

Discovering the history and the natural environment of Heraklion - Rethymnon #EduTourism



The educational tourism route with destinations of cultural and environmental interest in Crete, was designed in the framework of the Edutourism Project implemented in the framework of the INTERREG V-A Cooperation Programme "Greece - Cyprus 2014-2020, highlighting the natural environment and culture of Crete. A total of eight (8) routes in Crete, six (6) routes in Cyprus and three (3) cross-border routes were designed.

It starts with a tour of the area of Gramvousa with Balos Lagoon which is one of the most important habitats of the Eastern Mediterranean and one of the bird migration routes in the Mediterranean. More than 100 species of birds and 400 species of plants are found on the peninsula and the islands of Gramvousa and the whole area is part of the Natura 2000 network.

Next destination, the gorge of Therissos located in the village of Therissos, 6 km south of Chania. There, the flora is rich in common and endemic species of special interest and many

of them are rare or endangered and protected at international or national level. The length of the gorge is about 9 km.

Afterwards, a stop at the artistic village of Verekynthos will give the visitor the opportunity to meet a community of artists who showcase the arts that are intertwined with the life and culture of the Cretan people. In addition to the operation of the workshops, courses in ceramics, painting and fabric construction, etc. are organized for the public of all ages.

The settlement of Maroulas is of great cultural value, which, apart from its impressive tower, has unchanged architectural elements and other examples of life from past centuries that take the visitor back in time.

Another village with rich cultural characteristics is Melidoni, which is included in the list of settlements of "highest cultural heritage". There, customs from other times are revived, such as the "stealing of the bride" on Clean Monday and many cultural events are organised.

Continuing the route, the visitor passes through the region of Amari, which is a destination of great environmental interest. It is characterized by the geological formations and the



richness of the relief of the mountains that surround it. The north-eastern area of the municipality is dominated by Psiloritis, Mount Kros to the south

and other smaller mountain peaks in between, areas which are included in the NATURA 2000 network of protected areas. Clusters of trees and bushes cover much of the hillsides of the area, which is one of the greenest in Crete.

At the end of the route, one reaches the village of Kournas, which is a semi-mountainous village almost unaffected by tourism. It is located at an altitude of 200 meters at the foot of Mount Dafnomadara. The old houses, the village square, the ceramics workshop opposite

the large café are the first things one will notice in Kournas. Between the village of Kournas and the famous lake of the same name there is an impressive cave, the Kournas Cave, which offers a wonderful view. Although it is relatively small, being only 35 meters deep, its stalactites and stalagmites are very impressive. Evening visits are recommended as the cave is dark and the little light that enters makes it truly spectacular.

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