

Crete, Cyprus and Rhodes

Blue Dot Travel
Go somewhere different

April 2027 | 21 Days

\$14,300 per person, twin share

Solo Supplement: \$3,900

Tour Highlights

- Exploring the UNESCO-listed medieval Old Town of Rhodes
- Discover the ancient Acropolis of Lindos
- Excursion to the Minoan Palace of Knossos, the first European civilisation on Crete
- Take a day trip by ferry to the gorgeous Symi Island
- Visit the Greek Byzantine Art Museum and its many frescoes and icons from the Byzantine period
- The Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes Palace, one of the first castles built by the knights



Crete, Cyprus and Rhodes



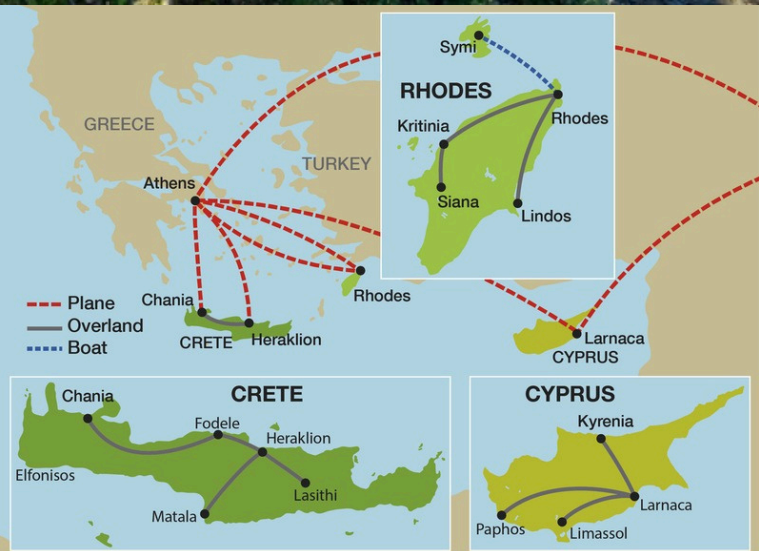
Tour overview

The story of Cyprus' tumultuous past is told through its historic sites, its Roman ruins, its multi-faceted museums and its dusty urban streets. This ease of accessibility is highlighted in Paphos, where one of the most important archaeological sites sprawls like an ancient theme park next to a tourist resort. Experience the intrinsically different Greek and Turkish societies of modern Cyprus with its fractured identity, a passionate people and culture, and beautiful landscape and lifestyle.

There is something undeniably artistic in the way the landscape of Crete unfolds, from the sun-drenched beaches in the north to rugged canyons spilling into the cove-studded south coast. In between the valleys, villages are cradled in the landscape and the gorges have a cave where Zeus was born. Crete's natural beauty is equalled only by the richness of its history. The island is the birthplace of the first advanced society on European soil, the Minoans, who ruled over much of the Aegean some 4,000 years ago. You'll find vestiges of this mysterious civilisation all over Crete, including the famous "Palace of Knossos" and the legend of the labyrinth of King Minos and the slaying of the Minotaur by Theseus to save the king's daughter, Ariadne. At the crossroads of three continents, Crete has been coveted and occupied by consecutive invaders.

History imbues the air in the old towns of Chania and Rethymno where a labyrinth of laneways, laid out by the Venetians, are lorded over by mighty fortresses and where gorgeously restored Renaissance mansions nestle beside mosques and Turkish bathhouses. In the end though, it is the people that create the most vivid memories. Crete's people champion their unforgettable unique culture, customs and time-honoured traditions.

Rhodes is rightly celebrated for the splendour of its medieval architecture and evocative old town and it is generally considered one of the most beautiful of the Greek Islands. The crusader Knights of St John (1309-1522) called Rhodes home after their expulsion from the Holy Land, and it is their legacy of massive castles and the old town that we enjoy today. Here, according to legend, stood the Colossus of Rhodes, a bronze statue of Helios, the Sun-God, erected in 290BC, standing astride the harbour entrance and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



Activity rating: Moderate

You must be capable of: walking up to 8,000 steps daily; occasionally ascending 3-4 flights of steps; standing at attractions for up to 1 hour; boarding and disembarking transport unaided, and handling your own luggage.



Sunday 18th April DEPART AUSTRALIA

Depart Australia for Larnaca. We will provide you with an individualised flight itinerary for your trip.

