

Sitia

Discover the authentic Crete

MUNICIPALITY OF SITIA
www.sitia.gr

TOWN COMMITTEE ON TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

www.cretesitia.gr

Greece
Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Greek National Tourism Organisation
www.visitgreece.gr


Sitia


The palm forest at Vai













Sitia's hot and dry climate, with 300 days of sunshine annually, mild winters, cool summers and an average annual temperature of 20.76 oC, is the ideal year-round vacation destination.





Sitia and Hospitality

The visitor who seeks to know and understand real Crete, can trace here the eternal roots of this particular behavior and presence that survived in Sitia because of the generous nature, the creative blending of some great civilizations and its geographical self-existence.

Crete is said to be the daughter of the Mediterranean Sea, Europe's warm embrace, an open door to the West and the East. Sitia has taken these characteristics to a higher level. Located at the easternmost edge of Crete, its natural distinctive features and its historical course have made it a place where differences blend together in a superb way. Being a crossroads of sea routes, it became also a merging point of different ancient cultures.

Some scholars have pointed out that “it features a natural environment which is unique in Greece as well as Europe”, and, indeed, its natural beauties are extremely rare.

The people of Sitia have been offering their hospitality for centuries through a warm and mutual relationship with guests and visitors; in this almost religious relationship, the visitors can find the profound truths of a 4000 year old history, the eternal nature, and its charming legends. And hospitality gains a deeper meaning when generously combined with the local products.

In this religious-like relationship the local products play an important role: the wonder-making, award-winning olive oil, the wines that were already famous in the ancient times, the divine tsikoudia, and tasty raisins.

Sitia is also home to some fine vegetables, delicious traditional desserts and cakes, several kinds of cheese, and honey —and all these products have won several international awards.

In the Sitia area, visitors will find high quality taverns and restaurants specialized in the genuine Cretan cuisine. Its rich folk culture is strong and alive, and most villages host every summer a series of traditional fairs, parties and vivid cultural festivals.

Our visitors can also enjoy the beauties of nature and the thrills of cultural heritage through organized treks.

They can also enjoy swimming and sea sports, or relax at secluded sandy beaches, and small uninhabited islands, the latter being a paradise for nature-lovers and amateur sea-world explorers. And of course, there is no shortage of regular entertainment!











The Sitia Municipality

The Municipality of Sitia has a population of 21,000 and it is the easternmost province of Crete. It includes, besides Sitia itself, the Municipal Units (administrative areas) of Itanos eastwards, Lefki (southeast), and Analipsi-Makrys Gialos (southwest).

Sitia, home to 12,000 people, is a picturesque town amphitheatrically built on the side of a hill, nestling a beautiful harbor and a spacious sandy beach.

The town of Sitia will satisfy your simple everyday needs for enjoyment. At the beach, at the squares, at the shops, the taverns, the night clubs, practically everywhere you will see that Sitia is a lively town with so much to offer. Nightlife here also includes many high quality musical, theatrical and dancing events.

Don't miss the archeological and the folklore museum, the archeological site of Petras, and the Venetian fortress of Kazarma. Do your shopping, and feel the sea breeze while enjoying your drink or meal at one of the taverns on the waterfront. Do taste the locally grown fruits. Indulge in a variety of local desserts and pastries, like kalitsounia and xerotigana.

Sitia is a town that has embraced its past, yet it seeks and welcomes anything new and modern. It's a town that can offer hidden magic, peace, and also vividness.

The municipal unit (area) of Sitia includes 17 smaller communities. From Sitia to Mochlos, at the north, you will find Skopi, Chamezi which features a significant folklore museum, Exo Mouliana and Mesa Mouliana, Myrsini, Tourloti, Sfaka and Lastros; a series of traditional villages on the hillside, with many olive trees and the sea in the background. Visitors can enjoy Cretan delicacies at the kafenio and the local taverns. **Mochlos**, 35 km away from Sitia is a picturesque seaside village with small sandy beaches and moderate tourist development. You can find a place to stay, coffee shops, bars and fish-taverns on the waterfront.

On the south route, which leads to Makrys Gialos and Ierapetra, you will also find several villages, like Piskokefalo, Maronia, Pano Episkopi, Agios Georgios, the nearby Praesos, and also Agios Spyridonas. These are very colorful villages built on the hills and the valleys of the area, with springs. On your inland journey southwards, you will find Roussa Ekklisia, Stavromenos, Katsidoni, Sitanos; to the southwest you can visit Achladia, Paraspori, Skordillo, Krya and Dafne: small traditional mountainous villages with a stunning view.









Services & Tourist Infrastructure...

Municipal Unit of Itanos: *It includes the municipal communities of Palekastro, Zakros and Karydi.*
Blessed with countless natural and historical beauties, this area attracts many visitors who believe that this easternmost edge of Crete is one of the few remaining destinations for alternative nature vacations.
Palaikastro (population 1,300), 16 Km east of Sitia, is the biggest village of the Sitia area, and one of the most lively and fast-growing villages of the Municipality; It boasts fertile agricultural land, significant archeological remains, and stupendous beaches. There is also a folklore museum, and in the summer visitors can enjoy several cultural events. The village has high accommodation standards, high quality restaurants, banks, shops, and drugstores.
Zakros, 36 km away from Sitia, is a traditional village (population 800) with many trees, a beautiful spring and a "museum of water". The Gorge of the Dead stretches from this village to Kato Zakros —next to the remains of the fourth biggest Minoan palace.
Kato Zakros is nestled in a small sandy cove, with some accommodation options suitable for relaxing vacations.
Municipal Unit of Lefki: *It includes the municipal communities of Agia Triada, Apidia, Armeni, Zeros, Papagiannades, and Chandra. Ziros (population 779) is the biggest village of the area.* **Xerokampos** is a seaside village situated between Zakros and Goudoura, 49 km away from Sitia (via Zeros). It is a real tourist magnet because of its African-like, exotic appearance, its splendid sandy beaches and the crystal clear sea.
Goudouras, a well-known seaside village, 12 km east of Makrys Gialos has some wonderful beaches. Both these villages provide accommodation options, and have several coffee shops and taverns.
Municipal Unit of Analipsi-Makrys Gialos: *It includes the municipal communities of Lithina, Pervolakia, Pefka and Chrysopigi.*
Analipsi-Makrys Gialos is a seaside tourist village on the South Route, 35 km away from Sitia. During the last decades, agricultural and tourist development has soared, mainly because of the picturesque beaches, the fertile land and mild climate. The neighboring area of Koutsouras has almost merged with Analipsi forming a fast-growing town which can provide tourist services, various shops, banks, a post-office and a police station.


