+++ Crete has the beauties of the whole world, therefore the Cretan moon is the most beautiful +++ hundreds of thousands of years of human creation surrounded by the sea +++ eggs and lemons in soups and sauces +++ this Cretan landscape resembled a good prose: clear-cut, sober, free of overload, strong and restrained (Nikos Kazantzakis) +++ Minoans, Mycenaeans, Byzantines, Saracens, Venetians, Ottomans formed Greece’s largest island +++ conscientious objectors in Stone Age caves +++ love, hope, sadness, exile, war and blood revenge rhyme for half a millennium to the lyre +++ spring always prevails in Crete, because the earth was poured with the blood of those who fought for freedom +++ Crete is music for me! (Mikis Theodorakis) +++ there Gaia quickly brought her son to Lyktos by black night, embraced him and hid him in deep cave (Hesiod) +++ snails in oil and small shoes +++

Our tour through the east of Crete in 7 days, max. 14 people, two double overnight stays.

Hotels     ***
Gastronomy  *****
Culture     *****
Nature      ******

Travel dates 2020
GKR1: Saturday, 28-mar. to Saturday, 04-apr-2020
GKR2: Saturday, 04-apr to Saturday, 11-apr-2020
GKR3: Saturday, 11-apr to Saturday, 18-apr-2020
GKR4: Sunday, 11-oct to Sunday, 18-oct-2020
GKR5: Sunday, 18-oct to Sunday, 25-oct-2020
GKR6: Sunday, 25-oct to Sunday, 01-nov-2020

Traveling price 2020
Price per person in the DR for 7 nights with half-board, eBike, entrance free, transfers, guided tours: 1930 €
Single-room surcharge: 420 €
Does not include lunch, drinks and your personal expenses as well as travelling there and back.
Flight
Booked by you or by pedelon at your request.
Target airport Iraklion from/to Munich (as available): € 480
Flights from other German airports and flights from airports in other countries on request.

Car
There are motorways that lead all the way to Venice, Ancona or Bari, where the ferries depart to Patras on the Peloponnese. From there, it is a two hours’ drive to Piraeus and nine hours by ship to Heraklion.
The journey from Munich is between 36 and 47 hours, including the two ferries. All in all, this is a rather tedious journey. Surely, it would be more sensible to rent a car, which is rarely more than 120 € per week in Greece, to explore Crete before or after the trip.

Train
The best connection leads via Munich, Budapest, Belgrade and Thessaloniki to Athens (about 1,500 km) and from there continue by ferry - a multi-day variant, which should be reserved for passionate train travelers.
Further information in specialized travel agencies or under www.bahn.de.

Participation conditions
The arrangement contains the above services. Our terms and conditions apply.

With your booking confirmation, you will receive the “pedelon travel information”, which contains useful notes on traveling to Iraklion and other advice around your trip.
A special eBike trip on the southern edge of the Aegean: winding mountain trails, picturesque coastal roads, lush olive groves, rugged canyons, high mountain peaks and wide views of the deep blue sea make each of their stages a unique experience. Crete is full of testimonies of Minoan and Mycenaean culture, the cyclist encounters everywhere traces of a moving, fascinating history on his way through the east of the island. The hospitable, warm-hearted population, the traditional cuisine of the local taverns and very good hotels round off the picture of a wonderful pedelon eBike trip.

Our guests will be collected at the airport of Heraklion between 5:30 and 6:30 pm on Saturday (end of March and April) and on Sunday (October). Many flights to Greece or Crete are operated by the modern fleet of the Greek airline „Aegean Air“, a member of „Star Alliance“. It was named the best European regional airline in 2017. Guests who arrive in Heraklion earlier can reach the hotel by taxi in about 20 min. This costs about EUR 20.

The „Elysium Boutique Hotel“ allows access to its rooms from 3 pm onwards. The recently opened luxury hotel is located right by the sea, near Heraklion. With its modern design, it is a very special inn that stands out architecturally from other resort hotels along the coast, as well as boasting a swimming pool. If you want to go for a walk before dinner, you can take a stroll along the beach and go for your first swim in the Cretan sea. The first shared dinner will take place at the outstanding hotel restaurant „Euphoria“. Here, you are delighted with modern interpretations of Greek cuisine inspiring you every single time.

1st day: Heraklion/Analipsi – Sitia, 68 km

After breakfast, the accompanying bus takes the cyclists to the Lasithi plateau, which is about a 40 minutes’ drive. It is nicknamed the valley of a thousand windmills. Once the bicycles are adjusted to their riders, the consistently flat route leads up to 800 m above sea level, embedded between more than 2,000 m high mountains, through fields and meadows, until reaching Moni Vldianis. The monastery’s history and treasures make it an interesting place to visit, providing the first impressions of the deeply religious nature of the Cretans. After this tour, the group will cycle on between picturesque mills, as well as apple and pear trees. The journey’s first lunch tavern is located underneath the stalactite cave of Psychro, where, according to myth, Zeus, the father of the Greek gods, was nurtured by the goat Amaltheia as a toddler. Maria treats the pedelon cyclists to her local specialities.
The cave itself is would require a difficult hike, and is hardly worth a visit to begin with.

