enagron
Cretan ecotourism village

R01* Mountain Route

ANOGEIA - ZOMINTHOS - AGIOS IAKINTHOS - SKINAKAS - NIDAS PLATEAU - ENAGRON

*see back side of map

8 km | 18 km | 20 km | 26 km | 30 km | 60 km — Total Distance

Anogeia is the largest village in the area and you will find more services available there, such as a Health Centre, a Police Station, a bank, a post office, a pharmacy and many small stores.

Anogeia. Only a few buildings of traditional architecture are preserved in the village today due to the total destruction of the village by the Nazis during the Second World War. The destruction served as reprisals to the strong resistance of the citizens in the area. The village is famous, however, for the preservation of traditions and customs that the villagers continue to include in their social events and their daily routine. Especially, during summer time, visitors can see groups of villagers playing their traditional musical instruments while sipping raki or drinking wine and dancing just as they did in the old times. During the summer, any cultural events also take place.

There are many points of cultural interest around the village that a traveler may visit. Also, travellers may easily socialize with the locals in the charming small squares of Pesalonei and Saint George. For those wishing to buy souvenirs, there are several workshops of traditional arts and blown glass.

Zominthos. Within the distance of 9 kilometres, you will find the archaeological area of Zominthos, in which a plethora of archaeological items as well as important Minoan building constructions have been found. One of them is the well-preserved house and an ancient pottery workshop dated to 1600 BC. A Mediterranean mendlar 12 metres in height is also found in the same area, which by itself is remarkable as most Mediterranean mendlars have the height of a bush or a small tree. This Mediterranean mendlar is considered to be a monument of nature.

Agios Iakinthos. In the direction towards Idion Antron, within a distance of around 12 kilometres after the village of Anogeia, the earth reaches the highlands you to Agios Iakinthos, a beautiful area of forests. In this picturesque area a week-long cultural event of national impact takes place each year at the end of July.

Skinakas Observatory. As you continue to drive towards Nidas Plateau leaving Agios Iakinthos behind, a side-road on the right will lead you to Skinakas Observatory, built on the mountain top named accordingly, in an altitude of 1750 meters. The Observatory is a scientific facility commonly used by the University of Crete and the Max Planck Institut in Germany. During the summer time, opening times are once a month.

Nidas Plateau. Driving towards Nidas Plateau, you drive by sceneries of interesting magnificent vegetation, a few trees, many endemic herbs and rare authentic griffon vultures, Bonelli's eagles and golden eagles. You may also admire the snow, the wild scenery of Psiloritis and the mitata (sheep' places), the stone domed buildings of the shepherds that are seen on both sides of the road. Nidas Plateau is found on the 27 km. You may leave your car at the small refreshment area that is found there and you can walk around the plateau, which is covered just like a carpet by aphant called Polygonum idaeum, a plant that is not found anywhere else in the world. Then, follow the path that leads to the holy cave of Idaian Antron. According to mythology, Zeus was born and raised in this cave. Many consider it to be the city of Bethlehem in the ancient world. This cave is one of the most important areas of worship in Ancient Greece. Following excavations, a plethora of ancient items have been found.

You follow the same route to return to the starting point.

R02* Route around the small villages of Mylopotamos

*see back side of map

SFENDONI CAVE - AG. IOANNIS - EPISKOPI - DOXARO - HOLY MONASTERY OF VASAKOS - DROSIA - ENAGRON

2 km | 11 km | 15 km | 26 km | 33 km | 43 km | 53 km

Sfendoni Cave. Having Enagron serving as the starting point, you drive towards the village of Zoniana that is found 2 km southwest of Axos. Just before the eastern entrance to the village of Zoniana, you turn right towards the Sfendoni Cave. Its remarkable stalactite-rich interior makes it one of the most impressive caves in Greece and due to this reason, it is a pole of attraction especially during the summer months. Visitors have access to the largest portion of the cave, following a specially formed path 270 metres in length, offering appropriate infrastructure even for individuals with special needs. In the cave, you are welcome to admire numerous stalactites and stalagmites, the stone water basins, the pools as well as the particular fauna of the cave. Its important geological value led to its inclusion of the Psiloritis Natural Park that is under the auspices of UNESCO.

