

CRETE NEWSLETTER

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD | 2024 FEAST OF TABERNACLES

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Festival Coordinator

Dress for Church Clarification

Acceptable Church attire for both Sabbaths and week days is *business casual* for both men and women (ties or jackets not required). This includes speakers, song leaders, special music and the choir. Jeans and shorts are not acceptable at Church service.

Additional volunteers for “Older Singles”

We only had one person volunteer to help organize a get-together or activity for the older singles (over 35). If you would like to help, let me know.

Festival Children’s Choir Music 2024 is Now Available!

The children’s choir selections for the Feast of Tabernacles are now available for download on the Feast website at: ucg.org/members/feast/childrens-choir-music

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Good To Know!

Baggage Restrictions vary with each airline. Be sure to check with the all the airlines you are flying on.

If you have to add a bag to your reservation it's usually less expensive to do it online before you check in.

Crete Feast Stats - there are 701 people signed up for the Feast in Crete representing 10 countries:

- Australia
- Canada
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- United States

Coming to Crete...

23 Infants

72 Children (ages 2-11)

37 Teens (ages 12-17)

Optional Tours

See page 6 if you would like to add an optional tour to your reservation. There are some that are still open.

Continued from page 1

Guidelines for the children's choir are posted there, as well as vocal and instrumental versions of the two songs and lyric sheets. Parents, please follow the posted guidelines and be sure your children know the songs before arriving at the Feast.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Alexis Wilhelm at alexis.sumner@gmail.com

Atonement Santorini

It is not likely that we will find a room for church services, but we will at least try to arrange a live Zoom feed from Athens possibly.

However, if you would like to gather as a group at a restaurant at sundown, let me know. It might be possible if a restaurant has a private room, that they will allow us to gather for a service and then eat in the restaurant.

If you are interested in either one or have a suggestion, then email me at CRMelear@gmail.com

Daily Feast Schedule

At the [UCG Crete website](#), you can download the daily schedule at three locations. The main page, the calendar tab, and the posts tab.

[Click here for daily Schedule](#)

Prayer Preparation

Now is the time to pray for a blessed, successful, safe transit to and from and the details during the Feast. It ain't just for me... its for all of us.

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Crete Maris Resort

Meal Times at the Crete Maris

Breakfast: 7:30 - 10:30

Lunch: 12:30 - 14:30 (2:30 pm)

Dinner: 18:30 - 21:30 (6:30 - 9:30 pm)

Speciality Restaurant times may vary and reservations will be required.

Reminders:

Dinner at the Crete Maris

Dress Code for dinner: flip flops and shorts are not allowed.

Preparing to Travel Internationally

- Make sure to let your **bank** know in advance of your travel plans so they do not lock your account down for a foreign transaction.
- Be sure to notify your **credit card** company to let them know you are traveling to Greece (and any other country) - give them travel dates. This will let them know that it is safe to accept charges while you are traveling.
- **Mobile phone service** and connectivity - plan to right size your data and mobile needs.

Offering Information: Atonement, FOT 1st and 8th Day

As is customary and an administrative decision by the United Church of God, on Festival Tour Programs we ask that you forward your holy day offerings to the applicable home office where you reside, prior to the fall holy days. At the Feast we don't want to collect checks or too much cash that needs to be carried around the rest of the trip. However, we realize some members still prefer to give something on the holy day itself.

We will accommodate that preference with 2 options:

- There will be a Crete Feast Venmo account created that anyone can donate to, but it is primarily for miscellaneous Crete expenses.
- We will accept some cash if necessary.

“Specialty Feast Site” like Crete, are supposed to be completely paid for by the attendees. However, there are some miscellaneous expenses that show up.

Any donations to the Crete Venmo account that exceed any expenses will be forwarded to the home office in Cincinnati as a holy day offering.

Passports

1. If you haven't already, please go into your reservation and provide passport information for you and anyone else in your reservation.

<https://travelgallery.grcoll.co/v2/go/2024ucgfeastcrete>

2. You should have a physical or digital copy of your passport. It is really helpful if something happens to your passport.

We need your air schedule to organize & provide you transfers!

The deadline has past and we still need some air schedules. If you haven't sent us your arrival & departure information please do so now via the link on our website!

85 people still need to provide their Air Schedules!

Air Schedules Due July 31, 2024

AIR SCHEDULES NEEDED

Once you've made your airline reservations please go to our website and click the "Submit Your Air Schedule" button to give us your air schedule. Knowing your schedule allows us to arrange your included transfer to and from the Creta Maris resort in Heraklion.

While submitting your schedule, you'll be asked if you'd like to add the cost of your ticket(s) to your Trip Protection, this is applicable if you have Trip Protection already.

Please note: adding your air to your Trip Protection will increase the cost of your Trip Protection.