After the lunch break, the group slowly leaves the plateau and lets their bicycles roll downhill on the „Old Road“ with Mirabello Bay in view. The route leads towards Agios Nikolaos, the tourism centre in the island’s east. Before reaching it, however, the tour turns south, leading towards silent little streets along the flank of the Dikti mountain range towards Istro, right by the Cretan Sea. The path to this day’s destination leads through several picturesque towns. One of them is Kritsa, a place with many narrow, picturesque alleys where local products and traditional arts and crafts are offered for sale, or little Kroustas with its picturesque postcard-like architecture. From Istro, the accompanying bus takes us across a region of Crete that is less suitable for our mode of travelling with its topography and many tourists. Nearly an hour later, we reach Sitia, where we will spend the next two nights at the „Sitia Beach City Resort & Spa“, the best hotel on site. Its wonderfully comfortable rooms make it perfect for two nights.

Dinner is served in a great fish restaurant just a ten minutes’ walk from the hotel, near the busy harbour.

2nd day: round trip Sitia, 71 km

After an outstanding breakfast, one of the most beautiful bicycle routes through the very east of Crete is next. A side road that sees barely any use at all winds its way through the mountains, crossing seemingly endless olive groves and picturesque villages until it reaches the bare and craggy plateau of Armenochantrades. The high-performance pedelon eBikes permit relaxed cycling even on the longer climb through the grand landscape. In Ardravasti, the only village far and wide, the group takes a well-deserved break in a cosy tavern. After the lunch break and a cycling leg of about one hour, the tour reaches the Toplou monastery. Approaching the facility, the abbey with its thick and high walls appears defensive as a medieval castle. It has an almost rejecting air. Here in this barren, rocky desert, the sacred building looks like the last outpost of civilisation. Inside, visitors are surprised by one of the most beautiful inner yards of the island, and the two-aisle interior has one of Crete’s greatest iconostases to admire. The monks have been self-sufficient for a long time. They still intensely operate their agriculture, and specifically produced olive oil. They sell their own products in a small store.

The path back to Sitia and the Beach City Resort Hotel leads along a slightly busier road that affords outstanding views of the Libyan Sea. The pedelon companion driver is available to any guests who prefer to cover these kilometres in the bus.

Dinner is served in a very good restaurant outside of town, with a beautiful terrace right by the sea.

3rd day: Sitia – Koutsounári, 64 km

After another fantastic breakfast, the pedelon cyclists will leave Sitia on calm side streets towards the southern coast. Today, they need to cross another mountain range – made enjoyable, rather than challenging in the cool morning air with the eBikes. Soon, the top with its wonderful first view of the Libyan Sea on the one side, and the Cretan Sea on the other side is reached. The path, slightly downhill along the foot of the Orno and Tripiti massif with its 1,426 m high Afendis Stavromenos, presents the cyclist with a picturesque change of vegetation: bare Macchia and olive tree plantations alternate with chestnuts, Aleppo pines and powerful sycamores. The group reaches small, picturesque Stavrochori in time for a lunch break and a tour of the beautiful town. Founded by the residents of the Koutsouras region, it was meant to protect them against Corsair attacks. In the summer months, locals and visitors from around the world gather here to enjoy walking through the picturesque alleys and eating the traditionally cooked specialities on the village square in the shadow of a sycamore tree. The chapel of St. Constantine, with flowers and lush greenery growing along its façade, is a point of attraction for believers and lovers of nature alike. The last 20 kilometres of the day lead through particularly attractive landscape: a small mountain road.
that repeatedly clears to make way for an outstanding view of the Libyan Sea accompanies us all the way to Koutsounari, the day’s destination. The outstanding „Kakkos Beach“ is waiting for the cyclists. It is a hotel with a modern design and every comfort imaginable. Dinner is served in a restaurant with a wonderful terrace at the beach.

