

WHAT TO DO

ACTIVITIES

There is something for everyone in Crete, whether you want a relaxing holiday or prefer something more adventurous. For the former there is the option of lounging by the pool or visiting one of the many sandy beaches or secluded coves, taking in the views from a beach bar/tavern. If you are the adventurous/active type then there are towering sandstone cliffs with deep valleys and blue lakes that make an ideal location for hang gliding, hiking, climbing, mountain biking and walking. Or for the explorers amongst you there's a rich history and culture to be discovered with archaeological sites, temples, palaces and monasteries all across the island.

MAKRYGIALOS AREA

There is a long shallow sandy blue flag beach that is ideal for smaller children, that leads to a pretty fishing harbour. Along the beach side are a good selection of bars, tavernas, gift shops and supermarkets. There are a variety of water sports facilities available in the summer season such as pedal boats, jet skis and a diving school. Fishing boats can be chartered from the harbour.



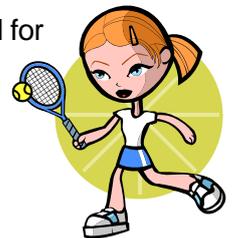
Each Friday there is a street market near the harbour entrance.

On Wednesday evenings, in season, the Vilea Village Hotel (bottom of the hill as you enter the village) holds a quiz night.

In June Makrygialos hosts the Mezzo music festival.

Sunwing Hotel (All facilities close at 11.00pm)

- **Mini Golf:** This is free. You need to take your own golf balls which can be purchased for €2 from the mini market down the road.
- **Tennis:** You can book the tennis court at the Sunwing reception. €10.20 per hour
- **Climbing Wall:** Available from 18.00 to 23.00 hours. €5 per person
- **Bungy Trampoline:** Available from 18.00 to 23.00. €7 per person



Observatory

For those interested in star-gazing appointments can be booked for the observatory in Agios Stefanos. Mob 00 30 6945 143787; home 00 30 2843052053

Art Workshops

These are also held in Agios Stefanos.



Chrissi Island

Cruises to Chrissi Island can be booked from Ierapetra.

Near to Makrygialos are the villages of Agios Stefanos and Pefki, just two of the many beautiful mountain villages, steeped in history, with narrow winding streets, old and beautifully renovated stone houses smothered in geraniums, bougainvillea and vines and dotted with rustic tavernas serving traditional Greek food.

Go-Karting can be found at Ierapetra and Sitia - check with Anja for details



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SPINALONGA

Have you read 'The Island' by Victoria Hislop? This book features Spinalonga. Excursion boats to this former Venetian fort and leper colony leave every hour from the harbour in Agios Nikolaos. Some include an all day excursions including BBQ. Fishing boats leave at regular intervals from Elounda; these boats just take you over and bring you back. A guide can be hired at the entrance to the island. There is also an entrance fee.

BEACHES

The local beach stretches the entire length of Makrygialos and Analipsis. Crete is as safe as anywhere else but accidents do happen and the sea can be dangerous in rough weather when currents can be quite strong - few beaches in Crete are supervised.

Along the beach and in the harbour area are several tavernas and cafeterias. The main beach is sandy, shallow and ideal for smaller children to play. There are sun beds along the beach, some are free and others you will have to pay a small charge.



Kalamouhania is just around the headland at the west end of the village. Take the road from the harbour around the headland or carry on the main road through the village and take the road through the river bed at Kalamouhania. This beach is shingle with a steep drop as you enter the water. Not ideal for small children or babies because as you enter the sea you are in deep water.

At the far end of this beach, there are rocks around the headland, which is ideal for snorkeling. You will also find tavernas on the beach where you can eat or just have drinks.

Diaskari beach is just along from Lagada beach. You will see an unfinished structure on the corner of the road heading towards the village. Take the small road down to the beach - it is very steep at the bottom. This is a lovely beach suitable for children. It consists of small stones with sandy areas, the water is crystal clear. It has a picturesque tavernas, which is only open during the main summer months

Closest to Lagada Ridge is the long sandy Lagada beach where the sea is deeper and suitable only for experienced swimmers as there is an undercurrent. This is used as a nudist beach.

There are many beaches, some of which are in isolated coves, so go and explore.

WALKS

On the headland above the harbour, behind the church, is an archaeological site with the remains of a Roman Villa which was in use from the second century BC to third century AD.

About 500 metres further on, following the main road to Irapetra, you will see a small sign post for 'Minoan Villa'. Take the small lane on the right hand side of the road, up the hill past the houses and the site is on the left hand side.

The ruins prove that this Minoan villa, despite its small size, is very important, not only because of the finds from the site but even more from an archaeological point of view as the basic layout follows the pattern of the Minoan palaces. When the site was excavated, a lot of artefacts were found which are now housed in the Museum in Agios Nikolaos.

ASPRO POTAMOS

Apart from walking down from the village of Pefki to the valley of Aspro Potamos you can also walk up to the valley from Makrygialos by turning inland on a concrete road which is sign-posted 'Aspro Potamos small Cretan Village', next to the Villea Village Hotel. Or walk along the small road by the supermarket, just a few metres from Grapevines Villas. Walk down to the new road and follow the small road just past the fruit warehouse.

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This takes you through the Olive groves and into Aspro Potamos. Carry on across the dry river bed, which only flows during the winter months. A little further on you will have a unique sight across the valley of the authentic old Cretan village.

From here you can either continue towards the gorge or just turn round and come back down to Makrygialos.

There's a separate section on walks in Section 2 of this pack.

Always remember to take a bottle of water with you.

MONASTERIES

There are two monasteries worth a visit, Moni Toplou on the northern coast, near Sitia and Moni Kapsa on the southern coast. Monasteries are usually closed in the afternoon for siesta. Please remember to dress appropriately.

Moni Topou is one of the most important monasteries in Crete and is of great historical interest. It is about 10 kms from Sitia and is reached by the road which branches off the main Sitia-Palekastro road and then joins up with the Palekastro-Vai-Itanos road.

Moni Kapsa is on the south coast between Makrygialos and Goudouras, built into the steeply rising cliffs on the side of the craggy Pervolakia Gorge, and with a superb view out over the open Libyan Sea. The Monastery of St John the Baptist is better known as Moni Kapsa. From the main road to Sitia, before you get to the village of Pilalimata, turn right and there is a sign post for Goudouras - Kalo Nero.



KATO ZAKROS



Even though the Palace of Zakros is smaller than Knossos, Phaestos or Malia, it has surpassed the bigger palaces both in the quantity and quality of artefacts found. It is now thought certain that the palace centre of Zakros must have been one of the biggest intermediary trading stations of all Crete. Today the best finds from Zakros are displayed in their own hall in the Heraklion Museum. It is believed that the destruction of the palace was connected with the massive eruption of the Santorini volcano in about 1450 BC

To reach Zakros you can go via Sitia and Palekastro, or over the mountains. Start off on the main road for Sitia and after Lithines there is a road sign to 'Handras-Ziros'. Take a sharp right turn. After 2 kms you come to the deserted village of Etia, with its impressive Venetian villa built at the end of the fifteenth century. Continue on to Handras. Take the road to Armeni and onto Ziros, which is fairly large village and follow the road through the village and pick up the road down to Xerokambos. This is a remote spot.. Go through the village and you come to the road to Zakros which is 8 kms away. Turn right and the road takes you down to Kato Zakros.