



## CHANIA

CRETE, GREECE

Since ancient times Crete has been an important hub linking the three continents which surround the Eastern Mediterranean. On this island an amazing culture thrived only to disappear for thousands of years. Nations and Empires, Sovereigns and Sultans, Dictators and Despots, Reichs and Republics, all shed blood or bought with gold the right or might to control the island. In ancient times when local city-states were not fending off foreign invasion they were fighting among themselves. Pirates used the island from which to launch pillage and plunder. Merchants used the island to amass great wealth. Tyrannical rule appeared from across the sea. The terror of subjugation literally dropped from the sky. Some men wrapped about them the cloak of their religion and fled to this island for safety only to find that peace and tranquility are more fleeting than the myths of ancient Greece. Rebellion against oppression has been as common on Crete as the violence and vengeance, retribution and retaliation it bred. And yet, through it all the people of Crete have maintained the depth of character and rich cultural heritage to which their long and turbulent history bears true witness.

On the northwest coast of Crete is the ancient city of Chania, restored and rebuilt to its Venetian charm. This beautiful city opens the arms of her harbor as if to welcome back friends and family from the sea. To walk along the historic and colorful waterfront, to relax in the shade of an outdoor café, to stroll the narrow streets where merchant's invite the curious to browse their stores and stalls, to catch the aroma of food being carefully prepared for hungry guests, to stand on the steps of an ancient church and wonder...perhaps peace and the warm embrace of tranquility is not so fleeting after all. Perhaps it is to be found in abundance on this ancient island, among the people who fill the shops and markets of this wonderful town. Perhaps peace and tranquility is to be found right here and now on the bustling streets of historic Chania, on the northwest coast of ancient Crete.



