

OUR CAPTIVATING GUIDE TO CRETE

*'Inspiring you to Travel',
by The Motoroamers*



INTRODUCTION

“There is a kind of flame in Crete, let us call it ‘soul’ - something more powerful than either life or death.”

N. Kazantzakis, Greek Author

Crete is the largest island in the Greek Cyclades and the fourth largest in Europe after Sicily. Keep going south and you will reach Lybia. 190 miles from Piraeus (Athens), Crete is a powerhouse of ancient civilization fused with modern infrastructure. It thrives in a self-sufficient culture, where tourism sits at its core, yet without the same dependence as its Greek island cousins.

As we found out, Crete really does have soul that exists beyond words and our month touring in our motorhome was simply not enough to uncover her mysteries, treasures and history. What we did explore will stay within our hearts forever...

INSPIRING YOU TO TRAVEL

Our ***Captivating Guide to Crete***, is the first in our ***Inspiring you to Travel series*** which offers you personal insights into our journey around Europe and the places that have inspired us.

This series, complete with tour guides, highlights and an honest account of lowlights, gives you an intimate flavour of what we experience as nomadic travellers. As we explore and discover a country's landscape, history and culture that satisfies our insatiable curiosity, we aim to share those experiences with you. We genuinely hope that it inspires you to travel and create your own memories.

With our ***Captivating Guide to Crete***, our intention is to lure you to this stunning island and share in the magic that we found in our short time of calling this place 'home'. Whether arriving with your own wheels or flying in with wings, we want to inspire you as you begin envisioning your very own Cretan Odyssey.

We felt compelled to write this Guide because, quite honestly, there were so few motorhomes here during our month, least of all British vans, that it felt important to get the message out there - Crete is not to be missed!

We understand that it is a long way from English shores and not something you can do in a two week vacation. Although with more and more of us venturing away for longer, we implore you to put Greece and Crete on your Wish List. You will have the place pretty much to yourselves, at least in spring and autumn, and exploring the island and Greece mainland are a joy.



We learnt very quickly that Crete is so much more than a fortnight's holiday destination. It is an experience and this is why we felt drawn to compile a Guide of our best bits and recommendations.

Who is this Guide for?

This eBook is aimed at anyone who has a love for travel and who has a wanderlust yearning in their guts. If you own a motorhome, then the campsite references will help you plan your trip. If you don't, then our Cretan story may encourage you to dream, plan and visit this southern European jewel using a different mode of transport.

If you are new to Crete or enjoy the freedom of camping, then ***Our Captivating Guide to Crete*** will both inform and encourage your next trip to these beautiful shores.

Who are we? The Motoroamers

Formally, we are Karen and Myles, digital nomads who have been motivated to discover the world with the freedom and choice that this travelling lifestyle offers.

More lovingly, we are known as The Motoroamers and in March 2016 we packed up and packed in our life in England for a gap year of travel whilst we sold property. The grand plan was to put down our roots in Devon or Somerset and find the 'good life', once we had sown our travel seeds.

With visions of a small-holding, donkeys, chickens and soil tarnished nails put to one side, we hit the road in our motorhome Scoobie,

ready for adventures and exploration that would soothe our curious spirits. Yet after six weeks we discovered that this was the life we wanted *permanently* and that *going back* was not an option. So, from that moment on, *home* became the place where Scoobie's tyres rested. We found love in every dawn, each new vista cleansed our eager eyes and fed our desire to live with freedom, fearlessness and joy.

In our first year with our trusty steed, a Pilote 740 (7.5m), we visited 10 countries and covered 12,000 miles; from Spain to Slovenia, to France, Belgium and The Netherlands. We were blessed with a rich array of adventures that tempered our need to feel alive after too many decades of corporate stress and burn-out.

2017 heralded a new set of adventures as we began nurturing the idea of travelling further east towards Greece, a somewhat undiscovered land for a large majority of motorhome owners. So with courage in our pockets and excitement in our hearts, we left Spain's shores, headed for Italy and then onto the north western edge of Greece at Igoumenitsa. And it is from here that our Greek Odyssey began.

We had been sold on the idea of visiting Crete from a Swiss couple we met back in the autumn, on the final leg of our Italy tour. And given the ease with which my mum could fly here, this became our rendezvous point. We had heard so many good things about the island, and despite a four day retreat in 2010, Crete still felt like a brand new adventure for us. So after a month touring the eastern thumb of the Peloponnese, we headed for Cretan soil. And so our journey began.

This book captures our experiences and whilst not a conclusive tour of all points in Crete, we have shared *our* highlights. Whether you

do a fly/drive or bring your motorhome, there is plenty of information for all adventure seekers, walkers, nature and history lovers. Truly there is something for everyone.

We hope you enjoy our virtual tour.



Karen and Myles, The Motoroamers

www.motoroaming.com





Sisi sunset, northern Crete

KRITI - THE LAND OF QUARTERS

Kriti or Crete as we know her, is technically split into four regional prefectures; Lasíthi (north-east and east), Heraklion (mid-east), Réthymnon (mid-west) and Chania (west). Each one has its own personality and character; They even have their own geological structure that would have the scientists puzzled as to their unique origins.

Home to mythological legends and ancient history that traces its family lines back to Minoan times 2000BC, Crete has a proud legacy to show off to the world. Despite her distance from Greece mainland, Crete asserts her rightful place in the tourist guides, as she stands uniquely amongst her island peers as a self-sustaining community. Not dependent upon tourism, Crete is an independent force in

Greece and it seems very different to the mainland and you feel it as soon as you step onto her shores.

Geologically, Crete is cemented by her majestic mountains who have positioned their stronghold through the centre of the island, creating a tectonic spine visible from any point of the island's compass.

Deep beneath the surface, earth's fragility has shaped Crete's identity, leaving an indelible mark upon the landscape for all to see. Each corner of the island has a different tale to tell about the forces that are central to their birthing.

There are crocodile rocks in Agios Pavlos in the the south, not found anywhere else on the island; the pink sands of Elafonisi on the west coast, which is an ecosystem totally unique to this one lagoon area. Then looking north towards Sisi, you will find metamorphic rock that looks like it has just been spat out of a volcano and you can almost imagine that you have landed on the moon. Crete has an amazingly diverse landscape that just needs to be seen.

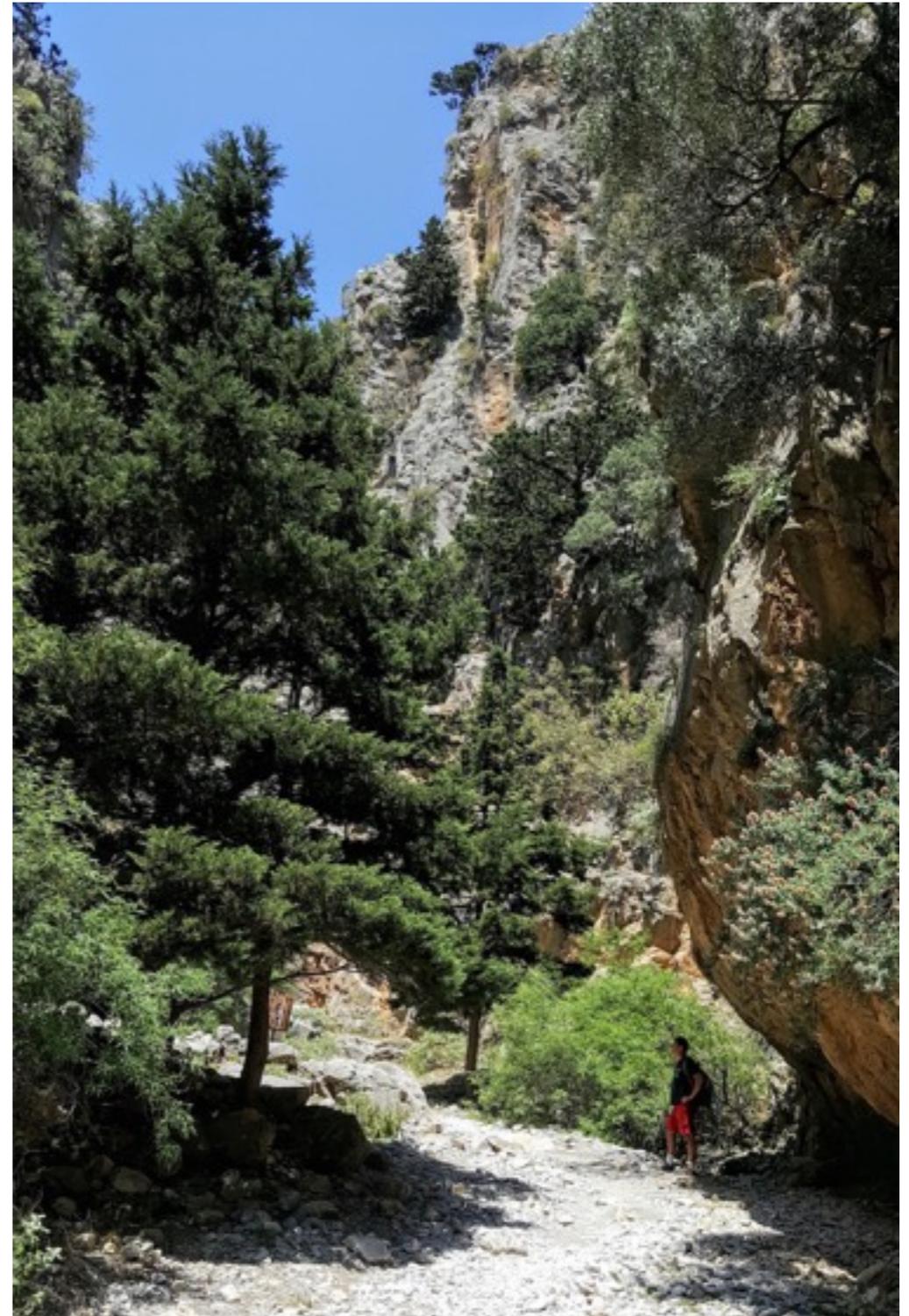
Then you have the gorges of Crete. Owing their own little bit of geologic fame, Crete's 50 ravines yawn up from deep within the mountain's heart. They invite you... no, they defy you to conquer their challenging routes, each one having their own characteristics and individual trekking tests. They will delight you, if walking is your love, as their canyons will demand courage, resilience, fitness and endeavour.

You cannot mention Crete without talking about her beaches - not as golden as we expected, although generally throughout Greece, we didn't find as many of the iconic yellow sands that we so often see between the pages of the holiday brochures. Still, Crete has taught us that - ***golden sands alone, does not a idyllic beach make!***

Whether you are a photographer with intentions of capturing the soul of Crete through your lens, or a history lover who thrives on understanding your place in the world through your ancestors' footsteps, Crete will satiate your desires at every level.

This island breathes with a rhythm that penetrates deep into your heart and through her natural beauty and her caretaker residents, she will leave you touched and drawn into her magical spell.

Come with us and turn the pages, as we share our photos, reviews and tour routes that will feed your longing for a trip of a lifetime.



The impressive Imbros Gorge, southern Crete



REGIONAL TOUR

Before we regale you with tales of *our* island tours, it would be sensible to show you what each of Crete's regions have to offer. This will help you make some choices based on what you love the best and the time you have available. After all, Crete is a huge island and it didn't take us long to realise that we wouldn't get to see it all. In reality three months might just do it!

Although there are four main prefectures - for our purposes in this Guide, we have decided to share our journey from coast-to-coast, encompassing the *east, south, west* and *northern* parts of the island.

Here's a bit of introductory detail about Crete's individual regions that we hope will help you uncover her soul.



OUR JOURNEY STARTED EAST

The easterly region of Crete is dominated by olive groves that hug the mountainsides and which thrive in the dry climate in this part of the island. This point of the compass presents three very different faces, each unique in character.

The first is not 'fair of face' by any stretch of the imagination. East from Heraklion is dominated by the tourist hub, so it offers wall-to-wall souvenir shops and hotel complexes. 50% of Crete's holiday accommodation is located here, so come mid-May when the scheduled flights and tour operators open their doors, you can imagine what this area is like. It certainly wasn't our cup of tea.

The only pretty section is Sisi, just east of the very built-up and touristy Mália. Sisi has its fair share of hotels along the rugged coast-

line, although there is a sweet little harbour and a huge concentration of fish restaurants competing for your attention. Our home was [Camping Sisi](#), which is a 15-minute walk away along a coastal path and from the village you can easily hire a car. We used [Malia Cars](#) which can be found down towards the harbour and restaurant area. We would describe Sisi as cute, if not a tad touristy, although compared to its other coastal rivals, Sisi wins hands down for us!

The more authentic side of this eastern section of Crete is to be found up in the mountains, where the Lasíthi Plateau will enchant you with her traditional wind farm and agricultural mastery. Little mountain villages each with their own chapels or a church or two, cling onto life in this fertile region, hoping that their produce will see them through the winter and provide enough money to sustain their

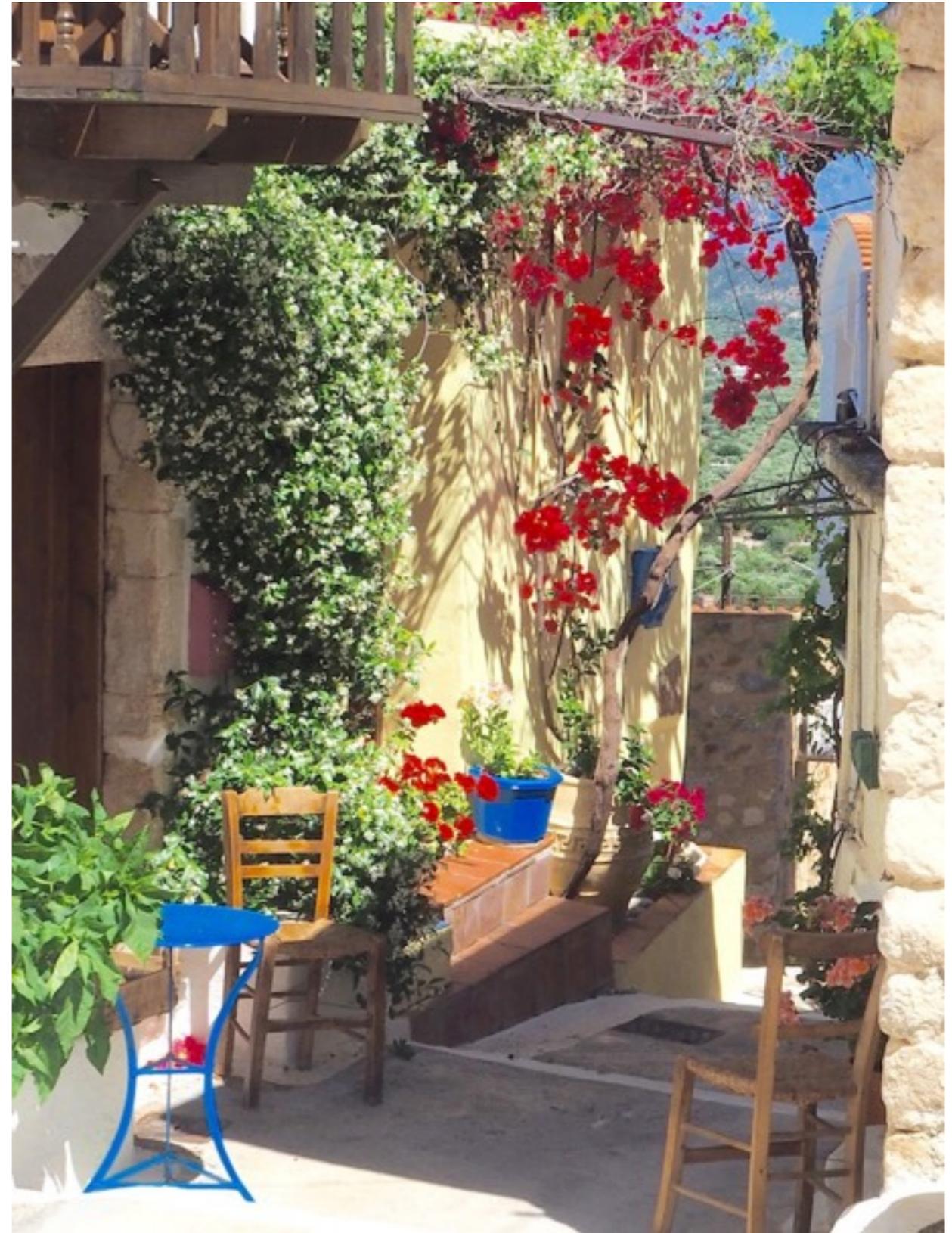
meagre lives. Cherry trees line the roads and the elderly generation, refusing to leave their mountain refuges, sit watching the world go by, which is often met with intrigue when it happens to be a 7.5m English motorhome.

