

FLOWERS OF CRETE

SPRING FLOWER FINDING TRIP

MARCH 2011



Itinerary

Week One

Tuesday, 1st March

Guests will be met at Heraklion airport, to spend our first night at the comfortable Heracles Pension in Spili. Dinner will be taken at one of the charming tavernas in this picturesque village. http://www.crete-connections.com/budget-accommodation-crete/Heracles_Pension.htm

Wednesday, 2nd March

After breakfast we will take our first excursion to the orchid rich fields above Spili. Only a short drive from Spili, this area is one of the most orchid rich areas on Crete. We can expect to find a wealth of ophrys, orchids and endemics. *Orchis boryi*, *Iris unguicularis* ssp *cretensis*, *Anemone coronaria*. Second night at Heracles Pension.

Thursday, 3rd March

After breakfast, we will drive over the mountains to Aghia Galini. We will have many stops for botanizing and photography and can expect to find *Ranunculus creticus*, *Ophrys cretica* in all its variants, *Orchis*

lactea, Barlia robertiana, Ophrys spruneri amongst many others. The third night at Heracles Pension

Friday, 4th March

After breakfast we will leave Spili to drive to the south coast, stopping to botanize en route. Phlomis fruticosa, Glaucium flavuum, Centaurea raphanina ssp. raphanina, Ricotia cretica, Orchis simian. First night in Plakias at the quiet and welcoming Thetis Studios.

<http://www.thetisstudios.gr/documents/welcome.html>

Saturday, 5th March

Travel to Hora Sfakion A short drive will bring us to the remote Aradena Gorge and on to Aghias Ioannis. For those who wish to explore the gorge, there will be sufficient time for exploration. Ophrys sphegodes ssp cretensis, Ophrys sphegodes ssp. gortynia, Ophrys holoserica, Cyclamen creticum. We will stay at the comfortable Ilingas Pension <http://www.greekhotel.com/crete/chania/ilingas/home.htm>

Sunday, 6th March

A short drive will bring us to the remote Aradena Gorge and on to Aghias Ioannis. For those who wish to explore the gorge, there will be sufficient time for exploration. Ophrys sphegodes ssp cretensis, Ophrys sphegodes ssp. gortynia, Ophrys holoserica, Ophrys speculum, Cyclamen creticum. Our second night at Ilingas Pension.

Monday, 7th March

Today we will travel the length of the amazing Imbros Gorge, stopping to explore on the way. One night just outside Hania at the resort of Platanias.

Tuesday, 8th March

We travel around south west to stay at the strangely named but excellent Anonymous Homestay at Paleohora. We will stop to botanise in a variety of habitats on the way. Dactolorchiza romana, Ophrys candica, Ophrys fleischmanii, Orchis simia

<http://www.anonymoushomestay.com/>

Wednesday, 9th March

We will drive to Sougia along the coast, stopping at the ancient site of Lissos on the way. *Lithodora hispidula*, *Convolvulus oleifolius*, *Asphodeliine liburnica*. *Ophrys iricolour* Second night at Paleohora

Thursday, 10th March

A winding road will take us to Elos, the Chestnut village, with its wonderful broad-leafed trees. From Elos we will drive to the Nature 2000 site of Elafonisi with its wealth of unusual flora. *Juniperus oxycedrus ssp macrocarpa*, *Neotina maculate*, *Ophrys apifera*, *Ophrys mammosa*, *Orchis provincialis* Third night at Paleohora

Friday, 11th March

We will take a winding mountain track into the Lefka Ori towards the Omalos Plateau, through tiny villages such as Rodovani and Prines. *Serapias orientalis*, *Ophrys sicula*, *Ophrys sphegodes ssp. cretensis* Fourth night at Paleohora

Saturday, 12th March

We will continue around Crete's extreme west coast, stopping off at Falassarna on the way, in the hope of finding the rare *Tulipa goulymi*. Our accommodation will be with the excellent Family Bikakis at Kissamos. <http://www.explorecrete.com/hotels-crete/EN-Kissamos-apartments-Bikakis.html>

Sunday, 13th March

The Gorge of Aghia Irini is our destination today and the area around Topolia which is famous for its wealth of species. *Ophrys bombyliflora*, *Ophrys episcopalis*, *Orchis tridentate*. Second night at Kissamos

Monday, 14th March

Another expedition into the mountains – this time to the small hidden gorges below Dracona – and then on to the spectacular vistas of Deliana. *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, *Ophrys heldreichii*, *Orchis fragrans*.

Optional dinner at an amazing organic taverna at Dracona. Third night at Kissamos

Tuesday, 15th March

Now travelling east along Crete's north coast, we will drive to the Omalos Plateau (weather conditions permitting) to take in the stunning scenery and superb flowers of the mountains. We will return to the coast staying in Aghii Apostolis at the quiet and comfortable Hotel Niriis <http://hotel-niriis.gr>

Wednesday, 16th March

A trip to the Orthodox Academy of Crete to visit their newly opened Museum of Cretan Flora and Botanic Gardens. We will then continue onto the Rhodopou Peninsula along a dirt track which will take us to an isolated beach and the site of an ancient shrine of Britomartis. A second night at Niriis Hotel.

Thursday, 17th March

Moving east along the north coast, we will drive into the mountains to the beautiful Kournas Lake, spending our first night at Artemis Studios. http://www.artemisstudios.net/artemis_rates.htm

Friday, 18th March

We will drive along a mountain track to the village of Asigonia through the small gorge of Giparis and on to the track leading to Mount Tripali. *Orchis collina*, *Ophrys herae*, *Orchis papilionacea* sps. *Heroica*. We will spend a second night at Artemis Studios

Saturday, 19th March

Today we will journey further east following the mountain road from Rethymnon to Zaros, stopping to botanise and photograph on the way.

<http://www.studiokeramos-zaros.gr/en>

Sunday, 20th March

A short drive will take us to the spectacular and remote Rouvas Gorge, where wild flowers and orchids abound. *Zelkova abelicea*. Our second night at Zaros.

Monday 21st March

A last excursion will take us to Aghii Deka and the Mesara Plain. *Ophrys mesaritica*, Last night of the trip at Studio Keramos.

Tuesday, 22nd March

The last day of the trip and a get-together over breakfast to share experiences and to swop contact details. Guests will be taken to Heraklion airport for their departure. (Please note guests booking for two weeks should book to Hania airport and from Heraklion airport)

Please Note:

Places are limited to a maximum of 6, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Please contact Julia for further information.

Cost of first week: €800

Cost of second week: €800

Cost of third week: €800

Cost for three week holiday: €2,400

(A single supplement may apply - please check for further information)

Cost of holiday includes: bed & breakfast accommodation in basic but comfortable traditional apartments, packed lunch, all travel costs on the island, including airport transfers, all trips accompanied by Julia Jones, Founder and President of 'Flowers of Crete'; information and advice, including flower identification. The cost of the holiday does not include international flights, dinner, international telephone calls from your hotel or beverages other than tea or coffee. Guests are advised to obtain their own travel insurance before their arrival.

The organisers reserve the right to change this itinerary depending on external circumstances, which are beyond their control. Weather conditions in spring are variable and the schedule may be amended accordingly.