Palaikastro


Zakros











...In Each Area

The Municipality of Sitia can provide all those services that our visitors might need for a safe and pleasant stay here. Harbor, airport, banks, civil services, a general hospital, police stations, a fire department, consumer protection services, market inspection service, healthcare services, health centers, tourist services, tourist police, travel agencies, and a Civil Aviation Authority station —all at your disposal.

By Plane: Sitia has an up-to-date airport which can accommodate small and large aircrafts for domestic flights to Athens, Alexandroupoli, Preveza, Kasos, Karpathos, Rhodes, international flights or even charter flights.

By Boat: Sitia has a port suitable for large passenger ships; the port connects Sitia with Piraeus, the islands of Cyclades, and the Dodecanese islands. There is also a marina that can provide berths for several sailing boats and yachts.

By Road: Both the North and the South Route can lead to this area. The North Route connects Sitia with Agios Nikolaos and Iraklion. The South Route connects Sitia with Ierapetra and southern Crete. There is regular, everyday **bus service from Heraklion to Lasithi** with spacious, safe vehicles. **Tel. +30 28430.22272. www.ktel.gr**

Discover your own Sitia by drawing your own road trips, and let the locals' simplicity and politeness be your guide, during your stay in Europe's most southeastern Municipality.
The area of Sitia is in fact an integrated tourism hub. Its tourist areas —Sitia town, Makrys Gialos, Palekastro, Mochlos— can provide all kinds of accommodation, and also a huge range of high-quality, low-price restaurants and entertainment venues.
The smaller seaside tourist destinations —Kato Zakros, Xerokampos and Goudouras— have to offer fewer, albeit excellent, tourist services for calm and relaxing vacations. Sitia will be waiting for you to live the best vacations you ever had, not only in the summer but also all year long, because of its mild weather and its non-stop liveliness.




Sitia


Chiona


Analipsi – Makrys Gialos


Kato Zakros

History and Culture

Antiquities

A trip to Sitia is no less than a pilgrimage to the fountain of civilization! The Minoan civilization is known to be the first high level civilization in Europe. In eastern Crete, in places such as Zakros, Palekastro, Petras, Mochlos and Psyra, the first Minoan urban centers and ports were located, and enchanting, ancient legends were born. Zeus, king of the Gods, transformed himself into a white bull and seduced the Phoenician king's beautiful daughter, Europa. She climbed upon his back and he swam to the island of Crete. He let her rest at a beautiful beach near Palekastro and Vai, and then moved towards the Dictaean Cave and Gortyna.

Sitia's extremely rich and glorious past has been established by many big excavations and historical studies that have been taking place continuously during the last century, both by Greek and foreign scientists and scholars.

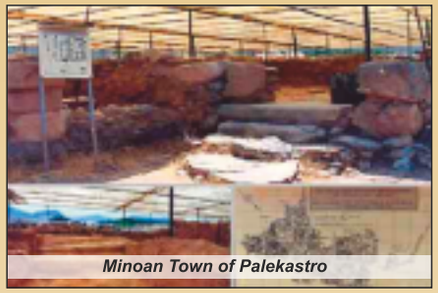
Sitia Province is indeed an area were antiquities abound, compared to the rest of the country and other countries, boasting more than 80 archeological sites.



Minoan Palace of Kato Zakros

Most important archeological sites

- The Minoan palace of Zakros
- The Minoan town of Palekastro
- A Minoan village at Mochlos
- The Minoan cemetery at Agia Fotia
- The Minoan palace of Petras
- Minoan mansions at Sitia
- Minoan mansions at Makrys Gialos
- Eteocretan Praesos
- Doric Itanos
- The Hellenistic village at Trypitos
- The Hellenistic village at Xerokampos
- Roman Lefki (Koufonisi)



Minoan Town of Palekastro



Minoan Palace of Petras

Buildings from the Middle Ages

Every historical period has left its trace on the land of Sitia. After the Minoan era, the land of the Praesians kept its Minoan roots, although hemmed in by a hostile Doric environment, until it was ruined by the mighty Hierapytnian city. After the Classical and the Hellenistic period, it was the Roman conquest that left its own traces. The Roman fish tanks at Sitia, the theater at Koufonisi, and other ruins testify to the importance of this area during that period.

During the Byzantine period, and later during Venetian rule, new forts, settlements, great ports, and big or small churches were built. The land of Sitia, doubtlessly an easy prey for pirates and bandits, keeps its important and cultural development uninterrupted.

The Kazarma fortress, the feudal towers scattered all over the area, glorious buildings such as those in Elia and Voila, new settlements built on the ruins of previous ones, like the Liopetro fort, the Roman vigiliae (guard towers), spacious villas and mansions, strong walls and makeshift fortifications —those are just some of the Venetian traces that visitors will see wherever they go.



Medieval settlement at Voila



Venetian mansion at Etia



Fortress of Liopetro



Water spring at Voila



Venetian 'Kazarma' fortress

Monasteries

Another characteristic of the Cretan land, and especially Sitia: The local monasteries and churches scattered all over the area. They are important, architecturally exciting religious and historical monuments built at exquisite spots, but they are great tourist attractions too.

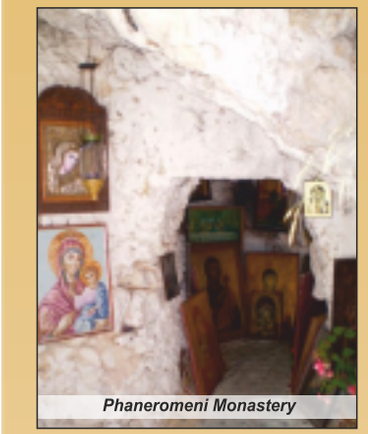
Toplou monastery: One of the biggest and most important monasteries on Crete. Located 10 km east of Sitia at the foot of Cape Sideros, this majestic monastery resembles a fortress. It was founded in the 16th century around an earlier small church dedicated to Virgin Mary, which (judging from its remaining mural paintings) was situated there since the 14th century. The monastery is home to many 14 and 15 century important religious icons. The monastery also owns tracts of land were organic olive oil and wines are produced. Visitors are welcome to taste and buy those famous local products in the monastery.

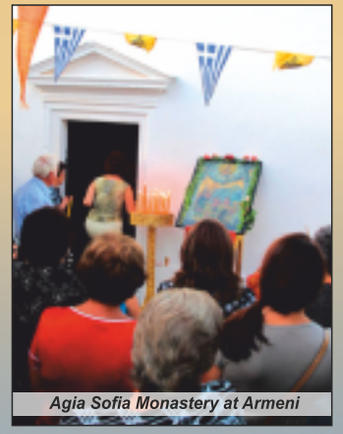
Kapsa Monastery: On the eastern edge of the mouth of the Pervolakia gorge, 5 km east of Makrys Gialos, built on a steep cliff, this Monastery is dedicated to Saint John the precursor. Originally founded in the 15th century, it was ruined during the Ottoman occupation; it was restored by Gerontogiannis from 1861 onwards. The view of the Libyan Sea is spectacular.

