if you lose any it's gone for good, and very few travel insurers will come to your rescue. Those who do normally limit the amount to about \$300. It's best to carry no more cash than you need for the next few days. It's also a good idea to set aside a small amount of cash as an emergency stash.

**Credit Cards**

The main credit cards – MasterCard and Visa – are widely accepted in Crete. American Express and Diners Club charge cards are accepted in tourist areas, but unheard of elsewhere.

Big hotels and some midrange places accept credit cards, but budget hotels and *domatia* do not. Likewise, upmarket shops and restaurants accept plastic but village tavernas and small shops don't.

**Moneychangers**

Banks will exchange all major currencies in either cash, travellers cheques or Euro-cheques. A passport is required to change travellers cheques, but not always for cash.

Commission charged on the exchange of banknotes is less than for travellers cheques (some banks charge €2 per cheque, regardless of the amount). Post offices can exchange banknotes – but not travellers cheques – and charge less commission than banks. Travel agencies and hotels often change money and travellers cheques at bank rates, but commission charges are higher.

**Tipping**

In restaurants the service charge is included in the bill, but it is customary to leave a small tip or at least round off the bill. Likewise for taxis – a small amount is expected and appreciated.

Bargaining is not widespread in shops in Crete, though it can be effective in souvenir shops and markets – walking away often gets results.

It is worth haggling over the price of accommodation, especially if you intend to stay a few days. You may get short shrift in peak season, but prices can drop dramatically at other times

**Travellers Cheques**

Travellers cheques are losing popularity as more and more people opt to withdraw cash from ATMs as they go along. American Express, Visa and Thomas Cook cheques are all

widely accepted and have efficient replacement policies. Maintaining a record of the cheque numbers and recording when you use them is vital for replacing lost cheques. Keep this record separate from the cheques themselves.

**PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO  
Film & Equipment**

Most major brands and types of film are widely available, and many stores in main towns and tourist areas do digital printing or can burn photos to CD or transfer to USB drive. Most places charge from €0.15 to €0.19 per digital print and around €8.50 for a 36-print film roll. Greece uses the PAL video system, which is incompatible with the North American and Japanese NTSC and the French Secam, unless you have a multisystem machine.

**Restrictions**

Never photograph a military installation or anything else that has a sign forbidding photography. The plight of the jailed British plane spotters in 2001 should come as a warning that Greek authorities take these matters seriously. Flash photography is not allowed inside churches, and it's considered taboo to photograph the main altar. Cretans usually love having their photos taken, but always ask permission first. The same goes for video cameras.

**POST**

*Tahydromia* (post offices) are easily identifiable by the blue and yellow signs outside. Normal post boxes are also yellow, with red boxes for express mail.

**Postal Rates**

The postal rate for postcards and airmail letters to destinations within the EU is €0.65 for up to 20g and €1 for up to 50g. To other destinations the rate is €0.65 for up to 20g and €1.60 for up to 100g. Post within Europe takes four to five days; to the USA, Australia and New Zealand takes five to eight days. Some tourist shops also sell stamps, but with a 10% surcharge.

Express mail costs €2.85 and should ensure delivery in three days within the EU – use the special red post boxes. Valuables should be sent by registered post, which costs an extra €1.

**Receiving Mail**

You can receive mail *poste restante* (general delivery) at any main post office. The service

is free, but you must have your passport. Ask senders to write your family name in capital letters on the envelope and underline it, and to mark the envelope 'poste restante'. If letters you are expecting cannot be located, ask the post office clerk to check under your first name as well.

After one month, uncollected mail is returned to the sender. If you are about to leave a town and expected mail hasn't arrived, ask the post office to forward it to your next destination, *c/o poste restante*.

Parcels are not delivered; they must be collected from the post office.

**Sending Mail**

It is usually advisable not to wrap a parcel before you post it – the post office may (but not always) wish to inspect the contents. In Iraklio, take your parcel to the central post office on Plateia Daskalogianni; elsewhere, take it to the parcel counter of any post office. Post offices usually only have small boxes for sale, so if you need a large box to ship stuff home supermarkets are your best bet (go early or ask them to keep some for you).

**SHOPPING**

Crete has a long tradition of artisanship. Ceramics, handmade leather goods, woven rugs, icons, embroidered linen and finely wrought silver and gold jewellery fill shops in all the tourist centres. In addition to crafted objects there are also Cretan wild herbs, olive oil, wine, sweet fruit preserves, cheeses, olives and other edible souvenirs. Do check if you're allowed to take these food items into the next country you're travelling to.

Most of the products available in the ubiquitous souvenir shops are mass-produced. Although they can still offer good value, it's worthwhile to seek out special shops that offer authentic Cretan goods.

Of all the large towns, you'll find the best selection of crafts at Hania where, in the streets behind the harbour, inspired artisans produce Crete's most artful leather, jewellery, ceramics and rugs.

Rethymno has a few good craft places, while Iraklio has more high-end designer and mainstream shops for clothing and other goods.

Several villages in the interior are known for their crafts. Theoretically, you can get good buys on linen and embroidery in Anogia and Kritsa. However, take note – these days

many of the items on sale are mass-produced in Hong Kong or Indonesia. Check the origin of the item carefully before buying. Weaving shops in Hania or lace stores in Gavalohori (p120) can usually be relied upon to provide the genuine article.

**Antiques**

It is illegal to buy, sell, possess or export any antiquity in Crete (see Customs, p211). However, there are antiques and 'antiques'; a lot of items only a century or two old are regarded as junk, rather than part of the national heritage. These items include handmade furniture and odds and ends from rural areas, ecclesiastical ornaments from churches and items brought back from far-flung lands. Do check with the dealer you're buying from.

**Ceramics**

You will see ceramic objects of every shape and size – functional and ornamental – for sale throughout Crete.

The main pottery centres are in Margarites (p134), which has its distinctive designs and motifs, and in Thrapsano (p165), famous for its giant *piitharia* (urns). Some more contemporary artisans use ancient Greek firing and glazing techniques (see Carmela, p88) to create unique designs.

The most commonly found Cretan ceramics are distinguishable for the shiny dark-blue glaze, which should be hard enough not to be scratch by the blade of a knife; a glazed bottom is the best sign of machine-made pottery.

**Jewellery**

Greek designers produce exquisite jewellery in select stores throughout Crete. Some local artisans can be seen in their studios, especially in Hania. You'll find more original and unusual pieces in silver than gold. For more traditional designs, look for replicas of Minoan objects such as the Phaestos disk, which are well crafted and available only in Crete.

**Knives**

Cretans are rightly proud of their distinctive, hand-crafted knives with rams-horn handles and heat-forged, razor-sharp blades. You'll see them on sale in many tourist centres, but few of them are made the old-fashioned way and, while they may look good, they don't always cut the mustard.

## Leather Work

Most of the leather is hard rather than supple, but it's fairly priced nonetheless. Durable bags, wallets, shoes and boots are best bought on 'leather lane' in Hania (p87). In Rethymno you will find several shops that sell excellent leather goods, including the Silverhorse (p129).

## Weaving

You will see many woven rugs and wall hangings for sale all over Crete. While these may look good and even be of a reasonable quality, much of the product on sale is machine-made in Crete or, worse still, in Asia. For really genuine articles that you can see being woven, look in Hania's Old Town (see p87).

## SOLO TRAVELLERS

Crete is generally a safe, friendly and hospitable place and you will have no problem travelling alone. It is common to see solo travellers backpacking through the island and you will no doubt hook up with others if you are staying at hostels, which is the best option for solo travellers. Most hotels or domatia will knock 20% off the double room rate.

In general, use common sense when travelling. Avoid dark streets and parks at night, particularly in the major cities, and ensure your valuables are safely stored.

## TELEPHONE

The Greek telephone service is maintained by the partly privatised public corporation known as OTE (pronounced o-tay; Organismos Tilepikinionion Elladas). The system is modern and efficient. Public telephones take phonecards, which cost €3 for 100 units, and are widely available at *periptera*, corner shops and tourist shops; cards for higher amounts can be bought at OTE offices.

All phones take international calls. The 'i' button brings up the operating instructions in English. Don't remove your card before you are told to do so or you could wipe out the remaining credit. Local calls cost one unit per minute.

You can also buy a range of prepaid international calling cards (*hronokarta*).

Villages and remote islands almost always have at least one metered phone for interna-

tional and long distance calls – usually in a shop, *kafeneio* (coffee house) or taverna.

For reverse-charge (collect) calls, dial the operator (domestic ☎ 129; international ☎ 139) to get the number in the country you wish to call.

To call overseas direct, dial the access code (☎ 00), followed by the appropriate country code.

## Mobile Phones

Greece uses the same GSM system as most EU countries, Asia and Australia. You must activate global roaming through your provider before you leave, although the charges can be hefty.

Greece's three mobile phone service providers – Vodafone, Cosmote and Wind – offer prepaid local SIM cards with your own Greek mobile number. These automatically revert to global roaming when you leave Greece and can be used to send and receive SMS messages.

Cosmote tends to have the best coverage in the more remote areas, so try re-tuning your phone to Cosmote if you find coverage patchy.

American and Canadian mobile (cell) phone users will not be able to use their handsets in Greece unless they are dual- or tri-band.

## TIME

Greece is two hours ahead of GMT/UTC and three hours ahead on daylight-saving time, which begins on the last Sunday in March when clocks are put forward one hour. Daylight saving ends on the last Sunday in September.

## TOILETS

One peculiarity of the Greek plumbing system is that it can't handle toilet paper – apparently the pipes are too narrow, or at least most places are paranoid about blockages. Toilet paper etc should be placed in the small bin provided.

