



MEET ME IN CRETE

CULINARY & CULTURE EXPERIENCE - MAY 12-18, 2026

WITH WORLD-RENOWNED CHEF & AUTHOR, NICHOLAS POULMENTIS
AND FOOD & TRAVEL WRITER, ISABELLA ZAMPETAKI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Your Experience: What to Expect

02

Your Host: Chef Nicholas Poulmentis

03

Your Host: Isabella Zampetaki

04

Accommodations & Tour Transportation

05

Itinerary: May 12-18, 2026

06

Excursions

07

Excursions

08

Contact



WHAT TO EXPECT

Are you ready for a trip of a lifetime? One where all you have to do is book your ticket, and leave the rest to experts to show you the way. Are you ready for, verdant vineyards and extra virgin olive oil, the vast blue sea against snow-caped mountains, sunshine as bright as the locals smile, gourmet cuisine and centuries-old local recipes, all paired with excellent wines.

Allow two experts in their fields to guide your senses and your palate on a culinary journey of a lifetime. One where you can relax and have fun, while discovering small daily rituals you may enjoy back home and create memories for a lifetime!

CHEF NICHOLAS POULMENTIS

CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED, AWARD-WINNING CHEF,
AUTHOR AND RESTAURANTUER

Executive Chef Nicholas Poulmentis is a globally recognized Chef, Food Network Chopped champion, and bold voice in modern Mediterranean cuisine. Born on the Greek island of Kythira and classically trained at Le Monde Culinary Institute in Athens and Le Cordon Bleu, featured in the New York Times and Forbes - he has led acclaimed kitchens across Europe and the U.S., including New York's renowned Kellari Taverna, and many others. Nicholas has also been a guest chef at The Whitehouse. And now launching his first solo restaurant in late 2025 in NYC.

Known for his energetic style, inventive approach to traditional Greek dishes, and magnetic on-camera presence, Nicholas brings a fresh, soulful take to ancient flavors—making Greek and Mediterranean cuisine accessible, exciting, and unforgettable.



ISABELLA ZAMPETAKI

FOOD AND TRAVEL WRITER, AUTHOR OF HANDCRAFTED CRETE

Isabella Zampetaki is a food & travel writer, storyteller and author based in Athens, Greece. Her first book, “Handcrafted Crete”, is a bilingual travel volume exploring all things made by hand on the island and revealing the true essence of the Mediterranean lifestyle. In its pages, we discover a multifaceted variety of age-old crafts: from textiles, ceramics and knife-making to cheesemaking and the production of olive oil and carob food items. Isabella speaks at conferences and other events about food culture, the Mediterranean diet and wellbeing in a digital world. She is currently building “The House of Handcrafted Crete” where physical and digital visitors will have the opportunity to discover the Cretan diet and practice crafts that are both traditional and sustainable.

A seasoned traveler and a connoisseur of Greek delicacies, Isabella speaks at conferences and other events about food culture, the Mediterranean diet & lifestyle, travel, sustainability, and wellbeing in a digital world. She is the creator of the Greek Tourism Awards and the Greek Hotel of the Year Awards. She was born in Thessaloniki, Greece and has a Bachelor of Arts from Grinnell College, Iowa and a Masters in Design of Information and Communication Technologies from Carlos III University in Spain.



ACCOMMODATIONS

All accommodations are carefully selected for our guests. Guests will be staying at two of the most luxurious properties Crete has to offer - one seaside retreat, complete with spa, sea and private suites. The other, an exceptional blend of modern elegance, service and timeless charm.



Hotel 1: Pnoe Breathing Life Resort, Heraklion

A unique ambiance of natural hues and enchanting tranquility will greet guests at Pnoé. Here, calmness, relaxation, and restoration take centre stage in a space that encourages reconnection and journeys that are driven from within. beach-front boutique hotel, one of the three in the entire island of Crete to be awarded a Michelin key.



Hotel 2: Domus Blanc, Chania

A stylish luxury hotel, where timeless elegance meets the joy of living. Each room is an exceptional blend of modern elegance and timeless charm, thoughtfully curated to ensure your utmost comfort. Some Suites also have private jacuzzi tubs to enjoy and hotel bistro is delightful to indulge in a drink or snack.



Airports / Transportation

Crete is a large island. **Guests should plan to fly into the Heraklion Airport in Crete, and depart from the **Chania Airport (west)**.**

All transport upon experience arrival until experience departure is included on the tour.

ABOUT HERAKLION

A REGION WHOSE REFINED FOOD CULTURE
BEGAN IN 2.500 BCS AND THRIVES TODAY



During the first three days of our tour, we will enjoy the region of Heraklion where most of the island's 12 indigenous grape varieties are grown. We will visit the world-famous archaeological site of Knossos, which is considered to be Europe's first organized city, built around 1.900BC.

Guided by an amazing archaeologist-storyteller, we will be able to travel back in time and feel what it was like to live in this sustainable city of people who loved nature and good food. We will spend time in a family-owned winery which has pioneered in rescuing indigenous varieties at a time when they risked becoming extinct and taste some of their internationally awarded labels.