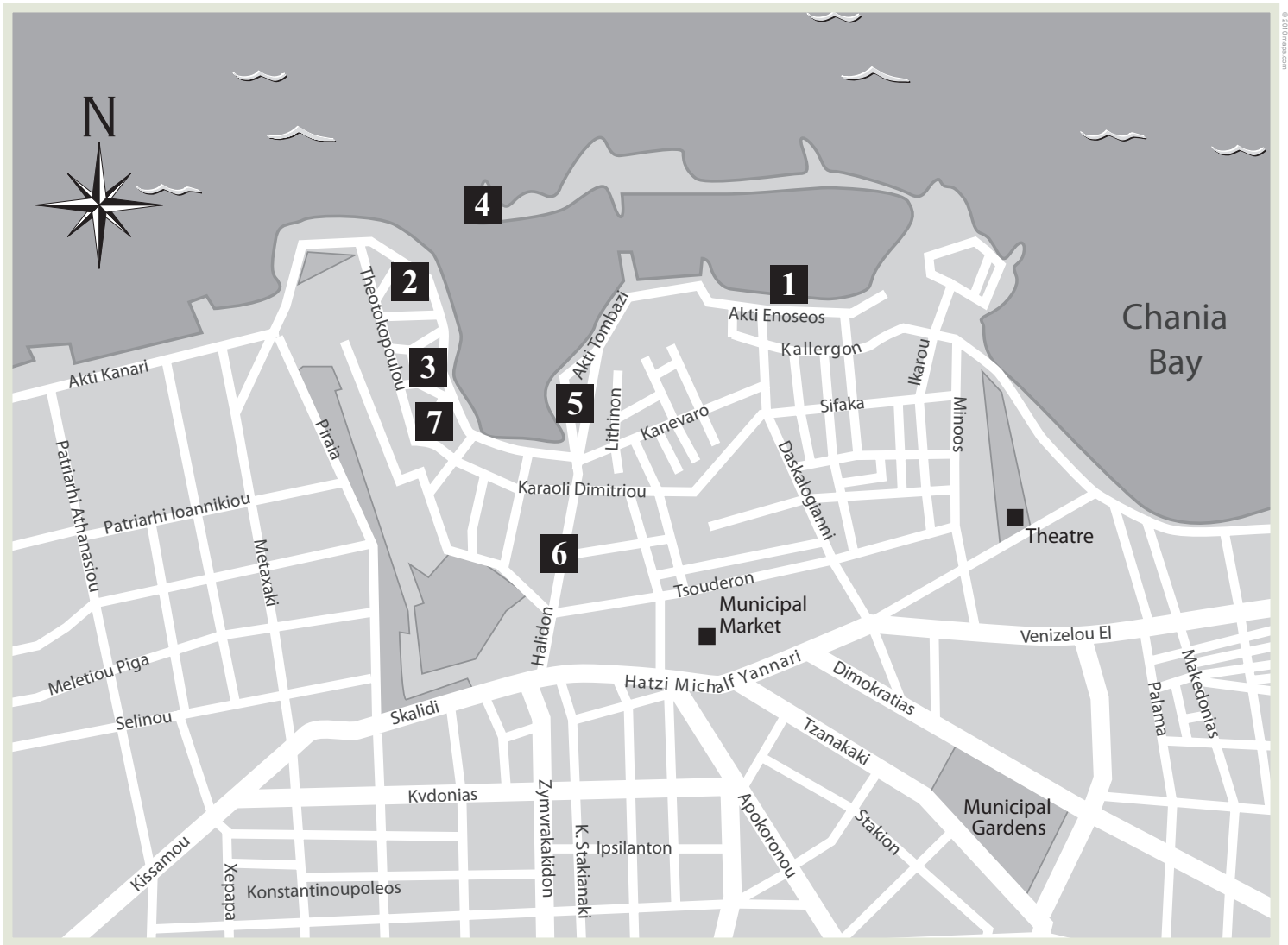
### HISTORY

The history of Crete is a reflection of the events which took place throughout the western Mediterranean, the Aegean and Asia Minor beginning long before recorded history. Crete has been inhabited for at least the past 9,000 years, dating back to the Mesolithic Age. The first civilized culture to emerge on Crete was a people referred to today as the Minoans. Though comparatively little is known of them, they were a highly organized people with a sophisticated social, religious, economic and artistic culture. They contributed greatly to that which is now recognized as the precursor to Greece civilization. The story of famed British archaeologist Sir Arthur John Evans and his early 1900s rediscovery of Crete's long hidden Minoan civilization is fascinating and certainly worthy of further independent reading.

The Minoans on Crete were followed rather abruptly it seems, by an influx of Mycenaean Greeks around 1500 BC. These are the Greeks of Trojan War fame, the subjects of Homer's epic *Iliad and Odyssey* penned four centuries after the war later in 800 BC. Around 1100 BC the Mycenaeans were followed by Dorians who sailed south from the Greek mainland in large numbers. There eventually emerged more than 100 flourishing city-states in ancient Greece.

By the 2nd century BC pirates dominated much of the Mediterranean, Ionian and Aegean Seas. Crete was a primary base used to launch attacks upon lucrative seaborne trade routes. The Roman Empire eventually destroyed the pirates and took Crete in 69 BC. Relative peace and prosperity followed on through the eventual decline of the Western Roman Empire and the rise of the Byzantine Greeks of Constantinople's Eastern Roman Empire. In the 1200s Crete and the city of Chania came under Venetian rule. Prosperity followed as the city again became an important center of trade.

With the fall of Byzantium the Ottoman Turks took Greece and eventually Crete in the mid 1600s. The citizens of Chania, as many Greeks throughout the islands and mainland, suffered greatly un-



der Ottoman conquest and rule. Cretans converted to Islam in large numbers. Greece, exacting its revenge upon the Turks, won its independence in 1832 but Crete had to wait until 1898. Civilians on both sides faced horrible reprisals. After years of revolt and Ottoman repression Crete was reunited with Greece in late 1913.