More information including ticket prices, manned tours and opening times are available at Enagron.

Agios Ioannis-Episkopi. Passing through the village of Zoniana, you drive west towards the village Livada. After 9 and 13 km respectively, you will reach the villages of Agios Ioannis and Episkopi, two small settlements that are representative samples of certain traditional architecture. If you walk around the small alleyways, you will admire the old Cretan farmhouses next to Venetian mansions, the churches of the Byzantine era, the beautiful small squares and the building of the Ottoman period.

Doxaro. After you pass the village of Episkopi, continue your drive towards the village of Mourtziana, take the exit to the old national road that once was the only way connecting Rethymnon with the city of Heraklion. Along the old national road, you will see many small but beautiful villages in a serene that will put you under its spell. Driving for 11 km, you will reach the village of Doxaro, whose old Greek hoodhood is a quite picturesque collection of traditional buildings, reminding of past times.

Holy Monastery of Vasakos. Leaving Doxaro, you may drive north towards the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Vasakos that is found in a small plateau between the mountain tops of Koutsoutsoulis and Vessakoulias of the Idaion Mountains. It is a very beautiful monastery with many colourful flowers. The name Vasako derives from the combination of the words vous and xakos, in other words, the term means own yard, as probably the plateau was used for the farming of oxen.

Geni Gave or Drosia. Drive back to the village of Doxaro and take the direction east towards Geni Gave or Drosia. It is a village that during the time period the old national road was the main route to the city of Heraklion, coaches stopped so that their passengers and drivers would make a stop enjoying the dishes of the taverns of the village. Nowadays, these taverns are financially maintained by the citizens of Heraklion and Rethymnon that come to taste the delicious roasted pork served in the taverns.

R03* Plain Route

PANORMOS - MARGARITES - ANCIENT ELEFTHERNA - ARKADI MONASTERY - ENAGRON

*see back side of map

28 km | 42 km | 46 km | 57 km | 43 km | 97 km — Total Distance

Panormo. You start your road trip from Enagron towards the direction northwest to Rethymnon. The route goes through the stream of Mylopotamos. Along the stream many little villages are found. When you reach the entrance of Perama, you drive over a small bridge and you turn right. After 400 meters, turn right again and drive over another bridge. Continuing on the main route, you will reach Panormo when you can enjoy a swim. If you so prefer, you can drive on the national road (11 km to the east) and dine in the crystal waters of Bali or west, and enjoy all the beaches of Rethymnon. The beach of Geropotamos is a wonderful one and it is found on the national road, 5 km towards the west of Panormo, under a large bridge. Special care needs to be taken, as you will need to turn left while on the national road and drive on an earth road that is found at the edge of the bridge.

After you enjoy your swim, we suggest you head north towards the mainland in the direction of the village of Margarites. Follow the return route. Just as you reach the eastern entrance of Panormo, turn right after the bridge and cross the main road of the village that will lead you to the western exit towards the village of Margarites.

Margarites. Margarites is a well-preserved traditional village of the area, famous for its traditional pottery workshops, as for centuries, it has been one of the most important centre of ceramics in Crete. Today, there are around 30 potters working in approximately 70 traditional ceramics workshops that are owned by families with a long tradition in the art of pottery making. Searching around the workshops, you will easily find delicate, useful or decorative ceramics of fine quality and style. In some of these workshops, you may also observe the potters while they create their ceramics on the wheel. You may also ask they to allow you to give it a go.

Ancient Eleftherna. Ancient Eleftherna is one of the most important ancient cities in Crete. According to tradition, it took its name from the Koutifa Eleftherna or from the surname of Dimitra Eleythoos. The city was created by the Dorians around the 9th century BC. A sealed tomb of 700 BC is considered to be a very important finding, in which a young couple was found surrounded by different pieces of jewelry. One of the most important findings was a piece of jewelry on which the first representation of the bee is carved in Crete and once turned on the other side, the same piece of jewelry shows a beautiful iris.

Arkadi. Arkadi is a historic monastery of particular architectural value built in the 5th century A.D. in a beautiful area. It has served as the centre of resistance against the Ottoman army. In 1866, during the great Cretan revolution, in an act of desperation and self-sacrifice, approximately 900 rebels, men, women and children, took shelter at the Arkadi Monastery bravely defending their motto: freedom or death. After been besieged by thousands of troops of the Ottoman army, and when the fortification of the monastery collapsed, they gathered in the gunpowder room, they decided to set on fire. Their action created a massive wave of support towards their fight by philhellenes everywhere in Europe.

LEGEND

Contour Lines
- Primary (interval 100m)
- Secondary (interval 20m)

Rivers Network
- Primary (Annual Flow)
- Secondary (Seasonal Flow)

Roads Network
- Primary Asfalt Road
- Secondary Asfalt Road
- Primary Dust Road
- Secondary Dust Road
- Internal Road
- Trekking Trail
- Stone Paved Road

Dwelling Areas
- Enagron Ecotourism Village
- Settlements & Villages

Ecotourism
- Node Point
- Summit
- View Admiral Location
- Bridge
- Doors on Routes
- Dry Stone Construction

Geophysical Heritage
- Cave
- Vertical Cave
- Spring
- Fountain
- Vulture's Nest
- Old Tree Trunk

Cultural Heritage
- Ancient Axos Arch. Site Locations
- Byzantine Chapel
- Museum - Workshop
- Aloni (threshing floor)
- Water Mill
- Charcoal Construction

Other Symbols
- Monastery
- Contemporary Church
- Cemetery

ECO - ROUTES

Trekking Ecoroutes

- T01 Halepa Monastery (Enagron – Halepa Monastery – Vultures Gorge – Enagron)
- T02 Wandering around Axos (Enagron – Ellinospita – Axos – Akropoli (Ancient Axos) – Enagron)
- T03 The Medieval Diskouri Monastery (Enagron – Veni – Diskouri Monastery – Agioi Apostoloi – Enagron)
- T04 Cross of Mylopotamos River (Enagron – Gorge – River – Enagron)

Bicycle Ecoroutes

- B01 Bicycle 1 (Halepa Monastery – Kryoneri – Aimonas – Zervou – Enagron)
- B02 Bicycle 2 (Halepa Monastery – Koules – Livada – Axos – Enagron)
- B03 Bicycle 3 (Enagron – Veni – Paratsi – Kambos Apladianon)
- B04 Bicycle 4 (Kamariotis – Chonos – Aimonas – Kamariotis)

CONTEMPORARY CHURCHES

Agioi Apostoloi	J9
Agios Athanasios	N11

BYZANTINE CHURCHES

1	Agios Vasileios	K11
2	Michael Arhangelos	M12
3	Timios Stavros	M12
4	Agios Georgios	M11
5	Agia Eirini	M11
6	Agia Paraskevi	M11
7	Metamorfosi tou Sotiros (Afentis Christos)	M11
8	Agios Ioannis	N11
9	Koimisi tis Theotokou	N12
10	Agia Marina	M4

MONASTERIES

Halepa Mon.	N3
Diskouriou Mon.	D8

ANCIENT AXOS ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE POINTS

A Afrodite Temple	N12
B Dimitra Sanctuary	L11
Γ Andreion	M11
Δ Script Monument	M12
E Fortification Relics	N12
ΣΤ Paniagia: Settlement Relics	N12
Z Tihio: Cemetary (non visible)	N13
H Ellinospita: Cemetary (visible)	K11
Θ Limnostratiari Cemetary (non visible)	J10
I Carved Passage	N12