Day 1, Monday 19th April ARRIVE LARNACA

Welcome to Cyprus!

Arrival and group transfer (15-minute drive) to the Hotel Lvadhiotis (or similar) for check-in and rest after a long flight. In the afternoon, our guide will meet the group at reception for an afternoon stroll around Larnaca. An official welcome dinner is at a local tavern within walking distance from the hotel. Overnight: Larnaca **D**

Day 2, Tuesday 20th April KYRENIA – NICOSIA

Today, we'll drive to the Turkish-occupied region of Northern Cyprus. Passports are required today and tomorrow as you are entering Turkish territory. We'll drive past the beautiful landscape of the Pentadaktylos, meaning 'Five Fingers,' mountain range. The first stop in the North is Bellapais Abbey, situated in the village of Bellapais. It is considered one of the best-preserved examples of Gothic architecture on the island and is built almost entirely out of local limestone. Then we'll explore the picturesque town of Kyrenia, with its horseshoe-shaped harbour, spectacular medieval castle, and maze of narrow streets lined with exquisitely preserved stone houses. The most important monument within the town is the Kerynia Castle Museum, which features, among other exhibits, a famous Shipwreck dating to circa 300 BC. From Kyrenia, we'll next visit Nicosia ("Lefkosia"), the world's only divided capital city. We enter the city by driving along the Green Line, the capital's dividing borderline, passing by the newly restored Famagusta Gate. We continue to the Archbishop's Palace to view St. John's Cathedral (exterior). Our tour continues to the picturesque old quarter of "Laiki Yitonia," where we'll have time to walk around the charming, winding alleyways lined with numerous traditional houses, shops, and galleries. Dinner at a local tavern. Overnight: Larnaca **B/D**

Day 3, Wednesday 21st April FAMAGUSTA – SALAMIS – AYIA NAPA

On the island's eastern side lies the beautiful coastal town of Famagusta, trapped in a time-lock since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. We'll explore the medieval walls of the old city, the spectacular Gothic Cathedral of St. Nicholas, now operating as a mosque, and the famous 'Othello's Tower'. Stroll through narrow streets, shop in the Bazaar and then drive close to the 'Ghost Town', the sealed-off area of Famagusta. Together, we will discover the medieval walls of the old city, the spectacular Gothic Cathedral of St. Nicholas, now operating as a mosque, and the historical background of Famagusta, with visits to the ancient capital, Salamis, founded in the 11th Century BC, right after the Trojan War. Then, we'll visit the archaeological site, which includes a beautiful ancient Greek theatre, Hellenistic theatres, and Roman Colonnades. Our last stop will be Asia Napa, one of the most well-known resorts in the Mediterranean Sea. Around 1500 AD, a monastery was built around the cave, in honour of the Virgin Mary of Ayia Napa. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight: Larnaca **B/D**

Day 4, Thursday 22nd April KOLOSSI – KOURION – PETRA TOU ROMIOU – PANAYIA – PAPHOS

Today, our excursion will be all about history, legends and the spectacular views over some of the most beautiful parts of Cyprus. The first visit will be at the Crusader Castle of Kolossi, a fine example of military architecture. Then we stop at the ancient city of Kourion, where we'll see the famous Greco-Roman theatre and mosaics, and enjoy the views the Greeks and Romans had of this amazing ancient city. Archaeological evidence and historical sources depict Kourion as one of Cyprus's most important ancient kingdoms. Our journey will continue past the Episkopi, a British military base and then to Aphrodite's Rock, one of the island's most famous attractions. Here we will see the place where the Goddess of Love and Beauty was born from the sea's foam. Then on to the stunning Chrysorrogiatissa Monastery, established in 1152. Lunch is at a family-owned winery. Our last stop is at Paphos, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover the remarkable history of this city, passing by the Catacombs of St. Solomon, the Pillar of St. Paul, and the House of Dionysos. Dinner will be at a local restaurant. Overnight: Paphos **B/L/D**

Day 5, Friday 23rd April THE BATHS OF APHRODITE – AKAMAS

Today, there is an optional morning trek for those up to it. This is suitable only for those able to trek for around three hours up and down some hills. The trek winds its way along a beautiful forest, passing canyons and deserted beaches of the Akamas Peninsula. At the end of the trek, you'll be dropped off to a jetty where you can buy lunch. For those not wanting to trek, there is free time to stroll around town at your leisure. Then, after lunch time (at your own leisure and cost), the group will be transferred to the same jetty as the walkers, where you'll all take a lovely boat trip around the peninsula. The cruise will go from about 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm. Then, you'll return to the hotel at around 5.00 pm to prepare for dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight: Paphos **B/D**

