

CRETE - LASSITHI TREK

ITINERARY

Day 1

Flights can arrive and depart at any time.

Transfers can be arranged from Heraklion airport, a journey of about 40 minutes (payable locally).

Alternatively you may prefer to hire a car and self-drive to the hotel. We recommend this option for guests on a sunny rides programme. The hotel is located on an unpaved rural road; every car can reach the hotel but the hotel does advise a car suitable for an unpaved road.

It may be possible to share the transfer with guests arriving at a similar time but we are not likely to know that until near the date of your holiday.

Room check-in is from 14:00 on the first day and check-out is by 12:00. Guests arriving or departing outside these times are welcome to use the public areas.

Overnight Velani Country Hotel. There are twelve spacious, ensuite rooms each with either a private garden or verandah. Each room has a hairdryer, a television, a fridge and air con. The hotel has a personal, family run atmosphere.



There is large infinity pool as well as a separately located children's pool. Situated on a hillside overlooking Aposelemis Lake, near the village of Avdou, Odysseia Stables and Veláni Country Hotel is an ideal place from which to

explore the island. This rural area, dotted with olive trees, Kermes oak forest and small villages, gives plenty of space for endless riding, and comfort for relaxing.



Day 2

The introductory ride this morning takes you up the hills of Sfendili. Cross by the Byzantine church of Avdou, then ride over the plateau of Mochos with an excellent view to the Psiloritis Mountains, which are the highest peaks on the island.

Return to the hotel for a late lunch and time to relax by the pool before dinner. (c. three hours in the saddle.)



Overnight Velani Country Hotel.

Day 3

The trail starts with a spectacular climb. After riding through the gorge of Gonies you climb from sea level to 1,100 m. The trail follows a small old donkey route, in the past the only possible path to the Lassithi Plateau. Stop for lunch

at a traditional tavern for food served fresh from the oven, with breathtaking views of the trail you have ridden.

In the afternoon ride over the Lassithi Plateau. This fertile plateau, in the heart of the Dikti Mountains, is known for its white windmills providing irrigation to the land. (c. six hours in the saddle.)



Overnight Hotel Dionyssos. Located on the Lassithi Plateau. This traditional family run tavern serves food produced on the owner's farm. There are six ensuite rooms, with double or twin beds.

Occasionally, Hotel Kourites in Dzeriado is used instead.



Please note that, because there are just six rooms at this hotel, on occasions some people may return to Veláni Country Hotel after dinner to overnight (a drive of c. 35 minutes) returning the next morning to join the group for breakfast.



Day 4

Packing your lunch into your saddlebags this morning, you head out across the Dikti mountain range heading south. This is the land of the shepherd and you follow their trails through the mountains.

Stop to enjoy your picnic lunch, keeping an eye out for Griffon vultures. The remoteness of the area brings a calmness as you experience the special feeling of being alone with the horses, the mountains and nature.

At the end of the day, you are met and transferred to Veláni Country Hotel for dinner and the night (a journey of c. 45 minutes). Your horses stay in the mountains for this night. (c. five hours in the saddle.)



Overnight Velani Country Hotel.

Day 5

Breakfast is at the hotel and then you return to the horses and follow the trail downhill through a desert land dried by the south winds out of Africa.

After stopping for your saddlebag lunch, you finally reach the clear blue water of the Libyan Sea and, conditions allowing, take your horses for a swim. (c. six hours in the saddle.)

Enjoy dinner of fresh fish in a restaurant right on the sea front.



Overnight Finikas Apartments. There are five ensuite rooms with double or twin beds.



Additional accommodation at the coast is available if necessary. Dinner and breakfast are served right on the sea front.

Day 6

This morning you follow the sea for a while before turning inland. The trail leads you along the Anapodaris River and a 5km long gorge. Even now, the

water continues to cut the gorge deeper and deeper. Reaching the end of the gorge the land becomes hillier with many olive trees and vineyards.

After finding a shady spot to enjoy lunch, the trail continues crossing through villages to Lake Ini.

At the end of the day, you are met and transferred to Veláni Country Hotel for dinner and the night (a journey of c. 35 minutes). Your horses stay near Lake Ini for this night. (c. six hours in the saddle.)



Overnight Velani Country Hotel.

Day 7

Returning to the horses this morning with your saddlebag lunch, you ride back to Avdou through typical Greek countryside, past villages where it seems that time has stood still. Perhaps there will be an opportunity to stop and drink an Ouzo with the Cretans at one of the village squares.

Finally the trail brings you full circle back to Odysseia stables. Hopefully there will be time for a dip in the pool before a farewell dinner. (c. five hours in the saddle.)



Overnight Velani Country Hotel.

Day 8

The time of your transfer will be confirmed locally. Check out is by 12:00, but guests departing later can make use of the public areas until it is time to leave.