



Wild poppies in the mountains of Crete

Wildflowers, Wine and History in Crete

18 – 24 April 2026

‘Outstanding. Really enjoyed all trips – especially botanical gardens, winery and river walk. Hugely appreciate the care that went into planning the itinerary – it was brilliant.’

Lisa Roberts, Wildflowers, Wine & History in Crete, April '25



Level 3
MODERATE





A street in Chania

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

Crete's natural beauty is equalled only by the richness of its history. The island is the birthplace of the ancient Minoans, who ruled some 4,000 years ago. At the crossroads of three continents, Crete has been occupied by consecutive invaders. Evidence of this long history can be seen in Chania, where mighty fortresses preside over labyrinthine lanes and beautifully restored Renaissance mansions rub rafters with mosques and Turkish bathhouses.

In Crete, 'locavore' is not a trend but a way of life. Rural tavernas often produce their own meat, cheese, olive oil, raki and wine, and catch their own seafood. Explore Crete's rich botany, its ancient and modern history, its beautiful landscapes and delicious food and wine, and learn how all of these intertwine.

'A wonderful trip with an amazing range and mixture of visits.'

Paul Roberts, *Wildflowers, Wine & History in Crete*, April '25

Tour Leaders

Gillian Winter (British) and **Doug Langmead** (Australian) met while working in the Middle East, Gillian in teaching English as a foreign language and Doug in architecture and landscaping on large projects. Music brought them together, as Doug gave lifts to members of a choir Gillian sang with. They both enjoy choral music and are currently rehearsing Handel's Messiah for a performance in the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Gillian has lived in or visited Crete on and off since 2002, settling permanently once she retired. Doug has been living and working in the Middle East since 1979: he has a management consultancy in Dubai and is currently working with Emaar in Egypt, from where he visits Crete frequently. They both enjoy exploring Crete, spending their time hiking, reading, learning about Crete and its history, and dining out. They are members of the Mediterranean Garden Society, headquartered in Athens, learning about regional gardening techniques



and participating in visits to various private and public gardens as well as monthly zoom talks. They are enthusiastic about sharing their love of Crete with visitors.

'Gillian and Doug were fabulous leaders who made you feel comfortable, explained things and kept you informed.'

Pat Schajermann, Wildflowers,
Wine & History in Crete, April '25

Knossos Palace





Tulipa doerfleri (endemic wild tulips)

Itinerary 18 – 24 April 2026

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

6 nights Chania, Crete

Day 1: Chania (Sat, 18 April) **D**

Pm: Arrive and transfer to Porto Veneziano Hotel.

Eve: Listen to a brief background on the tour, followed by a welcome dinner.

about food and wine in Crete. Enjoy an early dinner at the park's restaurant, where all the ingredients are either locally sourced or grown on-site. Return to the hotel.

Day 2: Chania (Sun, 19 April) **B D**

Landscapes, Food and Wine of Crete

Am: Following a short history briefing set out to explore Chania's old town on a walking tour. See the city's impressive 14th-century harbour and the 16th-century lighthouse. Learn about Crete's many influences, spanning Byzantine, Venetian, Ottoman and more.

Pm: Drive out to the foothills of the White Mountains and visit the Botanical Park of Crete, which spreads over 20 hectares. Its microclimate allows a wide range of plants and wildlife to thrive, including fruit trees, herbs, medicinal and ornamental plants. Meet with the owners of the park and learn about the history, landscapes and cuisine of Crete.

Eve: See a cooking demonstration, learning

Day 3: Chania (Mon, 20 April) **B L**

Minoans and Crete's Classical History

Am: Drive to Heraklion and visit the world-renowned Bronze Age Palace of Knossos, accompanied by a specialist guide. Visit the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, which includes important finds from the island, including the Phaistos Disc and Minoan frescoes.

Pm: Enjoy lunch at a local taverna before returning to Chania.

Day 4: Chania (Tues, 21 April) **B L**

Wildflowers and the Real Crete

Am: Discover the natural beauty and authentic charm of rural Crete on a walk around orange groves in Stylos to see the springs and river which supply the Samaria table water. Continue to Kefalas

for a walk around the olive groves in Kefalas taking in the serene landscapes and where we can expect to see wild native tulips, lupins, dwarf iris, anemones, and dragon lilies.

