

2002 Discovering the west of Crete

After we discovered the north-east and south-east of Crete in 2000 and 2001, This year we wanted to explore the west of the island. Slowly we got infected with the Crete virus. We only bought the airline tickets and we would see where we ended up. Only our first address was booked: Paleochora: I reserved a studio here for the first days.

Chania airport

We took off from Schiphol on May 22 and 3,5 hours later we landed on the military airfield at Chania in the northwest of Crete. After our experiences at the airport in Heraklion this was quite a relief: as soon as the plane stopped, a large bus arrives, everyone get out of the plane on to the bus and 5 minutes later you are in the baggage hall with 2 (!) baggage carrousel. They had a hard time with it today, because up to 2 times there was a power cut. Already after 20 minutes we had our backpacks and in a taxi we were on our way to Chania. 15 minutes later we got off at the bus station in the centre of the city. That went so smooth!

The bus to Paleochora arrived right on time. Our backpacks were placed in the luggage compartment at the bottom of the bus. Together with all other luggage, newspapers and magazines intended for shops in the south. The buses on Crete also serve as a transport bus.

Paleochora

The bus left punctually at 2.30 pm and we drove along the north coast to Tavronitis and there we turned south. Along the small villages the roads were so narrow that it was almost a miracle that the bus could pass by. During the trip it started to rain a bit and above the mountains we saw black clouds. A good day to travel.

At 4.20 p.m. we got off in Paleochora and a police officer showed us the right way to our first address. We arrived at the apartments of Haris and we felt immediately at home: shovels, excavators, road closures everywhere etc.

In our hometown Raalte they are building a large office opposite our house, so this sight and noise was very common to us.

Haris, the owner of the apartment complex, told us that they should have finished the work before the start of the tourist season, but there was a delay.

Every time a car passed by on the dusty road, Haris had to clean the tables on the terrace. We got studio 6, with balcony and sea view. After we unpacked our stuff it was time for a drink in the Haris' restaurant "Café at the water's edge".



At 9 p.m. it was already completely dark. Here on the south coast we couldn't see the Sunset. The sun disappears very early after the mountains at the west side of the village.

Anidri gorge

We woke up very early in the morning by the road workers. So we could leave in time for a walk to Anidri, to walk the gorge. We walked via the asphalt road and early in the morning in the sun it was already hot. The road rose considerably and after an hour we were glad to be on the terrace of the (one and only) Kafenion in Anidri.

Arno did his best to order 2 iced coffee in Greek and the waitress understood it very well, as she repeated it in Dutch! She came from the Netherlands and worked here since one month. Also last year she had worked around here, but her Greek was not that good. This was not such a problem, because there were mostly tourists here and they mostly understood English.

We went looking for the church where the road through the gorge begins.

Fortunately the route was well marked: "to the beach". According to our walking book it was an easy walk ("a warming up ") and this was true. An exception was a large, worn boulder where we had to slide off, but I did it.

It was a beautiful gorge. We only saw a few goats, who sometimes suddenly jumped out of the bushes before our feet.



Azogires

On a cloudy, stormy morning we decided to walk to Azogires, a village 5 kilometres away. We soon noticed that this village was also about 450 meter higher. When we finally saw some white dots (the beginning of the village?) a pick-up stopped next to us and the driver asked if we wanted to drive to the village. Of course we wanted that!

The man stopped at the first tavern with cafe in the village and went inside.

We thanked the man we took a seat on the terrace at the other side of the road and we thought there would be someone to serve us. But this did not happen.

Arno crossed the road and walked into the kafenion to ask the owner two iced coffee. Well, he could stay as a cook and a waiter, because the owner had broken her knee. She couldn't get up and the cook would not start before 2 pm. It was almost noon now, so Arno could get started right away. After we finished the coffee, we wanted to eat an omelette and some yogurt with honey. This was possible, if Arno just wanted to help. So he went into the kitchen and with the instructions of the owner he made an omelette. After this delicious lunch, we headed for the cave of the 99 holy fathers, 1.5 kilometre from Azogires.

The Cave of the 99 Holy Fathers

The gravel path soon turned into a normal asphalt road, but after a few bends it became a gravel path again and after a few signposts with CAVE it eventually became a goat path. We had to open a metal gate to continue and when we were standing on top of the mountain we saw a dark space

below us. It was the cave between the rocks. You could descend at old metal ladders. There was a kind of altar where you could burn a candle.