Very occasionally outside the big towns you might come across Asian-style squat toilets in older houses, *kafeneia* (coffee houses) and public toilets.

Public toilets are rare, except at airports and bus and train stations. Cafés are the best option if you get caught short, but you may be expected to buy something for the privilege.

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Directory inquiries	☎ 11888
from a mobile phone	☎ 11831
Greece country code	☎ 30
International access code	☎ 00
International directory inquiries/reverse charges	☎ 139

## Toll-Free 24-Hour Emergency Numbers

Ambulance	☎ 166
Fire Brigade	☎ 199
Forestry Fire Service	☎ 191
Police	☎ 100
Roadside Assistance (ELPA)	☎ 10400
Tourist Police	☎ 171

## TOURIST INFORMATION

The Greek National Tourism Organisation (EOT in Greek) office in Iraklio has a range of brochures and some maps but is the least helpful of the island's tourist information offices. The municipal tourist offices in major towns have handy maps, brochures, museum and transport information and some help with accommodation lists.

## TOURIST POLICE

The **tourist police** (☎ 171) work in cooperation with the regular police and EOT. There's always at least one member of staff who speaks English. Hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, tourist shops, tourist guides, waiters, taxi drivers and bus drivers all come under their jurisdiction. If you think that you've been ripped off, report it to the tourist police. If you need to report a theft or loss of a passport, the tourist police will act as interpreters between you and the regular police. Some tourist police also dispense maps, brochures and transport information.

## TOURS

The vast majority (80%) of visitors to Crete opt for a package holiday. Flight and accommodation packages from Europe can be a remarkably good deal, costing far less than booking separately. Charter flights alone can be hard to get, leading many regular visitors to book a cheap package but only stay at the hotel the first night (or not at all) and make their own arrangements. The best-value deals can often pop up at the last minute as opera-

tors struggle to fill charter flights and block-booked hotel rooms. Most of the offerings are for large resorts along the northern coast. For a less industrialised holiday experience, try one of the following companies:

**Diktyнна Travel** (☎ 28210 41458; www.diktyнна-travel.gr; Arhontaki 6, Hania, Greece)

**Pure Crete** (☎ 020-8760 0879; www.pure-crete.com; 79 George Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1LD, UK)

**Simply Crete** (☎ 020-8541 2201; www.simplytravel.com; Kings Place, Wood St, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 1SG, UK)

## VISAS

Countries whose citizens can stay in Greece for up to three months without a visa include Australia, Canada, all EU countries, Iceland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the USA. Others include Cyprus, Malta, the European principalities of Monaco and San Marino, and most South American countries. The list changes, so contact Greek embassies for the latest information. Those not on the list can expect to pay about €20 for a three-month visa (see www.greekembassy.org for more details).

## Visa Extensions

To stay in Greece for longer than three months, apply at a consulate abroad or at least 20 days in advance to the **Aliens Bureau** (☎ 210 510 2831; Leoforos Alexandras 173, Athens; ☎ 8am-1pm Mon-Fri). Take your passport and four passport photographs along. You may be asked for proof that you can support yourself financially (bank statement, exchange slips).

In Crete, apply to the main prefecture in Iraklio. You will be given a permit that will authorise you to stay in Greece for a period of up to six months. Most travellers get around this by visiting Bulgaria or Turkey briefly and then re-entering Greece.

## TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

If mobility is a problem, visiting Crete will present some serious challenges. Most hotels, ferries, museums and sites are not accessible to people in wheelchairs and the terrain of many areas is not suitable (although new hotels are required to be disability-friendly).

If you are determined, then take heart in the knowledge that wheelchair-users do go to Crete for holidays. The **Eria Resort** (☎ 28210 62790; www.eria-resort.gr) in Maleme, western Crete is one of the few in Greece designed for travellers

with disabilities. It caters for special needs and equipment and offers medical support and appropriate excursions and activities.

There is some useful English-language information on travelling in Greece on [www.disabled.gr](http://www.disabled.gr). Plan carefully before you travel.

### WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Many women travel alone in Crete. The crime rate remains relatively low, and solo travel is probably safer than in most European countries. This does not mean that you should be lulled into complacency; bag snatching and rapes do occur, although violent offences are very rare.

The biggest annoyance to foreign women travelling alone are the guys the Greeks have nicknamed *kamaki*, although they appear to be a dying breed. The word means 'fishing trident' and refers to their favourite pastime, 'fishing' for foreign women. Once they were found everywhere there were lots of tourists, but they are the exception these days, more of a nuisance than a threat. The majority of Greek men treat foreign women with respect, and are genuinely helpful.

### WORK

#### Permits

EU nationals don't need a work permit, but they need a residency permit if they intend to stay longer than three months. Nationals of other countries should in theory have a work permit.

#### Bar & Hostel Work

The best bar and hotel jobs can pay quite well – so well that they are usually taken by young Greeks from the mainland or seasonal work-

ers from Eastern Europe working through agencies. You can try your luck at the bigger resorts or more remote places in the south. Resorts such as Hersonisos and Malia that cater to British travellers are the best bet for Brits looking for bar work.

### Holiday Representatives

Crete provides terrific opportunities for working as a representative for a package tour company. British-based companies begin looking for personnel around February for the summer season. The pay is low but you can make tips and some outfits allow reps to earn a percentage of the packages they sell.

### Summer Harvest

Seasonal harvest work seems to be monopolised by migrant workers from Albania and Eastern Europe, and is no longer a viable option for travellers.

### Volunteer Work

The **Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece** (☎ / fax 210 523 1342; [www.archelon.gr](http://www.archelon.gr); Solomou 57, Athens 10432) welcomes volunteers for its monitoring programmes on Crete. See p69 for more information.

If you're keen to do some horse riding around Iraklio, make sure you ask around about the quality of treatment of the animals and the validity of any volunteering programs. Not all places hold to the same standards.

### Other Work

Jobs are often advertised in the classifieds of the English-language newspapers (see p208), or you can place an advertisement yourself.

# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

For many visitors, getting to Crete means first getting to mainland Greece, usually Athens. However, it is also possible to fly directly to Crete from all over Europe on scheduled and charter flights.

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

### ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Visitors to Greece with EU passports are rarely given more than a cursory glance, though customs may be interested in what you are carrying. EU nationals may also enter Greece with a national ID card but some non-EU passport holders may require a visa. Check with consular authorities or travel agents. Passports or ID cards must be produced when you register in a hotel or pension in Crete.

#### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

### AIR

Most travellers arrive in Crete by air. There are regular flights from Athens, where most international flights arrive. In summer, there are direct charter flights from the UK and many European cities to Iraklio and Hania, but very few direct international scheduled flights; most change at Athens or Thessaloniki.

### Airports & Airlines

Most scheduled international flights arrive in Athens (or possibly Thessaloniki).

**Athens International Airport (Eleftherios Venizelos)** (code ATH; ☎ 210 353 0000; [www.aia.gr](http://www.aia.gr)) is 27km east of Athens.

Iraklio's **Nikos Kazantzakis International Airport** (code HER; ☎ 2810 228 401) is Crete's biggest and main airport. Built many years ago when tourism was just taking off in Crete, it is adequate, but can be strained at times with the massive influx of arrivals during the summer. There are plans for a new airport near Kastelli, 40km from Iraklio.

**Hania airport** (code CHQ; ☎ 28210 83800) is 14km from Hania's town centre. It is convenient for travellers heading to the west of Crete.

**Sitia airport** (code JSH; ☎ 28430 24666) opened a long runway but international flights had yet to start operating in 2007.

See p223 for frequency and approximate costs of flights from mainland Greece to Crete.

### AIRLINES FLYING TO & FROM GREECE

**Aegean Airlines** (A3; ☎ 801 11 20000; [www.aegeanair.com](http://www.aegeanair.com))

**Air Canada** (AC; ☎ 210 617 5321; [www.aircanada.ca](http://www.aircanada.ca))

**Air France** (AF; ☎ 210 960 1100; [www.airfrance.com](http://www.airfrance.com))

**British Airways** (BA; ☎ 210 890 6666; [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com))

**Cyprus Airways** (CY; ☎ 210 372 2722; [www.cyprusair.com.cy](http://www.cyprusair.com.cy))

**Delta Air Lines** (DL; ☎ 210 331 1660; [www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com))

**easyJet** (U2; ☎ 210 353 0300; [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com))

**Emirates** (EK; ☎ 210 933 3400; [www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com))

**KLM** (KL; ☎ 210 911 0000; [www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com))

**Lufthansa** (LH; ☎ 210 617 5200; [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com))

**Olympic Airlines** (OA; ☎ 210 966 6666; 801 11 44444; [www.olympicairlines.com](http://www.olympicairlines.com))



**Singapore Airlines** (SQ; ☎ 210 372 8000; www.singaporeair.com)

**Thai Airways** (TG; ☎ 210 969 2010; www.thaiair.com)

**Transavia** (HV; ☎ 281 030 0878; www.transavia.nl)

**United Airlines** (UA; ☎ 210 924 2645; www.ual.com)

**Virgin Express** (TV; ☎ 210 949 0777; www.virgin-express.com)

### DOMESTIC AIRLINES

Olympic Airlines, Greece's national carrier, handles the vast majority of domestic flights. Olympic offers a 25% student discount as well as special youth fares for 18- to 24-year-olds on domestic flights, but only if the flight is part of an international journey.

Aegean Airlines flies between Athens, Hania and Iraklio on modern aircraft with generally excellent service. Aegean accepts internet bookings, issues e-tickets and has heavily discounted fares if you book early. There also are flights from Crete to Thessaloniki and connections via Athens or Thessaloniki to Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Munich, Stuttgart, Paris, Milan and Rome.