Panagia Faneromeni Monastery: It is a small monastery 9 km NW of Sitia, built on the top of a beautiful gorge. It was given this name (Faneromeni, “the one who disclosed herself”), because of a Virgin Mary icon which was found in a nearby cave.

Agia Sofia Monastery at Armeni: A ruined monastery in the area of the village Armeni, in Sitia province. It was built on a hill, near the village of Etia. It was founded during the Venetian occupation, in the 14th century.


Kapsas Monastery


Phaneromeni Monastery


Agia Sofia Monastery at Armeni


Toplou Monastery

Museums

Rare and valuable findings of various civilizations, ranging from the Neolithic period, through Minoan times and up until the modern era, have been excavated in the Sitia area. All those great civilizations that had flourished in this land have bequeathed to us superb specimens of their material and spiritual wealth, now on display in a number of local museums.

Archeological Museum of Sitia

The unique exhibits (that came from digs in Zakros, Mochlos, Psira, Palekastro, Praesos, Itanos, Agia Fotia, Lefki, Makrys Gialos, and other Minoan hotspots of eastern Crete) will most certainly provide our visitors with an one of a kind experience. Many exhibits are about olive trees, vineyards, cattle-breeding, fishing, bee-keeping, and other aspects of rural life.

Folklore museums

Some important folklore museums are situated in the town of Sitia, in Chamezi and Palekastro, while some smaller folklore collections are on display in Chandras and Pefki. There are venues specifically designed for the display of typically Cretan artifacts that represent different aspects of the local folk culture and rural life.

Toplou monastery museums

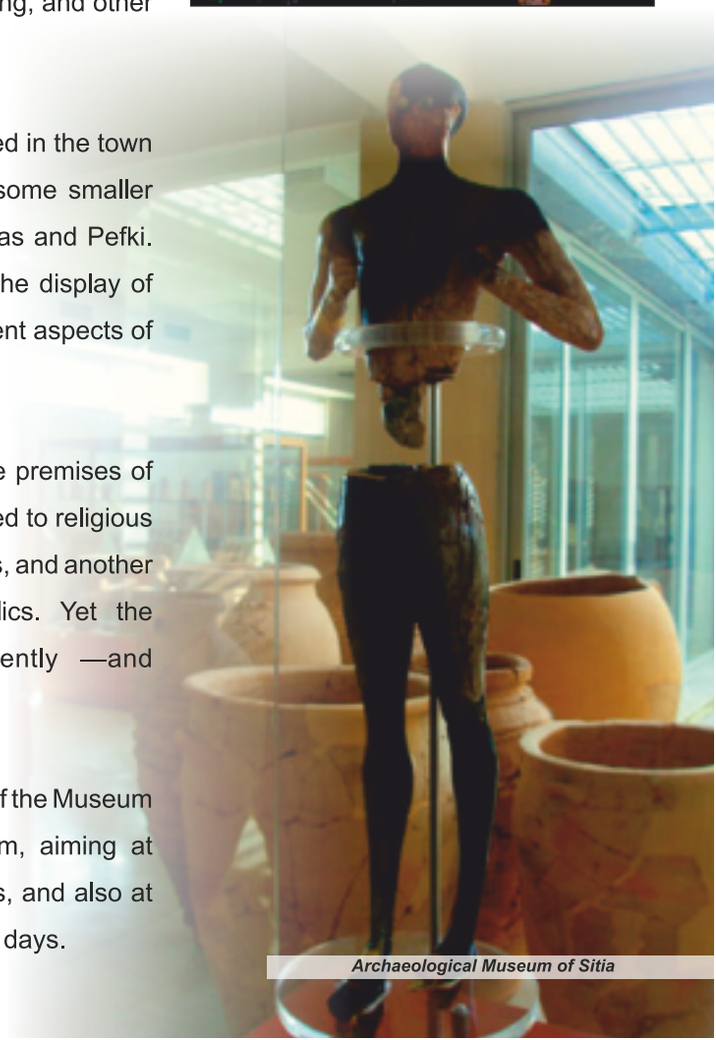
There are two important museums within the premises of the Toplou monastery: One museum dedicated to religious icons, books, relics and church-related objects, and another dedicated to engraving and historical relics. Yet the monastery itself is nothing but a recently —and successfully— restored glorious monument.

The Museum of Water in Zakros

The local restored watermills are the location of the Museum of Water in Zakros. It is a special museum, aiming at preserving water-related objects and artifacts, and also at highlighting the vital importance of water these days.


Water Museum at Zakros


Toplou Monastery


Archaeological Museum of Sitia

Beaches



All over the area of Sitia, there are numerous beautiful beaches with crystal clear water. Some beaches are isolated —ideal for some relaxed solitude. Others are full of people, well-organized, and blue flag accredited. The most important are the following:


Sitia beach

THE SITIA BEACH
This 2.5 km long, well-organized, town beach can offer all the services, the amenities and the security that our visitors want. It's a much-frequented beach, honored with 3 blue flags, suitable for all sea sports: jet-skiing, surfing, regular skiing, sea-biking, sailing, scuba-diving, and canoeing.


Kouremenos beach

THE KOUREMENOS BEACH
This is a 1.5 km long, relatively organized, fine sand beach, with deep blue water and shady tamarisks. It is a very popular place for European surfers, since the wind there is the perfect challenge for windsurfing lovers. There is also a windsurfing school on the beach, and also several cozy taverns for you to enjoy your meal.


Beach of Chiona

THE MARIDATI BEACH
It's a beautiful, secluded, sandy beach, halfway between Kouremenos and Vai, for those who seek some peace and quiet. There is a restaurant and several rental apartments nearby.

THE CHIONAS BEACH
This beautiful, white sand, sandy bottom, shallow beach is just 1 km away from Palekastro. It is not an organized beach, but you can sit and relax in the shade of tamarisks. East of the beach you can explore many virgin, small cloves with sandy beaches. The taverns of Chiona are famous for their kakavia (a traditional fish-soup).


Sitia beach

THE BEACH OF ITANOS-ERIMOUPOLI
Itanos (also known as Erimoupoli) is located almost 25 km east of Sitia and 1 km away from the palm forest of Vai. There are three gulfs featuring three beaches. Visitors here can also visit the archeological site of Itanos —this is actually where this place took its name from. If you are a scuba-diving fan or you just love swimming with a regular mask on, you'll love exploring the submerged part of ancient Itanos.

