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THE HISTORY OF CRETE, MONUMENTS, MUSEUMS, ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, CHURCHES, MONASTERIES, GORGES, MOUNTAINS, CAVES, BEACHES, TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS, CITIES & VILLAGES, COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE ACCOMMODATION, CRETAN GASTRONOMY, EVENTS, CRETAN MARKET AND ANY OTHER POINT OF INTEREST WITHIN CRETE THAT CAN IMPROVE THE VISITOR'S EXPERIENCE.

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Matala



Malia



Elafonisi



Falasarna



Preveli



Damnioni



Vai



Kouremenos



Ag.Stefanou



Bali

Archaeological Sites



Knossos



Knossos



Festos



Festos



Fortezza



Fortezza



Aptera



Aptera



Lato



Lato

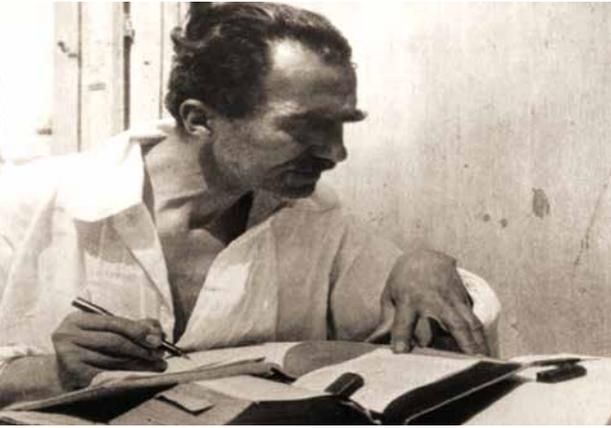


What Crete offers

Crete is famous for its traditional products. Most of the products are produced all over Crete.

1. The **right climate** on the island helps to produce **fresh fruits and vegetables**. Known for their quality are oranges, mandarins, tomatoes, watermelons and much more.
2. **Cretan Oil** is the best in quality due to the climate which helps the development of olive trees. Also proven the most healthiest olive oil in the world.
3. **Cretan Wine** is produced in each prefecture in different varieties very good in taste and quality.
4. **Local cheese** in Crete is popular not only in Greece but throughout the world. Cheese such as graviera, kefalograviera, kafalotyri, anthotiro, sweet and sour mizythra and other cheeses which are produced in the traditional way.
5. **Cretan Honey** is the most aromatic and the bees are fed from bushes that only grown in Crete. It's certainly the best.
6. **Mountain Tea** is a tea which all local Cretans drink when the weather gets cooler. They boil it in water and drink it. Helps case if you have a cold or sore throat. Herbs and spices are also found in area of mountains and not only, natural and tasty for ingredients.





Nikos Kazantzakis was one of the most important Greek writers, poets and philosophers of the 20th century and was born in Heraklion. He published many books but he became famous when he turned to pezo-graphy. He published the well-known Zorba the Greek, The Last Temptation of Christ and others. He died in **1957** and is buried at the venetian fort surrounding Heraklion “**Martinengo**”. The international airport of Heraklion is named after him.

Orthodox has been celebrated for over **1600 years**. Monks and Nuns still practice a monastic life in many monasteries in Crete. Also you have the possibility to visit them. Some monasteries have just one monk who makes all the duties around the monastery including church service, maintenance and gardening. There are many monasteries in each prefecture of Crete such as Arkadi monastery, Panagia Odigitria, Katholikon, Kaliviani, Toplou and many more.

Cretaquarium is one of the largest and most modern aquariums in Europe. Explore the magic of the sea floor and the diving experience in the sea world of the Mediterranean. See different species that you haven’t seen before and will fascinate you.

Beaches in Crete are beautiful and provide hundreds from the north of the Aegean Sea to the south of the Lybian Sea are very popular in summer due to the beautiful nature, lifestyle of locals and exotic areas. The most exotic sandy beaches are Balos, Elafonissi with crystal Caribbean-like water, palm beaches Preveli and Vai, Matala, Lenda and more paradise places.

Monasteries in Crete and its history in Cristian





Gorges there are about 50 and around the White Mountain only. Every gorge has its own nature and character walking through only to see the amazing land cliffs and scenery. They are all so fascinating for and exploring.

Cretan Nutrition in recent years has had the interest of many around the world because of its ideal diet, health and quality. The Cretan cuisine is the most healthy and high quality of the Mediterranean. People of Crete have been declared, having the highest indicators of longevity and smallest rates from many diseases. Crete has one of the oldest and most delicious cuisines in the world. They have the tradition of flavors, fragrances, materials and styles that has its origins in the Minoan era until today. The findings of archaeological excavations shows that ancient Cretans, 4,000 years ago, consumed almost the same products consumed by the Cretan people today. In Minoan palaces several large jars of oil, wine, cereals, legumes and honey were found.

Cretan villages - Crete is highly-appreciated for its rich history, the old traditions and hospitable people, characteristics that are spread out all

across Cretan villages. The stunning landscapes and scenery makes Crete one of the most outstanding destinations in Greece that draws the attention of all visitors. The beautifully preserved Cretan villages have ancient roots that go back in history. Many towns and villages in Crete have Venetian and Ottoman features, including castles, towers, stone bridges, churches and mosques. Other places located up in the mountains have a characteristic architecture with stone houses, red-tiled roofs, narrow streets, flowered gardens and always a square with a church in the center of every village.

Cretan dances are most famous and danced by men and women, who wear their wonderful Cretan costumes in formal events. They are either fast or slow, but always vivid and imposing. When danced by groups of men, they remind of the war dances of Curetes. Each area of the island has its own traditional dances, most of which retain the primitive circular pattern. Main dances are pentozalis, kastrinos, pidichtos, siganos, syrτος and sousta, which is danced in couples and is an erotic and vigorous dance, almost danced on the tip of the toes.



Sightseeings in Heraklion



1. Lions or Lions Square



2. Venetian Loggia



3. Koules



4. Basilica of St Markos



5. Eleftherias Square



6. Komarou Square



7. Saint Minas



8. Saint Titus



9. Archaeological Museum



History of Heraklion

During the Minoan (prehistoric) period, there must have been a few scattered houses in what is now the center of Heraklion, with a few small communities on the hills. The area east of Heraklion, Poros, Katsambas, Alikarnassos and the airport as far as the River Karteros and Amnissos, shows early signs of habitation. It was a good place to live, due to its geomorphology and because it was the natural port of Knossos, via the River Kairatos which reaches the sea at Katsambas (the east end of the modern Heraklion harbour). This has been demonstrated by a recent excavation in the Katsambas area, which has brought part of the Minoan harbour installation to light. Archaeological evidence shows that the settlement Heraklion probably arose during the first millennium BC (9th century BC), in the area between Daidalou and Epimidou Streets, at the top of the hill on which the center of Heraklion now stands. Many have been through Heraklion and settled. The Arabs had control of the trade routes to the East, and external trade began to wane.

From the 7th century onwards the island was subject to repeated pirate raids, led mainly by the Arabs, which brought about the decline of coastal settlements. Heraklion was built by the Arab Saracens in 824 A.D. At the time it was called Chandax, a name adapted from the Arab word "kandak" that means moat, due to the moat that the Saracens dug all around the city. Iraklion was built on the location where the old harbour of Knossos used to stand. The name survived during the second Byzantine period as Chandakas, and during the Venetian occupation as Candia. During the Venetian occupation, the whole island was named Candia after the city. The Saracens occupation lasted 140 years (824 -961 A.D). During that time Chandax was the safe harbour

of the pirates that ravaged and looted the eastern Mediterranean. Much wealth was gathered in Chandax, from the islands sacked and ships sunk by the pirates. The Byzantines tried quite a few times to liberate Chandax, with Nikiforos Fokas finally succeeding in 961 A.D. After a long and bloody siege that lasted almost a year. The sack of Chandax by the Byzantines, marks the beginning of the second Byzantine era which lasted until 1204. Eventually the Venetians were established in Chandax in 1210. They rebuilt the walls of the fort in order to protect themselves from the rebellions of the locals, the most important being that of the Kallergis in 1367. The Turks managed to occupy Chandax in 1669 after a siege that lasted 22 years. But the cost in human life was too much. After these 22 years 30.000 Christians were dead and 120.000 Turks. The Turks occupied Crete until 1897. During that time numerous rebellions by the Cretans were overthrown. On August 25 1897 Cretans were slaughtered on the main road to the harbour from the city. This road is still named after the event, 25th of August Street.



Heraklion city



Heraklion - is the largest city in Crete and the 4th largest in Greece. It has also the largest port and airport on the island. Famous of its castle of “**Koules**” the Venetian port and popular fish taverns at the waterfront. The history of Heraklion started in the Minoan times, as by the close ancient town of Knossos, the most developed of all Minoan towns in Crete. The prefecture of Heraklion is green and very interesting with mountainous villages, sandy beaches and impressive gorges. Driving around the prefecture is an excellent experience to get to know the Cretan landscape which is fascinating. Heraklion has developed a lot in tourism. Most famous tourist resorts are **Malia**, famous for their nightlife, **Hersonissos** and **Agia Pelagia**, while **Matala** on the southern side of Crete is also much developed.



Morozini Fountains

Morozini fountains - The Lions in Heraklion is the square of the Fontana Morosini, the ornate Venetian fountain with four lions with water gushing from their mouths. The Fontana Morosini is in Eleftheriou Venizelou Square in the centre of Heraklion, but the inhabitants of the city never use the official name, usually referring to it as the Lions Square or the Lions for short. The fountain with the lions is one of the most important monuments the Venetians bestowed on Heraklion. When it was built, it offered a solution to the problem of supplying Heraklion with water, providing 1,000 barrels of water a day.



Ag. Markos Basilica

Agios Markos Basilica - Dedicated to the patron of the Venetians, the Basilica of Agios Marco was built in the early Venetian island in 1239, exactly opposite the fountain in the Lion Square. It was an expression of love and gratitude for their country. The most important Venetian buildings in the capital of the prefecture, was built on a simple ground plan and roofed entrance, while the original version was not particularly different from its current appearance.



Heraklion Market

Heraklion Market - Heraklion central market is on 1866 Street, running from the Meidani to Kornarou Square. The street name refers to one of the most important Cretan risings to overthrow the Turkish yoke. The same is true of the parallel 1821 Street (on your right hand). The Heraklion central market is lined with shops selling souvenirs, cheap clothes and shoes, fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, cheese and meat, along with small cafés and tavernas. The Heraklion central market was where the inhabitants of the city once did their daily shopping.



Church of Peter and Paul

The **Church of Peter and Paul** was built during the early years of the Venetian rule as a Catholic monastery of the Dominican Order (Domenicani Predicatori). It is one of the oldest architectural monuments of the Cistercian monks of the 12th century, both in Europe and in Greece. Located next to the sea wall, between the Venetian harbor and Dermata Gate. The restoration of the historic church of the Dominicans started for several years. Today the church has been completed, but the surrounding area has still to be restored.



Saint George Gate

The Saint George Gate lay buried under Eleftherias Square for many decades. It was recently rediscovered and restored, bringing to light an unknown picture of Heraklion's history. The Saint George Gate is called "Pili Agiou Georgiou" in Greek and it is used for art exhibitions in Heraklion. The



St George Gate was built in 1565 during the Venetian period, and connected the walled city to East Crete. It was also known as the Lazaretto Gate, because it led to the Lazar House, the hospital for contagious diseases on the east coast outside the walls of Heraklion. (Heraklion was struck by the plague on several occasions, the worst being the 1591-93 outbreak).



Chronaki House

The Chronaki House - The house Chronaki is an important monument of the city of Heraklion and is the mansion known by two names: House Chronaki or Konaki Rasich Bey Aspraki. The house was built by Chronaki Rasich Aspraki Bey, a wealthy Turkish merchant, after the terrible earthquake of 1856. Architectural design of the building was based on the standards of the mansions of Thessaly and northern Greece.



Bembo Fountain

Bembo fountain – at Kornarou Square in Heraklion the monumental Bembo Fountain is preserved in good condition. It is named after the Venetian General (governor) of Heraklion Gianmatteo Bembo, who built it in 1552-54. It was the first time that the people of Heraklion saw water in the city, showing how important the fountain was. The fountain consists of a spout and a small, rectangular basin. Over the spout is set the headless statue of a Roman official from the Ierapetra area in southeast Crete, while the whole monument is decorated with Venetian family coats of arms.



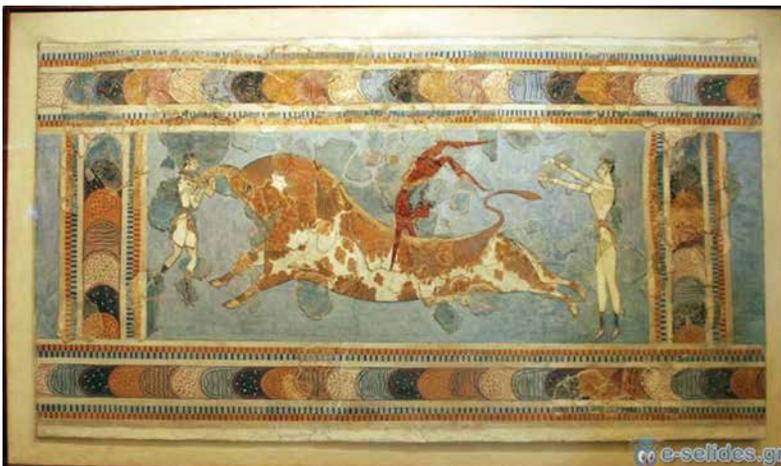
Archaeological Museum of Heraklion

Archaeological Museum of Heraklion - one of the largest and most important museums in Greece and Europe. There are many artifacts from almost every period of the history of **Crete**, from Neolithic and Roman times, also especially important Minoan collection, which contains unique examples of ancient art, many of which are considered masterpieces of world importance. **Heraklion Archaeological Museum** is considered the most extensive museum in the world, representing the Minoan culture. The museum is located in the center of Heraklion, was built in 1937-1940 years by the architect Karantinosa Patroclus. Earlier this place used to be a Roman Catholic Church of St. Francis, destroyed by an earthquake in 1856.

The two-story building has a lot of living rooms, laboratories, large



exhibition spaces, libraries, offices and a special department of scientific collections, which are archaeological finds stored and studied. There is a shop sells copies of ancient books, souvenirs and postcards. Visitors to the museum can also relax and have a snack in the cafe.



Lichnostatis Museum

Lichnostatis Museum – an open air museum was built by Professor Giorgos Markakis in the period 1986-1992 and located in Hersonisos. The museum already operating segments Audiovisual Media & Publications Educational pro-



grams, traditional products, Documentation. The museum has been nominated for the Prize of the European Museum of the Year 1996, and in 1997 received honors from the University of Crete in the competition Environmental Protection “Eleftherios Platakis”. He has presented and Echoramata ang 14 international and nationwide conferences - seminars and has organized 32 events in Greece and Crete by organizers varied cultural and scientific institutions.



Piskopiano Museum

Piskopiano museum – this museum opened in 1988 and is located at the traditional village of Piskopiano, 3kms to the south of the port of Hersonissos. It is housed in the village’s old olive-oil mill (named ‘fabrika’ by the locals), which was constructed in the mid19th century. The visitor can gain an understanding of daily life and occupations of the Cretan farmer before the introduction of modern technology such as: The cooper’s workshop – The olive-oil press – The carpenter’s workshop – The blacksmith’s workshop – The daily household chores and old way of life.



Natural History Museum of Crete

The **Natural History Museum of Crete (NHMC)** in Heraklion, Crete is a natural history museum that operates under the auspices of the University of Crete. Its aim is the study, protection and promotion of the diverse flora and fauna of the Eastern Mediterranean region. The museum is based in a restored industrial building that used to house an electricity power plant.

In late December 2012, NHMC was awarded by



the Academy of Athens with the Benaki award for “its diverse educational, research, writing and publishing work, its exemplary organization and its promotion of scientific research and training”



Historical Museum of Heraklion

Historical Museum – founded in 1953 Society of Cretan Historical Studies. The museum exhibits valuable findings from **archaeological, ethnographic and historical material** deriving from the medieval and modern periods in Cretan history. Also valuable historical relics of Crete, from the First Byzantine period (330 AD) to World War II, are displayed in its 22 rooms, covering an area of 1,500 square meters. Other rooms also display ceramic and sculpture collections, as well as paintings from the famous painter **El Greco** who was born in Crete.



El Greco Museum

El Greco Museum - a small museum located in the centuries-old stone house. It is believed that here Domenikos Theotokopoulos was born (1541 - 1614). Better known as **El Greco**, **Theotokopoulos** trained as an icon painter in Crete, then moved to Toledo in 1577, where he took over the Spanish culture and worked in this style until his death. Stepping in front of the art of icon painting of his time, he expressed himself through color and shade, but his talent was recognized only in the 20th century. Some of his work can be seen in the museum. The museum is located in the village of **Fodele** among orange groves about 18 km from Heraklion.



Nikos Kazantzakis Museum

The **Nikos Kazantzakis Museum** pays tribute to the important intellectual, author, thinker, philosopher, politician and traveller Nikos Kazantzakis.

The Museum is made up of a cluster of buildings in the central square of the historical village of Varvari, now known as **Myrtia**. The Museum Exhibition is housed on a site formerly occupied by the home of the Anemoyiannis family, which was related to Nikos Kazantzakis' father, Kapetan Michalis.



The Museum was founded by set and costume designer Yiorgos Anemoyiannis, a pioneering figure in Greek theatre. His fundamental aim was to preserve the author's memory and promote his work and thought. Significant assistance was offered by Eleni Kazantzaki, the author's second wife.



Palace of Knossos

Knossos - historical jewel of the island of Crete. The center of Minoan civilization and capital of Minoan Crete 5km south of Heraklion. Knossos flourished for approximately two thousand years. It had large palace buildings, extensive workshop installations and luxurious rock-cut cave and tombs. As a major center of trade and the economy, Knossos maintained collaboration with the majority of cities in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to legend, in the palace of Knossos lived the king Minos, son of Zeus and the princess Europe. The famous myth of the Minotaur, Theseus, son of king Aegeus, and Ariadne, Minos's daughter, tells us about the events that took place in this palace. Prior to the beginning of the 20th century, the world did not assume the existence of an ancient civilization, the very first in Europe. Very few excavations have occurred from 1878 until today.

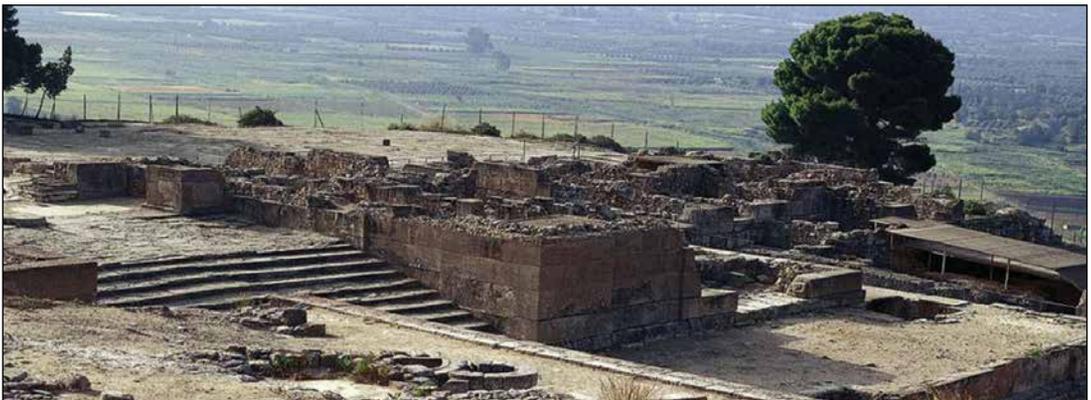




Palace of Festos

Festos Palace - one of the ancient monuments of Minoan architecture. Its excavations began in 1902. Scientists were able to understand the approximate chronology of valuable finds. In large part they produced ancient pottery, which became the starting point in the study of Minoan society ages. Festos palace was rebuilt three times. This was due to the devastating earthquake in Crete. It was one of the most important centers of Minoan civilization, and the most wealthy and powerful city in southern Crete. It was inhabited from the Neolithic period until the foundation and development of the Minoan palaces in the 15th century B.C.

The city participated to the Trojan war and later became one of the most important cities-states of the Dorian period. Festos continued to flourish during Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic times. It was destroyed by the Gortynians during the 3rd century B.C. In spite of that, Phaistos continued to exist during the Roman period. Festos had two ports, Matala and Kommos.





Gortys

Gortys - was the Roman capital of Crete. The history of its foundation goes back centuries, where the Mediterranean fate was in the hands of powerful gods of Olympus. According to legend, here Zeus and Europe, was conceived by the first king of Crete - **Minos**. Here was his first palace. At the moment, less than half of Gortys is excavated and studied, with further interest of the archeologists - the palace of Minos, perhaps waiting to be discovered. Gortys was built on the site of the destroyed Minoan city of about the 9th century BC and it became a city-state with a port, such as Matala, and a unique set of laws. With the arrival of the Romans to the island and its final conquest in 67 BC, a set of laws, not only

has not undergone any changes, but continued to serve as the Romans. Residents Gortys dutifully took the invaders, and gave them all possible assistance in the suppression of anti-Roman rebellion. During this Gortys was proclaimed the capital of Crete and Kyrenia - African Roman territories. Much later, it began with the spread of Christianity of Gortyna in Crete. Gortyna Archaeological Park - a wonderful interweaving of the Minoan, Mycenaean, Roman and early Byzantine cultures.



Vathypetro

Vathypetro - a complex of buildings of the Minoan era, found five kilometers south of Archanes, at the foot of the mountain Iuktas. Vathypetro became known in the second half of the 20th century, when the first findings were discovered by archaeologist Marinatos. The scientists decided to restore part of the buildings, based on their own assumptions and works predecessors. It is



believed that Vathypetro - a palatial building was not destined to be a palace. Strong earthquakes were not allowed to finish the construction of the architect. The south sector of the building, which includes a one of the oldest wine press, was rebuilt as a farmhouse and industrial center after the 1550 BC destruction and was finally destroyed around 1470 BC.

Ag.Triada

Agia Triada Archaeological site - Four kilometers west from Festos are the ruins of the Royal Villa, the Small Minoan Palace at Agia Triada. The site is named after the village of Agia Triada that is located next to it and was inhabited until 1.897, when the Turks destroyed it. The Minoan name of the site is unknown. At the site are the Minoan town, the palace and the tombs, excavated by Halbherr with L. Banti in 1902 and onwards. La Rosa resumed the excavation after 1976. The most important monuments of the site are:

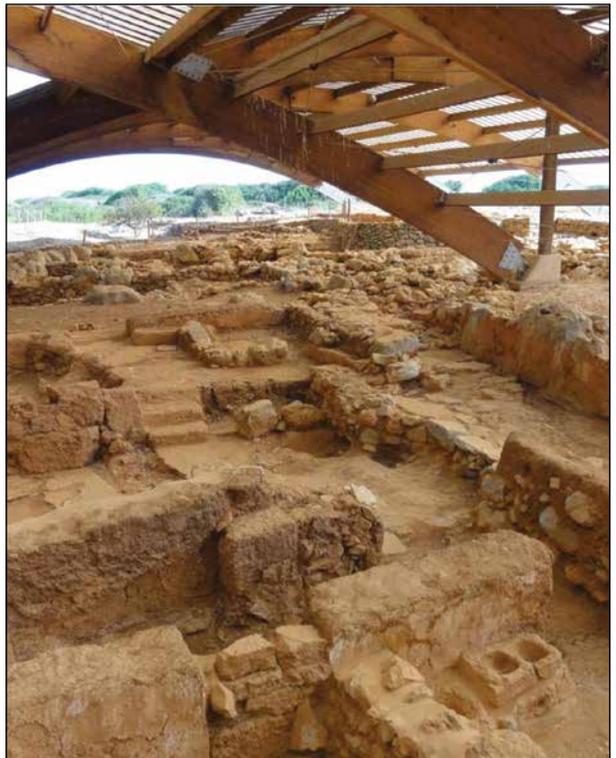
The Royal Villa consists of two wings and, although it was smaller than the palaces of Knossos and Festos, it presents all the typical features of palatial architecture. The settlement and Agora which lies to the NE of the villa and belong to the Mycenaean period. The cemetery of Aghia Triada and The Megaron of the "Mycenaean" type, built over the storerooms of the Royal Villa, is contemporary with the portico.





Malia Palace

The palace of **Malia**, dating from the Middle Bronze Age, was destroyed by an earthquake during the Late Bronze Age;[3] Knossos and other sites were also destroyed at that time. The palace was later rebuilt toward the end of the Late Bronze Age. Most of the ruins visible today date from this second period of construction. The palace features a giant central courtyard, 48m x 23m in size. On the south side are two sets of steps leading upwards and a maze of tiny rooms. Also here is a strange carved stone called a kernos stone, which looks like a millstone with a cup attached to the side of it. On the north side of the courtyard were storage rooms with giant earthenware pithos jars, up to two metres tall. These were used for holding grain, olive oil and other liquids; the floor of these rooms has a complex drainage system for carrying away spilled liquids.





Tyliisos

Ancient Tyliisos - The Minoan centre of Tyliisos most likely was dependent on the palace complex of Knossos, and its purpose was to control the strategic area between Central and Western Crete. It possibly regulated the economic activity in the wealthy area of Malevizi and the extensive region of Psiloritis, the latter being well-known for its livestock farming, and the timber and wool production. The town covered a fairly large area. Traces of houses of earlier periods can be seen scattered throughout the site. Three villas of this significant Minoan town were uncovered at the north of the present-day vil-

lage. Their architecture is similar to that of Knossos, and it is even considered more impressive compared to some palatial buildings (of the palace complex of Malia, for instance). The archaeological finds that were brought to light in the area are also considered remarkable. Amongst others, three large cauldrons, which are regarded as unique in the whole of Aegean, and a bronze figurine, the largest and finest of its kind, were unearthed. These finds have believed how strongly the trades were and probably was an important bronze working





Messara Plain

Messara Plain - is in southern central Crete in the south of the prefecture of Heraklion. It is the biggest plain in Crete and very important for the extensive agriculture that is produced there both now and around five thousand years ago. The name 'Mesara' comes from the Greek for 'between mountains.' Mesos – between, oros – mountains, which becomes Mesaoria or the modern word, Mesara. In the north are the southern foothills of the Psiloritis or Ida mountain range and in the south are the Asterousian mountains between the Mesara and the Libyan Sea. The coastline of the Mesara faces west almost from Agia Galini in the north to Matala in the south. Between the two is one of the most perfect and extensive beaches in Crete.





Rouva gorge

Rouva gorge – This gorge is the most important gorge of Psiloritis and central Crete. It has different formations and cliffs with natural beauty. It has a total length of 4 km and ideal for activities such as hiking, mountaineering, rock climbing and observation of wildlife. Unfortunately a beautiful part of the forest of Rouvas, near the south entrance of the Gorge was destroyed by a major fire in 1994.



Tsoutsouras Gorge

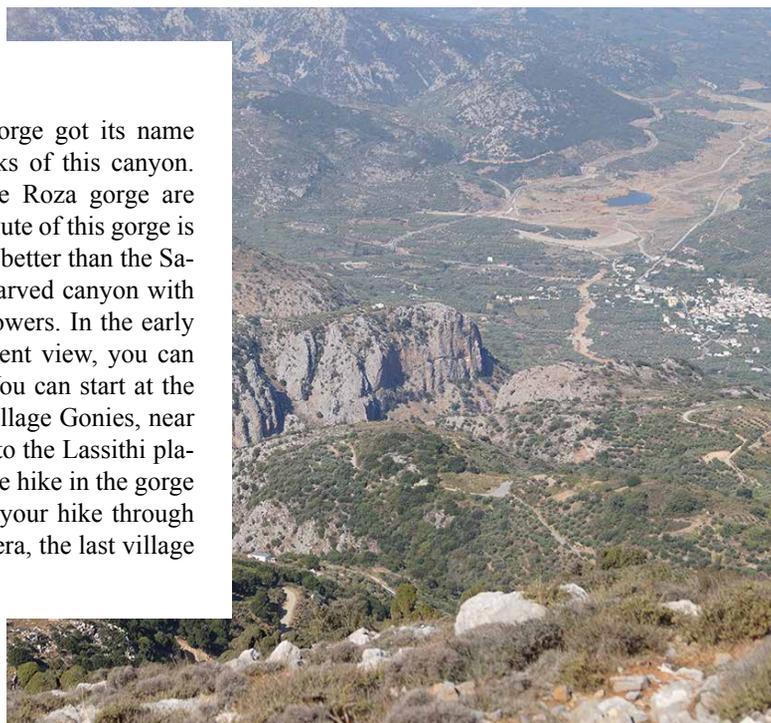
Tsoutsouras Gorge - originates in the village of the same name, is one of the many inaccessible canyons in the area. The gorge begins at Larnaka, its but recommended for beginners climbers. Canyon length of a little over 1.5 km, it is the ideal place for canoeing. The only way to access some places the gorge - only with a special climbing equipment, one of the

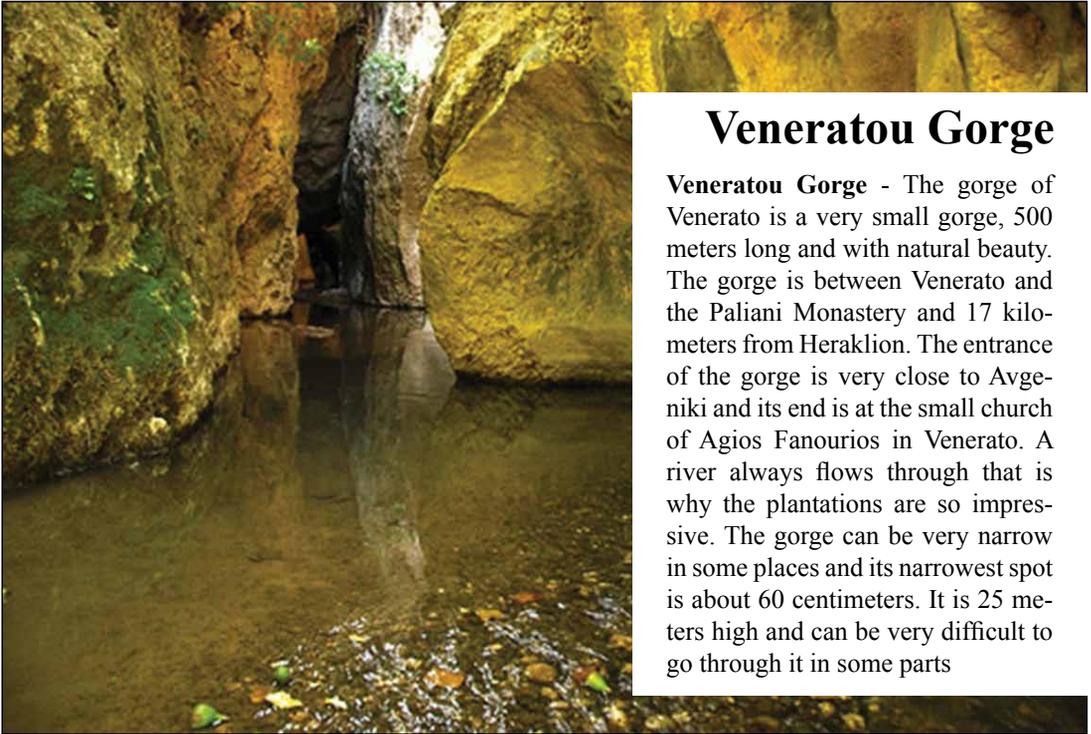


largest runs of about 30 meters. Most extreme places located at the exit of the gorge and the most beautiful scenery. In the winter it is filled with water, which makes it more exciting. A little further to the west is a small gorge Trulli. The locals call it Little Tsoustouras. Trulli has also attracted the attention of many fans of the canyons.

Roza Gorge

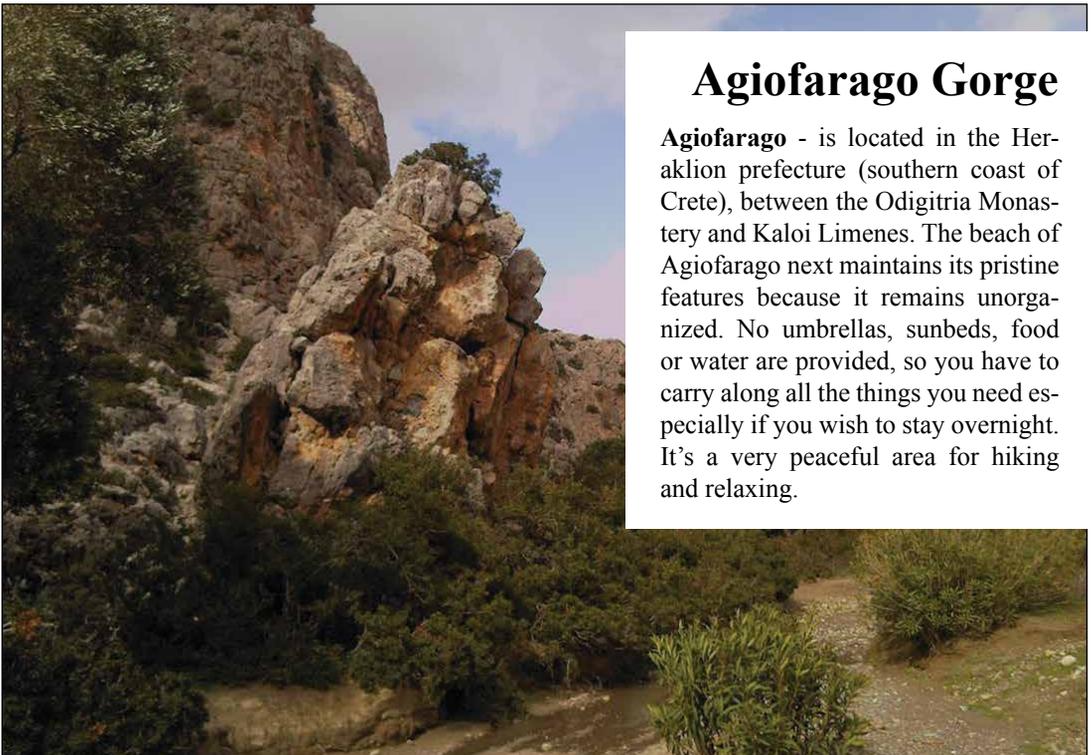
Roza gorge - The Rozas gorge got its name from the colours of the rocks of this canyon. The impressive rocks of the Roza gorge are rose and red. The downhill route of this gorge is spectacular, the view is even better than the Samaria gorge. It is a deeply carved canyon with many different plants and flowers. In the early morning you have an excellent view, you can even see the sea far away. You can start at the bottom of the gorge in the village Gonies, near Mohos and Avdou (the road to the Lassithi plateau). From Gonies begins the hike in the gorge upwards. You can also start your hike through the gorge from the village Kera, the last village before the Lassithi plateau.





Veneratou Gorge

Veneratou Gorge - The gorge of Venerato is a very small gorge, 500 meters long and with natural beauty. The gorge is between Venerato and the Paliani Monastery and 17 kilometers from Heraklion. The entrance of the gorge is very close to Avgeniki and its end is at the small church of Agios Fanourios in Venerato. A river always flows through that is why the plantations are so impressive. The gorge can be very narrow in some places and its narrowest spot is about 60 centimeters. It is 25 meters high and can be very difficult to go through it in some parts



Agiofarago Gorge

Agiofarago - is located in the Heraklion prefecture (southern coast of Crete), between the Odigitria Monastery and Kaloi Limenes. The beach of Agiofarago next maintains its pristine features because it remains unorganized. No umbrellas, sunbeds, food or water are provided, so you have to carry along all the things you need especially if you wish to stay overnight. It's a very peaceful area for hiking and relaxing.



Eileithya Cave

Eileithya cave - Cave Eileithya located 7 km east of Heraklion and 1 km to the south-east of the village Amnisos. The cave is formed on the east side of the valley of Karteros, next to the old road leading to the settlements and Amnisos Episkopi. The cave entrance is located near the old fig tree. Eileithya was discovered not so long ago, in the 20th century. Locals also call it Neraidospilios, which means “cave fairy.” The cave was named after the goddess Ei-

leithya, who was believed to bring good gifts to locals grapes, honey, oil, milk and wool. The length of the cave is 9-12 meters, a width of 3-4 meters. Near the entrance to the cave is a huge stone almost a meter in height and 2.2 meters in diameter. Archaeological excavations indicate that the cave served as an object of worship since the Neolithic era. The cave entrance is closed, there can only be reached with a tour group or with the permission of locals maintaining the area.