CAVES

Sfendoni Cave	L15
Tis Lamias o Spilios	M14
Kamaritis Cave	J11

MUSEUMS - WORKSHOPS

Wood Art Museum	L12
Argalios Workshop	M11

LIVE THE EXPERIENCES OF ECO-ROUTES

EXPLORING THE AREA OF PSILORITIS

North Side Psiloritis, Mylopotamos area

GENERAL

Psiloritis is the highest mountain in Crete, 2456 m in height with 5 tops over 2000 meters. Access to the top is feasible by many paths. The most popular and appropriate ones are found at Nidas Plateau, which starts at 1400 m, a mountain walk that takes approximately 5 hours and at Lakkos of Mygeros at 1670 m, a mountain walk that takes around 2-3 hours. (You may go up from Nidas and come down from Lakkos of Mygeros. Both starting points are covered by asphalt. The mountain of Psiloritis, due to the rich biodiversity, its history and the locals' traditions from ancient times until today, it has been categorized as a Natural Park and belongs to the network of international natural parks of UNESCO. In addition, the isolation of the island makes the mountain one of the most important places of high biodiversity and endemism and due to the latter it has been included in the areas of the network Natura.

HISTORY

Psiloritis has been inhabited since the prehistoric times. The most important ancient centers of settlement was Axos and Eleftherna, as in the ancient times they were considered to be city-states. The findings of great significance have been found:

- at the acropolis of Axos
- at the archeological area of Eleftherna
- in Idaion Antron, the holy cave in which according to mythology, Zeus was born
- in Zominthos, where a Minoan building construction is found. It is considered to have great financial and religious value.
- in the cave of Geronisopoli of Melidoni, where the giant Talos was worshipped. Talos was a mythological ancient copper robot that kept intruders away from the shores of Minoan Crete.

The history of the area is visible by its many monuments that are nowadays preserved from almost all periods of history and mainly from the Byzantine period (5th to 15th century). The Byzantine churches and the monasteries, the one of Arkadi, Vasakos and Halepa in particular, are quite distinguished. Today, the north part of Psiloritis has approximately 20.000 inhabitants that live in 70 communities of small villages, with rich traditions, myths and customs rooted in ancient times. Visitors are welcome to observe and enjoy social events as well as behaviours of daily life.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The impressiveness of the area lies in the rocks, its hundred caves and gorges, streams and small plateaus. Even though the scenery seems to be bare and rocky, yet it has a rich flora, of a botanical aspect in particular. The geomorphology and the isolation of Crete is responsible for the existence of such an unbelievable variety of fauna and flora. Researchers may find more that 1800 kinds of plants of Crete, 10% of which are endemic, such as dittany (Origanum dictamnus), the Cretan cyclamen (Cyclamen creticum) and the Cretan tulip (Tulipa cretica). The aiolauna of the area is of particular interest, as many rare kinds of birds, such as griffon vultures, vultures (Gyps fulvus), and golden eagles (Aquila chrysaetos) are included.

FINANCE - SOCIETY

Since ancient times, the locals have been engaging with farming, livestock farming and have developed rich and interesting traditional arts, such as weaving, pottery, cane weaving and a traditional technique with wood and stone that are preserved till today. In this area of the mountain Psiloritis, there are still some methods and production techniques alive that their point of commence is lost in the depths of time. Even today, a wonderer may meet shepherds next to their mitato (bucolic haze stone building without joints) milking their sheep, hanging over a tree-branch, potters creating their ceramic artifacts, women weaving on Cretan looms, shoe-makers nailing soles on sibaraka (traditional Cretan boots), or sculptors creating beautiful hand-made wooden sculptures. Additionally, ancient habits and customs, such as hospitality, healing queues, a laughter coming from the heart, singing in groups, traditional music and wild circular dances are preserved.

A Pretty Map designed by

STARIDAS GEOGRAPHY

motive creative GRAPHIC DESIGN

Scale 1:7,500 1 cm = 75 m (0 — 375 — 750 m)

Map's Georeference Systems
Greek Geodetic Reference System (GGRS87)
World Georeference System (WGS84)

T01 Historic Halepa Monastery

ENAGRON - H. MONASTERY, VULTURES' GORGE - ENAGRON

Distance	Duration	Road state
7 km	4 hours	Earth road-path or asphalt

The beginning of the route directs you downwards, towards the river Mylopotamos, that took its name from the many water-mills built along its beds. You walk through beautiful gardens, planted with vegetables, legumes and fruit, as well as tree plantations, such as orange-trees, olive-trees and lemon-trees. You walk downhill until you reach a small bridge. From there, the path continues uphill through olive groves and vineyards. If you choose to have this walk early in the morning, it is quite probable to meet local farmers that are taking care their land. Reaching a higher altitude, an impressive scenery is revealed in front of you. Just before you reach the Monastery, you will also find the even older little church of Agia Marina. The view from the Monastery will reward you. Psiloritis, the highest mountain in Crete, can be seen in the south and the sea shore of Rethymnon in the west.

In the same direction, when the weather is clear, the White Mountains and the Lefka Mountains (they were named after the giant Talos, a bronze "robot" of the Minoan era, ordered by King Minos to protect the island from any intruder) are just about seen. As far as we know, the Halepa Monastery exists since the 16th century and due to its great historic importance and location, during the Venetian and Ottoman years it found itself in the centre of many uprisings and revolutions. On the way back, you will see a plethora of wild herbs and flowers that blossom mainly in the spring, creating an impressive view. This path will lead you through the gorge of the vultures, full of other birds, and if you are lucky enough, you will see rare and huge vultures that nest on imposing slops. If you choose the detour through the forest found just below Enagron, you will be surprised by the magic offered by the area's flora.

Points of interest
- A variety of farmed fields and wild vegetation.
- A magical view of from the Monastery and the entrance of the gorge.
- The wonderful frescoes of the 15th century in the little church of Agia Marina.
- Halepa Monastery and its history.
- The gorge of the vultures and wild birds.
- The forest below Enagron.

T02 A walk around the village of Axos

ENAGRON - ELLINOSPITA - AXOS - ANCIENT ACROPOLIS

Distance	Duration	Road state
4 km	3 hours	asphalt - path

Having Enagron as the starting point and walking uphill towards the village of Axos, you will meet on your right hand side the a spring called Hochlidi within a 800-meter distance. Next to it, there is a small path that leads you to the ancient Ellinospita (Greek houses). The ancient domed tombs of the Hellenistic period. It is the place that during the first years of the period, the inhabitants of the village Axos were buried, that still worshipped the 12 gods of mount Olympos. They called themselves Greeks in order to be distinguished from those believing in the new Christian religion that were buried in a different cemetery. Next to and over the Ellinospita, there are old threshing floors, where farmers threshed their grains.

The village of Axos has been inhabited for more than 3500 years without relocations and still bearing the same name. The ancient city of Axos was one of the most important city-states of the ancient world, famous even beyond Crete. As Herodotos reports, Etean has ruled as its island. It had its own currency, a merchant port located at Mpali, conducted merchant agreements and maintained an army. In the acropolis of Axos, inscriptions, an ancient temple in the honor of goddess Aphrodite and domed tombs have been found. Also, during the Byzantine period, it served as the headquarters of a bishop. In the village, there are many little Byzantine churches built during the period between the 8th till the 16th century. Many of them are of particular architectural interest, such as the one of Agia Eirini (Saint Irie) and have spectacular frescoes such as those found in the church of Agios Ioannis (Saint John).

Today the village has around 500 inhabitants mostly engaging in farming and livestock farming. The locals are friendly and hospitable and you may meet them on the street or in the cafes.