On the morning of May 20th, 1941 German paratroops filled the sky over northern Crete as history's first major airborne assault took place. Allied troops from Britain, New Zealand and Australia together with Greek military units and the Cretan Gendarmerie (police and cadets) defended the island as best they could. They were supplied and supported by the British Royal Navy. Many brave civilian men and women of Crete came to the aid of the Allies. They paid a terrible price as the Germans took their revenge out on the local population after soundly defeating the poorly equipped Allies. Guerrilla groups comprised of astoundingly courageous Cretans with the support of British commandos operated on the island throughout the German occupation.

In 1944, a British submarine sank a German requisitioned commercial vessel named Tanais. Unknown to the British, together with hundreds of Greek and Italian POWs, the ship held 265 Jews...all who remained on Crete. They were the

descendants of a community which had lived on the island for the past 2,300 years. There were no survivors. However it must be noted; as costly a defeat as it was, the Battle of Crete taught Allied commanders valuable lessons which proved vital to the eventual and ultimately successful invasion and conquest of Hitler's Fortress Europe.

Today visitors from around the world are welcomed to share in the rich culture and ancient history that is Crete.

### CHANIA PLACES OF INTEREST

**1** The **Venetian Dockyards** were built when the city was an important trading center for the mighty Venetian Republic (mid 1200s – mid 1600s). It is here great merchant ships of the Republic came for repairs and refitting. Known as "neoria", many of the dockside warehouses are remarkably well preserved. It should be kept in mind that in the early centuries Crete was heavily forested and supplied a great deal of lumber for shipbuilding.

**2** The **Firka Fortress** was built beginning in the late 1530s to protect the port city. The name is a holdover from Turkish rule and translates as "barracks". The fortification has had many functions over the centuries. Most famously perhaps, after the island spent 250 years under Ottoman rule the fort

served as the site where, in 1913, King Constantine witnessed the raising of the Greek flag over the city thereby signifying the reunification of Crete with the nation of Greece.

**3** The **Naval Museum** is located at the entrance of Fort Firka. The museum has a large and interesting collection of Greek maritime artifacts, ship models, paintings and historic photographs which detail the history of Crete.

**4** The **Venetian Lighthouse** was an integral part of the expansion and modernization of the harbor in the late 1500s. The lighthouse was renovated again in the early 1800s. Visitors can walk along the harbor wall to get a close-up view of this city landmark.

**5** The **Kioutsouk Hassan Mosque** was built in the late 1600s and named for the city's first Ottoman commander to rule during Turkish occupation of the island. The Mosque functioned as such up until 1923 when 1.5 million Greeks in Turkey were exchanged (expelled) for 500,000 Turks living in Greece.

**6** **Halidon Street** is one of the main streets in the city. Leading out from the old harbor, the street is lined with cafés, shops and restaurants. Visitors will also find the city's Archaeological Museum (housed in 14th century Church of St. Francis) and the Three Martyrs Church.

**7** The **Byzantine Museum** houses a wonderful collection of Byzantine and post-Byzantine artifacts including icons, coins, carvings, sculptures and frescos. The museum is located near the Naval Museum.

### Beyond Chania

The **Arkadi Monastery** is about 35 miles east of Chania. Built during the 1500s the monastery became an important center of learning. Constructed with the defensive attributes of a fortress and remarkably well preserved, the monastery offered a little protection in times of danger. In the mid 1800s, during the period of Ottoman rule, the monastery was the site of heroic yet ultimately tragic events as the Turks sought to solidify their control over a rebellious Crete.

The **Samariá Gorge** is a stark and dramatically beautiful area of Crete. Located in the island's White Mountains the gorge is protected as a National Park. Generally following the path of the swiftly flowing stream, a well maintained trail allows visitors to hike nearly 10 miles through the steep and jagged mountains.

## SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Chania and the surrounding island we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

## LOCAL CUSTOMS

**Bargaining:** Prices are often set however some shop owners will bargain. Keep two things in mind when bargaining; A smile and a friendly attitude will go a long way towards striking a good deal, and They are pros at this... chances are they are simply bargaining to amuse the both of you. No matter, it's all in good fun.

**Tipping:** Cafés and restaurants add an automatic 15% service charge. It is customary to also tip a couple extra euros however.

## LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

The traditional foods and recipes of Crete are famously healthy and delicious. As it has been for centuries throughout much of Greece and the Mediterranean, the foundation of the Cretan cuisine is the humble olive. There are said to be millions of olive trees on Crete. Octapothi is octopus marinated in a mixture of garlic, oregano, olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper then grilled over hot coals and drizzled with lemon juice. Kreatopita is a meat pie combining boiled meat with onions, oregano, nutmeg, garlic, kefalograviera (a hard, rich sheep's milk cheese) and olive oil then covered with phyllo dough and baked till golden brown. Gemista is a dish of baked peppers or tomatoes stuffed with a meat mixture which combines rice, chopped onions, bread crumbs, parsley, salt, pepper and olive oil. Tzatziki, a dipping mixture made by combining Greek yoghurt, cucumber, chopped garlic, salt and pepper and fresh chopped mint. Kohli me Stari is boiled Cretan snails simmered in a sauce of sautéed garlic, onions, tomatoes and olive oil. The snails and sauce are added to cooked bulgur (cracked whole wheat). Baklava is the internationally popular dessert which uses a mixture of honey, cloves, nuts and syrup wrapped in phyllo dough and baked till golden brown.

Though usually reserved for the gathering of friends and family on special holidays, to appease the Greek gods of open-pit BBQ and our own palette, we hereby include: Arni sti Souvla (Roasted Lamb) - start the charcoal or hardwood fire a couple hours prior. Burn the charcoal or wood down to a deep bed of white-hot coals. The lamb is marinated with olive oil, lemon juice, rigani (Greek oregano), garlic, salt and pepper. Attach the lamb firmly to a spit and roast by slowly turning it over the hot coals for two to three hours.

Almost everyone has heard of the famous Greek ouzo. In some form or another it dates back to the 1400s and the time of the Byzantine Empire. Today ouzo made on the Greek island of Lesbos is regarded as the best. Ouzo has a very high alcohol content and is served cold, mixed with a little water (turning the ouzo cloudy). In Greece it is considered culturally unconscionable to mix ouzo with cola. Ouzo is sipped slowly in social settings such as one of the countless "ouzeri" (an ouzo café). In Greece ouzo is always accompanied by small plates of appetizers known as "mezedes". The mezedes can be anything from local meats or cheese to grilled octopodi (octopus) or salted sardines

and anchovies, depending upon the region. Though produced commercially, ouzo is made throughout Greece, often village to village or even café to café. A widely popular, rather strong local traditional spirit of Crete is tsikoudia or raki. Made from fermented and distilled grape skins, it is drunk by Cretans everywhere.

**SHOPPING**

There are numerous shops and boutiques located around the waterfront and along Halidon Street (the primary street leading from the pier area) and the pedestrian street of Skridlof. The Agora (market) is home to dozens of wonderful shops. Small hidden away stores can easily be discovered while exploring the historic and narrow streets of the Old City. Mainland Greek and locally made jewelry, crafts, glass, leather and island produced products are popular. Authentic Greek jewelry is renowned for its unique style and classically timeless beauty.

**LOCAL CURRENCY**

The unit of currency in Greece is the euro. All euro notes and coins are legal tender in all countries of the EU. Most stores accept major credit cards and debit cards. ATM's are commonly available. Local banks are the best location to convert your currency to euros.

**POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE**

There is a Postal Drop located at #53, Milonogianni Street. Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card:  
AT&T: 00.800.1311  
MCI: 00.800.1211

**TOURIST INFORMATION**

There is a Tourist Information Center also located at #53, Milonogianni Street.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Car rentals and taxis are available. Taxis are metered and have fixed rates which should be posted.

**USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES**

The Greek translation used here is spelled phonetically.  
Hello - Yia sou  
How are you? - Ti kanis  
I'm fine - Ime kala  
Please - Parakalo  
Thank you - Efharisto  
Yes - Ne  
No - Ohi  
Good-bye - Yia sou

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