Ag.Fotini Cave

Agia Fotini cave - is located on the mountain Luludaki 7 km south of the village Avdou. The village has a sign that indicates the direction to the cave. For Agia Fotini is a small dirt road, turning then to the steep mountain trail. It is necessary to be extremely careful, because the entrance to the cave is located at an altitude of 760 meters. Permitted for visits of the cave has a length of 40 me-



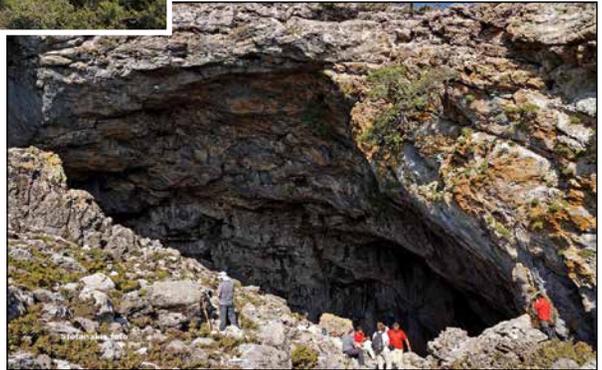
ters and up to 2 meters in width. Maximum ceiling height - about 20 meters, the minimum - 5 meters. It is known that the total length of the paths is around 700 meters. At the entrance there is a shrine and, after 12m there is an underground cavity. From there, a narrow corridor starts, which is an old riverbed, leading to the last room of the cave. This room is used as a church dedicated to Agia Fotini. According to legend, the cave was named after St. Fotini, which for a long time sought refuge in order to devote herself to God, but could not find it. Then the Virgin Mary appeared and created the rock cave especially for St. Fotini, and had the opportunity to serve and pray to the Lord. Now traditionally many women come to this cave.

Kamares Cave

Kamares Cave - Kamares Cave is located on the southern slope of Mount Ida (Psiloritis) at around 1524 meters. A great part of it is through a wooded area with 3-4 springs of water and rewarding views to Messara plains and Libyan Sea; if the weather is good then you may see the island of Gavdos far into the sea. The first excavations

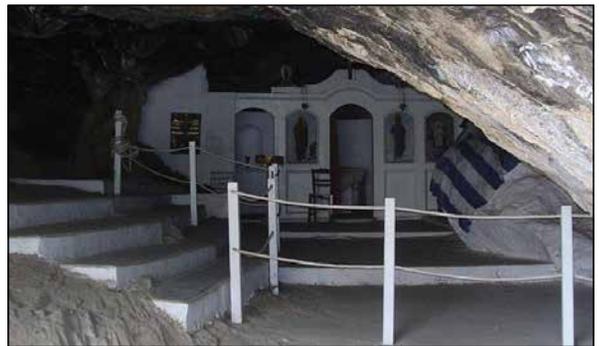


in the cave began in 1913. Archaeologists have discovered thousands of items of ceramics: These were vases, amphorae, and bowls. The pieces of pottery found here are very thin and delicate decorated with bright colours on a black background. They are dated back at 1700 BC and you can see them in Iraklion Archaeological Museum.



Milatos Cave

Milatos Cave – this cave is located 3 km north-east of the village of Milatos. To reach the cave, you need to travel 2.5 km to the east of the village and then walk up the hill on a dirt trail 10-15 minutes. The cave is open, always open to visitors, but in order to visit it may need a lantern. Cave Milatos associated with many tragic stories. During the occupation of the Turks there were a lot of locals hidden there. Milatos and many nearby caves were bombed and many were killed attempting to avoid the attacks. Cave Milatos has 8 inputs, the main entrance about 9 meters high and 2 meters wide. To the right of the main entrance the St. Thomas Church was built.





Saint Minas Church

Agias Minas is the patron saint of Iraklio, the capital of modern Crete. In 1862 the Turkish Pasha consented to the erection of this cathedral. In 1895 the construction works were over with the help of students and school children. It is believed that Saint Minas endowes the citizens of Iraklio with his protection for their fate and courage.



Saint Titus Church

The Byzantine church dedicated to **Saint Titus** was built in 961 in Khandak (modern Iraklion). The building comprises different architectural elements of Eastern and Western origin. In 1872 the church was rebuilt on the former basement. There is a shrine with the head of Saint Titus kept in the church. This Saint was the first Cretan bishop and Christian preacher.



Agarathos Monastery

Moni Agarathos - a monastery dedicated to Virgin Mary and located on a rocky hill between the villages and Sgourokefali Sabas, 23 km. From Heraklion. The age of the monastery is unknown but this is one of the oldest monasteries in Crete and might have been built in the years of the 2nd Byzantine period. It was originally a small monastery that belonged to the old Cretan family Kallergi which then developed with the help of a series of important abbots. Sightseeing of the monastery include the surviving parts of the old monastery, the church with icons of Cretan saints and the famous “Rogdia of Agarathos”.





St. Apanosifi Monastery

The **Holy Monastery of St. George Apanosifi or Epanosifi** is located approximately in the center of Heraklion and of Crete in general. It is the largest monastery in Crete in number of monks and not only registered. It was built during the last years of Venetian and acquired such a reputation that the next few years became one of the largest pilgrimages in Crete. The exact time of the founding of the monastery is unknown but it is said about in the middle or at the end of the 17th century.



Keras Kardiotissas Monastery



Moni Keras Kardiotissas -one of the many Orthodox monasteries of Crete. The exact date of founding could not be established, but the first signs appeared on the slopes of Dikti about the 10th - 11th centuries. Its name comes from the name of its capital icons - Panagias Tis Kardias,

which literally means “from the heart of the Virgin Mary.” Initially Kardiotissa Kera was a male monastery, but the constant war of the Turkish occupation reduced the male population of Crete, which then became a nunnery. It is a very peaceful monastery among the gorges and cliffs. From the walls of the monastery a magnificent view the plain Lagada.

Vrontisi Monastery

Moni Vrontisi - The famous monastery Vrontisi is located on the picturesque slopes of Mount Psiloritis. In Greek, the word “frontis” means “care”. In the past years it had a fortress architecture, but the included wall has been demolished. The geographical location offers panoramic views of the Messara and Asterousia mountains. The monastery church is dedicated to St. Anthony and the Apostle Thomas. The church perhaps was built in two different periods.



Pantanasa Monastery

Pandanassa Monastery – is located near the village Rogdia about 12 km from Heraklion. It is a new monastery dedicated to the Nativity of Mary. It was founded by bishop Nikolaos Xenos but unfortunately he died and could not fulfill his dreams completing the whole complex to create nursery homes, kindergarten, and orphanage homes.



Koudouma Monastery

Moni Koudouma - The Koudoumas, or the Koudoumas Monastery is located in southern Crete, on the south coast of Heraklion. It is dedicated to Virgin Mary and celebrates on every 15th August where many people reach the monastery to visit the day before and stay overnight in hostels and on the beach. Another big celebration in Koudoumas Monastery is on 10th July, they honor Saints Eumenios and Parthenius, the monks who built the monastery in the 19th century.



Zaros Lake

Zaros- West of Heraklion, in a small valley, lies the village of Zaros with its famous lake which is created by waters that run from the springs of Votomos. It is a particularly attractive, refreshingly village famous for its spring water, which are now bottled



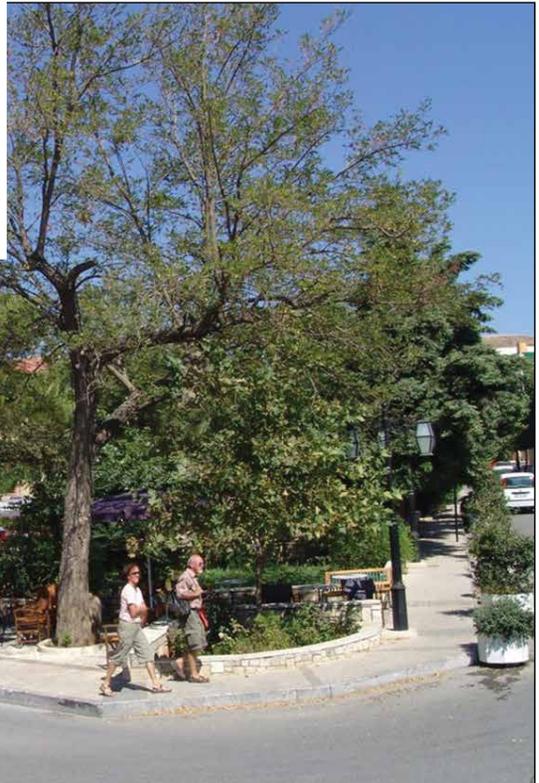
and sold all over Crete. Various excavations in the region indicate that the Minoans and the Romans settled here, lured by the abundant supply of fresh water. This spring water supplied the great Roman capital of as well. Around the lake there is a recreational area with tables and benches where you can relax and enjoy the environment.

Archanes

Archanes – is a big village located not far from Heraklion and built on the slopes of a low hill in a green area and has retained its name for thousands of years. The beauty of Archanes was acknowledged by the EEC, bestowing it the title “Total and sustainable development of excellent quality”. Not only can the visitor enjoy the beautiful Byzantine churches but you can visit the museum of agricultural history, the Agia Irini gorge where the Venetian



had constructed by Morozini, intended for the water supply of Heraklion, and finally the museum of natural history at the ecological and Archaeological Park at ‘Yiouchta’. A walk through the head village will give one the opportunity to admire the architecture.

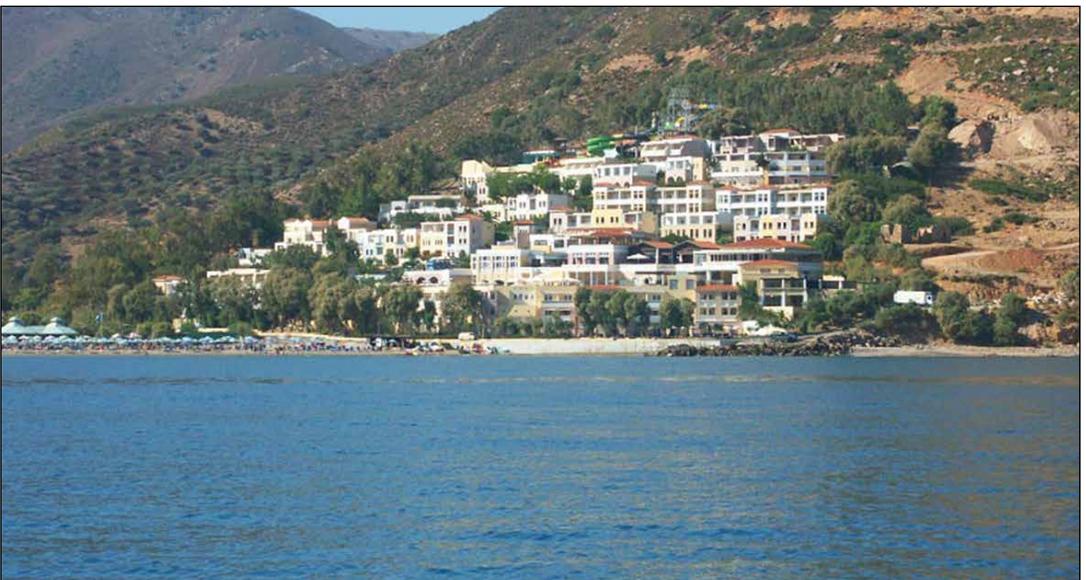


Fodele

Fodele – a village between Heraklion and Rethymnon, about 27 km west of Heraklion or 50 km east of Rethymnon. It is close to Agia Pelagia, the popular tourist resort on the north coast of Heraklion prefecture. Fodele is very green and a very pretty park next to the main square of Fodele

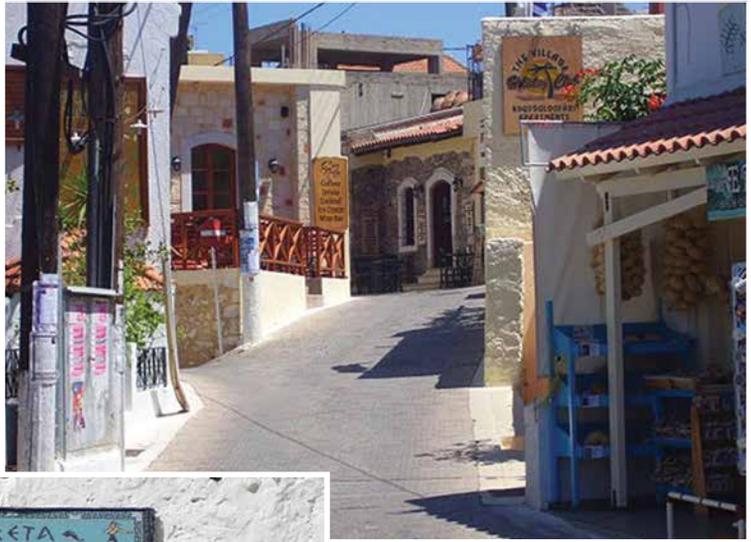


offers shade and benches where you can relax as well as many tavernas to enjoy your meal. Fodele an area well known for good oranges and lemons. During the sunny days of the winter and spring, Fodele is a popular destination for the people of Heraklion and nearby villages for Sunday lunch in the many tavernas there.



Koutouloufari

Koutouloufari – an authentic traditional village with Cretan architecture style, small individual houses and narrow paved streets, situated 29 km east of Heraklion and less than 1,000 meters from coastal Hersonissos. In Koutouloufari you will find old stone houses with



arches, arched doorways and inner courtyards roofed with vines offering shade and grapes in summer. You can stroll through the paved streets or take the road down to Hersonissos through the hills covered with olive trees. You will find many restaurants in Koutouloufari offering Greek and international cooking.





Thrapsano

Thrapsano village- is located in the Heraklion prefecture, some 30 km south-east of Heraklion. Thrapsano is famous for its pottery and particularly with the crafting of large-sized ceramic storage jars called pitharia, a basic storage facility in Crete from the Minoan era to this very day. The name Thrapsano also relates to pottery and derives most probably from the verbs “thravo” (break) and “psino” (bake), since many vessels broke during the baking process. There are many pottery workshops where you can watch the traditional art of pottery and choose from the biggest perhaps variety of utensils. Also there you can visit the church of Panagia Pigadiotissa (Holy Mother of the well) with its miraculous well. According to a myth, when some people fell into the well it miraculously overflowed, spilling them out and thus saving them from drowning. During the middle of July, you can visit Thrapsano during the 3 day events held in honor of the potters every year (17-19th July).





Mohos

Mohos – is a big village near Hersonissos and 40 km from Heraklion. It is full of olive groves and vineyards and the inhabitants in olive growing and viticulture. The village is mountainous and has its roots back in the second Byzantine period. In the village of Mochos itself, you can find houses and traditional alleys which date back to the 16th century. Famous churches with old byzantine icons such as Archangel Michael, Virgin Mary (the old central church of the village, Saint George, Saint Panteleimon and “Evangelismos of Theotokos”. A major celebration honouring Mary, mother of Jesus is held in the central square of the village and the church each year on 14th/15th August. Everyone is welcome and there is traditional Cretan music, dancing, excellent local wine and delicious traditional food.



Kراسi

Kراسi - In the village square of Kراسi, near Malia, there are three plane trees, the trademarks of the village. The most important of them is the platanus in the center of the square, which is considered to be the oldest and most majestic trees in Crete. Next to the tree there are two springs that have crystal clear water throughout the year. Very peaceful and fascinating to visit.



Sisi

Sisi – a village near Malia 40 km from Heraklion, a well balanced place between sea and mountains. The sea is warm and calm and there are many small, clean and romantic beaches such as Boukos and Avlaki. In the village you will enjoy nature going through the beautiful roads, to enjoy the Cretan way of life and the hospitality there is amazing. It offers all types of accommodation mostly with family character. Also near there are the traditional villages Vrahasi and Epano Sisi.

Mires

Mires is a town in the prefecture of Heraklion with population about over with 5.000. The distance from Heraklion is approximately 53 km. Its position is in the plain of Messara. The people involved in the trade, business, but more in agriculture. In the town are the churches of Saint George, Saint Raphael, Saint Nektarios, Saint Paraskevi and Saint Constantine.





Matala beach

Matala - a small village south of Crete not near the sea and beautiful beach. Every year they get the highest score of the European Blue Flag Association. In addition, the village is located in close proximity to the archaeological parks such as Agia Triada and Phaistos Palace. However, Matala and has its own history. Many have heard that once was here for many years hippies stayed in the area in caves from the early 60's. That's how it's so popular. Today the flower children did not stay longer in Matala, but have given way to thousands of tourists from around the world who come here to see a legendary place to taste something of the charm of the past.



Ammoudara beach

Ammoudara – is a long fine beach located 5 km from the capital Heraklion. It has soft golden sand and crystal – clear waters. You will find every type of accommodation, tavernas, bars, different shops and many other facilities. Ammoudara has been awarded with the EU Blue flag for the cleanliness and organization.



Karteros beach

Karteros is located near the beach of Ammissos and 8 km east of Heraklion Town. It is a nicely organized beach with golden sand and clean waters. Various hotels, apartments for rent, taverns and bars can be found in the area. The beach of Karteros has been awarded by the EU Blue Flag. It is a nice place for fishing and swimming as well.



Ag. Pelagia beach

Agia Pelagia – located in a cozy cove 22 kilometers north-west of Heraklion. On the seafront you will find many restaurants, bars and supermarket. This place is ideal for relaxing to spend your holidays there. Also in Agia Pelagia are many breathtaking landscapes, little beaches around and special place for diving. In the area you can find a variety of comfortable apartments and hotels. The settlement also has luxury hotels who have their own private beaches.



Lygaria beach

Lygaria – a nice bay next to Agia Pelagia well protected by high winds. A beautiful beach with sand and calm waters. Near the ruins of the old monastery of Panagia Ligariani where monks used to live is where the region got its name from. It is well organized with umbrellas, sunbeds and there are a few rocks on shore but the west part is sandy. There are tavernas bars and other facilities such as diving clubs and water sports.



Pantanassa beach

Pantanassa beach is located 16 km west of Heraklion town near the port of Pantanassa. It is a beach with pebbles and shingle with very few people. The beach is not organized at all and there are no chairs or umbrellas. By the beach in Port Pantanassas you can find some taverns and cafes.



Fodele beach

Fodele beach – is well known family place with a sandy beach 27km west of Heraklion. It is very close to Agia Pelagia and Bali. You will find there on the coast rooms and fish taverns. It is protected by winds except some days in August when the meltemia winds are high. Fodele is also the birthplace of the famous painter El Greco where the house he was born in the village is now today a museum.



Paleokastro beach

Paleokastro of the Malevizi municipality is a very interesting area, about 8 kilometers from Heraklion that combines the beach with the history and the nature. The beach has rocks and is deep while the beach is pebbly. Another advantage of the beach is that it is protected by the northern winds. The ruins of the Venetian fortress are in the eastern side of the beach.



Helidoni beach

Helidoni beach – or Swallow beach where helidonia birds make their nests, northeast of Paleokastro, a small beautiful magic bay. A beach close to Heraklion with clear waters and very protected from high winds. An ideal place to relax and all you hear are the swallow bird tweeting away with the sound of the sea.



Psaromoura beach

Psaromoura (Agia Pelagia) – a small beach with sand and pebbles. A popular beach for locals with umbrellas and sunbeds, tavernas and café bars on shore. A quiet and comfortable place to relax.



Mononaftis beach

Mononaftis (Agia Pelagia) – a village also near Agia Pelagia which many tourists visit every year. Mononaftis comes from the name “Lonely Sailor”. It is a well organized beach with umbrellas, sunbeds and also used for diving because of the many varieties of sea life in its deep waters such as eels, octopus, scorpion fish and shells.



Kokkini Hani beach

Kokkini Hani - The resort village of Kokkini Hani is located 13km east of the capital of Crete, Heraklion. In the southern part of the village there are ancient Minoan villas, which are open to people who have an interest of historical and cultural values. Kokkini Hani is not a major tourist destination as Hersonissos and Malia but in the village there is a fully-equipped beach and plenty of traditional taverns, clubs and guest houses. Of course the beaches in the village are very clean, and there are several large supermarkets close to the coast, a large number of flats, apartments and hotels.



Gouves beach

Gouves – a popular holiday resort with a fine sandy beach 16km east of Heraklion. There are many bars, clubs and tavernas where you can enjoy your relaxing holiday. It is also awarded with the Blue flag.



Hersonissos beach

Hersonissos - one of the most popular tourist resorts on the island of Crete, located 28 kilometers east of Heraklion. In Hersonissos you can find anything you want: water parks, excellent beautiful beaches, many taverns and restaurants and archaeological sites. In the city there are also nightly entertainment such as dance clubs, which attracts many young tourists. Hersonissos since ancient times has developed very quickly. From the beginning, the city was a small fishing village, but with the development of tourism Hersonissos turned into a full-fledged city with developed infrastructure and a large fishing port. On the western side of the city, one kilometer from the harbor, is a beautiful church of St. George, which is of interest to many tourists. Immediately begins a series of colored beautiful beaches along the coast and there are numerous restaurants, cafes and hotels. To the east of the bay of Hersonissos, you can see the hill Kastri. Daily from the port of Hersonissos excursion boats depart to the island of Dia.



Analipsi beach

Analipsi – a sandy beach between Gouves and Chersonissos. There are many water sport facilities and ideal place for surfers because of the high winds. It is awarded nearly every year with the Blue flag. Analipsi has developed rapidly and you can reach the area with public buses running regularly.



Malia beach

Malia - one of the most popular tourist resorts of Crete. The city is located just 35 kilometers east of Heraklion, on the outskirts where the locals grow the most delicious bananas on the island. Many years ago, Malia was a small village with several families involved in agriculture. It has become a major tourist center of the village over the past few years. Malia is famous for the lively club life, the possibility of active recreation and extreme sports. In the center of the village it is crossed by two main roads. One of them leads from the old center of the coast, there are also plenty of taverns, restaurants and cafes. The second road are the main elements of infrastructure: banks, hotels, pharmacies and shops. Malia is famous for a number of archaeological finds and excavations that are carried out until now. In 1700 BC, the famous Malian palace was built in this area, which was partially destroyed in 1450 BC. On the central square of the village is the oldest oak tree in the area.

Stalida – is a beautiful cove located 33km east of Heraklion. It is a well known tourist resort with beautiful sand, crystal waters, amazing gardens. You will find all kinds of accommodations, tavernas, bars and different types of shops.



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Keratokampos beach

Keratokampos – a village located 70km south of Heraklion, a large bay with soft sand and very clean waters. Always protected by summer strong winds. You will find a few traditional tavernas and small hotels on the beach. It can be reached through a dirt road from Kato Viannos from Heraklion to Myrtos.



Psari Forada beach

Psari Forada a quiet beach located 90km south of Heraklion more for a family resort. It is a bay not very affected by strong winds. A very relaxing place for quiet and calm holidays



Dermatos beach

Dermatos – a long beach near Tsoutsouras and Keratokampos located 90 km west of Heraklion. It is not very developed in tourism but it is a beautiful and calm place to relax with not many people. There are no hotels or tavernas but there are many trees on shore providing shade to visitors.



Tsoutsouras beach

Tsoutsouras - is located in village, 63 km from Heraklion. Behind the beach is the impressive gorge Mindris. The area is well organized and developed with hotels, restaurants and entertainment. It is ideal for a relaxing holidays on a quite beach with a few umbrellas and several tamarisk trees around. Tsoutsouras is the right place for exploring the other beaches surrounded. Certainly it is believed by doctors that swimming in Tsoutsouras is the best place for those who have orthopedic and muscular problems because of high salt and iodine.



Treis Ekklesies beach

Treis Ekklesies (meaning three churches) can be reached through the dirt road from Paranimfi village 65 km south of Heraklion. It is not organized but at the village with clean waters is just fascinating. The beach is famous for family and natural environment. You will also find there some tavernas and rooms to rent.



Tertsa beach

Tertsa located between Myrtilos and Psari Forada 88km south-east of Heraklion. A sandy coast with a few pebbles, an ideal place for relaxing. There are no umbrellas and sunbeds. Tertsa is surrounded by mountains and traditional villages where you can discover the real life of Crete.



Lendas beach

Lendas - a small coastal village 73 kilometers south east of Heraklion, in the south of Crete. The name Lendas comes from the word lion (liondas), because from high up the peninsula looks shaped like a lion. Lendas is an ancient Greek and Roman site, and has Byzantine churches and some excavations that you can visit. It's a quiet little village filled with flowers, friendly people, and there are plenty of taverna's and a supermarket.



Trafoulas beach

Trafoulas or Dragon Bay is located 4km east of Lendas and 69km south of Heraklion. It is a completely isolated beach of south Crete, which is formed at the exit of a small canyon on the Cape Trafoulas or Trahilas. According to the legend, this beach was visited by King Minos and his men, while the neighbouring Loutra beach was the bathing beach of Minos's wife, Pasiphae, and her female followers.



Maridaki beach

Maridaki beach - The coastal settlement of Maridaki is about 65 kilometers from Heraklion and behind the Asterousia Mountains. The small village is built at the end of the imposing gorge of Achentrias. There are springs with drinking water in Maridaki that pass through the Asterousia Mountains and end up in a brook that goes down to the beach. Administratively the area belongs to the Archanes-Asterousia Municipality and to the Archanes local community.



Ag. Nikitas beach

Ag. Nikitas beach - is located 65km south of Heraklion, on the east side of the wild Asterousia Mountains. The best way to get there is to drive in the rugged dirt road that starts from the village Ahendrias and ends at the Monastery of St. Nikitas after 15km. The fascinating route runs along steep cliffs and wild sharp rocks, a characteristic landscape of the Asterousia Mountains. Absolutely fascinating beach and clean waters.



Martsalo beach

Martsalo beach - is a pebble beach of unique beauty with crystal clear waters and palm trees. There you can reach through Martaliotikou gorge, hike about 30-40 minutes, or by boat from Matala, Agia Galini and Kokkinos Pyrgos. In the gorge, there is the church of the Virgin Mary, erected in the early years of Christianity. Through the gorge to reach the beach, you will see the magical beauty of the landscape.



Kommos beach

Kommos (or Komos) is located 66km southwest of Heraklion, just 2km north of Matala and close to the seaside of Kalamaki. It is the southernmost and the most isolated part of the huge beachfront of Mesara Bay. Kommos was once the port of Festos, so you can still see the ruins of the town, near the beach. You can access Kommos by driving in the road heading to Matala, till you see a sign to Kommos.



Kokkinos Pyrgos beach

Kokkinos Pyrgos a beach close to Tympaki village, a small sandy beach with regular strong winds known as meltemia. A quiet area with a few tavernas and rooms to rent. Next to the beach a small port for fishing boats.



Kalamaki beach

Kalamaki – this beautiful beach is located 67km south-west from Heraklion close to Tympaki and Mires. It is well organized with accommodation close to the beach. There are tavernas on the beach which offer mainly fresh fish. At times there are strong winds but it is a very fascinating and comfortable place to visit and relax.



Agiofarago beach

Agiofarago – is a wonderful beach located 80km from Heraklion close to the village Kali Limenes at the end of the small gorge Agiofarago. There are no facilities so you need to take any necessary with you. The closest facilities you will find in Kali Limenes. This beach is very popular for camping and nudism although it is not official. To reach there is by boat from Kali Limenes or walking along the gorge.



Kali Limenes beach

Kali Limenes - located south of Crete in Heraklion about 80 km from the city, and 25 km from Mires Heraklion. This small, traditional village has one of the most beautiful beaches of Crete. Because the area is often blowing winds, the beach at Limenes is the only one that gives visitors the opportunity to swim calmly and enjoy a swim, as it is well hidden from winds. The coast is pebble and the blue waters are clean. In Limenes you can find a few rooms and traditional taverns. Very close to Limenes beach, there are other beautiful beaches like Martsalo beach, Agiofarango beach, the Vathi and others.



Chrisostomos beach

Chrisostomos is a small touristy village with a beach; it occupied the site of ancient Lasia, one of the largest ports serving Gortyn. Here you can find rent-rooms and tavernas. The beach fronts the village: it has small pebbles and clear water, but remains undisturbed by the strong winds that blow locally. If in Chrysotomos, you may see the ruins of the early Christian church of Aghios Ioannis Chrysostomos (St John the Golden-Tongued = Eloquent) still surviving, and whence the village derives its name.



Platia Peramata beach

Platia Peramata settlement lies at the mouth of a valley that runs from the village Antiskari, and between Kaloi Limenes and Lenta. The beach right in front of the settlement has deep, very clear water, small pebbles and is used as a harbour. There is no organized infrastructure, but on all sides are a number of tavernas and a few rent-rooms.

Matala Beach Festival

Matala Beach Festival is organized to keep the myth of Matala alive!

A unique festival on the sandy beach beneath the caves made famous during the hippie era of the 1960s and '70s. Matala attracted international attention in the early 70s when Joni Mitchell released her critically acclaimed album 'Blue', which detailed her experiences whilst living in the caves with the young hippie travellers, enjoying the tranquility of Matala Beach.

For three days popular Greek and foreign artists and thousands of visitors unite in a grand music feast. The three concert stages of the festival will host very popular artists and groups.

The festival also features parallel events (performances, workshops, street painting, ect) and an open air bazaar.



Houdetsi Music Festival

Houdetsi Music Festival is a 4-day celebration of music, dance, food and art that takes place in the little village of Houdetsi which is located 23 km due south of Heraklion, on the island of Crete.

The Houdetsi Music Festival succeeds in highlighting the magic of the meeting and uniting of different musical worlds, combining them harmoniously with local colors, images, scents, and tastes in a celebration of hospitality, extended unconditionally by the local people to all who wish to participate in this unique festival.



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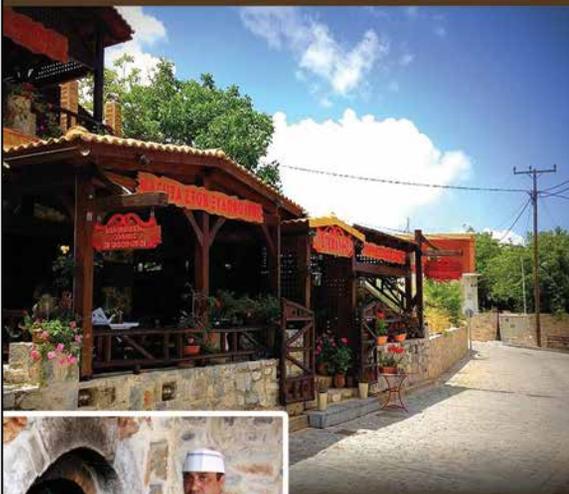
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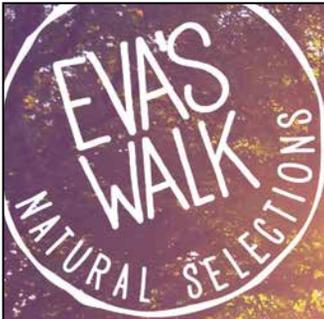
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Balos Beach Chania



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Sightseeings in Chania



1. Venetian Harbour



2. Venetian Shipyards or Arsenal



3. Lighthouse



4. Koum Kapi



5. Archaeological Museum



6. Naval Museum



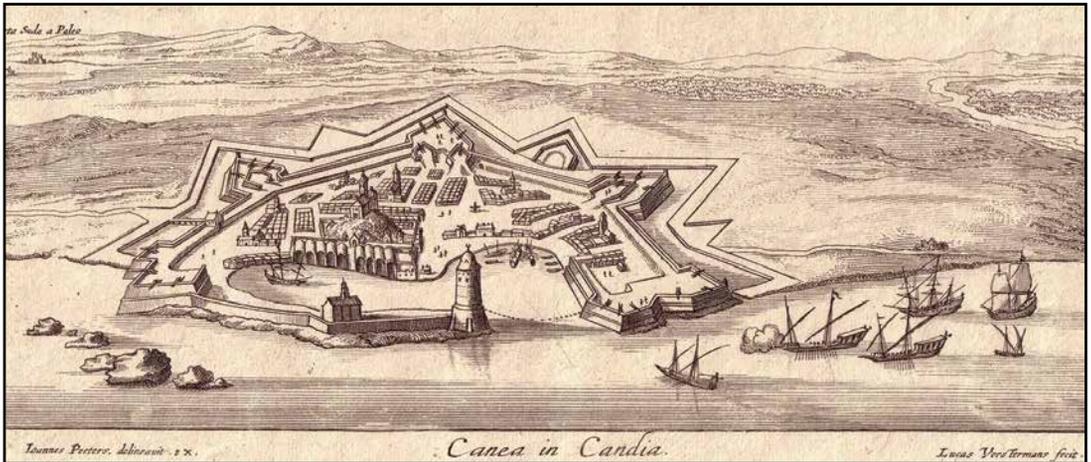
7. Splantzia



8. Municipal Market



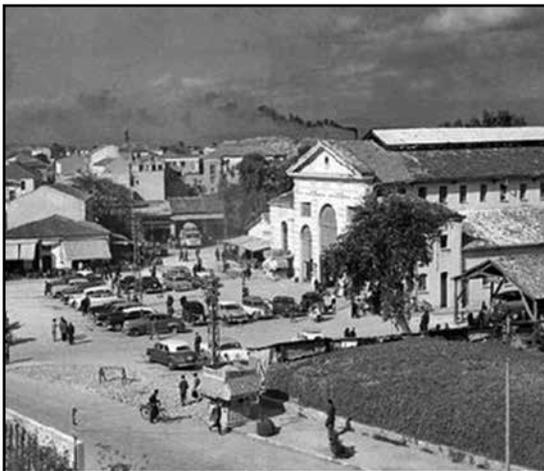
9. Municipal Garden



History of Chania

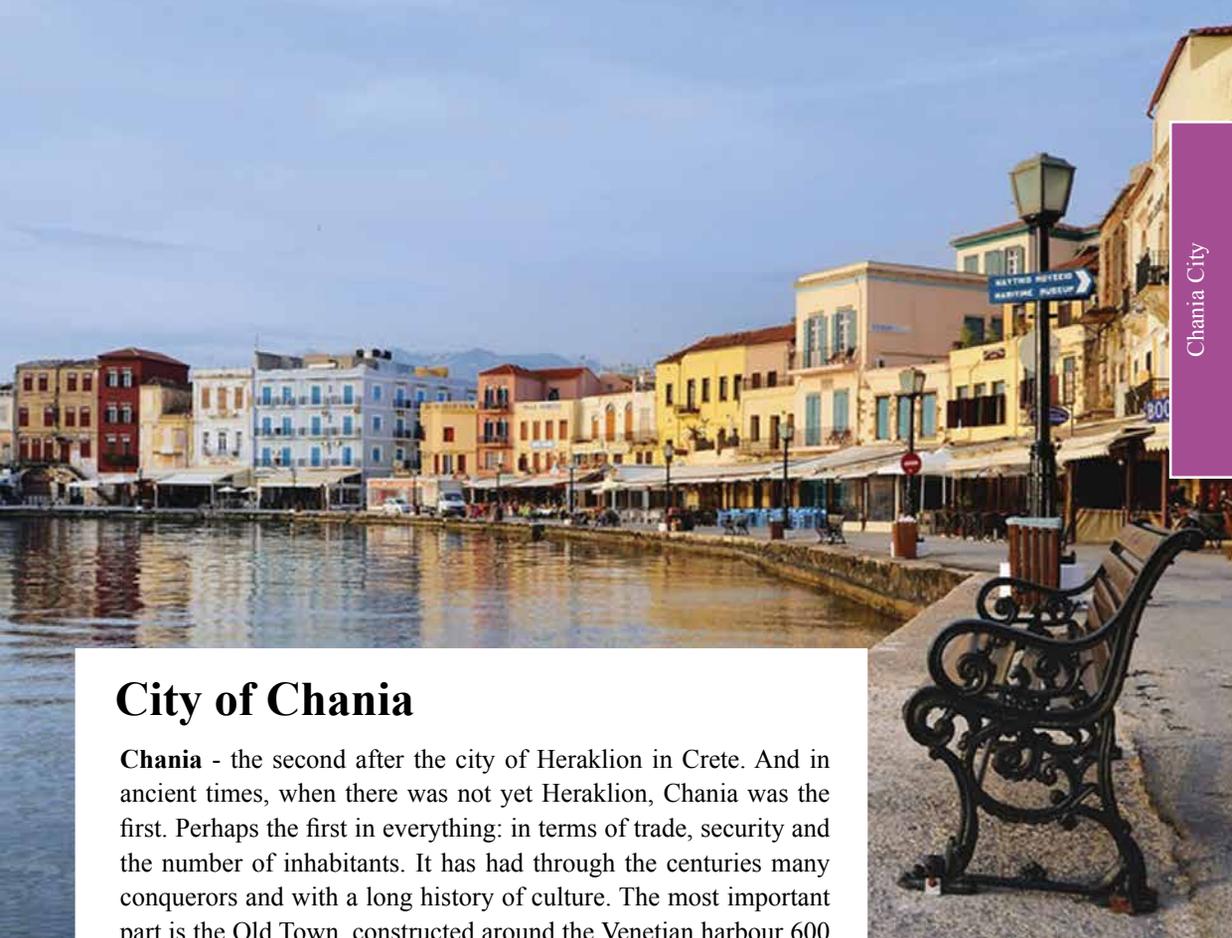
Chania is the most important town of western Crete, built in the eastern cove of Cydonia Bay, the site of ancient Cydonia. The city existed until the end of the Byzantine period, when it was destroyed by the Saracens. After when the Arabs had left the area, it was rebuilt, but remained a small and well preserved town. But because of the fortified position and because of the events by the Saracens, the Byzantines built a fortress on the hill named Kastelli. The Venetians, who were out the area they built and populated the city in 1252. First settled in Byzantine Kastelli, build-

ing their Metropolis Santa Maria, the Palace of (prefector) and the houses of the officers, while in the foot of the hill began to form the first groups of people with various professions. They were then destroyed in 1266. Indeed the city needed to be protected so the feudal lords demanded from the Venice central authority to build a walled enclosure that includes the entire city, as it had developed until then. It was decided in 1336 and work began immediately, to be completed within 20 years. These were the first walls of La Canea, namely Chania.