The symbiotic relationship between the earth and man is clear in this part of Crete and is a world apart from the hotels a mere 30 miles over the hill. It is almost as if you enter through the gates of heaven after a night out on the town; the peace and clarity of the air is almost palpable.

The third face of the east encompasses the coastal beauties of Agios Nikólaos, the Elounda peninsular and the south-eastern edge around Makry Gailós. This gives you a much more Cretan feel to the land, where small bays start appearing, holding their azure seas in protective embrace. Your eyes are opened to the draw of Crete's 50 canyons, that have gorged themselves into their mountain hosts and make their presence felt in earnest in this region.

As the sun rises, the sparkling seas are seen for their natural treasure, in contrast to the ugly tourist region further north. And in spring's pleasant daytime temperatures, the sea's glittering appeal soon has you diving in, as it offers welcome relief after a day's strenuous hiking.

The east is a lovely introduction to Crete and after the initial shock of Heraklion's grey and unattractive welcome, the oleander lined main road heading out of town is a sight for sore eyes. East was our first toe in the water and it left us wanting more.





Chaniá, Old Town

GO FORTH NORTH

We'll be honest with you, we arrived in Crete to a morning sunrise full of promise, only to be greeted by the gloomy, grey and unwelcoming sights of Heraklion. It left our hopeful hearts firmly in our boots and our expectations dashed.

Thankfully we were soon appeased by the loveliness that resides outside of the sprawling Cretan metropolis. And in fact, move only five miles in either direction and you will leave the city behind you and Crete's character starts to be unveiled.

What Heraklion's northern coast lacks in grace and charm, it certainly makes up for in legacy and history; this is the home to the most famous of all Palaces - Knossos. Now we're not great histori-

ans and so we left this historical architectural giant until the last few days of our tour and sadly a freak storm conspired against us visiting. Instead we had to fix my rather soggy laptop, just one of the victims of the heaven emptying downpour we experienced a few days earlier.

Still, we hear that Knossos is THE place to visit for ancient history. Home to the Minoans, who are said to be one of the earliest European civilizations and a place that is full of historical intrigue, legend and legacy.

There's something about history that commands your respect, whether you love it or not.

Heading west away from the vineyard terraces of Heraklion's foothills, you flirt with the coastline, where there is, we're sad to say, yet more tourism in the town of Réthymnon.

The old town and harbour again are reputed to be nice, although 'nice' just isn't good enough when Crete has so many nuggets to explore. So we chose to by-pass this one.

We do understand that each place holds an inner sanctum of quaintness, although from the outside looking in, the sprawling mass of hotels did not look inviting.

And then you reach the outskirts of Chaniá.

This is a key administrative centre for the west of the island, which is evident as you navigate around the town's fringes. Although once past this functional part of town, you enter its heart and here you will find its soul.

Chaniá's old town, encased by its protective walls, embraces you in Venetian and Turkish splendour. There is so much elegance here, which we found missing in other towns around the island.

In fact, generally speaking we found that Crete puts all her architectural energy into the mountainous landscape and not the buildings; the one exception being Chaniá. It is picture post-card perfect.

It is a sight to behold and they have blended the old town harbour with the renovated dock warehouses so beautifully. Any graffiti pales into insignificance as the Venice-style façades reach out and defy you not to fall in love with their masterpieces.

Behind the curvaceous harbour, there is of course still evidence of dilapidated and run down buildings that have little or no finance to

fund their reconstruction, although the café culture that wafts through the backstreets and main town, almost blind you to the obvious run-down parts of town.

Chaniá is one of those places that I could just keep going back to, just like Venice and each time still see something new.

As a photographer, you will get lost amongst the different angles that the sun highlights, as the harbour seas gently lap against the cobble promenade and where horse-drawn carriages satisfy your romantic desires with a tour of the town.

This is definitely the jewel of the northern coast and a place worthy of your time.



Chaniá's Old Town café culture

DOWN SOUTH RAISES A SMILE

South is where the landscape starts to change dramatically and diversity wins the day. The mountains that act as a horizon backdrop from the north now feature heavily as you cross their barrier to the sandy retreats beyond. Like giants, you are suddenly driving amongst them and feeling their presence around every turn.

On the one hand, these snow-capped mountain beauties dominate this southern landscape; yet on the other, the power of the sea seems to stop them in their tracks, as they visibly tumble in surrender.

One minute their fight with the sea creates craggy rocks and hidden coves and the next they seem to yield their power, creating flat plains, where small hamlets take their stand between the two forces.

The south is most famous for its holiday-brochure beaches, which are private, secluded and shield the shyness of those wishing to bare all to the natural world. With what seems like an impenetrable access, this south coast holds a secret beauty that will amaze and astound. Its joy is hard to describe.

Using [Camping No Problem](#) as our base, our route south and west introduced us to geological masterpieces and yet more gorges that blew us away. Ottoman and Venetian history stand proudly in Frankokástello and villages and coves, only accessible by boat, offer a priceless peak at the south's elegance.



Ancient history and natural architecture fuse together to make a formidable partnership to wow us all. And with the fair winds that blow more gently around this coast than the north east, this is a great destination to simply relax and soak up the atmosphere and soul that Crete does so well.

Beware, this side of Crete will grab at your heart and whisk you away for all eternity.



Gefyra Bridge





Hóra Sfakion harbour

THEY SAY WEST IS BEST

Crete's crowning glory has to be the western coastal fringes, if it is beaches and sunsets that you crave. From the lagoons of Bállos in the north-western tip, to the geologically unique, pink fringed shore-lines of Elafonisi and the undiscovered Sfinari, this region has amazing character.

The mountains once again take hold and a masterful drive around the winding, hair-pin roads, reveal corner after corner of staggering artistry and a view of the island's true nature beyond the tourist hot-spots.

It is here that the giant of all gorges claims its rightful place on the tourist agenda, enticing visitors (that can be in their hundreds every day) to walk its 11 mile passage through the mountains. The

Samária Gorge is not for the faint hearted, nor the unfit, as there is only one way in and one way out. Once you commit to the walk, there is no going back, as the ferry waits for no man.

Sadly injury prevented us from rising to the challenge, although we found an untouched gorge in Eirini that we had all to ourselves, which soothed our peace-seeking souls away from the coach-loads of eager tourists.

Golden sands finally make their presence known on this side of the island and you find yourself transported into beach heaven as you are compelled to walk bare-footed and feel the grains between your toes. Shallow, crystal clear waters call you to swim and immerse

yourself in the Lybian Sea that feels more like bath water than an immense sea that is unforgiving and wild.

Little harbours shielding a fishermen's trade, tavernas cooking you a fishy feast and mesmerising coves all combine to steal away your heart - we defy you not to be impressed.

The one thing that can be said for Crete, amongst the many saluting her charisma, is how completely diverse she is. Whatever your tastes, desires and interests, Crete will satisfy each one completely. Crete could never disappoint, such is the depth of her offerings.



Stunning western sunsets



CRETE'S SOUL?

So what gives Crete so much soul? What magic lies within her land that makes it feel so special?

These are tough questions to answer as sometimes there are neither the words nor pictures that can sum up how a place feels to you. Although let us try to paint the image behind Crete's soul which has been left in our hearts.

Crete fights against the modern world's endeavours to own, strip and dismantle the precious balance of ancient legacy, mythological legend and geological delight. A fight she handles with integrity and charm. The north coast certainly seems to have laid down its modern marker, although Crete simply laughs from deep within her belly as she contains their sprawling intent with seas, mountains and canyons. Like a well-known politician once said, 'This lady is not for turning'.

Part of Crete's soul has to be her history, which is etched so deeply into her culture. From the myths of Zeus, to Minoan civilization that is a mind-blowing four thousand years old, to the more recent World War 2 scars, Crete continues to evolve. On the back of that history she gains her strength and her reputation for resilience and fortitude. She is almost defiant in her determination to maintain her place in the world.

Colour also has to be part of Crete's jigsaw of soul. There is an artist's palette of hues painted across the land. The oleander is central to this, from baby pink to deep magenta flowers colouring the roads and hugging the mountain ravines. The azure blue and



emerald green coves contrast against the golden sands and the pure white of the snow-capped mountains, offering a stark reminder of winter's realm.

We cannot pass up the chance to talk about the entrepreneurial spirit that runs in the Cretans' blood. Every village has a house, turned taverna to capture passing trade. Rickety stalls on roadside pavements offer their produce from the fields of toil. And boats are transformed into shops selling seashells and sponges, as if it were the most normal thing to do.

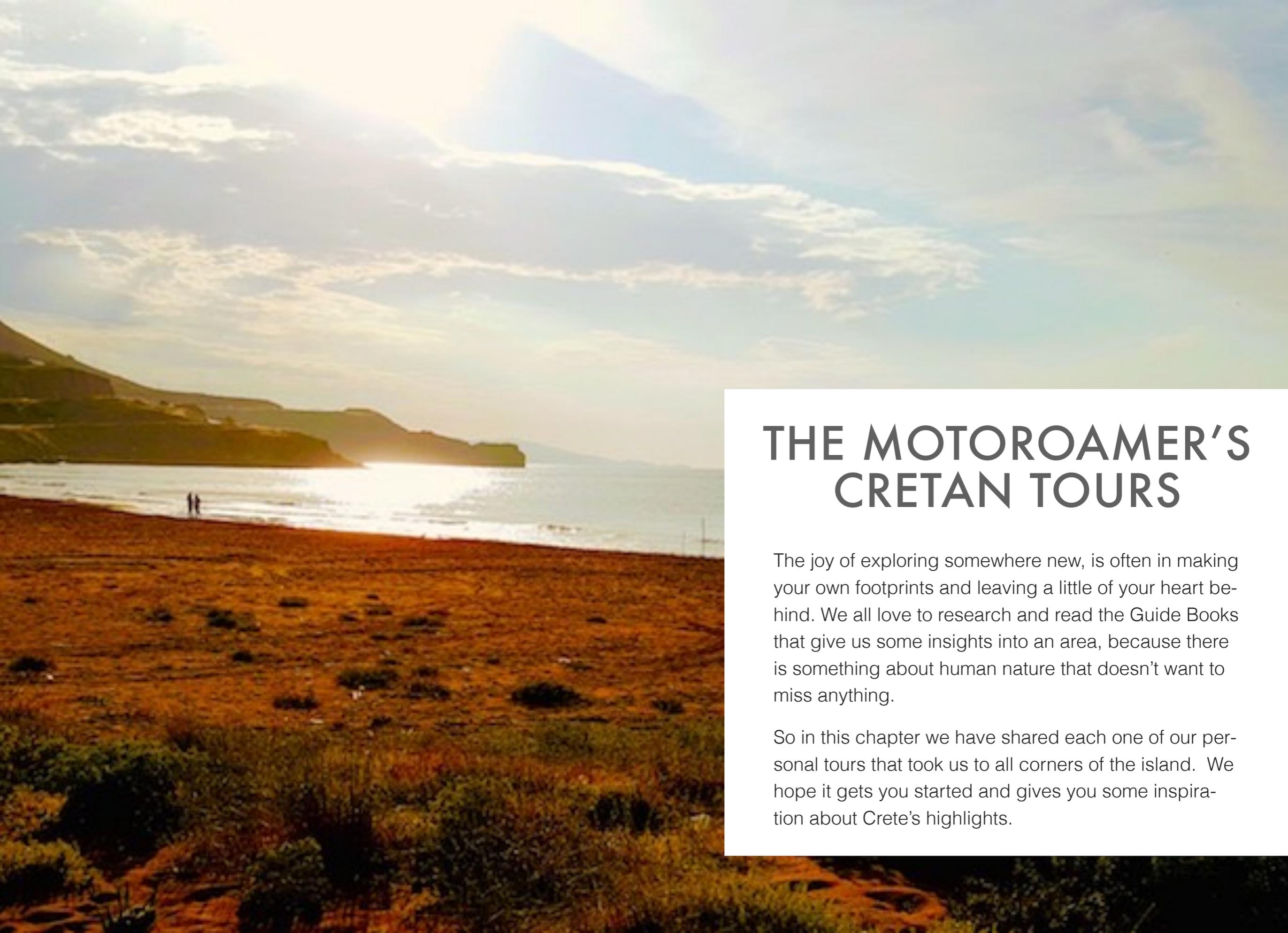
And amongst their desire to make a living, the locals have the biggest hearts, the broadest smiles and the most generous of spirits. The Cretans love and respect their island home and willingly share it, with a lack of selfishness that has to be admired.

Crete has perfected the art of moving with the times whilst staying true to her roots. Modern meets ancient - a perfect harmony that tells a tale of evolution and progressive commercial savvy that many could learn from. How can a place possibly maintain its integrity when so many modernistic challenges face it? Somehow Crete manages it; with the backdrop of so much depth, you can't imagine her ever losing the battle.

So is Crete special and does she have soul? You bet. Come and feel it for yourselves and tell us it's not true.

Picture across is a Cretan mask from a shop in Kritsá.





THE MOTOROAMER'S CRETAN TOURS

The joy of exploring somewhere new, is often in making your own footprints and leaving a little of your heart behind. We all love to research and read the Guide Books that give us some insights into an area, because there is something about human nature that doesn't want to miss anything.

So in this chapter we have shared each one of our personal tours that took us to all corners of the island. We hope it gets you started and gives you some inspiration about Crete's highlights.

OUR 10 CRETAN TOURS

As we mentioned at the outset, this Guide is only a collection of *our* thoughts and insights from our trip. It is not an exhaustive list of what to do and where to go. There are plenty of Travel Books that offer that type of guide.

This is a more intimate look at Crete, through the eyes of travel commentators who are motivated to share their stories with you and offer you visions that can dance in your heads.

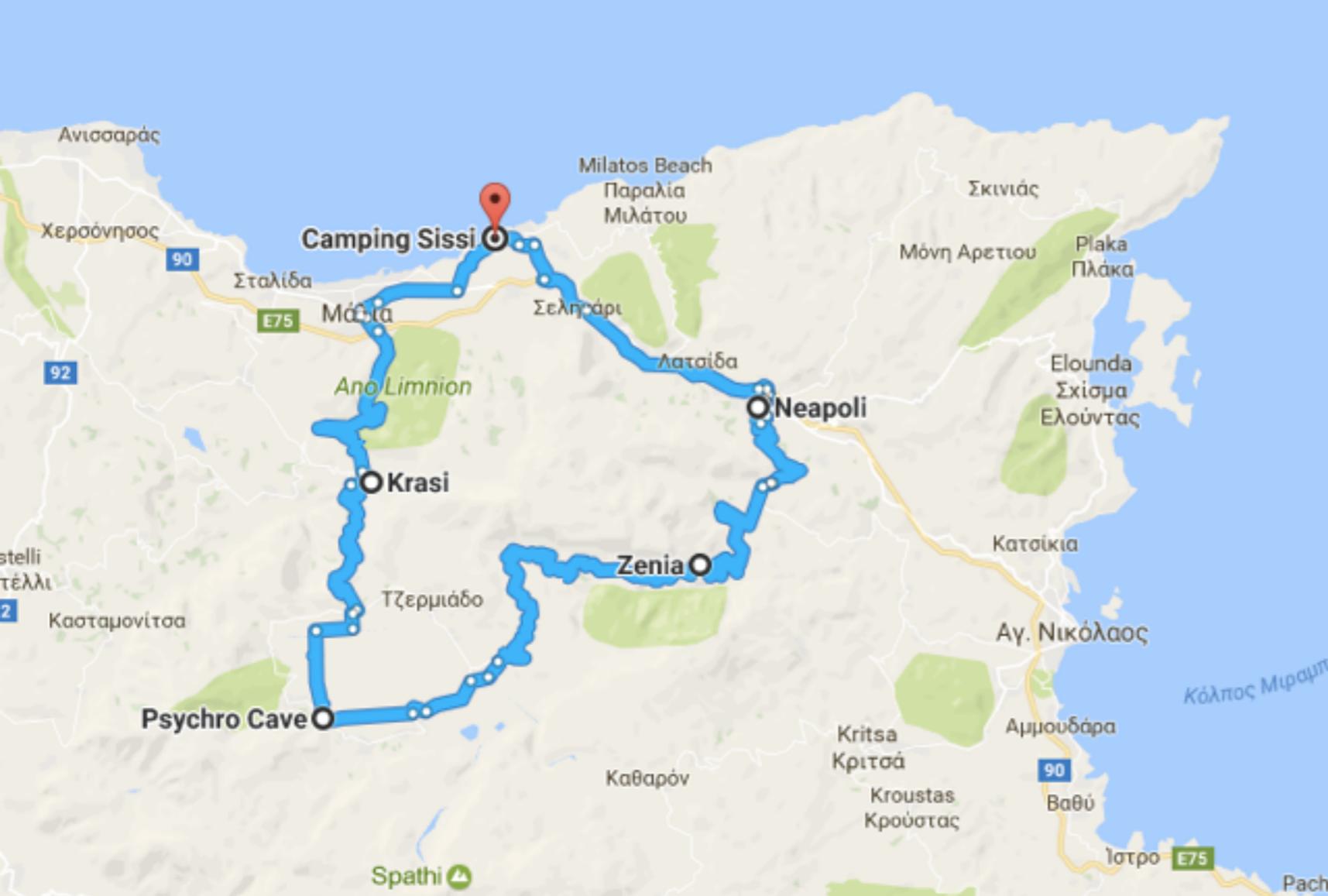
This chapter shows in more detail, the *10 tours* we did, with route maps and highlights to help you plan for your own trip here.