Day 6, Saturday 24th April KAKOPETRIA – KYKKOS – OMODHOS

After breakfast, we drive to Chrysorrogiatissa Monastery, established in 1152, before heading to the Troodos Mountains, the biggest mountain range in Cyprus, located in the centre of the island. Troodos' highest peak is Mount Olympus at 1,952m, and it is considered to be the green heart of the island. There are many famous mountain resorts, Byzantine monasteries and churches on mountain peaks, and villages nestling in its valleys cling to terraced hill slopes. Our first stop is at Kakopetria, a well-preserved village with traditional, picturesque houses dating back to the 14th century AD. Following Kakopetria, we will experience one of the wealthiest monasteries in Cyprus, Kykkos. The Holy Monastery of the Virgin of Kykkos was founded around the end of the 11th century by the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081 – 1118) and lies at an altitude of 1318m on the north-west face of the Troodos Mountains. The day ends with a stop in another traditional village called Omodos, known as one of the best wine-producing villages on the island. To top off our day, we step into a winery where we'll learn the history of the island's wines. Overnight: Larnaca **B/D**



Day 7, Sunday 25th April IN TRANSIT

Today, we say goodbye to Cyprus and fly to Heraklion, Crete, via Athens.

Welcome to Crete!

Arrival at the airport in Heraklion (HER) in Crete. Our group will be transferred to the hotel in Heraklion, where we will stay for 5 nights. Dinner at the hotel. Overnight: Heraklion **B/D**

Day 8, Monday 26th April KNOSSOS

Our day starts in Heraklion, where we will visit the archaeological museum, which houses exhibits from the Minoan civilisation. Next, to the island's most important archaeological and historical site, Knossos Palace. The most controversial and well-preserved Minoan archaeological site, the Palace of Knossos, is a must-see for any traveller to Crete. The size and variety of this vast palace complex's surviving layout, columns, walls, paintings, and sculptures give us an idea of Minoan life and take us back thousands of years. Afterwards, we will visit a local winery, where we will have the chance to taste different types of Cretan wine, accompanied by traditional snacks. Dinner at a local tavern. Overnight: Heraklion **B/D**

Day 9, Tuesday 27th April OLIVE OIL TASTING – KARA KARDIOTISSA – KRASI

We'll visit a local olive oil factory in the morning to learn how the Cretan golden liquid is produced. After the tour, we'll have an opportunity to taste the product. Our tour continues to the Lasithi Plateau. Lasithi Plateau is a varied, fertile landscape with many vegetable gardens. We pass old wind turbines that, just a few years ago, pumped water from the ground for the fields. We will visit the monastery of Kara Kardiotissa, then take a short break and try the local cheese pie with honey, for which the region is famous. Next to the village of Krasi, where we see the mighty plane tree with a circumference of 18 metres, said to be the largest plane tree in Crete and one of the largest in Europe. Dinner at a local tavern. Overnight: Heraklion **B/D**

Day 10, Wednesday 28th April GORTYNA – FESTOS – MATALA

We will embark on a relaxing journey to the "antiquity" and sunshine of southwest Crete, beyond the mountains and through the island's unique landscape. Our first stop is Gortys, the island's capital during the Roman occupation. Visit the ancient Forum and Amphitheatre, the Basilica of St. Titus (dating from the 5th-6th C. AD), and admire the famous Doric Law Code carved in stone. Afterwards, we will visit Festos, the island's second major Minoan archaeological site on a hill overlooking the fertile Messara plain and offering a wonderful view of the Ida and Asterousia mountains. The ruins of the palace complex provide evidence of a glorious past destroyed by fire and earthquake, and rebuilt shortly after. Next to the village of Matala, well known worldwide as a favourite hippie destination during the 70s. Enjoy a stroll around the village with many shops, cafes and tavernas. Dinner at a local tavern. Overnight: Heraklion **B/D**

Day 11, Thursday 29th April KRITSA VILLAGE, SPINALONGA AND AGIOS NIKOLAOS

Our first stop is Kritsa, a beautiful small village in the mountain foothills, with narrow, winding lanes and plenty of local character. Renowned for the skill of local weavers and embroiderers, it is also famous for its picture-perfect whitewashed buildings set against the backdrop of the mountains. Our trip continues to the eastern side of Crete, where we disembark the bus and board a boat for the small island of Spinalonga. Here, we open a new chapter in history... in front of us lies an imposing Venetian fortress that takes us back to when Crete was an important base for the mighty maritime and trading power. The old leper village on the small island, which can be visited amid the fortress walls, is impressive. The view from Spinalonga over Crete is breathtaking. At the Plaka, enjoy a traditional lunch at a local tavern. On the way back, we will stop at Agios Nikolaos, where a beautiful town awaits. Dinner at a local tavern. Overnight: Heraklion **B/L/D**

Day 12, Friday 30th April CENTRAL CRETE'S VILLAGES AND TOWNS

Today, we'll check out of the hotel and enjoy a day of discovery of the traditions and cuisine of Crete. We'll drive through small, traditional villages in central Crete to gain an authentic sense of Cretan life. We will visit a farm and learn how the locals thresh using donkey labour and how they grind the wheat. There will be a demonstration of how the sheep are milked and how traditional Cretan cheese is made, with a visit to the cheese aging room. Afterwards, we will taste a selection of local, traditional products in the villages of central Crete to gain an authentic sense of local life, including the freshly prepared cheese. Later, check into the hotel for three nights. Dinner at your leisure - we suggest the old town. Overnight: Chania **B/L**

Day 13, Saturday 1st May APTERA – SOUDA CEMETERY – CHANIA

Today, we will explore the western part of the island. We will start our tour in Aptera, an ancient city with magnificent views of the white mountains. Here, you can see the wonderful ancient theatre and the equally impressive two huge Roman-era cisterns. We will continue to the Souda Bay War Cemetery to learn about the Allied history, including Australia's involvement. Continue to Chania, the secret capital of Crete. In the late afternoon, we'll take a walk through the picturesque streets of the old town. Dinner at a tavern in the Old Town. Overnight: Chania **B/D**

Day 14, Sunday 2nd May MARGARITES – MONASTERY ARKADO – RETHYMNO

Today, we'll visit the village of Margarites, where the art of pottery has been cultivated since ancient times, thanks to the region's abundant clay resources. In a ceramic studio, we will be introduced to the art of Cretan potters. Next, to Arkadi Monastery, located inland southeast of Rethymnon, a memorial to the Cretan struggle for freedom against Turkish rule. In Venetian times, the monastery was very prosperous and housed 300 monks. We continue to Rethymnon. Rethymnon embodies a valuable spiritual and cultural tradition rooted in the Venetian period. Here we will have a short city tour. Stroll through the small streets and enjoy the Venetian harbour. Dinner at a local tavern. Overnight: Chania **B/D**



Day 15, Monday 3rd May TRANSFER TO RHODES

After breakfast, check out and board our group transfer to the airport for the flight to Rhodes via Athens. Flights to be confirmed.

Welcome to Rhodes!

On arrival on the island of Rhodes, we'll transfer to our hotel, where we will stay for the next 4 nights. Overnight: Rhodes **B/D**

Day 16, Tuesday 4th May RHODES CITY TOUR AND FILERIMOS

After breakfast, we'll explore the city of Rhodes, which was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988. It is considered one of the best-preserved and most densely populated medieval European towns. A naval superpower of the Hellenistic era and a target for numerous conquerors, modern Rhodes is a cosmopolitan centre concealing many surprises. We'll begin at the Acropolis of Rhodes, where the ancient Pythian Apollo Temple sits atop an archaeological reserve where the first Pythian Games were held. We'll explore the Odeum, a school for orators, and learn about the Colossus of Rhodes, the gigantic statue named one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. At the harbour of Mandraki, we'll learn more about the history and construction of the statue before our walking tour through the paved streets of the Old Town. We will pass the Grand Masters Palace, Hospital of Knights, Gothic buildings, Byzantine churches, Turkish baths, Muslim mosques, and the beautiful town squares that are so much a part of everyday life. Finally, we will visit the ancient town of Ialysos and the hill of Filerimos, which has a medieval monastery. Dinner is at a local restaurant tonight. Overnight: Rhodes **B/D**