I found it a nasty place, it was cold, dark and deep, very deep. Arno went down on the rusty steep ladder.

Katsouna

When we walked back from the cave, it got even more cloudy. We were almost walking with our heads in the clouds. The way back went pretty fast (downhill). The weather was getting worse, the clouds getting darker. Beyond the tavern in Azogires we saw a lot sticks and branches on the side of the road and Arno discovered a beautiful (well beautiful?) walking stick. A so called "Katsouna", a shepherds' walking stick, with a curl on top. Also for me he found a nice walking stick (without a curl).

On the way up we met two dogs and now, going downhill we saw them again. Only now they had some more respect for us because we had a stick with us. One of the dogs followed us to Paleochora. Then Arno shouted some Greek (?) words at the dog and finally the dog went back and we could continue walking without a wet dog's nose every at our legs.

Koudoura

We planned to go to Elafonissi by boat, but Haris told us the boat would not sail today: the weather was too bad, there was too much wind. We decided to make a walk in the direction of Elafonissi, to the village of Koudoura, 8 kilometres away.

The way to this village was not so exciting, along the coast on a dull asphalt road. There was a lot of traffic. It was Sunday, so many people went to the church or were on their way to visit the family. The village of Koudoura appeared to consist almost entirely of greenhouses in which tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. were grown. After a little tour through village we decided to go back. When we walked past a tavern some guests saw Arno's walking stick and they found this "very good, extra fine". They were laughing loud and enjoyed it very much.

We didn't like walking back the same boring asphalt road and we asked the men if there was a taxi. They could arrange this for € 3, -. After a while they changed their mind and cancelled the offer. So we had to continue walking, because a bus didn't run here either. We did see a bus stop, but no bus.

Lemons

At one of the last houses in the village we saw a lemon tree in the garden and Arno could just reach a few lemons with his walking stick. The Papous (grandfather of the house) saw this and told us to pick more lemons. The whole family helped us filling our rucksack. On the way to Paleochora the clouds became darker and darker and after a occasional drop of rain, it suddenly started pouring down. We took shelter under a tree and when it was dry again we continued our walk. It looked more like skating, because the asphalt road was so slippery. We now know that this happens on all asphalt roads on Crete after a long dry period.

"The small garden"

When we returned at Haris, we swapped lemons for iced coffee and discussed our plans for the rest of the vacation. We planned leave the next day and travel to the northwest of Crete, to Kastelli Kissamos and surroundings. When Haris heard this he shook his head: we shouldn't go there, that didn't suit us, we could do much better. We should go to Loutro. We just had to stay in the south. We would think about it.

In the evening we would eat at "The small garden" a restaurant that was run by the Dutchman Joep and his wife Lisette. During a chat with Joep about our plans, he also advised us not to go to the north coast. We had to go to Loutro, that was really something for us. And when we were there we had to give his warmest regards to Kostas and his wife Maria. Maria worked as a cook in restaurant Notos. We also had to say hi to Andy.

So we decided to go to Loutro. We were here during the stopover on the ferryboat from Agia Roumeli to Chora Sfakion, after we walked the Samaria Gorge. And we remembered, seeing Loutro that we thought: what is this for a place... there's nothing to do there ... Well, if we didn't like it, we would travel further. We will see.

Loutro

The next morning we said goodbye to Haris and went to the harbour, where we bought a ticket for the boat trip to Loutro. The weather was nice, a clear blue sky with plenty of sun, but the wind was still blowing. It seemed as if summer has started.

The boat sailed past Sougia, Agia Roumeli, and Marble Beach in 2 hours

Later we were in Loutro. We liked the trip, it was a great experience.

In Loutro we left the boat and we walked towards the beach. At Notos, behind the taverns, we rented a room.

After an iced coffee at tavern Kri-Kri we walked along the coast towards Phoenix, west of Loutro. A small bay with a few apartments. On the way back we passed by the fort. We liked the area, it was a special place.

In the evening we ate at Kri-Kri and there we met Kostas, who worked there as a waiter.