They will not suit everyone, we realise that, and there are some 'must sees' that we were unable to do, on this visit. Although what we did see and the routes we travelled, are offered with love and a sharing spirit.

So pick and chose from our top 10 highlights and start to create your own Cretan adventures.

Cretan Hibiscus





Tour 1 - Lasithi Plateau

North East Crete - 4hrs

With our base at Camping Sisi, (**35.304367 25.50807**), we hired a car from Malia Cars in Sisi and headed for the hills. We took the main road to Heraklion (E75) and then turned left at the roundabout, signposted for the Lasithi Plateau. We followed this amazingly winding road up through the mountains, passing eagles en route.

Our first destination was Krasi, where there is a 2,500 year old Plane tree and a water irrigation system thought to be thousands of years old. This place was definitely worthy of a stop and a coffee or beer!

From here we drove further up into the mountains and evidence emerged of the region's famous Wind Farm - thought to be the largest in Europe.

Now let me be clear, when we mention wind farms, we're not talking about the modern mechanical beasts. We're talking traditional stone built towers with fabric-sailed turbines that use the wind to power their irrigation units. The land we were about to enter would seriously be admired by the Dutch.



The Plateau commands so much respect as it is a region that symbolises our relationship with the natural world, working in delicate balance.

Our biggest attraction on this tour, aside of the stunning scenery was the mythological birthplace of Zeus, who it was said, was hidden by his mother to avoid the wrath of his evil, murdering father.

Psychro Cave (also known as Dhiktean Cave) on the slopes of Mount Ida requires a tough ascent up the side of the mountain for about a mile. Please do not take one of the donkeys, as they are not intended to carry adults, only small children.

Once at the top of the mountain, that sits 1540m above sea level, you gain access into the cave. For €6 per person you can make the 100m descent into the belly of the cave and look in awe at the spectacular light show that presents the stalagmites and stalactites so beautifully.

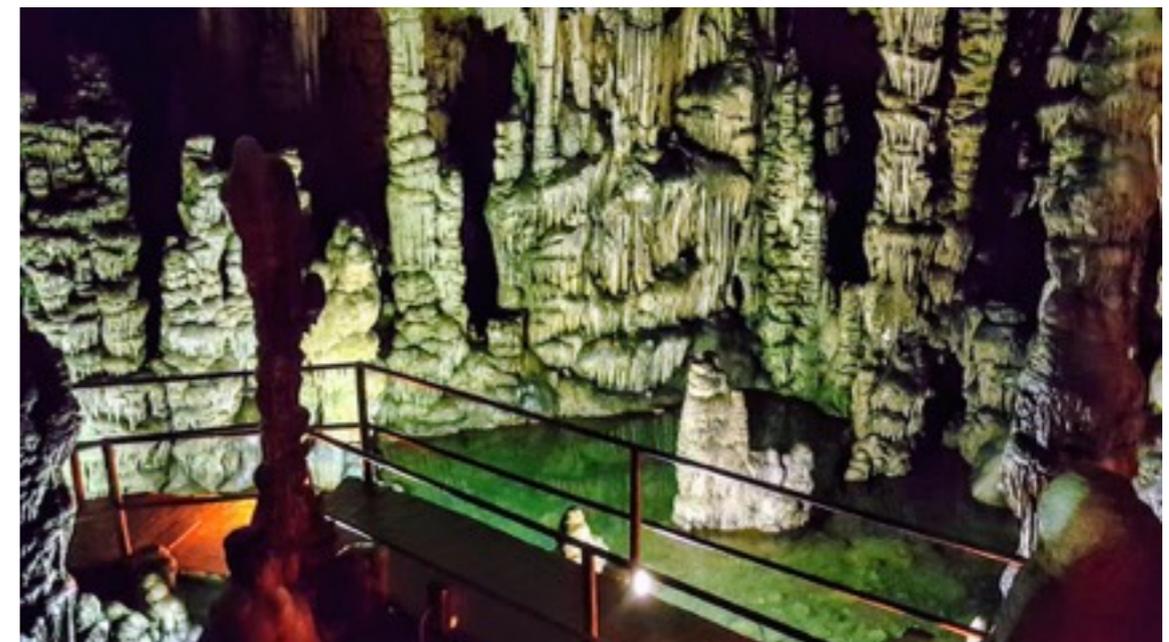
Avoiding the tacky shops that inevitably line the road to the cave, you follow the road anti-clockwise around the basin of the Plateau, taking a right-hand turn towards Neopoli and then back on the main E75 route back to camp.

It is a good 90 minute drive and the mountain perspective changes around every bend and often you will catch a glimpse of the sparkling sea, reminding you that you are never far from home.

The route is stunning with twists and turns throughout. Although we were glad to have done this journey in a car and not the motorhome, just because it was so much easier to navigate.



Zeus' Birthplace - Psychro Cave



Tour 2 - Kritsá

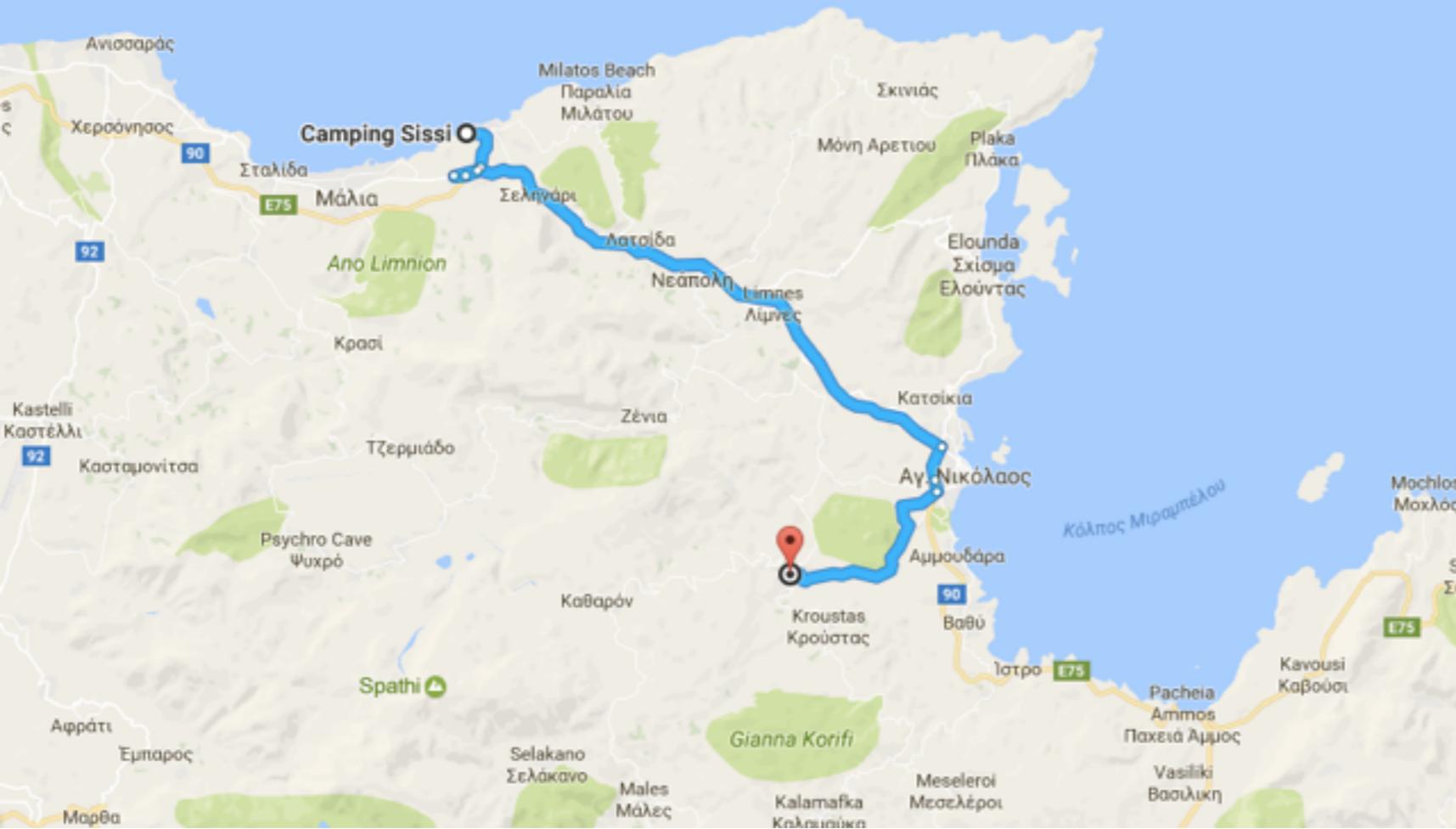
North East Crete - 2-3hrs

Kritsá is the most delightful village tucked up in the mountains south of Agios Nikólaos, about 45 minutes away from the campsite. Taking the E75 road to the east, as you approach Nikólaos, you begin to pick up signs for the village.

Kritsá is a great example of authentic Cretan life, even if the tourist shops do profess otherwise.

As you walk up the main cobbled street, typical Greek houses decorated with bougainvillea on their white-washed walls make you feel like you have walked straight onto the pages of a magazine. The shops are a pleasant distraction if you love lace, linen, leather and olive oil products. Artisans perch outside their shop fronts hoping to catch your eye, sometimes gently encouraging you to enter and browse their wares. The odd taverna is woven in between the shops and a cooling beer is essential so you can do a bit of people watching in the heat of the mid-day sun.

Although one of the best experiences is to walk beyond the main street and into the real village. Here only cats stroll by, old ladies sit underneath the shade of the vines



making their lace or simply just sitting and watching. The smell of mimosa in spring fills the air and white washed houses and narrow alleyways all add to the intrigue and evocative experience of a Kritsá visit.

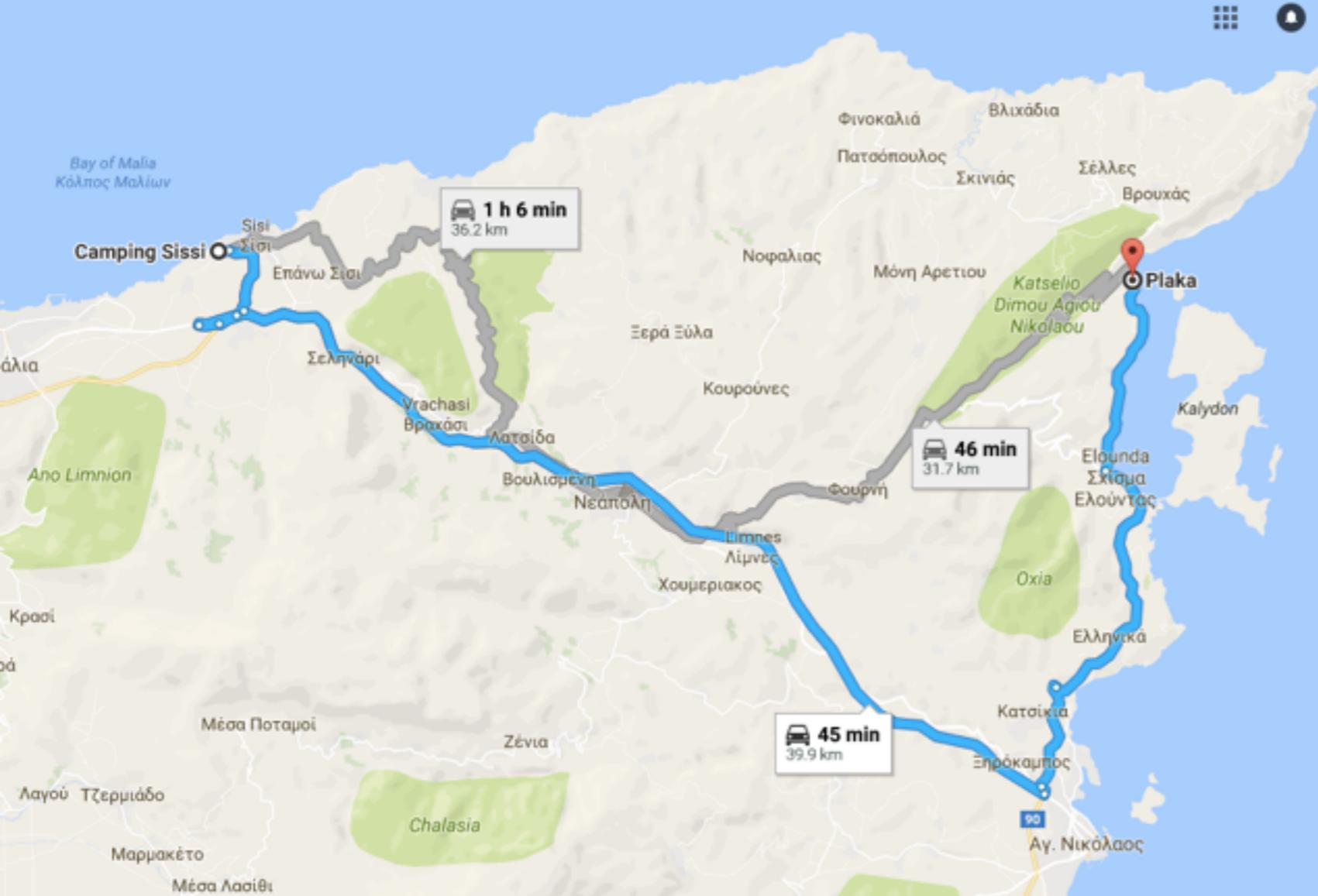
As you walk through the lanes, climbing the steep steps decorated with iconic Greek vases, you feel like you need to tiptoe in silence, as to speak would be to break the spell of these personal living quarters. It feels almost intrusive although you are compelled to keep walking and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of this characterful place.

As you wander, you are gently reminded how old this place must be. And in fact Kritsá is the oldest village in Crete and with a height of 375m high, you get a real sense of its isolation and privacy. It is quite special and was one of our favourite trips.

We missed the gorge that is near-by, which we were told was lovely, so this would be a good addition to your tour or you could combine Tour 2 with 3.

With Kritsá only 6 miles away from Agios Nikólaos, turning this into a full day's outing is very possible.





Tour 3 - Elounda Bay

East Crete - 4-5hrs

Our final tour of this north eastern region of Crete was to Agios Nikólaos and Elounda Bay. This was only 30 minutes away from the campsite on the main E75 road, heading east. There was a more scenic route that we could have taken up through the mountains, although on this occasion after a morning of rain, we just wanted the fastest and perhaps the least pretty route.

Nikólaos is famous for its inland, salt-water lake, which is reputed to be bottom-less and it is surrounded by tavernas, charging lots of money for the privilege of sitting lake side in the vain hopes of seeing a sea-turtle floating by. There really isn't much more to see here - the town has tree-lined avenues and some shops for a bit of retail therapy and a nice coastal path to walk, although the lake is its main draw.

The highlight though of the trip for us was heading right round the bay towards the old fishing village of Plaka.

En route you may want to stop at the sunken city of Olous, which is elusive



and in truth there is not much to see apart from a restored windmill and a Roman Basilica church.

Plaka, a further 10 minutes around the bay is charming and after passing a classier tourist resort, you reach the small village known for its fish restaurants. Half a dozen water-front tavernas will engage you in warm Greek smiles and pleas for you to partake in their gastronomic delights. Choosing any one of them will deliver you a tasty dish of fish.

Plaka holds one more delight, apart from a few shops that have built up to cater for the increasing visitors - the ferry to Spinalónga.

Spinalónga is a man-made islet and as you walk amongst the building relics, you get a real sense of its Venetian history. A fortress built to protect against Turkish invaders, which it did successfully for 45 years after the mainland had fallen to Ottoman attack. In more recent history, Spinalónga was a refuge for lepers and as you breathe in the ghosts of the recent past, you can feel the isolation and desperation that must have been rife during the first half of 20th Century. The leper hospital was only closed in 1957. It is worth the short ferry ride from either Plaka or Elounda to visit this humble man-made island.