**Sky Express** (☎ 2810 223 500; www.skyexpress.gr) is a new airline running flights from Hania to Rhodes and from Iraklio to Rhodes, Santorini, Mytilini, Kos, Samos and Ikaria on its 18-seater planes (baggage is restricted to 12.5kg).

It is advisable to book early as flights can be packed in the high season. See individual destination chapters for details of flights to specific destinations.

The information throughout this book is for flights during high season (from mid-June to late September). Outside these months, the number of flights to the islands drops considerably.

### CHARTER FLIGHTS

Cheap charter flights to Crete operate from all over Europe between April and October but these can be increasingly difficult to find unless you also book a package holiday as they have been block-booked by tour operators. Tickets are cheap but flights are often at ungodly hours and conditions may apply, such as 'compulsory' accommodation vouchers (although in practice this requirement may be overlooked nowadays). Some regular visitors find it is cheaper to book a charter package to get to Crete and then go to other accommodation they have booked independently.

Charter flight tickets are valid for up to four weeks, and usually have a minimum-stay requirement of at least three days. The tickets can be so cheap that it might be worth buying a charter return even if you plan to stay for longer.

### CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

### Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

### Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

### FLIGHTS FROM MAINLAND GREECE TO CRETE

The following table will give you an idea of the high-season frequency and approximate costs of one-way flights between mainland Greece and Crete.

Origin	Destination	Frequency	Fare (€)*
Athens	Hania	5 daily	85-125
Athens	Iraklio	12 daily	85-125
Athens	Sitia	4 weekly	71
Thessaloniki	Hania	4 daily	106-135
Thessaloniki	Iraklio	3 daily	106-135
Rhodes	Iraklio	2 daily	89-98
Alexandroupoli	Sitia	3 weekly	92

\*One way, including tax

Look for cheap charter deals in the travel section of major newspapers or on the internet.

### Australia

Thai Airways and Singapore Airlines have convenient connections to Athens two to three times a week. Emirates has daily flights between Melbourne and Athens via Dubai.

### Canada

Olympic Airlines has flights from Toronto to Athens via Montreal. From Vancouver, there are connecting flights via Toronto, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and London on Air Canada, KLM, Lufthansa and British Airways. British Airways flies from Montreal to Athens via London.

### Europe

Athens is linked to every major city in Europe by either Olympic Airlines, Aegean Airlines or the flag carrier of each country.

### CYPRUS

Cyprus Airways has four flights weekly direct from Larnaca to Iraklio and five to six flights daily to Athens. Olympic Airlines has a daily flight from Larnaca to Iraklio and several daily to Athens.

### GERMANY

Aegean Airlines has several flights from Iraklio connecting to Stuttgart, Düsseldorf,

Munich and Frankfurt. Iraklio is linked by Lufthansa to Frankfurt, while several airlines rush scheduled flights to Iraklio from cities across Germany in summer.

### NETHERLANDS

KLM-associate Transavia has direct flights between Amsterdam and Iraklio.

### UK

Daily flights between London and Athens are operated by British Airways, Olympic Airlines and easyJet. Olympic also runs five direct London-Thessaloniki flights a week from Heathrow.

There are numerous charter flights to Crete from London, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Luton, Manchester and Newcastle. Try [www.charterflights.co.uk](http://www.charterflights.co.uk) or [www.justthelight.co.uk](http://www.justthelight.co.uk).

### New Zealand

There are no direct flights from New Zealand to Athens. However, there are connecting flights via Sydney, Melbourne, Bangkok and Singapore on Olympic Airlines, United Airlines, Thai Airways and Singapore Airlines.

### USA

Flight options to Europe from the North Atlantic are bewilderingly extensive. For online bookings try [www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com), [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com) and [www.orb.itz.com](http://www.orb.itz.com).

New York has the widest range of options to Athens. Both Olympic Airlines and Delta Airlines have direct flights but there are numerous other connecting flights.

There are no direct flights to Athens from the west coast. There are, however, connecting flights to Athens from many US cities, either linking with Olympic Airlines in New York or flying with one of the European national airlines to their home country, and then on to Athens.

### LAND

Travellers arriving in Greece overland from Western Europe normally drive to the Italian ports such as Venice, Ancona, Bari or Brindisi and ship vehicles across to Igoumenitsa or Patra. To get to Crete, you would have to drive to Piraeus to take a ferry. Passports are rarely required when crossing western European borders, the exception being the borders with Switzerland.

## ISLAND HOPPING TO CRETE

From Piraeus there are only two options for hopping off at other islands along the way to Crete. ANEN Lines' F/B *Myrtidiotissa* does a long 'milk run' via Gythio and the islands of Kythira and Antikythira, while LANE Lines makes a stop in Milos and Santorini in the western Cyclades on its thrice-weekly run to eastern Crete ports, continuing to Rhodes via Karpathos and other islands. From Thessaloniki, you have a choice of stopping off at Skiathos, Skopelos, Tinos, Paros, Naxos, Ios or Santorini on GA Ferries F/B *Milena* on its haul from one end of the Aegean to the other. Alternatively, you can head to any of these intermediate islands from Piraeus or elsewhere and pick up the Iraklio connection at your leisure. From Rhodes you have a choice of four ports to hop off at: Halki, Diafani, Karpathos and Kasos, using LANE Lines' connections from the Dodecanese (twice weekly).

There are no bus services to Greece from western or northern Europe, but there are buses from Albania and Bulgaria.

## Car & Motorcycle

Crossing from Italy to Greece no longer requires border formalities and is preferred by the great majority of drivers and riders heading to Greece. There are four main Italian ports serving Greece: Bari, Brindisi, Ancona and Trieste.

It is still possible to travel to Greece via Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but the savings are not huge and are far outweighed by the distance involved and the necessity to cross five borders.

It is feasible on weekends in summer to arrive in Patra by ferry in the morning and be on a high-speed ferry to Crete by lunchtime, arriving in Iraklio late the same day. Otherwise, you can just as easily take an overnight ferry to Crete on the same day you arrive in Greece.

## Train

Unless you have an **InterRail** ([www.interrail.net](http://www.interrail.net)) or **Eurail** ([www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com)) pass or are aged under 26 or over 60 and eligible for a discounted fare, travelling to Greece by train is prohibitively expensive. To get to Crete, you can take a train to Brindisi in Italy and use your rail pass for a free passage to Patra. From Patra you can take a train to Kiato, then change to the suburban rail (included in your pass) which goes directly to Piraeus harbour for your ferry connection to Crete.

## SEA

Crete is well served by ferries in the summer, with mainland connections from Piraeus,

Thessaloniki, Rhodes, Kalamata and Gythio, plus a smattering of Cyclades islands and Kythira. From November to April, however, services are considerably curtailed. Ferries are generally large car ferries and range in quality from 'comfortable' to luxurious. See [www.ferries.gr](http://www.ferries.gr) or [www.gtp.gr](http://www.gtp.gr) for routes and timetables.

## Routes

Greece's ferry hub is Piraeus, the sprawling port of Athens. Ferries to Crete depart from the western end of the port. The departure points are slightly more convenient for the suburban rail train station in Piraeus, but involve a 10-minute hike from the metro station. From central Piraeus allow a good 15 to 20 minutes' walking to reach the Crete quays. Ferries leave here for Iraklio, Rethymno, Hania, Agios Nikolaos and Kissamos-Kastelli. Check the destination board at the stern of the ferry.

## Schedules

Ferry timetables change from season to season, and ferries are subject to delays and cancellations at short notice due to bad weather, strikes or mechanical problems. No timetable is infallible, but a comprehensive weekly list of departures from Piraeus is put out by the EOT (Ellinikos Organismos Tourismou, Greece's main tourist office) in Athens. The main ferry schedules are also published in the English-language edition of *Kathimerini* (included in the *International Herald Tribune*) or check the websites [www.gtp.gr](http://www.gtp.gr) and [www.open.seas.gr](http://www.open.seas.gr).

Throughout the year there is at least one ferry daily from Piraeus to the major ports in Crete, with three or four per day in summer.

Travelling time can vary considerably, depending on the ship and the route it takes.

Hania's fast catamaran can do the trip in 4½ hours, whereas Iraklio takes eight hours.

## Costs & Classes

Prices are fixed by the government, and are determined by the distance travelled rather than by the facilities of a particular boat. There can be big differences in the size, comfort and facilities of boats offering rival services, but the fares will be the same. You may find that differences in prices at ticket agencies are the result of some agents sacrificing part of the commission to qualify as a 'discount service'. The discount is seldom more than €1.

The large ferries nominally have two classes (first and second) but the demarcation lines between them are often blurred. You pay instead for either the quality of the cabin, or the choice between aircraft-type seats or deck passage.

Deck class remains a cheap way to travel, while a 1st-class ticket can cost almost as much as flying on some routes. Children under the age of four travel free, while children between four and 10 pay half fare. Full fares apply for children over 10 years of age. Unless you state otherwise when purchasing a ticket, you will

automatically be given deck class, though you can usually upgrade on board if you can't find a comfortable spot. See boxed text (below) for some sample fares.

Cabins range from double-berth outside cabins (1st class) to four-berth inside cabins (2nd class). Aircraft-type seats can be very comfortable (the new high-speed catamarans) to bearable (most older boats). Deck class is hard and uncompromising and not usually custom-designed for deck-class sleepers. Modern ferry boats tend to have bare, exposed deck sections, but there are always wind-protected areas where you can set up temporary camp and several places inside where you can roll out your sleeping bag if you get in early. Many people nab a spot in the café area or lounges but these are invariably smoky. The self-service restaurants on board are decent value.