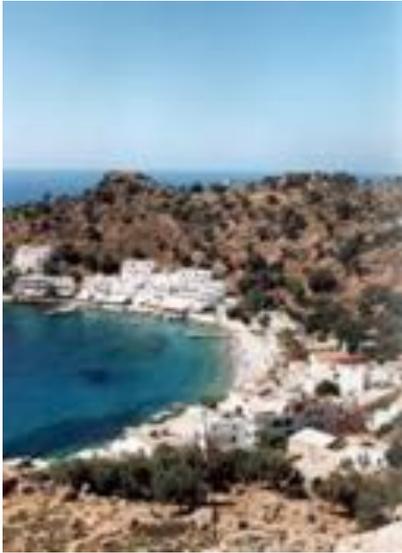
We also met his wife Maria there and they were pleasantly surprised with the regards

From Joep and Lisette from Paleochora.



Sweet Water Beach

After having breakfast at Kri-Kri we went to Sweet Water Beach. Over the narrow E-4 hiking trail at the foot of the mountains it took us an hour. It is a beautiful quiet beach, with a few visitors sun and some goats. The goats are very cheeky. As soon as you are eating something, they come straight to you and try to eat your food. The only safe way to eat undisturbed is standing until your knees in the water. Only then the goats go to your bags to look for food.



It was so hot that you had to get in the water almost every half hour to cool down a bit. It was lovely here. They planted some Tamarix trees on the beach, but they were still so small, you did not have shadow underneath them. On our way back to Loutro we saw a small island with a lot of garbage (we thought from Loutro). Gulls and goats had a good meal here. We didn't find this the right solution, but how could it be done differently? Take it to Chora Sfakion? By boat? We have also seen a lot of garbage in many places in the mountains. Refrigerators (with coolant) and washing machines are dumped right off the mountain. It is a miracle that the goats don't shine yet!



Aradena gorge

After breakfast at Notos we put on our walking shoes and went for the Aradena gorge. We first walked towards Phoenix, and Lykos Bay towards the high cliffs. We really had to go through this and it was really high (you can do it) and very narrow (you can do it) but definitely worth the effort. At the Marmer Beach we walked into the Aradena Gorge. Here the gorge is still quite wide and we could easily walk on the pebbles.

A bit further the gorge became more impressive, with high cliffs, big rocks where you had to climb, many, many oleanders and all over the rocks you saw goats without a fear of heights. We found this gorge more beautiful, rougher and much quieter than the Samaria gorge. And we had only had seen half of the gorge.



Livaniana

We wanted to walk back via Livaniana and fortunately, next to an old olive tree, we saw a sign with Livaniana. We had to go uphill. Halfway we saw in a small cave the corpse of a goat, the fur was still intact: it looked like a carpet.

On top of the mountain we made a mistake. We walked to the left, towards Aradena. Here we saw a man walking on the dry stone walls with 2 blue plastic shopping bags.

I thought he was a handsome man: black hair, a beard, a true Cretan “palikari” (a slender, brave man from the mountains)

The wind was blowing hard on top of the mountain and we had to hold ourselves not to be blown over. As we walked around a boulder we suddenly heard the wind blowing very fast, but this was not the wind, it was a bird of prey, a vulture that flew past us at eye level. I was shocked!

What a noise and how big it was! In the rocks behind us in the gorge were many nests for these birds.

We realized that we went in the false direction and would never end up in Loutro this way. So we went back and read in our guide that we went left instead of right.

Tavern Livaniana

We soon found the right path and saw the church of Livaniana below us. The village was completely deserted. We only saw derelict, abandoned houses and barns. We knew there would be a tavern in the village and if you would follow the blue dots you should find it. We found the tavern and on the terrace we had a delicious iced coffee and a lovely omelette. The owner of the tavern was our handsome “palikari” with the blue bags. His name was Nikos and he told us he had done some shopping in Chania and in Anopoli he got out of the taxi and walked from there to Livaniana.

When he spoke to us, his beauty was a bit disappointing: he almost didn't have teeth in his mouth!

From the tavern we walked over the good signposted path in the direction of Lykkos bay and via narrow paths to Phoenix. One hour later we were back in Loutro. What a strenuous, but beautiful day this was.



Anapoli

Today Anapoli was on our program and after breakfast we left Loutro. Via a wooden gate, which you had to close properly (otherwise the goats escape to the village) we came on the E-4 path towards Chora Sfakion. Just after the goat shelters we turned left and followed a narrow path uphill to Anapoli. This path is quite steep as well.

We regularly took a short rest to recover, and also to enjoy the beautiful view.

We already learned that you cannot go walking and enjoying the view at the same time. Either one or the other!