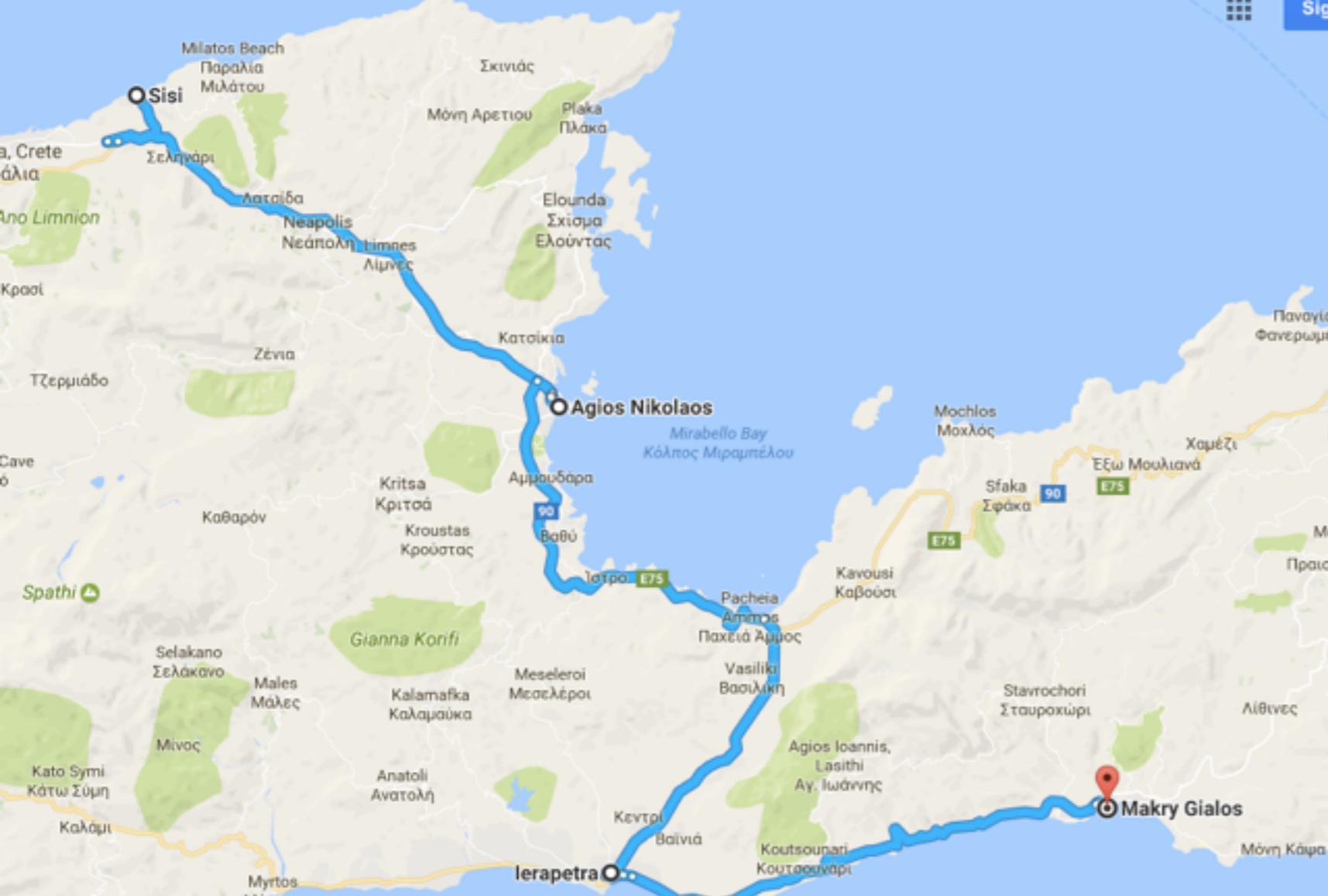
This three-centre trip needs at least four hours to do it justice. This will be one of those days where you want to treat yourself to lunch out.

En route back to the campsite using the E75 route, you will find a cheap petrol station, so it is worth filling up whilst you have the chance.



Above; Plaka fishing boat
Below; a view of Spinalónga islet





Tour 4 - Makry Gialós The Pefki and Butterfly Gorges

2-3 days

We left the comfort of our eclectic Sisi campsite and headed off in the van to the south eastern coast of the island. Passing through the familiar territory of Agios Nikólaos we continued towards Ierápetra.

After Ag Nik, as it is often nicknamed, the coastline around Mirabello Bay was delightful and there would be some opportunities to wild camp here overnight, if the fancy took you. More on that later.

With more time than we had, you could continue on around the coast to Sitía and Zakros Gorge, named the Gorge of the Dead, which we hear is wonderful and a very doable gorge. Although with some time constraints and that realisation of how big this island is, we headed south. We did have the option of hiring another car to reach Zakros gorge, although the deals this side of the island were more difficult to negotiate. So we stayed put, and we are so grateful that we did, because we found two stunning gems.



Ierápetra holds very little interest and is a working town that serves the surrounding rural and agricultural community. So after the oleander-fringed roads of the north, the plastic greenhouses don't look particularly pretty. Although ignore these and carry on through this strangely buzzy town, as your final destination will have a much nicer feel to it.

Our calling was further along the coast about 30 minutes to Makry-Gialós, which is a small resort, popular with tourists looking for a more, *out-of-the-way* destination. The town is a little built up, although nothing like the jungle of the north. The bay is lovely and with its sheltered harbour and shallow beach, makes for a safe haven for swimmers and young families. With Africa only 200 nautical miles away, it seems quite a surreal place to arrive at.

We found a wild camping spot just above the main harbour (**35.036114 25.973743**), which we got permission to stay at, from a local self-catering company. We had two lovely nights here and it felt very safe..

Only a mile walk away from our overnight spot, we found Pefki Gorge, (the gorge of the pines), which is a 300m, 4.5 mile hike up through meandering paths, lined with pink oleander and the scent of pine trees that cling to the sheer rock faces above you. The odd trickling stream beneath the tree-lined canopy provide both shade and refreshment, although there's no denying it, it is a challenging trek, which will take a good 3 hours with some stops. The views from the village of the same name makes this such a worthwhile walk and the achievement you feel at the top is incredible.

Pefki is a delightful mountain village, which we would love to have had the energy to explore more fully. Although that is for another day. Instead the instinctive smell of beer and mezze called us and of course the much need seat to park our weary bones.

Do visit the gorgeous taverna The Piperia (Pepper Plant), which can only be reached by yet another set of steps, which after your hike, seems like torture. This taverna is where everyone heads as it has such a great reputation, and for good reason. A beer or two here as you catch your breath, served by Nikos or Maria is well worth it, and with a few mezzes on the side and a complementary glass of homemade pomegranate Raki, will soon have you feeling human again. For €7 you can buy a bottle of their Raki, which warms the cockles of your heart for a few nights to come, reminding you of your hiking achievements.

Unless you are very fit, we suggest a taxi back, which Nikos ordered for us and for €13 it really is a 'no brainer'. If we had been sensible, we would have got a taxi up from Makry Gialós and walked down the gorge, although they say hindsight is a wonderful thing.



Butterfly Gorge - Koutsouras

They say that it is often more about 'who you know, not what you know' and this was true for us during our Pefki Gorge walk. We met up with a young Dutch couple who told us about a second gorge, not more than 10 minutes drive, which was worth doing.

Poetically called Butterfly Gorge by the locals, although more formally known as Koutsouras or Oreino Gorge, it offers a completely different set of challenges. Despite carrying some injuries, the walk was not going to deter us and so with sturdy boots and a determined spirit, off we went. The Butterfly Gorge is named so because historically it was teeming with red butterflies. Sadly after a fire in 1993, many of the butterflies left, although evidence of these delicate insects can still be seen if you keep your eyes peeled.

Parking in the Community Park just outside Koutsouras, you begin your hike. It is 3-4 hours to Oreino and physical endurance is needed for this gorge, unlike the stamina of Pefki.

Think rock climbing and water wading and you will have the right idea of this gorge's personality. Wooden ladders offer you some assistance up the rock faces, although others need just a bit of grit and determination. This gorge is delightful as it follows a river, lined with pink and white oleander, which makes for a pretty, if not stretching trek.

We didn't make it all the way to the village, although the two hours we did manage were sensational and Butterfly Gorge will absolutely make it into our top three gorges of the Island.

There is a taverna in the Community Park which sells good beer and basic food. Just across the road we found 'home' for the night in a great wild spot, with fresh water and a beautiful sea view. Shame about the road noise, although you can't have it all. **(35.034411 25.93336)**.



Above; Butterfly Gorge. Below; Pefki Gorge



Tour 5 - Southern Belle Beauties

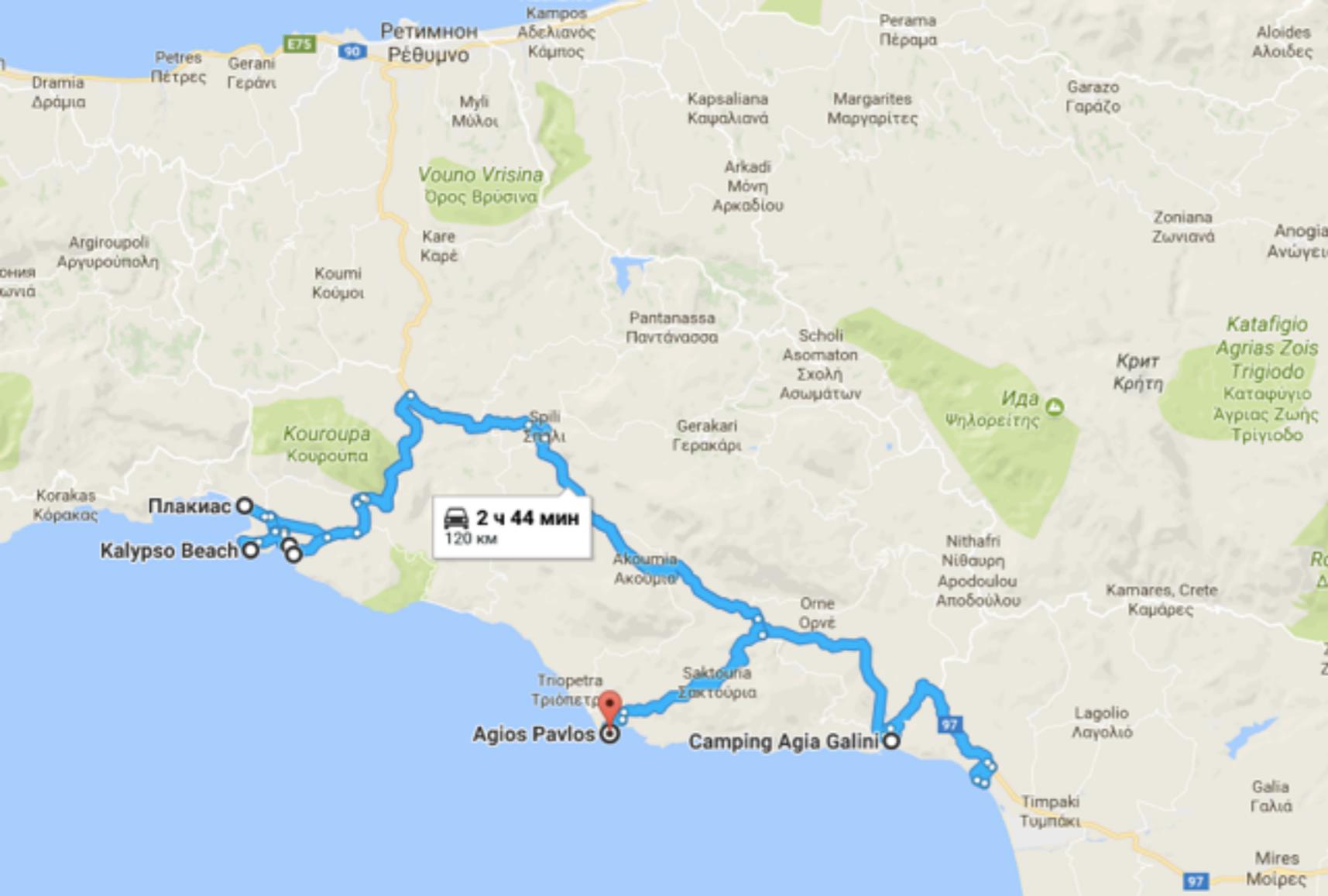
Whole Day

From our base at Camping No Problem in Agios Galini (**35.099984 24.695212**), we decided to hire a car, as the roads in this region are mountainous. It intuitively seemed a simpler option to allow us to cover more ground.

There are a couple of hire firms in town - we went for Autogalini, which is the first company you reach from the harbour-front. They are not the cheapest, although when it comes to cars, cheap is not always the best. For one day we were charged €30 and we filled up with €12 petrol. For our second day we negotiated a discount and got it for €25.

Agios Galini is a delightful town that has built up around its harbour. You can hire fishing trips for the day or catch the ferry out to Preveli Beach. The price though per person wasn't financial viable compared to the car hire, so although the sea view is always a great perspective, we decided on the car.

Galini is worth exploring with its beach-side



tavernas serving every taste. In town there are a lot of souvenir shops and all the general services you need, although in the height of summer we reckon this place is teeming with tour buses. For us in June, it was just the right side of buzzy. There is also a lovely little beach if you are looking for an alternative to the lovely camping swimming pool.

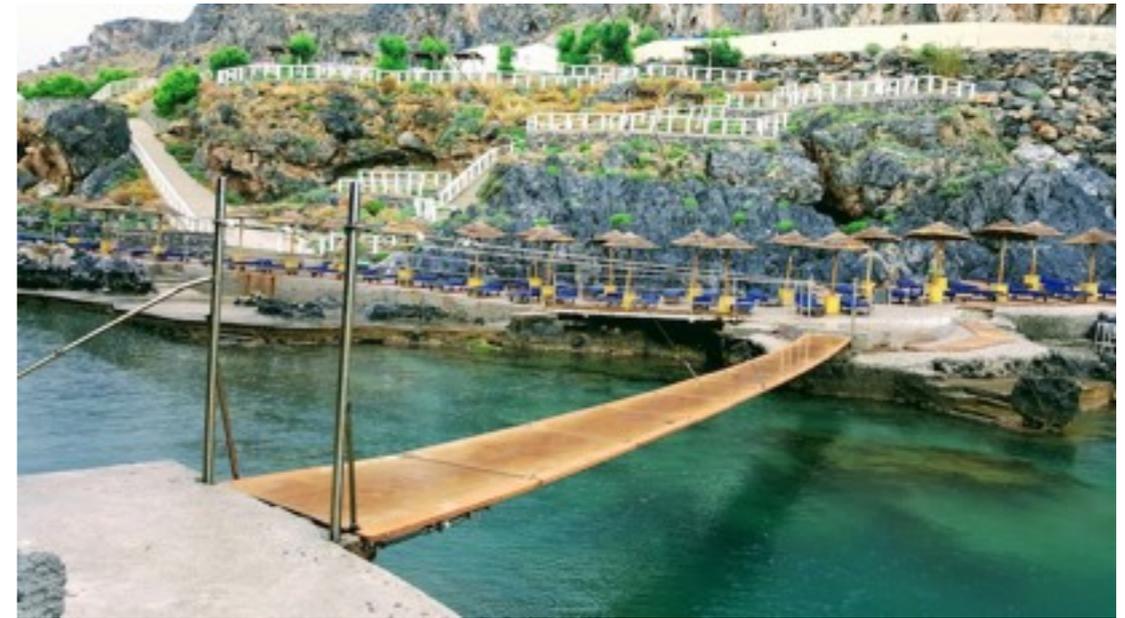
From Galini, you follow the road north towards Réthymnon via the little town Spili, which is cute enough although crazy busy with the Greeks parking willy nilly. Soon after Spili you turn off towards Plakias, which is an underwhelming port of call. In fairness we had to sit out a storm here and nothing looks good in the rain, although there was nothing much here to entice us to stay.

I had a place I wanted to check out that I'd seen on Facebook called Kalypso Cove (see picture right). It is part of a hotel complex although allows visitors to enjoy this magical and very private cove. It can also be reached by boat from Agios Galini.

The emerald green waters are just spellbinding and it is definitely worth a detour. We had the place to ourselves because of the torrential rain, although it is still as beautiful as I imagined.

(35.172762 24.399048).

Our route then took us east to a region of very secluded bays and coves, where the coastal scenery creates a landscape perfect for nudists and pirates. Head to Damnoni (bottom right picture on the previous page), the first of the beaches and a large bay with tavernas and take a walk along the cliff to the other three coves. This way you don't need to take the arduous journey by road.



