

# Crete your heart out

Feast like a god on a Greek island - from beach and spa luxury to fun on the farm

BY **LYNNE HYLAND**

**E**ver felt like you've overindulged at breakfast on holiday? Trust me, you're in the amateur league.

Forget the Full English. You haven't truly stuffed yourself silly until you've sampled the Full Cretan.

I discovered this at Grecotel [Creta Palace](#), where I indulged in a traditional Horn Of Plenty breakfast - quite literally the food of the gods.

Legend has it this was the cuisine Zeus was weaned on by the goat Amalthea. Endless platters of Cretan cheeses, breads, sweets and pastries. Honey-drizzled yoghurt thick enough to stand your spoon up in. And then came hot courses - smoky tenderloin, followed by eggs scrambled with herby tomatoes and olive oil.

And that was just the start of my feasting. As well as a fine all-you-can-scoff buffet, there were outstanding à la carte restaurants to sample at this five-star spa hotel, from modern Greek

to seafood and Asian.

Everything seemed to arrive across at least nine courses, delivered by staff who charmed me into trying "just one more dish". By day two I'd gone with it and switched to elasticated waistbands.

Daytimes here are all about digesting the food and the beautiful surroundings. My airy hotel suite opened on to its own pool and patio garden, and just beyond that lay a private beach. As I lazed on a cabana, cocktail in hand, life felt mighty fine.

However I'm glad I managed to rouse myself sufficiently to visit the epicentre of [Creta Palace](#)'s culinary excellence. A few miles away lies Agreco, the hotel's organic farm which does things the old-fashioned way.

My kids, who think a make-your-own party at Pizza Express counts as artisan baking, would be astonished by Agreco's Farmer For A Day experience, where youngsters knead dough by the watermill, pick toppings from the gardens and cook their pizza in a traditional wood-burning oven.

A big kid like me also

enjoyed the farm's mini zoo, where I was handed foliage and invited to play feeding time tug of war with Agreco's peckish donkeys.

The farm becomes even more magical as night falls and fairylights glow like the stars. There's music, there's wine and, of course, there's food. All 30 wonderful organic dishes of it.

The way to the heart must be through the stomach, as the repeat guest rate at Creta Palace runs above 40 per cent. I encountered romcom-worthy stories, like the

couple who had met here as kids, returned to get married and had now brought their baby to complete the circle.

And up at the rooftop bar, I chatted to a charming elderly British couple who have come here every year for the past two decades. "Don't tell everyone about

this place," they winked. Many guests hardly leave the hotel but it's worth visiting nearby Rethymnon Town. Over the centuries it's been fought over by the Venetians and Ottomans, and today it's an atmospheric tangle of mosques, grand mansions, fountains and churches.

I spent an afternoon strolling through cobbled streets lined with trinket shops and ouzo bars. Rethymnon's Venetian fortress beckoned, and I looked across dusty-pink rooftops glinting in the sun before heading down to the harbour where the cool bars were filling up.

Tempting as it was to stay, I realised it must be time to head back to the hotel as my waistband was feeling loose again. Clean eating be damned. Sometimes you need to spend your holiday feasting like a Greek god. Just don't expect to return home with the body of one.

## TRAVEL FILE

traditional coffee shop crossed with a museum.

### GOOD TO KNOW Creta

Palace is family friendly, and has a mini-village with family accommodation, a kids' pool with waterslides, playground and Grecoland kids' club.

**TOP TIP** The perfect place for a Horn Of Plenty breakfast is at Kafenion, a



**FUN ON THE FARM**  
Lynne picks her own fruit at Agreco



**HOMEMADE**  
Tasty pies in the taverna, above

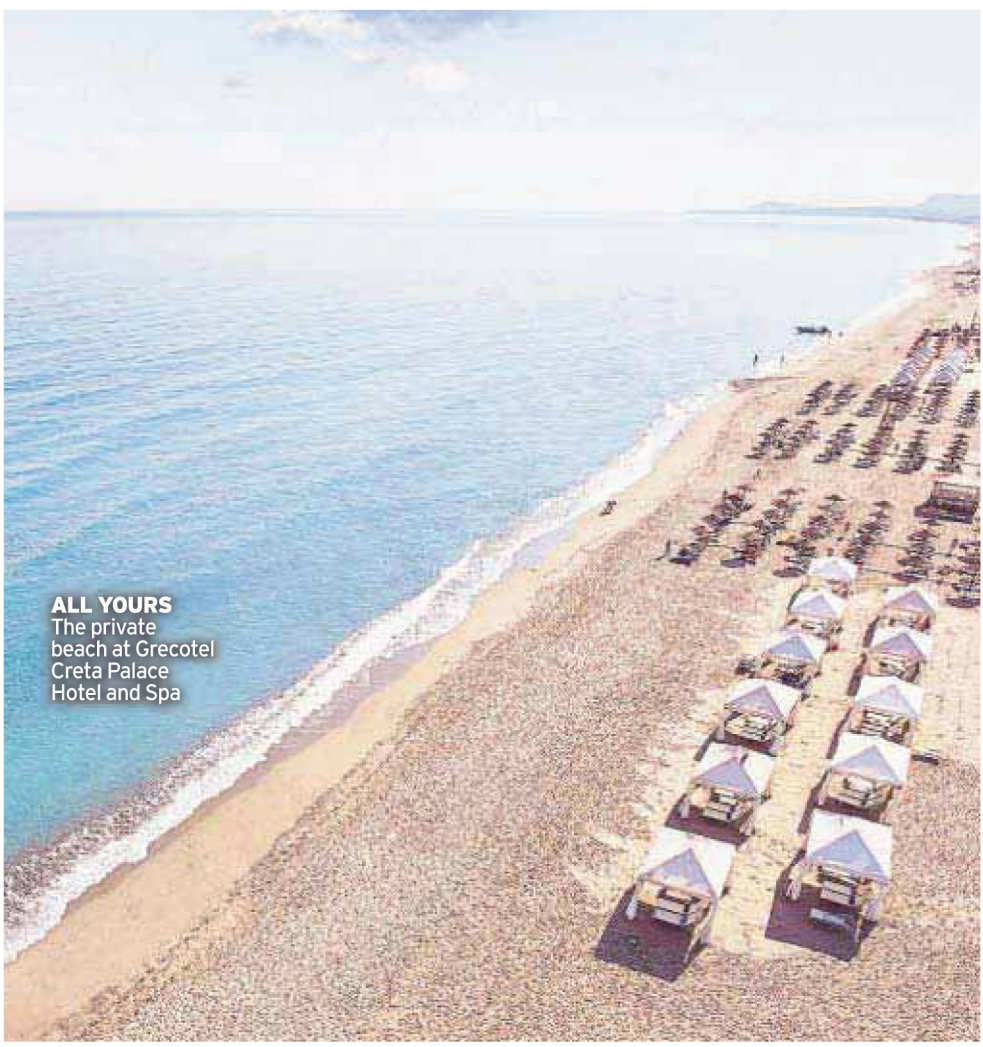


**LABYRINTH**  
The old town  
of Rethymno



**CHEERS** Cocktails by the pool



An aerial photograph of a private beach. The beach is composed of light-colored sand and pebbles. A row of approximately ten white cabanas with purple roofs is arranged in a line along the shore. To the right of the cabanas, a large area of the beach is filled with numerous dark-colored umbrellas, likely for sunbathers. The turquoise sea meets the shore with gentle waves. In the distance, a coastline with buildings and hills is visible under a clear sky.

**ALL YOURS**  
The private  
beach at Grecotel  
Creta Palace  
Hotel and Spa