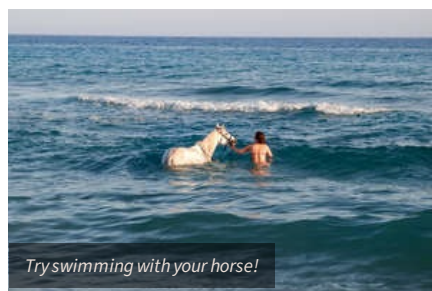


Lassithi trail in Crete

GREECE

Blessed with almost 300 days of sunshine a year, Crete is a great **riding holiday** destination! On this trail riding holiday, you will explore eastern Crete, from the mountains to the sea, the fertile Lassithi plateau and its iconic windmills. Let your guides show you the **Greek “filotomo”** (hospitality) and enjoy a warm welcome, delicious food, and splendid landscapes. A lovely holiday for intermediate to experienced riders looking for a comfortable and **relaxing trail ride** with the guarantee of sunshine almost all year round!

Trail Riding	 8 days (6 days riding)	 From £1,210	
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


ITINERARY

Highlights

- Stay in comfortable accommodation and enjoy the delicious Greek and Cretan cuisine
- Enjoy the Greek “filotomo” (hospitality)
- The scenery and terrain varies from day to day, as you ride from the Dikti mountains to the sea
- Take the horses for a swim in crystal clear waters (weather-dependent)


Day 1 — 1 : HOME – HERAKLION

 Hotel Velani

Fly to Heraklion in Crete. Flights are not included but we can assist with this on request. If you require airport transfers (the hotel is 45 min away from the airport), this can be arranged – please see dates and prices.

Welcome dinner with the rest of the group and night at the hotel. Note for late arrivals: dinner will be taken to your room (simple, cold meal).

Day 2 — 2 : INTRODUCTORY RIDE - 3 hours riding

 Hotel Velani

You start your trail riding holiday in Crete with a ride to the plateau of Mochos, so you can get used to the horses and terrain. Today’s ride then take you to the hills of Avdou, a village known for its Byzantine church, before reaching a plateau that provides a lovely excuse for a long canter. Enjoy beautiful views over the Dikti Mountains, that you will explore in the coming days.


Overnight in Avdou, Country Hotel Velani***.

Day 3 — 3 : AVDOU - MAGOULAS - 6 hours riding

The trail today starts with a spectacular climb. After riding along the gorge of Gonies, you climb up from sea level to an altitude of 1000 m. At the top, everyone deserves a little break - enjoy the breathtaking views before lunch, cooked in a traditional oven in the village of Kera. You continue climbing to reach the fertile Lassithi Plateau, nestled within the Dikti Mountains. It is known for its white windmills irrigating the land.

Overnight in Magoulas, Hotel Dionissos.

Day 4 — 4 : DIKTI MOUNTAINS - 5 hours riding

 Country Hotel Velani


Ride through the Dikti Mountain Range in a southerly direction. Experience the remoteness of the land and the tranquillity of a secluded location – only broken by the occasional shepherd or vulture in flight.

Overnight transfer to Avdou, Country Hotel Velani***, while the horses stay in the mountains overnight.

Day 5 — 5 : TO THE SEA - 6 hours riding


You ride downhill through arid and desert-like landscapes shaped by the south winds blowing from Africa. Enjoy 360° views over the coastline where the mountains meet the sea. Downhill you go, until you meet the clear blue waters of the Libyan Sea – some may like to take a refreshing dive and there is a chance to go swimming with the horses (weather dependent). Overnight in Keratokambos, Finikas Rooms.

Day 6 — 6 : ANAPODARIS GORGE - LAKE INI - 6 hours riding

 Country Hotel Velani

After riding for a few days across mountainous terrain, you now find yourselves riding across typical Greek countryside – small narrow roads and small hills, picking up the pace a little. You start today's trail ride by following the sea before turning inland, following the Anapodaris River and its 5-km long gorge. The land changes again, becoming hilly with many olive tree fields and vine yards. You ride through small villages and along lake Ini. Transfer to Avdou, Country Hotel Velani***.

Day 7 — 7 : LAKE INI - AVDOU - 5 hours riding

 Country Hotel Velani

Today is your last day in the saddle in Crete. Ride back to the stables through the Greek country side. You cross Cretan villages where time stands still. Feel welcome to stop and perhaps share Raki with the Cretans in one of the colourful village squares, before you reach the end of your trail.

Overnight in Avdou, Country Hotel Velani***.

