

VAMOS & GAVALO- HORI

Two Traditional Cretan Villages

Visiting *Vamos* will give you the opportunity to enjoy authentic Cretan culture. Walking the paths of alleys in the old town you will have the chance to see the traditional architecture and get a feeling for real Cretan life. Stop by the 'Parthenagogio', an old restored girls' school, built in 1863, now used as a guesthouse, and visit the old grocery with many local products. In the district of Vamos is the Venetian village of Karidi of Agios Georgios, with its Venetian villa, the Monastery of Agios Georgios, and the largest oil factory in the prefecture of Hania. *Gavalohori*, with its traditional architecture is officially protected by the government for landmarks such as an 18th century two-roomed arched olive oil factory, the temples of Panagia and Agios Sergios, the old school, and the unique folklore museum. Watch the technique of lace making, (kopaneli) in the square (platia) of the village.

Directions Take the Nat'l Highway toward Rethymno. 8km from Souda look for the sign to Kalives (old road), turn left and go thru Kalives. Follow the sign to Vamos, go through Vamos and at the end of the village look for the sign to Karidi, turn right and about 3km on the left is the Karidi Monastery. Take the same road back to Vamos, and by Bloomosifis Tavern take the right alley and walk to the old part of the town. Take the same road back to Chania and 3 km from Vamos you will see a sign to Gavalohori. Follow the sign directions.

When to Go Visit these villages year round. Bring Euro for lunch & shopping,, and swimsuit and towel if you want to go to the beach in Kalives at the end of your visit.

MATALA CAVES

Matala's most recent claim to fame was as a meeting place for hippies who inhabited the famous caved located there in the 60's and 70's. Now there is a fence around the caves, but for a small fee viewing is allowed during daytime hours. The caves were originally carved out for use as tombs in the Roman era and later extended as cave dwellings for early Christians. **Matala** served as the port for the ancient cities of Gortys and Phaestos. In spite of being a popular tourist attraction with lots of restaurants, bars, shops, and a nice beach, Matala is small enough to retain its charm and is a great weekend getaway.

Directions Take the National Highway east toward Rethymnon. In Rethymnon, continue through the stoplight and watch for the exit (right) to Spili. Take the Spili exit. Go through Spili and follow the signs for Agia Galini. Turn left at the T-junction, away from Agia Galini and continue on the main road. You will see signs for Matala and Phaestos. This is about a 2-hour drive.

Public Transportation There is bus service from Hania, times and days change according to the time of year.

When to Go Best time to visit is spring or summer, as many facilities are closed in winter. Don't forget your swimsuit if it's a hot day, and bring Euro for lunch at one of the Tavernas.

Crete

Do It Yourself!



DAY TRIPS To

KNOSSOS
MATALA
VAMOS & GALVALOHORI
ELEFThERNA

KNOSSOS PALACE

This is one of the most important archaeological sites in all of Crete, and indeed in the western world, illustrating Crete's strategic cultivation of its position as a meeting point between east and west. A walk through this expansive site, with its breathtaking mosaics and ancient cemeteries, easily reveals the Minoan civilization's merging of influences from eastern, western, and northern societies, creating the unrivaled tag on Knossos as the "Cradle of Western Civilization". Excavation shows that the area was inhabited since Neolithic times (6,000 BC and perhaps earlier) and was destroyed by the volcanic eruption of Santorini around 1450 BC. Minoan Crete is also home to the legend of the Minotaur, half-man, half-bull, whose mythological labyrinth prison within the Palace of King Minos was invaded by Theseus, who ultimately killed the man-eating beast! The Archeological Museum of Heraklion houses many of the original artifacts and is a great add-on for this trip.

ENTRANCE FEE: EURO 6 Mon-Sat.. Sundays entrance is free. Hiring a tour guide is highly recommended. Wear comfortable walking shoes.

DIRECTIONS Take the Nat'l Highway east to Heraklion. Continue on the highway and follow the brown signs to the site. You can't miss it! There's free parking directly outside of the site.

TOUR GUIDES Kriti Info can book a guide for you or you can hook-up with one of many at the site looking for additions to their group. All guides are sanctioned by the Greek Cultural Ministry, prices range from Euro 5-10 (or more, depending on group size).

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION Buses depart from Chania hourly. 12.60 Euro one way to the KTEL bus station in Heraklion plus one transfer in Heraklion.

ELEFTHERNA



Interested in a little known archaeological site? Eleftherna is packed with ruins from the Dorian, Roman, Hellenistic and, even, the Minoan periods. On the ridge are the remains of a Dorian State and on the west side you can follow the path, take a sharp left at the fork where you'll see two large rock cut cisterns. Head north on the path again and a 30 min walk will lead you to a beautiful Hellenistic bridge. To the west of the ridge you will also see a cemetery from the early Iron Age. To the east side going toward the valley floor is a curious double church dating back to the 6th and 10th centuries. On the valley floor is the remains of a Roman Villa . . . along with so many interesting things to see. Plan to spend all day if you like to explore, this site is wonderful.

DIRECTIONS Take the National Highway east towards Rethymno. Go past Rethymno to Panormos, then watch for a sign indicating a right turn to Roumeli/Perama. Follow this road into Perama, at the fork in the middle of the town bear right, continuing to Margarities (village of potters). From there go through Kinigiana and Arkhaia Eleftherna (formerly Prines). At the top of the village street, opposite a fountain, follow the lane to the right. Go down to the entrance to Eleftherna, defined by the remains of a tower. Park here. Well-used footpaths will take you to the sites.

ENTRANCE FEE No entrance fee, open year-round.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION None!

NOTE Avoid rainy days, it gets muddy! Bring Euro to

HORA SFAKION

One of the most beautiful and interesting counties in Crete is the County of Sfakia, as it's centered around the White Mountain range, or "Lefka Ori" in Greek. The seaside capital of the county is Hora Sfakion, a coastal village located on the Southwest coast of Crete, 70 km from the city of Hania. Hora Sfakion has an enclosed picturesque harbor and is famous for being one of the headquarters of the resistance against occupying forces of both the Venetians and the Turks. After the Battle of Crete during WWII, the locals helped the Australian and New Zealand armies escape from Sfakia on the night of May 31, 1941. Sfakia is also an ideal base for sea and mountain excursions to neighboring villages and sandy beaches of southern Crete. Boats leave from Sfakia throughout the day in the summer months to Agia Roumeli, Loutro, Paleochora, Sougia and Marmaras. **Directions:** Take the National Highway east toward Rethymno. At the 33rd km mark turn right at the sign for Vrisses and Sfakia. Drive thru Vrisses and follow the signs to Sfakia. The sign in the village for Sfakia is sometimes hard to locate, but at the first confusing intersection, look to your left and you'll see it; turn left. This will start an impressive trip to the east side of the White Mountains crossing the mountainous area of Sfakia. is the plateau of Askifou. The ride from Askifou, the halfway point from Vrisses to Sfakia, is dramatic, as the road hugs the western slope of the Gorge of Imbros. The view of the gorge and the Libyan Sea is breathtaking. **Public Transportation:** Buses depart from the Hania Bus Station at 0830, 1100 and 1400. Cost is around 10 Euro.