We will enjoy a cooking class by chef Nicholas amidst the vineyards and will discover the mythical secrets behind the region's ancient, rock-hewn wine presses. Isabella will offer us a food-storytelling dinner experience where she will share the top stories and secrets she discovered while writing "Handcrafted Crete".

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We will visit Heraklion's Archaeological Museum to marvel at the fine ceramics, elaborate pots and souvlaki grillers that ancient Minoans built out of clay as part of their refined culinary culture. We will plunge in the laid-back atmosphere of a traditional village kafeneio and absorb a cooking demonstration by the local womens' association. The ladies of the village will share the essence of cucina povera -making smart use of scant resources- and will prepare the simplest, yet extremely flavorful, type of fresh, homemade pasta. We will follow the scenic route that leads to Europe's southernmost mountain range and meet two different artisans who are reviving the local sheep and goat varieties.

We will visit the stone-built cellar of a dairy barn where graviera cheese is made and cured for up to two years and we will light a wood-fired oven to cook kleftiko lamb. We will have the opportunity to walk along adramatic Santorini-like precipice that stretches along the open sea or even ride horses in the wild. You will have personal time to wander around the Venetian loggias and iconic sea fortress of the city of Heraklion and to leave your footprint on the fine sand of our beach-front boutique hotel, one of the three in the entire island of Crete to be awarded a Michelin key.

ABOUT CHANIA

PICTURE-PERFECT AND THE LAND OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

During the second half of our tour, we will explore the region of Chania. The old city of Chania is rich in Venetian and Ottoman architecture and its harbor is the perfect place to experience the sun set in company of those you hold most dear. You will have free time to explore its colorful alleys and craftsmen shops. We will spend a morning with one of Crete's foraging experts and he will teach us some of his techniques for spotting some of nature's delicacies that are in season. We will drive through millennia-old olive tree groves and along beautiful coastlines. We will visit Greece's most innovative olive-oil farm, where two young producers join forces in creating some of the most unique extra virgin olive oils (EVOOs). We will enjoy creative Cretan cuisine with views of the ancient city on the opposite rocky hill. We will discover all the secrets to choosing and using the right kind of EVOO.

We will walk the streets of the ancient city of Aptera and discover the jaw-dropping secret of its Roman theatre -have your favorite verses ready for reciting! We will be introduced to Crete's indigenous herbs and especially to those who are as rich in antioxidants as green tea. We will sit around the tables of a traditional taverna and discover how food, wine and stories shared among people nourish not only the body but, mainly, the soul.



ONE OF A KIND COOKING CLASSES WITH CHEF NICHOLAS POULMENTIS

CULINARY INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES

We will learn all the tricks to a perfect spanakopita and kleftiko wood-fired oven lamb, dolmadakia (vine-leaves stuffed with rice and herbs) and Sfakiani pita (crunchy and thin white cheese pie), dakos and Greek salad, boureki and maggiri.

Cooking classes will take place in beautiful outdoor areas, by the sea and in verdant plains set at the foot of Crete's mountains.

Rich in seasonal local products, fresh herbs and extra virgin olive-oil, Chef Nicholas will illustrate techniques that guarantee the success of each dish. Isabella will share anecdotes indicative of the cultural depth behind each recipe and will introduce us to local experts. You will have the option of participating hands-on or laying back and enjoying the process while sipping a glass of wine.

Expect surprises - like an invitation to join a night-time cooking class in Chef's suite!



DINING AND DREAMING

THE BEST OF CRETAN CUISINE CHOSEN FOR YOU



The restaurants and tavernas where we will be dining feature the best of Cretan cuisine and have been handpicked by Isabella who writes for food and travel for over 25 years. Among them, the island's most sincere zero-waste bistrot, a family-run farm-to-table restaurant, a taverna whose cook prepares dishes just as if she cooked them for her own family.

Cretan cuisine is all about the quality of the raw ingredients and we will have the opportunity to taste products like the first high-phenolic olive oil to be globally certified as a food supplement and 24 months aged graviera, Crete's answer to the Parmesan cheese. We will forage edible wild greens that grow around this time of year and enjoy delicacies that not even Cretans themselves know, like the grape caviar that is just ripe in May!

You will with some of Greece's top wine, olive-oil, cheese and herbs experts and chat with them about anything you want to learn as an aficionado.

The traditional Cretan Diet has been associated with longevity and Isabella will share practical tips about how to incorporate some of Crete's best food into your everyday diet. During the tour, you will be invited to a special breakfast where you will discover all about the right combinations.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday, May 12 - Arrival to Heraklion

Heraklion airport afternoon pick-up

Hotel Check In and free time to spend on the beach, spa or relaxing in the swimming pool

Welcome dinner and food storytelling at Pnoe Breathing Life Resort - <https://pnoe-breathinglife.com/en/home/>

Day 2: Wednesday, May 13 - Exploring Heraklion Region

Breakfast - Isabella invites you to a Cretan breakfast where she will share longevity secrets behind its staples

Visit Knossos, Europe's most ancient city

Wine tasting at one of Crete's top wineries & cooking class among the vines (spanakopita, dolmadakia)