Municipal Market of Chania

The Municipal Market of Chania is commonly known as the “Agora”. It was built between 1909 and 1913. It has a cruciform shape and space inside for a large number of shops. It was built on the site of a bastion of the Venetian fortification wall. This was dismantled to fill in the moat and created a space to build the market on. It is still an active market and houses shops selling vegetables, fish, meat, herbs and spices, Cretan products such as cheeses, olives, raki and more. In the summer



City of Chania

Chania - the second after the city of Heraklion in Crete. And in ancient times, when there was not yet Heraklion, Chania was the first. Perhaps the first in everything: in terms of trade, security and the number of inhabitants. It has had through the centuries many conquerors and with a long history of culture. The most important part is the Old Town, constructed around the Venetian harbour 600 years ago by the Venetians and the Turks. It is a very beautiful city, picturesque famous for its Venetian harbour, the old harbour and narrow streets. Ideal for shopping and romantic walks. Chania will astonish you with its museums, monasteries and buildings, like the Market of Chania. Visit the lots of clean and beautiful beaches like Falassarna, Elafonissi and Fragokastelo but also great gorges like Samaria, well known all over the world.





Firkas

On the northwest side of the entrance of the **port of Chania**, the **Venetians** built the Revellino del Porto, a fortification capable of preventing any possible hostile risk to the port. It is the fortress “**Firkas**” (the word means military unit). The fort retains the Turkish Bastion name. The construction began around the middle of the 16th century and was completed a few years before the fall of the city of Chania to the Turks in 1645.

Mosque of Chania

The **Kucjk Hassan Mosque** (or Mosque of the Janissaries) is the oldest Ottoman building in Crete. It was built in 1645 when the Turks captured Chania. The minaret was destroyed during the bombings of World War II. The building stopped functioning as a mosque in 1923. Since then the mosque was used for a variety of purposes (a café, a restaurant, a tourist office). In the past years it was renovated and has become a space for exhibitions.



Venizelos House

The ancestral **home of Eleftherios Venizelos**, one of the most popular Prime Minister of Greece in Halepa Chania was the roof of his life for more than thirty years, from 1880 until 1910 and later from 1927 to 1935.

Eleftherios Venizelos had strong feelings for this house. There he lived from youth, married, had two children and later his wife died. In this house he lived when the Revolution of



1897 broke out, from there went to Therisso 1905, returned there before going in Thessaloniki in 1916 for the Movement of National Defence. But after the failure of the 1935 movement, the house was gone. This house, where he lived almost half his life, had strong ties with his hometown and his family.

Venizelos Graves

Venizelos Graves - On the Akrotiri Peninsula in Chania, on the hill of Prophet Elias, one can find the Tomb of Venizelos. Eleftherios Venizelos had expressed his wish this site to be his last residence. He was one of the most popular prime minister in Greece. In 1936 this one grave was built.

Then in 1965 opposite the tomb of Eleftherios Venizelos the tomb of his son Sophocles Venizelos was built, who was also prime minister of Greece during the period 1943 to 1952. Just beside their graves, they built the Statue of Liberty. This is a statue built of stone, which symbolizes the Cretan struggles for freedom. The area is surrounded with a beautiful garden and park with seating.



Naval Museum

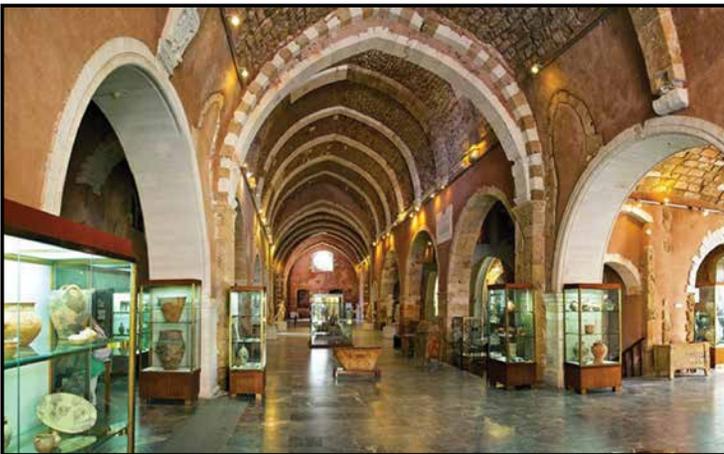
Naval Museum - is housed at the Venetian Firka fortress, placed at the entrance of the old harbour in Chania. This location has a historical importance, because on December, 1st, 1913, the Greek flag was raised there and signaled the unification of Crete with the Greek state. The initial idea behind the museum was to build a place that would depict the Greek naval tradition and especially the naval history of Crete. The first exhibition goes back from the Prehistoric times till the 6th century B.C.

and includes ship models and pictures representing naval battles from the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War. The following collection goes from the Byzantine to the post-Byzantine period.



Archaeological Museum

Archaeological Museum Chania – the museum was opened in 1963, at the moment it enters the top 20 archaeological museums in the world. Its exhibits the cultural history of Chania from the Neolithic until the Roman times. The exhibition is divided into two large sections: in the eastern sector are located the archaeological finds of the Late Neolithic and Bronze Age, in the western sector exhibits the ancient samples of the Iron Age. Collections include Minoan finds from the area of Chania, prehistoric caves, Minoan finds from different areas of Crete, archaeological objects from the tombs and graves, coins, jewelry (the Minoan and Venetian periods), sculpture, parchment letters, columns, mosaics. Archaeological Museum of Chania intended to promote the cultural history of the area and its demonstration in the various periodic exhibitions, educational programs and other cultural events in the museum.





Museum of Typography

Museum of Typography - is located in Chania, only 4 km from the city of Chania, in the Industry Park of Souda. It officially opened in May 2005,

and you will see fine printing presses and other machines, as well as tools and objects that present the development of typography from its birth till today. Also Rare books and newspapers, as well as precious lithographies. During the visit can everyone print using the old printing press.

Museum of National Resistance

Museum of National Resistance - is located in the village Theriso and includes rich photographic material from the period of the National Resistance of 1941-1945. The Museum includes weapons and other objects of fighters as well as clippings of newspapers of that period. It is the only museum of its kind in Crete and it is opened during the summertime of 2003.



Folklore Museum

Folklore Museum - is located at the center of the old city of Chania, in Halidon Street, next to the Catholic Church. It includes folklore and traditional exhibits that allow the visitor to see the way of life of older residents of island during the 18th and 19th century. Among



others, in the museum display a collection of tools, raw material and products of traditional home handcraft. There are also models of the workplaces of traditional professions, such as a cobbler's, tailors, and a rope- and basket-maker's. In addition, there are exhibits of various objects of daily use, musical instruments and furniture.

Municipal Art Gallery

Municipal Art Gallery of Chania - a unique place of culture that hosts works of painting, engraving and sculpture of Greek creators and local artists that are dated by the 18th century until today. All the collection of works in the Municipal Art Gallery of Chania was the donation of Lykourgos Manoyssakis during the end



of decade 1950. **The Art Gallery of Chania** also organizes and hosts exhibitions, speeches, meetings, educational programs and other activities, during the whole year.



Museum of Venizelos

Museum of Venizelos, one of the most popular and important Prime Ministers of Greece lived in Halepa in this house for more than thirty years from 1880 to 1910 and later for short periods from 1927 to 1935. Now it is a museum and exhibits his collection of personal objects, works of art, part of his library and particularly part of his life. Impressive is that until today this house is very much still in good condition.

Byzantine Museum



Byzantine Museum – this museum is situated in the old town which was before the church of San Salvatore. This Venetian church was built by Frangiskan monks in the 15th century A.D. This Byzantine Museum exhibits a large collection of items from Byzantine, post-Byzantine

and Venetian times that come from the excavated sites in the wider region of Chania. It is presented in different sections which include statues, coins from the Venetian and the Byzantine period, ceramic pieces, jewelry and various other interesting items.

Askyfou War Museum

Askyfou War Museum - In the mountainous village of Askyfou, 50 km south of Chania, there is an interesting war museum created by a local man. Georgios Hatzidakis, born in 1931, started to collect weaponry at the age of 14. He would collect anything he found in the village, mostly weapons from the Second World War, but as he was growing up, he was also interested to find



other weapons that dated from the Cretan Revolution of 1770 or even older. Later on, he created this war museum to exhibit his large collection. There you can see many interesting exhibits, including guns, revolvers, carbines, mortars, mortar shells, binoculars, military uniforms, even the helix of a German helicopter that fell in Crete during the Battle of Crete in May 1941. The oldest exhibit of the museum is a canon that dates from 1770, while the largest exhibit is a German bomb.



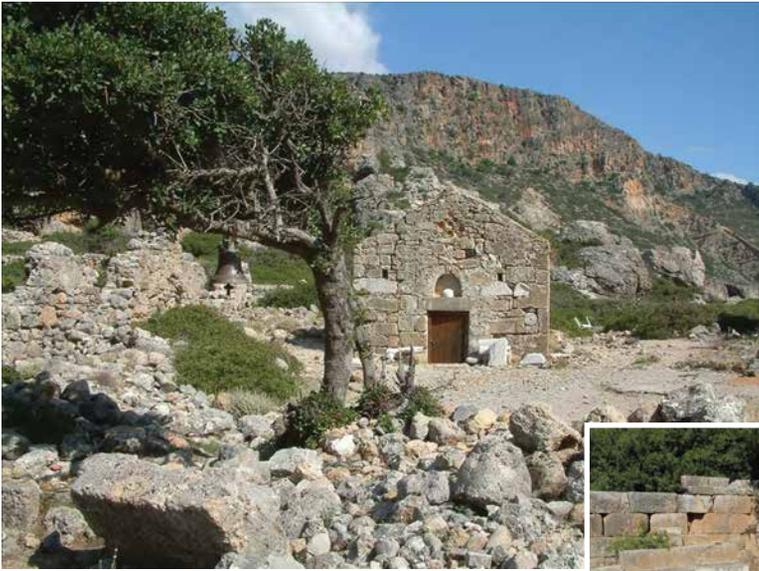
Frangokastello

Frangokastello - is in the area of Sfakia, on the south coast of west Crete, 13 km east of Chora Sfakion and west of Plakias. There stands one of the most beautiful Venetian fortresses, Frangokastello, built in 1371. The village is very much developed with nice beaches and clean waters with many visitors. Frangokastello took its name from the castle the Venetians built right on the beach in 1371, to protect themselves from pirates and from the constant revolts of the locals. The Venetians called it Castel Franco. The fortress consists of a big corners with square towers. Above the main entrance to the castle there is a sculptured slate with the Lion of Saint Mark and two Venetian feudal coat of arms. The last repairs to the castle were made by the Turks in 1866.



Lissos

Lissos - is an ancient city whose ruins are preserved between Paleochora (west) and Sougia (east) on the south coast of Chania. Lissos was Port Doric city Elyros, which was located near the present village Rodovani. Both Elyros and the



two ports, Sougia and Lissos flourished in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods and destroyed by the Saracen Arabs, who arrived in large numbers from Spain. Lissos was known for the famous Asklepio, where patients were cured in Crete because of the thermal waters. Excavations they have found the famous statues of Asklepios, the goddess Hygeia and Pluto, which are exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Chania, like the rest of the 20 statues that were found here by chance in 1957. In no other city in Crete there were many statues, except for Gortys, the capital of Crete by the Romans.

Aptera Fortress

Aptera Fortress - A new castle in relatively good condition overlooking the bay of Souda in Crete. It is on a hill 12 km east of Chania, near the ancient city of Aptera. It was built after the Cretan Revolution of 1866 to control the region of Apokorona and to support Itzadin fortress in controlling the strategically important bay of Souda. It was equipped with two towers was turned towards the west (it controlled the passage to Kerameia) and the other east (towards Kalyves). The first communicated with the fortress of Souda islet, while the second communicated with the fortress Intzedin and the towers of Kalives and Neo Chorio. After the Turks left Crete, Aptera Koules was used as a school for the village of Megala Horafia.



Kissamos Fortress

Kissamos Fortress – a fortress built by the Venetians. The first fort of Kastelli was built by the Genoese pirate Henry Pescatore on the site of the ancient Kissamos, in the early 13th century, and was one of the 15 forts fortified by the Genoese after 1204 AD. When the Venetians expelled Pescatore, the fortress fell into their possession. Then, they restored it and it became the defensive military center of the region. The shape of the fort was asymmetrical pentagon and, like all the Venetian fortresses, it included quartering areas, prisons, churches and a well.



Gramvousa Castle

At the eastern end of Crete, near the cape **Gramvousa** and the lagoon of Balos with exotic waters there are two uninhabited islands. The Wild and Imeri Gramvousa. The Imeri Gramvousa is famous for its beautiful beach, where this Venetian castle stands. The castle was built in 1579 to 1584, at a height of 137 meters above the excellent natural harbor, designed and supervised by Latino Orsini. Its shape is irregular three-sided fort with walls and bastions on three sides, while from the north is protected from the rocky cliffs.



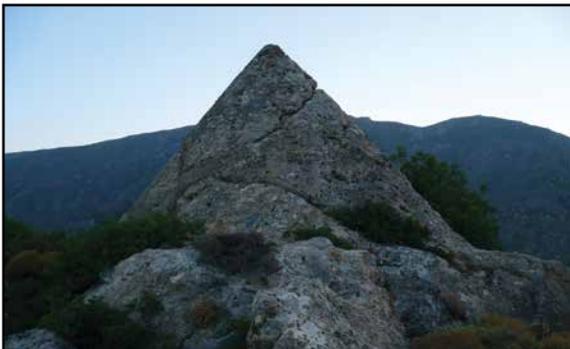


Fort of Itzedin

Fort of Itzedin - The Byzantine Empire was followed by the Turkish rule which became all the more crushingly felt as a result of the imposing presence of the Koule in the northern edge of the hill which is positioned above the fort of Itzedin. Itzedin, the guardian of the port of Souda, is a structure that cooperates with the Venetian fort of Souda island, strategically located right across, to defend the gulf. The 19th century fort was used as a prison until 1971.

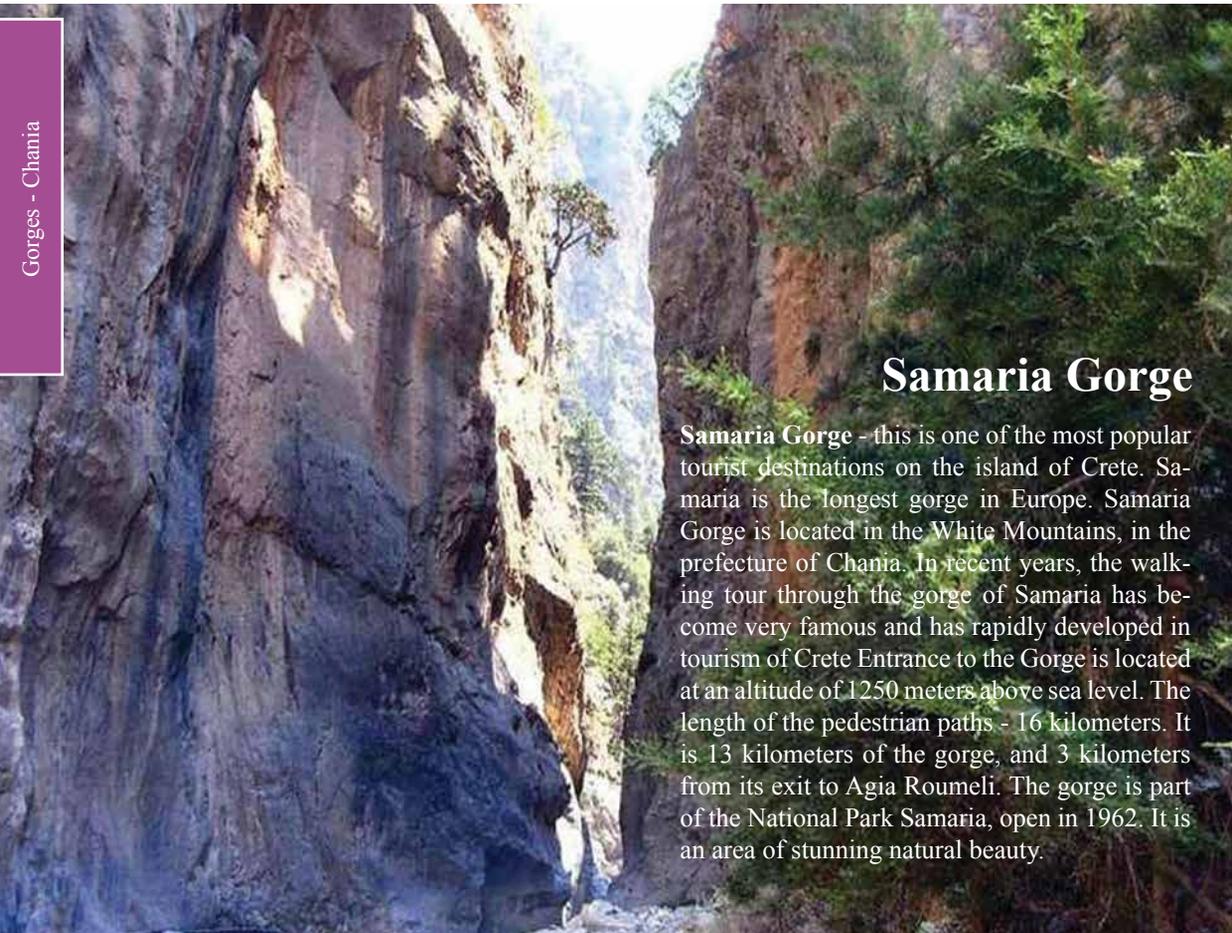
Polyrhenia

Polyrhenia - West of Chania and south of Kissamos is where the ancient Polyrhenia, another ancient city of Crete, founded at an impressive location, dominates above the plain and the gulf of Kissamos. Ancient Polyrhenia was a rich and powerful city due to its strategic position; its acropolis has views of both the Cretan and the Libyan seas. Today, ruins from Greek and Roman structures are preserved there, while its most outstanding element is the imposing fortification of its acropolis, a work from the Byzantine period.



Eliros

Eliros - The site of the ancient Greek city of Elyros is located 500 m above this village on the Kefala hill, above the road to Sougia, and is presently unexcavated. Elyros was one of the most important Greek cities in western Crete. It was an industrial and commercial city which had factories for weaponry production. Sougia and Lissos were its harbors.



Samaria Gorge

Samaria Gorge - this is one of the most popular tourist destinations on the island of Crete. Samaria is the longest gorge in Europe. Samaria Gorge is located in the White Mountains, in the prefecture of Chania. In recent years, the walking tour through the gorge of Samaria has become very famous and has rapidly developed in tourism of Crete Entrance to the Gorge is located at an altitude of 1250 meters above sea level. The length of the pedestrian paths - 16 kilometers. It is 13 kilometers of the gorge, and 3 kilometers from its exit to Agia Roumeli. The gorge is part of the National Park Samaria, open in 1962. It is an area of stunning natural beauty.

Roka Gorge

Roka Gorge - is 32 km west of Chania, in Kolymbari area. The easiest entrance to the gorge is located in the village of Delia. This is the second kilometer of the gorge from the beginning. Out of the canyon in the small village of Rock is located. In the village you can see a picturesque hill Truly, also even the ruins of a Byzantine fortress. Hiking along the gorge not complicated, does not last more than 2 hours, and it is better in the early summer, when there is still water streams. In the valley grows many plane trees, which give a refreshing shade during the walk. The excursion route is mostly along the river, which, unfortunately, is dry in the summer. Almost at the exit of the gorge Roka, from dirt road you get to the village of Rock, and Mount Truly. You can climb to the castle and enjoy the amazing views of the surrounding areas. The village has several cafes, which serves traditional dishes of the area.



Sirikari Gorge

Sirikari Gorge – this gorge is placed on a 55 kilometers west of Chania and 17km south of Kissamos, in a lush green area, among other canyons and water flows. The beautiful gorge begins at Sirikari Polirinia ancient settlement, which was once famous for the power and militancy. Near the canyon grows old chestnut garden where you hear the sounds of waterfalls and streams. This is not the only Brown bushes in Crete (also grow in the mountains Lefka Ori), but they are taller with amazing



ing beauty. Visiting Sirikari leaves a lasting impression, especially if the journey will go through all the valley and ends in the ancient Roman city of polish.

Sfakiano Gorge

Sfakiano Gorge - One of the many gorges of the Sfakia district is Sfakiano. It is a beautiful gorge that starts 2 kilometers in the east of Chora, from the Niato plateau, near the Askifos settlement and ends to the Plakakia beach in the Libyan sea. The small Agios Pavlos church is near the entrance of the gorge and was built by the residents of Sfakia in 1407. The route is on wild rocks. The gorge is in a wild natural landscape with steep rocks and rich flora (oak, pine and cypress trees). The gorge is about 6.5 kilometers and 3 hours long and easy.



Ag.Irini Gorge

Agia Irini Gorge - a small village of Agia Irini is located along the road that leads from Chania to Sougia in southwest Crete. From the South end of the village at an altitude of around 560 m, the gorge of Agia Irini is located at the western edge of the White Mountains. It is interesting because the gorge is not very crowded, there is a lot of shade and a shorter gorge than Samaria about 7.50km. It has its own personality and character with a new experience.

Avlaki Gorge

Avlaki Gorge - is located near Gouverneto Monastery, 16 km to the east of the city of Chania. This is one of the most important gorges in Crete of religious significance, where monks found refuge in the caves of the gorge. Inside a small canyon Avlaki is the famous monastery Catholics, perhaps the most ancient religious temple on the island of Crete. In association with the monastery, the valley is also sometimes called Catholic. The route starts from the monastery of Gouverneto and advances to the Catholics. The hiking trail runs from the top and sides of the gorge, walking is easy enough, to climb the mountain, but such intervals is very short. After a ten-minute walk from Gouverneto Monastery on the way you meet Arkudiotissa cave, inside which an ancient temple built in honor of the goddess Artemis. Then the trail leads to the abandoned monastery of Catholics and Church of St. John, who once lived here.



Imbros Gorge

Imbros Gorge – this gorge is the second most popular gorge after Samaria. It is easier to walk, walking time about 2.5km. It also would not need to take a whole long day. Despite being much smaller in size than Samaria there are some very spectacular sections, especially the several very narrow passages. The gorge is open all year around. This makes it especially popular in spring time (April) when the gorge of Samaria is generally still closed.

Kallikratis Gorge

Kallikratis Gorge - a small valley in the south-eastern part of the mountains of Lefka Ori (White Mountains), in the region of Chania. Gorge connects the mountain plateaus and valleys to the villages in the lowlands. Despite the fact that the gorge Kallikratis routes are not very popular among the tourists, walking is full of positive emotions. In this area, a lot of beautiful plants, and colorful exotic flowers. Most tour groups go to Kallikratis only way out of the gorge Asfendu. It is best to start hiking early in the morning, when it is cool sometimes go to parts of shade.



Asfendou Gorge

Asfendou Gorge - is one of the many gorges in Sfakia province, starting from deserted hamlet of Asfendou that currently houses some local sheep herders. Along the canyon runs a passable but steep trail, parallel to the streambed. In many places the Libyan sea is visible. The vegetation in Asfendou is not as dense, as in other canyons in the province of Sfakia, and is mainly limited to the riverbed. You will meet the Cave of the Shepherd. Shortly before reaching the deserted village Kolokasia, it is worth visiting the wall painted cavernous church of St. Anthony.



Kambos Gorge

Kambos Gorge - On the road to Elafonisi by the road running along the western coast of Crete, is a beautiful village Kambos relating to Kissamos province. From a small village exits a dirt road to the west, to the beautiful and amazingly canyon Kambos gorge on west of Crete. Along the canyon there are shades of huge plane trees. A small river which does not dry all year round, because of the mass of tree standing. At the entrance to the gorge, you can see the amazing curved walls of the canyon. A road that passes through the gorge is found the church of St. Kyriaki.



Pelekaniotis Gorge

Pelekaniotis Gorge – in a forgotten area in Selino (South Chania), you can find a well-hidden heavily vegetated valley Pelekaniotis river. It is the largest river in the area of Selino, it is so important that the whole area is called Palaiochora Pelekanos. Full-flowing river throughout the year and maintains a lush green valley at the exit of the gorge, near the town Maherota. The steep canyon cliffs are home to dozens of species of birds of prey, who accompany tourists during the entire trip. The best route of the gorge - walking on a dirt road that begins on the beach Gram and to Paleochora.



Topolia Gorge

Topolia Gorge - is located in the western part of Crete and extends along the road leading to the city of Elafonisi. Begins in Strovles near the village at an altitude of 450 meters, and is near the village of Topola, at the height of 150m. The most impressive part of the gorge is between Katsomatadosom, which is very high with almost vertical side walls of the gorge. Canyon Tiflos crosses the river, which flows down from the mountains Dikeos. Along the riverbed runs a walking trail. At the entrance to the gorge is worth

visiting the cave of St. Sophia, located above the main road. In the wider part of the canyon there are rare and endemic plants of Crete. Myths of the island state that fairies lived in this poplar forest.

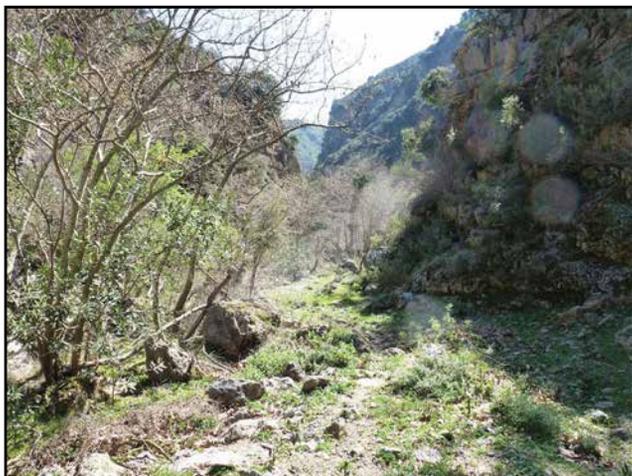


Anydri Gorge

Anydri Gorge - is a small but beautiful gorge located in the wider area of Paleochora in the southwest part of the Prefecture Chania. It starts from the village and ends in the beautiful double beach Gialiskari, which separates small peninsula overgrown with cedars. The length is two kilometers and to walk less than 1 hour and a bit more to return to the village. At the end of the path is the beach Gialiskari where will prepare you for return to the village.

Vrissi Gorge

Vrissi gorge - One of the nicest gorges of Crete is that of Vrissi on the north side of the White Mountains, crossed by the river Vrissiotis which gathers water from Melidaou area and waters Zourva and Lakki. In the gorge there is the cave – underground river with water springs, where you see many several beautiful waterfalls running. The trail to the spring of the cave starts from Lakki and goes along the walls of the gorge.





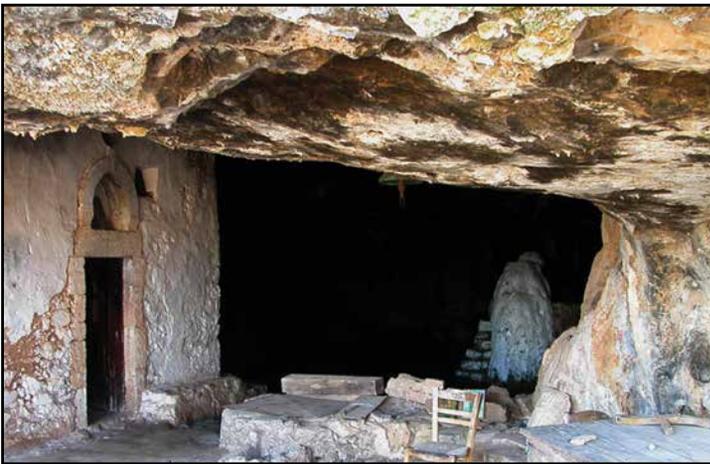
Lake Kournas

Lake Kournas - perhaps the largest in Crete. It is famous for its amazing scenery, immersed in the olive groves, trees and mountain peaks. The lake is located 20 km from Rethymnon and 43 - from Chania, near Kournas a small village of the same name. Lake Kournas is an important part of the Greek ecosystem, as it is one of the few areas in Crete where there is abundant fresh water throughout the year. This is one of the reasons that the Lake Kournas is a protected area by the Natura 2000. This lake was created of the underwater which comes from the White Mountains. It is ideal for relaxing and a walkthrough around the lake. Fresh water all through the year and it's said that its depth is about 22,50 meters.



Cave of the Bear

Cave of the Bear - The cave of the bear or the Virgin Mary Arkoudiotissa lies on the path from Gouverneto to Katholiko. A chapel is inside the cave dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Near the entrance of the cave are a gray stalagmite in the form of a bear and a small pond in front of it. According to local legend, the Virgin Mary did the bear stone when she went to drink the water of the monk. Archaeologists claim that in antiquity the cave was a sanctuary dedicated to the goddess Artemis, which was transformed into a bear. The cave was sacred since ancient times. Inside found relief inscriptions with Apollo and Artemis. Even there worshipped the bear-goddess Artemis something that continues until today, only its position, in celebration of Akrotiri on February 2. It is well known that the ancient Greeks when they find in caves formations which had forms of animal deities persons etc. the altars used as objects of worship. The cave is an old riverbed now has ceased to exist, of course, and consists of a large hall with sufficient but afflicted adornment and blackened by the fires. There is a smaller second Chamber from where someone penetrates through a very narrow passage. After the Chamber that there is another small cave but it is too small in width and not able to go through.



Kournas Cave

The cave of Kournas is located at position Keratides, west of Kournas village, and is one of the most beautiful caves in Chania prefecture. Descending into the main room is a bit tedious, but the rich cave décor with beautiful colors and formations will excite anybody.



Kryoneridas Cave

Kryoneridas Cave - is located in the ravine Laggos, southwest of the village Vafes, at an altitude of 230m. The cave has no special speleological value, but it has enormous historical importance, as the residents of Vafes were killed here by the Turks in 1821. Indeed, the wider region of Krionerida was named so after this historic cave. The entrance has a width of 1.8m and height 1.5m. It consists of four rooms, with the first being the larger, while the second contains the bones of the victims of the Turkish atrocity. The last room



has a spring of water, after which the cave takes its name (kryonerida means a place with cool water in Greek).

Gourgouthaka Cave

Gourgouthaka Cave - The cave-precipice of “Gourgouthakas” the largest in Greece located in “Atzines” of the White Mountains and East of the Summit of the Holy Spirit, in the region of Melidoni, Apokoronas. It was discovered in 1990 by the Speleological Expedition Catamaran where group is based in France. This group, in 1996 reached the depth of-452m. 1997 – 985m. August 1998 eventually managed to reach the bottom in depth of – 1208m, where there lies a beautiful small lake with water.



Ag.Sofia Cave

Agia Sofia Cave - The cave of “Agia Sofia” incision in the West walls of the Gorge of Topolia, on distance 47 km. from the city of Chania. Consists of two rooms on different levels. The floor plan of the cave is approximately circular-shaped with a diameter of 50 meters. The height is variable and in some places reaches 20 m entry has opening 25 m and the left edge is the chapel measuring 5 m. The cave presents archaeological and historical interests from features of Neolithic shells, classical and in the Roman period.

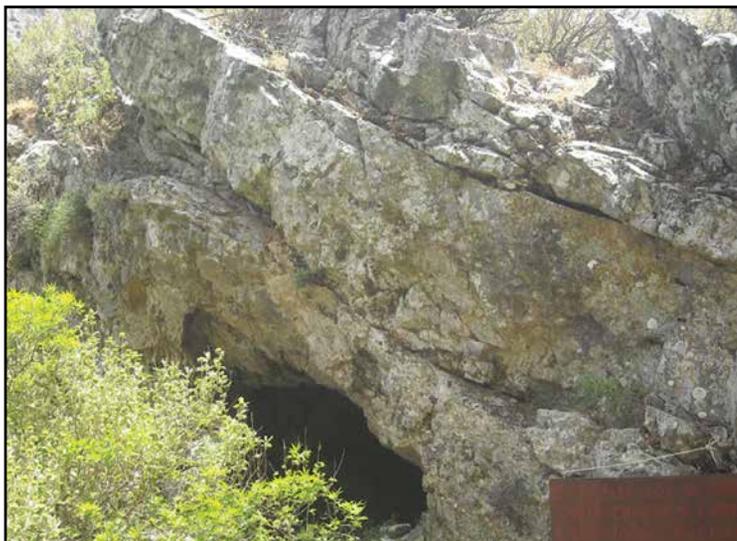


Samonas

Samonas cave - is one of sights worth visiting in Samonas and it is also one of the most beautiful caves of Chania located in the area Apokoronas. This cave of Samonas was discovered accidentally in 1994 during road constructions. Although relatively small in size, it has beautiful stalagmites and stalactites. After entering the cave,



you have to descend a ladder for about 15 to 17 meters. At the end there are two small rooms. In the largest one, there is a small beautiful lake with clear water. The natural decoration of the cave of Samonas is unique and will impress you. The other room has not been discovered, it is believed that there are other smaller or larger ones, through which probably the water of the lake passes.



Asfendou Cave

Cave Asfendou - is situated in the location "Skordalackia", in the northeast part of the entrance of the gorge Asfendou. Near its entrance, there are rock paintings representing hunting scenes, animals, trees, ships, arrows and many other hunting tools, as well as some abstract symbols. Researches have dated these paintings to the prehistoric period. The paintings present a great ar-

chaeological and aesthetic value, as they picture the everyday activities and preoccupations of the people that lived in the alpine areas of Sfakia 4.000 years ago.



Tzanis Cave

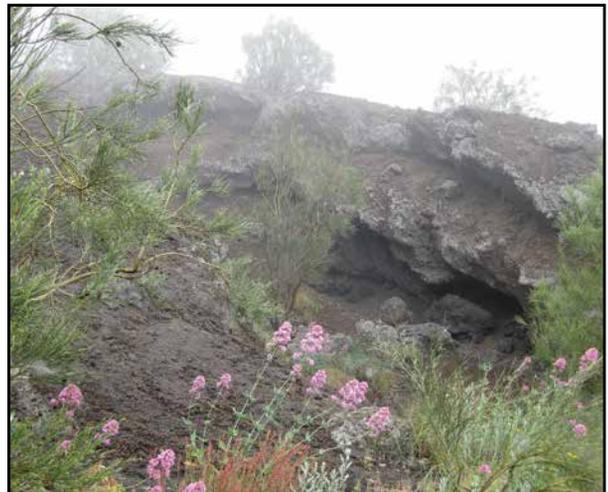
Cave Tzanis or Katavothra or Chonos, is located in Omalos Plateau in Chania. It reaches a length of 2500m and a depth of 280m. The cave has raised the interest of foreign tourists since 1865. Since 1961 caver groups of different nationalities explore the cave. Tzanis is accessible, but is not

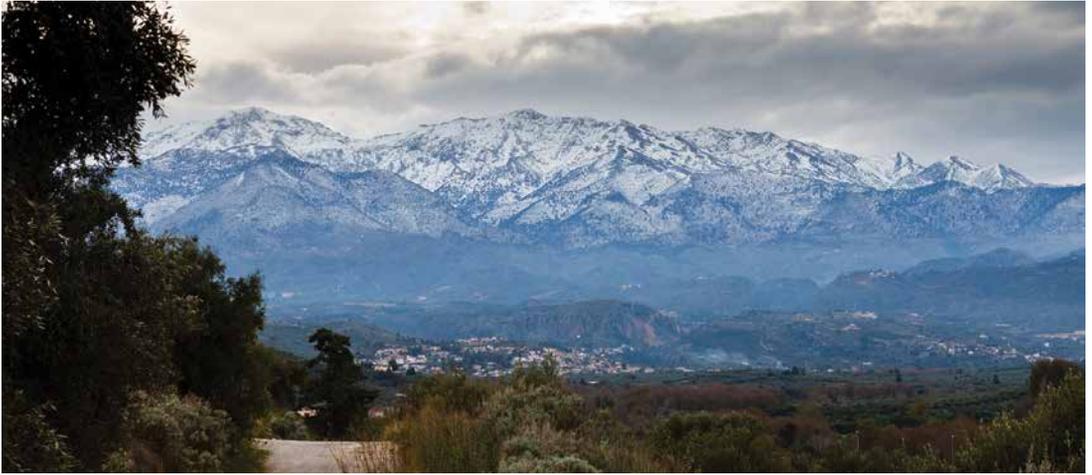
organized for tourists. Cave Tzanis has taken its name from the legendary chief-tain of Lakki, Markos Tzanis or Fovos (meaning Fear).



Polyplemus Cave

Polyplemus cave - The cave of the Cyclops Polyphemus is located between Sougia and Koustogerako areas. The cave has no interesting decor, but a marble formation that reminds of a throne. The entrance is divided in two by a large rock, as like the rock was put by Odysseus in the cave of Polyphemus, the one-eyed Cyclops, before blinding him with a large wooden stick.