Walking on the narrow, pebble path was tough, but luckily the goat path turned into a wide path with red sand. We followed this path and soon we arrived at the first houses of Anapoli. At the first tavern we drank a delicious iced coffee. We continued towards the centre of the village.

Aradena

Through the centre of Anapoli, along the square with the statue of the hero Daskalogiannis, we walked along the asphalt road in the direction of the Aradena Gorge. It was an easy walk, and soon we noticed we were almost in Aradena. We could hear cars crossing the Bailey Bridge, it was such a noise. It was a bridge, made of wooden sleepers in iron supports, so it makes a terrible noise when a car is passing by. Arno walked to the middle of the bridge, and enjoyed the view. I didn't dare and stayed at the beginning. It was quite high (138 meters, we heard) Before the bridge was built in 1986, the people had to walk via the steep kalderimi (paved, old path) downhill and uphill again to the village of Aradena and the village of Agios Ioannis.



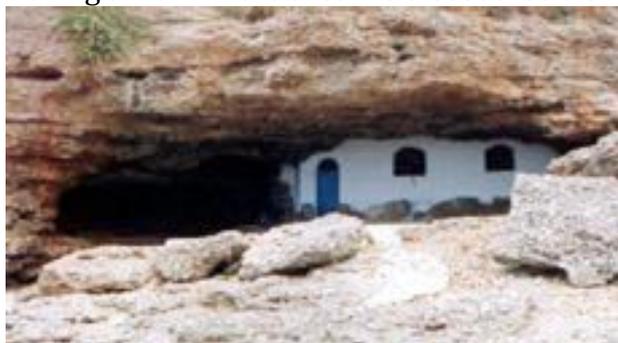
Via Livaniana we would walk back to Loutro, but first we had our lunch under the olive trees. The route ran on wide gravel and sandy paths downhill. Here too, at a height of about 500 meters, we suddenly heard and saw the birds of prey flying.

Chora Sfakion

After breakfast we said goodbye to Loutro. We had changed our opinion about this special village: it was great here !!! Here you can do nothing, here you could relax. We would certainly come back.

We took the boat to Chora Sfakion. After 10 minutes we were already there and we went looking for a place to sleep. We found a room at hotel Stavris.

During a walk in the area we discovered a small beach, with a small church in the rocks.



Imbros

Today we would walk the Imbros gorge and we should take the bus at 7 am. We had to get up early and that was no problem, because the talking and shuffling downstairs on the terrace at Stavris woke me up at 5 am. A group of 30 people would leave this day and they all would have breakfast on the terrace. When we arrived at the bus stop at 7 o'clock, this group was also waiting for the bus. They had to go to Heraklion to get their plane to New Zealand. It was quite chilly early in the morning and it was also windy. There were already few tourists and a group school children with escorts in the bus and then came the New Zealanders and we. The bus was full. Fortunately, the school children wanted to sit close together so almost everyone had a seat.

Spiros

After about 30 minutes we got off in the village of Imbros. We did not have breakfast. We thought it was too early and we heard you were able to have some breakfast in Imbros.

At the tavern we saw an old man (dressed in black) and when we asked him if we could get coffee and breakfast, he only laughed seeing Arno's walking stick. Meanwhile we learned that this stick had been thrown away because it was not right: the curl was too long. But the stick was fine for Arno. This man also had to try the stick and nodded: it was fine.

Kreta breakfast

Spiros gave us a large cup of coffee, but breakfast was a bit difficult. The old man hadn't counted on that, but luckily he had a very Cretative solution. On the tables in the tavern were baskets with bread and feta for a large group who would come later for breakfast. But nobody would miss a few slices of feta and some bread! So we were served a delicious Cretan breakfast.

Imbros Gorge

After breakfast we descended the path to the gorge. According to our walking book you had to buy a ticket at the beginning of the gorge, but there was nobody in the kiosk. So we continued walking. Maybe it was too early or it only applies in high season.

The sun was not yet shining in the gorge and the wind was quite fresh. We were cold in our shorts and t-shirts. Two German girls walked behind us, but no one else was in the gorge. I walked in front and suddenly I heard a lot of screaming behind me. It was nothing special: it was Arno shouting something in a strange language to a dog that bothered the girls behind us. The screams and the walking stick did have effect, because the dog ran off and we could walk quietly.