Kalypso Cove

The final bay along this lovely collection of beaches is Skhinariá, where a couple of vans were wild camping.

After tearing yourself away from the beach, head inland towards the mountains and seek out Preveli Beach and the gorge. You can experience this from two angles; either the west side where you turn towards the monastery and follow the road to a car park. From here you can take the steep descent to the beach and gorge entrance. Alternatively you can access it from the east side, which is, by all accounts a less arduous route.

Sadly we mis-planned our visit here and didn't get to the Palm Beach which has strong WW2 connections. Instead we found the St Nikolaos chapel which is the start of a short walk down to some amazing waterfalls, offering a 15 minute diversion, although no access to the gorge itself.



Our final destination on this excursion, was Agios Pavlos, an off-the-beaten-track hamlet with incredible rock formations. The famous Crocodile Rock will astound you, whether you are a geologist or not. A hike up the steep steps from the taverna will afford you great views up and down the coast and you can marvel at Melissa's Beach, which looks like something out of a James Bond movie. A huge windswept dune that looks incredibly inaccessible and yet there are half a dozen beach umbrellas down there.

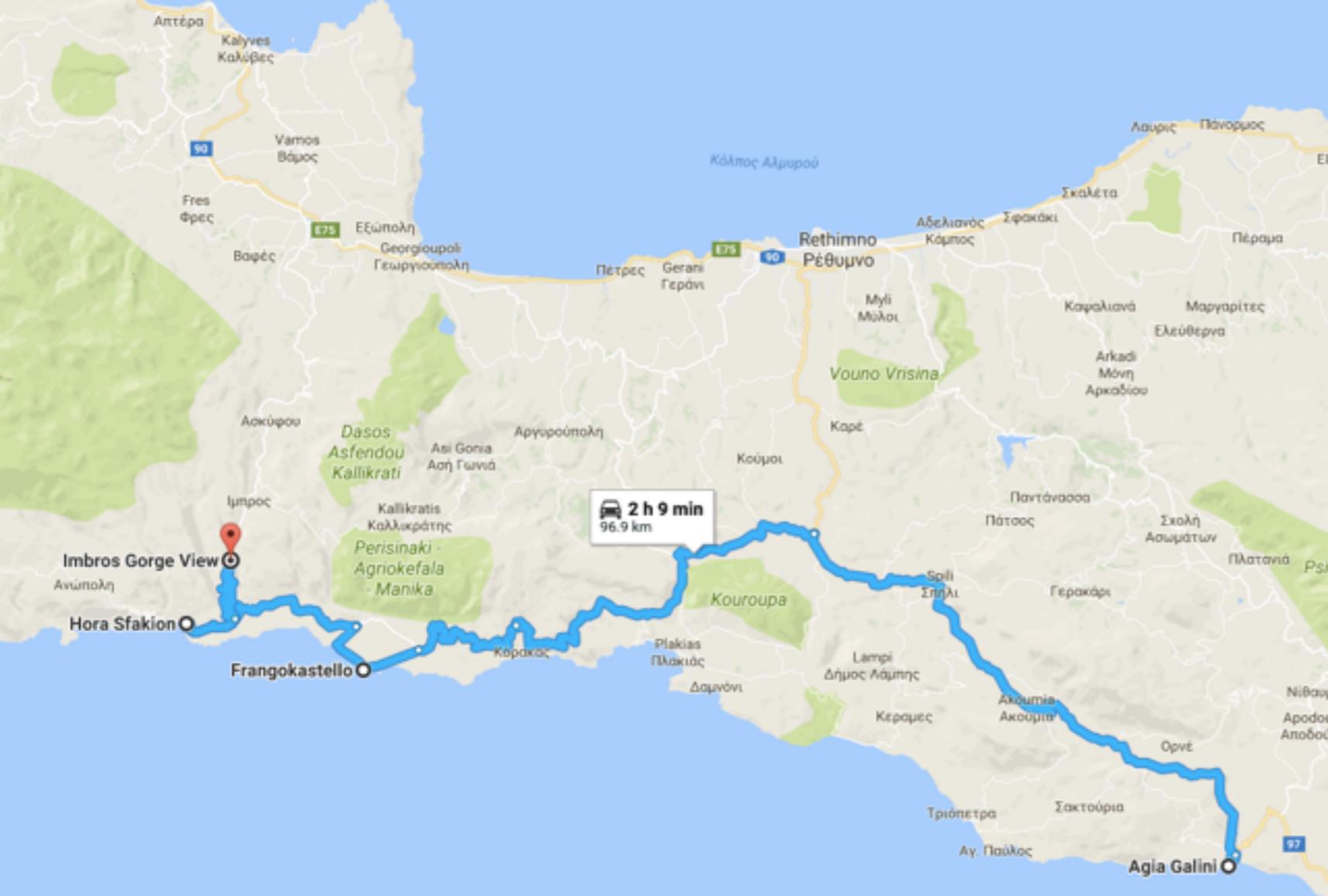
If you find the access to it, you must let us know as it baffled us!

The road back to Galini was easy and picturesque, as it weaves through the mountains and within 30 minutes, we were back on the outskirts of town, where there is a petrol station to fill up before handing the car back.

A highly enjoyable day that satisfied our beach curiosity.

Above; Agios Galini Panorama. Right top, Ammoudi Beach and bottom, Agios Nikólaos chapel, Kourtaliotiko Gorge.





Tour 6 - Frangokástello and Imbros Gorge

Whole Day

Once again, armed with a hired car, we left Camping No Problem in Agios Galini and headed north towards Spili. Turning left, our route took us towards Plakias, although veering west we followed signposts to Frangokástello - our first destination.

This Venetian fortress is located in an incredible landscape, which is so different to the rest of the island. It is here that the mountains slide into the sea as if in surrender to their watery master. The flat foothills are a light relief to the winding mountain roads that you take everywhere else.

Do not be fooled; the journey by map doesn't look far, although you need to allow at least an hour to get to Frangokástello. There is very little here, which actually makes it quite appealing. A small resort has built up along the beautiful sandy beach and azure seas, with a few tavernas and a couple of guest houses, really this is it. The fortress is the main draw here and it is indeed a magnificent building to behold and very photogenic.



There is plenty of history absorbed into the walls of this fortress dating back to 13th century. Turks, Germans, Venetians all stake a historical claim on this ancient monument at some point over the last seven hundred years.

Beyond the obvious draw of the history lesson, the beach is worthy of a walk, or stopping at one of the tavernas, where they see little trade outside of the main season. Soft, golden

sands and an idyllic bay with sheltered and shallow water entice you to paddle, just for a moment. Once we had walked around this tiny complex, our 30 minute visit came to an end.

Hitting the road again, we headed west, past the entrance to the almost famous Imbros Gorge - more on this soon. Our next destination was Hóra Sfaklión. This bustling little port offers so much. A boat trip to the isolated, only reachable by boat Loutró, lunch at one of the harbourside bars or a private taxi anywhere up the coast you fancy for €25 per person. It really is a delightful place to head for.



We settled for a picnic and a wander, for this trip at least, because the Imbros Gorge was awaiting us and there just wasn't enough time to do it all. We would recommend getting here earlier in the day and squeezing in a trip to Loutró for lunch, as we were disappointed not to get there.

Imbros is another of Crete's famous gorges and although not in the same league as Samaría, it is still a tough challenge especially, if like us, you attempt it up hill. It is 6 miles of river bed walking, in between narrow gorge walls that tower way above your head. It is a stunning trek without the crowds, although do allow a good couple of hours with stops and take plenty of water, as once in the body of the gorge, there's nothing until you reach the end.

Ideally, park at the top entrance to the gorge and walk down, where tavernas and taxis are waiting to return you to your car. Unless of course you are super fit and want to walk both ways! Do either early morning or late afternoon so you're not walking in the heat of the mid-day sun, although that said, the gorge is fairly shady. There is a small entrance fee of €3 per person.

A tired drive back to camp and a swim was most definitely in order at the end of a magnificent day.





Tour 7 - West Coast Wonders

6 Days (with some serious ‘down time’)

Leaving the south beach beauties, we headed north, back past Spili for a third time and on towards Réthymnon. We had heard unfavourable things about this town, given that it is still part of the touristy north coast, so we bypassed it and headed to the golden sand beaches Mecca of Crete.

Our first recommended stop was at Falásarna, where you enter tomato growing land. And so whilst the coast looks promising you have to balance the view with a commercial landscape of poly tunnels.

Beyond the plastic, the water here makes up for it, with clear, sparkling seas that make you want to dive in from great height. This Falásarna beach is a good five miles long, and offers a number of overnight stops if the beach appeals, although it was a bit too stark and busy for us.

A stop off to explore the ruins to an ancient city right at the far end of the beach is worthwhile. Although avoid weekends and Bank Holidays, as it is closed to visitors,



whilst archeological students continue their excavations.

We found a wild spot that night at the opposite end of Falásarna, by a little harbour and although within the greenhouse area, for the night it felt a better option than right on the beach car parks where we would have been inundated with beach goers and potential revellers. **(35.477173 23.566722)**

We decided to move on up the coast, as this area really didn't appeal to us, and no more than 45 minutes away you find the village of Sfinari. The village itself is a typically quiet, unassuming place with a couple of tavernas, although with a sharp turn right, you follow a narrow, yet passable road that takes you along the bay.

Keeping on this road, past all the bars on the left we reached Sunset Taverna. It is here that you find your haven - well at least we found ours.

The Baladakis family run this lovely restaurant and you are invited to camp here for free. With fresh water, bins and goats' milk each morning, you can watch papa clean the octopus that his sons catch at dawn and then enjoy the fruits of their labour at lunchtime in their wonderful home-cooking taverna.

Staying here amongst the shade of the trees, looking out over the bay and watching the sun gracefully set is another of our highlights. See more of this piece of Utopia from our Dave the Drone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8walklDezU>



After four days of RnR, we headed into the oleander filled mountains en route to the famous pink beach at Elafonisi. A little stop over for coffee or lunch is a must at Lefteris Taverna that has views from the terrace through the mountains to the sea. It is quite special. **(35.363608 23.598082)**





With a bumpy entrance to the loosely termed 'road' to Elafonisi, we made it to this very famous beach, which is geologically unique in Crete.

Its pink sand and shell fragments line the shores giving it a rosy hue, although these days the pink sands are a bit of poetic justice, so head to the shore line for your real splash of pink. The whole lagoon though is incredibly beautiful. especially at sunrise and sunset when the crowds have gone.

In between those times you have to be prepared to share the experience with many, many tourists.

We stayed here overnight together with at least a dozen others. I suspect in high season this may be more difficult or not tolerated, although we had a peaceful night here. Here's another beautiful video of this area to show you the reason to visit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXvZP9zdtF0>





Tour 8 - Paleochóra

2hrs

Our tour of Paleochóra was sadly short-lived, thanks to a freak storm that caught us out. With roof lights and windows open, 'Operation flooded out' kept us occupied as we valiantly tried to salvage carpets, washing and soggy laptops.

Still prior to our drama, we had taken out our electric bikes for the first time on the island and had a little exploration.

Staying at [Camping Grammeno](#), which is one of the two ACSI discount sites we stayed at, we cycled the 5 km to town and checked out the ruins of the old fortress, high on the hill, overlooking the town protectively.

The town itself is really quite cute, although like many around the world, from the outside it really doesn't impress. It is worth looking around and exploring the little lanes and cobbled streets, as well as the main promenade that is home to bars, restaurants and people-watching locals.



Our exploration took us further round the coast to the east, where we had spied a wild camping spot we wanted to check out.

We cycled around the coastal perimeter and followed the signs for Palechóra Camping. Continuing past the campsite, there is a turning to the right, signposted to the Spa Hotel and Taverna.

It is a challenging road given that there is no tarmac, although the reward at the end is absolutely worth it, if for no other reason than for the views. As we continued down the 2 mile road, a little peninsular of gorgeousness emerged that looked like it had come out of the pages of an Indian Ocean holiday brochure.

A small bar awaits you selling that all important cold beer, basic snacks, loungers and umbrellas that entice you to stay awhile on this pebbly beach.

Another bay around the corner offers sand rather than the pebbles and looks as though it is attached to the exclusive Spa Hotel.

For vehicles it is certainly an interesting, although doable road. Our conclusion was that getting down onto the area for camping may be tricky as it is mostly sand and getting off the actual area might be a challenge. There was a camper van already parked there, so they had taken the risk, although that is something only you can assess when you get there.

Still a great cycle and an oasis destination to enjoy for an hour or so before hitting the road and returning to the campsite. All in all a 6 mile round trip, give or take.



Tour 9 - Kandanos and Eirini Gorge

Whole Day

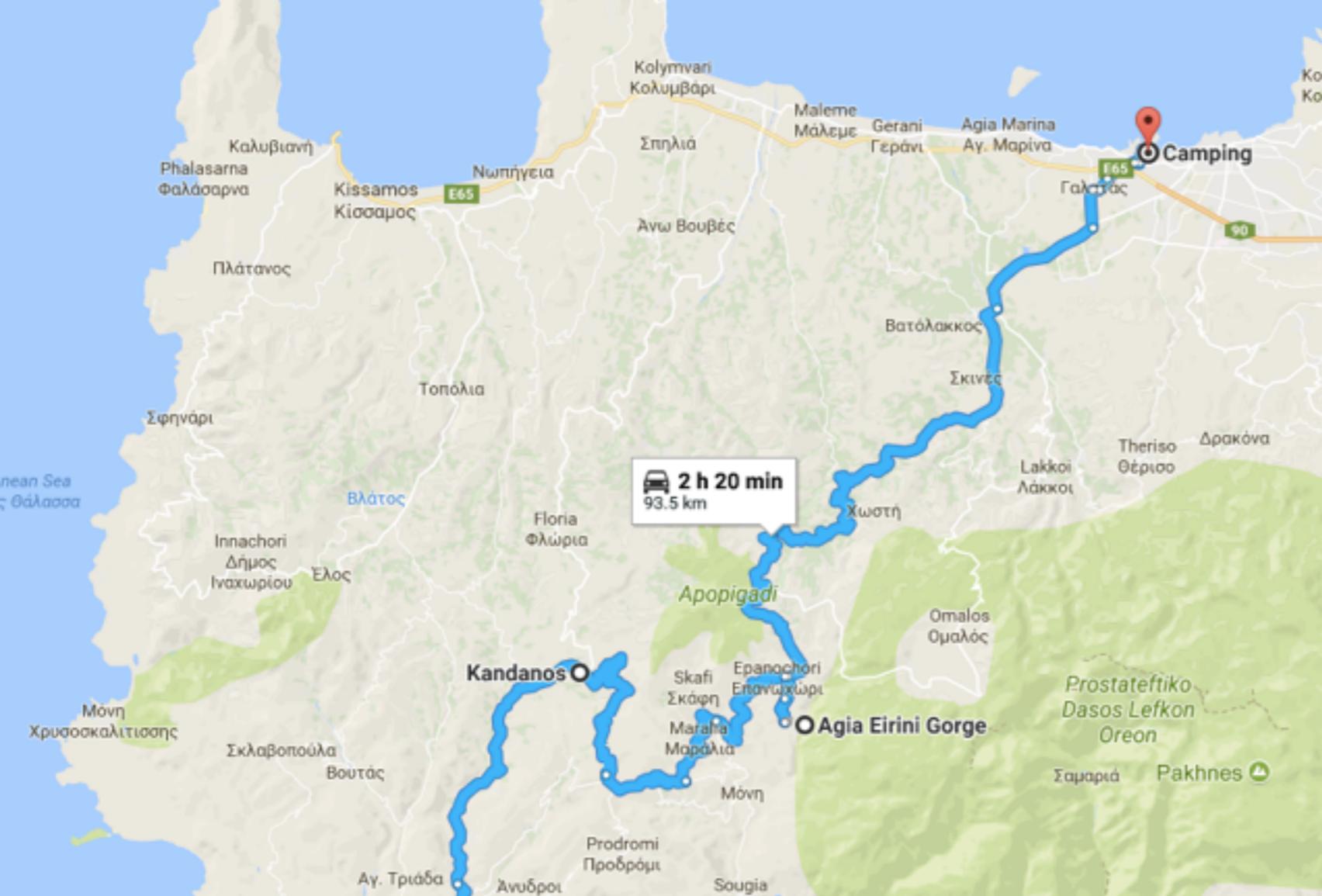
With heavy hearts we left the beautiful south and west coasts to enjoy our penultimate tour. After our immersion into World War commemorative sites around northern Europe, we were keen to pay our respects to the village of Káندانos. A tiny mountain village in the west of the island that was totally destroyed by WW2 German armies in revenge for their fierce resistance.