White Mountains

The **White Mountains** or **Lefka Ori** occupy a good part of the centre of West Crete and are the main feature of the region. They are made of limestone and called White Mountains because they are covered in snow until late in the spring. In the summer, the sun reflected on the limestone summits makes them appear white as well. Mountains also has about 50 gorges, the most famous being the gorge of Samaria. Another characteristic of the mountains are the high plateaux in the centre of the mountains. The best known is the plateau of Omalos which is a round plain surrounded by mountains, at an altitude of 1100m.



Omalos Plateau

Omalos Plateau - is located 38km south of Chania at an altitude ranging from 1,040 to 1,250 meters, surrounded by the high peaks of the White Mountains. The plateau is particularly beautiful in the winter, when it is frequently covered by snow. At older times, the plateau of Omalos was the shelter of the locals and the base of rebels during the two and a half centuries of the Turkish occupation, but also during all other wars against invaders. Moreover, locals grew grain and potatoes and there were many shepherd huts and “mitata” (cheese-dairies) where the marvellous cheese of the area was produced.

Tavri and Niatos

Tavri and Niatos Plateau - The plateaus of Tavri and Niatos are located 2km and 3km west of Askifou Plateau, 51km south of Chania, at an altitude of 1200m. They can be accessed via a road starting from Askifou, crossing Tavri and then ending up in Niato. In Tavri there is a big mountain shelter with 42 beds, where anyone can stay overnight. The beauty is magnificent, as the views to the peak Kastro (2215m) of the White Mountains are very impressive. From here begins the path to the top of Kastro. Tavri plateau is often dressed in white



and it is said that it was here that someone skied in Crete in 1955. Moreover, there is the chapel of the Holy Spirit, built with stone and fitting in perfect harmony with the landscape.

Askifou Plateau

Askifou Plateau - is located 50km south of Chania, in one of the nicest and most authentic areas of Crete. The wild mountains around and the serenity of the valley, form a magnificent landscape all year round. In winter the plateau is dressed in white several times, since the altitude is around 1200 meters. The plateau brings a lake from above and its name means “cup” in ancient Greek, because of its shape. Askifou has four small villages with few inhabitants, most of them being shepherds.



Anopolis Plateau

Anopolis Plateau - is located in the area of Sfakia and more specifically 13km west of Hora Sfakion. It is a small plateau formed in the wild mountains of Sfakia, the most inaccessible province of Europe. The plateau is fertile and still feeds the inhabitants of the village of Anopolis, located in the plateau. Anopolis can be reached via a 12km asphalt road, climbing the steep mountains of Sfakia. The landscape with the beautiful mountains and the trails that go up inspires all who go the plateau.



Cathedral Church

Cathedral of Eisodia of Theotokos – a cathedral, metropolitan and protector of the Chania. Devotes generally religiously interesting to the population of Chania. It is believed that in the place that the Cathedral Temple is located today, a small Temple existed since the beginning of the 11th century, dedicated to Eisodia of Theotokos. The Venetians destroyed this small Temple, building in its place a big storehouse for the needs of their Monastery that was located opposite of it, on the other side of the current Halidon Street. Later when Turks enslaved Crete (1695), they transformed the storehouse of Catholics into a soap making workshop that was open until 1850.

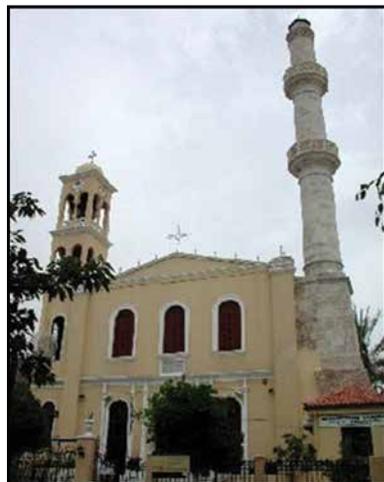


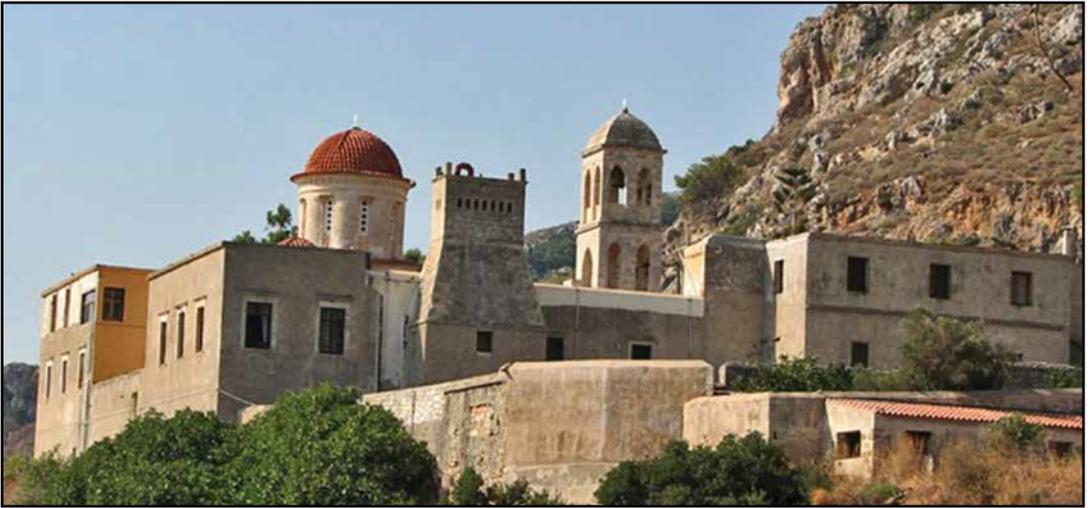
Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church in Chania meets in the town centre at Halidon 46, the road that leads from 1866 Square down to the harbour front, in a beautiful building just set back from the main frontage. The church serves an international congregation and services are conducted in several languages, including English.

St.Nikolaos Church

Church of Agios Nikolaos in Splantzia - East of Splantzia Square of the old city of the church of Agios Nikolaos is located, which was built before 1320, during the Venetian Period, as monastery of Dominican Order. During the Venetian period it was the most important church of the city. It was elegant and very large, with wide arches in the interior. After the occupation of Turks in Chania the temple was turned into mosque and was named Hiougkar Tzamisi (mosque of the Emperor), in honour of the sultan of Ottoman Empire, Imbraim. In 1928, after being seized by the Christians orthodox, the mosque was turned into a christian church and has been dedicated to Agios Nikolaos.



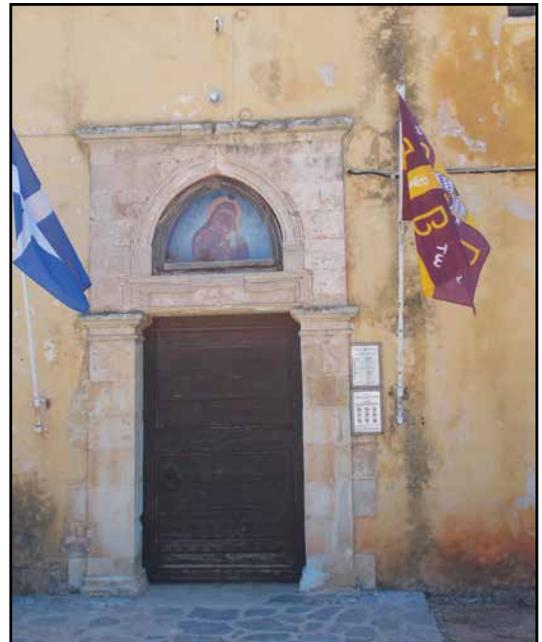


Gonias Odigitrias Monastery

Gonias Odigitrias, **The Monastery of Panagia Odigitria** is located at the base of the peninsula Spatha, about 26km west of Chania and 2.5km north of Kolymbari, next to the sea. A monastery of the ninth century all what is remained of it - a church dedicated to Agios Georgos. There was always of resistance to all the conquerors of Crete, and it had been destroyed many times by various conquerors. The original church of the 14th century is situated in the cemetery, near the present monastery complex. The complex is surrounded by a high wall, similar to the Venetian castle. The temple is dedicated to the Virgin of Hodegetria (August 15) and has chapels. All around there are other buildings of the monastery (cells, abbey, bank, warehouses, cellars, etc.). In areas of the monastery also houses the Orthodox Academy of Crete, gym, swimming pool, schools, boarding school, district court, etc.

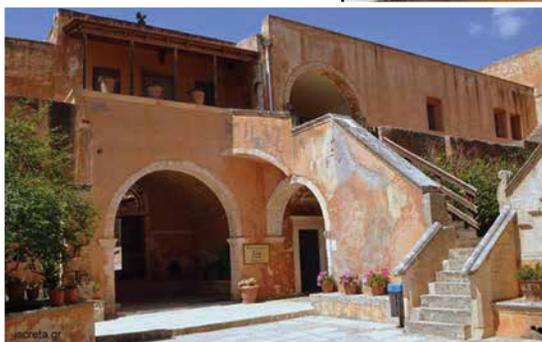
Gouvernetou Monastery

Gouvernetou monastery- stands on the Akrotiri peninsula. It looks like a Venetian fortress: four guard towers connected by walls, forming a parallelogram. The founder is considered to Gouverneto monk named John Xenos. He was sent to Crete by Nicephorus Phocas to explore the life of the Cretans. Xenos attributed many miracles and acts. One of the miracles - the legend of Gouverneto. After he died the new Gouverneto was built in 1537. The monastery church - is its pearl. It is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The temple is surrounded by two-story building of the monastery, which houses 50 rooms and other necessary facilities. Twice the new Gouverneto was destroyed. At first the Turks, then by the Nazis. Today the monastery consists of five monks and the abbot maintaining the complex.



Tzagarolon Monastery

The Patriarchal Monastery of the **Holy Trinity Tzagarolon** is one of the most important monasteries of the Venetian time in Crete with rich history and education of the island. Located at the foothills of “Tzompomylos” of Cape Meleha.



According to tradition, confirmed by documents of the Venice files, was built by the brothers Jeremiah and Laurentius Tzagarolon who came from a great Venetian-Cretan family and had strong influence in both the Orthodox population and Catholic Venetians.

Katholikou Monastery

To get to the Monastery of the **Katholikou**, you need to walk down the road from the monastery Gouverneto and from the gorge Avlaki on the stone bridge. It is believed that the monastery was the oldest monastery of the island of Crete. Scientists have not yet found evidence that, but the monks in one voice say, that this is so. The monastery today is ruined and is accessed through the path that starts from the monastery Gou-



verneto. In the monastery area you will see the church of St. John and the cave, where the monks have sheltered and the impressive old bridge that crosses the river canyon. Beneath the floor of the bridge has enough storage and service areas.

Pazinou Monastery

Pazinou monastery – this monastery is very close to Chania airport, south of Pazinos. The monastery, which operated as a monastery of Gouverneto, was preserved in excellent condition. The monastery is a rare example in Greece western monastic architecture, the church outside of the central court, where the cells are, and a separate entrance. For this reason it assumed that it is the Catholic monastery of St. George, which refers to Kastrofylakas of 1637.



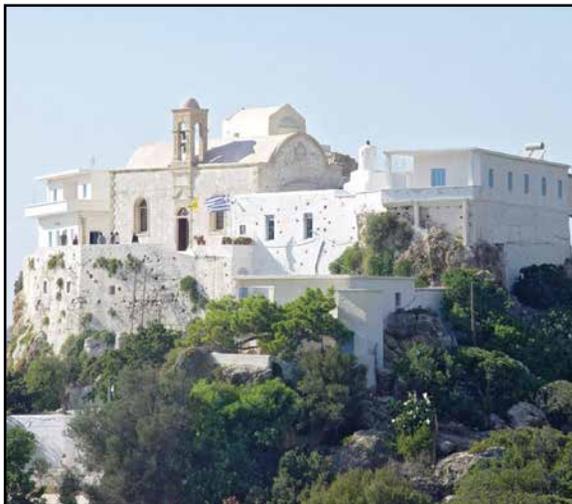
Chrissopigi Monastery

This Holy Monastery of Panagia **Chrissopigi**, a popular female monastery today in Greece is located just three km from Chania. From the city, on the route to the port of Souda. It is dedicated to Panagia Zoodochos Pigi and celebrates Friday after Easter. Thousands of people go to this day with devotion and worship the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary. The monastery was founded in the 16th century, during the last period of the Venetian rule and was male until recent years. Over the centuries the monastery experienced periods of growth and decline.



Chrisoskalitissas Monastery

One of the most popular monasteries in Crete, because of the impressive architecture and the short distance that separates it from Elafonissi, the **Monastery of Panagia Chrisoskalitissas**. The monastery is located 72km southwest of Chania, on a cliff 35 meters overlooking the Libyan Sea. It is one of the most important monuments of southwestern Crete. It is not known, that the monastery was founded according to tradition when a farmer found in the rocks an icon of the Virgin Mary. This icon is said to have hidden there in the period of battle of icons 726-842 AD. This icon is still in the church of the monastery.



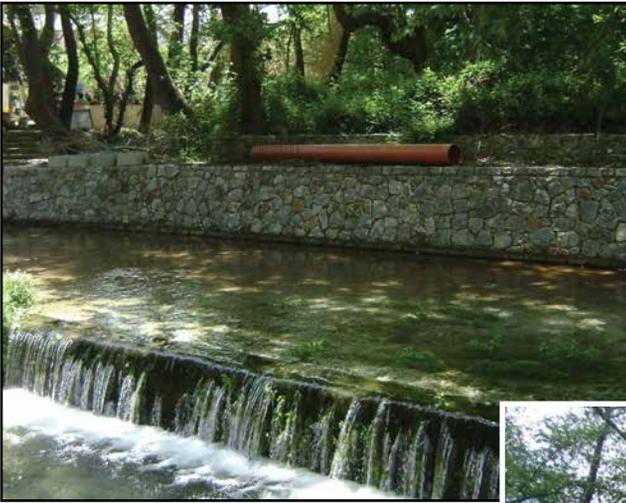
Milia

Milia Mountain Village, up in the mountains in western Crete, Chania region, with endless hiking paths, wooded hillsides and away from it all. The alternative, ecologically sound collection of stone buildings with matching taverna and natural foods. Situated in the mountains, above the road that leads from the north coast of Crete to the tropical beach at Elafonisi and nearby village of Elos. A village with great nature around, clean air, warm hospitality, relaxed atmosphere and many activities. Traditional built stone and timber houses, very comfortable. Whatever you need for a cozy and relaxed holiday in a Cretan traditional way.



Vryses

Vryses - is built at an altitude of 70m and located 30 km From Chania, on the main road Chania - Rethymno - Heraklion. The magical location where the village lies, abundant waters, springs and rivers makes Vryses one of the most beautiful villages of Apokoronas. Their inhabitants amounted to 635, and grow olives,



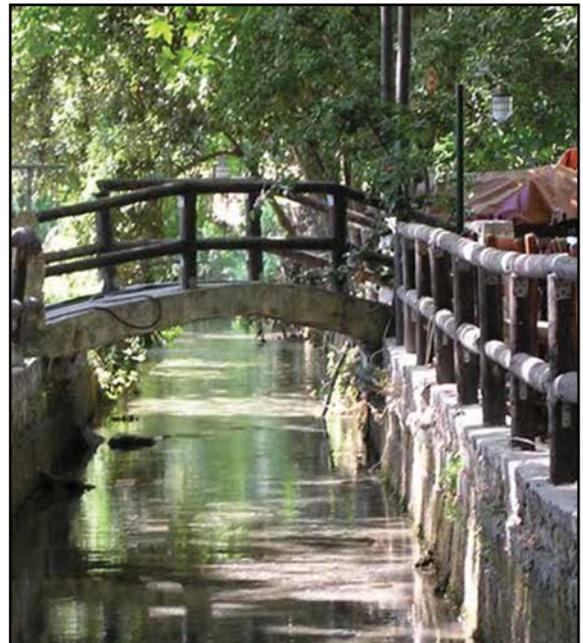
grapes, citrus and a few potatoes. The village had about 1950, twice as many people, because migration had not yet begun. Its development began in 1928, but was interrupted by the German occupation and relaunched in recent years.



Platanos

Platanos – this village is located 10 km from Kissamos. It is a modern, spacious village, with approximately 1000 inhabitants, that are mainly occupied with green houses, olives and tourism. The name of the village (Platanos means planetree) is most representative as the village has plenty of trees and flowers due to the abundance of water resources.

The village offers many facilities, gas stations, many shops, rooms for rent taverns and café bars. Platanos combines the traditional life with the elder drinking coffee in the traditional cafes, with the modern life, and has rapidly grown the last years.



Therisso

Theriso - is the historic village of the prefecture of Chania and played a significant role in the various revolutionary movements of the 19th century Crete and it received its name in 1905 the homonymous movement against the



residency of Prince George. It is built on the north-western foothills of the White Mountains at an altitude of 580 meters in the southern part of Therisos. Located 16 km south of the city of Chania. Near the village is the gorge “Eleftherios Venizelos” (or gorge of the Reapers), with a total length of 6 km. The population of the village is 113 residents and you will see very few old houses, monument, old churches and not many shops.



Elos

Elos – this village is located 60 km south west of Chania Town, on the way to the Monastery of Chrissoskalitissa and the wonderful beach of Elafonissi. Elos is a small village with few stone houses where its inhabitants are mostly engaged in agriculture cattle breeding. The village is surrounded by lush greenery, olive groves and plane trees. In late October, there is the Chestnut Festival with traditional music and dancing in the square.

Gavalohori

Gavalohori - is a large old village with particularly interesting and well-preserved folk architecture. In this officially protected, traditional village a lot of interesting buildings can be found, such as the 18th century two-roomed, arched olive oil press, the temples of Panagia and Agios Sergios, the old school and many residences. The landscape around the village still has its natural beauty. Plenty of opportunities for walks around the group of Venetian



wells, the Roman cemetery and the church of Agios Pavlos. You can also find the unique folklore museum of the prefecture of Hania, organized by the Ministry of Culture, filled with a wealth of displays of folk life.



Kokkino Chorio

Kokkino Chorio - The Red Village is a village located in the Apokoronas area, Chania, Crete. The village had an important role in the period of the Second World War. The Red Village is close to Kambia, Plaka, Almirida, Gavalohori and Kalives.

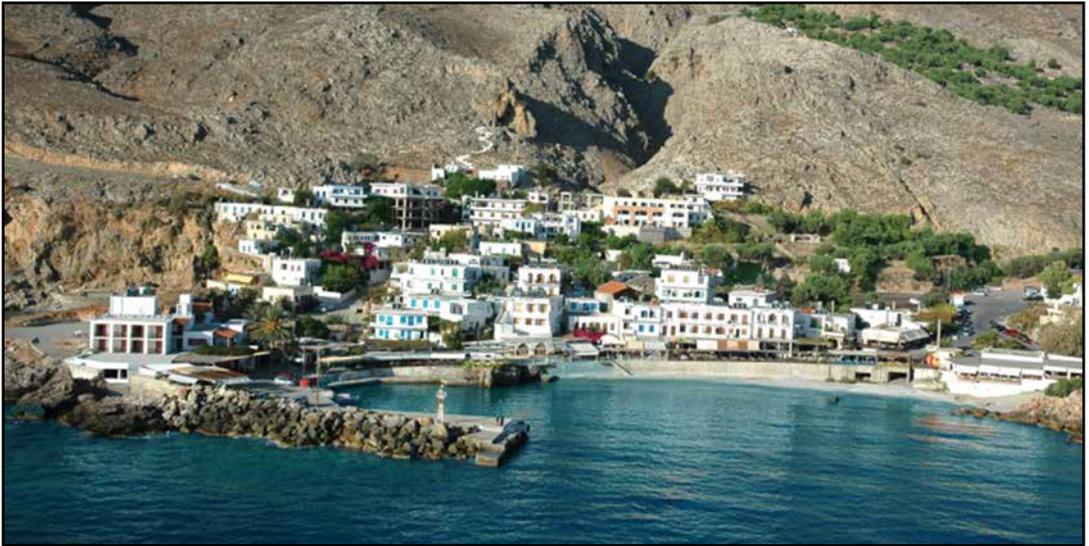
The village is a traditional, quiet, small village. Here are three churches, the Byzantine church of St. George with a cave which was used as a refuge during the period of war and ends at opposite of the mountain. Over the Red Village, one can see the odd shape of the hill Drapanokefala (named during the Venetian). The entire coastal area northwest of the village is a very interesting place for a walk because of soil and caves, as Cave Petsi (or Karavotopos).





Chora Sfakion

Hora Sfakion is located on the south coast of the prefecture of Chania in Crete, 75 km from Chania, and a region in the southeast part of the prefecture of Chania known a word as Sfakia. This small vil-lage of Sfakia, but also throughout the region of Sfakia in general, is a place for anyone looking to quiet vacation in contact with nature, away from mass tourism in the northern regions of Chania. There are relaxing beaches trails for hiking and experience the Cretan traditional hospitality from the locals as they are one of the most traditional Cretans on the island.



Ag. Roumeli

Agia Roumeli - is a unique place. It has genuine Cretan heritage and a strong sense of character. It is a peaceful community, nestled between breathtakingly high and wild mountains and a long beach of fine pebble by the deep blue, crystal clear Libyan sea. The village is remote and near enough isolated, you can only reach it on foot or by boat, as there is no road. Agia Roumeli is situated in one of the wildest regions of Crete with rare flora, fauna and geology. Being the exit of the Samaria Gorge National Park, it offers magnificent walking and hiking trails through protected nature.

Kissamos

Kissamos - sometimes called Castelli, a large port city in the northwest of Crete 40 km from Hania. The city is home to no more than three thousand local residents, so there is relatively calm life and low car traffic. The city was built by the Venetians, who also built the majestic fortress of Kastelli, which served as a defensive structure.



Kissamos famous local wine, olive oil and other agricultural products. In the town are all the amenities of a modern resort: post office, bank branches, hotels, taverns and shops. On both sides of the resort are two sandy beaches stretched. A more remote beach is considered the best: it is fully equipped, it has umbrellas and sunbeds, the other beach - a quiet and cozy. Kissamos has its own port, where daily excursions with boats are sent to large cities of Crete, as well as on the island Imeri, Gramvousa and others. In ancient times, Kissamos was an important strategic point on the island, there was a well-developed trade and minted its own coins. Romans once occupied the city, stayed here for water, built fountains and other urban decoration. In the city of Kissamos you can find many unique monuments of ancient culture: the acropolis Polirinia, offering breathtaking views of the bay, the majestic fortress Castelli. The city has its own archaeological museum, which lists the values and artifacts found in the area of Kissamos.

Paleochora

Paleochora - this is truly the pearl of the island of Crete. This small town, which lies on the coast of the warm sea has always attracted tourists for many reasons. Firstly, the average annual temperature in Paleochora - the highest in the whole of Crete: 19.5 degrees Celsius. This mild climate is obliged to particular geographical position of the town, surrounded on all sides by low mountains. This barrier

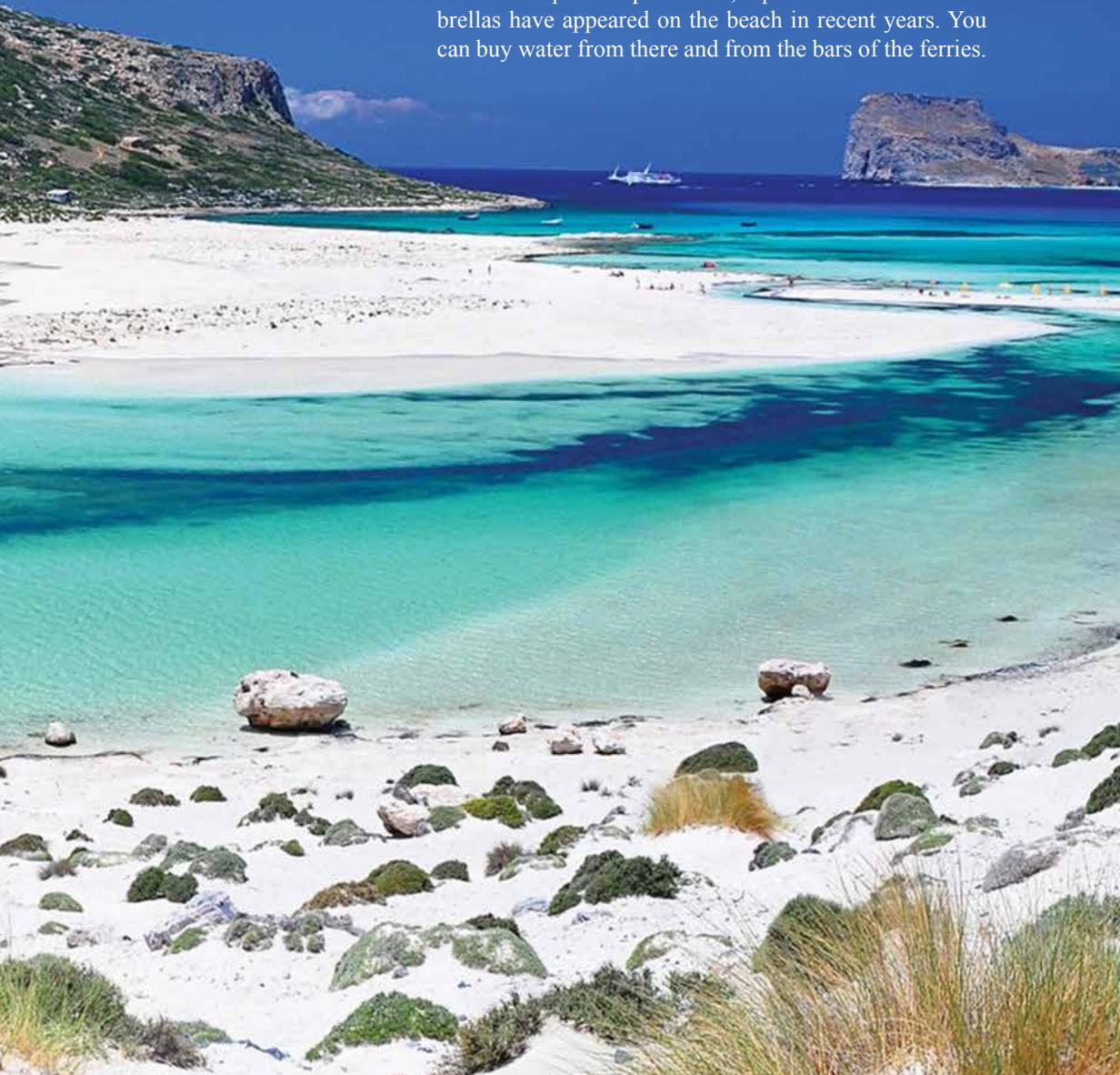


prevents the northern Meltemi winds host in this earthly paradise. Two bays on both sides of the peninsula Paleochora do not look as if they are separated by a great distance. On the hill Fortezza lie the ruins of a small fortress from Venetian times. Paleochora is also often referred to as “the bride at the Libyan Sea” because locals believe in the ancient legend, according to which the sun god Apollo promised to always shine over Paleochora, fell in love with a beautiful maiden who lived here in ancient times.



Balos beach

Balos - The lagoon of Balos has white sand and exotic white, vivid blue and turquoise waters. The sea is very shallow and warm, ideal for young children. In many places the sand has a lovely pinkish color, because of millions of crushed shells. Beyond the rocks at the boundaries of the lagoon, the water is deeper and colder, ideal for a snorkeling. The lagoon and the wider area, with rare species of flora and fauna, are protected under the Natura 2000 program. Eleonora falcons, shags and cormorants nest in the caves of the area. Moreover, the area is a shelter for the protected monk seal and the sea turtle caretta caretta. Despite the protection, a primitive café and umbrellas have appeared on the beach in recent years. You can buy water from there and from the bars of the ferries.





Platanias beach

Platanias - a modern place with a good infrastructure and transport links. In the village a lot of scenic spots, a long coastline with big nightlife. Platanias Town is often compared to such resorts like Malia and Hersonissos. The village has grown from an ancient amphitheater, which is even mentioned in the writings of the Venetian. Around the area grows a lot of beautiful sycamore trees, that's where Platanias got its name. In the center of the old city the ruins of the buildings still remain where the locals were hidden during the Turkish invasion. The village offers a wonderful view of the mountain scenery, the sea and the Theodorou island. Beaches in Platanias are shelly, with fine sand. They often receive the award "Blue Flag" for cleanliness and safety.



Kalathas beach

The seaside village of **Kalathas** is located 12km northeast of Chania, in the heart of a large natural bay on the Akrotiri peninsula, which is open to the north winds. Kalathas is a relatively modern village, which has been inhabited by residents of Chania who wanted to live away from the city center. The beach in front of the village is beautiful, with fine sand and shallow crystal clear water. Opposite Kalathas, there is a small island which you can easily reach by swimming. Next to the beach there are several palm trees that give an exotic tone to the landscape.



Ag. Marina beach

The village of **Agia Marina** is located on Crete's north, 9 kilometers west of Chania. In the village there are basically only modern new buildings and traditional Cretan houses are very rare. Near Agia Marina is 2.5 km long sandy beach overlooking the island of Theodorou, which is 400 meters from the coast. Sandy and well organized beaches of Agia Marina attract many tourists and a little crowded in some areas. In the village there are many hotels, apartments, tavernas and shops. Agia Marina is suitable for those who are looking for both lively and quiet place to relax. It is also an ideal place for those who love to explore the historical values, as the village is located near Chania, Kissamos, ancient monasteries of Akrotiri on the island and other attractions.



Almyrida beach

Almyrida - The village of Almyrida stretched 23 km from Chania, on the southern shore of the Gulf and a kilometer from the village of Plaka. It is a quiet resort with a good infrastructure. Around the village is well preserved nature, it is an ideal location for exploring the scenic groves. The beaches of this area are well organized for windsurfing, scuba diving and other extreme sports. Coastal tavernas serve delicious fish and traditional Greek dishes. The village is well connected with transport with a taxi or bus. Not far from the Almyrida is an island of Karga.



Falassarna Beach

Falassarna Beach - The exotic beach of Falassarna is located 59km west of Chania and 17km west of Kissamos. It's located in the western part of Cape Gramvousa. Falassarna bay is one of the most famous beaches in Greece, which has been awarded as the best beach of Crete and one of the 10 best beaches in Europe in the past. The sand in Falassarna is white, making the water color tropical. The area around Falassarna is magnificent and is a Natura protected region. If you have time and looking for something romantic, you can wait for the sunset, which is considered the best in Crete. sin



Gramvousa Beach

Gramvousa - two small islands to the north-west of Chania: Agrida Gramvousa and Imeri Gramvousa. Agrida Gramvousa completely uninhabited, can be dangerous because of bare gentle slopes. The second island Imeri Gramvousa, is quite famous for the ancient fortress and military action, which once held. The islands are located on Cape Korikos, which can be reached from the beach of Balos. A few hundred meters from the end of the Cape road ends, so you will have to walk further more. Basically these islands go sightseeing boat tours. Imeri Gramvousa acquired opening the first port on the island. Since here it has approached many ships of the Adriatic. Venetians decided to build a fortress in 1584, it had become the guarantor of safety through of the area.



Elafonissi Beach

Elafonissi - also called Elafonissos is one of the most famous in Crete and it is located 76 km west of Chania and just 5 km from the monastery Hrisoskalitissa. It is something like an island and a peninsula, because to reach the island you have to walk through the sea. Beach Elafonisi is included in the protected areas «Natura 2000» program. What characterizes the area of Elafonissos and makes it such an exotic place, are the little sand islets formed, the shallow turquoise waters of the sea, and of course the fine white sand, pinkish at several spots because of the crushed shell powder.



Kedrodasos Beach

Kedrodasos - South Elafonisi is another area of wild, exotic beauty, the Kedrodasos. Access there is by car (up to a point) by a dirt road that passes through the glass of the region, either on foot, following the E4 path from Elafonisi beach. Dunes of white sand and a forest of perennial cedars cover the whole of Kedrodasos region. The main beach has sand and crystal clear turquoise waters and along the coastal path from Kedrodasos to Elafonisi are also smaller and deserted coves.



Nea Chora Beach

Nea Xora - is the closest beach to Chania Town, located to the west of the Venetian walls. You can easily reach it by bus, by car or on foot. Also very close to the city and the shopping center. Nea Chora is a sandy beach with shallow waters that are suitable for children and is well-organized, offering accommodation facilities, sun beds, umbrellas, cafes and nice taverns that serve delicious fresh fish dishes. In fact, Nea Chora is a popular beach for locals and tourists. However on the other side of the Venetian walls, the eastern side, there is another beach that is affected by summer winds and therefore it is not so popular.



Sfinari Beach

Sfinari - is a large beach located 60 km south west of Chania Town and 20 km of Kissamos. This secluded beach is far from most tourist places in Crete, however it has some rooms to rent and fish taverns along the coast. People also camp out there, although the region is frequently affected by summer winds. It is an ideal place for calm and relaxing holidays. The coast has small pebbles and the water is clean. Many trees and bushes are front providing some shade to visitors.



Loutraki Beach

Loutraki - is a small beach about 12km east of Chania town, very close to Marathi. This is a small bay, on the southern side of Akrotiri peninsula, protected from strong winds. Loutraki is mostly popular with locals and families, as its water is safe for children. Some facilities are found close to the Marathi village, including hotels, taverns and a few shops.



Kolymbari Beach

Kolymbari - is located 24 km west of Chania town, nestled between the flat cliffs of Kissamos peninsula. Totally untouched by tourism, the area is ideal for a peaceful and relaxing vacation. A concrete pavement is set to the back of the pebble strip where you can walk by tasteful fish taverns and also beautiful traditional café built of stone. The beach is clean with shallow blue waters, letting you view the magnificent cliffs. A few resorts are located on the hills around Kolimbari with nice views of the beach. Kolymbari can be reached by regular buses from Chania or Kissamos.



Sougia Beach

Sougia - is located 70 km south west of Chania town between the villages of Paleochora and Agia Roumeli. It is one of the best beaches of Crete stretched 1200 meters due to big crowds. It has pebbles and crystal clear waters. Sougia has been nominated as one of the cleanest beaches of Greece. It is very well protected from the winds with not many tourist facilities or buildings. Only a few showers have been placed along the beach by the locals. Nudism is allowed on a large part of the beach and the surrounding landscapes are naturally beautiful. There are many accommodations, tavernas, bars and a few shops.



Stalos Beach

Stalos - is situated right above Stalos village, 7 km west of Chania Town. It is a very long beach with nice soft sand and clean-crystal waters. There you can enjoy the beautiful and relaxed environment during the day as well as the nightlife of the close villages, especially Platanias and Agia Marina. There are also many activities to make during the day such as watersports, beach volley, beach tennis and water-cycling.



Maherida Beach

Maherida - The tiny beach of Macherida is located 14km northeast of Chania and 1km west of the village Chora Sfakia, hidden in a rocky bay. The beach is named after the rocky cape in its north end that looks like a knife (“machairi” means “knife” in Greek). This bay is always calm with crystal clear waters but it is not organized. This secluded beach of Macherida attracts mainly nudists.



Tripiti Beach

Tripiti - is located close to the tourist village of Sougia and at the end of Tripiti Gorge. Accessed on foot, by boat or through a track road, this beach is not organized and there are no tourist facilities near. An ideal place for romantic couples. The closest facilities and accommodation are found in Sougia, Paleochora and Agia Roumeli. Tripiti has soft sand and clean water. The surrounding nature is wild and provides the perfect setting for total privacy.



Kalyves Beach

Kalyves - is the name of a small village located about 20 kilometres east of Chania, one of the greenest areas of Greece, from where the White Mountains can be seen. The village is surrounded by wonderful sandy beaches with crystal waters .In the village you will find a friendly and authentic traditional atmosphere and a very good variety of small taverns, accommodations and bars.



Drapanias Beach

Drapanias - is placed 35 km west of Chania Town. It is a pebbled beach near Kissamos town. Although the beach itself does not offer any facilities and accommodation, it is 5 km far from Drapanias village, which always develops tourist facilities, from bars and taverns to accommodation options with view to Kissamos Gulf. The beach is close to the ruins of an ancient Minoan settlement, the ancient town of Mythymna, which was believed to be built right onto the beach.



Glyka Nera Beach

Glyka Nera - The name Glyka Nera means Sweet Waters. The beach is called like this because when someone digs a hole in the sand, sweet water appears from the ground. The beach is very beautiful and the water is blue crystal clear. Nudism and camping are allowed. This beach is located close to Sfakia, on the southern side of the island. It is reached through a track road, on foot or by boat.



Grammeno Beach

Grammeno - is a small beach located 75 km south west of Chania town and close to Paleochora. This is a long beach with sandy shore. Some umbrellas and sunbeds are found on the beach, but no tourist facilities. The closest facilities and accommodation are found in Paleochora. Next to Grammeno, there are many other small bays to enjoy some privacy and being calm and relaxed, including Krios, Pachia Ammos and Psilos Volakas.



Marmara Beach

Marmara Sfakia - The Marmara beach is one of the most popular beaches in Sfakia Crete. Located on the south coast of west Crete, in Chania, just west of the bath, at the exit of the gorge Aradaina. The beach is pebbly, with crystal clear waters. Further from the beach, on the rocky coast, there is a tavern. You can enjoy your meal after swimming and beautiful views of the sea from above, the coastline of southern Crete and to the gorge Aradaina.