<https://www.travelgallery.com/ucg-crete-2024>

You can also add the cost of other components of your trip, if you want.

For Standard Trip Protection add 4.55% of the cost and for Enhanced Trip Protection add 7.6% of the cost.

Travel Gallery Website

What's on the website?

- ❖ Booking Portal Access
- ❖ Arrival/Departure Schedule Form
- ❖ Optional Tour Information
- ❖ Current & Past Newsletters
- ❖ FOT Schedule & Activities

<https://www.travelgallery.com/ucg-crete-2024>

Travel Tips

Airline App

We recommend downloading your airline's app on your cell phone and make sure your profile has all your current information including your cell phone #, TSA preCheck or GOES #, if applicable.

Sleep Mask & Ear Plugs

A Sleep Mask & Ear Plugs can be helpful on a plane as well as in a hotel room! You might consider adding them to your packing list!



Roommates Tip

If you are rooming with someone during the Feast AND you use white noise to help you sleep please make sure you use ear pods. White noise might have the opposite effect on your roommate and using ear pods is a nice way for both of you to get sleep! Please communicate with your roommate now about any idiosyncrasy you have.

Transfers

We are working on transfers first for those going to Athens with one of the offered packages and then arrival transfers from the airport to the Creta Maris Resort. Transfers are on your own in Santorini.

For those who have not made your reservation please do so and fill out our Air Schedule (blue button) on our website. We can't include you in the transfer if we don't know when you arrive and when you depart.

<https://www.travelgallery.com/ucg-crete-2024>

Infants

If you've added a baby to your family please make sure they are signed up for the UCG Crete Festival in your reservation. This is important for the resort to know in advance.

Contact us at groups@travelgallery.com if you have any questions.

Now is the Time to...

1. ASK Questions - email us at groups@travelgallery.com
2. DOUBLE CHECK your [account reservation](#) - does it include everything you think it does? Here's where to find things:
 - Pre-Athens Trip (under Adjustments)
 - Additional Nights at the Creta Maris (under Adjustments)
 - Optional Tours during the Feast (under Add-ons)
 - Air added to your Trip Protection (under Adjustments)

Currency

The local currency in Greece is Euros, which may be obtained at the Athens airport or at ATM machines throughout Greece. Please note that you will usually get a better exchange rate if you use your ATM card to get Euros than you will exchanging cash.



When you arrive in Greece you will be occupied with getting your luggage and meeting your transfers. It's important that once you land you meet your transfer in a timely manner. They will only wait so long for you if they know you have landed. Therefore we suggest getting some Euros before you arrive. You can usually do that through your local bank.

Gratuities / Tipping (including transfers)

Please note: Gratuities for **tour guides & drivers, hotel staff & transfer drivers and transfer baggage handling is NOT included** in the feast package. We suggest 2 Euros per person for group transfers. For private taxi transfers we suggest 5 Euros per person. **Any tour guides & drivers, hotel maids, dining and bar staff should be tipped as you would normally.** Tip boxes for dining and bar staff are available. The only tips that were included are for portage of baggage to and from your room in Crete as per the hotel contract.

Vaccines

There are *recommended* vaccines for Greece but **nothing is required**. Please note:

- There are NO Covid-related entry requirements for U.S. citizens.
- There is NO negative Covid test required.
- There are NO health screening procedures in place at airport and other ports of entry.

Optional Tours Still Available

- * 18Oct-C01 - Knossos & Heraklion City
- * 18Oct-C05 - Knossos & Winery Tour
- * 20Oct-C05 - Knossos & Winery Tour
- * 21Oct-C10 - Arolithos Village with Cooking
- * 19Oct-C20 - Cretan Evening Dinner with Show
- * 21Oct-C25 - Heraklion City Coach to/from
- * 20Oct-C40 - Biking at Mochos
- * 18Oct-C45 - Hiking Krista Gorge
- * 21Oct-C45 - Hiking Krista Gorge
- * 18Oct-C50 - Land Rover Safari w/Driver
- * 20Oct-C50 - Land Rover Safari w/Driver
- * 18Oct-C55 - Safari Self Drive
- * 20Oct-C60 - Island of Tears Boat
- * 21Oct-C65 Hersonissos Gulf - Eleni Boat
- * 23Oct-C65 Hersonissos Gulf - Eleni Boat

For information about the tours please check our website at:

<https://www.travelgallery.com/ucg-crete-2024>

If you'd like to add any of these to your reservation please email us at groups@travelgallery.com.

Coming in next month's newsletter:

- * Transfer Lists
- * Athens Tours - Meeting Point & Times
- * Creta Maris Arrival Instructions
- * What to do if you missed your flight or your flight was delayed
- * Trip Locator