A plaque on the village wall states;

"Here stood Kandanos, destroyed in retribution for the murder of 25 German soldiers and never to be rebuilt again."

Except with true Cretan grit and determination, the locals *did* rebuild the village, stone by stone as if in complete defiance. And today, replicas of the memorial stones take central place just below the cathedral. It is an amazing little find, in the middle of nowhere and by-passed by all the coaches.

The road out of the village and onto our last gorge walk, was one of the best we



travelled and bearing in mind how amazing all of the roads were, you'll understand how incredible this one must have been.



Because of our injuries we couldn't walk the Samária Gorge, so instead we compromised on the beautiful Eirini, which was quieter, gentler and like walking through your own personal aviary.

Trimmed with pink oleander and protected by giant walls of granite, Eirini was a beautiful meander. Its five mile stretch of cavernous hiking was just a perfect way to end our gorge experiences.

We parked up at the car park (**35.331893 23.835843**) and took our walk from there and after 2.5 miles turned around to the welcome taverna at the starting point. This was a delightful experience and we would highly recommend this walk, particularly if you are unable to do Samária.



If we thought the road to Eirini was beautiful, we were in for yet another pleasant surprise as we travelled back towards Chaniá. Winding through the White Mountains, we found around every corner another breathtaking view.

ner another breathtaking view.

Take your time on this road and savour the views, the silence and the gentle heart-beat of the earth, as every moment of this serenely beautiful space is a joy to experience.

Once up and over the mountain ridge, where the modern windmills turn furiously in the afternoon breeze, you begin to glimpse the



Mediterranean Sea as you approach Chania. This was our last stop, using [Camping Chania](#), just on the outskirts of the city as an overnighter.

**(35.511513
23.984846)**





Tour 10 - Chaniá Old Town

3hrs

Parking up outside the city walls, we were perfectly positioned to explore the inner sanctum of Chaniá's historical harbour. **(35.516922 24.024467)**

The walking tour took us around the outer harbour walls to the tower and the lighthouse, where if you are lucky, as we were, you may catch a glimpse of the sea turtles floating in or out to the sea.

We followed the promenade path alongside the renovated ship warehouses, which have been sympathetically restored. Cretan entrepreneurial spirit is alive and kicking here, as boats - turned shops sell their sea-faring wares.

You will soon notice the horse carriages waiting to take tourists around the old city sights and evidence of WW2 destruction. A Mosque has been converted into an exhibition hall for local artisans and the buzz around the waterfront bars is palpable.

Step back one street behind the main path-



way and you will find a classy café-culture scene that could easily grace any metropolitan city. With colourful buildings, bougainvillea draped balconies and history to marvel at, old town Chaniá is a delightful experience. Venetian architecture is evident everywhere and it took us back to our two visits to Venice, such is the likeness.

Chaniá is classed as the spiritual capital of Crete and within five minutes walking within these city walls it is easy to understand why. Where other towns and villages lack style or architectural identity, Chaniá stands out. Evidence of ancient city dwellers are being unmasked every year and the blend of Turkish and Venetian influence is clear.

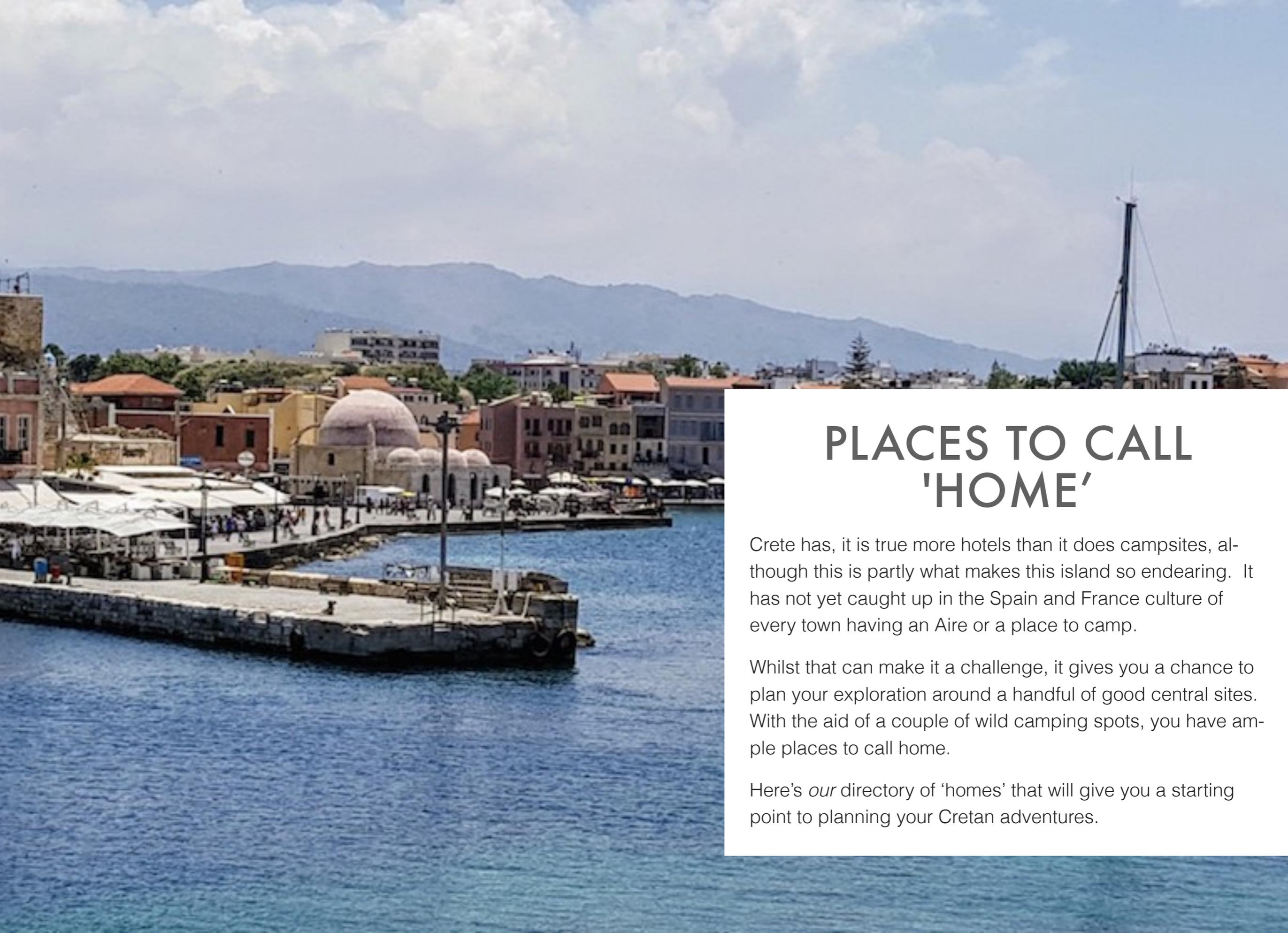


You will want to take your time as you wander around the town, soaking up the atmosphere and feeling the vibe that is so apparent. Chaniá

will charm and delight you in equal measure and whether it is a beer to people watch or an early breakfast as the town warms up in readiness for the day's visitors, you will feel satisfied by your visit.

If you love photography then sunset and sunrise give you a completely different perspective of the town and the different light will show off its artistry. We adored Chaniá and would return in a heartbeat.





PLACES TO CALL 'HOME'

Crete has, it is true more hotels than it does campsites, although this is partly what makes this island so endearing. It has not yet caught up in the Spain and France culture of every town having an Aire or a place to camp.

Whilst that can make it a challenge, it gives you a chance to plan your exploration around a handful of good central sites. With the aid of a couple of wild camping spots, you have ample places to call home.

Here's *our* directory of 'homes' that will give you a starting point to planning your Cretan adventures.



Sisi Camping, pool and sunset

OUR CAMPING HOMES

In this section we will list all of the places we called home around the island, both wild camping spots and campsites so whether you bring your own van over, decide to hire a motorhome or bring your own tent, you will have some good ideas of where to go. Whilst we found it helpful to have other people's suggestions, we also looked for our own homes too.

We have also listed places that are potential 'homes' that we didn't try out, although looked like good possibilities - all with co-ordinates and an idea of services, where possible.

1. Camping Sisi - www.sisicamping.gr; info@sisicamping.gr
(35.30371 25.50858)

Great little site, once you get over how basic Cretan (and Grecian sites) are compared to western Europe. The shower facilities are in need of some serious TLC although there is a pool to die for and sunsets that just need photographing. This cost us €20 per night, with a 10% discount. Sisi is a 15 minute walk along the coastal path where there are restaurants, a supermarket and ATMs are available. This is open from April until October.

2. Wild spot Makry Gialos - (35.03598 25.973634)

With permission from the locals, we parked up here for two nights on a raised piece of ground overlooking the harbour and the bay. Access to the spot needs to be via the western side of town and not along the promenade as it is too narrow. Plenty of eateries are within walking distance and water and bins are available from the harbour. Here is a map for the entry point to this spot.



3. Wild spot Koutsounas - (35.034315 25.933623)

Although this place, just outside a tiny harbour was on the road, it was not too noisy. The views of the sea were spectacular and there is a small taverna across the road in the Community Park. Here there is a big parking area with plenty of shade, although the Park was gated and we were unsure whether this would be shut and

locked overnight. There is water at the harbour and bins across the road.



4. Wild spot near Heraklion airport - (35.331796 25.240954)

We stopped off here after dropping my mum at the airport as it was convenient after an afternoon travelling and was close to a large



Lidl. This spot is essentially a big parking area right on the beach and although a little close to the main E75, there wasn't too much disruption. Water

may be available from the Beach Bar along the beach and bins are freely available.

5. Camping No Problem - Agios Galini www.agia-galini.com
(35.099947 24.694821)

This was a great campsite site on the southern side of the island, complete with an amazing swimming pool that overlooks the snow-capped mountains. The restaurant on site served incredible food and we highly recommend eating there.



The facilities are good, in fact this is one of the better sites on the island. Although again there is little structure and so camping tends to be a free-for-all. We did manage to secure an ACSI discount here and so the price was €17 per night including electricity. A lovely family run site with good English. Open April to October.

6. Wild spot Falásarna - (35.477173 23.566722)



This west coast beach spot was tucked away to the south of the main beach area away from the crowds. There were a number of us here, hidden away under the shade of the trees. There was a taverna

five minutes walk away and whilst the greenhouses and lorries passing by during the day were unpleasant, it was actually quiet at night.

7. Sunset Taverna, Wild spot, Sfinari - (35.415279 23.56086)

This was our favourite spot of the whole tour. We had four days here doing really very little given there was no internet. Just nature, sea and wildlife. Incredible sunsets are just part of the joy here, although watching Yannis milk his goats at 0730 and then eating Eleni's homemade goat's cheese for lunch is wonderful. Nikos hunts for octopus, which they wash in the sea in front of you. There is water from his hose at the 'camping area' and also down by the restaurant. Of course he has toilets, which he is happy for you to use, as



long as you eat with them - understandably. The camping is open all year, although from October until March the restaurant is only open on Sunday.

8. Wild spot Elafonisi Beach - (35.273623 23.539678)

Although there are 'no camping' signs, these are tents not motorhome specific and there was whole area of vans that had parked at the other end of the beach. Sadly there was dodgy route to this spot that would have damaged our back axle, so we decided not to take the risk. There were two of us at the upper end of the beach and no one bothered us. I suspect that during the high season

things may be different. There are toilets here during the day, although will be shut up at night and water from the cafe area if you are desperate. During the winter, not sure how much would be open, although camping here at this time of year would be ok. Just beware of the road in that looks severely affected by heavy rains - might make it difficult for getting out.

There are also camping possibilities at the monastery about 10 minutes up the road, if you're in any doubt. Bins available here.
(35.310703 23.533561)



9. Camping Grammeno, Palechora - (35.235033 23.635968)

This campsite on the south west of the Island is great if you want to consider walking Samária Gorge. It is about 2 miles into the town and then there is a ferry to Sougia that you can pick up. The site is quite large in comparison to others we came across and has a mixture of pitches and wooden yurts, which looked neat. There is a restaurant here and you are right on the beach of a sheltered bay. This was only the second of the sites we stayed on that gave us an ACSI discount, so we paid €19 per night. There is a washing machine and decent showers here too. The biggest advantage is that they are open all year for those of you who wish to come through the winter.



10. Camping Chania, Chania - www.camping-chania.gr (35.511513 23.984846)

This was our least favourite campsite purely because it was more family oriented and overcrowded. It was in a beach resort area where tourists flock so it was very much a transactional overnighter.

And it was our most expensive yet at €25 per night with electricity. The pool was a nice touch, although just not our cuppa. There is a nice walk out along the headlands, about 10 minutes out of the campsite, although no wild camping opportunities to be had in this particular area. You are about 10 minutes drive to Chania where you will find a couple of overnight options, one of which we chose which was only a 2 minute walk from the old town.

Camping Chania had all the amenities including a shop, although no toilet dumping facilities - you just emptied down one of the toilets in the shower blocks, which seemed odd given the price. Also the drive in was narrow and not clear from the signposts, so take care when you arrive at the site entrance.

They are open from April until October. I have no pictures, although this is bay just a short distance from the site, so great for family beach holidays.



11. Wild spot Chania - City Walls (35.5173 24.02431)

This was a great spot albeit a car park in a residential area. This is mostly due to its location, just a couple of minutes walk into the old town and harbour area. Plenty of restaurants line the promenade to

the right of the car park and if you're lucky you might pick up internet from the hotel up the hill. The car park does get busy, especially during work days, so park with caution so you're not trapped in. The slope you need to navigate on exit is to be handled with caution if you have a low axel, although we managed it without any scrapping. It was a safe spot although no facilities.

In case you should need it, there is a PC Doctor shop a five minute walk up the hill, on the main road, who will sort out any issues with computers or provide PC equipment.





Wild camping, Agios Nikolaos.

OTHER CAMPING POSSIBILITIES

So they were **our** stopovers during our month in Crete. We did find some other possibilities, although we can not vouch for either their safety or appropriateness given we didn't actually stay at any of the following spots. So do camp here at your own risk.

1. Sisi - (35.308611 25.517522) This is a possible wild spot on the west of the little harbour area and in front of the hotel. In the high season this may be frowned upon, although out of season it is a possibility. There is water to the right of the spot, where there is room for a couple of vans.

2. Agios Nikolaos marina - thanks to Peejays (35.18726 25.71828) €6 for 24 hrs including EHU and hot showers, toilet and WiFi. Ask at the kiosk to be let in.

3. Wild camping by the church or in the car park south of Agios Nikolaos (35.128934 25.73698) A quiet area off the main road where there is a car park and some portable toilets when we visited. Just around the corner towards the beach there are opportunities for camping by the church, where it is level and water is available. Lovely little bay and beach. See title picture on the previous page.

4. Camping Gournia Moon - Agios Nikolaos - this appears on the official map from Crete Camping, although the website no longer exists. We certainly didn't see any signs for camping in this area.

5. Kat Zakros wild camping - thanks to Peejays (35.096125 26.263246) Take the winding road along the eastern coast to Zakros - Gorge of the dead. Descending down the hill there is a spot on the beach. Water can be found at the top of the hill before coming down to the beach area.

6. Wild camping at the church - Makry Gailos (35.037221 25.972348) Thanks to Ann and Mark. A possibility to park here overnight, although if you head around the town to the west you can access the free harbour area, which is far nicer.

7. Camping Koutsounari - Koutsounari

<http://www.camping-koutsounari.gr> (35.008854 25.820006) Just off the main road, 3 miles from Ierapetra, you will find the campsite to your right as you head to Makry Gailos. Looked like there was a lot of shade and close to the beach, although we didn't stay there. A good option for exploring this side of the island if you prefer going to campsites. It is open from 1 May to end of 31 October and offers all the normal facilities.

8. Wild camping on the beach, Koutsounari (35.007533 25.826037)

Turning off from the main road, following the Megali Paralia Taverna signs, you come across a stretch of beach to the right of the road. There are plenty of flat camping spots that have some overnight possibilities. Water may be available at the hotel or the taverna.



9. Camping Creta - Heraklion cretacamp@hotmail.com (35.3329 225.29182) A site on the busy northern coast close to Heraklion.

10. Camping Matala, south Crete (34.99451 24.751201) Matala is a busy party town with plenty of vibe - so we are told.

11. Camping Apollonia, Plakias. www.apollonia-camping.gr (35.188377 24.399545) We looked into staying at this campsite, although it seemed far too small for motorhomes. Small rigs possibly. When we drove by, it looked ok, although unsure how feasible it is. Please note this weblink no longer works, nor does the one on their FB page. Perhaps they are no longer trading?

