

Villages along the coast from Myrtos to Makri-Gialos



Most of the coastal villages and settlements are not old. The local people, who in that time used to live in the surrounding villages in and around the mountains, used small harbours along the seaside to store up and then, export their goods, like olive oil, wine, raki, sultanas, carobs beans, corn, and live animals. Around this time, there were only a few families living in the area and a few men, spending the night while they were fishing.

It wasn't until after the last war and between the 50s – 70s that the government started building roads. More and more people moved down from the mountain villages. Also, during these years, most of the local population moved to the big cities in Crete and Greece. A large number of them also went to Germany and to Australia for work.

Sources: www.ierapetra.gr and Wikipedia and www.cretanbeaches.com and www.crete-today.com

Photos: my own

Myrtos

At the mouth of the river Sarantapihos, in a green valley with olive and orange groves, you'll find the beautiful, seaside, tourist village of Myrtos.

The museum is dedicated to the history of the place and includes archaeological collection, with great finds. In the area was located the first settlements of the Minoan era, the only one that is fully excavated, which developed particularly the potteries while uniformity in buildings shows that at that time were not developed or even social discrimination among residents. West of Myrtos is the traces of the Roman past of the region, with various buildings, baths and mosaics.

More information in the document about the western villages.

Kopanes – Ammoudares – Nea Anatoli - Stomio

Settlements in an area characterized by the greenhouses. Down by the seaside, there is a lot of long and small nice beaches, but most of them difficult to reach and surrounded by greenhouses.

One of the beaches in Ammoudares is Kalamaki. It is a nice sandy beach. totally unknown to visitors, since it is well hidden from the main road. It is also called Kapelas, due to a legendary pizzeria that used to operate here by an American (kapelas means tavern owner in Greek). The beach is surrounded by high cliffs and is very quiet.

Gra Lygia

The village is located approximately 4 km west of Ierapetra centre. Its residents are called "GraLighiotes". They are occupied mainly in the agriculture sector; this is the main source of income for the residents and their income per capita is one of the highest in the region. The village is surrounded by greenhouses which demonstrate that the agriculture sector is modernized. There are many firms in related fields such as agriculture companies that co-operate with multinationals. It's said that it was here the first greenhouses were built at the end of 1950. The man who saw that the place had possibilities and applied innovative greenhouse cultivation methods was the Dutch agriculturist Paul Herman Felix Kuijpers. In the area, among the greenhouses, stands the statue of Kuijpers, who was killed in a car accident in 1971.

The community enjoys a high multicultural environment as a lot of immigrants live here and contribute to the local economy mainly as manual workers. The immigrants are mainly for countries of the former Communist block. Sports are highly popular in the village, especially football and basketball. During the summer the beach is very popular as a lot of people with origins from Gra Lygia spend their holidays in the village. Local people enjoy sailing and fishing and they possess small boats that one can see in the marina of the village.

Koutsounari

Koutsounari is a small settlement situated in a lush green hill with many olive groves and pine trees around. One km south of the village lies the Long Beach that has a length of 5km, being one of the longest in Crete. This wide quiet beach the characteristic wonderful coarse greyish sand of southern Crete, which in the sea turns to fine sand.

Close to hotel Kakkos Bay you can find Roman fish tanks that were carved by the Romans in the soft sandstone, with a small opening to the sea to allow fresh water to flow in. There are worn steps in one corner. You can easily imagine the Roman housewife standing on top, pointing and saying "I want that one!" It's really impressive and worth seeking out.

Ferma

Settlement along the main road that has several nice beaches.

Agia Fotia

A famous and small summer resort. The name (Agia Fotia = Holy Fire) comes from the church of Aghia Fotini next to the beach. An illustration of Francesco Basiliata (1618) is titled *Spiaggia di Santa Lucia* (the same, in Italian) and you can indeed make out this very same beach.

The beach is beside the central road of Ierapetra – Sitia and very easy to approach.

Galini

Galini is a small village, slightly developed, which is built in a lush landscape with pine trees. The coast around the village is full of hidden coves with pebble beaches, where access is tricky since only some well-hidden paths head there.

Achlia

Ahlia (or Achlia) is a small settlement in a small cove, surrounded by pine trees and steep slopes of Thrypti Range. In front of the cove stretches a beautiful beach with coarse sand and vivid blue water. The beach is slightly developed with some umbrellas, water sports and some rooms, mini markets and taverns close by. There are many tamarisk trees around offering shade to the visitors and the sea is almost always flat.

Mavros Kolimbos

Mavros Kolimbos is a small settlement near the shore, that has faced a mild development during the last decades. There are some rooms to rent around and some small taverns. Agios Panteleimon beach is a nice beach with dark grey pebbles and usually calm water. The seabed is rocky in some places, making it ideal for snorkelling.

Koutsouras

It got its name from pine logs which are systematically cultivated in the region.

Like almost all other seaside villages, Koutsouras, is a new community, with its foundation dating to about 1950, mainly from residents of Stavrochori, who chose to move to more fertile and productive lands.

The main attraction is the "pine forest" at the entrance of the village, known not only for its rich summer events but also that there ends the famous Gorge of Red Butterflies which starts up in the mountains.

At Kalamokania beach you may in late summer encounter the impressive "Stilts", migratory birds in black and white with red tall and slim feet that look like storks, which make a stop in streams that are there and eventually gave their name to the beach.

Over Koutsouras is located the traditional settlement of Tsikalaria with the "pirate path" passing through, a historic remnant of the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine years.

Makry-Gialos

Makri-Gialos got the name from its long, sandy beach. The village has a good supply of shops, tavernas and watersport facilities and attracts visitors of all ages.

Some years ago Makri-Gialos was a little harbour with a few storehouses. Today the resort of Makri-Gialos has a population of around 1000 people. Makri-Gialos consists of two settlements, Makri-Gialos and Analipsi. The village has grown very fast between 1980-1995.

Excavations have brought to light a Minoan villa and a villa from the Roman period.

From the port, there is a boat which leaves each morning for the beautiful island of Koufonisi, returning late afternoon. From Makri-Gialos you can also visit Monastery of Kapsa.