Votsalo Beach

Votsalo is a nice beach located very close to Paleochora and 70 km south of Chania town. It is a small beach with crystal water and some trees on the shore providing shade in hot summer days. Some tourist facilities and accommodation surround Votsalo. More facilities can be found in Paleochora, the most tourist developed resort in southern Chania.



Gialiskari Beach

Gialiskari – Close to Paleochora, Gialiskari is a beautiful village in the southern side of Crete. Surrounded by wild nature and short vegetation, Gialiskari has small pebbles on the shore and crystal water. The beach is organized with umbrellas and sunbeds, but there are no tourist facilities. The closest facilities and accommodation are found in Paleochora.



Orthi Ammos Beach

Orthi Ammos – is located 80 km from Chania, and only 1 km east of Frangokastello on the south coast of Crete. It owes its name to the tall dunes and dunes that surround it. It is a secluded, quiet, non-organized, sandy beach with crystal waters. The locals prefer this beach to avoid the crowds - although almost many have discovered. At one end and nudism is allowed.



Filaki Beach

Filaki - is located 3 km east of Chora Sfakion, very close to the official naturist resort hotel Vritomartis. This beach is mostly a nudist beach. There are warning signs on the road going down to the beach. On the beach, apart from sun beds and umbrellas, there is also a canteen with tables and chairs. If you are looking for a secluded beach, in the same area and west of Filaki beach, there are small coves, next to each other.



Iligas Beach

Iligas - is a beautiful turquoise-water sandy beach, 1km west of Chora Sfakion and 74km south of Chania. Iligas is located at the end of Kavi Gorge that starts close to Anopolis. There are two beaches, separated with a big cavy rock. The main beach is bigger and can be accessed by walking a short distance from the main road of Sfakia-Anopolis. The second bay that is located on the east can be reached only by boat or by swimming from the main beach. There is one small taverna with rooms to let near Iligas beach, but there are more amenities in Chora Sfakion. Iligas is one of the nicest accessible beaches of south Crete. There are many caves, in which you can keep yourself in shadow. It's easy to go and is close to Sfakia, so you can visit that by walking from Sfakia (10-15 min).



Fournoti Beach

Fournoti - is located 57km south of Chania, about 12km east of Sougia and 1.5km west of Agia Roumeli and is a well-hidden beach. With its wonderful deep blue waters, grey sand and fine pebbles, it's just paradise. Also suitable for people who love camping. Its rocky but an ideal place for snorkeling.



Kalogeros Beach

Kalogeros - is located 57km south of Chania town, 13km east of Sougia and just 1km west of Agia Roumeli. This wonderful beach with the crystal clear waters will surely amaze you. Between Kalogeros and Agia Roumeli, other small and isolated beaches are situated quiet and relaxing. They are also surrounded by huge cliffs and therefore are called Spilies sto Marmaro (Caves in Marble).



Ag. Stefanou beach

Agios Stefanos - the beach is next to the area Seitan Port, 22 km northeast of Chania and 2 km east of the village Chordaki, on the east side of the Cape. The name of the region means Cursed Ports and comes from the fact that the waves generated in the area is dangerous. It has sand, gravel and blue clean waters. It is a secret hidden area, but in recent years has become quite famous and attracts many visitors. It is a not well developed beach so you should think ahead of necessary. Experienced lovers of canyoning can explore the Diplochachalo canyon that leads to the beach.



Georgioupoli beach

Georgioupoli – this village is located on the northern coast of Crete, 35 km from Chania and 20 km from Rethymno. Georgioupoli - coastal small village with a long and spacious sandy beaches. Through the village goes through several main roads, one of which leads to the bay of Almiros. On the way there you will see a lot of variety of exotic trees, including eucalyptus, among which the traditional villas are built. Georgioupoli has large number of hotels and resorts, many taverns, souvenir shops and super-markets. Also in the center of the village there are two small Orthodox churches. Long sandy beaches, passing through Georgioupoli is more than 10 km, so that everyone can find a comfortable place to relax.



Lakki Beach

Lakki – a beach at a distance of 82 kilometers from Chania at the Southeast, open to the South and affected by the southern winds. No accommodation facilities, neither facilities for food and drink available. Very isolated so access is by Frangkastello, you get to Skaloti, and then follow the road from the village.



Menies Beach

Menies – is located on the north eastern end of Rodopos cape, about 45km northwest of Chania town. It is unorganized without facilities and very isolated. There are two secluded beaches with emerald waters, ideal for campers and naturists. The first pebbly beach is that of Saint George. The next sandy beach is found about 1km to the north and is called Diktyinna.



Krios beach

This beautiful beach, almost quite undeveloped and quiet, is a spot suited to rest and relaxation. Characterized by crystal waters and a beach of small pebbles (larger to the east), it stretches a long way, and can be seen as three run together. The infrastructure is limited to a single café-canteen, and in one small area umbrellas are provided for those who want them.



Koutelos beach

Koutelos beach is located near the village Nomikiana, approximately 9km east of Chora Sfakion and 4km west of Frangokastello. It is a quiet beach consisting mainly of two coves with large pebbles and deep, blue waters.



Loutro

Loutro is a seaside resort on the south coast of Chania Prefecture (south-western Crete, Sfakia area). It is only a few kilometres from Hora Sfakion, lying in the embrace of a cliff which towers 600 metres above the village.

Loutro is a unique spot in Crete for many reasons:

its white buildings with blue windows are reminiscent of the Cyclades and are unique in Crete.

You can only go there by scheduled boat service (20 minutes from Sfakia) or on foot.

There is no road in Loutro itself, no cars and no motorbikes. Actually, there is one car, which is used to transfer supplies from the boat to a hotel.



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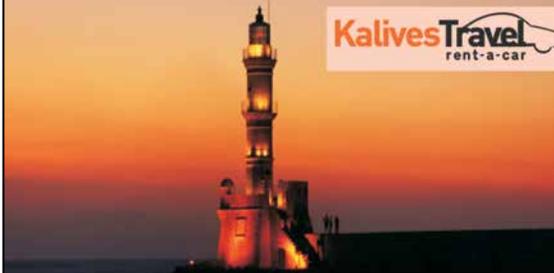
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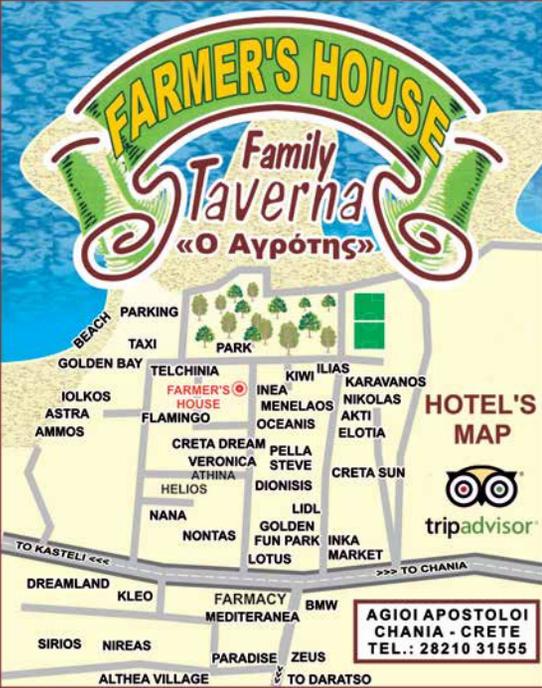

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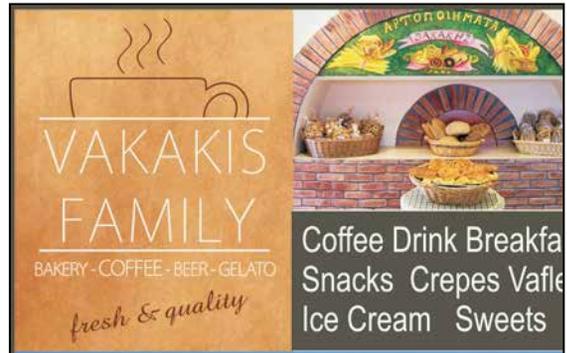
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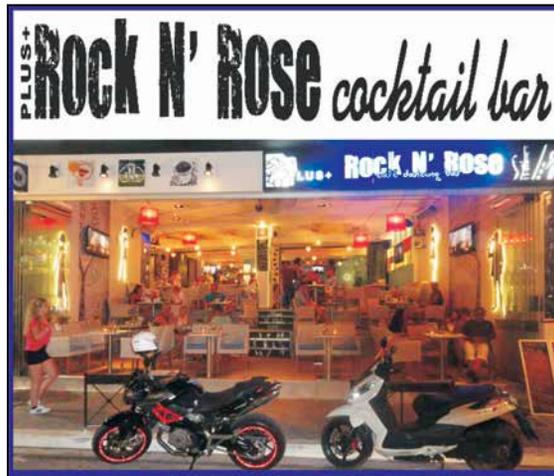
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Damnoni Beach Rethymnon

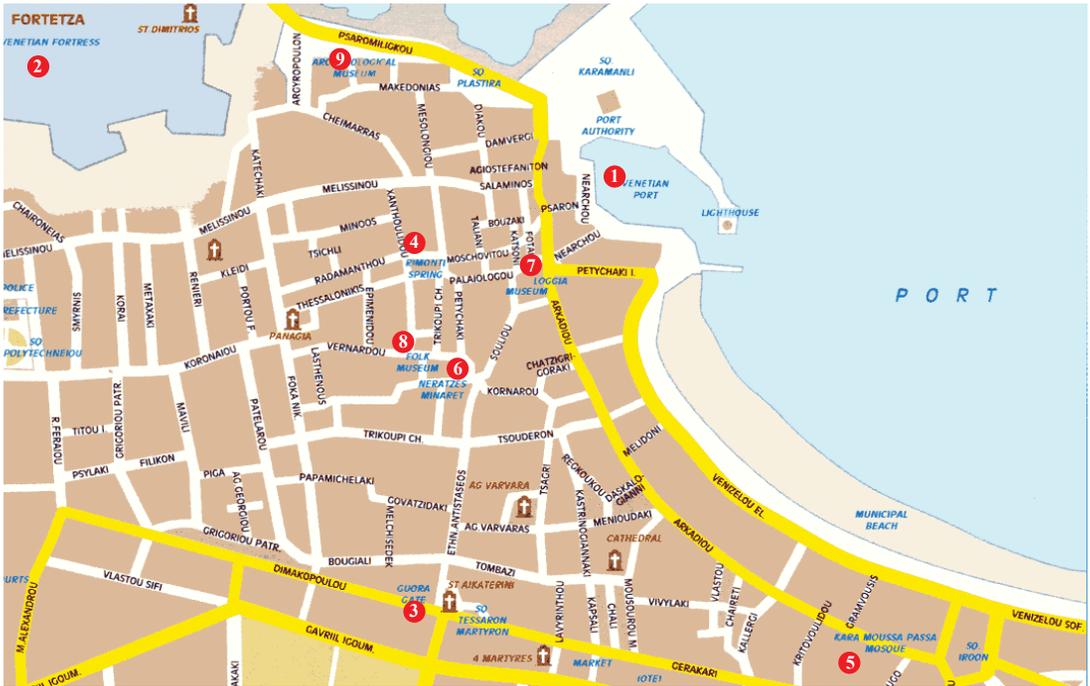


Preveli Beach Rethymnon



Bali Beach Rethymnon

Sightseeings in Rethymnon



1. Venetian Harbor



2. Fortezza



3. Guora Gate



4. Rimondi Fountain



5. Kara Moussa Pasha



6. Neratze Mosque



7. Venetian Loggia



8. Folk Museum

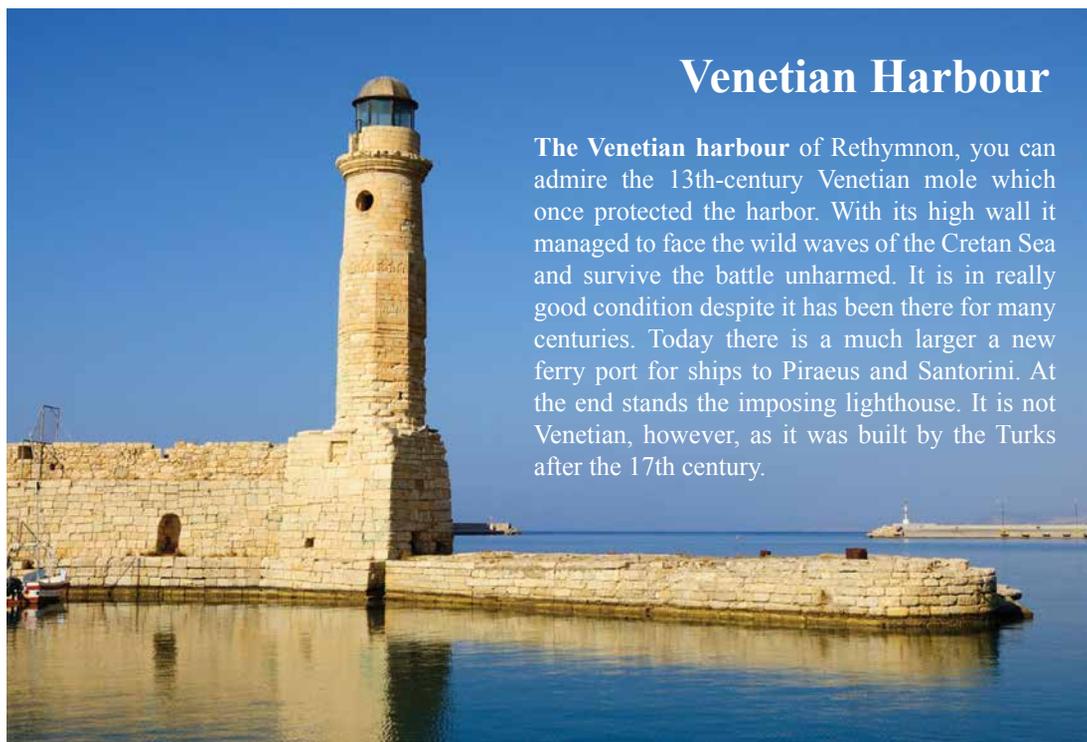


9. Archaeological Museum



Rethymnon

Rethymno - situated in the middle between the two big cities of Crete. There are traces of a civilization that dates back 4,500 years, many Byzantine churches and monasteries, enchanting Venetian monuments that make Rethymnon a lively place to visit. The old town of Rethymnon with the Renaissance style centre, the Fortezza, the museums and the endless beach will certainly charm you. It is Crete's smallest prefecture and it is located between the White Mountains and Mt Psiloritis the highest mountain of Crete. It is synonymous with gorgeous mountainscapes, marvellous beaches, Cretan lyre melodies, gastronomical delights, legendary caves, historic sites, traditional mountain villages and luxurious holiday resorts.



Venetian Harbour

The Venetian harbour of Rethymnon, you can admire the 13th-century Venetian mole which once protected the harbor. With its high wall it managed to face the wild waves of the Cretan Sea and survive the battle unharmed. It is in really good condition despite it has been there for many centuries. Today there is a much larger a new ferry port for ships to Piraeus and Santorini. At the end stands the imposing lighthouse. It is not Venetian, however, as it was built by the Turks after the 17th century.

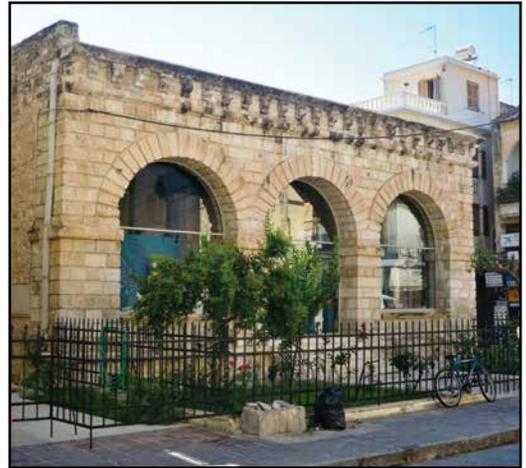
Fortezza

The Fortezza (in this case pronounced “Fortedza” rather than “Fortetsa”) is the Venetian fortress of Rethymnon, in the center of the old town. This giant Fortezza, with its hidden centuries of history, is visible from every corner of the town and offers panoramic views of Rethymnon and the coast to the west. The first Venetians built the Fortezza 30 years. It was designed by the famous engineer Michele Samichelli.

A few months after the fortress fell under a pirate raid then was taken over. Later on the Venetians realized that to protect Rethymno from the Turks it needed a new stronghold complex, capable to defend an attack, but also accommodate all residents. In 1573 the first stone of the second (and last) Fortezza was laid by the Governor of Crete at the time. Many Cretans were involved in construction but eventually Fortezza was surrendered to the Turks in 1646. Today, the historical appearance of Fortezza restored completely.

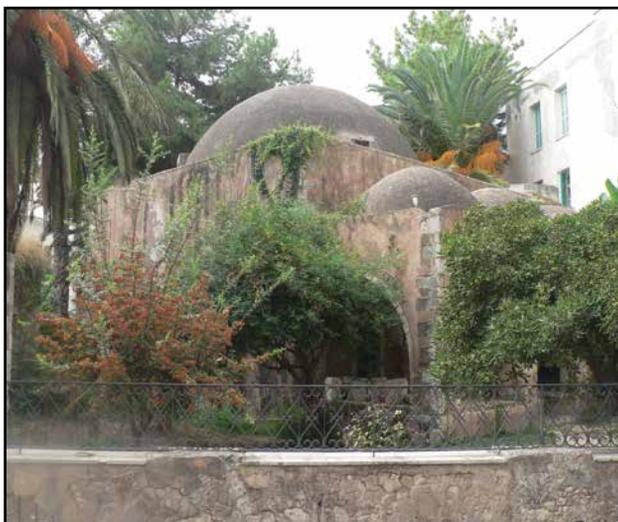
Venetian Loggia

The **Venetian Loggia** of Rethymnon is a square building with arched fronts on three sides. It is particularly well built, possibly according to plans by the famous Veronese engineer Michele Sanmicheli. Originally it was an opened and covered with a wooden roof, which was replaced after in 1625. The original 16th-century building is pretty much preserved. The Loggia was a meeting-place for the Venetian nobility and officials, a where they had meetings to discuss trade and politics. After the fall of Rethymnon to the Turks, the Loggia was converted into a mosque.



Kara Moussa Pasha Mosque

The **Kara Moussa Pasha Mosque** was named after the Turkish commander of the naval campaigns that were conducted against the city of Rethymno. It is situated where the Venetian monastery of Agla Varvara used to be. One of its characteristic elements is a fountain, which was used for ritual washing, and also supplying the area with water. In the mosque courtyard the remains of the minaret can also be seen, as well as numerous grave steles, where the founder of the mosque is probably buried.



Guora Gate

The **Guora Gate** (Porta Guora or Grand Gate)) is the main entrance of the Venetian city walls that protected the city of Rethymno. The gate was built in the years of Rector Rettore Jocoopo Guoro (1566-1568). Part of the gate is preserved at the beginning of the street “Ethnikis Antistaseos”. It is 2,60m. wide, built with carved stones with skew acnes, creating a semicircular arc on the top.

Public Garden

The beautiful **Public Garden** is located right in the heart of Rethymno Town and is a true delight for visitors of all ages. The park houses a zoo within it, which gives its visitors to see rich fauna of Crete. The gardens are impressive and famous all over Crete, with many tourists wanting to visit. An ideal spot for a day out with your family, the public garden provides all basic amenities required by its visitors. Perfectly suited for children, the Public Garden aims at being not just a fun experience, but a learning one as well. One of the biggest attractions of the Public Garden is the Cretan Wine festival, held there every year. It lasts for three weeks and takes place every summer, attracting a lot of visitors. The wine is distributed free of cost and is accompanied by traditional Greek and Cretan music.



Rimondi Fountain

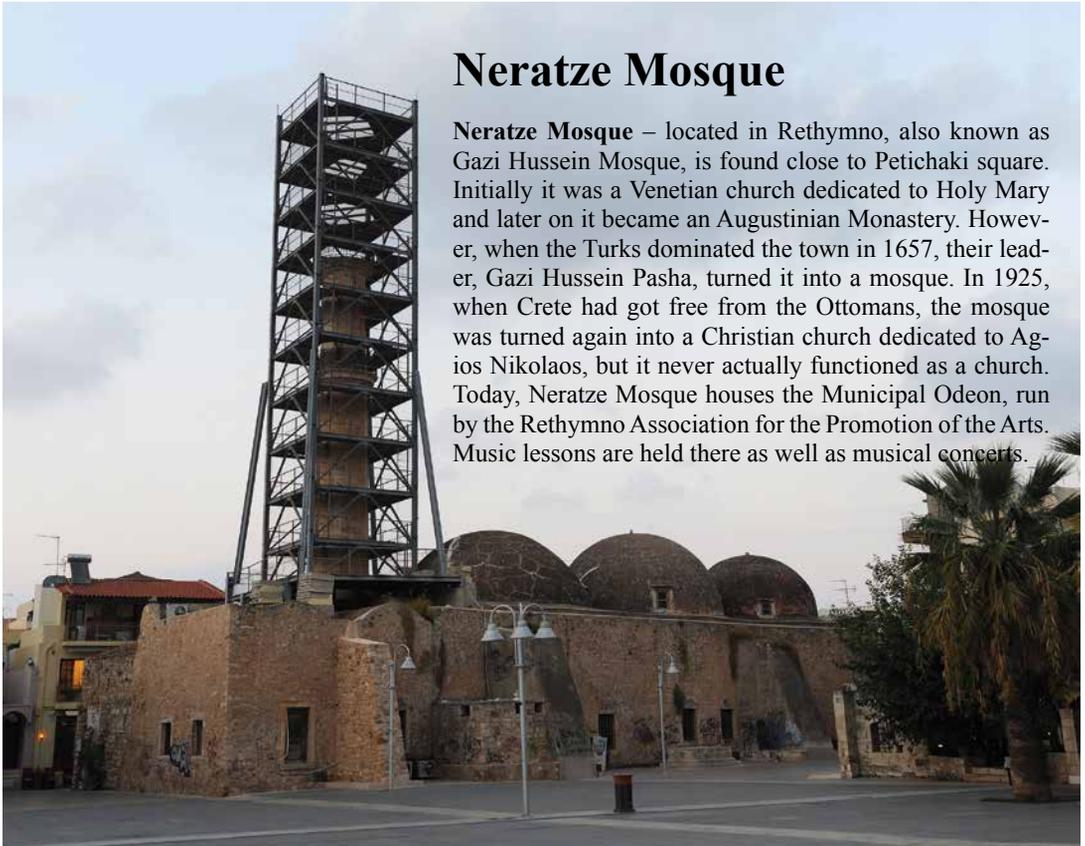
The **Rimondi Fountain** - is located at the north end of Petychaki square, in the center of the old town of Rethymnon. The current fountain stands on the site of an older fountain believed to have existed since 1588. The Venetian governor J. Rimondi started the reconstruction of the current fountain in 1626. During the Venetian Period many towns on Crete suffered severe water shortages. For most practical needs residents collected rain water or by digging wells. However, drinking water for the inhabitants was supplied by public fountains such as the Rimondi Fountain.



lected rain water or by digging wells. However, drinking water for the inhabitants was supplied by public fountains such as the Rimondi Fountain.

Neratze Mosque

Neratze Mosque – located in Rethymno, also known as Gazi Hussein Mosque, is found close to Petichaki square. Initially it was a Venetian church dedicated to Holy Mary and later on it became an Augustinian Monastery. However, when the Turks dominated the town in 1657, their leader, Gazi Hussein Pasha, turned it into a mosque. In 1925, when Crete had got free from the Ottomans, the mosque was turned again into a Christian church dedicated to Agios Nikolaos, but it never actually functioned as a church. Today, Neratze Mosque houses the Municipal Odeon, run by the Rethymno Association for the Promotion of the Arts. Music lessons are held there as well as musical concerts.





Archaeological Museum

Archaeological museum of Rethymno - was founded in 1887 by the Ministry of Education and Science. It is housed in the pentagon building in front of the main gate of the Fortezza fortress. The structure is one of the Turkish bastions, which were created in order to protect the main entrance to the fortress Fortezza. Archaeological finds are exhibited in the museum and include the following collections: vessels of the Neolithic period and early Minoan times found in the area of Rethymno and Melidoni cave, finds from the buildings at Apodoulou, Monastiraki, bronze items, including ammunition from the area of Armeni cemetery; gold jewelry, oil lamps, referring to the Roman period, collection of coins, inscriptions and writings of the region Eleftherna and Ancient Greek sculpture.

Historical and Folklore Museum

Historical and Folklore museum - is located next to the Neratze Mosque. It is an institution of public benefit, founded in 1973 by the President of the Historical and Folklore Institution, Christoforos Stavroulakis, and Fali Vogiatzaki. The museum is housed in a restored Venetian building with an interior courtyard. There



are five halls which exhibits collections such as basket weaving, lace, costumes, ceramics, historic photographs and maps, weapons and coins. Over 5.000 items dating from the 17th to the 20th century are displayed.



Ecclesiastical Museum

Ecclesiastical Museum - is housed in the Cathedral of Rethymnon Town, at Mitropoleos and includes exhibits dated from the 19th and 20th century. The museum was founded in 1994. The small collection includes old objects from churches of Rethymno and interesting coins of the Cretan state (1898-1913), French coins of 1868 and Ottoman coins.



Museum monastery Preveli

Museum monastery Preveli – a large number of icons are kept in this museum. The icons are from the period 17th to the end of 19th century approximately, an era that the good tradition of Crete had been interrupted by the Turkish occupation. During the periods of uprising a great number of valuable monastery items were sold to raise funds for arms and ammunition. The following collections in the museum of the Monastery are Collection of icons, ecclesiastical garments, vessels and heirlooms.



Nikos Xylouris Home

Nikos Xylouris Home - There is one person in the history of Cretan music who stands out because he became well known beyond the island's borders: Nikos Xylouris (Psaronikos), who died an early death but not before becoming one of the most recognizable voices in Greek music and a true symbol of modern Crete. Born in Anogia in 1936, to his village's great musical tradition, Xylouris began working

professionally at the end of the 1950 and rapidly became known as one of the best singers of his generation. Today, part of Nikos Xylouris' house can be visited. More a kafeneion rather than a museum, you can enjoy a cup of hand collected mountain tea together with some local anthotiro cheese and Cretan rusk served by one of his sisters.





Museum of Arkadi

Museum of Arkadi – an Orthodox monastery, situated on a plateau, 23 km south-east from the city of Rethymnon. The monastery played an active role in the Cretan resistance to the Ottoman Empire during the uprising in 1866. About a thousand people, mostly women and children, found refuge in the monastery. After three days of battle on the orders of Abbot Cretans blew up barrels of gunpowder, they chose to sacrifice themselves rather than surrender to the enemy. Today the monastery is a museum which has archaeological artifacts belonging to the famous battle, also exhibited church writings, a separate room devoted to the art gallery. The museum’s collection also consists of Byzantine icons, weapons, ancient manuscripts and other religious and historical relics.



Museum of Cretan Lyra

Museum of Cretan Lyra - is strongly connected with the tradition and music of Crete. The lyra is the traditional musical instrument of the island and visitors will listen to its music in all the villages of Crete, particularly in the inland. This museum is actually a workshop of the Cretan lyra. This workshop was originally founded in 1940 by Manolis Stagakis, a well-respected lyra artist (lyraris). He decided to make a lyra of his own when he could not find the musical instruments of his time. This is how this workshop started and the family tradi-

tion is kept till today. Along the decades, lyras of the Stagakis family were used by the most famous lyra artists of Crete. The Museum of Cretan Lyra is located in the modern part of Rethymnon Town, 2 km from the old part and right next to the Municipal Hospital. Entrance and guide is free.

Paleontological Museum

Paleontological museum – a new museum which exhibits fossils coming from the deep sea areas of Rethymno, Crete, dating from the Paleozoic, the Mesozoic and the Cenozoic period. Very important is the material of endemic elephant bones, deers and old hippopotamus. The aim is to give the visitor the opportunity to under-

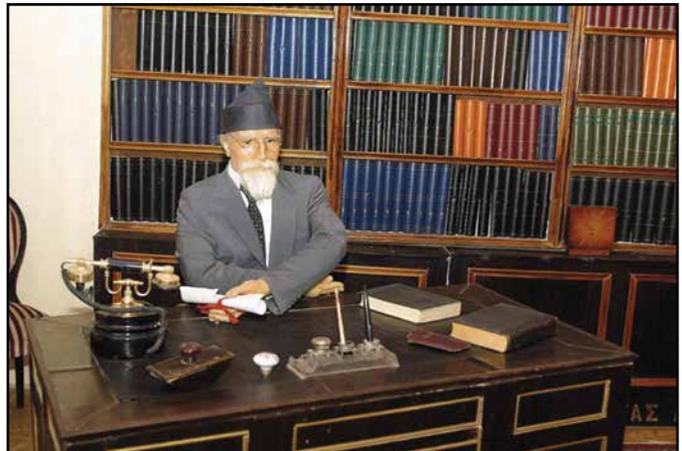


stand the changes that have occurred in Rethymnon environment and the evolution of the geological history of Crete and particularly the prefecture before the appearance of man. The fossils, deer, elephants and hippos that lived before ten thousand years are irrefutable evidence of history in Crete.



Wax Museum

Wax museum – in the village of Zoniana built at an altitude of 650m, on the slopes of Mount Idi, the highest mountain on Crete. Zoniana is located about 45 km from Rethymnon Town and also 43 km from Heraklion Town, therefore it is found between these two towns. This village is a nice excursion to go from both towns, and you will find the Wax Museum at the center of the village. The Wax Museum of Zoniana opened in 1998 by Mr Dionysis Potamianos, a painter and sculptor from Athens. It took him and his wife about 40 years to create these 87 natural size figures that are exhibited in the museum. Apart from these wax figures, the museum also exhibits a large collection of coins and bank notes from various periods, from the Turkish occupation, the period of the Cretan Autonomy at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, and many drachmas, the official currency of Greece which was changed in 2002, after replacing the euro.





Ancient Eleftherna

Ancient Eleftherna - is located at a distance of around 25 km to the SE of Rethymnon and occupies two long, narrow ridges, called Pyrgi and Nissi. Three streams flow around the foot of the hills and join to the north of them. The urban center of ancient Eleutherna was always located at Pyrgi. Ruins of Hellenistic walls and buildings, Roman structures and an

Early Christian basilica are preserved on the east slope of the hill. On the west slope of the hill, at the site called Orthi Petra (standing stone), lies the cemetery of the Late Geometric and Archaic periods, part of which was covered by the Roman buildings. Evidence shows that Eleutherna was one of Crete's most important ancient cities, a capital city of the Geometric and Archaic periods. The city had its own coins in the fourth century BC. In the third century BC, Eleutherna fought against Rhodes and its ally Knossos. In 220 BC, when the Cretan cities fought against each other, Eleutherna sided with Knossos, but a siege forced it to break the alliance. In 68 BC, when the Roman general Metellus attacked Eleutherna, the city managed to resist for some time because of its location, but was finally conquered through treason.





Zominthos

Zominthos - is a major archaeological site, a once-flourishing Minoan settlement (1900-1400 BC) on Mount Psiloritis in Crete. Archaeologist Yannis Sakellarakis has been excavating Zominthos for the past 5 years and, according to him, the dig is set to continue for many more years, bringing to light important finds which

will add greatly to our knowledge of the Minoan civilization. Zominthos is in the Mt Ida range, on Mt Psiloritis in the center of Crete. It dominates the Zominthos Plateau, at an altitude of 1187 m above sea level and 7,5km west of Anogia on the road to the Nida Plateau. In Minoan times the sacred road from the Palace of Knossos to the sacred Ideon Cave passed through Zominthos.

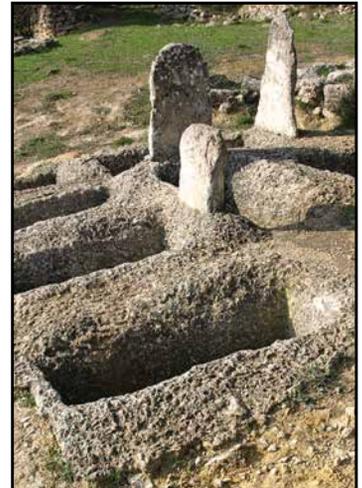


Cemetery of Armeni

Cemetery of Armeni - is located 8 kilometers south of Rethymno on the road to Spili and Agia Galini and one of the most interesting findings of archaeologists on the island of Crete. It is believed that there are more than 220 tombs. Most graves date back to 13-12 centuries BC. Almost

every individual burial place, was

with a few exceptions. The ancient Cretans believed in the after-life and its unity with life on Earth. The dead were buried in small coffins in an embryo form, symbolizing the birth of his life in the beyond. Scientists believe that many ritual elements were borrowed from the Egyptians. The tomb chambers many ritual offerings were found, ornaments, some of which are melted down and placed on the forehead of the deceased in form of plates. Among the graves one stands out, the so-called tholos tomb. It is carved into the rock and has a diameter of 15 meters tomb. These tombs were found near the villa of Agia Triada and it seems that they are more ancient than the rest of the ancient burial cemetery.



Patsou Gorge

This impressive **gorge Patsou** is located in the northwestern part of the area Amari. It is a gorge that crosses a small river. The length reaches two kilometers while to traverse it one would need two hours in total return. The height difference between the highest point of the entrance

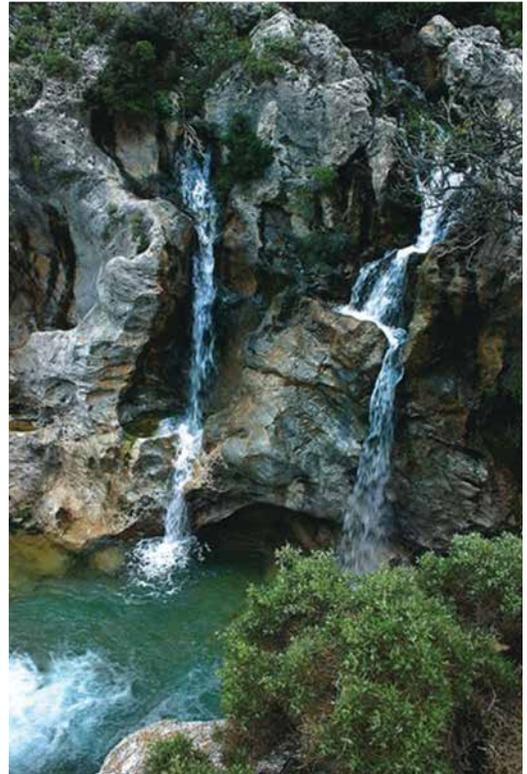


reaches 240 meters. Inside you be impressed by the huge trees and lush vegetation that grows in the river bed, the rest areas, the tall walls and the chapel of St. Anthony built in large cave.



Kroutaliotiko Gorge

Kroutaliotiko Gorge - is one of the most beautiful gorges of Crete. On both sides of the cliffs which in many places reaches 300 meters high. The length reaches 2.5 km. The canyon is almost bare of vegetation, composed of limestone rocks and along the many small caves. It is a nesting area and feeding area of many rare species of birds, especially birds of prey, for this reason it is considered an important area. In the middle of the canyon on the west side in a cave, is a small picturesque church.



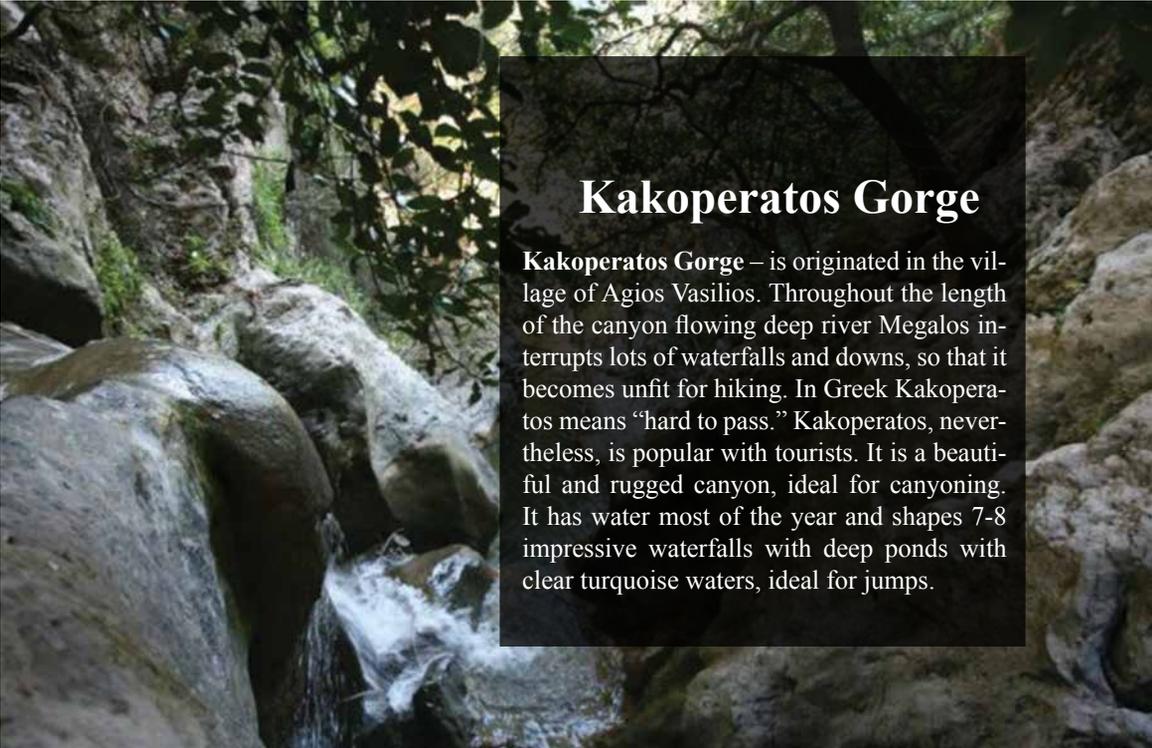
Smiliano Gorge

The **Smiliano gorge** in the is located north of the vil-
lage Ano Meros and approximately 45 km southeast
of the city of Rethymno. The Ligiotis River, flow-
ing out from Gerakari, passes through the gorge.
The gorge is 2.5 km long, starts at the village Vrises
near the abandoned settlement of Smilé, the name
of which it comes from. Pretty rough and wild, es-
pecially at the beginning, the Smiliano gorge, or
else Kalamafka, is the ideal destination for all the
canyoning-lovers in early summer, since there are
a lot of waterfalls with very deep lakes beneath,
ideal for “jumps”. The biggest “jump” is about 15
meters tall, probably the tallest in Crete. At some
parts, the Smiliano gorge narrows and requires the
use of ropes or, alternatively, parallel hiking along
the slopes of the gorge.