Free time to walk around Heraklion /optional visit to the Archaeological Museum (For those who wish to take a siesta, there will be a ride to the hotel)

Evening raki and meze in a traditional village kafeneio, while the Women's Association demonstrates the local cucina-povera version of fresh, homemade pasta



Day 3: Thursday, May 14

A visit to an artisanal cheesemaker who strives to maintain local breeds of sheep and specializes in aged graviera cheese

Cooking in a wood-fired oven atop Europe's southernmost mountain range with the man who brought an abandoned village back to life and an optional hike/horse ride on the mountain slopes

A dinner cooking class in Chef Nicholas' suite

ITINERARY

Day 4: Friday, May 15 - Exploring Chania Region

A morning with one of Crete's top foraging experts and a picknick lunch on the beach

Check in at Domus Blanc Boutique Hotel which used to be the historic home of the French Consulate

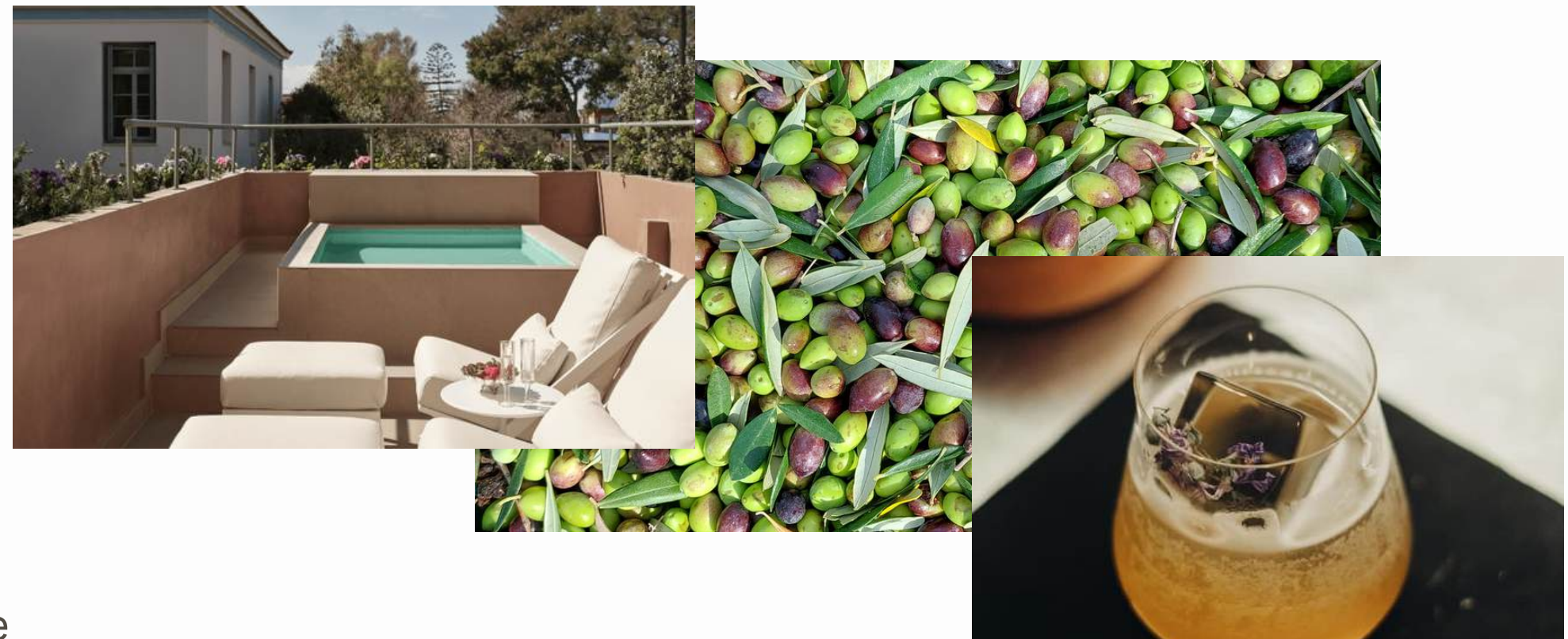
Dinner in a zero-waste bistrot that buys its produce from dozens of small farmers across Crete

Day 5: Saturday May 16

A guided visit to the olive oil farm where the world's first high phenolic olive oil to be certified as a food supplement is produced. Olive oil tasting of monovarietal and naturally scented extra virgin olive oils and a farm-to-table lunch

Free time to explore the old city of Chania / Optional visit to the Folklore Museum

Bites and stories from Chania's Belle Epoque



Day 6: Sunday, May 17

Explore the ancient city and charming theatre of beautiful Aptaera

Visit a verdant organic herbs farm where Nicholas teaches us how to make a light and crunchy Sfakiani pie

Enjoy a festive dinner in the heart of a traditional village

Day 7: Monday, May 18 - last excursion & departure

Optional visit to the Chania Archaeological Museum

A last surprise on a famous turquoise beach

A fond farewell and transfer to Chania Airport



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CONTACT

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Please contact us with any inquiries you may have or to schedule a call to provide more details and secure your seat(s). Our goal is to make your experience a memorable one.