

## Top 3 reasons to visit Crete in 2024

- Design-led Minos Beach art hotel
- Immersive well-being at adults-only Minos Palace hotel & suites
  - Authentic family-friendly Candia Park village

**18 December 2023:** Three of Crete's top hotels will continue their programme of innovation and renovation in 2024, providing travellers with even more reasons to take a holiday on Greece's largest island next year.

Family-owned Greek hotel group, [bluegr Hotels & Resorts](#) has a trio of hotels in Crete – the minimalist and design-led [Minos Beach art hotel](#), adults-only sanctuary [Minos Palace hotel & suites](#) and family-friendly [Candia Park village](#), all set in Mirabello Bay, a few kilometres away from Agios Nikolaos on Crete's northern eastern coast.

bluegr will continue with its large-scale investment plan to upgrade all three hotels. Its first phase saw the revamp of Minos Beach art hotel, including new accommodation categories and renovated bungalows, coinciding with 60 years of operation in 2023, and Minos Palace hotel & suites added new room categories. In 2024, bluegr will upgrade experiences available for guests, highlighting the essence of each property including a 'year of togetherness' at Minos Beach art hotel, 7 days of Joy at Candia Park village and a revived era of hospitality for Minos Palace hotel & suites, which introduces its new dining concept and a re-imagined entrance.

### **Minos Beach art hotel: For art lovers**

Minos Beach art hotel, a glorious assembly of bungalows and gardens poised right on the water's edge, is Crete's first five-star, barefoot luxury resort and an ideal destination for art lovers. The 2024 season begins on 15 April.

#### ***Design & ethos***

A distinguished member of Design Hotels and Marriott Bonvoy, the property has been designed to connect with nature. Stretching along two kilometres of coastline, 125 low-lying whitewashed bungalows, villas and suites are scattered amongst sand, rocks, and greenery. Each villa has a private pool, while bungalows have patios mere steps from the shore. Inside, modernity and muted earthy tones fuse seamlessly with natural textures and Cretan patterns.

Minos Beach art hotel has become a cultural beacon for the local community with its expansive collection of contemporary art. The G&A Mamidakis Foundation was established with a mission to support and promote contemporary art, culture, and lifelong learning. With an art collection comprising more than 70 artworks from Greek and international designers, the majority of which are scattered in the Sculpture Garden of Minos Beach art hotel. Notable works include the underwater

sculpture 'Lost Ears of Agios Nikolaos' (2016) by Kostas Ioannidis; 'The Painful Pyramids' (1993) by Magdalena Abakanowicz; and 'Image in the Matter and Addition' (1990) by Rena Papaspyrou.

### ***Dining***

Three restaurants offer Greek and traditional cuisine overseen by chefs Poppy Kourkoutaki and Kyriakos Mylonas, who partner with local suppliers offering farm-to-table dining and the essence of Crete's gastronomy.

La Bouillabaisse is ideal for lovers of fine dining, serving refined Mediterranean mezze dishes and sweeping views of island and sea. Bacchus is the buffet restaurant with live cooking stations and Terpsis offers authentic Cretan delights in a laid-back al fresco setting just steps from the water. With a focus on farm-to-table cooking and in line with the hotel's sustainable hospitality practices, much of the produce is sourced from trusted local suppliers in and around Agios Nikolaos, including the majority of the wines that come from excellent local vineyards and wineries.

A plethora of bars offer signature cocktails inspired by herbs native to the island. La Cave de la Bouillabaisse is a seafront wine bar serving Cretan, Greek and international wines with expertly paired nibbles, while Pure Lounge Bar serves refreshments and light bites to your sunbed. Dionyssos Bar is the elegant sand-covered cocktail lounge with bonfire, and the Ibisus Poolside Bar offers a refreshing escape from the heat. For a more traditional experience, Adeste is the traditional kafenion serving local mezze, raki, ouzo, and strong Greek coffee and live music.

### ***To do***

Guests can enjoy two Blue Flag-awarded private beaches and plenty of safe sea swimming platforms and private patios that ring the water's edge, just steps from their room or take a dip in the freshwater pool. Take wellbeing to new heights at the Ananea wellness centre offering a fully equipped gym, yoga classes and treatments by Aegeo Spa.

Guests can play a round of tennis, zip along on bicycles, or take on the ocean with the certified Pelagos diving and watersports center.

Alternatively, why not join the locals as they flock to the hotel's kafenion, known for nights filled with traditional Cretan music in an amphitheatric setting. From May 2024 guests will be able to enjoy live and unplugged Cretan music while feasting on local mezze, a carving station, and raki.

