

Information provided courtesy of Crete's Culinary Sanctuaries (CCS)

Flights to Greece from the USA: Flight prices should be reasonable if you book well in advance and before holiday increases may occur. We recommend that you consult a travel agent for all international travel details, and book a refundable/transferable ticket. It's best to plan to stay at least two weeks in Greece – perhaps explore Athens for a few days if you have never been there, then stay in Crete for a couple days before or after your visit with us, or travel to another island on your wish list. We do not recommend too much island hopping, unless you'll be here for a while, because you'll be in airports or ferry ports more often than just meeting residents and relaxing in a lovely cove or mountain retreat.

To keep it simple, sample flight itineraries are:

- US City – London - Crete
- US City – Amsterdam - Crete
- US City – Frankfurt – Athens – Crete
- New York – Athens – Crete

Getting to Crete: You will want to fly into the **Heraklion Airport** in Crete. There are some direct flights from major Euro cities to Crete during the high season (British Air, Aegean Air are the most well-known). There are also many charter flights to Crete from European cities, offered by “bucket shop” travel agencies based in those countries. This may be an inexpensive option, but could be tricky with ticketing, connections, and general comfort.

Option 2: Fly to Athens, then take one of the domestic airlines: Aegean Airlines or Olympic. They both offer several daily flights to Crete; the flight takes an hour. There are ferries from Piraeus, a port of a city near Athens. The ferry, while it might be interesting, takes from 7 to 11 hours or more, depending on the line. Ferries can be delayed due to weather, etc., so if you plan to travel to Crete via ferry, be sure to allot some extra time before the CCS tour begins. Ferries are better for shorter trips...and highly recommended for daytime travel to Santorini (aka Thira), which is about a 5-hour trip from Crete. The entrance to the port is spectacular.

Getting to Athens:

1. Direct flights from USA to Athens: There are direct flights to Athens from the East Coast USA. From New York and Atlanta on Delta Airlines, from Newark, NJ on Continental Airlines, and New York on Olympic Airlines. There might be others...flight schedules change frequently.

2. Flights from European Hubs to Athens: There are several daily flights from major US cities to European hubs -- London, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Munich, Milan, Rome, Vienna, etc. The average flight time from these cities to Athens is about 3 to 4 hours. Of course, the further southeast you get, the shorter the flight on this leg.

a) Aegean Airlines (the Greek carrier) has flights to Athens and Thessaloniki from several Euro hubs. You can keep it simple by connecting to Crete through Aegean. They also have a partnership with Lufthansa, which means it should be more efficient for ticketing and connections...and accumulating frequent flyer miles thru other partners.

b) Check for deals on British Air, Lufthansa, Swiss Air or Air France, etc. Aside from Delta, most major US carriers fly to other big hubs, then you'll need to transfer to a Euro carrier to get to Greece, of which there are many partnerships for ticketing and earning frequent flyer miles. I do not recommend Alitalia...or Olympic for international journeys.

- Bear in mind the flight schedules from Crete to Athens, and your connecting flight times from Athens to the US or Euro hubs. The last flight from Crete to Athens leaves at about 11:00 p.m. If your return flight leaves Athens early in the morning, you'll need to stay in Athens overnight...which might be just fine, but just so you know. The Athens airport is a 45-minute taxi ride from the city. There is an expensive hotel at the airport, Sofitel, but you may be able to find a deal if you book in advance through web discounts like hotels.com. So, weigh out the options of a possibly higher ticket price but later flight time, if you'd prefer not to stay in Athens overnight on your way home.

Websites and more info:

Check the Links section on our website for lots of info on travel to Greece and Crete. Also,

- Aegean Airlines: www.aegeanair.com (they also offer e-tickets).
- Lufthansa: www.lufthansa.gr
- Delta: www.delta.com
- Swiss Air: www.swiss.com
- Continental Airlines: www.continental.com
- For flights from European Hubs to Greece, see: <http://www.europebyair.com/efp/index.jsp>
- Also, a Crete Travel Website: http://www.cretetravel.com/To_and_from_Crete/Flights_Crete.htm
Within this site, there are charter flight options from Europe. They are the no-frills bucket shop deals with big restrictions...but may be some options.
- For domestic flights within Greece (from Santorini to Crete) see: <http://www.skyexpress.gr/default.asp>
- Athens News (for travel articles and restaurant reviews) www.athensnews.gr

- **Travel Agency** specializing in Greece: Amphitriion, with offices in the US, Canada and Greece.
Contact: Constantine at washdc@amphitriion.com.

- **Astor Travel** - consolidator specializing in flights to Greece (San Francisco office). Contact Tim at 415-334-5957