THE KATO ZAKROS BEACHES
7 km away from the colorful village of Zakros, there are the three Kato Zaktos beaches —a big one, and two smaller ones. With sky-blue, crystal clear water, the beaches can be pebbly or sandy. It's one of the most beautiful, secluded places of southeastern Crete, which will win your heart. At the Kato Zakros harbor you can also enjoy local delicacies at the several taverns on the waterfront.

MOCHLOS
At this village's small sandy beach and also at the small bays to the east and west, the visitors can swim and enjoy the sea. Just a few meters outside the village, and on the small islet of Agios Nikolaos, you can see the remains of an important Minoan settlement. There are also taverns and coffeehouses for you to enjoy traditional dishes, fresh fish and your drink.


Itanos beach


Beach of Kato Zakros


Mochlos Beach

The most beautiful beaches of each area

Area of Sitia
Sitia
Agia Fotia
Platani
Papadiokampos
Richtis
Mochlos

Area of Palekastro
Vai
Itanos/Erimoupoli
Chiona
Kouremenos
Maridati
Tenta
Schinias
Karoumes

Area of Zakros
Kato Zakros (the main one)
Limanaki
Almyriki

Area of Xerokambos
Xerokampos (the main one)
Potamos
Katsounaki
Argilos
Gerontolakos
Tis Ligias o Lakos
Ammatou
Agia Irini

Area of Goudoura
Stou Thodori
Votsalaki
Goudoura (the main one)
Livari

Koufonisi island

Area of Makrys Gialos
Analipsi
Limanaki
Lagoufas
Diaskari
Lagada
Ammoudi
Kalo Nero/Staousa

Beaches

BEACHES OF MAKRYGIALOS At Analipsi, there are many stunning sandy beaches. Some of them are remote, like Ammoudi, and some are near small villages, like Kalo Nero, Langada and Diaskari. There are also some well-organized beaches within the tourist village of Analipsi-Makrys Gialos. These busy beaches have shallow crystal water and fine sand —ideal for families with children. At the edge, there is a small harbor for fish boats. There are many taverns, coffee shops, bars, and of course hotels and rental apartments.


Makrys Gialos beach

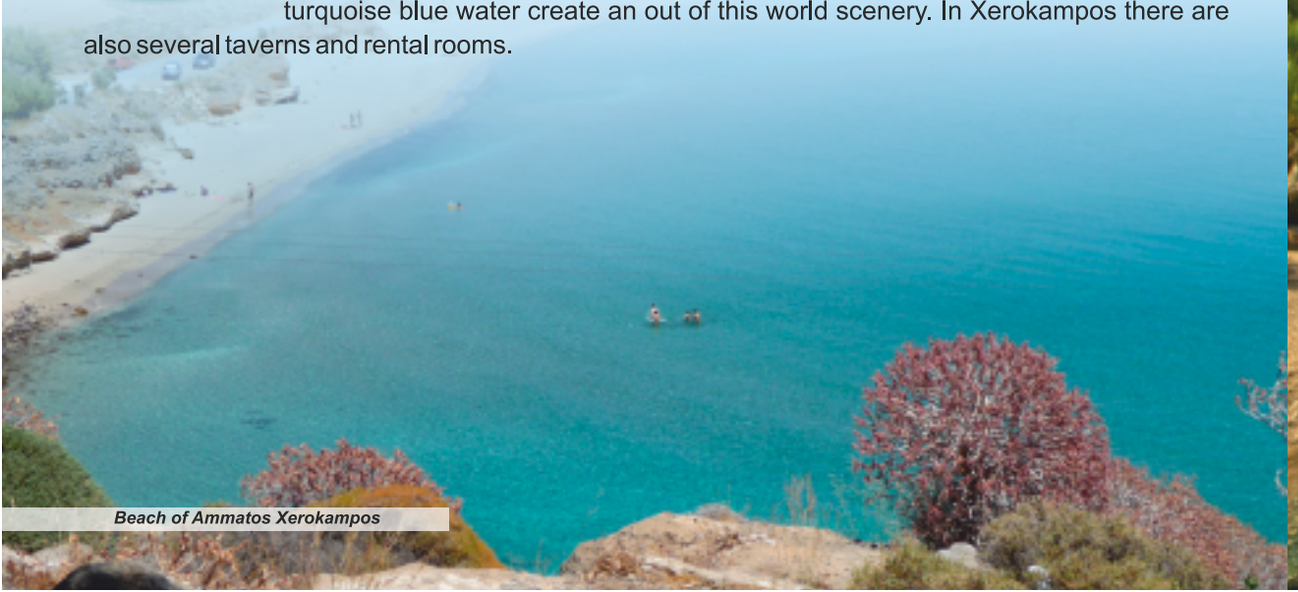
BEACHES OF GOUDOURAS
Goudouras is a small seaside village facing the Libyan Sea, with many beautiful beaches and crystal water. In the village, you can find taverns, rental rooms and coffee shops.


Goudouras beach

KOUFONISI ISLAND
Koufonisi, with its stunning beaches with white sand and sky-blue sea, will certainly create in the visitors the desire to swim and enjoy the sea. This virgin, African-like scenery is simply enchanting. You may also visit the remains of a 1000 seats Roman theater.

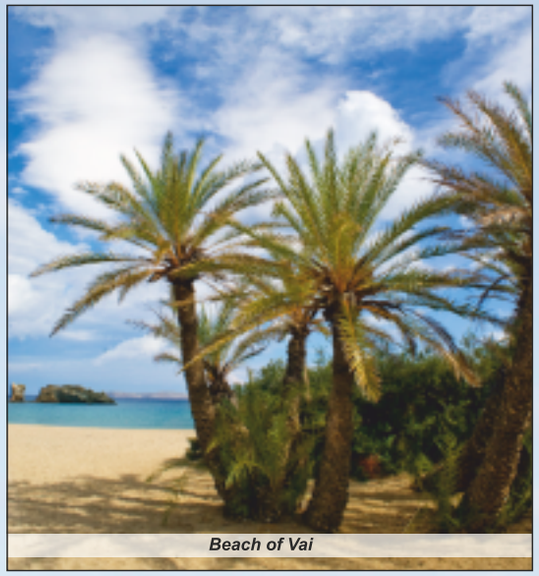


BEACHES OF XEROKAMBOS
Xerokampos is a virgin place with gorgeous beaches, ideal for those who seek to kick back and relax. Blessed with a shallow, crystal clear sea, the beaches are ideal for families with children. The wild mountains, the gorges, the olive-trees, the incredible secluded beaches, and the small bays with turquoise blue water create an out of this world scenery. In Xerokampos there are also several taverns and rental rooms.


Beach of Ammatos Xerokampos

Vai – Palm forest

The palm forest of Vai is located 20 km away from Sitia, on the eastern edge of Crete. It is a stunning, exotic place, a synonym to natural beauty. It measures 200 sq km and stretches along a small valley which leads to a sandy beach endowed with a green-blue sea.
There are many legends about its origins. Some say that the Phoenicians —allegedly the original settlers of Itanos— were the first to plant palm trees there; others believe that it was created because of the date palm seeds thrown away by Egyptian soldiers, or Saracen pirates, or invaders. But no matter how it was created, its growth and preservation is due to the hot and dry climate and the underground water of the valley. Its name comes from the local term for a palm ("vagia" [pron. vaya] or "vai").
It is full of palm trees (Phoenix theophrasti) and it is the only palm forest not only in Greece, but in Europe as well. There is nothing similar in Europe in terms of size and beauty.
Its uniqueness is the reason that it was declared one of the 19 most sensational forests in Greece, and back in 1973 it was declared a protected natural area. The palm wood of Vai is definitely a unique place, worth of visiting.


Beach of Vai


Beach of Vai


Beach of Vai

Sea Sports

Crete, blessed with 1,000 km of natural shoreline, has a wide range of landscapes interchanging with the coastline. The area of Sitia is particularly privileged, facing to the sea from three different directions: The Cretan Sea from the north, the Carpathian Sea from the east, and the Libyan Sea from the south. Apart from swimming and exploring the sea bottom, you can also indulge in windsurfing, sailing, kayaking, fishing and scuba diving.

Windsurfing

Enjoy unique moments of freedom and speed, while tilting the rig forward at the Kouremenos beach, one of the most well-known and remarkable surfing beaches in Europe. This is the place of well-organized surfing clubs that can provide for the advanced surfers, as well as those who want to feel the magic of this superb sport for the first time.

Sailing

Pure freedom! Let the Aegean breeze refresh your skin. Imagine the cool drops of seawater coming from the waves hitting on your boat, and the deep blue Cretan sky in your eyes! We invite you to feel this incredible sense of freedom with family or friends, while sailing the eastern Crete sea.



Kouremenos beach; windsurfing



Kouremenos beach; windsurfing



Sailing from the marina of Sitia



Kouremenos beach; windsurfing

Kayaking

Visit Sitia and discover the coastline of eastern Crete by using just your hands. You will feel a sense of adventure when you steer to places only accessible by kayaks: Visit beautiful beaches, small secluded coves, steep rocks, and sea caves that you already know about, or discover them from scratch. After all, this is what Crete really has to offer: the mysteries of the sea.

Fishing

A regular summer pastime for those who live here, a must do for those who want to enjoy the sea —excluding swimming. You can always rent a boat, enjoy your own personal cruise, fish using any technique, swim, or observe the sea floor with a mask. And, of course, you can take your fish to a local tavern and have them cooked.

Scuba diving

The undersea world of eastern Crete and Sitia boasts a wide variety of fish, shellfish and marine mammals. This is a result of the rocky seafloor combined with the endemic seagrass Posidonia oceanica. Scuba diving clubs can provide you with diving gear and diving experts will accompany you to special spots that feature remarkable flora and fauna or sea-wrecks. There are also courses for beginners.



Kayaking from Goudouras to Makrys Gialos



Fishing offshore Makrys Gialos



Scuba diving at Sitia



"Cavo Sidero" Cape; scuba diving

Sports & Nature

Natural Wealth

- The nature of the Sitia Province is very rich and unspoiled.
- Many extensive "NATURA Areas".
- An abundance of particularly beautiful landscapes.
- Rare geological formations and impressive spots of geological development.
- More that ten deep gorges and big gaps.
- 300 caves of great interest to explore.
- 2,100 species of native plants, 300 of them are indigenous, and also many herbs and pharmaceutical plants —not to mention numerous beautiful wildflowers.
- A large population of rare birds and animals; and also the biggest colony of Eleonora's falcons in the world.
- The richest and most unspoiled sea habitat in the Aegean Sea (north of the island of Psyra), home to some fine corals.
- Extensive fields covered with the threatened seaweed Posidonia oceanica.
- The palm forest of Vai, the only palm forest in Europe.
- The starting point of the E4 European Path.
- Many habitats of Euro-African vegetation (at Vai, the southern shores, Koufonisi, etc.)

Trekking & Hiking

As you hike through the wild and virgin Cretan landscape, every step will create a brand new memory. Breathe in the aroma of the herbs, and be part of this adventure like many civilizations have done so far. Learning about the natural wealth and the history of this land will be an exciting experience beyond words. Do hike through the unique and famous paths and gorges of Crete!

Recommended Trails:

- AGII PANTES GORGE – SKOPI: 3 HOURS
- SITANOS – ZAKROS – KATO ZAKROS: 4 HRS
- PEFKI – MAKRYGIALOS: 2 HRS
- CHAMEZI – LIOPETRO – PAPADIOKAMBOS: 4 HRS
- EXO MOULIANA – RICHTIS: 3 HRS
- SITIA – ROUSSA EKKLISIA: 4 HRS
- PERVOLAKIA – MONI KAPSA: 3 HRS
- AGATHIAS, PETSOFAS, SCHINIAS, KAROUMES, CHOCHLAKIES: 6 HRS
- KOUREMENOS – MARIDATIS – VAI: 2 HRS