Day 8 — 8: HERAKLION - HOME

Transfer to Heraklion airport (payable locally) after breakfast.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
24/03/2024	31/03/2024	£1,500	Open
14/04/2024	21/04/2024	£1,500	Open
12/05/2024	19/05/2024	£1,500	Open
26/05/2024	02/06/2024	£1,500	Open
09/06/2024	16/06/2024	£1,500	Open
08/09/2024	15/09/2024	£1,500	Open
22/09/2024	29/09/2024	£1,500	Open
06/10/2024	13/10/2024	£1,500	Open
03/11/2024	10/11/2024	£1,440	Open

Price details

- Flights or transportation to your destination (Heraklion) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double standard room during the ride. Room upgrades are available on request – please contact us.
- Groups are composed of a minimum of 2 riders and a maximum of 9 international riders, plus guides.
- There is no single supplement if you are willing to share a room with another guest of the same sex. To guarantee your own room there is a single supplement of £210/€245/\$270 (2023/2024)
- Transfers can be pre-booked from Heraklion airport and are payable locally directly to the driver: around €55-60 each way per car (max 4 riders).
- Accompanied minors are welcome from 12 yo, provided they match the riding requirements.
- Rider weight limit: 90 kilos, 14st11bs. Heavier riders please contact us.
- It is possible to avail of the hotel's jacuzzi and massage treatments at an extra charge starting from €50 per hour.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English-speaking horse guide

LOGISTICS

1 vehicle and driver

ACCOMMODATION

Double or twin room in hotels

MEALS

Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the last day

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Saddle bags

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

TRANSPORT

International flights

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement

TRANSPORT

Airport transfers payable locally. See above

EXTRAS

Trip extensions or additional activities

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

You ride on Arabians, Thoroughbreds and warmbloods – hardy horses with great stamina, used to long-distance riding and difficult terrain. They are always eager to go, sure-footed and easy to handle. The horses are ridden English style, but are easily ridden on a long rein. They vary in height and each has their own temperament, so there is a horse for any sort of rider!

Guide & local team

Sabine (of Dutch descent) and Manolis Fragkakis (Greek), are the owners of the stables and have been welcoming guests on riding holidays since 1997, building the hotel in 2006. Vladimir and Beau complete the team. Your guides will speak English (and Dutch, if led by Sabine). Safety and horse welfare is their priority - the stables are an ISO 9001:2008 certified yard, with a standardisation for safety and stable management.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be at least an intermediate rider, capable of riding a sensible horse at all paces in the outdoors and over demanding terrain. Previous experience of a long trail ride is an advantage but not mandatory.

There is a rider weight limit of 90kg /198lb/14st.

PACE

You will be riding at all three paces with some great opportunities for trots and canters when the terrain allows. When riding in the more mountainous areas the pace will be slower for obvious safety reasons, and you may have to dismount and lead your horse on foot. You will cover 160-200 km in total.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

All riders are responsible for grooming and tacking their own horse. You can also help the team feed and water the horses when required.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You should have some experience riding outdoors on trails and be confident riding in open spaces. You need to be fit enough for this trail. On some occasions you will be asked to dismount and lead your horse on foot over steep hills and rocky terrain.

The terrain is quite rugged and stony - the horses are well trained, sure-footed and quite used to navigating terrain that would be tricky for most European/Western horses.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

English and trail riding saddles. Saddlebags are provided.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

COMFORT

The main accommodation (5 nights) is at Velani country hotel. The 12 en-suite rooms are spacious, with beautiful views over the valley. All rooms have a large private balcony or patio with garden. There is a large infinity pool as well as a separately located children's pool. WiFi is available. Laundry service is available but there is a charge for this.

Two nights are spent in separate hotels. Those are simple with more basic amenities, but remain comfortable and adequate. Your luggage is transferred by vehicle.

MEALS

This is a great trail ride for those who want to experience the local healthy Cretan diet or Greek cuisine.

The restaurant at the main hotel only uses fresh ingredients and local products. The restaurant has its own vegetable, herb and fruit gardens providing guests daily with new seasonable ingredients. Some of the local produce used in the restaurant also includes meat from free-ranging goats and sheep from neighbouring farms, cheese made by the local shepherd, homemade raki and honey from a local beekeeper.

Lunches are picnic lunches carried in your saddlebag - lunches on day 1 and 2 are taken in restaurants.

CLIMATE

Crete, the largest Greek island, has a Mediterranean climate, with mild, rainy winters and hot, sunny summers.

The bulk of the rain falls from October to March; in summer, it almost never rains. In winter, but also in spring, it can snow in the mountains, the highest of which is Mount Ida, 2,456 meters (8,058 feet) high.

In winter, from December to mid-March, temperatures are generally mild. For its southern location, Crete is less exposed to cold spells than other Greek islands, however, the temperature can drop at night. Springs and summers are warm to hot (up to 30°C), and very sunny with virtually no rain.

TIPS

Tips are left to your discretion and are not mandatory. We recommend around €40/£35 per rider for the week, to be divided between the team.

PACKING LIST

Head

- A riding helmet: we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding

Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun or extra warmth
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- In the spring and fall: waterproof jacket (made from Goretex or equivalent) waterproof and breathable

Lower body

- 2 pairs of lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- A swimming costume
- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Other useful items

- Water bottle (1.5 litres or 2 equivalent)
- Toiletries

- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Small plastic bags for your rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery

Medical kit

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) and clearly stated in your medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Painkillers
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamin C tablets
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Hydrating/ soothing cream
- Plasters
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..
- 10cm wide bandage
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Our Recommendations

- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lip balm etc)
- A soothing cream may be useful to treat areas irritated by long hours in the saddle
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- Keep a copy of your passport and insurance details with you.

In your hold luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant over 100 ml and all bottles can be decanted into small, clear, plastic Ziplock bags. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- In your hand luggage carry any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .