



# Orchid Finding Trips

March, 2020

One week trips in the east of Crete

Dates:

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March

## Itinerary

### Day One

Guests will be met at Heraklion Airport and driven to their friendly and comfortable accommodation at Corali Apartments, Elounda, with views over the bay. Once settled in, we will take a short drive to the hills above Plaka to see a spectacular array of species, including *Gortys ophrys*, *O. papilionacea* in their hundreds, Bee ophrys and *Ophrys cretica* ssp. *bicornuta*, *Ophrys creberrima*, *Ophrys phryganae* amongst many others. The day will finish with a meal together at an excellent traditional beach side taverna, where we can share a glass of raki and get to know each other.





### Day Two

We have a relaxed day exploring the remote area around Mount Oxa where a number of species of orchid and ophrys can be found. Apart from orchids, we may find wild lupin and a variety of other beautiful wild flowers. Dinner can be taken at The Hope taverna in Elounda. Expect to find *O. anatolica*, *O. italica*

### Day Three

Today we will be travelling further east to the mountains around Kavousi. This area is famous as one of the top flower finding sites in the east of the island. Combined with sensational views and lunch at a superb traditional taverna, this is definitely a day for finding a wide range of flowers and orchids. A chance to find *O. fleischmanii* and several varieties of *O. sphegodes*.

### Day Four

After a gentle drive into the mountains we will arrive on the Katharo Plateau to experience wonderful and breathtaking views of the snow covered mountains and winding crystal streams. The flowers of the Katharo are stunning and besides orchids, we may be lucky enough to find wild tulips and fritillaries. Here, depending on snow conditions, there are meadows of the rare and endemic *Crocus sieberii* and *Scilla nana*. In this clear environment flowers abound and there will be plenty to see. Lunch will be taken at Yannis' taverna. Guests will have the



opportunity to talk about his life and his love of nature. As a boy Yannis helped his father, who worked as a charcoal burner in the forests above Kritsa. This is a chance to experience and enjoy the reality of life on the island. Expect to find *Orchis lactea*, *Arum creticum*, *Cyclamen creticum*, *Fritillaria messanensis*, *Scilla nana* - amongst many other species. 'Katharo' means clean or pure and refers to the quality of the air.

## Day Five

A short drive to a remote area of Crete's north coast will give us an opportunity to find the superb *O. heldreichii* in large numbers, also *O. fusca* and *O. mammosa*. There will also be lots of other photo opportunities for endemic flowers and unusual fungi. A meze dinner can be shared at one of Elounda's welcoming and authentic traditional tavernas.



## Day Six



A wonderfully scenic day trip high into the mountains will bring us to the remote village of Thripti to search for orchids amidst the dense pine forests of the area. There will be a chance to admire and photograph the rare Cretan mistletoe – *Viscum album* ssp *cretensis* en route and to spot many birds of prey circling overhead. Lunch will be taken in Thripti's only taverna. A chance to find *Aceras anthropophorum* and *Neotina maculata*.



## Day Seven

On our final full day, we will travel to the orchid meadows of the south east coast to explore a variety of habitats. We will have lunch at a beach side tavern close to the Libyan Sea. A supplement will apply for anyone wanting to sample the local fresh fish. In the pine forests of this area many rare orchids can be found and there will be plenty of time for exploring and walking.



## Day Eight

The last morning of the trip and a get-together over breakfast at Babel Café Bar to share experiences and to exchange contact details. Guests will be taken to Heraklion airport in good time for their departure.



Ophrys fleischmanii at Prina

**Please Note:**

Places are limited to a maximum of 6, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Please contact Julia for further information.

Cost per person: 1,400 GBP

A 25% deposit is required upon booking, the balance is due eight weeks before arrival date.

Cost of holiday includes: self-catering accommodation in a quiet and friendly family run apartment with breakfast provided, lunch, all travel costs on the island, including airport transfers, all trips accompanied by Julia Jones, FLS, Founder and President of 'Flowers of Crete'; information and advice, including flower identification. Welcome drink and farewell breakfast/coffee and cakes.

The cost of the holiday does not include international flights, dinner, international telephone calls from your hotel or beverages other than tea or coffee. Guests are advised to obtain their own travel insurance before their arrival.

The organisers reserve the right to change this itinerary depending on external circumstances such as weather conditions, which are beyond their control.

