

Ambrosia & Nectar



Ambrosia & Nectar is a food and wine extravaganza. Cooking classes, wine tasting, vineyard visits and gastronomic activities conducted by local gastronomical experts.

Santorini lies in the midst of the alluring Cyclades islands. Everything in its vicinity seems to be bluer and whiter than Greece's national flag. Owing to a perfect dry climate, the volcanic island has been a wine making center since the Bronze Age, and its food epitomizes healthy Mediterranean cuisine.

Tour highlights

- Sailing around Santorini's volcanic crater
- Cooking classes with local chefs expert in Greek cuisine
- Ancient Doric and Minoan ruins
- Sampling local wines, spirits and raki
- Strolling the Fortezza, Rethymno's grand Venetian fort

Trip Duration

8 nights

Start & End Points

Start: Santorini
daily flights from Athens

End: Hania
daily flights to Athens

Crete is so huge, it is practically its own country with its own culinary and wine traditions specific to the island and to each locale. Your immersion into Crete foods and spirits will include visits to famous and fascinating antiquities, including the Minoan palace of Knossos and Venetian fortresses in Rethymno.

By the way, the accommodations in each overnight destination are of honeymoon caliber!

Itinerary

Day 1: Santorini

Welcome to the Cyclades region and its star island, Santorini. Actually Santorini is four volcanic islands. On your first day you have a land excursion visiting Ancient Thira, an underground wine museum, a contemporary art gallery located in a renovated winery and a peak inside a traditional Santorini cave house from generations past.

Day 2: Santorini

Put on your apron. Today you learn all about traditional Santorini cooking. You will make several dishes including local specialties, *fava* Santorini-style with onions, stewed capers, and tomato *keftedes*. You will sample five varieties of local wine and learn the foods available each season. Eventually you will sit down and consume the fruits of your labor.



Day 3: Santorini

Today's main event is a visit to a local winery in Oia. You will see how the vine grows in a circle on the ground, like a wreath, to better capture the night fog moisture in a land where water is scarce. You will sample six wines accompanied by local foods prepared on site. And then enjoy Oia's famous sunsets.

Day 4: Arhanes (Crete)

Arhanes is a beautiful village in the mountains about 1000 feet high where eating and drinking are given full attention. Visit a refurbished olive oil factory that is now a lively scene for mezedes (small plates of food), wine and raki and traditional Cretan music.

Day 5: Axos

Morning tour of Knossos, the celebrated Minoan palace and then the Archaeology Museum in Herakleion with its lovely Minoan frescos. Continue on to tiny Axos village in the Psiloritis Mountains, home to a thriving eco-lodge emphasizing Crete's homespun traditions. Engage in a cooking class learning to make cheese and jams.

Day 6: Rethymno

A morning botonic walk will acquaint you with roughly forty herbs that grow in the Axos region. By afternoon you leave the mountains to descend to the sea to the harbor city of Rethymno, Crete's best kept secret. Not many foreigners or even Greeks visit Rethymno, yet, with its Venetian and Ottoman profile, it is one of Greece's most captivating cities.

Day 7: Rethymno

Cretan specialties are the focus of today's cooking class, including the foods of Sfakia the region of southern Crete where the people are most traditional and most rebellious. The Turks never did conquer Sfakia. If the bakery is open, you will get to see how baklava is produced in large quantities, with the dough rolled out on a round table bigger than a merry-go-round.

Day 8: Hania

Visit a family run winery whose owners enlighten you on the varieties and richness of Cretan wine. Stroll Hania's harbor with its Venetian architecture and tiny boutique shops.

Day 9: departure

Note: tour prices are based on the euro which is the official currency of Greece. Exchange rates found at www.xe.com

Trip Price

per person in euros

- 1 person — 2900 euros
- 2 persons — 2175 euros
- 3 persons — 2115 euros
- 4 persons—2020 euros

Inclusions

- ◆ All accommodations in 3 and 4 star hotels, comfortable, clean, hospitable, with breakfast. Based on double occupancy.
- ◆ ferry from Santorini to Crete
- ◆ maps of each island
- ◆ cooking classes in Santorini and Rethymno with lunch
- ◆ Wine tasting with local appetizers in Santorini
- ◆ Land excursion in Santorini Day 1
- ◆ Baking seminar and herb walk in Axos, Crete
- ◆ Private guided tour of Minoan Knossos with professional guide plus entry fee to site and museum
- ◆ pre-tour trip packet with info about Greece, the regions you will visit, recommended places to eat, phone numbers and other useful information

Exclusions

- ◆ International airfare
- ◆ Air or sea transfers from Athens to Santorini and Crete to Athens
- ◆ meals except breakfast and food and wine during classes
- ◆ Travel insurance

Transport Options

- ◆ Private car — valid driver's license required and international driver's permit
- ◆ Private car with local driver at your disposal for roughly eight hour day costs 500 euros per day

Hotel Upgrades

- ◆ Hotel upgrades available in Santorini and Rethymno

Optionals

- ◆ Day boat or sunset cruise in Santorini caldera
- ◆ Transfers to/from airport
- ◆ Personal bilingual Aegea guide throughout the trip at 500 euros per day

Driving Notes

Santorini is a small island. Driving from the capital, Fira, to enchanting Oia or the port only takes about twenty minutes. Many visitors rent motor scooters. All public buses stop in Fira where you must change to get another bus. Taxis are available but when a ship comes in to port they become scarce.

Crete is a big island and you will need a vehicle. If you don't hire a private driver, you should rent a car because public transport is not so comfortable or reliable. You will pay an extra fee to rent the car in Herakleion (your entry point) and drop it off in Hania, the end point of the tour. It takes two hours to drive from Herakleion to Rethymno and one hour to drive from Rethymno to Hania.