Narrow passage

After an hour we arrived at the first narrow passage, very impressive: 2 high rocks and a passage for a maximum of 2 people. On the smooth rocks, it was clearly visible that water was flowing through the gorge and how high this water stood. At some places the rocks were completely worn out by the water.

The gorge is easy to walk, but the underground only exists from pebbles, big, small and everything in between.



In the gorge we saw also all kinds of flowers, which still bloomed profusely while on other places they were still gone. That was probably because here was a lot of shade.

There are many waste bins in the gorge and signs on the trees with "Forbidden to smoke". Logical because there are many pine trees and they can burn well. The bins were overflowing and some had more waste next to the bin as in it.



At the end of the gorge we saw a hut with a sign "Checkpoint Charley, but there was nobody to be seen here either. There were all kinds of things around the hut, strange things, a goat skull, goat fur and pictures of the inhabitant and his donkey. As we walked on it became clear that we were near the end of the canyon, because we were meeting people, walking the gorge the other way round. After our lunch in the village of Komitades we walked on the asphalt road back to Chora Sfakion.

Cheap meal

In the evening we had dinner at a tavern just outside the centre (opposite the hospital). We were taken to the kitchen to point out what we wanted to eat and today on the menu was fish, fish and fish!. The owner spoke only Greek and she did not understand that I would rather eat meat than fish. When we later placed our order it turned out to consist of fish, fish and more fish! Fortunately it was OK: the red mullet was very tasty and also another type of fish (I have no idea which) tasted fine.

When Arno wanted to pay the bill with a note of € 50, -, there was a small problem: the owner did not have enough change. After asking the other guests and passers-by she could finally give Arno the change. Arno gave her the € 50 note, but he got it back up to 3 times. According to the owner, Arno had already given her this note. In the end Arno got his € 50 back, with the change! We had never eaten this cheap.

Vrisses

We got up early this morning, because we wanted to take the 7 o'clock bus to Vrisses. When the bus came all the luggage and also the walking sticks went to the luggage compartment of the bus. The old and narrow road uphill to Imbros was again very impressive, a lot of hairpin bends and views into deep ravines. Sometimes I found it scary, but I assumed the driver knew what he was doing and that he did not drive this road for the first time. (I remember for a moment I had the idea that there were too many passengers sitting on the right side of the bus, it was not well distributed, maybe that could cause a slide off the road)

We passed the village Imbros and the gorge and on the Askifou plateau we saw a beautiful byzantine church. Very beautiful, the plain with grasslands at a height of more than 700 meter.

At 8.15 am we got out at the bus station in Vrisses and we bought a bus ticket to Georgioupolis, our next destination.

Georgioupolis

The bus was due to arrive at 9 o'clock, so we had time for breakfast. At the tavern next to the watermill we ate yogurt with honey and walnuts.

We got on the bus at 9 o'clock and fifteen minutes later we were in Georgioupolis.

At the bus stop we saw a billboard with apartments for rent and we decided to walk there. It was just a short walk, but with a backpack on your back, walking uphill was not easy.

Joanna Apartments

At Joanna Appartments they had a studio for us. Arno told Niki, the owner, that we first went to the village to do some shopping because we only had wine with us.

Niki spoke only Greek and she told us that this was no problem, they had enough wine, from their own grapes and there she went... A little later she came back with a plastic bottle with one and a half litre wine and 6 eggs: enjoy your meal. We never had such a welcome.

When we had cleared our things and wanted to go to the village, Niki showed us a shortcut. Opposite the entrance to the garden of her house we could cross the National Road and. Now this was easier said than done because the cars on this road were driving 90 kilometres per hour and this crossing was just after a turn. With risking our own lives we ran across the road to the other side. Now we were almost in the centre of the village.

Greek

In those years, Georgioupolis was still a small, cosy fishing village with a lot of taverns, shops, rent-a-car companies, hotels and apartments. There were not so many tourists, it was still early (June) in the season. We mostly heard the people speaking English and German.

Thanks to our little dictionary and our self-study Greek we managed to express our self in the Greek language and we also tried to speak Greek as much as possible, because then you learn it faster. But sometimes the Cretan expect that you understand the Greek language completely and they talk to you so fast and with a lot of new words. When we explained that we are still learning Greek they speak slower and we could understand a bit more what they are talking about. Every day we learned some new words.