4th day: Koutsounári – Kapetaniana, 64 km
This day begins with a transfer of nearly half an hour, in order to evade the hustle and bustle around the town of Ierapetra and a few annoying climbs. Europe’s southern-most town with its loud streets and alleys and its crouched architecture clearly reflect its proximity to the orient. After collecting the bikes, a slight downhill road returns the group to the southern coast. The following cycling section remains close to the coast at all times, with many beautiful vantage points to look out over the Libyan Sea. Fruit and vegetable plantations and calm fishing harbours line the way. After a light lunch in the small harbour of Tsousouros, the tour sets out through the Asterousia mountains, Europe’s southern-most mountain range. The region’s rough beauty is impressive. Steep gorges, caves and slopes along the southern side of the mountains range with its scant vegetation characterise the impressive landscape here; and after 400 altitude meters that can be covered either by eBike in the comfortable mountain mode, or in the accompanying bus, the group reaches the Messara Plain. At 40 km long and up to 12 km wide, its appearance is characterised by innumerable olive trees and small white villages. What makes cycling particularly enjoyable here is that in just a few short climbs, you are able to see wonderful views across the plateau and onto Crete’s tallest mountains, the Psiloritis mountains. In Loúika, the day’s destination, our accompanying bus and the hotel’s Land Rover will take the guests on the short 15 minute drive up to „Kapetaniana“, an idyllic mountain village. The hotel’s rooms are spread out across several carefully restored buildings. The „Thalori Retreat Hotel“ is a skilful combination of traditional hotel business and modern comfort (double nights & swimming pool). The restaurant is very good and offers Cretan cuisine prepared with lots of passion and fresh regional ingredients.

5th day: round trip Kapetaniana, 52 km
After breakfast on the terrace with a breath-taking view of the Libyan Sea, a short transfer ride takes the group down to Loúika, before they switch to eBikes to cross the Messara Plain to Ape-sokari. The distinctive, barren and fascinating landscape of the outliers of the Asterousia mountains characterise this day’s leg of the journey. The lonely mountain landscape appears to stretch out virtually without end, and is almost entirely abandoned. A longer climb that can be cycled well ends at a ridge road, affording a wonderful view all the way to the Messara Bay. The comfortable downhill ride to Lendas is no less breath-taking. From up here, a suggestion of the Libyan coast seems to be visible at the horizon. The silhouette of Gavdos, an island off the Cretan coast, is clearly visible. The group reaches Lentas early in the afternoon, a bright oasis in the overpowering sea of rocks. Only a handful of buildings are assembled here, seeking the protection of the „weeping lion“. According to legend, a lion didn’t make the jump when Crete separated from Africa. Sadness turned it to stone.

The local beach has a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Aléxis Zór-bas and his wife Eleni went skinny-dipping here in 1924, and caused a great uproar. Lunch is served a little later in a wonderful tavern, before the 11 km boat ride back to the bay underneath the Thalori Retreat Hotel. The hotel owner and his Land Rover are waiting in the bay to help the guests back up to Kapetaniana. If the weather does not permit a boat ride, the bicycle route back to the hotel is just as pretty. A second outstanding dinner in the hotel tops off a day filled to bursting with memories.

6th day: Kapetaniana – Heraklion, 68 km
The group leaves Kapetaniana with heavy hearts in the morning. It is the sort of place everyone wants to return to. They cross the Messara Plain by eBike and reach Górtis before noon. The impressive ruins are surrounded by olive groves. They date to the Dorian time, after most Minoan settlements had been destroyed, and developed into a centre of power, creating the first city in Europe before the Roman times. The Romans made this place Crete’s capital city, and turned the tablets of laws cut in stone into the „historical“ decoration of their theatre. Only after the Arab conquest in 824 A. D. did this city lose its importance. The last kilometres of the journey are set against the backdrop of
Mount Ida, on small roads without traffic and through a landscape characterised by agriculture and vineyards. The destination is Heraklion. This is the only region that grows the white, sun-spoiled Kotsifali grape, used for the strong, pure wine of the same name that is known for its strong aromas. Just before the day’s destination is reached, the group will have a look at Crete’s most famous excavation. In Knossos, Crete’s most famous sight and, therefore, unfortunately often overrun by tourists, a qualified tour is offered that explains the ruins of the Minoan place. If several cruisers have just landed in Heraklion, with more than 20 buses waiting for their tours, however, there is no point in touring this famous excavation.

Early that evening, the outstanding „GDM Megaron Hotel“ awaits the pedelon guests near the harbour of Heraklion. A small tour of the city is integrated into the way to dinner, along the well-preserved fortification walls that offered the harbour time at least a temporary protection against attackers in the times of Venetian rule. A tastefully furnished tavern with particularly good cuisine offers the ideal framework for properly celebrating the last night and reminiscing about this wonderful journey one last time.

7th day: departure

After breakfast, and a last glance at the Cretan Sea, our guests are taken to Heraklion’s airport in good time, where the pedelon eBike tour with its wealth of memories ends.

Some may opt to spend a few more days on this beautiful island and explore, for example, Crete’s western part, which is just as interesting. The pedelon travel information for this journey offers plenty of advice for an extended stay.