Pm: Have lunch in Meterizi taverna in Kefalas village. Return to the hotel.

Day 5: Chania (Wed, 22 April)

B L

The Battle of Crete

Am: Accompanied by a specialist guide, take part in a tour tracing Operation Mercury (the German Invasion of Crete). Learn about the role of Australian, New Zealand, British and German soldiers at the Battle of Crete. Visit the German war cemetery, Hill 107 in Maleme, the airfield and Tavronitis Bridge. Continue on to Galatas village and its small museum, the Greek-New Zealand memorial and ANZAC memorial.

Pm: Light lunch at Manousakis winery. Continue to the Allied cemetery. Return to Chania and at leisure.

Day 6: Chania (Thur, 23 April)

B D

Bridging the Gap, Greeks and Romans (and Wildflowers). This day is at leisure OR join our optional morning and/or afternoon visits, at your own expense.

Am: Walkable options include Chania Archaeological Museum, Maritime Museum, the synagogue, Kipos cafe and garden, or a nearby beach, boat trip or shopping. Options requiring a bus or taxi include Aptera Roman ruins and Turkish fort, Koumos stone village and Kalyves beach, and the Battle of 42nd Street monument.

Eve: Farewell dinner at Ta Neoria accompanied by local wines.

Day 7: Chania (Fri, 24 April)

B

Am: Depart Chania after breakfast.

*NB: there can be no guarantee about precise flowering times. All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.



A taverna in Chania



The Hotel Porto Veneziano

Hotel Porto Veneziano

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



The Egyptian lighthouse

'Porto Veneziano – great location, friendly service and very good breakfast.'

Janet Farran, Wildflowers,
Wine & History in Crete, April 25

'(Hotel) food fantastic – variety and quantity. Staff welcoming and customer service a high standard. Room comfortable. Best was the pillows!'

Juliet Weeramanthri, Wildflowers,
Wine & History in Crete, April 25

THIS TOUR IS CLASSED AS:

Level 3 | Moderate



Regular walking at destinations, extended standing and /or increased travel distances. Good fitness is required.



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

The cost of the tour sharing a room is £1,760

The cost of the tour in a single room is £2,124

Upgrades:

We have Classic Double Sea View Rooms and a Superior Sea View Suite available for upgrade, with Junior Suites available on request. Please contact us for details.

The cost includes:

- Six nights' accommodation at the medium grade Hotel Porto Veneziano Hotel based on a twin or double classic room.
- Tour leaders Gillian Winter and Doug Langmead
- Specialist local guides and speakers on days 3, 4 and 5
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- All breakfasts, dinners with wine on days 1, 2 and 6, and lunches on days 3, 4 and 5
- All internal transport
- A full programme of cultural visits
- All admission fees and tips

Cost excludes:

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

"All excursions were interesting and enjoyable. Excellent hotel. Meals very good and plentiful. Much fun for one and all."

Jean Thomas, Wildflowers, Wine & History in Crete, 2024

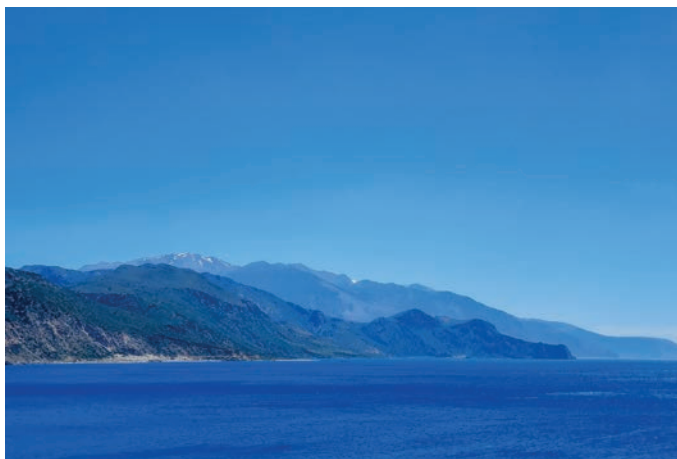
About Us

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

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



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TOURS**