Kakoperatos Gorge

Kakoperatos Gorge – is originated in the vil-
lage of Agios Vasilios. Throughout the length
of the canyon flowing deep river Megalos in-
terrupts lots of waterfalls and downs, so that it
becomes unfit for hiking. In Greek Kakopera-
tos means “hard to pass.” Kakoperatos, never-
theless, is popular with tourists. It is a beauti-
ful and rugged canyon, ideal for canyoning.
It has water most of the year and shapes 7-8
impressive waterfalls with deep ponds with
clear turquoise waters, ideal for jumps.



Myli Gorge

Myli Gorge – This gorge is a fairly easy gorge to walk and starts at the small village Xiro Chorio. The greenery in the gorge is absolutely stunning and the trail is beautiful. The whole area feels like a jungle with foliage all around, it even has a small creek. In between the amazing green-



ery you will see small empty houses and a tiny deserted village. Many small churches can be discovered as well.



Petres Gorge

Petres Gorge - is located 13km west of Rethymno and its mouth is situated on the beach of Episkopi. The river of the gorge is fed by the waters of Kollita Gorges and the surrounding area, covering almost half Rethymnon Prefecture. It has water all year round. The narrow part of it is quite small and is approximately

1km long. It starts near the village Karoti and despite its small length it is surely worth a visit. It is accessible by everyone and its ideal for swimming in the ponds formed along it, however fences have been installed to keep goats inside.



Zoniana Gorge

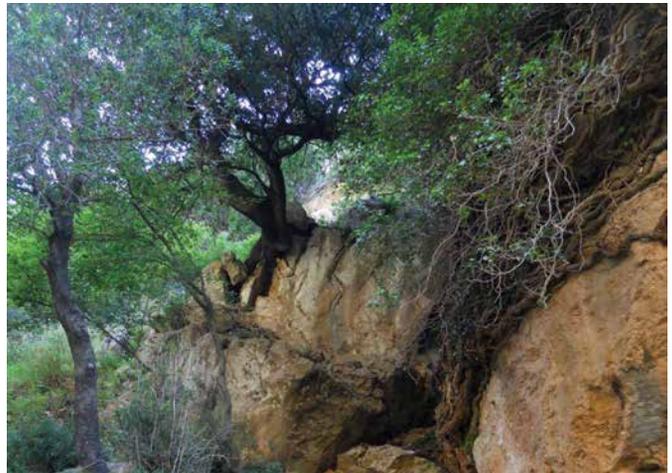
Zoniana Gorge - is located south of the village Zoniana and considered one of the most accessible gorges. Starting at an altitude of 950 meters and ending at the village at an altitude of 650 meters, the Gorge of Zoniana is surrounded by wild natural landscape passing through the rock layers, while many trees have grown vertically into the slopes of its narrow points. The river Oaxis is passing through the Gorge of Zoniana, full-



flowing in the spring, completely dry in summer. In the final section of the gorge near the village, the walls open, creating a narrow valley. It's easy and safe for hiking.

Prassano Gorge

Prassano gorge - starts south of Prasses village offers a three-hour drive through spectacular rock walls and some relatively inaccessible accesses that make the passage very interesting. Ends in Platanias at the north beach east of Rethymnon.



Arkadi Gorge

Arkadi Gorge - The gorge starts just north of the Arkadi monastery and after a scenic route of 2 hours (some parts along the bed of the gorge as it is inaccessible), it ends near the village Pikris, where you can admire important Venetian architectural monuments. In the gorge with the natural beauty, you will have the opportunity to admire representative species of Cretan flora and fossils.

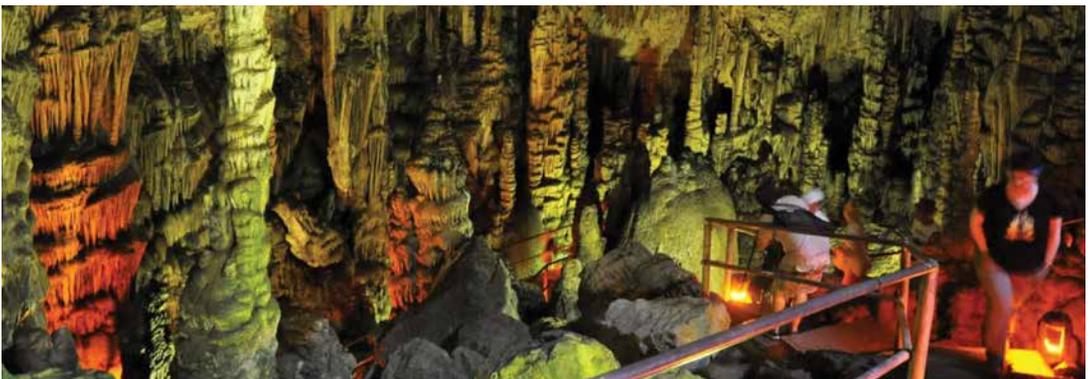
Ideon Andron Cave

The **Ideon Cave** or Ideon Andron is found on Mt Ida or Psiloritis, the highest mountain in Crete. The Ideon Cave is one of the greatest cave sanctuaries in Crete, as important as the major Greek temples. It flourished in antiquity (4000 BC to the 1st century AD). The Ideon Cave was famous for being the place where Zeus, the Father of the Gods, was born and grew up. The Ideon Cave is on the east side of Mount Ida in central Crete, at an altitude of 1,498 metres. The cave is 20 kilometres after the village of Anogia and a few metres higher than the Nida Plateau. On entering the Ideon Andron Cave you find yourself in the main chamber, which is 40 meters long and 50 wide. The chamber has been excavated twice, the first time by Federico Halbherr in 1885 and the second by Yannis Sakellarakis in 1982.



Sfendoni Cave

Sfendoni cave - it is located near Zoniana village and one of the most impressive caves in Greece. You will need at least a map or a local person to guide you to the cave because it is so big, with different chambers and corridors as well as slippery paths. Its surface is bigger than 3,400 m² and it consists of many chambers decorated with stalagmites and stalactites which create various shapes, such as big pillars that look to have been constructed by talented architects. Stalagmites have turned to huge delicate sculptures over the years. Sometimes they are conjunct to the stalactites creating glyphic walls.



Melidoni Cave



Melidoni Cave - is located in 2 km north-west of the village of the same name. From the Stone Age until the arrival of the Romans to the island of the gods it was worshiped. Many finds, some of which are exhibited in the Archaeological Museum in Rethymnon - is one of the reasons to visit Melidoni. There are many reasons to go there. One of them - it's incredible natural beauty. Hanging stalactites, stalagmites sticking out like thousands of teeth in the

mouth of a huge cave. Melidoni has three large rooms, but only one is open to see. Attention when you are going on very slippery rocks. During the time of Turkish occupation of Crete rebel groups often hide in caves and mountains. In 1834, about 20 rebels and 370 residents of the village of Melidoni hid from the Turks in this cave. Many had died in the cave from Turkish attacks. Each year, in a small chapel near Melidoni people gather to honor the dead.

Gerani Cave

Gerani cave - is a beautiful cave in the prefecture of Rethymno and it is located 7 km west of Rethymnon, at the location "Kamari" and close to the beach of Gerani. The cave was accidentally discovered on March 15, 1969 during construction works for the modern highway. The area covered by the cave is 1200 m and is divided into six chambers. The five rooms are sequential and are separated by large stalactites and stalagmites. The roof is full of thousands of small snow-white stalactites resembling to frozen, fossilized rain. The sixth chamber is parallel to the first left. There was the natural entrance of the cave.



Mougkri Cave

Mougkri Cave – is located in the village Sisses 44 km from Rethymno. Known to the locals the cave covers an area of 2 acres. The findings were at least from the Minoan era, also found inscription in Roman letters. The cave is quite impressive with decoration curtains, stalactites, stalagmites. It includes a total of 5 large halls and intense slope at some points becomes vertical. After the entrance on your right there is a small rooms where bats nest just in front of the entrance hall and in the distance stands the large cave hall.



Psiloritis mountain

Psiloritis mountain – or Ida is the highest mountain on Crete (5 peaks, the highest is Timios Stavros 8057 ft-2456m). In ancient times its slopes were covered with forests that gradually disappeared due to soil erosion and earthquakes. Entrances to ancient caves of Ideon Andron, Kamares cave, Sfedoni and Melidoni caves are located on the slopes of Mount Ida. Mt Ida used to be a holy mountain in Minoan Crete and many myths were strongly attached to it. In Christian years there was a stone-made church built on top of Psiloritis, the church of the Holy Cross. On September 14th, the day of the Holy Cross, there is a celebration on the summit of Timios Stavros (Ida). On the previous day people from all over Crete walk all the way to the top together with a priest and spend the night there. Next morning (September 14th) they join the ceremony inside the little church. The main part of the mountain is a rocky place with no trees at all and there are no plants above 2000m. There is no water either. As a result, trekking on Ida in summer time is an exhausting experience due to the high temperatures and the lack of any shadow and water.



Kedros mountain

Kedros mountain - is located southwest of Psiloritis, with the valley of Amari shaped between them. The highest peak reaches 1777m. From afar it seems to have a conical shape (kentri), after which it takes its name. The mountains are mostly rocky, with bare rocks and wild gorges. At first you might see that the vegetation is very poor. Vegetation although limited in bushes and brushwood, consists of endemic and rare



varieties of plants such as tulips, anemones, orchids, hyacinths, etc. Also, the steep and inaccessible slopes are perfect shelters for rare birds of prey such as hawks, vultures and golden eagles. Ideal for those who love climbing.

Amari Valley

Amari Valley - is formed between the Mountains Kedros and Psiloritis, at an altitude of 400-500m and is 25km long. It is the passage from the north to south Rethymno and Messara Plain. For its central location used to be a theater of several historical events, especially during the Ottoman rule. Amari is one of the areas of Crete with the most rainfalls. Platys River starts from Amari and exits in Agia Galini and there is one of the largest dams in Crete, the dam of Potami. The fertile valley of Amari hosts many rare species of Cretan flora, such as in the natural "Botanic Garden" Gious Kambos plateau, north of Kedros Mountain.





Potami Lake

The lake of **Potami** is shaped by the Potami dam, in Amari plain. It was built in 2008. The dam is located in the verdant valley of Amari, 25km south of Rethymno. This new lake has a capacity of 23 million cubic meters and is one of the most important wetlands in the southeast Mediterranean. Already, many species of birds and animals have appeared in the area. You can visit the dam and admire the beautiful scenery.



Orne Pond

Orne Pond - The pond of Orne village is located at an altitude of 300m at the southeastern slopes of Mount Kedros, only 500m northeast of the village Orne. The distance from Rethymnon is about 50km. This small natural lake is formed in the winter by the spring waters of the area transferred from the snowy peaks of Kedros. It is shaped at a small recess of the land covering an area of approximately 10 acres, surrounded by dense olive groves. In summer the area gets dry.

Georgioupoli

Church of Georgioupoli - The church of St George in the centre of Kournas, a settlement with interesting folk architecture. It was built at the end of the 12th century, originally with the style of the three part, wood roofed basilica with a silicon with a narthex and blind arches on the lateral sides. In around 1230 was added in the south the single-room, wood roofed part of Christ. It was found that at first full-body saints were

painted in the lower parts of the walls and scenes from the Gospels in the upper parts. The representation of the Apostles' Communion is preserved in a very good condition. There is also a representation of a extra-sized Christ the Light-Giver, with the Mother of Christ and John the Precursor in a smaller scale.



Agia Anna Amari

Santa Anna in Amari - The Byzantine church of Agia Anna contains some of the oldest dated inscription frescoes in Crete (1225). The frescoes from walls are faded and not at all impressive, but the church is very cleverly placed in the green area. It is a one-aisled church with arches.



Virgin Mary in Thronos

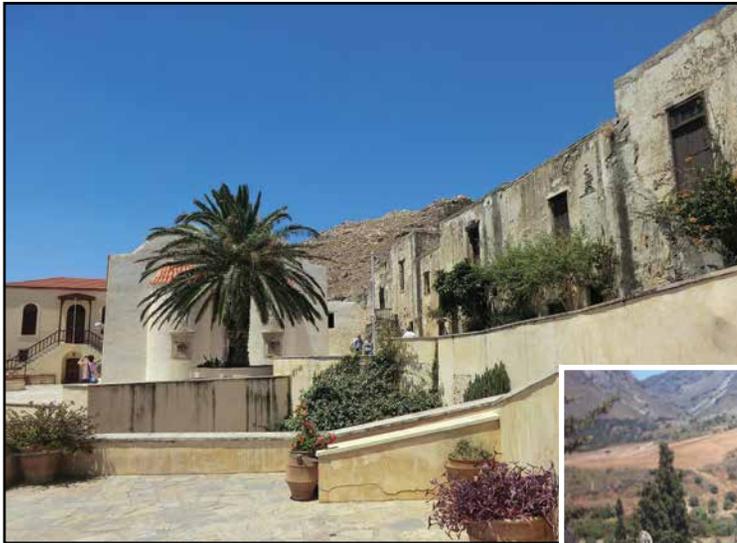
Virgin Mary in Thronos - The church of Virgin (Our Lady), located at the village Thronos at Amari province is a single-aisled vaulted church built around 1300. The temple was built on the ruins of an early Christian basilica of the 4th century, from which mosaics are preserved.



Asomaton Monastery

The **Asomaton Monastery** is dedicated to the Gathering of the Angels and is built in a beautiful landscape in the center of Asomathianos plain. The monastery was built around the 10th-11th century and was then destroyed by the Arabs. Founded again and then destroyed again by the Turks when they took over Crete.

During the Turkish occupation, it played a major role. In 1927 the monastery housed the Agricultural School, which is today a research center.



most sacred part of the Holy Diocese of Lambis and Sfakion, which the spiritual jurisdiction belongs. The monastery is consisted of two main building complexes, the Lower (Kato) Monastery of Saint John the Baptist and the Rear (Pisso) Monastery of Saint John the Theologian which is in operation today. The Preveli Monastery and its dependencies cover a large estate land of the Phoenix Municipality towards the Libyan sea and along the Great River. The Monastery has a glorious history due to the active and leading involvement of the monks in all national activities for freedom and education of the people. There is recognition and respect throughout the island of Crete.

Preveli Monastery

Preveli Monastery - is located at the south of Prefecture of Rethymnon and it is the





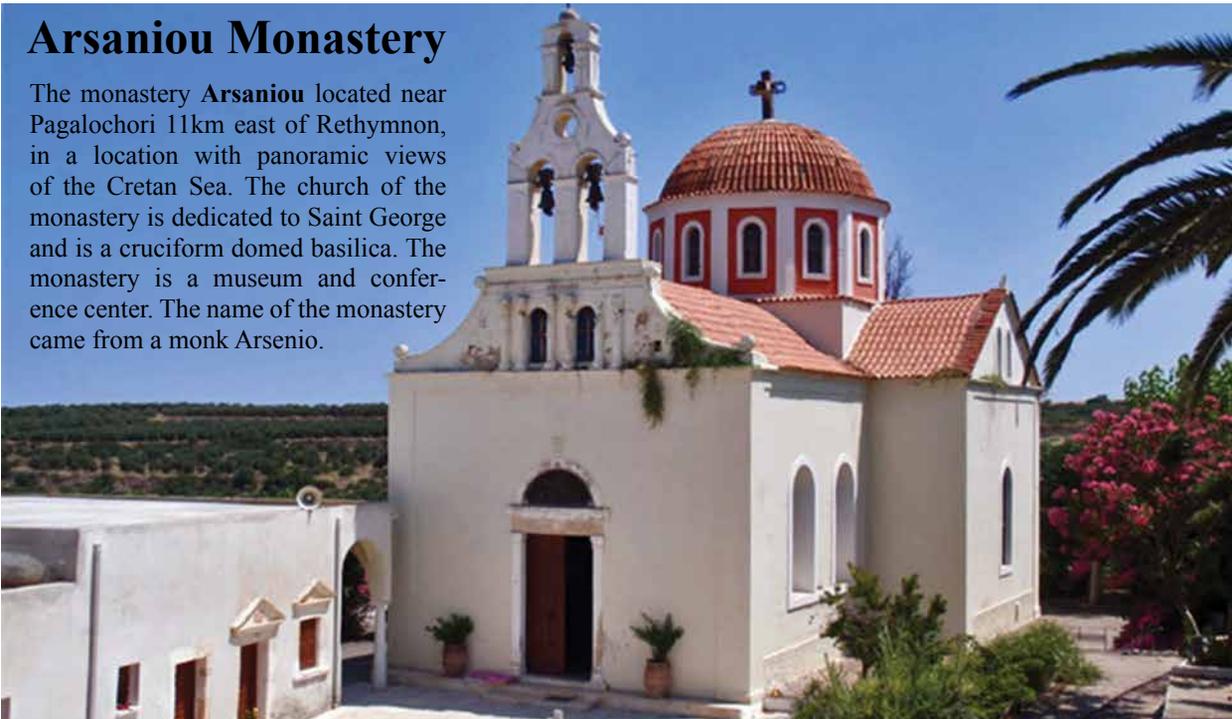
Arkadi Monastery

Arkadi Monastery - one of the most revered shrines. It's name forever entered the history of the Greek struggle for national independence from the Turkish invasion. It is believed that the first monastery appeared here in the 9th century, but the earliest Arkadi is dated to the 14th century. The monastery is located 23 kilometers south-west of Rethymno and

stands at around 500 meters above sea level. The monastery is quite large and its high walls relate to a fortress. This holy place has been well-known from the events of November, 1866, when Crete had rebelled against the Turks, dominating the island for the past 200 years. When the Turkish soldiers violated the monastery after many hours of siege, the besiegers with a monk as leader put on fire a room filled with gunpowder. The explosion, which killed all the people inside the monastery and most of the Turkish soldiers, was a desperate act of the besiegers to remain free and not fall in the hands of their enemies. This act symbolizes the Cretan liberation and makes the Monastery of Arkadi one of the most famous monasteries in Crete.

Arsaniou Monastery

The monastery **Arsaniou** located near Pagalochori 11km east of Rethymnon, in a location with panoramic views of the Cretan Sea. The church of the monastery is dedicated to Saint George and is a cruciform domed basilica. The monastery is a museum and conference center. The name of the monastery came from a monk Arsenio.



Agia Iринi Monastery

Monastery Santa Iринi

Located at an altitude of 630m south of the village Krousonas at the foot of Psiloritis and was one of the richest monasteries in the early years of Ottoman rule.

The founding date is not known, however, mentioned in documents from the 16th century. In

documents also indicated that the monastery, the Venetian, belonged to Mudazzo family. Also shows that the monastery and operated as a school. In 1822 the monks were killed, the monastery was destroyed and property was given to the Monastery Kera. The reconstruction of the monastery was in 1940, monks returned in 1944. Dedicated to Agia Iринi, today it operates as a nunnery.



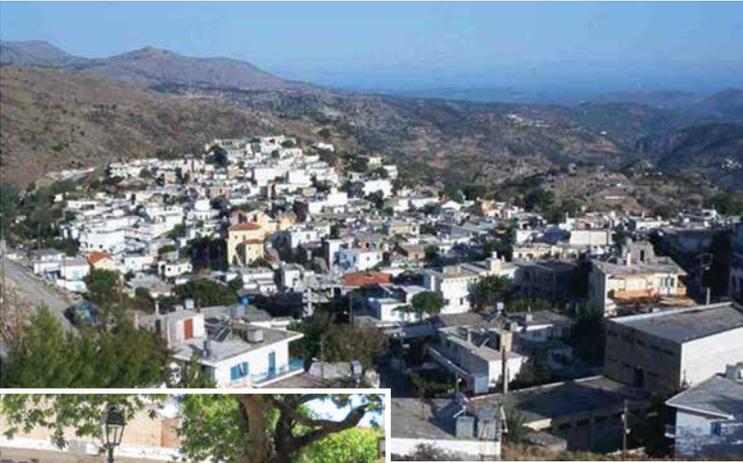
Virgin Mary Monastery

The Monastery of **Virgin Mary** (Panagia) Antifonitria is located in Miriokefala, a small mountainous village 29 km south west of Rethymnon Town, in the borders between the prefectures of Rethymnon and Chania. It is said that this monastery was founded in the 11th century by Saint John Xenos, who has also

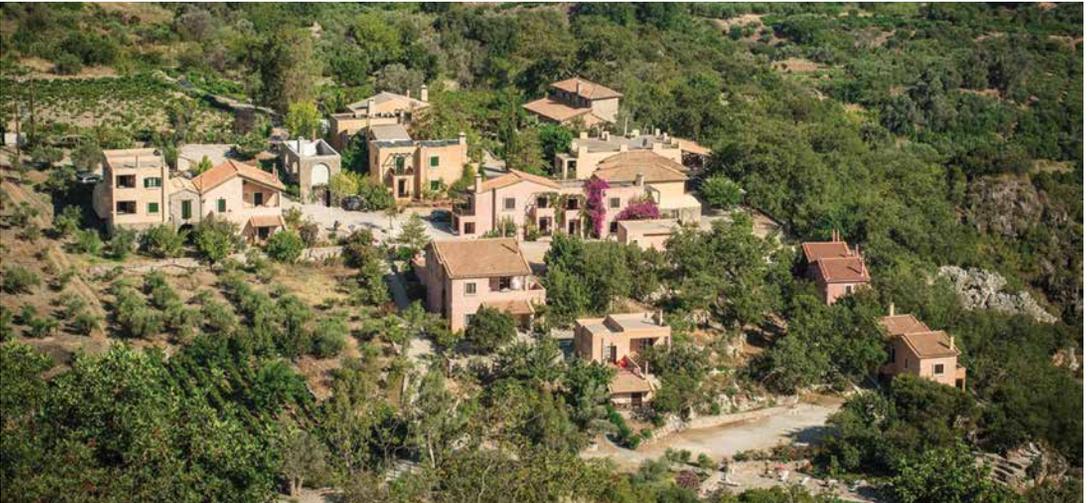
founded many other monasteries around Crete. According to tradition, the monastery was established after Saint John heard a voice coming from a bush in that spot going Here I am! Here I am!. Under that bush, he found an icon of Virgin Mary, which was said to be miraculous. From this incident, the monastery was named Antifonitria, meaning she who shouts.

Anogia

Anogia - is considered as one of the most attractive, picturesque mountainous villages of Crete. It stands at an altitude of 750 metres on Mount Psiloritis, the highest mountain of Crete, and about 50 km east of Rethymno. Due to its location, the village remains very strong in authentic character, the local customs, traditional costumes and they speak the old Cretan dialect. Birthplace of the famous Cretan singer and composer Nikos Xilouris, Anogia has a great musical tradition and many excellent singers. A culture festival always takes place every middle of August. You will find traditional tavernas and kafeneions as well as a few accommodations.



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Axos

Axos – is a village in the province of Mylopotamos on the northern slopes of Mt. Psiloritis with a population of around 727. It is located on the road from Rethymno to Anogeia at a distance of around 44km from Rethymno. The name of the village comes from the original ancient city of Axos which was built close to the present day village. Ancient Axos was one of the most well preserved city states in western Crete during the Classic Period. According to mythology, the founder of the city was the legendary hero, Oaxos, who was the grandson of Minoas and Passiphae. Places of interest to see in and around Axos include the site of the ancient city, Minoan slabs of clay which the ancient inhabitants used to mark during voting, the ruins of Cyclopean walls and the Byzantine church of Agia Irini which was built in the first years of the Venetian occupation. Visit also the museum of wooden sculptures of Axos.

Argyroupoli

Argyroupoli - is located 21 km southwest from Rethymnon, at an altitude of over 700 meters and is picturesque mountain village with about 400 residents. Characteristic of the village architecture are the many houses built in ancient architectural. The village is connected with the revolution of 1878, because this was declared the union



of Crete with Greece.

Outside the village, you can visit the ancient Lappa city flourished during the Hellenistic and Roman times and several of their currencies. Visit the exotic location “Sources” with lush vegetation of plane trees, small beautiful waterfalls, ponds, brooks with crystal clear spring waters. Perfect

location for coffee, drink, or delicious food in an environment that really opens the appetite.

Spili



Spili - the village is about 30 km south of Rethymnon, at an altitude of 430 m, at the foot of the mountain Vorizis. The population of this town is less than a thousand people, the number of residents increases due to summer tourism. Most residents Spili - are farmers. The village has a favorable geographical position, so there is well-developed infrastructure: a lot of banks, supermarkets and shops, medical centers and police stations. In the center of Spili is a well-known area Kefalovrisi the famous fountain avenue and

sycamore trees. Fountains in the form of lions’ heads (25 pieces) constantly circulating cool drinking water. The lush vegetation of the village is supported by full-flowing mountain rivers and streams.



Maroulas

Maroulas - is a quiet village situated on the heights above Rethymno, facing the sea at an altitude of 150 metres and surrounded by greenery, a spring and several valleys. The olive groves and presses of Maroulas were very important for the local economy. The village attracts many painters and photographers with its narrow alleys, old doors, door knobs, stone mosaics. Now Maroulas is an ideal place where you can stroll, meet with the locals and enjoy its tavernas and cafes.



Stavromenos

Stavromenos - is a small settlement of the sandy beach in Rethymno, 11km away from Rethymno downtown. Stavromenos has a fully organized beach ideal for

families if you to spend relaxing vacation away from the tourist resorts.. There are more excellent sandy beaches between Stavromenos and the town of Rethymnon.

Chromonastiri

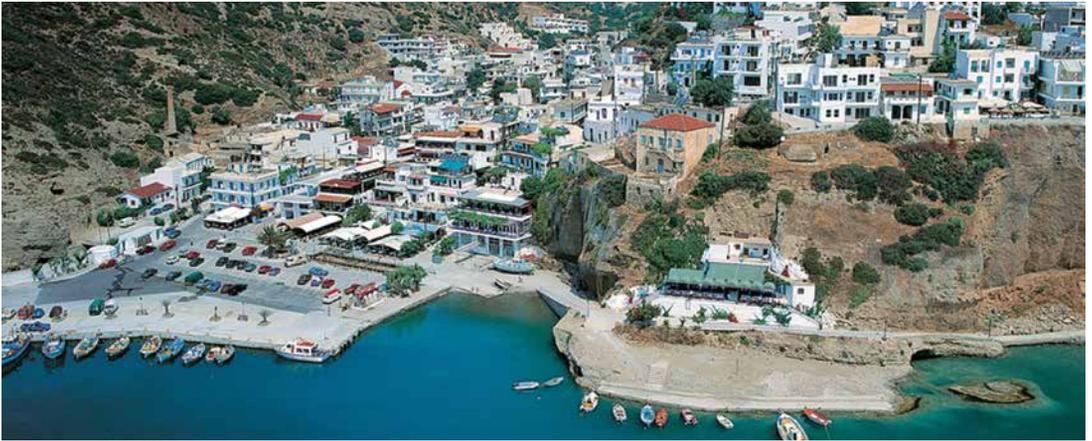
Chromonastiri - located 12 km from Rethymnon, at an altitude of 360 meters on the outskirts of Vrisinas Chromonastiri. It is one of the most important historical settlements of Rethymno. A very picturesque village surrounded by beautiful mountain scenery. In the village center there is a remarkable collection of folkloric character and is housed in Mill Prinari.





Agios Pavlos beach

The seaside village of Agios Pavlos is located 58 km south of Rethymno, west of Agia Galini. You can reach here through Akoumia or Sachtouria villages. It is a very quiet place, hidden in a closed bay, is ideal for family holidays and relaxation. The bay is a beautiful beach with deep green waters and the wild beauty of the region offers amazing beaches making it a special place to visit. There are several rooms and taverns, facilities with umbrellas, sunbeds and a market so you do not miss anything necessary for your holiday.



Ag.Galini beach

Agia Galini - a popular seaside resort located 61 km south-east of Rethymno and 68 km south-west of Heraklion, on the southern shore of the Amari Valley. The name Agia Galini in Greek means “Sacred Serenity” - means that this place is very peaceful and the sea always calm. Excellent pebbly beaches and picturesque harbor village to attract thousands of tourists each year. The village itself Agia Galini is located on a hillside, near the mouth of the deep Platis river, starting in the near village Tronos. View of the village falls in the Messara bay and the Libyan Sea. On the south side of the village is bordered by wild cliffs, quite a few popular beaches are located along the shoreline of Agia Galini, as well as several caves, which are often organized tours. The village is well-developed infrastructure, everywhere you can find banks, supermarkets, health centers, post offices and so on.



Ag.Georgios beach

Agios Georgios beach- is a secluded beach situated 62 km south east of Rethymno town and close to Agia Galini. It can be reached by boat from Agia Galini. There are no tourist facilities in Agios Georgios. No umbrellas, sunbeds, fish taverns or accommodation are found on the beach. It is just a secluded cove to enjoy some privacy, away from big crowds and to relax.



Bali beach

Bali - a small quiet village, famous for the beautiful scenery and peaceful atmosphere. The village is located at a distance from large cities (45 km from Heraklion and 28 km from Rethymno) attracts families with children and older couples. Around Bali there are three small coves with pebble beaches, there is a small number of taverns and restaurants just off the coast, large shops and supermarkets are located mainly in the center of the area. From Bali many excursions to the islands of Santorini and Gramvousa are sent. Not far from the village of Bali, you can see the Monastery of St. John the Baptist and has a beautiful view of the sea.



Panormo beach

Panormo - a small fishing village and popular beach resort in the north of the island of Crete, 22 km from Rethymnon. It is a tourist resort and is becoming more popular every year. In Panormo there is traditional way of life, which gives the incredible charm of the village. S great place for walking along the sea, many tourists even go fishing. Cultural institutions are constantly being built in the village. Several years ago they have built a large church. Before the village there are three comfortable beaches located. On one of them into the rock you will notice a small church. Two other beaches are located a little away from Panormo, but they are also equipped with sun loungers and parasols.



Korakas beach

Rodakino - the village is located 45 km southeast of Rethymnon, at the exit of a canyon that descends from Mount Kryoneritis, a few miles west of Plakias and east of Frangokastello. This traditional village is spread out on both sides of the gorge, which separates the Upper and Lower where overlooks the deep blue of the Libyan Sea. It is believed that the name of the village came from a Peach tree that grew here despite the dry climate. You will meet calm beaches. To visit them you need to take the road leading to **Korakas**. Although it has a large beach front, Rodakino is very developed developed, keeping its traditional form, very quiet and relaxing.



Damnoni beach

Damnoni beach - One of the nicest sandy beaches of Crete Damnoni is around 6km to the east of Plakias. There are some facilities like umbrellas, sun beds and sea sports and a couple of taverns. Accommodation is also available. Within walking distance to the east there are two smaller beaches nestled in small coves. A little further is the beach of Shinaria which is very popular for divers.



Plakias beach

Plakias – a big beautiful village surrounded by steep hills and attractive landscapes. On the western side of the village there is a beautiful harbor and a large beach, surrounded by dense thickets of tamarisk trees. Plaka is somewhat different from the traditional Greek villages: there are no old houses, ancient and original buildings, the streets are no goats, which are so often found in the Cretan villages. Plakia is a modern holiday village, with many restaurants and shops. Most of the hotels here provide all sorts of amenities for travelers. Despite such a developed infrastructure, Plaka is a quiet and peaceful village. The main beach of the village quite spacious, with clean, golden sand and turquoise clear waters.



Triopetra beach

Triopetra - is 52 km south of Rethymnon and 13 km south east from the village Akoumia. It has sand, crystal clear waters and magnificent sunsets, perfect location for peace, relaxation and privacy. The main feature of the three impressive rocks that pop up through the blue sea, consists of two beaches, Great Triopetra west and Little Triopetra to the east. Very few facilities at the back two tavernas and rooms for rent.



Kerames beach

Kerames beach - The village Kerames is located 49km south of Rethymno, close to the village Agalianos. South of the village are many beautiful beaches, with the most famous being the beaches of Akoumiani Gialia, namely Ligres, Triopetra and St. Paul sand hills. The beachfront north of Akoumiani Gialia is called Keramiani Gialia, meaning Keramean Beach, named after the nearby village.



Ligres beach

Ligres is located 51km south of Rethymno and 7km south of the village Kerames, at the foot of the imposing mount of Siderotas. It is actually the northbound part of the beachfront called Akoumiani Gialia. Ligres is a vast beach with sand and fantastic deep sea. The development of tourism has kept it away, making it one of the nicest beaches on the island. The beach is not organized, but there are taverns and a few rooms on the west part of the beach, which can be accessed by car through a bad asphalt road. At the west end of the beach there is a beautiful waterfall having water all year round, which falls next to the sea.



Preveli beach

Preveli - The gorge that forms the river “megapotamos” ends at the Libyan Sea creating a small lagoon at its mouth. This lagoon, which the locals call “Lake” is surrounded by palm trees and rich vegetation and is one of the most attractive places in Crete. In the past it used to be the ideal place for camping and naturalism. The sea is clean with a dazzling range of green and blue colors and the beach has fine white sand. Preveli beach is accessible only by foot or by boat. There are two footpaths leading to Preveli beach, one from Preveli monastery (west) and the other from Drimiskiano Ammoudi (east), both are only a few minutes walk. Some organized cruises start from Plakias or Agia Galini to bring visitors to Preveli beach, which can be fairly crowded during the high season. Visitors can buy refreshments rent sun-beds, umbrellas and puddle boats from the canteen. The area belongs to the NATURA network and is protected by the authorities. Staying overnight is officially prohibited.





Ammoudi beach

Ammoudi - a beach located 32km south of Rethymno and 4km east of Plakias. To get there, you have to drive by paved road from the village Lefkogia. The paved road leads to the first beach of the area, Ammoudi. The beach is little organized, with umbrellas and some taverns and rooms nearby. Moreover, in Amoudi you can find a scuba diving center. Ammoudi has thick white sand and rocky seabed, ideal for diving and snorkeling, and the waters have a bright green color. Next to the beach there are many tamarisk trees, under which you can find shade and camp.



Skinaria beach

Skinaria beach (or Shinaria) is located 33km south of Rethymno, 3km south of the village Lefkogia, in the east part of the wider Plakias area. The beach is relatively unknown to most locals, but for its few visitors it remains paradise and is one of the best beaches of Crete. The beach is slightly organized, with a tavern offering a few umbrellas and refreshments. The beach can be accessed via a narrow road that starts from Lefkogia. As you head to Plakias from Rethymnon, when you meet the taverns “Stelios” and “Vassilis” in Lefkogia turn left. There are also signs showing you the way. The very narrow road that starts from Lefkogia leads to the beach after 2km. On the way to the beach, you’ll see an amazing cylindrical cave on your left hand, inside a rock.



Pigianos Kampos beach

Pigianos Kampos beach - is located about 8 km east of Rethymnon Town, on the way to Heraklion. It is a long sandy beach with crystalline waters, well-organized with umbrellas and sunbeds and some days it is affected by the strong winds, the so called meltemia. There are trees along the coast to provide some nice shade to the visitors. It is not developed as other beaches of Crete such as Panormos and Platanes, but still it has some hotels and fish taverns.



Adelianos Kampos beach

Adelianos Kampos - is located on the flat plains, 6 km east of Rethymnon. The name of the village means “Valley of Adele”: the village is located near the traditional village of the same name. Before the village there is a spacious sandy beach, extending from the bay of Rethymnon and ending near the village of Skaleta. In Adelianos Kambos is a lot of comfortable apartments, hotels, various shops, many restaurants, clubs, cafes and taverns. The main beach of the village is equipped and organized with sun loungers, umbrellas, showers. The sea is shallow, however, often the oncoming waves attracts water sports fans.