12. Wild camping at the beach - (35.170953 24.421001) This beach is the fourth of a string of quiet coves and bays, stretching from Damnoni Beach a mile away. When we explored, there were two vans wild camping there. There is a bar with toilets during the day and therefore, we suspect water of some description. This spot must be accessed from the main road, you can't drive here from Damnoni as it is only a cliff footpath.



13. Frangokastello - Fortress car park free camping possibilities. (35.182365 24.234369) Thanks to Pete and Vera. There may be overnight parking possibilities here - it was a recommended spot for us, although we didn't actually use it. Quite atmospheric with the fortress lights on at night.



14. Chora Sfakion port wild camping - (35.200226 24.136559) There are a couple of opportunities for stopping overnight on the port, which looks reasonably active during the day. We saw a couple of campers here.



15. Paleochora possibilities - (35.236405 23.668377). Along the road towards Camping Grammeno, there are a couple of wild spots along the coast side of the road. Not pretty, although an option if you didn't want to stay at the campsite, which is open all year. Also further along the coast to the east, there is a lovely wild opportunity as you drive past the Paleochora campsite on your left and then shortly after, turn right. The track leads you to a spa hotel and taverna, where there may be some camping possibilities, although it is not firm ground, which is what put us off. In season there were portable toilets available.

16. Camping Paleochora (35.237378 23.658299) This is a tiny campsite, room for only about 6 vans and no long rigs here. Opposite the beach on the lefthand side of the road about 1/2 mile out of Paleochora. Has its own restaurant.

17. Camping Mithimna <http://www.campingmithimna.gr> (35.501654 23.703211) A campsite by the beach that offers all the normal facilities with 10% discount offered. Also there is **Camping Nopigia** <http://www.campingnopigia.gr/en/> about a mile up the coast to the east with camping opportunities. They are open from 1 May to 30 September.

18. Wild camping Chania peninsular - (35.59159 24.09132). Beautiful beach parking.

19. Camping Elizabeth, Rethymnon. www.camping-elizabeth.net Reputed to be the oldest campsite on the island, established in 1964, this is halfway between Chania to the west and Heraklion to the east. You have easy access from here to the south of the island on day trips. It looks to offer winter camping opportunities too.

20. Wild camping, Rethymnon, courtesy of Peejays. (35.37298 24.47258). Sea view, below castle walls, five minutes from Venetian harbour and lovely city centre. Open wifi from nearby tavernas.

21. Kastelli, Lassithi. (35.209331 25.337175), courtesy of Peejays. A quaint little town where few tourists visit. There is a parking place in the centre of the village by the car park.

22. Heraklion Harbour car park (35.34169 25.1406) courtesy of Peejays. €3 for 24hrs with toilets. 5 minutes to the old town and 10 minutes to the Archeological museum and city centre. Knossos Palace is reachable by bus from the nearby bus station.

There are so many wild opportunities in Crete, so look for places that you feel safe at and be guided by your own intuition. Other people's recommendations are great, although the bottom line is, it has to feel right for you and of course it must be responsible and respectful to others. And there are enough campsites that you don't need to wild camp if it doesn't suit you.

However you choose to camp and wherever you decide to call home, you will find so much to uncover and discover on Crete.

A close-up photograph of several pink flowers, likely cherry blossoms, with soft, layered petals and some buds. The background is a blurred green, suggesting foliage. The lighting is bright, highlighting the delicate texture of the petals.

OUR TOP TIPS FOR CRETE

Like any decent Travel Guide book, there are plenty of recommendations from the writers about what their highlights would be. The danger is that it is such a personal matter and so subjective; what is one person's cup of tea is another man's poison.

That said, we have offered our highlights in the hope that it influences you to come and check out these places for yourself and create your own top tips.



Wild Camping at Paleochóra, south west Crete

OUR TOP TIPS FOR CRETE

We guess by now that you have realised we like Crete just a little bit. With its diversity, character and charm and beautiful places to explore, there's so many reasons to come.

As we begin to round off this first eBook in our *Inspiring you to Travel* series, it feels important to summarise the essential tips for making the most out of your visit to Crete. So we have listed some of the beauties that we enjoyed and also those we missed that need to be on your list. So here is our **Top Tips List**.

1. Do think about **spring or autumn as a time to come**, with the better weather and not too many crowds.

2. Do **shut your eyes as you arrive in Heraklion**. There are undoubtedly some beautiful parts of the old city; let's face it every city has its own charm, hidden somewhere. Do not be put off by your first impressions after disembarking from the boat or plane, because it really does get better.
3. Remember that **the campsites here need some getting used to**, although they are quite endearing once you see past the façade.

4. **Winter in Crete may not be as warm as you think.** We spoke to many expats and locals who say that the winters are turning for the worse and that snow and bad winds are really hitting them.
5. **Eating out here is great,** with super mezzes offered generally with drinks. The local fare is good value and very tasty.
6. **LPG is easy to get hold of** on the island, although we filled up in Piraeus and didn't need to top up.
7. **The island is so much bigger** than you realise, so don't scrimp on the amount of time you spend here. The sooner you understand that you will not get to see everything the more enjoyable your time will be.
8. **Centre yourself at four or five destinations** across the island so that you cover good ground. Unless you have three or four months here, getting a flavour is a good compromise.
9. **Hiring a car is a good option** for whizzing around the island, if of course you don't have your own alternative form of transport.
10. **Wild camping is certainly doable** and although we have given you our co-ordinates, enjoy finding your own and be adventurous.
11. Some of the **mountain villages are narrow**, so go slow and watch for the building overhangs with your rig.
12. **Make plenty of time to rest** as the journey times to places can be quite long and you will end up getting travel weary. So slow down to a Cretan pace and you will enjoy it so much more.
13. If you love gorges and walking, then **choose four or five** that you want to do that span across the island. There's so many to choose from and you are unlikely to be disappointed.
14. **Do your research**, although once you get there and get a feel for the island, **allow yourself to be guided** by your campsite host, the map and your own intuition.
15. Don't forget to stop off at the **road-side huts** for some gorgeous honey and olive oil products. They are so much cheaper than the supermarkets.
16. **Avoid camping on sandy ground** as in spring Crete can have some freak storms and there's always a danger of getting stuck on soft ground.

17. **The afternoon winds** can be a bit breezy, so just be aware of this and factor it in.

18. In spring, take precautions if you come in your motorhome and close up your roof lights as these **storms come in from nowhere** and take you by surprise.



19. If you love the safety of groups of people, then you'll love the north. **If you enjoy nature, then the south will be more your cup of tea.**

20. And finally...

**Crete is so much more than a holiday -
it is an experience.**

Take the time to really immerse yourself in Crete's diversity and allow her to colour your life's canvas - just like it did for us.

Things we missed and you should not

We can not leave without giving you a list of things that we wished we had had time to see;

1. **Zákros Gorge** - south east coast. The gorge, The Valley of the Dead, is rumoured to be a tough yet doable introduction to Crete's family of ravines and a great hike. There are also some ancient ruins and Zákros Palace here, with tombs evident in the gorge sides as you walk.
2. **Knossos** - The largest of the Minoan Palaces that is over 2000 years old. This is a 'pièce de resistance' when it comes to ancient history and is a *must see* on your Cretan To Do List, especially if you love days of old and mythology. Legend says that the Minotaur exists in the walls of the Labyrinth.
3. Whilst in this area, Heraklion doesn't boast much, although the **Archeological Museum** is another visit to make if history is your bag. It is reputed that every Minoan and prehistoric artifact can be found here in this museum. We visited Mycenae in the Peloponnese and some of their archeological finds are just incredibly mind-blowing.



4. **Gournia** in the east, near Agios Nikolaos, hosts the most completely preserved Minoan town on the island, with its narrow streets and stairways still intact and will give you great insight into the lives of normal people.

5. **Préveli and Palm Beach**. We approached this gorge from the wrong side, so didn't get to see it in all its glory. We suggest approaching this from the eastern side so you can get access to the beach and gorge, or better still take a boat!

6. **Samaría Gorge** - if you are super fit, then this monster is a must for your trip. 11 miles of strenuous hiking, which is said to be beautiful, although do be prepared to share it with the masses unless you go out of season.

7. **Loutró** - this out of the way village, only reachable by ferry, offers tranquility and charm. Allow yourself a good day out, if travelling from Agios Galini, as you'll want to get an 11.30am ferry to be there by lunchtime and still walk the Imbros Gorge.

8. **Bàlos Lagoon**, north west edge. Once you arrive at Kissamos, you need to look out for the signs to Bàlos, which is reached either by ferry or via a 7km dirt track. This was no good for our motorhome, so we missed this out and by all accounts the best view is from the cliff top. Although it is said to be worth the drive, if you have your own separate transport.

So much to see, so many tastes satisfied, so make sure you have enough time to do it justice.

Learn from our mistake. One month is simply not long enough unless you are going to make some serious compromises on what you see and where you go!

Now on to some practicalities that will make your trip effortless and enjoyable.





CRETE PRACTICALITIES

So hopefully we have whetted your appetite for a Cretan Odyssey. What about the practicalities?

Questions like, how do you get there, how much does it cost and what is the cost of living like when you get there?

All relevant and important questions that might sway you, one way or another. So here are our thoughts that go some way to answering those questions.



Sfinari Beach, south west Crete

GETTING TO CRETE

Crete may be the furthest point south in Europe, although it is a popular destination for good reason. The travel links to and from the island are plentiful and, whether you choose to come by plane and hire a vehicle or bring your own camper or motorhome, getting here is not that difficult.

Coming with your Camper or Motorhome via Ferry

Although we didn't see many motorhomes, in comparison to other western areas of Europe, the journey to Crete is easy enough - eventually! We did though tear our hair out until almost bald when we first started trawling through the websites looking for ferry options.

Normally I would use www.directferries.com, although even they couldn't come up with an appropriate deal. In fact, such was the diffi-

culty in finding a ferry, that mild panic set in, given that part of our reason for going was to rendezvous with mum - who had already booked her flights.

When I did find an option from Piraeus, Athens, the price was initially a bit of a shock at €400, although this was return, and given the prices of a one-way ferry from Italy, we soon realised that actually this was a pretty good price.

So let's see if we can make your planning efforts easier. Forget searching the internet - go down the old fashioned route and hire an intermediary who can do all the investigations for you. The internet has its place, although sometimes, just sometimes, it is easier to get others to help you along the way.

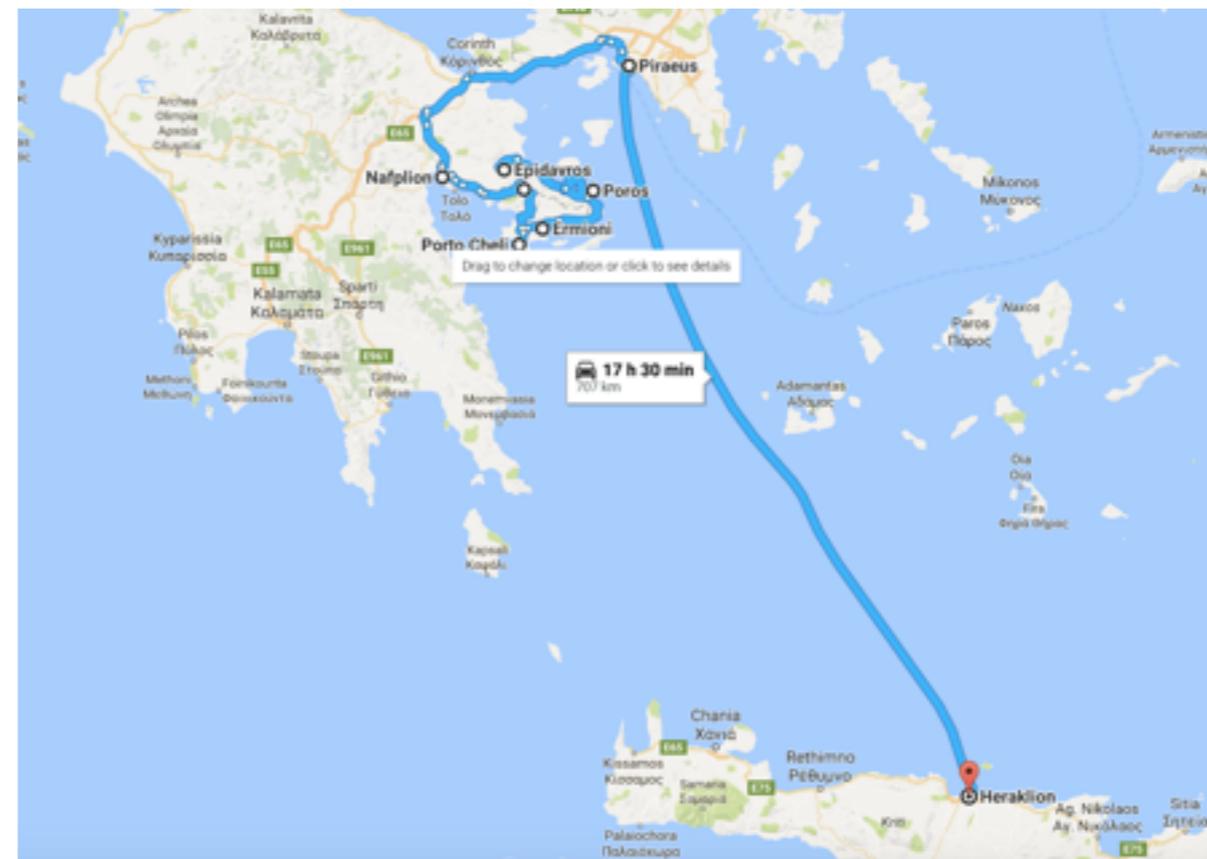
We employed the services of www.paleologos.gr and we did everything over email, which was so easy: info@paleologos.gr. Not only did they remove the stress of finding the best ferry crossing, they also managed the bookings of our Italy to Greece sailing too. And because they were doing a bulk booking, they secured us a discount on our International crossing and also an Early Bird Discount, because we booked before **28 February**. So if you are thinking about a spring visit, then remember that this discount is available.



The additional benefit of using a third-party was that when we decided to extend our trip, they handled the alterations to our tickets and there were no additional charges! Happy Days!

We eventually chose a Piraeus (Athens) sailing to Heraklion in mid May with Anek Lines. Although we would have preferred a sailing from Gythio on the Peloponnese to Kissamos on the north west coast of the island, they hadn't released their timetable by the time we wanted to book and the Early Bird was a good incentive.

Here are some links that you might find helpful;



www.anklines.gr

www.minoan.gr

www.bluestarferries.com

www.ferries.gr

A note of information; the ferry price is calculated based on the length of your vehicle and, unlike the International route to Greece that allows 'On Board Camping', you must book either an airplane-style seat or a cabin. We went for the airplane seat and then upgraded when we checked in. We got a significantly cheaper rate than we were offered by the agents. On the way out it cost us an additional €58 and on our return only €28 and for a good night's sleep, it was a 'no-brainer'. Obviously you take the chance that the cabins are fully booked, although given the time of year, we took a calcu-

lated risk. And in fact there were very few private vehicles on board when we travelled - just a lot of freight.

We were really impressed with Anek Lines. They are such a professional ferry company and the boat is superb. And we say that from a position of experience, given the Spain to Italy route we took with Grimaldi Lines, who really live up to their grim label. For an honest appraisal and ferry links from Italy, you can catch our blog [here](#).

Arriving by plane and hiring

Of course there are other alternatives to driving from UK to Greece, via Italian ferry. You can either drive overland through Albania and Bosnia (which most Insurance Companies won't cover you for and you would need a Green Card) or you could **fly and hire**.

If camping under canvas is your thing, then why not bring your own tent and hire a car when you get here? There are some really gorgeous, 'out of the way' beaches where tent camping is tolerated and indeed encouraged in many ways.

Why not find a flight that goes either to Heraklion, which is the primary airport, or Chaniá, which is fast becoming a popular flight destination?

Car hire is easy across the island in the main towns and obviously at the ferry port and airports. We hired on three occasions so we could move around the island with speed and dexterity. It cost us between €27-€30 per day, including all insurances, just with the addition of petrol. All you need is a valid Driver's License and you're good to go.

Of course, if you love the open road and want to take your home with you too, then you could hire a motorhome.

We saw a couple of these around the island and they offer a really good compromise to taking your own vehicle, especially if time is precious and limited to a couple of weeks.

