

Western Coast Scenic Drive

Rethymno, Georgioupoli, Lake Kournas and the springs of Argyroupoli. The gentlest self-drive day in western Crete, from getcarhire.com

The Route at a Glance

Start	Chania (airport 20 min from the city)
Distance	About 120 km round trip, an easy full day
Time to allow	A relaxed full day, or a gentle half-day
The lake	Kournas, the only freshwater lake in Crete
Best for	Families, nervous drivers, an easy day out

The Drive, Stop by Stop

1. Chania to Georgioupoli

38 km / 20-30 min east on the E75 National Road. An easy, fast coastal road, perfect for nervous drivers.

2. Georgioupoli

A riverside resort where the Almyros meets the sea. Long sandy beach, eucalyptus square, and the famous chapel of Agios Nikolaos on a stone causeway out in the sea.

3. Lake Kournas

A few km inland (watch for the easy-to-miss turn). The only freshwater lake in Crete: pedal boats, warm swimming, lakeside tavernas, terrapins and birdlife. A protected Natura 2000 site.

4. Argyroupoli

A short climb into the hills, on ancient Lappa. Natural springs and waterfalls under giant plane trees, taverna trout by the running water, Roman remains. The tours skip it.

5. Rethymno

The best-preserved Venetian old town after Chania: narrow lanes, the Rimondi Fountain, a charming harbour, and the great Fortezza fortress with panoramic views. Best in the late afternoon light.

Driving Tips

- The easiest drive in western Crete: the E75 coastal road is fast, modern and gently curving. Ideal for nervous drivers and families.
- Lake Kournas cannot be seen from the highway and the turn is easy to miss. Watch for the Georgioupoli exit and the inland Kournas signs, then 4 km to the lake.
- Police radar traps are common on the long straight near the Episkopi exit before Georgioupoli. Keep to the limit.
- In Rethymno, use the edge-of-centre car parks, not the pedestrian old-town lanes.
- Bring swimwear for Georgioupoli and the lake, cash for pedal boats and small tavernas, and comfortable shoes for the old town and Fortezza.

Where to Eat

At Lake Kournas, lakeside tavernas serve Cretan food with a view over the water. At Argyroupoli, the spring-side tavernas are famous for fresh trout by the running streams. In Rethymno, the old town offers everything from smart seafood to tiny tavernas doing dakos and slow-cooked lamb. Georgioupoli has good tavernas around its square and beach.

Guide by the Digitalhound.co.uk editorial team for getcarhire.com. Compare cheap car hire at Chania Airport at getcarhire.com/chania.htm. Drive times verified; roads and openings can change, so check locally.