## Tickets

Ferries can be prone to delays and cancellations in bad weather, so it's best not to buy a ticket until it has been confirmed that the ferry is operating (unless you want a cabin or it's the August peak season). If you need

## FERRY TRAVEL TO CRETE

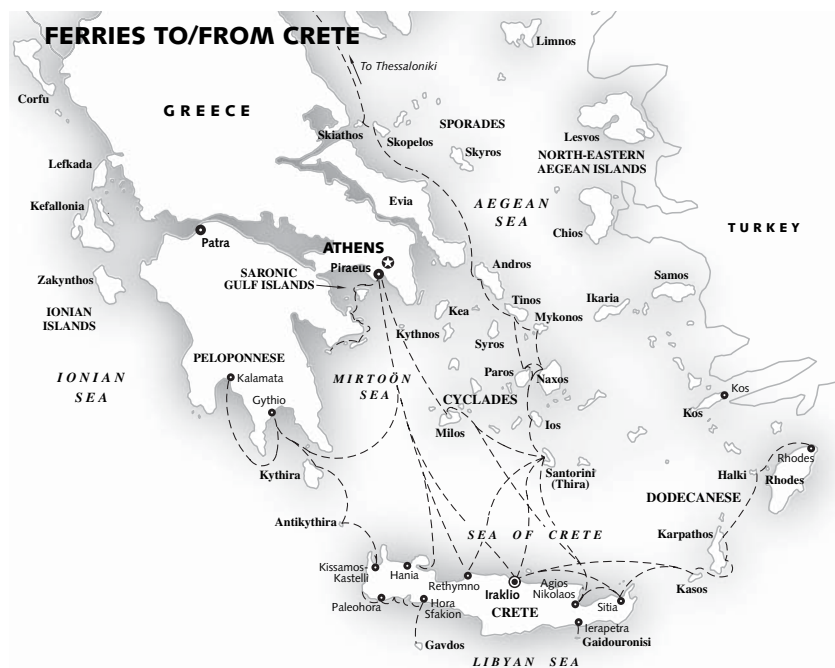
It wasn't too long ago that ferry travel in Greece was a true ordeal. Deregulation of the formerly closed domestic ferry market, a gradual upgrade of fleets and the aftershock of the F/B *Express Samina* sinking in September 2000 have significantly improved the domestic and international ferry scene.

Ferry services to and from Crete still differ in quality and service. The high-speed boats of Minoan Lines linking Piraeus and Iraklio, and Hellenic Seaways catamaran services to Hania, are by far the most comfortable. NEL Lines also runs a high-speed catamaran service to Rethymno in peak season (five hours).

Minoan's services make the run between Iraklio and Piraeus in a flat eight hours on modern, monster ferries – notably the F/B *Festos Palace* and the almost identical F/B *Knossos Palace*. Minoan's competitor ANEK is a comfortable option, although it still uses older, smaller boats. ANEK's F/B *Preveli* makes the overnight run between Rethymno and Piraeus. Larger ANEK boats also link the western port of Souda, which serves Hania.

The one-boat ANEN Lines of western Crete runs a small ferry linking Piraeus and Gythio in the Peloponnese with Kissamos-Kastelli via Kythira and Antikythira. To the east, LANE Lines links Piraeus with Agios Nikolaos and Sitia with a stop in Milos and Santorini. Its two boats F/B *Vitsentzos Kornaros* and F/B *Ierapetra* are fairly old, but comfortable enough.

Origin	Destination	Frequency	Duration	Fare (one way, €)
Piraeus	Agios Nikolaos	2 weekly	14hr	34
Piraeus	Hania (Souda)	2 daily	6-9hr	30-51.50
Piraeus	Iraklio	2 daily	8hr	37
Piraeus	Rethymno	2 daily	9hr	24
Gythio	Kissamos-Kastelli	1 weekly	7hr	29-57
Thessaloniki	Iraklio	4 weekly	31hr	46.50



to reserve a car space, you may need to pay in advance. If the service is cancelled, you can transfer your ticket to the next available service with that company.

Agencies selling tickets line the waterfront of most ports, but there's rarely one that sells tickets for every boat, and often an agency is reluctant to give information about a boat it doesn't sell tickets for. This means you will have to check the timetables displayed outside each agency to find out which ferry is next to depart – or ask the port police. Ticket booths open up beside a ferry about an hour before departure.

## Yacht

Yachting is probably *the* way to see the Greek Islands, but Crete is a long way from other islands and does not have a huge yachting industry. There are companies that offer sailing trips around Crete, especially along the south coast and from Agios Nikolaos (see p76).

The sailing season lasts from April until October. In July and September, the *meltemi* winds in the Aegean can ground you regularly.

## GETTING AROUND

### BICYCLE

Cycling is becoming more common on Crete, but the often-hilly terrain means you need strong leg muscles and endurance. You can hire bikes in most tourist areas. Prices range from €8 to €20 per day. Bicycles are carried free on ferries. See the Crete Outdoors chapter (p70) or [www.cycling.gr](http://www.cycling.gr) for information on mountain-biking tours and equipment hire.

### BOAT

#### Ferry

Smaller boats link the towns along Crete's south coast, some of which are only accessible by sea.

In summer there are daily boats from Paleohora to Hora Sfakion, via Agia Roumeli, Sougia and Loutra. Schedules change from year to year, but there are usually two to three boats a day between Hora Sfakion and Agia Roumeli and one boat

a day from Hora Sfakion to Paleohora. Boats to Gavdos Island leave from Hora Sfakion and Paleohora (though these were going via Hora Sfakion in 2007, making it a five-hour trip).

Tourist boats run excursions to offshore islands, including Ierapetra to Gaidouronisi (Hrysi) Island, Agios Nikolaos to Spinalonga, and Kissamos-Kastelli to the Gramvousa Peninsula.

### Taxi Boat

Most southern port cities have taxi boats – small speedboats – transporting people to places that are difficult to get to by land. Some owners charge a set price for each person, and others charge a flat rate for the boat, with the cost divided by the number of passengers. Either way, prices are quite high.

### BUS

Crete's comprehensive public bus service makes it relatively easy to travel around the island. Frequent buses link the major towns along the north coast highway from Kissamos-Kastelli to Sitia. Less-frequent buses operate between the north-coast towns and the south coast, via the interior villages. Fares are fixed by the government, and are very reasonable by European standards.

Buses are operated by regional collectives known as **KTEL** ([www.ktel.org](http://www.ktel.org)). Every prefecture has its own KTEL. Their website has schedules for all the island's buses, or try [www.crete-buses.gr](http://www.crete-buses.gr) (Iraklio-Lasithi) and [www.bus-service-crete-ktel.com](http://www.bus-service-crete-ktel.com) (Rethymno-Hania). Alternatively, you can pick up a handy leaflet with Crete's bus schedules at major KTEL bus stops.

Larger towns usually have a central, covered bus station with waiting rooms, toilets and a snack bar. In small towns and villages the 'bus station' may be no more than a bus stop outside a *kafeneio* (coffee house) or taverna, which doubles as a booking office. Most timetables are in both Greek and English.

The buses running along the north coast are generally in good shape and air-conditioned. They do not have toilets on board or refreshments, so make sure you are prepared on both counts. Smoking is prohibited on all buses; only the chain-smoking drivers occasionally dare to ignore the 'no smoking' signs.

Most buses use the northern highway, but at least one or two buses each day use

the scenic but slower old roads so ask before you buy your ticket. In major towns it's best to buy your ticket at the station to ensure you get a seat, but if you board at a stop along the way you can buy your ticket on the bus. Bus stations in major towns keep long opening hours and are a good source of information. See the destination chapters for timetable information.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Having your own vehicle is the best way to explore Crete if you can brave the roads and drivers. There are plenty of places to hire cars and motorcycles and roads have improved enormously in recent years, but in the more remote areas (particularly the south) you'll still find unpaved roads that are only suitable for 4WDs.

Beyond the main highways, prepare to spend a lot of time poring over maps, as country roads are generally badly signposted. Road signs, when they exist, are usually marked in Greek and English (the English phonetic sign follows a few metres after the Greek) except in remote areas. Even when written in Latin letters, the spelling of place names can vary wildly from the names on your map or in this book. Invest in a good map, but even the best maps don't cover all the side roads.

Don't expect reassuring signs along the way telling you you're on track or the remaining distance to your destination. The rule of thumb is just to keep going until told otherwise and keep in mind you generally won't get much warning before a turn-off.

The E75 highway that runs along the north coast from Sitia to Hania is continually being upgraded and is better in some parts than others.

But the danger in Crete lies in the driving culture rather than the state of the highway. Slower drivers are expected to straddle the narrow service lane and let the traffic pass. The laid-back Cretans are manic drivers and inexplicably immediately in a hurry once they get behind the wheel so expect to be tailgated, honked and overtaken if you move too slowly. Overtaking on bends and ignoring double lines is prevalent. Road rules are routinely ignored and there is barely any police presence (see Road Rules, p229).

Inland and to the south, narrow and windy mountain roads can be hazardous.



for motorcycles are 70km/h (up to 100cc) and 90km/h (above 100cc).

The blood-alcohol limit is 0.05%; anything over 0.08% is a criminal offence.

Traffic fines are not paid on the spot – you will be told where to pay. Reciprocal legal agreements between EU countries may well mean that an ignored parking fine will turn up in your mailbox at home a few weeks later. If you are involved in an accident and no-one is hurt, the police will not be required to write a report, but it is advisable to go to a nearby police station and explain what happened. A police report is required for insurance purposes. If an accident involves injury, a driver who does not stop and does not inform the police may face a prison sentence.

## HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country, and we don't recommend it. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and should let someone know where they are planning to go. Greece has a reputation for being a relatively safe place for women to hitch, but it is still unwise to do it alone and it's better to have a male companion. In Crete you don't hitch with your thumb up as in northern Europe, but with an outstretched hand, palm down to the road.

Getting out of major cities tends to be hard work; hitching is much easier in remote areas. On country roads, it is not unknown

for someone to stop and ask if you want a lift even if you haven't asked for one (or to hail you for a ride).

## LOCAL TRANSPORT

### Bus

Local city buses operating from Iraklio, Rethymno and Hania largely service the suburbs and are not practical for getting around (most routes they serve are walkable anyway). Tickets are normally bought at *periptera* (kiosks) or on board the bus.

### Taxi

Taxis are widely available except in remote villages, and are relatively cheap by European standards. Large towns have taxi stands that post a list of prices to outlying destinations, which removes any anxiety about overcharging. Otherwise you pay what's on the meter. Flag fall is €1 followed by €0.34 per km (€0.64 per km outside town or between midnight and 5am). There's a €2.15 surcharge from the airport and a €0.86 surcharge from a bus station or port. Each piece of luggage weighing more than 10kg carries a surcharge of €0.32, and there's a surcharge of €1.60 for radio taxis. Rural taxis often do not have meters, so you should always settle on a price before you get in.

Taxi drivers in Crete are, on the whole, friendly, helpful and honest. If you have a complaint, take the cab number and report it to the tourist police.

# Health

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## BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later on. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is a good idea (also see Warning, below). If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter stating their medical necessity. If you're planning a long trip, make sure your teeth are OK and take your optical prescription with you.

### INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, the European Health Insurance Card (which replaced the E111 form in 2006) covers you for most medi-

### WARNING

Codeine, which is commonly found in headache preparations, is banned in Greece; check labels carefully, or risk prosecution. There are strict regulations applying to the importation of medicines into Greece, so obtain a certificate from your doctor that outlines any medication you may have to carry into the country with you.

cal care but not for non-emergencies or for emergency repatriation. You can apply for one online in many EU countries via your government health department's website. Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Greece. If you do need health insurance, make sure you get a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditure.

### RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No jabs are required to travel to Greece, but a yellow-fever vaccination certificate is required if you are coming from an infected area. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio.

### ONLINE RESOURCES

The WHO publication *International Travel and Health* is revised annually and is available online at [www.who.int/ith](http://www.who.int/ith). Other useful websites include [www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com) (travel health recommendations for every country; updated daily), [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk) (general travel advice for the layperson), [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk) (advice on travel for the elderly) and [www.marieetopos.org.uk](http://www.marieetopos.org.uk) (information on women's health and contraception).

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility (the longer the flight, the greater the risk). The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle, or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it

may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention. To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol, tobacco and caffeine. Compression socks are also being recommended for people at risk of DVT.

## JET LAG

To avoid jet lag drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eat light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep, etc) as soon as possible.

# IN CRETE

## AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

If you need an ambulance in Crete call ☎ 166. Crete's major cities of Iraklio, Hania and Rethymno have modern, well-equipped hospitals. Pharmacies can dispense medicines that are available only on prescription in most European countries, so you can consult a pharmacist for minor ailments.

All this sounds fine but, although medical training is of a high standard in Greece, the health service is badly under funded. Hospitals can be overcrowded, hygiene is not always what it should be and relatives are expected to bring in food for the patient – which could be a problem for a tourist. Conditions and treatment are better in private hospitals, which are expensive. All this means that a good health-insurance policy is essential.

## TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably in the form of an oral rehydration solution such as dioralyte. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain you should seek medical attention.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### Bites, Stings & Insect-Borne Diseases

Watch out for sea urchins around rocky beaches; if you get some of their needles embedded in your skin, olive oil will help

to loosen them. If they are not removed they will become infected. Be wary also of jellyfish, particularly during the months of September and October. Although they are not lethal in Greece, their stings can be painful. Dousing in vinegar will deactivate any stingers that have not 'fired'. Calamine lotion, antihistamines and analgesics may reduce the reaction and relieve the pain. Much more painful than either of these, but thankfully much rarer, is an encounter with the weever fish. It buries itself in the sand of the tidal zone with only its spines protruding, and injects a painful and powerful toxin if trodden on. Soaking your foot in very hot water (which breaks down the poison) should solve the problem. It can cause permanent local paralysis in the worst cases.

Greece's only dangerous snake is the adder. To minimize the possibilities of being bitten, always wear boots, socks and long trousers when walking through undergrowth where snakes may be present. Don't put your hands into holes and crevices, and be careful when collecting firewood. Snake bites do not cause instantaneous death and an antivenin is widely available. Keep the victim calm and still, wrap the bitten limb tightly, as you would for a sprained ankle, and attach a splint to immobilize it. Seek medical help, if possible taking the dead snake (or preferably a photo) with you for identification. Don't attempt to catch the snake if there is a possibility of being bitten again. Tourniquets and sucking out the poison are now comprehensively discredited.

Always check all over your body if you have been walking through a potentially tick-infested area as ticks can cause skin infections and other more serious diseases such as Lyme disease and typhus. If a tick is attached, press down around its head with tweezers, grab the head and gently pull upwards. Avoid pulling the rear of the body as this may squeeze the tick's gut contents into the skin, increasing the risk of infection and disease. Lyme disease begins with the spreading of a rash at the site of the bite, accompanied by fever, headache, extreme fatigue, aching joints and muscles and severe neck stiffness. If untreated, symptoms usually disappear but disorders of the nervous system, heart and joints can develop later. Treatment works best early in the illness – medical help should be sought. Typhus begins with a fever, chills, headache

and muscle pains, followed a few days later by a body rash. There is often a large painful sore at the site of the bite and nearby lymph nodes are swollen and painful. There is no vaccine available.

Rabies is still found in Greece but only in isolated areas. Any bite, scratch or even lick from a warm-blooded, furry animal should be scrubbed with soap and running water immediately and then cleaned with an alcohol solution. If there is any possibility that the animal is infected medical help should be sought immediately. Even if the animal is not rabid, all bites should be treated seriously as they can become infected or can result in tetanus.

## Heatstroke

Heatstroke occurs following excessive fluid loss and inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heatstroke drink water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans.

## Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. As ever, proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting it. Even on a hot day in the mountains, the weather can change rapidly so carry waterproof garments, warm layers and a hat, and inform other people of your route. Hypothermia starts with shivering,

loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless re-warming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent any further heat loss by seeking shelter, putting on warm dry clothing, drinking something hot and sweet, and sharing body warmth.

## TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Make sure children are up to date with routine vaccinations and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year old. Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* includes travel health advice for younger children.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern.

If using oral contraceptives, remember some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

## SEXUAL HEALTH

Condoms are readily available but emergency contraception may not be, so take the necessary precautions.

# Language

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The Greek language is probably the oldest European language, with an oral tradition of 4000 years and a written tradition of approximately 3000 years. Its evolution over the four millennia was characterised by its strength during the golden age of Athens and the Democracy (mid-5th century BC); its use as a lingua franca throughout the Middle Eastern world, spread by Alexander the Great and his successors as far as India during the Hellenistic period (330 BC to AD 100); its adaptation as the language of the new religion, Christianity; its use as the official language of the Eastern Roman Empire; and its proclamation as the language of the Byzantine Empire (380–1453).

Greek maintained its status and prestige during the rise of the European Renaissance and was employed as the linguistic perspective for all contemporary sciences and terminologies during the period of Enlightenment. Today, Greek constitutes a large part of the vocabulary of any Indo-European language, and much of the lexicon of any scientific repertoire.

The modern Greek language is a southern Greek dialect which is now used by most Greek speakers both in Greece and abroad. It is the result of an intralinguistic influence and synthesis of the ancient vocabulary combined with words from Greek

regional dialects, namely Cretan, Cypriot and Macedonian.

Greek is spoken throughout Greece by a population of around 10 million, and by some five million Greeks who live abroad.

## PRONUNCIATION

All Greek words of two or more syllables have an acute accent which indicates where the stress falls. For instance, *ἀγαλμα* (statue) is pronounced *aghalma*, and *ἀγάπη* (love) is pronounced *aghapi*. In the following transliterations, italic lettering indicates where stress falls. Note also that **dh** is pronounced as 'th' in 'then' and **gh** is a softer, slightly guttural version of 'g'.

## ACCOMMODATION

### I'm looking for ...

<i>psa-hno yi-a ...</i>	Ψάχνω για ...
<b>a room</b> <i>e-na dho-ma-ti-o</i>	ένα δωμάτιο
<b>a hotel</b> <i>e-na kse-no-dho-chi-o</i>	ένα ξενοδοχείο
<b>a youth hostel</b> <i>e-nan kse-no-na</i>	έναν ξενώνα
<i>ne-o-ti-tas</i>	νεώπιας

### Where's a cheap hotel?

*rou i-ne e-na fti-no xe-no-do-hi-o*

Πού είναι ένα φτηνό ξενοδοχείο;

### What's the address?

*pya i-ne i dhi-ef-thin-si*

Ποια είναι η διεύθυνση;

### Could you write the address, please?

*pa-ra-ka-lo bo-ri-te na ghra-pse-te ti dhi-ef-thin-si*

Παρακαλώ, μπορείτε να γράψετε τη διεύθυνση;

### Are there any rooms available?

*i-par-chun e-lef-the-ra dho-ma-ti-a*

Υπάρχουν ελεύθερα δωμάτια;

### I'd like to book ...

*tha i-the-la na kli-so ...* Θα ήθελα να κλείσω ...