Day 17, Wednesday 5th May WEST SIDE OF RHODES

Today, we explore the island's west side, visiting the small harbour of ancient Kamiros and the Castle of Kritinia, with the ruins of St. Paul's Church perched high above the sea. We will have lunch (included today) in the quaint village of Embona, high in the hills near the island's highest point, Mt Ataviros. We will visit the local winery, Embona, to see how they produce the region's wines and to taste the local produce. After this, we'll travel to Siana to stroll through the village and visit the Panteleimon Church. The local produce in Siana makes for great souvenirs and gifts. Dinner at your leisure and your own cost tonight. Overnight: Rhodes **B/L**

Day 18, Thursday 6th May EAST SIDE OF RHODES

Bring a torch and good walking shoes today! After breakfast, we'll head off for the East Coast to visit the charming bays, beaches and small settlements on the island's eastern side. Lindos, established around 3,500 years ago, stretches out in an azure bay. Walking through the town, we'll take in the traditional architecture, cozy shady streets, mosaic paths, and courtyards. Situated at the top of a steep rock, the Acropolis of Lindos harmoniously combined the Temple of Athena Lindia, the Byzantine church, Roman temple ruins, the medieval castle and a strong wall encircling the complex. From the height of the Acropolis, we can enjoy stupendous views of the sea and the mountains, as well as St. Paul's Bay. To enjoy a tour of the town or ascend the Acropolis, you can procure the services of a traditional Lindos taxi – more commonly known as a donkey – at a nominal cost. Today, we will also explore the Seven Springs. According to legend, the water in these brooks is miraculous. You might want to walk through the tunnel built by the Italians during the war. It's more than 180m long, and only for those who like a challenge (bring your torch). It leads to the shore of an artificial lake and is quite an adventure. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight: Rhodes **B/D**

Day 19, Friday 7th May SYMI ISLAND

After breakfast, you'll transfer by ferry to the gorgeous Symi Island. You'll have a tour around the town before heading to your hotel for dinner and an overnight stay. The perfect setting to relax! Overnight: Symi **B/D**

Note: We suggest you take a backpack with a change of clothes, valuables and other essentials when staying on Symi Island. The hotel in Rhodes will store your luggage, and you'll collect it upon return.

Day 20, Saturday 8th May SYMI ISLAND – RHODES – ATHENS

We'll depart on the 10.40 am ferry for Rhodes this morning, arriving around 12.00. You'll have time to grab some lunch and collect your bags back at the hotel before transferring to the airport for an afternoon flight to Athens. We will transfer to the centrally located hotel for one night upon arrival in Athens. Enjoy a drink or two and some snacks on the rooftop bar of the hotel, looking across to the Acropolis, beautifully lit up. Dinner is at your leisure tonight (but the snacks may be enough). Your time in Athens will be unguided and unhosted. Overnight: Athens **B**

Day 21, Sunday 9th May ATHENS – DEPARTURE

The day is at leisure to explore this fabulous, historical city before heading to the airport for your flight home or to your next destination. (Please check your personal flight itinerary). **B**





Accommodation

Our hotels are carefully chosen to capture the local atmosphere and set you up in an ideal location. You can expect accommodation that comprises a mix of standard hotels, boutique-style hotels, and smaller, independently owned establishments. Below are some of the hotels on this tour. Final hotels may change, and a complete list will be shared with you.

Hotel Atlantis, Heraklion
www.hotelatlantis.com

Mediterranean Hotel, Rhodes
www.mediterranean.gr

Best Western Plaza, Rhodes
www.bestwestern.gr



Why Blue Dot?

Travel is more than just moving from one place to another; it is an opportunity to explore this vast planet, connect with its people and marvel at its beauty. We have established a group of loyal, like-minded travellers who share this feeling and have taken multiple tours with us. With Blue Dot, you'll experience

- Thoughtfully designed itineraries with unique experiences
- Small, inclusive groups with a maximum of 16 travellers
- The support of both an Australian tour leader* and experienced local guides
- Programs designed to meet the needs of mature-age travellers
- Hands on, personalised service including customised flight bookings
- Tipping included in your tour cost

*Australian leaders accompany groups with more than 10 travellers.



Blue Dot welcomes solo travellers

In fact, over half of our clients are solo travellers. We understand it can be daunting to travel on your own, and we'll ensure your travel is safe, inclusive and enjoyable. You can confidently join our groups, knowing that we bring solo travellers together to share the camaraderie of an unforgettable adventure.



Enquiries and bookings

A \$500 deposit is required to secure your booking.

For more information:

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