Adele beach

Adele - is at a distance of approximately 8 Km east of Rethymnon town located on the road to the Monastery of Arkadi. It is a beautiful small village built in an altitude of 70m above sea level with a population of 350 people. You will see the narrow streets strolling around the village and will come upon beautiful picturesque house yards, freshly whitewashed houses, historical churches and tasteful traditional coffee shops.



Geropotamos beach

Geropotamos beach - located 18 km from the city of Rethymno. It is a small beach, in a closed bay with pebbles, sand and many rocks. Although located in a secluded bay, it is sometimes opened to strong winds blowing in the region, common among the beaches of the northern coast of Crete. The beach water is crystal clear but cold, however, and on the east side of the river flows, which gave its name to the beach.



Petres beach

Petres beach- this small rocky beach is located 12 km west of Rethymno town. It is often quiet as only locals tend to visit these unbelievable crystalline and clean waters. A fantastic tavern is located nearby and offers incredibly fresh fish and tasty local specialties. This paradise of taste attracts a lot of locals.



Misiria beach

Misiria beach - of Rethymno, within walking distance from the city center, just 3 km to the east and on the long sandy beach. Access is only possible by regular and frequent bus service, taxi and rented or private cars and motorbikes. Very close to the beach you will find restaurants, cafes, etc. Nice sandy beach but some days with strong winds so beware of sea currents.



Rethymnon's Carnival

It's been one century, since a group of people from Rethymno – with optimistic mood and open heart to every pleasant challenge – decides to put some colour to the everyday life of the city, during the Carnival season.

So, in 1914 the first Carnival of Rethymno was organized, bringing the original mark of the intentions of the people of Rethymno. Through the years, these intentions turned into actions that exceeded every time the expectations of their inspirers and finally turned to be an amazing event: the Carnival of Rethymno, a live organism, tending to reverse the natural route of life: the “older” it's getting the better it is becoming!





This year's carnival subject is focused on this inversion and invites whoever deeply hopes for better days, whoever sees rainbow colors beyond grey to be part of the large, emotional and fresh Team of the Carnival of Rethymno and share, create, have fun and experience things that nobody wants to miss.

We invite you to create and share this experience, having in our mind and our heart the fact that when people cooperate, every day becomes special and life itself becomes more beautiful. It is as simple as that.



Prefecture Rethymnon Accommodation

Rethymnon

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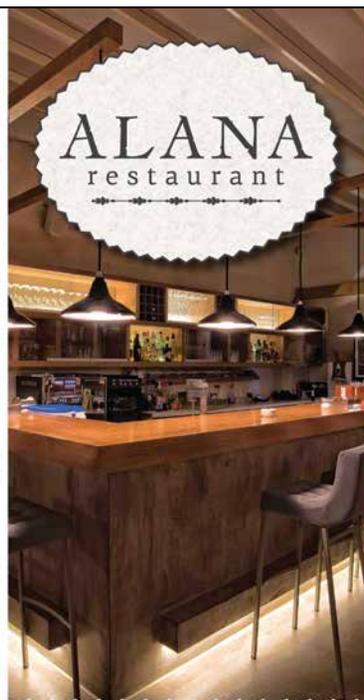
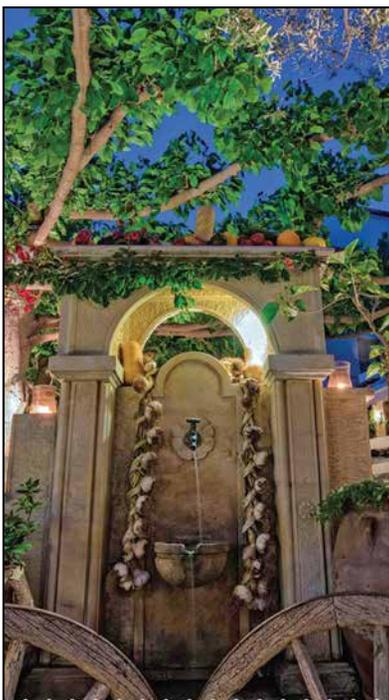
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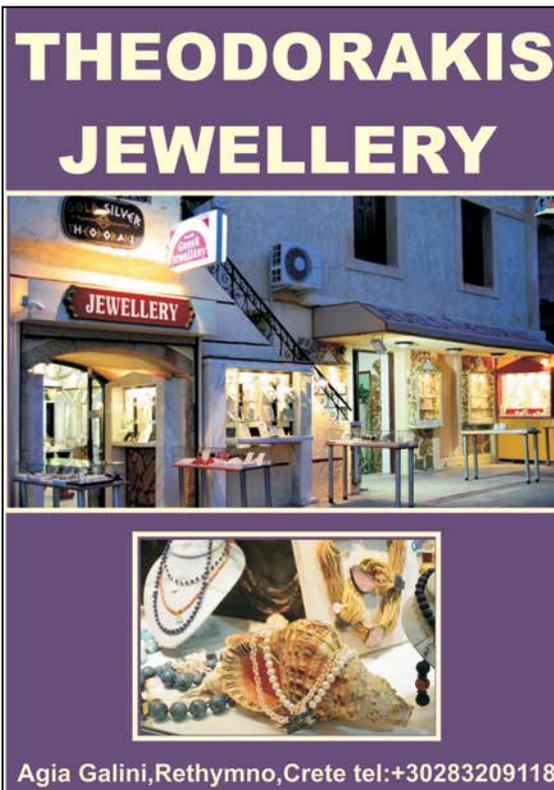
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Agios Nikolaos

Agios Nikolaos - the modern capital of Lasithi. This popular tourist resort, which attracts tourists not only for beach holidays, but also those who are interested in history. The beaches here are truly magnificent - an annual independent European Commission assigns them the highest category, and gives the “Blue Flag”, a kind of gold medal in the competition among beaches. The history of this place is fascinating. Once, in the late Neolithic, Minoan Cretan residents built a port. Later, near the modern village Kritsa, which is 10 km from Agios Nikolaos, settlers there found the legendary city of Lato. Not far from Agios Nikolaos Elounda is located, an ancient port city, and the island-fortress of Spinalonga, a former leper colony, which is now one of the most popular tourist attractions.



Voulismeni Lake

Voulismeni Lake - Trademark of Agios Nicholas is the picturesque Lake Voulismeni, a small lagoon in the center of the town, used as a small harbor where fishing boats stop. The name comes from that perhaps of the deep waters as it has no bottom. In the lake the Germans disposed all their war material before leaving Crete in 1944. A stroll around the lake is a very nice experience.



Sitia

Sitia - a small coastal town, built in the western part of the Gulf of the same name in the northern part of Crete. This is a typical Mediterranean port and the capital of the whole district. It separates Agios Nikolaos a distance of 73 km. The main part of the city attracts its guests especially from its climate. The area has great natural beauty, clean beaches (Sitia takes blue flag even next to the port), hills, mountains, small plateaus, canyons, caves, plains, small islands. Very large also in olive oil production. In ancient times it is known that

Sitia has been inhabited both in the Classical period and the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman period. Under the Venetian rule the town of Sitia was destroyed three times. In 1508 a terrible earthquake, in 1538 by pirates and in 1651 by the Venetians in order not to fall into the hands of the Turks. For two centuries Sitia there was like a city until 1869. The current city was built in 1870.





Ierapetra

Ierapetra- the modern capital of Lasithi. This popular tourist resort, which attracts tourists not only for beach holidays, but also those who are interested in history. The beaches here are truly magnificent - an annual independent European Commission assigns them the highest category, and gives the “Blue Flag”, a kind of gold medal in the competition among beaches. The history of this place is fascinating. Once, in



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Elounda

Elounda - a modern town north-east of Crete, with a population of approximately 2,200 people. Its inhabitants are engaged in fishing and agriculture. There are few beautiful hills with fascinating scenery and very clean beaches. Once discovered by tourism, Elounda developed into a resort famous for its beautiful scenery and luxury hotels which are still being built in the area. It is said to be the place with the most five-star hotels in Greece.



Archaeological Museum of Ag.Nikolaos

Archaeological Museum of Agios Nikolaos - The Museum of Agios Nikolaos was founded in 1970 in order to accommodate the numerous new archaeological finds from eastern Crete, which later also were housed in the Museum of Heraklion. Exhibitions until now replenished and cover a long period from the Neolithic to the end of the Greco-Roman period. The most important exhibits of museum are: finds from the cemetery of Agia Fotia which was located by the sea, finds from peak sanctuaries of the Middle Minoan I pe-



riod (2000 B.C.), the Gold diadem, the “Goddess of Myrtos”, the figurine of a worshiper or a priestess from the cemetery of Myrsine, in Sitia, the head of a clay statue and the extraordinary Skull of a young athlete with a gold wreath found in the Roman cemetery of the city of Lato towards Kamara (modern Agios Nikolaos).



ros” from the Minoan town of Palaikastro in Sitia, The rhyton (libation vessel) in the shape of a bull, with painted decoration, the stirrup jar from the Minoan settlement on the islet of Pseira, the pithoid jar from the Palace in Zakros, the geometric amphora from the cemetery of Agios Georgios, the terracotta figurine of a woman, of the type known as the “Tanagraia”, the black figure kantharos with “west slope” decoration and the clay plaques of Daedalic type, from a deposit in the city of Sitia.

Archaeological Museum of Sitia

Archaeological Museum of Sitia – This museum contains the most important discoveries from eastern Crete. Apart of the exhibition halls, the museum has storerooms and workshops, as well as offices for scholars and staff. The labels of the exhibited finds are written in five languages. The museum has been opened since 1984. The most representative exhibits of Museum Sitia are: The gold and ivory statue “kou-



Archaeological Museum of Ierapetra

Archaeological Museum of Ierapetra - The museum was founded at the end of the 19th century, during the Turkish occupation of Crete and was housed



in several buildings in the past. Today it is housed in the building of the Commercial Ottoman School, which is protected by a preservation order, and has been ceded to the Ministry of Culture by the Municipality of Ierapetra.

What is displayed are: The Clay sarcophagus, Stone stele from Hierapytna (current Ierapetra), the Honorary inscription, the Red-figure amphora from Manoliana of Ierapetra, the Clay plastic vase, the Minoan axe mould, the marble statue of the standing female, the marble headless woman from the region of ancient theater in Viglia (Ierapetra), the marble statuette since the Roman era and the marble head of man statue.



Archeological Museum of Neapoli

The **Archaeological Collection of Neapoli** was created before World War II and within two years included around 1000 items, found mostly in the area of Mirambello and in other sites of



Lasithi. During the Italian rule, the collection was protected in the underground of the Institute. Today it is housed in a building belonging to the Ministry of Culture by the Ministry of Health and the Municipality. The Collection is temporarily closed to the public. The most important exhibits of Museum are: Inscription in four lines and two lines on limestone, the Inscription in four lines on iron-stone, the Bronze figurine of a bull, the marble female statue and the Marble headless female statue from the ancient city Of Lato in Agios Nikolaos.

Historical and Folklore Museum Agios Georgios

Historical and Folklore Museum Agios Georgios - A nice folklore museum with main theme the traditional professions, exhibiting the tools and elements that were used in professions of past eras. Creations of traditional crafts, such as embroideries and textile. The institution operates in combination with the other museum of Agios Georgios, the Museum Of Eleytherios Venizelos.



Museum of El.Venizelos

Museum Of Eleftherios Venizelos - The museum is dedicated to the big Greek politician (Former Prime Minister of Greece). You will see various exhibits referring to the life of Eleytherios Venizelos. Rich collection of photographs, documents, books and coins is part of the collection. The institution operates in combination with the other museum of Agios Georgios, the Folklore and Historical Museum.



Archaeological and Folklore Museum of Myrtos

Archaeological and Folklore Museum of Myrtos – Founded in July 2001, the Archaeological and Folklore Collection Of Myrtos, welcomes the public, in order to exhibit its archaeological, folklore and historical heritage. Discoveries from the regions around Myrtos, as well as, hill of Fournou Koryfi and Minoan villa on hill Pyrgos. In the folklore collection, are exhibited elements of the daily life of region's residents, through the centuries, whilst in the Historical department, munitions from the period of late history of the area, are been exposed.



Folklore Museum of Ag.Nikolaos



The Folklore Museum of Agios Nikolaos is in one of the oldest buildings of the city, next to the bridge of the lake. It opened in 1978 in order to maintain the tradition of the area. The exhibits are authentic and rare samples of the Cretan art, as textiles and embroideries, everyday objects of a Cretan house, various objects as woodcuts, icons, books, agricultural tools, a

loom, coins, musical instruments etc. An impressive weapon collection of the general, Ioannis Alexakis, is also in the museum.

Folklore Museum of Palekastro

Folklore Museum of Palekastro - The founding of museum began in 1987 from the Cultural Unions of Palekastro “Elia and Itanos” with the support of the Monastery of Toplou and the local government. In 1989 the crumbling traditional Cretan house was bought and restoration was begun immediately. With the help from the Development Union of Sitia, the restoration was completed and objects were collected from around the region.

The museum exhibits common items and tools that would have been in use by the generations of people from the times of the Turkish Occupation up until 1960. Today’s visitors can get a complete picture of an authentic Cretan house, with its traditional furniture and everyday household items. As well as, rare kinds of Cretan popular art.



Ecclesiastical Museum of Toplou

Ecclesiastical Museum of Toplou Monastery – a museum located in the monastery of Toplou and includes collections of Cretan icons and graven icons. The most important exhibits of the Museum are: Virgin Mary the Asbestos-15th century, Christ the Pantocrator-15th century, Agios Ioannis (St. John) the Precursor and scenes of his life-17th century, the Dormition of Virgin Mary-15th century, Virgin Mary the uncontaminated-15th century, Virgin Mary of Passion and Agios Nikolaos (St. Nicolas)-1642, Agios Theodoros (St. Theodore)-1723, the Saint Trinity-17th century, Agios Ignatios and Savvas-17th century, the Agios Athanassios, Cyrille and Agios Ioannis (St. John) the merciful- 17th century.



Spinalonga

Spinalonga - island is located off the east coast of Crete, about eight kilometers from Agios Nikolaos. You can reach it by boat or ferry - from Agios Nikolaos around an hour, Elounda - half an hour, and from Plaka - no more than 15 minutes. This small island of only 200 to 400 meters. It was created by Venetian engineers, separating a piece of land on the peninsula. Spinalonga is one of the most famous fortresses of the Mediterranean. The Turks never managed to besiege it either by sea or land. Only in 1715 the Venetian authorities, losing to Crete, signed a deed of assignment of the fortress to the Ottoman Empire. During the Cretan revolutions, particularly after the 1866 uprising, a Turkish family rushed to hide from the Greek nationalists in the fortress. After the declaration of independence of Crete it was again empty. The Greek authorities used the isolation of Spinalonga and turned it into a leper colony. Lepers



started here from all over the island in 1903. People were dying of leprosy, there was no food, no medicine, never possibility to meet with relatives. In 1938, the situation changed. During the occupation of Crete by Nazi troops, a German doctor and a few soldiers secretly brought provisions and medicines. In 1957, after the discovery of medicine against leprosy, the leper colony was closed and people were sent for treatment in hospitals across Greece.

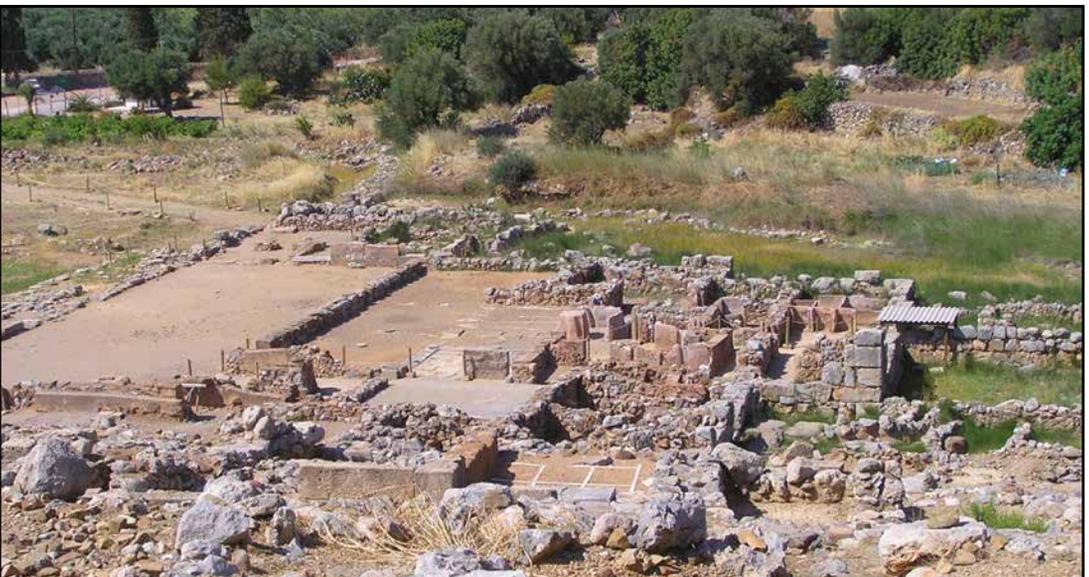


Zakros

Minoan palace of Zakros - situated 45km to the east of the town of Sitia, in a sheltered bay on the eastern coast of Crete, one of the latest vestiges of the ancient Minoan civilization. It was brought to light by the great Greek archaeologist N.Platon at 1961. Like the other Cretan palaces, the palace of Zakros, was first built in about 1900 B.C. The present ruins seen by the visitor belong to the second building phase, in about 1600 BC.

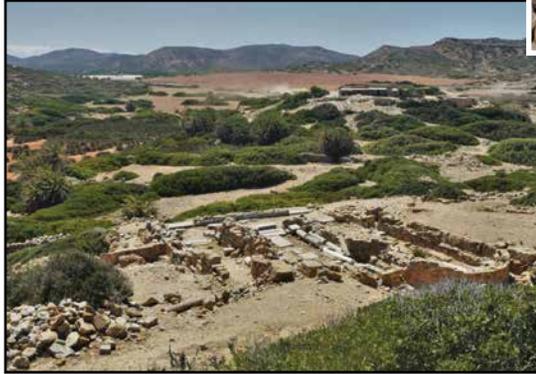
The total area of the palace, including ancillary buildings, is approximately 10,000 sq.m. It was not only the permanent residence of the royal family, but also the administrative, as well as commercial and religious center of the surrounding area.

Many excavations were made and have discovered over 10,000 objects, many of them very unique, which are now displayed in the Heraklion and Sitia museums.



Itanos

Itanos – it was believed that inhabitants from the small island Santorini wished to discover a new city heading to Africa. They did not find it so they built the city of Itanos. It is believed that in its place was a Minoan settlement in the late Neolithic period, but no findings supporting this theory has not yet been found. Residents of Itanos over the centuries were Phoenicians.



Initially, they used it as a port for the exchange of goods in Crete. Later, the city became independent through the development of crafts, especially the production of glass products. Also they had workshops except glass production, fisheries and textiles. Itanos was the trade point from the port from Crete to the east. Believed it was destroyed by the earthquake at 795 AD.



Lato

Lato - was one of the most important Doric city-states in Crete, although it must have existed before the “Coming of the Dorians”. It is built between two hills, at a site protected by attacks but also with a splendid view over a large area of the Mirambello Bay. It was named after Leto (Lato is the Doric type), mother of Apollo and Artemis. Lato was the birth-place of Nearchos, the admiral of Alexander the Great. Before the end of the 3rd

century B.C., the inhabitants of Lato participated in the League of the Cretan cities and shared the same laws. Lato made many alliances with Rhodes, Teos, and king Eumenes of Pergamon. However, it was in continuous conflict with the neighbouring city of Olous, for the arrangement of the borders between them. The harbour of the city was Lato towards Kamara (modern Aghios Nikolaos), which was so flourishing by the middle of the 2nd century A.D. that the administrative center was transferred there and Lato was later abandoned.



Castle of Ierapetra

Castle of Ierapetra - is a Venetian fortress in northern part of the Ierapetra harbor. A legend says that the first castle was built by a genius pirate Enrico Pescatore in 1212. Only in 1307 it was first mentioned in a venetian documents. In 1626 Francesco Morozini rebuilt the old castle and since then it housed first Venetian then Turkish administration and garrison. The castle of Ierapetra had two gates, one on the north



side, at the Town Hall Square, and a second on the west side, at the square of Mosque. The wall from out was surrounded by a moat with water which the locals called hendeki. The walls of Ierapetra were repaired in 1823 and 1829.

Makrigialos

Ancient Makrigialos – a settlement near Ierapetra, where it was used for agriculture. Farmers for centuries have come across historically important sites such as Makrigialos. It is believed it was just a large house but the excavations discovered a single attribute of secular buildings - ceramics, frescoes and objects of worship. The Romans also valued Makrigialos strategic position very highly, which explains why the remains of a Roman villa have also been uncovered here. Many unanswered questions remain for scientists to this day about Makrigialos.



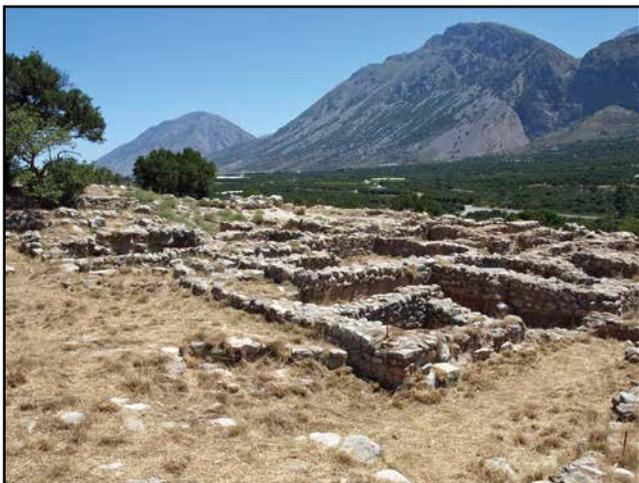
Agia Fotia



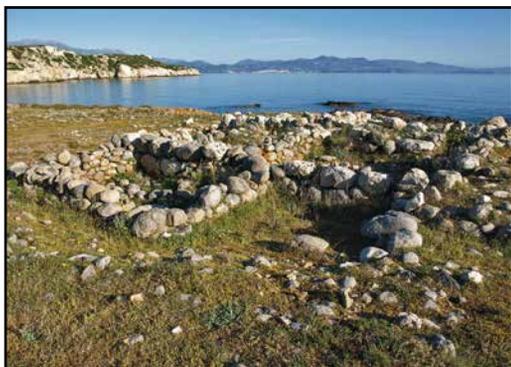
Agia Fotia - It is a very interesting site due to various accidental discoveries and traces of dwelling in the hollow cave in the beach and the discovery of gigantic necropolis of Early Minoan era with 250 graves. This is one of the largest cemeteries of the Minoan Crete. The tombs consist of chamber and antechamber but there are simple graves, which contained more children or young people. The findings were too many. They found about 1800 vessels of various types in excellent condition, with great interest and bronze objects such as fishing hooks, manuals, peaks of spears etc. Also stone objects such as axes, mills.

Vasiliki

Minoan Vasiliki - is located across the exit of the gorge of Ha and near the Minoan settlement of Gournia, at an elevated point that controlled the valley of Ierapetra. Existed since 2600BC. The main buildings were destroyed by fire in 2300BC then rebuilt on the hilltop. The first excavations were made in 1900 by Americans H. Boyd and R.B. Seager, but the most systematic excavations were made by A. Zois. They discovered a Minoan mansion (on the hill) with storage rooms and a courtyard.



Gournia



Gournia - lies on a small hill, a few hundred meters from the sea in the Gulf of Mirabello, close to the north end of the Ierapetra (2 Km from Pachia Ammos village & 19 Km from Ag.Nikolaos). Gournia - the ancient name of which is not known - is the most characteristic of the excavated medium-size settlements, dated in the late Minoan period 1550-1450 B.C. It is called “Pompeii of Minoan Crete” because of the good state of preservation. It occupies a low hill, close to the sea, at the Isthmus of Ierapetra. The first inhabitants settled here in the Early Minoan III period 2300 B.C. Remains of the Middle Minoan period 2000-1600 B.C are also preserved. In 1600

B.C the palace was destroyed as well as other palatial centers in Crete. It was finally abandoned in around 1200BC. The excavations at Gournia were carried out in 1901-1904.

Pressos

Pressos - it is a cultural monument of the time of the Minoan civilization. Located in the eastern part of the island of Crete, was one of the largest commercial and socio-cultural centers of the Minoans. The city lays between three hills. On the tops of these hills were three acropolis. Many believe that the acropolis was the only the temple complex here. In fact people went to pray to the gods for mercy or victory from attacks and wars. Pressos also stood a surprisingly long time. Unlike most cities, destroyed by the earthquake in the 15th century BC





Mochlos

Mochlos - Not far from the modern village of Mochlos on a small islet the archaeologists had discovered a Minoan settlement. In the ancient tombs valuable items designed for certain rites were found. Now they are exhibited in the Cretan museums. This Minoan city lived longer than the palaces. In its center stood a 3-storied religious center. Also one of the workshops in these centers produced vases, ivory and precious stones. After the destruction of major cities and palaces, Mochlos stood for another 2 hundreds of years.

Pirgos

Pirgos - a monument to the time of the Minoan civilization. It was first discovered in 1970. Believed that the building was nothing more than a Minoan house acting as the administrative, religious and cultural center. The structure stands on a hill. Pirgos - is in Greek "tower". The valley through which the river flows Myrtos, supplied the villa (or house) with all necessary. Also on the grounds there were peasants from the nearby villages. It is believed that Pirgos stood at the end point of the ancient route from the Lassithi Plateau to the sea. Archeologists suggested that the villa was rebuilt four times. After the devastating natural disaster Pirgos was not restored immediately. After the research it was found that Pirgos burned, but the fire, as opposed to fires in Zakros or in Aghia Triada, was set up deliberately. The excavations on the hill discovered ancient pottery samples identical to finds made in the Malia Palace.



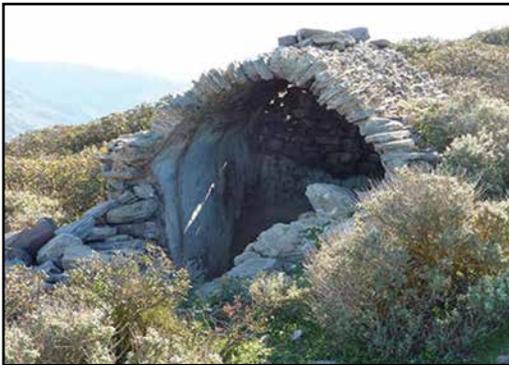
Voila

Medieval village of Voila - The village of Voila, deserted today, is up the northern and the western side of a steep hill on the eastern side of the plateau where the villages Ziros, Armeni and Handras are located. The main part of the fortress - tower Genoa, which is very well preserved and can still be restored. Near the tower is a small dilapidated church Tzinalis, built in the 15th century in honor of St. George. In 1828, during the revolution in Sitia, the rebels burned the tower, but the inhabitants of the fortress, and it is about 500 people were able to



evacuate the city Etiya. Near the village there are other few ruins, which the locals call Castelli. In the period of Turkish rule, Voila was headquarters of a battalion of Janissaries, inhabited mostly by Turks.

Liopetra



Castle of Liopetra - the castle of Liopetros is situated at a distance of some 12 kilometers Western to Sitia and 8-9 kilometers Northern to the village of Chamezi. It was built in the early period of Venetian domination at the same place where it used to be the ancient acropolis. The name of the castle is due to a false pronunciation of "Leon di Pietra" ("the lion of stone"). Today the monument is ruined and what the visitor sees is only a part of the huge walls and towers as well some cisterns and rooms for various purposes. It is so big, that the Venetians in the 16th century had planned to transfer within the castle the entire population of Sitia, in order to save them

from the Ottoman attacks. In 1971, at the site of "Fatsi", near the castle found 5 small square vaulted tombs were found of the Sub-Minoan and Early Geometric periods.

Chamezi

Chamezi - is a ruined Minoan building lying on a hill. Archaeologists did not succeed in solving the Chamezi mystery. Chamezi is unique due to its shape which is oval, very unusual for a Minoan building. It was multistoried and carried palatial features such as room and entrance layout. Probably proved that this building was actually a house; it is dated to 2200-2000 BC. . Bronze artefacts were uncovered outside the house, while vessels and several figurines were found inside the rooms. They are kept today in the Museums of Heraklion and Agios Nikolaos. From the walls of Chamezi opens a magnificent view.





Ha Gorge

Ha Gorge – In the area of Ierapetra, in front of the beautiful village of Vassiliki is the so-called “King of Cretan Gorges”, the Ha Gorge. It is considered the fifth most beautiful gorge in Europe and one of the wildest gorges in Crete, a rare morphological phenomenon of nature, probably caused by tectonic earthquake. It’s also one of the biggest gorges in Europe with a height of 700 m and a basis opening of 8 m. The intense parallel colors on the rocks are impressive and it remains a virgin environment who still finds its formation prohibitive for exploration or development. The entrance of the gorge is very narrow, about 3 m and opens on the top. Its width in many parts is only 30 cm and in others no more than 3 m. To the left and right stand huge stone walls 200 – 400 m high. Its length is about 1 km. Right before the entrance there is a pond, created by a small waterfall that comes from another lake above. This is not visible from the root of the mountain but you can marvel at it once you climb a few rocks carefully.



Kato Zakros Gorge

Kato Zakros Gorge – This is the most famous gorge in the area, also known as the Canyon of the Dead, due to the Minoan cemetery. Apart from its impressive topography, rich flora and plentiful water, it is also home to several sites of archaeological and historical interest. The E4 path passes through the gorge, while at its exit there is an organized rock climbing area. The trail starts from Epano Zakros and ends at the archaeological site of Kato Zakros.



Toplou Gorge

Toplou Gorge - is the only gorge that hasn't developed in alpine unit limestone; instead it is found in Miocene clastic rocks. It is beautiful throughout and worth hiking along its entirety. It is home to the Cretan Date Palm, various impressive kinds of local flora, tafoni formations and springs.

Kritsa Gorge

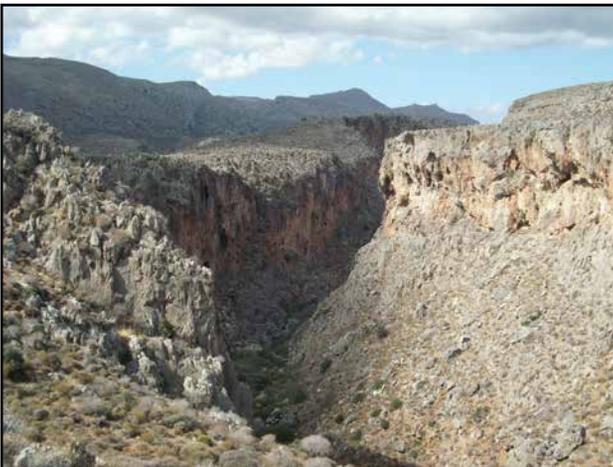
Kritsa Gorge - starts near the picturesque village of Kritsa, 9.5km southwest of Agios Nikolaos and ends at the village Tapes. It's 4km long, reaching a width of only 1.5m in some places. It is easily accessible where slowly you have to climb over some big rocks. The only time you should not visit the gorge, is when it has rained previously and there are ponds in the gorge, which block the passages. The entrance of the canyon near Kritsa is impressive, as the mountain is torn in two, shaping the narrow passage of Havgas. Apart from the main path starting next to the stone bridge of Kritsa, there's a second trail starting in the village. It is beautiful in nature, also some places with shade.





Richtis Gorge

Richtis Gorge – This amazing gorge is located in Lasithi Prefecture, on the north side, between Agios Nikolaos and Sitia. It starts just outside the village Exo Mouliana and ends at the Richtis beach, east of the village of Kalabro. The total length of the route is approximately 3 kilometers and the elevation difference between the starting point and the beach is about 350 meters. The gorge, even in summer, has enough water, which is used by locals. Hiking in the gorge takes three to four hours. The route starts from of Lachanas. During the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, it is said that, at this point, Christians killed the Turks of the region, who were trying to reach Sitia and get the boat to Turkey. The route continues in a lush landscape in the river, an amazing scenery of East Crete. The mountain is actually above your head. Platan, oleander and sage are numerous, and the smells of fresh herbs change constantly.

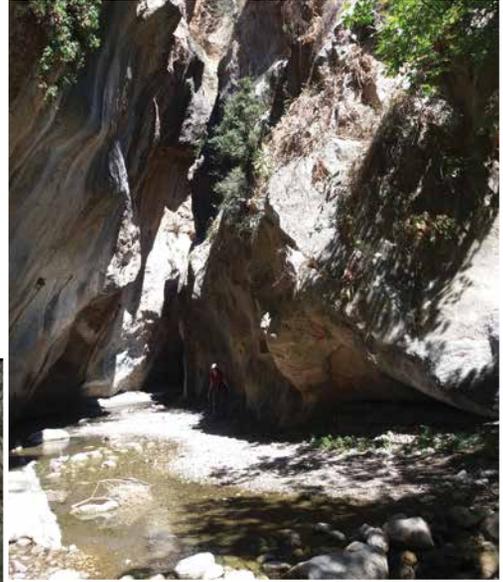


Katsounaki Gorge

Katsounaki gorge is yet another significant geotope in the Xerokambos area. It is very long and has almost vertical slopes, which inside it exceptional and very impressive landforms develop, while there is surface water runoff over most of it. One can also enjoy it using the country road leading to Xerokambos, especially when the sun is setting, lighting the landforms and offering a unique sight.

Sarakina Gorge

Sarakina Gorge - This gorge with its beautiful nature is close to the village of Myrtos. Walking through this gorge is a real challenge. Through this gorge you can make either a short or a longer hike. The gorge is breathtaking beautiful and has sometimes a lot of water inside. In spring and autumn you also walk parts through the river or small streams and sometimes you even have to swim. You can organize this gorge hike at Myrtos in combination with an overnight stay in there in Myrtos.



Milonas Gorge

The Gorge of Milonas starts between the villages of Agios Ioannis and Schinokapsala, at an altitude of 500m, and ends 7kms down at the beach of Kakia Skala. It's not possible to walk the entire gorge, because of the waterfall(s), but from the beach up you can walk to the waterfall of Milonas. The waterfall is 40m high and lies at an altitude of 300m. In winter/early spring there is more water and another waterfall forms

next to the big one making it more spectacular than in summer. But even in summer it's a nice place to go, although it can be hot walking up there. At the bottom of the waterfall is a small pond, surrounded by rocks, making it a nice place to cool down after your walk.

Koudoumis Gorge

Koudoumis gorge - The canyon of Koudoumis is located about 27km west of Sitia, near the village Tourloti. The canyon is easy on foot, but it has six small steep rappels that require little attention. The canyon is also called Tourloti Gorge as its exit is located close to Tourloti and its entrance is located at the small plateau of Monokaras, a few kilometers further south. The impressive rock formations and the nature beauty of spring this gorge very interesting.



Xerokambos Gorge

Xerokambos gorge – You reach the gorge of Xerokambos during the drive from Zakros to Xerókambos. There is no specific route, therefore passing through does require some caution. The elevation difference is approximately 100 metres. After the location of Agrilia, at the spot where the many branches of the gorge unite, the scenery is truly magnificent. From this point until the outlet at the beach, the distance is approximately 1,5km. At the Xerokambos plain, where the gorge ends up, there are many exquisite, untouched beaches, with crystal-clear waters.



Mesona Gorge

Mesonas gorge is located on the northern slopes of the mountains of Thripti, near villages Kavoussi and Avgos. It is a short gorge 4km long. The canyon connects the Plateau of Thripti to the plain of Kavoussi. The canyon is ideal if you like canyoning, crossing a narrow gorge, climbing with ropes and swimming in the waters of the gorge. Mesonas Gorge starts quite smoothly with less roping and more walking. The entire canyon is crossed smoothly except its last part, where its form changes and it turns to a very narrow passage with high walls.

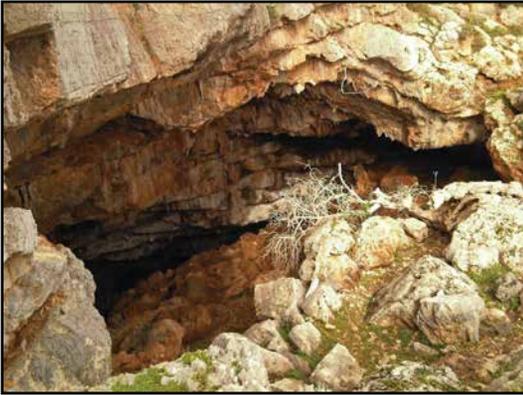




Dikteon Andron Cave

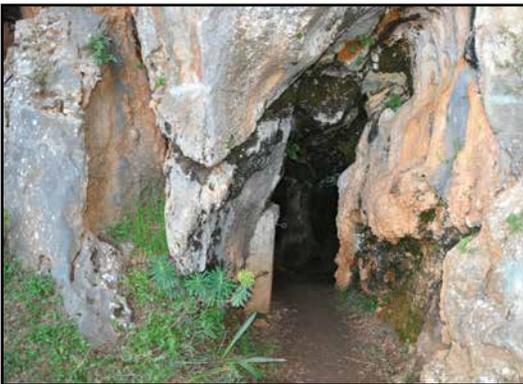
Dikteon Andron - is located on the side of a mountain above the picturesque plateau of Lassithi at a height of 1.025 m west of the village of Psychro. The cave can be reached by going to the outskirts of the village of Psychro (48 km east of Heraklion and 2 km west of Agios Nikolaos), where there is a path ascending to it. The view from the cave entrance is marvelous. The cave is not only a famous archaeological site, and among the most important in prehistoric Greece, but also one of the most beautiful and impressive of the 3.400 caves on Crete. One can go from the village to the cave on foot or by mule or donkey, which can be rented from the locals. A steep path leads to a small level area in front of the narrow entrance to the cave. Archaeologists have uncovered many icons and votive symbols, confirming that the cave was an important place of worship during the Minoan era. In the background of the cave is a small pond, where, according to myth, Zeus bathed and around which most of the offerings were found.