From the eastern edge of the village, we climb up the archaeological area of the acropolis. Apart from the Byzantine church of Agios Ioannis with its wonderful frescoes, you may admire the numerous ancient ruins that spread around. The Greek inscription that is carved on a stone is of great archaeological importance and it is dated back in the 7th century BC. It is one of the two most ancient inscriptions written in the Greek alphabet that have been found in Crete. The archaeological area, unfortunately, has not been developed, as no excavations have taken place apart from some occasional ones and in particular spots. Consequently, in order for monuments to be recognised by a visitor, a guided tour is essential.

Points of interest:
- The ancient tombs – the Ellinospita
- The village of Axos
- The Byzantine churches-frescoes
- The weaving workshop of Ms Antonia
- The woodcarving workshop of George Koutantos
- The view on the top of the archaeological area

The route is organised and guided once a week from Enagron.

T03 Medieval Monastery of Diskouri

ENAGRON - VENI - M. OF DISKOURI

Distance	Duration	Road state
3 km	2 hours	earth road-path or asphalt

You start from the western exit of Enagron, following the path heading towards the village of Veni. The largest part of the route is through an old path crossing the local nature and fields. The first spring we meet is the one that gives its water to the gardens of the area. In the village of Veni, we may meet locals in the small square, where a large water-mill is found. Also, at the entrance of the village, there is a traditional xakokazano (cauldron for making raki), where from October to November, the locals make their raki. We go up to the village and we continue towards the monastery of Diskouri.

This monastery is believed to be founded during the first years of the Byzantine Empire on top of the ancient sanctuary of Diskouroi in the 4th century AD. Today, it is small and poor. It is, however, important for the shepherds of the area, as they come here to solve their differences in front of the icon of Agios Georgios (Saint George). The faithful shepherds are afraid and have respect to this Saint that has been represented as a warrior on a horse, stabbing with his spear the dragon. And so, in order for them to be believed, they swear, placing their hand on the icon and starting saying an ancient phrase that is considered to have religious value. This phrase is: «Μα με Ζέ κι ομόψυχα σου πώς,», which in English means «Yes, in the name of Zeus, I swear to you that...».

In the monastery, there is an old oil press that is moved by cattle.

On the way back, after you pass the village of Veni, you must go up a sole, where the little church of Agioi Apostoloi (Saint Apostles) is found. The view is breath-taking.

Points of interest:
- The old path that goes through local nature
- The small water-mill in the square of the village
- The monastery of Diskouroos
- The icon of Agios Georgios, on which the shepherds swear

T04 Crossing Mylopotamos river

ENAGRON - GORGE - RIVER - ENAGRON

Distance	Duration	Road state
2,5 km	3 hours	Path-walk through the bed of the river-earth road

Special attention needs to be taken as there are slippery parts in this route. In case you have no experience in walking in a mountain environment, we suggest the route to be avoided. Also, this route is best avoided during the winter months or when the ground is wet following rainfall. Follow the north path through Enagron towards the river. The path guides you through a small forest of holm oaks. If you choose the left western path, after approximately 100 meters, there is a clearing of vegetation. There, deep in the clearing, you will find the cave of Antartis (rebel) that was used as a hiding place of rebels during the Second World War. According to witnesses, a radio of great range was kept there. If you choose the eastern path on your right-hand side, you will be led to Spiliaos of Voukolos, a cave used many times in the past as a hideout during periods that locals felt under threat. There are many other little caves in the area. Following the western path, just before the cave of Antartis, you will walk downhill on the right, towards the river until you reach its bed. In the summer, when no water is running and paying particular attention, you may cross it, walking downhill to the west, where in a distance of approximately 1 km, you will come across a bridge. Walk on the earth road that goes over the bridge and turn left. The earth road will lead you again back to Enagron. It is a route of a small duration, however, you will enjoy the wild nature and the vegetation. You will be accompanied by the songs of the birds and the whispers of the wind. This route is best enjoyed when you have company.

Points of interest:
- The cave of Antartis
- The small forest of holm oaks just under Enagron
- The walk through the beds of the river
- The wild vegetation and the birds that nest close to the beds of the river