

TRAVELLING TO CRETE: Basic information

Language

The official language is Greek. However, English, German, French, Russian and other languages are widely spoken in tourist resorts. Foreign visitors that try to speak even a few words of Greek are rewarded with warm smiles.

Religion

In Greece the right to religious tolerance and freedom is constitutionally established. The majority of the population is orthodox Christian

Climate – Weather

The climate of Crete is a factor that greatly contributes to its attractiveness. It is mild Mediterranean – dry and warm, which means high sunshine all year round, very small seasonal changes in temperatures and no extreme weather phenomena.

In **spring** temperatures fluctuate between about 16 and 24 degrees Celsius. During the **summer**, the average temperatures fluctuate between about 25 and 30 degrees Celsius, the maximum values reaching even 40 degrees Celsius, while the “meltemi” winds mitigate the warm weather. **Autumn** is the mildest season in Crete, with the average temperatures fluctuating between about 12 and 13 degrees Celsius.

In general, eastern Crete is warmer than western Crete, the southern part of the island is warmer than the northern, the western part of Crete has more vegetation and in the mountainous areas the weather is cooler.

Time

Time of Greece: GMT +2

Working hours of public offices and shops

1. Public Offices: Monday – Friday 7:30 – 15:00
2. Post Offices: Monday-Friday 7:30 – 14:00
3. Banks: Monday – Thursday 8:00 – 14:30 and Friday 8:00 – 13:30
4. Shops are open on Monday and Wednesday: 9:00 – 15:00, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 9:00 – 14:00 and 17:30 – 21:00, Saturday: 9:00 – 15:00. In touristic areas during the summer months shops have free working hours.
5. Although pharmacies have free working hours they are usually open from 08:00 to 14:00 on Monday and Wednesday. On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday they are also open in the afternoon from 17:30 to 21:00. There are also emergency pharmacies that are open 24 hours and at weekends. You can find the lists of them on the doors of all pharmacies.

National and local holidays

There are two types of holidays: Those occurring on the same day every year and the movable feasts, which occur on different dates every year.

1. **New Year's Day:** January 1st
2. **Epiphany:** January 6th
3. **Ash Monday:** 48 days before Easter
4. **Independence Day and Annunciation:** March 25th
Movable holiday - Easter: Good Friday to Easter Monday
5. **Resurrection:** Easter Day
6. **Workers' Day (May Day):** May 1st
7. **Whitsun:** Is celebrated 50 days after Easter.
8. **The Assumption:** the 15th of August
9. October 28th: Oxi Day
10. **Christmas:** December 25th -26th

Currency – Exchange

In Crete, like in the rest of Greece, the euro is used. Coins of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents and of 1 and 2 euros circulate. The notes circulate in values of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros. Before your trip, contact your bank to inform them about the use of your credit card and the withdrawal of money.

Passports & Visas

Find out whether the issue of a visa and a passport is required for your country of origin and undertake the necessary actions in time. For more information visit the website of the Hellenic Tourism Organization:

http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/before_you_travel/passports-visas

Electric current – electrical appliances

The electric current is 220 V (50Hz). In order for appliances from North America to function properly and without problems a transformer is necessary (schucko adaptors). For appliances from England a special adaptor is necessary. Make sure before use that the appliances you are going to use function at this voltage.

Health services –Medical Care – Insurance

Crete has very good public hospitals, private hospitals etc. Make sure that your healthcare insurance is valid. Visitors coming from European Union (EU)member-states and wish to receive the necessary healthcare should have the European HealthCard or another legal Community document, issued by their competent insurance authority. On the basis of it part or the whole of their care costs is covered. Those whose country is not a member of the European Union, in order to receive the necessary healthcare should consult their insurance authority before they travel.

Drinking water

Tap water is safe for consumption in cities and larger towns, the consumption of bottled water is recommended though.

Telecommunications – wifi areas – business centers for fax, letter, and telegram dispatch

Crete has a wide coverage of mobile telephony networks, so you will have no problem. However, contact your telephone company in order to activate the service of international roaming in your mobile phone. If you plan to stay for a long time or make more calls, it might be better to buy a Greek SIM card. Go with your mobile phone and your passport to a mobile telephony shop, where your new SIM card will be registered, along with your telephone number and your personal information. (Undeclared telephones cannot receive or make calls).

In order to send postcards, letters or packages you should go to the Hellenic Posts. These offices also offer a fax sending service, like most hotels also do. If you wish to connect to the internet, you can go to places offering this service: Areas of public use, Internet cafes, airport etc.

International Call code – Calls from and to Crete

The international call code for Greece is **+30** . If you wish to make a call from abroad, you should call +30, followed by the telephone number. If you wish to call another country from Crete, dial 00 and then the code of the country and the telephone number. You may also make calls from telephone boxes which operate with call cards.

Weddings in Crete

Individuals of nationality other than Greek that wish to marry in Crete should address the local municipalities (where the wedding is going to take place) and be informed about the certificates required. Wedding of individuals of the same sex is not allowed.

Holidays in Crete with your pet

Before you start your trip with your pet, it is advisable to check with the accommodation you have chosen and with your travel company, regarding their rules on travelling with animals. According to Law 3170/2003 the dog is allowed in open areas, provided that it is tied or leashed, that its mess is collected, and has a health booklet to prove it is vaccinated. In case of a dangerous animal a muzzle is required. Dogs are not allowed in areas where there are swimmers (public beaches).

Nudism in Crete

There are holiday centres, where, according to Law1399/83 nudism is allowed.

Smoking Prohibition

Smoking is prohibited in all closed public areas, according to Law 3868/10. Hotels and similar accommodation may reserve rooms for smokers.

Tourism complaints

If you are not satisfied with the quality of the tourist services during your stay in Crete, address the local offices of the tourist police and the Hellenic Tourism Organization. For filing a complaint you can fill in the following application form and send it to the following email address: complaints@gnto.gr

Emergency telephone numbers

National Emergency Center: 166

Emergency Hospitals, Pharmacies, Doctors: 14944

Police: 100

Fire Brigade: 199

Emergency Intervention of the Port Authority: 108

European Emergency Number: 112

The European Emergency Number was created to serve the citizens on a 24 hour basis in case they need help, no matter in which country of the European Union they need it. The call is answered immediately by a specialized professional, with whom you can communicate in one of the basic European languages. The call from a fixed phone, a mobile phone, a telephone box or a public telephone appliance is without charge. The number operates within the range of any mobile telephony network, even if your own network does not function in a specific area, provided there is coverage by another network.