Pelekita Cave

The Cave of Pelekita is one of the largest caves in Crete, having a length of 310m. Its large size, the rich stalactite and stalagmite decor and the spectacular boulders make this unknown cave unique on the island. The cave of Pelekita is located at an altitude of 100m, at the foot of Traostalos Mount, well hidden within the bare rocks of the wild landscape of Zakros. The entrance of the cave is located 5 km northeast of Kato Zakros, in the position Pelekita or Sikia. To reach the cave, the visitor has either to walk one hour from Kato Zakros or one quarter by coming from the sea. The cave is also called “Cave of the Fig Tree”, named after the old fig tree near its entrance.



Kronos Cave

Kronos or Trapeza Cave - To enter the Cronos Cave (“Kronian cave”, Kronos = Saturn, father of Zeus), near the tiny town of Tzermiado on the Lasithi Plateau, is to unpeel one of the last layers of human history on the island. Fall down through the centuries, back beyond the heyday of the Ottoman Empire and of the Venetians, past Byzantium and beyond to the Romans and the ancient Greeks - all of whom very evidently left their mark on Crete - and you reach the era of Europe’s most ancient culture, the Minoans. But even the Minoans are not as ancient as the people that once lived here. The skeletons that once lay here dated back to Neolithic times - the remains, perhaps, of one of Crete’s founding families.



Dikti Mountain

Mountain Dikti - s the main mountain range in Lassithi prefecture. It consists of Mt Spathi (2148 m.), Mt Afentis Hristos (2141m.) and Mt Lazaros (2085 m.). Its mass is dominating the Lassithi Plateau, the largest and prettier plateau in Crete. It is a place with a long history. Here is the Diktaion Antron, a cave where -according to the Mythology- Zeus was born. There is a different myth that claims the birth of Dias (Zeus) was born in Mt. Idi and raised in Dikteon Andronin. Another myth claiming that Zeus was born in Diktaion Antron but raised in Idaion. The Lassithi Plateau is a nice place for a pleasant excursion. If you are more ambitious and want to climb to the summit of Mt Spathi, then ask at the village of Agios Georgios for the path leading to the small plateau of Limnakaro. The distance is 2 hrs long. At Limnakaro there is a dirt track leading to the shelter of the Mountaineering Club of Lassithi (30 minutes). Do not follow this road, try to locate the E4 path which leads up. The ground is not very solid, so you have to be cautious. Go all the way up to the crest of the mountain and then keep moving to the left for the next 2 hours.



Lassithi Mountain

Lassithi Mountain – the eastern mountain range of Crete. The mountain is divided into two separate peaks: Tripiti mountains to the west and mountains to the east Zakros. The highest peak is in the mountains and is called Tripiti Stavrometos, its height is 1476m. The territory is covered by pine forest, which, unfortunately, is reduced due to seasonal fires, near the beginning of the gorge of Tripiti plateau Ha and Mesonas. On the southern slopes of the mountains of Lassithi there are several picturesque villages such as Orin village and

seaside resort of Makrigialos. In the western part there are amazing green gorges of Pefki, Mylonas and Orin.



Skafi Lake

Lake Skafi - is formed among the most beautiful landscapes of Crete, 3 km south-west of the village Orin, located in the mountains of Tripiti. There are a lot of pine trees growing in the area, which makes the landscape a bit like a typical Cretan countryside. It is a unique in its kind natural lake, it was named by locals as the “water bath”. Throughout the spring of water in the lake is very clear and cool. To reach the picturesque lake, you can go on a dirt road from the village of Orin - a two-kilometer path through the mountain landscape.

Barmianon Lake

Lake Barmianon - This particular lake has been created as a National Park and is the second largest wetland in South Greece. It was built just in 1985. It covers a pretty large area and hosts a large number of migrant birds that had disappeared from the island, while some of which are at risk of extinction, like the Ferruginous Duck and the Black Stork. Its main purpose is to supply the needs of cultivation in the area.





Lassithi Plateau

The Lassithi Plateau is one of the most beautiful and graphic areas in Crete. High up on the Dikti Mountains, it is a green, fertile valley, covering an extension of 25.000 sq. km full of cultivation of potatoes, garden and fruit products and almond trees. Also the unique 10.000 windmills scattered throughout the area. The plateau is not only an impressive landscape but a unique geological phenomenon. It is 817 meters high, but is surrounded by high mountains. Although the plateau as it is today has to a large extent been shaped by human activity, it still remains an impressive ecosystem, with many species of animals, birds and plants.





Virgin Mary Kera Church

Panagia Kera Church - Very close to the mountainous village of Kritsa is the old Byzantine church of Panagia Kera. This is one of the most important churches in Crete, located in a remarkable setting, high in the mountains of Dikte, at an altitude of 630 meters overlooking a valley. The church of Panagia Kera, for which there is no reliable founding date, is dedicated

to the Assumption of the Virgin. The central aisle dedicated to Virgin Mary contains the oldest paintings while the north aisle is dedicated to Agios Antonios and has several pictures representing the Judgment Day. Many miracles were associated to the icon of Panagia Kera. According to tradition, during the Byzantine period of Iconoclasm, the icon of Panagia was transferred to Istanbul but it found its way back to the monastery.

Ag. Nikolaos Church

Church of Agios Nikolaos - North of the town of Agios Nikolaos on top of a small peninsula, the church of Saint Nikolas is the oldest example of classic early Byzantine architecture. It is quite a small



church that was built between the 7th and 9th century, during the Iconoclastic period, as indicated by its schematic decoration. Geometric and natural patterns, and intersecting circles unite to form multi-colored leaves of bright colors, and schematic tree trunks with branches, in addition to diamond and rosette shapes comprise the interior decoration.



Odigitria Church

Church of Our Lady the Guide - (Panagia y Odigitria): The pride of more recent residents of Kritsa. A twin-nave domed basilica (6 domes), with peculiar architecture that was founded in November of 1852 (later Turkish occupation). It is dedicated to the Presentation of the Virgin Mary, (right nave) and to Saint Haralambos. The recent renovation (2001) has revealed the unsurpassed and unaffected beauty of the church.



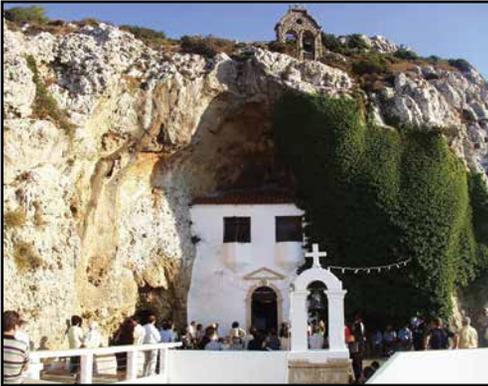
St. John Church

Church of **Saint John the Theologian** - This church is located 2 km from Kritsa on the road to Krousta. According to experts, it is the most important example of ecclesiastic architecture of the 16th and 17th century, having three parallel naves and one western transverse, which were consecutively built until the 18th century.



Toplou Monastery

Toplou Monastery – is located 20 kilometers east of Sitia and 8 kilometers from Palekastro. Today the monastery is a museum, where many exhibits of the Cretan-Turkish war. The monastery is a complex of buildings in a square area of 800 sq.m. Its name comes from the Turkish “top” - “gun”. The main building of the monastery has 3 floors in height, which once housed the cells, guest rooms, apartments, warehouses. This building was well protected by pirate raids to protect the coastal areas of eastern Crete. It withstood many attacks of Turks but Toplou was finally surrendered. The Turks executed all monks and burned down the monastery.



Faneromeni Monastery

Faneromeni Monastery - is located 8 km west of Sitia. From the sea to the shrine is quite convenient for walking flat cemented road. Near Faneromeni is the entrance to the Gorge of the Saints. In the early days the first Christians lived here in the rocks where in a small plot of land they built the main church of Faneromeni. It was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. The exact construction date is unknown, but the inscriptions say that the temple was built at the beginning of the Venetian era in Crete. There were constant pirate raids on the coastal areas of the island where locals were forced to leave their homes. Another such attack proved disastrous for Faneromeni. The Turks also set up in the church fire, which killed a lot of valuable relics. Part of church utensils monks managed to save to hide it in the rocks. Later came the monks from the monastery Akrotirianis. Since then, a new life in Faneromeni began, which became independent only in the 20th century.

Aretiou Monastery

Aretiou Monastery – Located at an altitude of 530m of Karydi settlement in Neapoli. The monastery was founded between 1580 and 1596 by the nobleman Marco Papadopoulos and is dedicated to the Holy Trinity. It has two inputs and two courtyards. On the outer courtyard are the winepress, warehouses and stables, monk’s chambers and the water tanks are located in the inner courtyard. The monastery also has a cheese factory and mill.



The church is single-nave barrel-vaulted church with a pointed arch with a bell tower of hewn stone that - according to legend - dates back to 1618. In addition to the Catholic there is a second temple dedicated to Saint Lazarus which was built during the Venetian period.

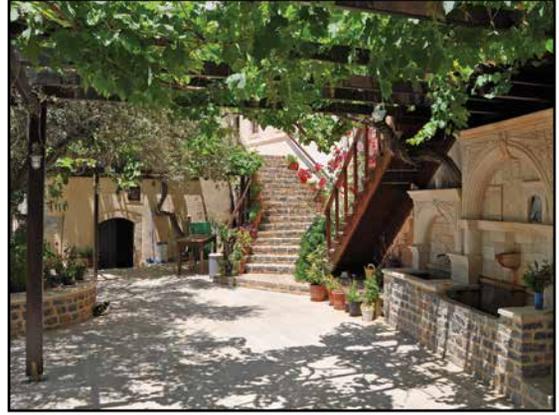
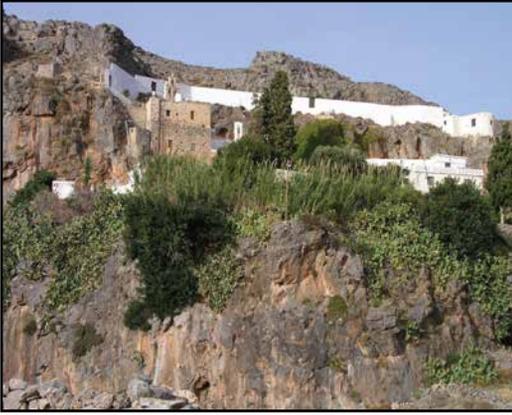


Although the Turks looted and torched the monastery after the 1821 revolution, destroying artifacts and books from the years of Venetian rule, in 1844 was renovated and opened again, and in 1991 began the process of maintenance.

Vidiani Monastery

Vidiani Monastery - is located in the northwestern part of the plateau at the base Lulundaki hill, next to the road connecting the villages of Lassithi. Believed was built around from 1854 to 1866. The first structure used to be just a village house but locals from Lassithi believe that during Venetian rule it was a church. Vidiani was restored in the early 20th century, then again in 1991 was reopened.





Kapsa Monastery

Kapsa Monastery - is a dependency of Toplou Monastery and the church is dedicated to the Beheading of the Decapitation of St. John the Baptist. The date on which the monastery was built is unknown. However, according to historians it was built in the 15th century, but it was destroyed by pirates and deserted. Other versions indicate that the monastery was built earlier, in the 14th or even the 13th century. On August 29, they celebrate the monastery with a traditional festival and many believers come and crowd the monastery.



Ag. Georgios Selinari Monastery

Agios Georgios Selinari - The Monastery of St. George, located in the gorge of Selinari, built in the second Byzantine period. In the yard there is the church dedicated to St George and two other temples dedicated to Epiphany and Easter. According to tradition, a monk from Rhodes saw an image of St. George, so he built a chapel. He spent the rest of his life in a rock carved himself on top of Anavlochau, on the east side of the canyon, where a large cross is placed. The image of St. George is considered miraculous as it is said that the Turkish occupation protected the monks. This male monastery is one of the most famous in Crete and as St. George is considered the patron of travelers, is a traditional pilgrimage for people who pass by.

Kardiotissas Monastery

Kardiotissas Monastery - one of the many Orthodox monasteries of Crete. The exact date of founding scientists could not establish. Kera Kardiotissa - one of the many Orthodox monasteries of Crete. Its history is closely intertwined with the fate of the island and its inhabitants.



The exact date of founding scientists could not be established, appeared on the slopes of Dikti about the 10th - 11th centuries. Its name comes from the name of its capital icons - Panagias Tis Kardias, which literally means "from the heart of the Virgin Mary." Initially Kardiotissa Kera was a male monastery, but constant war with the Turks the male population of Crete reduced, becoming a monastery of nuns.



Koufi Petra Monastery

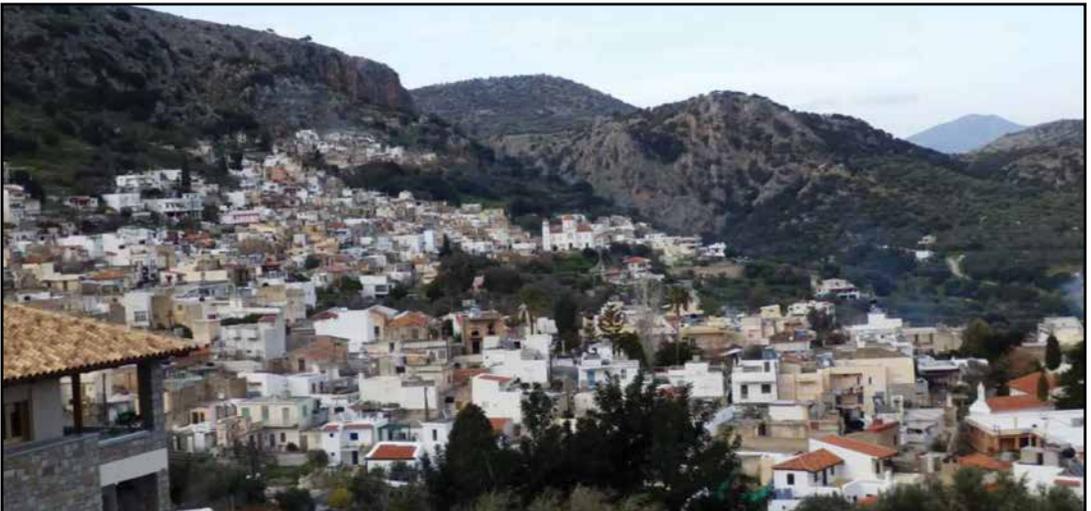
Koufi Petra Monastery - The nunnery Koufi Petra is located west of the Kremaston Monastery and a short distance from it is very close to Neapolis. It is dedicated to the Annunciation. The view from the monastery to the province of Mirabello is panoramic. Very close to the monastery are the remains of a small temple which was built in cavernous rock. Probably the name of the monastery is due to this temple, which is built in a "hollow" stone.

The monastery has comfortable facilities and elegantly crafted the surrounding area. The old church of St. John the Baptist has been renovated. In the yard of the monastery there is the tomb of Bishop Meletios Chlapoutaki and beside the grave of his sister Irene.



Tourloti

Tourloti - is a small village located 45 km from Agios Nikolaos and 28 km from Sitia. There are many other villages near Tourloti, while the most popular beach is in Mochlos, where there are some accommodation and tourist facilities.



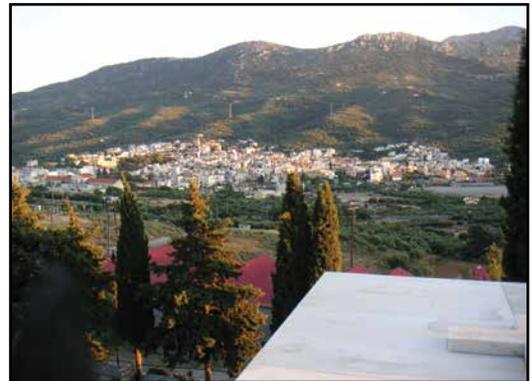
Kritsa

Kritsa - a village located in Lasithi and is built on the Kastellos mountain at an altitude of about 365 meters. In the village live about 1,300 inhabitants. It is one of the oldest villages of Crete and retain significantly more intact from the old architectural structure. Its inhabitants are descendants of Lato Etera whose ruins lie 3 km north-east of the village.



Tzermiadon

Tzermiadon - This picturesque village of Tzermiado is 50 km west of Agios Nikolaos, in the wonderful Lassithi Plateau, at an altitude of more than 800 metres. This place is a unique natural beauty, known for its healthy climate. Tzermiado lies on the slopes of Mount Selena. You will find a few accommodations in the area as well as excellent taverns and traditional cafes. The village is also ideal for hiking.



Neapoli

Neapoli - This beautiful town is situated 15 km north-west of Agios Nikolaos town. It is where the provincial courts are still located (Neapolis used to be the capital of Lassithi) and is the seat of the local government. It is a very attractive place where visitors can admire some ancient ruins, the churches of Agia Ekaterini and Panagia Kera Goniotissa and the monasteries of Kremasta and Agios Georgios Vrahatsiotis. Numerous accommodations of all categories can be found in beautiful Neapolis as well as various restaurants, cafes, bars and taverns. The Archaeological Museum of Neapolis is very interesting.

Palekastro

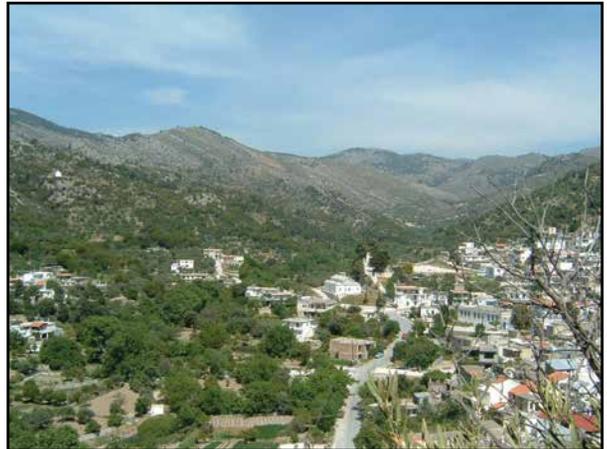
Palekastro - a small village on the eastern side of Crete. The population is just over a thousand people. The settlement is located 17 km from Sitia and 7 km from the palm beach of Vai. On the eastern side of the village once stood an ancient Venetian fortress Castro, after which the village got its name. The village has a lot of quality hotels, supermarkets, taverns and restaurants, there is also local history museum located.



Around the villages there are many beautiful and famous beaches: Hiona, Vai, Itanos, Kato Zakros and many others.

Kalamafka

Kalamafka is one of the most picturesque traditional villages of Crete located 25 km south of Agios Nikolaos surrounded by wild mountains. The village is built on the site of the ancient town of Larissa that flourished from the Minoan till the Classical times. Kalamafka consists of old traditional houses and is ideal for hiking adventures. Trekking is also a popular activity as beautiful paths lead to gorges, caves that are worth exploring and many forests.



Ziros

Ziros - is a small and agricultural village located 83 km south east of Agios Nikolaos town at an altitude of 590 metres. Surrounded by wild mountains and greenery, Ziros is a typical traditional Cretan village with small, stone houses and narrow paths. Close to Ziros is the gorge of Xerokampos. There are no facilities in the village and the closest tourist developed village is Makrighalios.

Istro beach

Istro – This beach is found 12 km south of Agios Nikolaos town on the road towards Ierapetra. The crystal clear blue waters and the white sand are two of the main characteristics that have made this beach so popular. It is surrounded by green slopes with a beautiful magical landscape and nature. There are facilities such as sunbeds and umbrellas. You will find many taverns that specialize in the Cretan cuisine and fresh seafood. **Istro** beach is quiet and ideal for relaxation.





Sisi beach

Sisi Beach - a coastal village and one of the most popular beach resorts of Crete. Despite its popularity it is still quiet and calm. It is located 40 km east of Heraklion and 26 km north-west of Agios Nikolaos. A few facilities are available as sunbeds and umbrellas for rent. The secluded bay of Avlaki, which is like a private beach with crystalline waters and white sand is also found near Sisi and is an excellent choice for swimming and relaxation away from the noisy crowds.



Milatos beach

Milatos – is a traditional village east from the tourist resorts of Hersonisos-Malia-Sisi. It is a beautiful fishing village with beaches where someone can combine to seek for landscapes and sea. There are about over 400 residents most who work in tourism and fishing and in winter with olive oil production. They produce tons of olive oil annually.



Plaka beach

Plaka is located 16km north of Agios Nikolaos, opposite the entrance of the lagoon of Korfos (or lagoon of Elounda), in one of the most beautiful places of Crete. A feature of Plaka is the wonderful views of the island Kalydon, on where the famous fortress of Spinalonga stands. Spinalonga operated as a leper hospital during the first half of the 20th century. The island can be reached primarily by boat from Elounda and Plaka. Indeed, Plaka existence is highly linked to Spinalonga, as the settlement was built for serving the leper colony. In Plaka you will find several traditional taverns and lovely old houses



Amoudara beach

Amoudara - is a long beach situated 5 km south of Agios Nikolaos, on the road to Ierapetra. It is a beautiful bay and rarely affected by the strong summer winds. Amoudara beach is amongst the most crowded beaches in Lassithi because it is well-organized with sunbeds, umbrellas, seaside accommodations and delicious taverns.



Mirabello beach

Mirabello - 2 km north of Agios Nikolaos you will find the historic hotel Mirabello. In front of the hotel there are two bays with two lovely small beaches. In one, located next to the hotel there is a small marina and platforms, and both beaches are well organized with showers, bar, deckchairs and parasols. Separated by a small (artificial) peninsula, where there are many trees. Today is known as Havanja beach north, not the Mirabello beach.



Pahia Ammos beach

Pahia Ammos – This amazing beach is located 20 km south east of Agios Nikolaos town, in the Mirambelo Gulf. Beautiful olive trees and greenhouses surround the area. The beach, as its name which has wonderful soft and thick golden sand and crystal waters.



Tholos beach

Tholos or else **Kavousi**, is located 26 km east of Agios Nikolaos town , on the way to Sitia. The closest tourist resort is Pahia Ammos, with there is plenty of facilities available. Tholos is a large bay with clean water and soft pebbles on the shore. Through a walking path from Tholos, you can see the gorge of Messona and the Minoan copper mines of Chrissokamino.



Mochlos beach

Mochlos - is located 35 km east of Agios Nikolaos town, off the main road to Sitia. It remains a quite resort with not developed tourism with peaceful surrounding and friendly atmosphere. The fishing village is ideal for peaceful holidays and a nice opportunity to get closer to nature. The Minoan tombs and remains from the ancient settlement can be seen in the wider region.



Papadiokampos beach

Papadiokampos - One of the most isolated beaches in Lassithi located close to Sitia about 60 km east of Agios Nikolaos. Papadiokampos has small coves with soft pebbles or large rocks on the shore. The beach can be accessed through a track road and it is very quiet. The closest facilities are found in Sitia.



Itanos beach

Itanos - beach is located 80 km east of Agios Nikolaos town. The region is not developed so it is a great place for calm and relaxation. The beach is surrounded by small hills and has crystalline waters. You can reach this beach by car.



Vai beach

Vai - is the most famous among all the beaches of Crete. Vai brings thousands of visitors each year, not only for the beautiful palm grove, but also for the long sandy beach that stretches in front of it. It was discovered by hippies who were persecuted in the early 70s from Matala and found that area looking for new shelter. By early 1980 Vai had become permanent camping place. In the 1980s Vai was declared a protected area and purified. Today it is considered one of the most beautiful areas in Crete and the beach carries the Blue Flag of the European Union.



Maridatis beach

Maridatis - is a small secluded beach located 90 km east of Agios Nikolaos, between the famous beach of Vai, and the windsurfing spot of Palekastro. Maridatis is not developed by tourism and is quite isolated. The beach has clean waters, white pebbles and the wild landscape create a nice environment to relax and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere. Few tourist facilities are found in the region. Most accommodation are located in Palekastro or Vai.



Hiona beach

Hiona – a small but very beautiful. It has soft sand and clean waters and in summer not very strong winds that allow you for watersports. Hiona is not an organized beach, as it has no umbrellas and sunbeds. The closest tourist facilities in Palekastro or Sitia. Hiona is located 90 km east of Agios Nikolaos town, 22 km from Sitia and 3 km north of Palekastro. It is an ideal choice for swimming and some privacy.



Agriomandra beach

Agriomandra is located 24km east of Agios Nikolaos and 3km west of Kavousi village and Tholos. It is a completely unknown beach, formed at the exit of a short gorge. Crossing the canyon on foot is also the only way of access.



Kato Zakros beach

Kato Zakros - The beach is found close to Zakros village, about 8 km which is one of the most picturesque in Lassithi. Near is the archeological site of Zakros, one of the most important Minoan palaces in Crete. The beach of Kato Zakros is not organized with sunbeds and umbrellas, but it provides a wonderful place for relaxation. Some accommodation is available in the wider region.



Xerokampos beach

Xerokampos - is a beautiful beach located 103 km south east of Agios Nikolaos town and 20 km from Ziros, on the eastern side of Crete. There are few taverns and accommodations in the area but ideal for relaxing holidays. In Xerokambos, you will enjoy delicious Cretan food and relaxing views to the sea. Some days in the summer, the beach is affected by the strong winds but in late August, the winds calm down. In August 29th, the locals celebrate the feast of Saint John with a traditional panigiri.



Makrigialos beach

At the village of Makrigialos lies the beach 24 km east of Ierapetra and 60 km south-east of Agios Nikolaos, in the centre of Kala Nera Bay. Because of its long stretch of sand and its crystalline blue waters, **Makrigialos** is one of the most important tourist resorts in the area. In the wider area, there are ruins of a Minoan mansion.



Goudouras beach

Goudouras - is a coastal village located 37km east of Ierapetra and 73km southeast of Agios Nikolaos, in a large valley surrounded by the rugged mountains and canyons of the area. The very warm climate of the region is ideal for growing olives and vegetables in greenhouses. It is a large pebbly beach with clean waters not very developed. Although you may find near a tavern where after a swim enjoy the local fish.



Agia Fotia beach

Agia Fotia – a beach near the village Agia Fotia 8km from Ierapetra has developed to a great tourist resort but still keeps its character and quiet atmosphere. It is beautiful with soft sand and very ideal for a great swim and to relax.



Mirtos beach

Mirtos – the beach is located 15 km west from Ierapetra and 51 km south-west from Agios Nikolaos Town. It is a fine pebble beach with crystalline waters and a few facilities. Some accommodations and taverns can be found in the little village which is full of banana and orange trees.



Diaskari beach

Diaskari beach and Langada beach, two secluded beaches past Makrigrigalos. There is a sign to Diaskari beach. In order to locate the dirt track to Langada beach you will have to drive for a couple of km past Diaskari and look for the “Taverna Eftyhia”. The tavern is closed, so don’t count on it for lunch. Past the taverna there is a greenhouse and right after that, you will see the dirt track leading to the beach. You will probably be alone there, so naturism is possible.



Koutsounari beach

Five km from Ierapetra is **Koutsounari** beach. This is a large beach with fine sand and relatively shallow water. It’s not fully organised, which means that a large part has no beach umbrellas and loungers, but there are quite a few trees providing shade for bathers.



Gra Lygia beach

This seaside resort has a beautiful beach, just right for relaxing on. As with much of the land around Ierapetra, the locals are much involved with greenhouse cultivation and tourism.

The beach has coarse sand, small pebbles and crystal-clear water; and a few tamarisks. It is well equipped with umbrellas, sunbeds and showers as well as opportunities for water-sports. In the village are rooms to rent, tavernas and some bars.



Mavros Kolympos beach

Mavros Kolimpos beach is a shingle and pebbles beach, where you will be almost alone. There is no sign with the name of the beach, only a generic “beach” sign.



Kolokytha beach

Very close to Elounda and the Spinalonga peninsula there is an islet called Kolokytha. On the opposite side of the islet there is a wonderful beach, the beach of Saint Loukas or Kolokythas as it is called by the locals. The water is superbly clean, and the island of Spinalonga in the background is a reminder of the past. Spinalonga was the last leper colony in Europe which closed in 1957. The branches of the aged olive trees cast their shadows like strokes of an artist's brush.



Kakia Skala Beach

Kakia Skala beach is located 11.5 km east of the town of Ierapetra and 46.5 km south of Agios Nikolaos right beside the beach of Kakkos. Kakia Skala is a long beach with coarse sand and pebbles, not at all developed. On the beach there are no restaurants but you can serve next beach Kakos. In Kakia Skala operated a few rooms for rent.



Karoumes Beach

Lying at the mouth of the Chochlakies Gorge, this is a lovely, calm beach with sand, small gravelly stones and clear and crystalline waters which deepen suddenly – suitable therefore for swimming and underwater exploration. The beach is not organized and you will find no infrastructure: when you visit, take care to have food and drink with you.



Psili Ammos Beach

An exceptional beach with fine, golden sand and turquoise waters. The hills create a natural division for privacy. Its name means Fine Sand and the sand extends up to the hill (see photo on the left). In order to reach this remote beach, you have to walk 10 min. starting from Vai, palm beach.



Windsurfing in Kouremenos beach

The beach is the longest in the area with a length exceeding 1.5km, bounded on the north by the Cape Tenta and on the south by the Cape Plaka. It has fine brown sand, shallow turquoise waters and several tamarisk trees around. It is slightly organized in some areas with umbrellas, showers and beach bars.

The beach is beautiful but the main feature of Kouremenos is elsewhere: the wind. Indeed, the wind here is so strong that the area is popular to windsurfers and kite surfers across Europe. Indeed it is no coincidence that the area hosts the largest windmill generators park in Greece, exploiting the huge wind potential





A windsurfing school operates in Kouremenos beach, from where you can also rent equipment at reasonable prices. Meltemi (i.e. northwest summer wind) increases its power through the local thermal and a funnelling effect that gives the ground wind an additional 2 Beaufort, than in the surrounding area. Thus, the wind force is stably between 4 and 7 Beaufort. During the summer season, the average wind force is approximately 6 Beaufort, making Kouremenos the

most wind-certain spot in Europe. The most used sail size is 4.5 – 5.3m.

Kouremenos is ideal for all levels of windsurfers. Near the coast the sea is flat and very suitable for beginners. The flat surface is ideal for planning as well as professional freestyle. Moreover, the shallow water and the sandy shore helps beginners with beach start. The local school has installed buoys for indicating the entrance. Instead, there are small waves further out, where the experts can let them-selves go and show off their chop-off jumps. Some experts prefer the quietest northern end of the beach, Tenta (near the local harbor). The shore in Tenta is rocky and the entrance to the sea can be achieved only from a cement dock.



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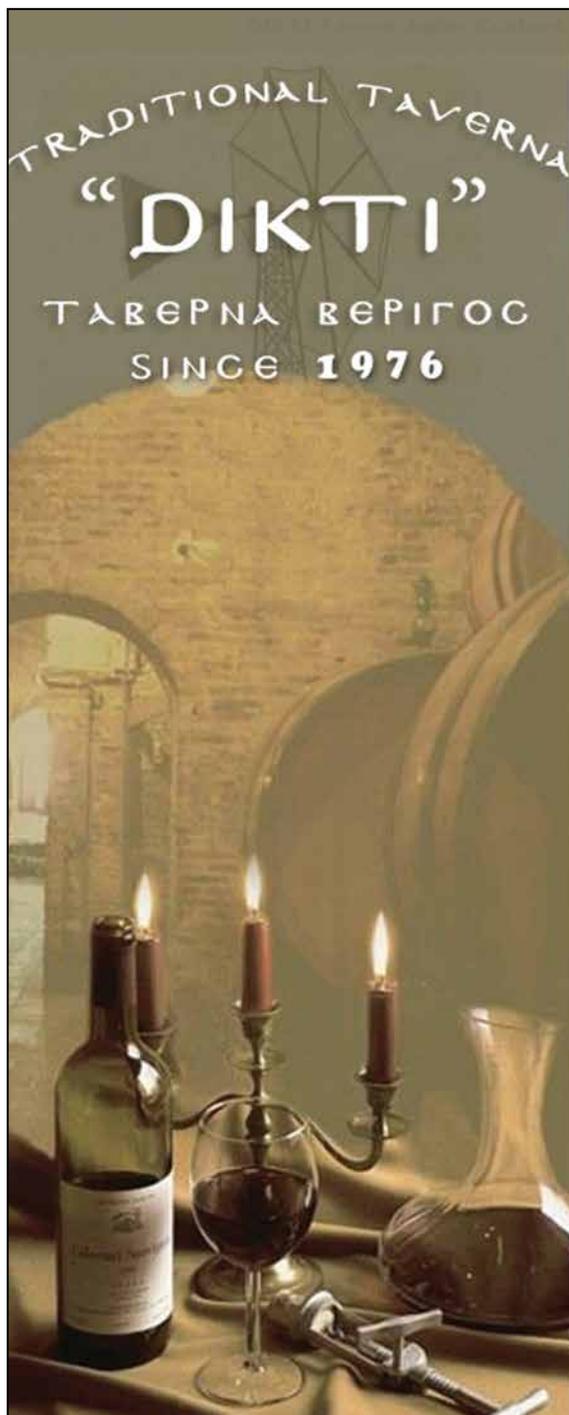


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f v o t i p

Shopping Jewellery Clothes

Rodoula Tsamparli

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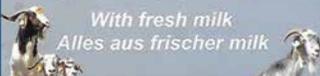
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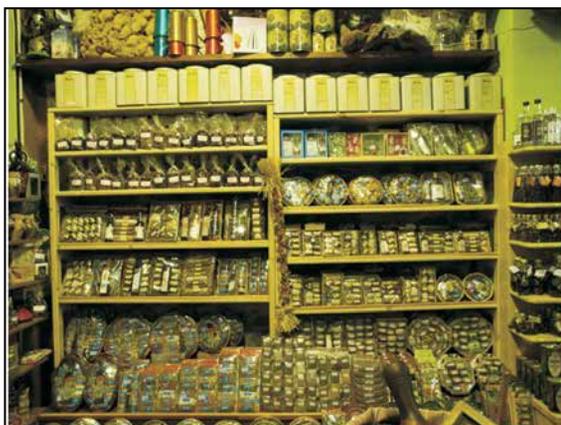


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Τα κοσμήματα Χαρκιολάκης έρχονται να ικανοποιήσουν αυτές τις τάσεις με δημιουργίες από χρυσό και πολύτιμες πέτρες.

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Cretan Natural Products | Критские Натуральные продукты

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Botanical & Perfume Museum



Essential oils Distillery & Natural Cosmetic Production Bioaroma is an inspiration from the vast history and heritage, that surrounds the land of Crete.



The Cretan land is a paradise of herbs, plants with distinct aromatic, cosmetic and coloring properties. Its expedient climate and the quality of its soil comprise one of the richest ecosystems in Europe. 2000 different kinds of plant thrive in the remote mountains of the island, 200 of which are endemic and found only on Crete. This natural wealth drove the Minoans, the ancient denizens of the island, to become some of the first producers of cosmetics in the world 4000 years ago. They produced unique natural creams, healing ointments and aromatic oils which they offered to Kings and Gods as sacrifice. The Minoan women used these products to such an extent as to be considered the most beautiful women of the ancient world. Minoan palaces contained specially constructed areas, which were forerunners of modern cosmetic labs, where various natural products and perfumes were prepared. Aromatic plants were considered as gifts from Mother Nature but also as an expression of beauty.



Bioaroma is a link between past and present; a modern, vertically integrated unit working in the field of herbs and natural products. Bioaroma's facilities are located in Agios Nikolaos, Crete and give the visitors the opportunity to see the distillery of aromatic plants, the production of herbal cosmetics and traditional olive oil soaps, smell 40 different essential oils and learn about all natural treasures of Crete.

Longing to preserve tradition and spread this important knowledge, Bioaroma created also a charming botanical garden, including 40 different types of herbs, a museum of folk medicine and a perfume museum. The folk medicine museum highlights the old healing practices and traditional methods of collecting and processing plants and gives the visitors the chance to watch a video about the properties of cretan herbs and uses besides. In the same place, a great photo-collection of unique endemic flowers, orchids and edible plants is exhibited. Bioaroma's perfume museum allows visitors to discover the history of fragrances in Crete and offers visitors the chance to make their own perfume by mixing unique Mediterranean raw materials under the guidance of a professional Perfumer. After the tour every visitor can enjoy free tea from cretan herbs and taste carob syrup.



Free Entrance

Working hours: Daily except
Sundays 09:00-15:00



www.bioaroma.gr



Rhodes



Nafplio



Corfu



Simi



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Parthenon



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