### ***New for 2024***

- Launch of a new book celebrating 60 years of Minos Beach art hotel. The book is set to feature the history of the hotel, its pioneering take on 'barefoot luxury' prioritising sustainability, simplicity, innovation and authentic guest experiences, and the support of the arts by the G&A Mamidakis Foundation
- In collaboration with its in-house chefs, bluegr is inviting renowned chefs to draw inspiration from Cretan cuisine and collectively embark on a journey of aromas and flavours throughout the year. Amongst them Dimitris Dimitriadis, Sotiris Evangelou, Manolis Papoutsakis, and many more are to be announced
- The North & South culinary battle will be taking place in October, the ultimate battle of flavours from Crete and Macedonia, where two chefs go head to head, creating a menu paired with fine wines

- Between 29 April and 5 May, guests are invited to a week-long celebration of cultural richness of Orthodox Easter celebrations. Highlights include the Midnight Resurrection on Holy Saturday featuring hymns by candlelight, followed by a vibrant fireworks show. Guests can partake in a number of activities such as an Easter pastry workshop, decorating the Epitaphios with floral petals and take part in an egg-dying process using a traditional technique, all while delving into its fascinating 100-year history. The festivities culminate with a curated Sunday Easter feast, as outdoor celebration with all kinds of Cretan delicacies, a rotisserie station, wine and raki that connects everyone around the table. A live band will also bring the dance floor alive with Cretan music.
- The Minos Beach art exclusive includes The Villa Experience, a stay in a luxurious villa with a private pool, airport transfers, daily delivery of seasonal fruit and daily all-Greek breakfast for 20 off a standard rate.

**Nightly rates at Minos Beach Art hotel start from 299 Euros, based on two sharing a Sea View Bungalow, including breakfast. The Villas at Minos Beach art hotel start from 825 Euros for a One Bedroom Villa with Private Pool and from 1,000 Euros for a Two Bedroom Seafront Villa with Private Pool. [www.minosbeach.com](http://www.minosbeach.com)**

### **Minos Palace hotel & suites: offering a transformative experience for adults only**

Nestled on a secluded private peninsula, Minos Palace hotel & suites offers an exclusive adults-only luxury experience. With 360° views and its herbal gardens, this oasis of calm resembles an island within an island where guests can disconnect from life and reconnect with nature to rejuvenate mind, body and soul. The 2024 season begins on 20<sup>th</sup> April.

#### ***Design & ethos***

Situated on the shores of Mirabello Bay, amidst Cretan gardens, Minos Palace is just 1.5 km from the centre of nearby Agios Nikolaos. The 121 rooms, bungalows, and 28 suites with private and shared pools are awash with earthy, neutral palettes and conscious materials to blend seamlessly with the elements and hues of the coastline. Guests can immerse to the golden rays of the sunrise or watch as the setting sun paints the scenery with rosy palettes. Minos Palace is a destination worthy of romantic honeymooners, solo travellers in search of wellness, and group getaways.

Within the property are spaces for meditative relaxation, golden silence and quiet reflection. The gardens create a restorative escape amidst sea breezes carrying the scents of over 1,000 herbs and plants grown there.

#### ***Dining***

Guests at Minos Palace are treated to the best Greek and Mediterranean cuisine, fusion mixology and healthy beverages across two restaurants and three bars. Well-being is an integral part of the dining concept. Chefs provide an authentic, sustainable, and seasonal experience by crafting bespoke wholesome menus with an emphasis on traditional recipes and restorative ingredients, all supported by integrated science.

Amalthea, open for breakfast and dinner, aims to re-energise and liberate guests' vitality without compromising taste, with harmoniously carved areas featuring raw cuts, seasonal fruits and vegetables, and live cooking. Inblu is the all-day lounge and restaurant serving an ode to alfresco

dining, crafting dishes from seasonal ingredients, designed to be savoured with infinite views. The poolside Bacchus Lounge Bar and beachside Island Bar serves innovative cocktails, refreshments, snacks and healthy light meals all day, carefully selected to nourish your body and soul.

### ***To do***

Guests can enjoy the private, Blue Flag-awarded sandy beach or a swim in the freshwater infinity pool. The wellness experience at Minos Palace is based on a holistic connection between the mind and body healing programmes, yoga, meditation and pranayama practices, seasonal retreats and wellbeing through local craft.

For the active, guests can use the tennis court, PADI certified diving centre, and fitness centre. A dedicated exercise zone, a green space with lovely views, invites guests to embrace the outdoors. To search for inner peace, numerous silent zones are scattered throughout the hotel.

### ***New for 2024***

- The culinary offering at Minos Palace hotel & suites is being upgraded for 2024 with new names and concepts for the hotel's restaurants, including a new dining concept and a re-imagined entrance, which is a celebration of unique spatial experiences, inspired by the contrasting hues of brilliance and mystery.
- Guests can discover new ways to ignite their soul with the 2024 Summer Program. They will be able to immerse themselves in well-being programs and explore a diverse weekly schedule that includes herbology classes, live music, celestial DJ sets, early riser yoga classes, and much more.