E4 Sitia

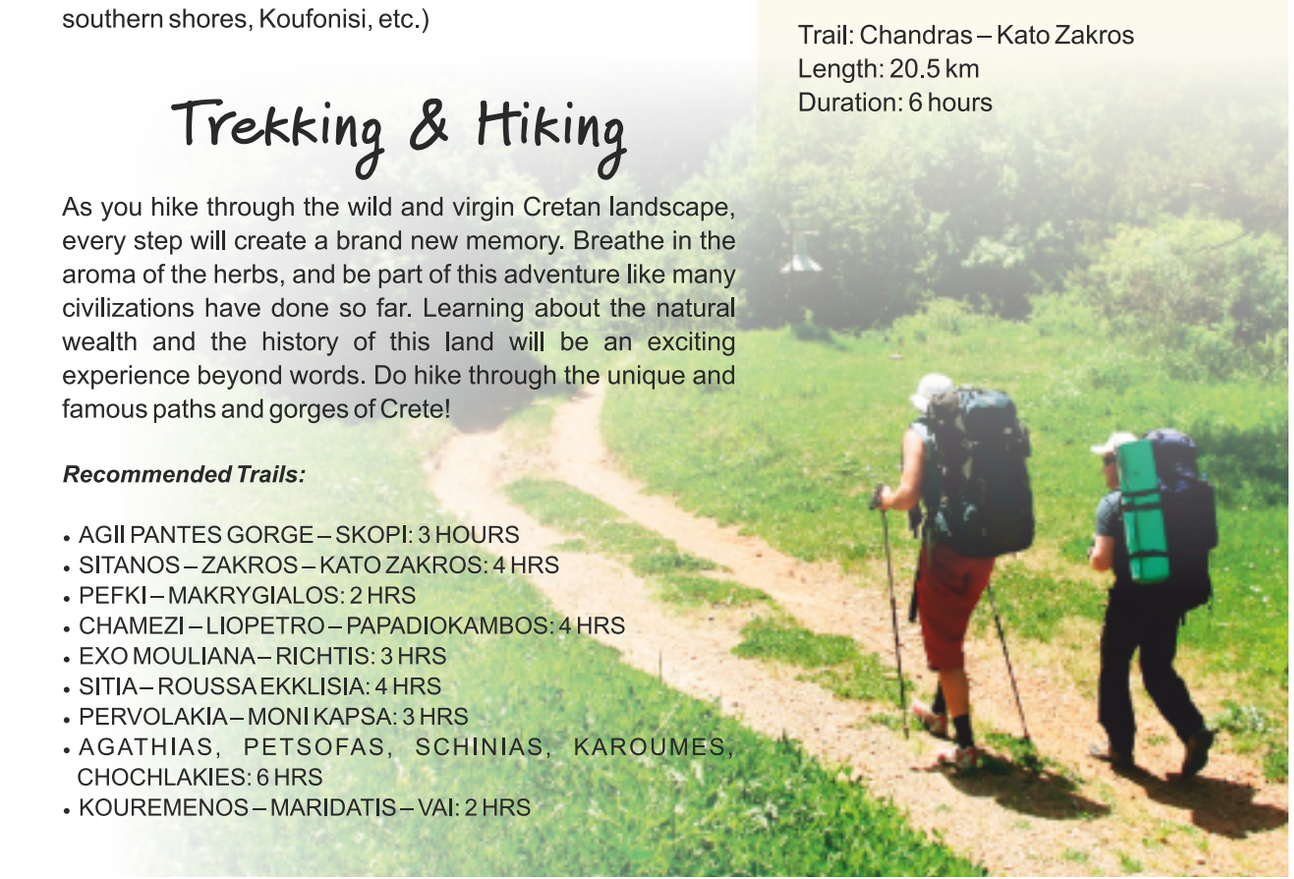
A Journey to the Legends

The E4 adventure starts from the Pyrenees and, via the main European mountains, ends up to Zakros, at the easternmost edge of Crete. The route of E4 through Crete provides the visitors with the opportunity to enjoy the small seaside or mountainous villages. The following E4 trails, hikable throughout the year, can help you enjoy nature and learn more about the locals.

Trail: Vasiliki - Chrysopigi
Length: 23.5 km
Duration: 7 hours

Trail: Chrysopigi - Chandras
Length: 19 km
Duration: 5 hours

Trail: Chandras – Kato Zakros
Length: 20.5 km
Duration: 6 hours



Climbing

An alternative suggestion for extreme nature escapes. The secure climbing areas at the Gorge of Kato Zakros will offer our climbing-lovers safe, top-quality climbing thrills. You can also find other secure climbing routes in the nearby villages of Chochlakies, Katsidoni and Dionysos. You can rent the necessary equipment and enjoy your favorite sport while looking over the spectacular Cretan scenery.

Mountain Biking

Don't stop! Go up the hills, small roads and paths sitting or standing! Fly on your bike rushing down the opposite side of the hill. You will see many villages where hospitality has remained alive even today. Indulge in the refreshing drinks and mouth-watering local food. Steer through unpaved paths and trails, through the olive trees and the vineyards, to mountainous and seaside areas and discover Sitia's virgin natural environment.

Recommended Trails:

- SITANOS – CHANDRAS – PERVOLAKIA – MONI KAPSA – KALO NERO
- CHAMEZI – LIOPETRO – PAPADIOKAMPOS – FANEROMENI - SITIA
- SITANOS – ZAKATHOS – ZIROS - XEROKAMPOS
- TENTA – ITANOS – VAI – KOUREMENOS – CHIONA – SKARIA
- SITANOS – KARIDI – ADRAVASTI – ZAKROS – KATO ZAKROS
- PALAIKASTRO – XEROLIMNI – MANGASA – KARYDI – ZAKROS
- LITHINES – PEFKOI – STAVROHORI – ORINO

Visiting the Caves

In the mountainous part of Sitia there are many beautiful caves. You can visit them only if you have the right equipment and an experienced local guide. The most important caves are the following:

- **The Cave of Pelekita:** It is located northeast of Kato Zakros, at an altitude of 100 m. It's 310 meters long.
- **The Cave of Peristeras:** 2.5 km east of Karydi, at a spot called Platyvola, at an altitude of 540 m.
- **The Vreiko Cave:** Situated 5 km away from Pefkoi.
- **The Petsofas Cave (Itanos):** At an altitude of 80 m., 500 meters southwest of a spot called Rousolakos.
- **Megalo Katofygi:** North of the village Tourtouli or Agios Georgios. The cave mouth is at an altitude of 450 meters.
- **The Cave of Oxo Latsidi:** The cave mouth is located next to the road connecting Sitia with Karydi, between the villages of Sitanos and Katsidoni, at an altitude of 684 m.



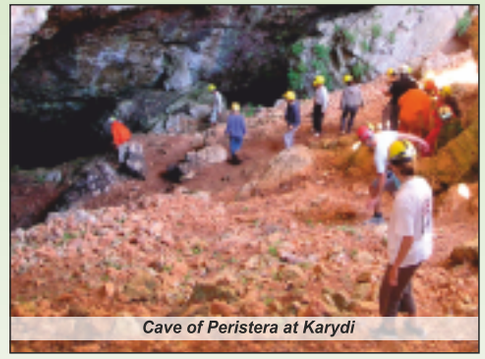
Climbing at Kato Zakros



Cycling on mountain trails at Sitia



Cave of Pelekita at Kato Zakros



Cave of Peristera at Karydi

Gorges

All over Sitia, there are several astonishing gorges; their orange and grey walls show the entrance into the world of stupendous wild beauty. These gorges were generally formed in the early Pleistocene, two million years ago, when Crete took its present shape. Visitors will certainly feel this geological wealth; especially during the spring and summer months, when herbs and pharmaceutical plants —already known since Minoan times— bloom and release their magnificent scents. The steep slopes of the gorges are the natural habitat of several rare species, like bearded vultures and hawks. The Gorge of the Dead at Zakros is a place that still shows the ancient roots and links of the locals with nature.