Chicken

At noon we sat on the terrace at our studio and were enjoying our lunch. Opposite our studio was the house where Niki lived with her husband Giannis and their children Sifis and Joanna. I saw Niki and Giannis in their vegetable garden, next to their house and their children were playing in the middle area. In the garden, with lots of flowers and plants there were also some chickens with their chicks looking for food.

I saw Niki entering the house and a few seconds later she came out of the house with a big knife in her hands. Joking, I said to Arno: Niki is going do scary things! Arno responded by saying: Where is her husband? Giannis was still in the vegetable garden and Niki was walking in that direction. Moments later I saw Giannis walking in the garden, so he was fine! Nothing happened. But then I saw Niki picking up a large white chicken and a moment later I saw a chicken ,without a head, jumping around!! I was grown up in a city and had never seen something like this. I was totally shocked. A nice girl like Niki doing this!

The spectacle continued: Niki put on her household gloves, picked up a bowl with water and washing-up liquid and put the chicken in the bowl. Arno explained that she had to do this because you can easily pick the feathers. When the chicken was clean Niki hang it on the wall and she began to pick the feathers. The cats were already waiting. She started cutting and threw the legs, little wings and other parts at the cats.

When I thought she was done she burned the smallest feathers with a gas burner. After this the chicken was put back on the wall and with the big sharp knife he was cut open. Niki took everything out of the chicken, some things (I don't even want to know which ones) were rinsed off and hung in the tree and other things she threw at the cats. After this the chicken was rinsed again and hung in the tree. The wall and the basin were rinsed clean, all feathers were swept together and put in a waste bag and then Niki went back to what she was doing, oh yes watering the garden. The next day Arno told Niki that we saw her killing the chicken and that for me it was a bit shocking. Niki told Arno she would do this somewhere else the next time. But I assured her that I would get used at this.

Lake Kournas

Early in the morning we were awakened by the roosters, chickens, goats, sheep and cats of Niky and Giannis. Behind the apartments was a large pasture where their cattle ran around. Arno asked Niky if she had any eggs for us and we got about 10 eggs. We were not allowed to pay for it, because the chickens laid more than enough.

After breakfast we went on foot to Lake Kournas, the only natural freshwater lake on Crete. The 3 kilometre long road going there was not so spectacular: an asphalt road along olive groves, apartments and farms. In Lake Kournas you could rent a pedal boat, take a sunbath, walk around the lake halfway and at the taverns at the edge of the lake you can eat and drink and enjoy the view. When you are lucky you also can see some turtles in the water or taking a sunbath. The lake is a Natura 2000, protected area and although it is forbidden to swim there, almost everybody is going into the water.



We walked back to Georgioupolis via another smaller road and at one point Arno heard a stream flowing. He went looking in which direction the water flowed, he handed me the rucksack so he could make a picture. He would tell me later what he saw. There were a few dead goats lying in the stream (maybe fallen down and drowned) and two turtles were having a big meal in and up the dead animals.

We have had turtles ourselves and knew they liked cat food, but that they also ate goat meat ...

scooter

After breakfast we went to the village and rented a 50cc scooter for a trip through the villages in the province of Apokoronas.

Via Kalamitsi Alexandrou we drove to Vrisses, and then via Nippos, Fres, Pemonia, Vamos to Kalives. A very touristic place, with a nice sandy beach. After a coffee we drove via Almerida, also a touristic village, to Plaka, Kambia and ended up in Kokkino Chorio, where we visited the glass factory. We saw the glassblowers making beautiful lamps. We drove back to Georgioupolis and passed by Drapanos, Kefalas and Sellia.

It was a beautiful ride with great views, traditional villages and on a 50cc scooter you can't go fast (especially not uphill), so you see a lot.

Cave of Kournas

On our walk to the village of Kournas we saw a tavern with a sign "Cave Information". We stopped there to eat something. We asked about the cave, but Elias, the owner of the tavern "Panorama" told us it was closed.

Elias showed us some pictures of the cave and a book written by a German who had visited and described all the caves of Crete.

In the mountain village of Kournas we visited the family's shop Zymbragoudakis with all kinds of traditional products. Not knowing that, 14 years later, we would rent this shop to run "Mandali".



Holidays

We went to Rethymnon by bus to visit the market. The first bus stops at the High Way were at Kavros, where there are many hotels and apartments, with a lot of tourists. And on Thursday everyone wants to go to the market in Rethymnon. We took the bus at 9:10 in Georgioupolis and after 3 stops the bus was already full. The driver already asked for an extra bus on his mobile phone. A few more people could get in at the next bus stop and the other people had to wait till the next bus.