<b>a bed</b> <i>e-na kre-va-ti</i>	ένα κρεβάτι
<b>a single room</b> <i>e-na mo-no-kli-o-no</i>	ένα μονόκλινο
<i>dho-ma-ti-o</i>	δωμάτιο
<b>a double room</b> <i>e-na dhi-kli-no</i>	ένα δίκλινο
<i>dho-ma-ti-o</i>	δωμάτιο

## THE GREEK ALPHABET & PRONUNCIATION

Greek	Pronunciation Guide	Example
Α α	<b>a</b>	as in 'father' αγάπη <i>a-gha-pi</i> love
Β β	<b>v</b>	as in 'vine' βήμα <i>vi-ma</i> cat
Γ γ	<b>gh</b>	like a rough 'g' γάτα <i>gha-ta</i> cat
Δ δ	<b>y</b>	as in 'yes' για <i>ya</i> for
Ε ε	<b>dh</b>	as in 'there' δέμα <i>dhe-ma</i> parcel
Ζ ζ	<b>e</b>	as in 'egg' ένας <i>e-nas</i> one (m)
Η η	<b>z</b>	as in 'zoo' ζώο <i>zo-o</i> animal
Θ θ	<b>i</b>	as in 'feet' ήταν <i>i-tan</i> was
Ι ι	<b>th</b>	as in 'throw' θέμα <i>the-ma</i> theme
Κ κ	<b>i</b>	as in 'feet' ίδιος <i>i-dhyos</i> same
Λ λ	<b>k</b>	as in 'kite' καλά <i>ka-la</i> well
Μ μ	<b>l</b>	as in 'leg' λάθος <i>la-thos</i> mistake
Ν ν	<b>m</b>	as in 'man' μαμά <i>ma-ma</i> mother
Ξ ξ	<b>n</b>	as in 'net' νερό <i>ne-ro</i> water
Ο ο	<b>x</b>	as in 'ox' ξύδι <i>ksi-dhi</i> vinegar
Π π	<b>o</b>	as in 'hot' όλα <i>o-la</i> all
Ρ ρ	<b>p</b>	as in 'pup' πάω <i>pa-o</i> I go
	<b>r</b>	as in 'road'ρέμα <i>re-ma</i> stream
		a slightly trilled 'r'ρόδα <i>ro-dha</i> tyre
Σ σ, ς	<b>s</b>	as in 'sand' σημάδι <i>si-ma-dhi</i> mark
Τ τ	<b>t</b>	as in 'tap' τόπι <i>to-pi</i> ball
Υ υ	<b>i</b>	as in 'feet' ύστερα <i>is-tera</i> after
Φ φ	<b>f</b>	as in 'find' φύλλο <i>fi-lo</i> leaf
Χ χ	<b>kh</b>	as the 'ch' in Scottish 'loch', or like a rough 'h' χέρι <i>he-ri</i> hand
Ψ ψ	<b>ps</b>	as in 'lapse' ψωμί <i>pso-mi</i> bread
Ω ω	<b>o</b>	as in 'hot' ώρα <i>o-ra</i> time

## Combinations of Letters

The combinations of letters shown here are pronounced as follows:

Greek	Pronunciation Guide	Example
ει	<b>i</b>	as in 'feet' είδα <i>i-dha</i> I saw
οι	<b>i</b>	as in 'feet' οικόπεδο <i>i-ko-pe-dho</i> land
αι	<b>e</b>	as in 'bet' αίμα <i>e-ma</i> blood
ου	<b>u</b>	as in 'mood' πού <i>pu</i> who/what
μπ	<b>b</b>	as in 'beer' μπάλα <i>ba-la</i> ball
	<b>mb</b>	as in 'amber' κάμπος <i>kam-bos</i> forest
ντ	<b>d</b>	as in 'dot' ντουλάπα <i>dou-la-pa</i> wardrobe
	<b>nd</b>	as in 'bend' πέντε <i>pen-de</i> five
γκ	<b>g</b>	as in 'God' γκάζι <i>ga-zi</i> gas
γγ	<b>ng</b>	as in 'angle' αγγελία <i>an-ge-ia</i> announcement
γξ	<b>ks</b>	as in 'minks' σφινξ <i>sfynx</i> sphynx
τζ	<b>dz</b>	as in 'hands' τζάκι <i>dza-ki</i> fireplace

The pairs of vowels shown above are pronounced separately if the first has an acute accent, or the second a dieresis, as in the examples below:

γαϊδουράκι	<i>gai-dhou-ra-ki</i>	little donkey
Κάιρο	<i>kai-ro</i>	Cairo

Some Greek consonant sounds have no English equivalent. The *u* of the groups *au*, *eu* and *nu* is generally pronounced 'v'. The Greek question mark is represented with the English equivalent of a semicolon ';'.





<b>condoms</b>	pro-fi-la-kti-ka (ka-po-tez)	προφυλακτικά (καπότες)
<b>contraceptive medicine</b>	pro-fi-lak-ti-ko farm-a-ko	προφυλακτικό φάρμακο
<b>sunblock cream</b>	kre-ma i-li-u	κρέμα ηλιού
<b>tampons</b>	tam-bon	ταμπόν

**LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**

- Do you speak English?**  
mi-la-te an-gli-ka Μιλάτε Αγγλικά;
- Does anyone speak English?**  
mi-lai ka-nis an-gli-ka Μιλάνε κανείς αγγλικά;
- How do you say ... in Greek?**  
ps le-ghe-te ... sta el-li-ni-ka Πώς λέγεται ... στα ελληνικά;
- I understand.**  
ka-ta-la-ve-no Καταλαβαίνω.
- I don't understand.**  
dhen ka-ta-la-ve-no Δεν καταλαβαίνω.
- Please write it down.**  
ghrap-ste to pa-ra-ka-lo Γράψτε το, παρακαλώ.
- Can you show me on the map?**  
bo-ri-te na mo-u to dhi-xe-te sto har-ti Μπορείτε να μου το δείξετε στο χάρτη;

**NUMBERS**

0	mi-dhen	μηδέν
1	e-nas mi-a e-na	ένας (m) μία (f) ένα (n)
2	dhi-o	δύο
3	tris tri-a	τρεις (m&f) τρία (n)
4	te-se-ris te-se-ra	τέσσερεις (m&f) τέσσερα (n)
5	pen-de	πέντε
6	e-xi	έξη
7	ep-ta	επτά
8	oh-to	οχτώ
9	e-ne-a	εννέα
10	dhe-ka	δέκα
20	ik-o-si	είκοσι
30	tri-an-da	τριάντα
40	sa-ran-da	σαράντα
50	pe-nin-da	πενήντα
60	exin-da	εξήντα
70	ev-dho-min-da	εβδομήντα
80	oh-dhan-da	ογδόντα
90	eneninda	ενενήντα
100	e-ka-to	εκατό
1000	hi-li-i hi-li-ez hi-li-a	χίλιοι (m) χίλιες (f) χίλια (n)
2000	dhi-o chi-li-a-dhez	δύο χιλιάδες

**EMERGENCIES**

<b>Help!</b>	vo-i-thya	Βοήθεια!
<b>There's been an accident.</b>	ey-i-ne a-ti-hi-ma	Εγινε ατύχημα.
<b>Go away!</b>	fi-ye	Φύγε!
<b>Call ...!</b>	fo-nak-ste ...	Φωνάζτε ...!
<b>a doctor</b>	e-na yi-a-tro	ένα γιατρό
<b>the police</b>	tin a-sti-no-mi-a	την αστυνομία

**PAPERWORK**

<b>name</b>	o-no-ma-te-po-ni-mo	ονοματεπώνυμο
<b>nationality</b>	i-pi-ko-o-ti-ta	υπηκοότητα
<b>date of birth</b>	i-me-ro-mi-ni-a yen-ri-se-os	ημερομηνία γεννήσεως

<b>place of birth</b>	to-pos yen-ni-se-os	τόπος γεννήσεως
<b>sex (gender)</b>	fil-lon	φύλον
<b>passport</b>	dhia-va-ti-ri-o	διαβατήριο
<b>visa</b>	vi-za	βίζα

**QUESTION WORDS**

<b>Who/Which?</b>	pi-os/pi-a/pi-o (sg m/f/n) pi-i/pi-es/pi-a (pl m/f/n)	Ποιος/Ποια/Ποιο; Ποιου/Ποιες/Ποια;
<b>Who's there?</b>	pi-os i-ne e-ki	Ποιος είναι εκεί;
<b>Which street is this?</b>	pi-a o-dhos i-ne af-ti	Ποια οδός είναι αυτή;
<b>What?</b>	ti	Τι;
<b>What's this?</b>	ti i-ne af-to	Τι είναι αυτό;
<b>Where?</b>	pu	Πού;
<b>When?</b>	po-te	Πότε;
<b>Why?</b>	yi-a-ti	Γιατί;
<b>How?</b>	pos	Πώς;
<b>How much?</b>	po-so	Πόσο;
<b>How much does it cost?</b>	po-so ka-ni	Πόσο κάνει;