Here are some links that you might find help. *Although we must of course offer a disclaimer at this point, as we can't vouch for their quality, value for money or safety - this is something you must take on your own merit.*

www.campergreece.com

www.motorhomes.gr



The rugged coastline of Sisi

CAMPING IN CRETE

Campsites

Comparatively speaking, there are only a small handful of campsites on Crete. Many of us are spoilt by the profuse number of Aires and ACSI sites available across western Europe. Greece, as a general rule, has far less campsites and they are yet to truly gear themselves up for the camping fraternity.

That said, there are sixteen official sites in Crete that are part of the *Union of Camping Owners* and you can become part of their loyalty scheme. You get a stamp per campsite you stay on within a twelve month period and after six stamps you are given a free night.

A word of caution in terms of managing your camping expectations - campsites in Greece, and Crete especially, are informal and basic in their services. Strangely, a large majority of their investment seems to go into their swimming pools and not the shower blocks. That said, whilst the facilities are in need of a bit of TLC, they are at least clean and functional, and the warmth of the hosts makes up for anything they lack in shower block standards.

There is little structure to the sites, so don't expect neatly sectioned pitches - it is a bit of a free-for-all, although it works and, in fact, is quite endearing. Well that is how it felt for us after our first week.

The sites, when we visited for the month from mid-May, were reasonably quiet, although I suspect things would hot up during the



summer months. Bear in mind that Greek schools break up for summer, generally by the third week in June. So make allowances for this in your plans.

The costs for camping varied a little, although an average from the four we stayed at was €20 per night, for two people, including electricity. Washing machine facilities were available at an additional €4-5 per load.

Another word of caution. Although some of the sites do advertise the ACSI Discount, their partnerships have generally lapsed. We did manage to secure a 10% reduction at Camping Sisi, and an ACSI price at Camping No Problem and Grammeno Camping.

The sites are generally open from April until October, so if you are thinking of an autumn trip here, do factor this in. We came across one site on the south west coast, Grammeno Camping that is open all year round, which is great if you fancy having winter down in this neck of the woods. At the end of the book, we have given you all the co-ordinates and information on the spots we stayed at so you can use these as a guide if you wish.

And now for the more controversial topic of wild camping, respecting all the debate that this brings with it.

Wild Camping

Personally, we love wild camping and not just because it is free. We love it because it gives us freedom and a real closeness with the land and the culture without the rules of a site. After all, we left UK to escape the rules that tied us to the system, so no wonder we love to wild camp.

There are some spots around the island that looked suitable to wild overnight, although we always asked someone nearby if it was acceptable. I suspect during the high-season they may tighten up on wild camping activity, however we didn't experience any difficulties.

In fact one spot, our favourite of them all, **Sunset Taverna at Sfinari Beach** openly welcomed wild camping. At the end of the Bay, Yanis and his family have made half-a-dozen spots for motorhomes and tents to pitch up, with fresh mountain water and goats' milk from his own herd.

We have already offered you a list of *our* wild camping spots and others that we investigated along the way for you to check out on page 44-52.

We always apply general rules and values to our wild camping:

- 1) We both have to feel comfortable at the site.
- 2) We evaluate the surroundings for litter, graffiti and evidence of other potential issues
- 3) We check with locals that parking overnight is acceptable and ensure that our position is respectful to the neighbourhood.
- 4) We give back to the local community as a thank you for our stay.

We realise that wild camping is a contentious subject, although Greece really is a haven for wilding, especially given the general lack of sites.



COST OF LIVING

This always seems like a really important question for us to ask when we're planning a trip away - especially if it's going to be an extended stay. We are after all on a budget.

Greece, as a general rule is a lot cheaper than Italy, Germany and France although a little more expensive than Spain and Bulgaria.

Diesel averaged around €1.25 per litre and LPG was freely available around the island, coming in around €0.90. And food - for a week's supply for two of us, including alcohol came out around €80 per week. It's always tricky putting food expenses 'out there' as our tastes and eating habits are bound to vary. Although it gives you a guideline to base it on. There was a Lidl in every major town such as Chaniá, Heraklion, Réthymnon, Agios Nikólaos and Ierápetra. In

addition there were plenty of local supermarkets to pick up supplies, although they tended to be a bit more expensive.

Eating out was very cheap and extremely delicious, especially the mezze that would often accompany just a beer. Road-side sellers would pedal their wares, namely honey - which is *really* good and olive oil products. Greece does olive oil so well, it is really hard not to succumb to a gallon or two.

A don't forget that **CASH IS KING** in any southern and eastern European country, so don't get caught out and carry plenty with you. Although you can pay with card in Crete if you have to, they absolutely prefer cash. The campsites would only take cash.



WHEN IS IT BEST TO COME?

This is, of course a little tricky for us to answer, given that we only had one calendar month on the island. Although talking to the locals and doing research allows us to make our own judgement based on our experiences.

For us, spring was a delight. The pink and white oleander create corridors of colour throughout the island's road network and everything is green, lush and blossoming. The tomatoes are being harvested and the heat, is generally a very delicious 25°. Of course, wherever we go, we seem to attract unseasonable weather! So freak storms and ragingly high temperatures that had the locals puzzled beyond belief, is not a good review to offer you.

Certainly, the most typical weather for springtime and early summer is balmy temperatures and afternoon winds that keep the tempera-

tures bearable. Winters have the reputation for being pleasant, although in the last couple of years they have had their worst weather ever with storms and snow. So as with anywhere in the world, you 'pays your money and takes your chances.' One thing you will see though, up on the mountains is plenty of snow, even in the searing heat of summer. That will give you an indication of what happens later in the year. So unless you are going to camp on the mountain's summit, you *may* be in for some decent weather, although nothing is guaranteed.

You certainly want to avoid July and August, in part because of the heat, although mostly the crowds. With locals armed with car loads of children on school holidays and coach loads of tourists heading south from their tourist coastal hotels, it would make for an unpleasant trip - for us at least.

GETTING AROUND

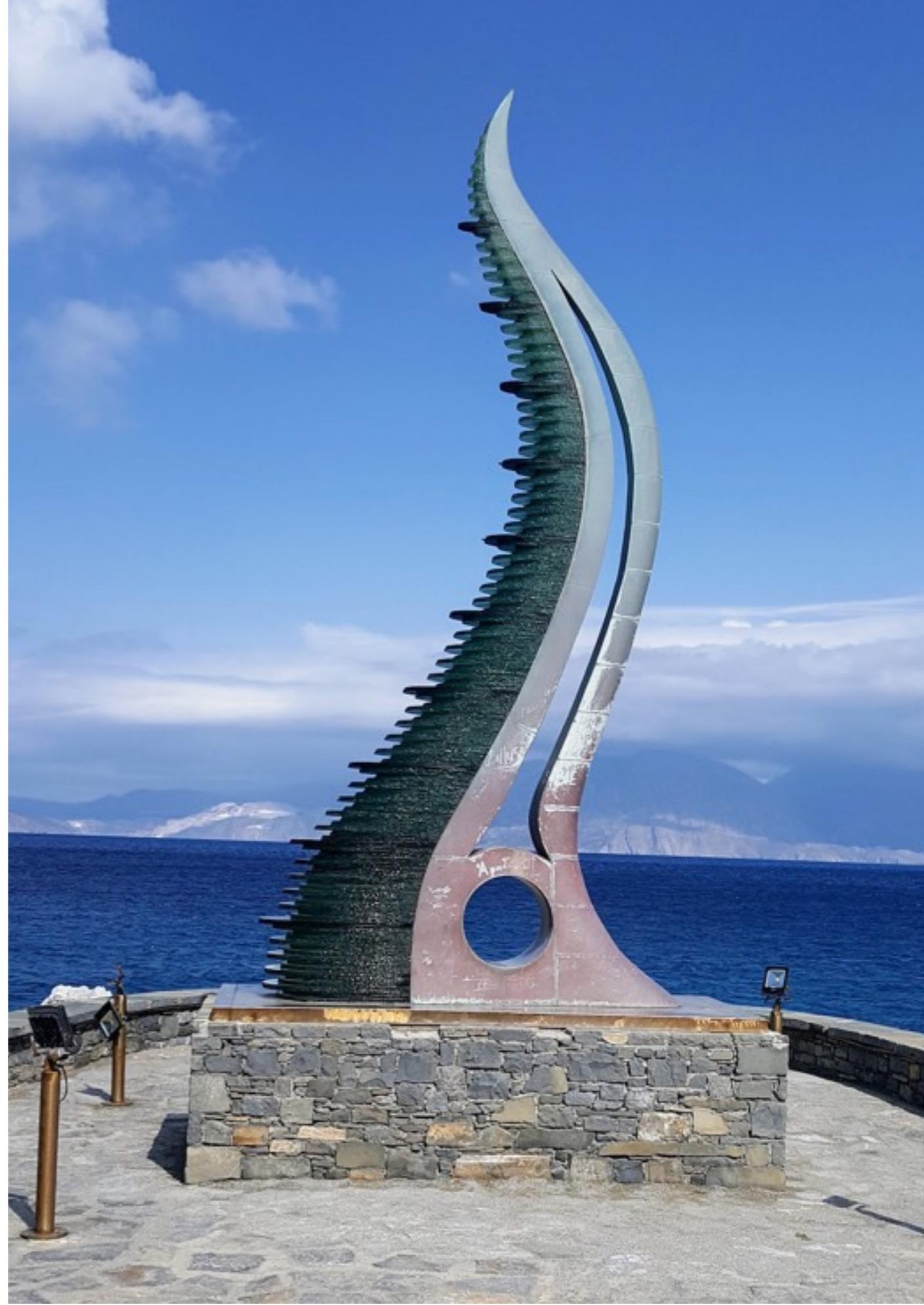
Greece has a bit of a reputation for being economically in dire straights and hence their infrastructure has taken a big hit. We are happy to report that this reputation has little truth to it, from what we saw.

Greece's roads are not difficult to navigate and although Crete has a unique topography, with its mountain spine, she too is easy enough to drive around. Believe us, after three months in Italy, these pieces of tarmac are a dream.

Crete has one main road that runs west to east, linking Chaniá and Heraklion and this is what we would class as dual carriage-way standard, on the whole. It is a fast road, although still bear in mind it takes at least two hours to reach Heraklion from Chaniá.

In between this main road, there are smaller mountain or country roads that tend to be crowded with cars parked in random formation along the road-side. There are though some pot-hole issues, although there is no going fast on Crete. And quite frankly, why would you want to?

The mountain roads from north to south are very doable and considering that coaches drive to and fro with a tourist laden load, then it gives you a strong indicator of their doability - as we like to call it.



Some of the mountain villages are quite narrow and many of the roads in the southern region have more twists and turns than a Sixties Jive dance group.

So what is our bottom line recommendation when driving in Crete?

You can get around, although there are some occasions where a hire car just seems an appropriate thing to do for ease and comfort.

It is absolutely fine for getting around on the main roads. If venturing off-piste, then consider taking a scooter or hiring a car and leave your 'home' in the safety of the campsite.

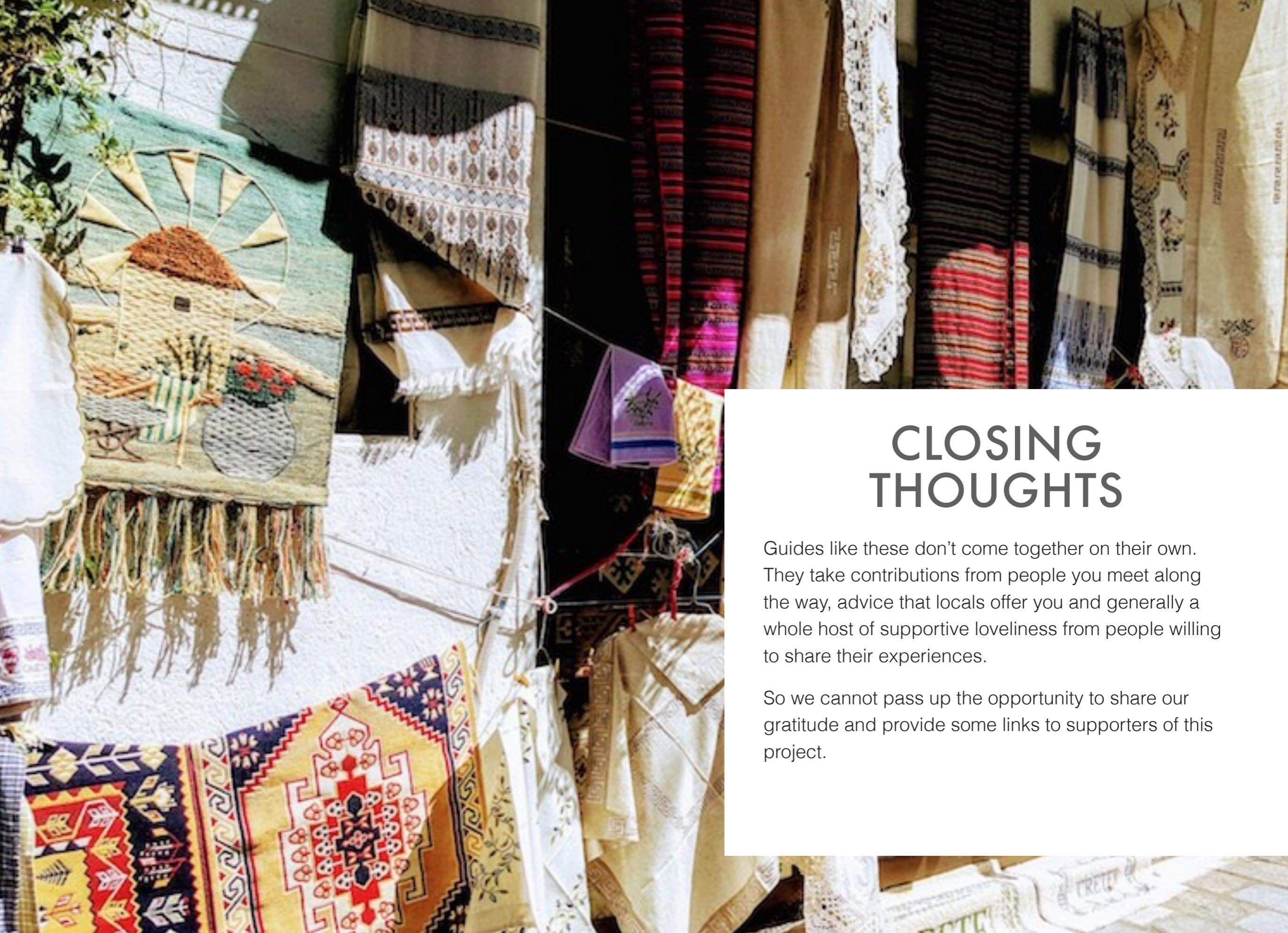
Don't be scared of driving here as it is generally fairly easy, especially compared to Italy's roads and drivers,

Our rule of thumb is, if a coach can make it, then we can make it. Just break it up with a hire car for a couple of days, particularly in the southern region, where getting to some of the beaches will be far easier in a smaller vehicle.

And forget your bicycles. We used them once in four weeks. It is just a bit too hilly, even with electricity.

Hopefully these practicalities help - of course if it leaves anything unanswered or there are other questions you would like to ask us, just drop us an email at themotoroamers@gmail.com. We will happily help, if we can.





CLOSING THOUGHTS

Guides like these don't come together on their own. They take contributions from people you meet along the way, advice that locals offer you and generally a whole host of supportive loveliness from people willing to share their experiences.

So we cannot pass up the opportunity to share our gratitude and provide some links to supporters of this project.

CLOSING THOUGHTS AND THANKS

Crete would never have been on our list had it not been for our chance meeting with Swiss couple, Patricia and Patrick Alain in Italy. Thank you for sowing the seed and inspiring us to visit.

Thanks to Aria at Paleologos Travel Agency for all her help in coordinating our travel, which turned from a nightmare doing it alone to a breeze.

We are so grateful for the time and information from Cretan long-time expats Ann and Mark, who gave us so much information.

To Vera and Pete who used to live and work on Crete, your recommendations and writing inspirations are really appreciated.

To PC Doctor in Chaniá, thank you for salvaging my laptop and all my valuable material.

We are grateful to all the locals who welcomed us, gave us free produce and who generally were warm and engaging, making our stay so memorable.

Thanks to my mum for giving us even more of a reason to come as a lovely family rendezvous.

And finally, THANK YOU Crete for a huge basket of memories that we will treasure for eternity. From here we now expand our horizons to Eastern Europe and see what they have to offer us. For more Guides and Travel Blogs, check us out at:

www.motoroaming.com

Here's to your Cretan Adventure - from Karen and Myles!

LIVE
Like heaven is on earth
LOVE
Like you've never been hurt
LAUGH
Like you have no cares
Sing
Like No one is listening
Dream
Like everything is possible
Play
Like a child, without reserve
Give
Like you have plenty
Cherish
Your family and friends
EVERY DAY