**Nightly rates at Minos Palace hotel & suites start from 257 Euros, based on two sharing a Zen Room, including breakfast. The suites at Minos Palace hotel & suites start from 351 Euros for a Sea View Suite and from 569 Euros for a Waterfall Suite with Private Pool. [www.minospalace.com](http://www.minospalace.com)**

## **Candia Park village: for authentic Cretan experience for families**

The idea of a village takes Greeks and Cretans back to their roots, embodying simplicity, joy, and the sense of community. **Candia Park village** encapsulates this feeling in colourful neighbourhoods, a traditional kafenion and its central square clock. The 2024 season starts on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

### ***Design & ethos***

Cocooned in nature, on a secluded slope with magnificent views of Mirabello Bay, Candia Park village invites guests to escape to a laid-back oasis of fun and recreation for the whole family. Taking pride of place on 65,000 sqm of coastline, Candia Park's 222 family apartments and suites are supremely spacious with an understatedly warm design. The Serenity Suites, tucked away are designed for privacy and tranquillity.

Bathed in natural light, with terraces and balconies, each comes with everything a family could need. Every detail and amenity for our younger guests has been thought of, allowing families to travel without worry.

### ***Dining***

Two restaurants, two bars, and a kafenion offer family-friendly Greek and Cretan dining, complete with children's menus and mocktails.

Restaurant Agapi (meaning love), is the main spot on the central square where breakfast and dinner are served, with a buffet of delights and dishes made with the freshest of ingredients. Kids can serve themselves from a designated buffet of delicious and nutritious dishes. Agapi also hosts evening entertainment and live music.

To Fili Taverna, overlooking Mirabello Bay, explores Cretan cuisine from locally caught fish and seafood specialties to exquisite authentic delicacies. Local fishermen arrive via boat delivering their catch of the day directly to the restaurant. It's also the ideal place to introduce Greek cuisine to children, with dishes including souvlaki and Greek salad.

The traditional kafenion, serves authentic meze and coffee against a backdrop of panoramic views. At the poolside Plori, families mingle over cocktails, freshly squeezed juices and light snacks. Moments from the village square, Eros' classy cocktails and refreshments are enjoyed in a cozy, laid-back atmosphere.

Rifi Gelateria is where treats and delights await guests of all ages. Meanwhile, Sohoro Village Market offers a curated store of products from small local businesses, fresh fruit, souvenirs and gifts.

### ***To do***

Guests can enjoy the private, Blue Flag-awarded sandy shallow beach, sundeck and three freshwater swimming pools – one of which is exclusively for children. Sports facilities include volleyball, basketball, tennis courts and bicycle hire to explore island trails.

Guests can unwind at the Aegeo Spa, enjoy a yoga session or the watersports facilities which include diving, windsurfing and water skiing.

There is a wide variety of activities at the Mini Blues Kids' Club for children between 4-12 years old, babysitting services upon request, and a weekly programme with 7 Days of Joy. Children can engage in various activities, including games, treasure hunts, and theatre workshops, as well as water sports, crafts, and beach parties.

### ***New for 2024***

- The new Summer Program offers a selection of new experiences for the whole family to enjoy and bond over, including Mothers' Day and World's Environmental Day celebrations, international dining theme nights, movie nights and Cretan-themed nights.

**Nightly rates at Candia Park village start from 123 Euros, based on a one-bedroom Family Apartment with village view, including breakfast. The Suites at Candia Park village start from 157 Euros for a one-bedroom Suite with a sea view and from 195 Euros for a Superior Family Apartment Side Sea View with breakfast and from 275 Euros for a Serenity Suite.**

**[www.candiapark.com](http://www.candiapark.com)**

For further information on bluegr, visit [www.bluegr.com](http://www.bluegr.com)

**For further information please contact: [bluegr@four.agency](mailto:bluegr@four.agency)**

**Ends**

## **About bluegr Hotels & Resorts**

Family-owned bluegr Hotels & Resorts features some of the best hotels in Greece that combine the three pillars of quality tourism: exceptional service, hospitality excellence and breathtaking locations.

With hotels in Crete, Athens and Rhodes, bluegr Hotels & Resorts has diversified the concept of luxury hotels in Greece for 60 years.

The CEO, Ms Gina Mamidakis, has brought to life her vision of an innovative hospitality company that strives for excellence and will inspire generations to come. Under her creative vision and her commitment to sustainable growth, bluegr has become a pioneer in 'barefoot luxury', prioritizing sustainability, simplicity, innovation, and authentic guest experiences.

Guided by a constant thirst for knowledge and a wholehearted belief in the inextricable connection between hospitality and culture, G&A Mamidakis Foundation was established in 1988. Its mission is to continually support and promote contemporary art and culture, foster lifelong learning and the passing down of knowledge to future generations. With an art collection comprising more than 70 artworks, the majority of which are exhibited at the Sculpture Garden of Minos Beach art hotel. The collection is constantly growing, as every year, with the awarding of the annual Art Prize, it is enriched with the work of the winning artist. This year, the G&A Foundation just celebrated its 30th anniversary.

bluegr strives for a continuous journey of excellence and outlines a comprehensive plan of initiatives for ethical, responsible, and sustainable business practices. The eco-culture and sustainability philosophy is built around the four pillars of: Environment; Solidarity & Volunteerism; Cultural Heritage; and Sustainable Education. bluegr's key commitments are sustainable luxury, supporting local communities, responsible waste management, and protecting natural resources.