The Gorge of Richtis

Home of the Fairies

The gorge of Richtis, almost 4 km long, is a place of superb beauty. It starts just outside the village of Exo Mouliana, where you can also park your vehicle. The thick vegetation of plane trees, ivy, oleander and other trees, in combination with the scent of the herbs, the river and its crystal clear water, the small ponds and a 20 meter high waterfall, make up an astonishing scenery.



Richtis Gorge

The Gorge of the Dead



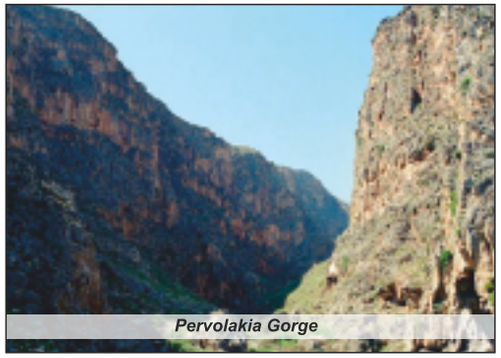
The gorge of Zakros, also known as the Gorge of the Dead, is one of the most beautiful in Crete, and it has a particular archeological, ecotourism and geophysical interest. It was named 'Gorge of the Dead' because the Minoans used the caves nestled in the steep walls as burial places.

Visitors can easily hike across the gorge, especially in the summer. The trail through the gorge ends at Kato Zakros, which is also the final part of the E4 Path.

There are two entrance points to the gorge. The first is near the village of Zakros. The other is almost halfway between Zakros and Kato Zakros. There is also a parking space. Trekking from that point will take you almost 2 hours, and the whole trail is unique.

Some other gorges that worth a visit:

- Chochlakia gorge, until Karoumes
- Pefkoi gorge, until Makrygialos
- Xerokampos gorge (from Zakros)
- Faneromeni-Agii Pantes gorge
- Pervolakia gorge, until Kapsa Monastery
- Chametoulo gorge, until Xerokampos
- Mesa Apidi gorge, until Goudouras



Pervolakia Gorge



Chochlakies Gorge



Pefkoi Gorge



Gorge of the Dead

Taste & Tradition

Crete boasts one of the oldest and tastiest culinary traditions in the world —a tradition of flavor, ingredients and cooking techniques that started in the prehistoric ages and today is alive and vivid.

Sitia is an olive oil powerhouse, but is also the proud producer of high nutritional value products.

The local olive oil, an international award winner, is one of the most healthy and nutritious olive oils in the world, because of the ideal climate of the area.

Olive oil is a staple of cretan diet, used in every traditional dish. We encourage you to taste these delicious dishes by visiting the local restaurants, taverns, and raki-places.



Taverns

The local taverns, either next to the sea or on paved pedestrian-only streets, create a joyful, friendly feeling. Welcoming, warm people are always ready to bring to your table unique, unforgettably tasty dishes… The good mood of the owner reaches the kitchen, and even the most hard to please visitor will feel it. It is such a special experience, that even the small, cozy taverns will become your regular hangout for your next night out. During your journey in Cretan food, our local fresh ingredients will be your guide.

Local cheese, honey, herbs, vegetables and many other products, make up the base of the miracle that is the local cuisine. Cretan and Sitian diet has been acknowledged as the quintessential Mediterranean diet, one of the healthiest worldwide. The high quality of locally grown ingredients has given birth to a cuisine with a unique flavor and vivid imagination, which is based on extra virgin olive oil combined with local fresh products.



Raki-places & Kafenio

A raki-place is a traditional, old-school kafenio, and most of the time is something that combines a kafenio with a tavern. Well, everybody knows what a tavern is, but what is a kafenio, already?

A kafenio is nothing but a coffeehouse where the locals go for coffee, hot and cold beverages, sodas, and alcoholic drinks like raki, ouzo, wine, etc. The main difference between a coffeehouse and a kafenio is mezes. Mezes is a set of 4 to 6 different dishes (with small portions), served with your alcoholic drink. What will this meze be? That depends on the season, the shop-owner and your drink.

The main difference between raki-places (“rakadiko”) and kafenio is that —apart from the meze which will come with your raki, ouzo, wine or beer— you can also choose extra delicious meze dishes from the menu. Raki-places are meeting places for many people of different age groups, and the atmosphere there is just fantastic.

Cretan Diet

Why do the Cretans live long? What's their secret?

The reason is that the Cretans eat locally produced ingredients, many vegetables, fruit, cheese, honey, legumes and fish, always combined with olive oil. Herbs (like thyme, oregano and basil) collected from the mountains are used for that extra flavor; they wash down the meal with local wine and accompany their food with hand-kneaded delicious bread.



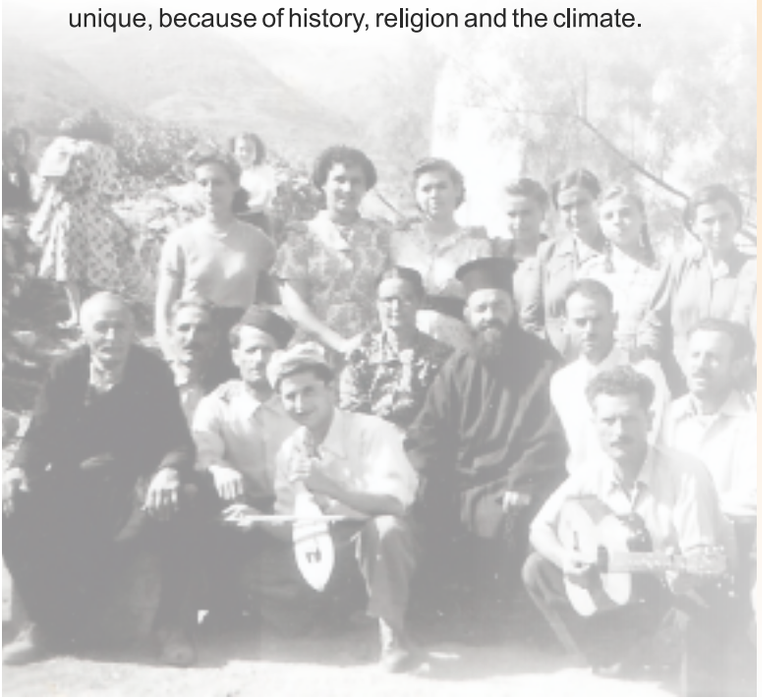
The joy of life

Sitia is one of the few places in Crete, where traditional and modern ways of life merge nicely together.