One of the waiting ladies asked when the next bus came and the driver replied: "Avrio" (tomorrow). When we drove on we heard talking to the ticket salesman: "What are they so worried about, they have Holidays, they have time? "

Market

In Rethymnon we got off at the bus station and walked towards the marketplace. It started with clothing, belts and fabric, next to this there were vegetables and fruit and of course fish and the living animals: rabbits, chickens, chicks in metal cages with many stuffed together. But cardboard on top against the sun.



Mili gorge

One day we again took the bus to Rethymnon and got off at the bus station.

We walked through the city enter to the Theotokopoulou Street and started here the walk from our walking booklet to the Myli gorge. A helpful policeman pointed us the right way to the small church on the mountain. The door at the path to the church was locked, but the mesh next to the gate was broken, so we could go further.

It was a Byzantine church with a few chairs on the shadow side. It was already hot and we had a decent climb, so we sat down and enjoyed a great view of Rethymnon.



Further inland we arrived at Agia Irini. At a kafenion we drank a iced coffee in the company of 2 Norwegians. One of them had built a house in the village for his training in and the other was visiting him. After a nice conversation and eating a mandarin we wanted to continue walking. The owner and the Norwegians laughed when they saw Arno's walking stick and the owner immediately took a saw and cut off the end of the curl. He also made my walking stick a bit shorter.

Vrissinas

We heard from the Norwegians that the church on Mount Vrissinas is worth a visit, but it was quite a climb so we could better do it another time. We said goodbye and walked in the directions of the Mili gorge (we thought).

After 2 laps through the village we still could not find the way signed out in our walking guide. Then we walked along the asphalt road to Mili instead of via Chromonastiri (as the booklet said). It went quite easily and quickly we were at the gorge. Down in the valley we already saw the tavern. We walked downhill and ate an omelette and a salad. We walked into the gorge and it was so beautiful! So green, with a lot bushes, trees, and flowers, a small river, many butterflies and many more ruins.





artist

At the end of the gorge, an artist built his house in and against the rocks. It was very special place. We left the gorge and soon we were walking past a marble factory in one of the outskirts of Rethymnon.

When we arrived at the boulevard we took a quick drink and an ice cream and then we rushed to the centre to catch the bus. It was already 6.15 pm and we wanted to catch the 7 pm bus. Otherwise we had to wait an hour for the next bus. (What are we worried about, we are on holidays, we have time)

Almost running along the boulevard, with our walking sticks and sunhats we had a lot of attention. After a short sprint to the bus station, we saw the bus was ready to leave. From the driver we got the 30 seconds to buy a ticket. This worked out ! Exhausted we laid down in the back seat of the bus.

Vrissinas

Today we would rent a scooter again to go to the mountain Vrissinas. We drove through the centre of Rethymnon to the road where our hike to the Mili gorge started. We stopped in Roussospiti for an iced coffee and water in an old kafenion and drove further via Kapedia up on a gravel road. Soon I did not want to go further, it was so high! It was so bumpy! Is the scooter ok? We stopped and decided not to go any further and to go back and continue in the direction of Armeni, a shorter way, but much more bumpier.



Koufi

On the way back to Georgiopolis we stopped at tavern Kostas near Koufi for fries, an omelette and a salad. The owner had no electricity this afternoon, but this was no problem: they had gas and a BBQ. When we finished our delicious late lunch we were surprised that Kostas's wife brought us chicken and chips. This was also delicious, but we didn't order this. Arno thought that Kostas treated all his guests because he had no electricity and he had to empty the freezer. But this was not the reason.

Our 2nd meal was ordered by 2 other guests who were quite sore, because they had to wait so long for their food. Arno got an angry look. We paid everything neatly (including the extra meal) and left for Argiroupolis to see the waterfalls.

Argiroupolis

Driving on our scooter It seemed as if the oven doors were open, it was such a hot wind. We arrived in Lappa-Argiroupolis and saw the small waterfalls, surrounded by many taverns and tourists. The water was drinkable with a lot of magnesium, manganese and iron (we read on a plate). In any case, it was nice and cool and we freshened up a bit.

We enjoyed our holiday and did not want to leave Crete, but we will come back next year.