**SHOPPING & SERVICES**

<b>I'd like to buy ...</b>	the-lo n'a-gho-ra-so ...	Θέλω ν' αγοράσω ...
<b>How much is it?</b>	po-so ka-ni	Πόσο κάνει;
<b>I don't like it</b>	dhen mu a-re-si	Δεν μου αρέσει.
<b>May I see it?</b>	bo-ro na to dho	Μπορώ να το δω;
<b>I'm just looking.</b>	ap-las ki-ta-zo	Απλώς κοιτάζω.
<b>It's cheap.</b>	i-ne fti-no	Είναι φτηνό
<b>It's too expensive.</b>	i-ne po-li a-kri-vo	Είναι πολύ ακριβό.
<b>I'll take it.</b>	tha to pa-ro	Θα το πάρω
<b>Do you accept ...?</b>	dhe-che-ste ...	Δέχετε ...;
<b>credit cards</b>	pi-sto-ti-ki kar-ta	πιστωτική κάρτα
<b>travellers cheques</b>	tak-si-dhi-o-ti-kes e-pi-ta-ghes	ταξιδιωτικές επιταγές

<b>more</b>	pe-ri-so-te-ro	περισσότερο
<b>less</b>	li-gho-te-ro	λιγότερο
<b>smaller</b>	mi-kro-te-ro	μικρότερο
<b>bigger</b>	me-gha-li-te-ro	μεγαλύτερο

<b>I'm looking for ...</b>	psach-no ya ...	Ψάχνω για ...
<b>a bank</b>	mya tra-pe-za	μία τράπεζα
<b>the church</b>	tin ek-kli-si-a	την εκκλησία
<b>the city centre</b>	to ken-dro tis po-lis	το κέντρο της πόλης
<b>the ... embassy</b>	tin ... pres-vi-a	την ... πρεσβεία
<b>the market</b>	ti-lai-ki-a-gho-ra	τη λαϊκή αγορά
<b>the museum</b>	to mu-si-o	το μουσείο
<b>the post office</b>	to ta-chi-dhro-mi-o	το ταχυδρομείο
<b>a public toilet</b>	mya dhi-mo-sia tu-a-let-ta	μία δημόσια τουαλέτα
<b>the telephone centre</b>	to ti-le-fo-n-i-ko ken-dro	το τηλεφωνικό κέντρο
<b>the tourist office</b>	to tu-ri-sti-ko ghra-fi-o	το τουριστικό γραφείο

**TIME & DATES**

<b>What time is it?</b>	ti o-ra i-ne	Τι ώρα είναι;
<b>It's (2 o'clock).</b>	i-ne (dhi-o i- o-ra)	είναι (δύο η ώρα).
<b>in the morning</b>	to pro-i	το πρωί
<b>in the afternoon</b>	to a-po-yev-ma	το απόγευμα
<b>in the evening</b>	to vra-dhi	το βράδυ
<b>When?</b>	po-te	Πότε;
<b>today</b>	si-me-ra	σήμερα
<b>tomorrow</b>	av-ri-o	αύριο
<b>yesterday</b>	hthes	χθες

<b>Monday</b>	dhef-te-ra	Δευτέρα
<b>Tuesday</b>	tri-ti	Τρίτη
<b>Wednesday</b>	te-tar-ti	Τετάρτη
<b>Thursday</b>	pemp-ti	Πέμπτη
<b>Friday</b>	pa-ras-ke-vi	Παρασκευή
<b>Saturday</b>	sa-va-to	Σάββατο
<b>Sunday</b>	kyri-a-ki	Κυριακή

<b>January</b>	ia-nou-ar-i-os	Ιανουάριος
<b>February</b>	fev-rou-ar-i-os	Φεβρουάριος
<b>March</b>	mar-ti-os	Μάρτιος
<b>April</b>	a-pri-li-os	Απρίλιος
<b>May</b>	mai-os	Μάιος
<b>June</b>	i-ou-ni-os	Ιούνιος
<b>July</b>	i-ou-li-os	Ιούλιος
<b>August</b>	av-ghous-tos	Αύγουστος
<b>September</b>	sep-tem-vri-os	Σεπτέμβριος
<b>October</b>	ok-to-vri-os	Οκτώβριος
<b>November</b>	no-em-vri-os	Νοέμβριος
<b>December</b>	dhe-kem-vri-os	Δεκέμβριος

**TRANSPORT  
Public Transport**

<b>What time does the ... leave/arrive?</b>	ti o-ra fev-yi/fta-ni to ...	Τι ώρα φεύγει/φτάνει το ...;
<b>boat (city) bus (intercity) bus</b>	pli-o a-sti-ko le-o-fo-ri-o	πλοίο αστικό λεωφορείο
<b>plane</b>	ae-ro-pla-no	αεροπλάνο
<b>train</b>	tre-no	τράινο

<b>I'd like (a) ...</b>	tha i-the-la (e-na) ...	Θα ήθελα (ένα) ...
<b>one way ticket</b>	a-plo isi-ti-ri-o	απλό εισιτήριο
<b>return ticket</b>	i-si-ti-ri-o me e-pi-stro-fi	εισιτήριο με επιστροφή
<b>1st class</b>	pro-ti-the-si	πρώτη θέση
<b>2nd class</b>	def-te-ri the-si	δεύτερη θέση

**I want to go to ...**  
the-lo na pa-o sto/sti...  
Θέλω να πάω στο/στη ...  
**The train has been cancelled/delayed.**  
to tre-no a-ki-rothi-ke/ka-thi-ste-ri-se  
Το τρέινο ακυρώθηκε/καθυστέρησε

<b>the first</b>	to pro-to	το πρώτο
<b>the last</b>	to te-lef-te-o	το τελευταίο
<b>platform number</b>	a-rithmos a-po-va-thras	αριθμός αποβάθρας
<b>ticket office</b>	ek-dho-ti-ri-i-si-ti-ri-on	εκδοτήριο εισιτηρίων

**timetable**

dhro-mo-lo-gio δρομολόγιο

**train station**si-dhi-ro-dhro-mi-kos σιδηροδρομικός  
stath-mos σταθμός**Private Transport**

<b>I'd like to hire a ...</b>	tha i-the-la na ni-ki-a-so ...	Θα ήθελα να νοικιάσω ...
<b>car</b>	e-na af-ti-ki-ni-to	ένα αυτοκίνητο
<b>4WD</b>	e-na tes-se-ra e-pi tes-se-ra	ένα τέσσερα επί τέσσερα
<b>(a jeep)</b>	(e-na tzip)	(ένα τζιπ)
<b>motorbike</b>	mya mo-to-si-klet-ta	μια μοτοσυκλέττα
<b>bicycle</b>	e-na po-dhi-la-to	ένα ποδήλατο

**Is this the road to ...?**

af-tos i-ne o dhro-mos ya ...

Αυτός είναι ο δρόμος για ...

**Where's the next service station?**

pu i-ne to e-po-me-no ven-zi-na-dhi-ko

Πού είναι το επόμενο βενζινάδικο;

**Please fill it up.**

ye-mi-ste to pa-ra-ka-lo

Γεμίστε το, παρακαλώ.

**I'd like (30) euros worth.**

tha i-the-la (30) ev-ro

Θα ήθελα (30) ευρώ.

<b>diesel</b>	pet-re-le-o ki-ni-sis	πετρέλαιο κίνησης
<b>leaded petrol</b>	su-per	σούπερ
<b>unleaded petrol</b>	a-mo-liv-dhi	αμόλυβδη

**Can I park here?**

bo-ro na par-ka-ro e-dho

Μπορώ να παρκάρω εδώ;

**Where do I pay?**

pu pli-ro-no

Πού πληρώνω;

**ROAD SIGNS**

ΠΑΡΑΚΑΜΨΗ	Detour
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ Η ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ	No Entry
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ Η ΠΡΟΣΠΕΡΑΣΗ	No Overtaking
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ ΗΣΤΑΘΜΕΥΣΗ	No Parking
ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ	Entrance
ΜΗΝ ΠΑΡΚΑΡΕΤΕ ΕΔΩ	Keep Clear
ΔΙΟΔΙΑ	Toll
ΚΙΝΔΥΝΟΣ	Danger
ΑΡΓΑ	Slow Down
ΕΞΕΟΔΟΣ	Exit

**The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...)**

to af-to-ki-ni-to/mo-to-si-klet-ta cha-la-se sto ...

Το αυτοκίνητο/η μοτοσυκλέττα χάλασε στο ...

**The car/motorbike won't start.**

to af-to-ki-ni-to/mo-to-si-klet-ta dhen per-ni-bros

Το αυτοκίνητο/η μοτοσυκλέττα δεν παίρνει μπρος.

**I have a flat tyre.**

e-pa-tha la-sti-cho

Επαθα λάστιχο.

**I've run out of petrol.**

e-mi-na a-po ven-zi-ni

Εμεινα από βενζίνη.

**I've had an accident.**

e-pa-tha a-ti-chi-ma

Επαθα ατύχημα.

**TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN**

<b>Is there a/an ...?</b>	i-par-chi ...	Υπάρχει ...;
<b>I need a/an ...</b>	chri-a-zo-me ...	Χρειάζομαι ...
<b>baby change room</b>	me-ros nal-lak-so to mo-ro	μέρος ν'αλλάξω το μωρό
<b>car baby seat</b>	ka-this-ma ya mo-ro	κάθισμα για μωρό
<b>child-minding service</b>	ba-bi sit-ter	μπέμπι σίττερ
<b>children's menu (disposable)</b>	me-nu ya pe-dhya pan-nez Pam-pers	μενού για παιδιά πάνες Pampers
<b>nappies/diapers (English-speaking)</b>	ba-bi sit-ter pu mi-la	μπέμπι σίττερ που μιλά
<b>babysitter</b>	an-ghl-ika	αγγλικά
<b>highchair</b>	pe-dhi-ki ka-rek-la	παιδική καρέκλα
<b>potty</b>	yo-yo	γιγιό
<b>stroller</b>	ka-rot-sa-ki	καροτσάκι

**Do you mind if I breastfeed here?**

bo-ro na thi-la-so e-dho

Μπορώ να θηλάσω εδώ;

**Are children allowed?**

e-pi-tre-pon-de ta pe-dhya

Επιτρέπονται τα παιδιά;

Also available from Lonely Planet:  
Greek Phrasebook

# Glossary

**Achaean civilisation** – see *Mycenaean civilisation*

**acropolis** – highest point of an ancient city

**agia (f), agios (m), agii (pl)** – saint(s)

**agora** – commercial area of an ancient city; shopping precinct in modern Greece

**amphora** – large two-handled vase in which wine or oil was kept

**architrave** – part of the *entablature* that rests on the columns of a temple

**arhontika** – 17th- and 18th-century-AD mansions that belonged to arhons, the leading citizens of a town

**baglama** – miniature *bouzouki* with a tinny sound

**basilica** – early Christian church

**bouleuterion** – council house

**bouzouki** – stringed lute-like instrument associated with *rembetika* music

**bouzoukia** – any nightclub where the *bouzouki* is played and low-grade folk songs are sung; see also *skyladika*

**Byzantine Empire** – characterised by the merging of Hellenistic culture and Christianity and named after Byzantium, the city on the Bosphorus that became the capital of the Roman Empire in AD 324; when the Roman Empire was formally divided in AD 395, Rome went into decline and the eastern capital, renamed Constantinople after Emperor Constantine I, flourished; the Byzantine Empire dissolved after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453

**caïque** – small, sturdy fishing boat

**capital** – top of a column

**cella** – room in a temple where the cult statue stood

**choregos** – wealthy citizen who financed choral and dramatic performances

**classical Greece** – period in which the Greek city-states reached the height of their wealth and power after the defeat of the Persians in the 5th century BC; ended with the decline of the city-states as a result of the Peloponnesian Wars, and the expansionist aspirations of Philip II, King of Macedon (r 359–336 BC) and his son, Alexander the Great (r 336–323 BC)

**Corinthian** – order of Greek architecture recognisable by columns with bell-shaped capitals with sculpted elaborate ornaments based on acanthus leaves

**cornice** – the upper part of the *entablature*, extending beyond the *frieze*

**cydlopes** – mythical one-eyed giants

**dark age** (1200–800 BC) – period in which Greece was under the rule of the *Dorians*

**delfini** – dolphin; common name for hydrofoil

**dimarhio** – town hall

**Dimotiki** – Demotic Greek language; the official spoken language of Greece

**domatio (s), domatia (pl)** – room; a cheap form of accommodation in most tourist areas

**Dorians** – Hellenic warriors who invaded Greece around 1200 BC, demolishing the city-states and destroying the Mycenaean civilisation; heralded Greece's *dark age*, when the artistic and cultural advancements of the Mycenaean and Minoans were abandoned; the Dorians later developed into land-holding aristocrats, encouraging the resurgence of independent city-states led by wealthy aristocrats

**Doric** – order of Greek architecture characterised by a column that has no base, a fluted shaft and a relatively plain capital, when compared with the flourishes evident on *Ionic* and *Corinthian* capitals

**ELPA** – Elliniki Leshi Periiigeison & Aftokinitou; Greek motoring and touring club

**ELTA** – Ellinika Tahydromia; Greek post office

**entablature** – part of a temple between the tops of the columns and the roof

**EOS** – Ellinikos Orivatikos Syllogos; the association of Greek Mountaineering Clubs

**EOT** – Ellinikos Organismos Tourismou; Greek National Tourism Organisation

**Epitaphios** – structure depicting Christ on his bier, decorated for the Easter procession

**estiatorio** – restaurant

**faïence** – an ancient glazing technique that uses quartz instead of glass

**Filiki Eteria** – friendly society; a group of Greeks in exile; formed during Ottoman rule to organise an uprising against the Turks

**fluted** – of a column having vertical indentations on the shaft

**FPA** – foros prostithemenis axisias; Value Added Tax, or VAT

**frieze** – part of the *entablature*, which is above the architrave

**galaktopoleio (s), galaktopoleia (pl)** – a shop that sells dairy products

**Geometric period (1200–800 BC)** – the period characterised by pottery decorated with geometric designs; sometimes referred to as Greece's *dark age*

**Hellas, Ellas or Ellada** – the Greek name for Greece  
**Hellenistic period** – prosperous, influential period

of Greek civilisation ushered in by Alexander the Great's empire-building and lasting until the Roman sacking of Corinth in 146 BC

**hora** – main town, usually on an island

**iconostasis** – altar screen embellished with icons

**ikonostasia** – miniature chapels

**ionic** – order of Greek architecture characterised by a column with truncated flutes and capitals with ornaments resembling scrolls

**kafeneio (s), kafeneia (pl)** – traditionally a male-only coffee house where cards and backgammon are played

**kalderimi** – cobble footpath

**kastro** – castle, fortress, bastion

**katholikon** – principal church of a monastic complex

**kefi** – an indefinable feeling of good spirit, without which no Greek can have a good time

**kilimia** – flat-woven rugs that were traditional dowry gifts

**Koine** – Greek language used in pre-Byzantine times; the language of the church liturgy

**kore** – female statue of the Archaic period; see also *kouros*

**kouros** – male statue of the Archaic period, characterised by a stiff body posture and enigmatic smile

**kri-kri** – endemic Cretan animal similar to a goat

**KTEL** – Kino Tamio Eispraxeon Leoforion; national bus cooperative, which runs all long-distance bus services

**labrys** – double-axe symbol of Minoan civilization

**lammergeier** – bearded vulture

**leoforos** – avenue

**libation** – in ancient Greece, wine or food that was offered to the gods

**Linear A** – Minoan script; so far undeciphered

**Linear B** – Mycenaean script; has been deciphered

**lyra** – small violin-like instrument, played on the knee; common in Cretan and Pontian music

**malaka** – literally 'wanker'; used as a familiar term of address, or as an insult, depending on context

**manga** – 'wide boy' or 'dude'; originally a person of the underworld, now any streetwise person

**mandinada (s), mandinades (pl)** – traditional Cretan rhyming song/s, often with improvised lyrics

**mayirefta** – pre-made casseroles and bakes served at *tavernas* and other eateries

**megaron** – central room of a Mycenaean palace

**meltemi** – northeasterly wind that blows throughout much of Greece in the summer

**metope** – sculpted section of a Doric *frieze*

**mezedopoleio** – *mezes* restaurant

**mezes (s), mezedes (pl)** – appetiser/s

**Minoan civilisation (3000–1200 BC)** – Bronze Age culture of Crete named after the mythical King Minos

and characterised by pottery and metalwork of great beauty and artisanship; it has three periods: Protopalatial (3400–2100 BC), Neopalatial (2100–1580 BC) and Postpalatial (1580–1200 BC)

**mitata** – round stone shepherd's huts

**moni** – monastery or convent

**Mycenaean civilisation (1900–1100 BC)** – first great civilisation of the Greek mainland, characterised by powerful independent city-states ruled by kings; also known as the *Achaean civilisation*

**narthex** – porch of a church

**Nea Dimokratia** – New Democracy; conservative political party

**necropolis** – literally 'city of the dead'; ancient cemetery

**nomarhia** – prefecture building

**nomos** – prefectures into which the regions and island groups of Greece are divided

**nymphaeum** – in ancient Greece, building containing a fountain and often dedicated to nymphs

**odeion** – ancient Greek indoor theatre

**odos** – street

**OTE** – Organismos Tilepikinonion Elladas; national telephone carrier

**oud** – a bulbous, stringed instrument with a sharply raked-back head

**ouzeri** – place that serves ouzo and light snacks

**Panagia** – Mother of God; name frequently used for churches

**Pandokrator** – painting or mosaic of Christ in the centre of the dome of a Byzantine church

**pandopoleio** – general store

**paralia** – waterfront

**parapente** – paragliding

**pediment** – triangular section, often filled with sculpture above the columns, found at the front and back of a classical Greek temple

**periptero (s), periptera (pl)** – street kiosk

**peristyle** – columns surrounding a building, usually a temple or courtyard

**pinakothiki** – picture gallery

**pithos (s), pithoi (pl)** – large Minoan storage jar

**plateia** – square

**propylon (s), propylaia (pl)** – elaborately built main entrance to an ancient city or sanctuary; a propylon had one gateway and a propylaia more than one

**prytaneion** – the administrative centre of the city-state

**raki** – Crete's fiery spirit, distilled from grapes

**rembetika** – blues songs commonly associated with the underworld of the 1920s

**rhyton** – another name for a *libation* vessel

**rizitika** – traditional, patriotic songs of western Crete

**santouri** – hammered dulcimer from Asia Minor

**skyladika** – literally 'dog songs' (and the venues they're sung in); popular, but not lyrically challenging, often sung in *bouzoukia* nightclubs

**spileo** – cave

**stela (s), stelae (pl)** – gravestone that stands upright

**stoa** – long colonnaded building, usually in an *agora*; used as a meeting place and shelter in ancient Greece

**tahydromio (s), tahydromia (pl)** – post office

**taverna** – traditional restaurant that serves food and wine

**temblon** – votive screen

**tholos** – Mycenaean tomb shaped like a beehive

**toumberleki** – small lap drum played with the fingers

**triglyph** – sections of a Doric *frieze* between the *metopes*

**trireme** – ancient Greek galley with three rows of oars on each side

**tsikoudia** – also called *raki*, the Cretan distilled spirit from grapes

**volta** – promenade; evening stroll, outing or excursion

**volute** – spiral decoration on *ionic* capitals

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