Since the Minoan times, it was one of the most important wine-making places, featuring some top quality wines. This ancient wine-making tradition is reflected on the findings from the Zakros palace and other archeological sites, and these are the areas that still keep producing some of the most famous Cretan wines.

“Raki” and “Sitia” are almost the same thing. The region of Lasithi is in high spirits because of all the raki brewing in Sitia. The distillation of raki every autumn signals a period of non-stop feast and cheer. You see, raki is not just another product —it's more like a symbol of a never-ending tradition, of a culture that seeks to keep these things that make it so special. And perhaps this is why many visitors that choose to be here during this time of the year, take to raki with great gusto!

Without a doubt, the local culture and customs of Sitia are unique, because of history, religion and the climate.





Religious feast-days & fairs

- St George festival, 23/4, at the ruined settlement of Skalia, near the village of Sitanos.
- St. Marina festival, 17/7, at Karydi, Praesos, Exo Mouliana, Myrsini and Sklavi.
- Prophet Helias festival, 20/7, at Mesa Mouliana and Sykia.
- St. Paraskevi festival, 26/7, at Zeros, Agia Triada and Agios Georgios (Tourtouli).
- St. Panteleimon festival, 27/7, at Chandras, Roussa Ekklisia and Chamezi.
- Afenti Christou (“Christ the Lord”) festival, 6/8, at Exo Mouliana, Agios Stefanos and Zakros.
- Virgin Mary's festival, 15/8, at Palekastro, Lastro, Piskokefalo, Tourloti, Sitanos, Armeni, Achladia and Faneromeni Skopis.
- St. John's festival, 29/8, at Ziros.
- Virgin Mary's Festival, 8/9, at Lithines.
- The Holy Cross festival, 14/9, at Sfaka.
- St. Sophia festival, 17/9, at Armeni.
- St. Anna's festival, 9/12, at Piskokefalo.
- The Trinity festival, at Palekastro and Agia Triada.
- The Holy Spirit festival, at Armeni.
- The Ascension Day festival, at Papadiokampos and Goudoura.

Most of the time, these religious feast-days are combined with local fairs, organized by local cultural clubs. These fairs take place on the day of the festival, or on the eve of those festivals.

The visitor who will attend any of those festivities, will doubtlessly be fascinated by the traditional dances, the vivid music tradition, the fantastic kondylies of Sitia, and traditional or impromptu Cretan mantinades —and the people of Sitia come second to none, regarding these traditions!

Casual or random meetings between the locals and the visitors can easily lead to parties.





This rich cultural heritage of Sitia coexists with modern ideas, something that can easily be seen when it comes to modern artistic expression and everyday entertainment.

Every summer, the Municipality organizes a series of cultural events, named “Kornaria”, aiming both at the cultural upgrade of the area, and at giving our guests the opportunity to meet the local culture. These events include musical, theatrical and dancing events, lectures, painting and photography exhibitions, featuring both local and foreign artists that express traditional as well as modern artistic trends.



As soon as visitors meet the locals, they realize that this area is not just about history, nature and sunny beaches: It's mainly about freedom combined with a carefree feeling —the ideal combination guaranteeing unforgettable vacations. Go for a stroll along the picturesque alleys and enjoy your coffee looking over the sea. And when the sun goes down, you will see why the people of Sitia are know as the most fun and party-loving people of the island. Groups of people at every corner of the town simply know how to enjoy life.



Useful Telephone Numbers and Links

- Sitia Police Department……28430.22266
- Tourist Police……28430.24200
- Police Station of Makrys Gialos……28430.51666
- Police Station of Palaikastro……28430.61222
- First Aid……166
- General Hospital of Sitia……28433.40100
- Fire Department……199
- Fire Station of Sitia……28430.23199
- Sitia Airport……28430.24424
- Bus Station……28430.22272
- Sitia Port Authority……28430.22310
- Taxi station……28430.22700
- Domestic flights schedule……144
- Coastal lines schedule……143
- Post Office……28430.22283

Hotel Union of Sitia
www.sitiahotels.gr

"ESTIA" —Association of
Rental Room Owners of Sitia
www.sitiarooms.gr

Hotel Union of Itanos
www.eastcrete-holidays.gr

Association of
Rental Room Owners of Makrys Gialos
www.makrysgialos.com




MAIN PORT
PORT
SITIA
TO AIRPORT
TO HERAKLION
TO PISKOKEFALO MAKRI GIALO
TO PALAIKASTRO - VAI
HERAKLION
MASTROPAVLOU
NIK. NIKTAKI
HELLENIC COAST GUARD
VARLA
3rd PRIMARY SCHOOL
AKRITA
ROUSSELAKI
KAZARMA FORTRESS
AK. NIKOLAOU
EFESSOU
N. PLASTIRA
M. ASIAS
IONIAS
KARNEZELI
MACHIS KRITIS
DERMITZOGIANNI
ITEAS
SKOULOUDI
26th OKTOVRIOU
LAMPRI
1st PRIMARY SCHOOL
FLEMING
ETERIOTHTON
G. SPRIDAKI
SPRIDAKI
LATZANAKI
LEFKIS
MILOTI
28th OKTOVRIOU
LOUKITAKI
DOMOUSOU
DOMOENEOS
NEARCHOU
ETHNIKOU STADIOU
CHANION
D. SOLOMOU
MESOLOGIOU
ASPRIDAKI
KARAOLI & APEXENTIOU
THERISSOU
KNOSOU
ALEXOU GEROLAKI
DIMOKRATIAS
ARCHAIOLOGOU PAPADAKI
4th PRIMARY SCHOOL
FAISTOU
GEORGIOU GENNIMATA
MITROPOLITI FILOTHEOU
PRAISSOU
MARRIGIANNI
LOCAL MARKET (EVERY TUESDAY)
DIONISADON
POLICE
HIGH SCHOOL
EMM. PIRLI
PAPAMASTASIOU
MISONOS
ANTHEON
IOANNI KAPODISTRIA
DIMOKRATIAS
K.E.P.
PISKOKEFALOU ZACHARIA
ALEXIOU PANAGOULI
DORITSOU P. PASALIDI
ITANOU
M. KATAPOTI
KATAPOTI
MICHAIL KORAKA
E. PAPADAKI
P. GEFRAKOY
MAVROKAKI
GAS
KONT. FRAGOULI
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V. OLGOU
KONSTANTZOU
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MANOLI KORAKA
LOUKARIS
KOMNINOU
MINOS
AGGELAKI
KEDROTAKI
STAVRAKAKI
MILOTI
N. LINARDAKI
MAVRIKAKI
KEMIKAKI
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SKALON
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MESOGIOU
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