

2009 Guided Walks

(If not part of a 3 or 5 day package, individual guided walks priced at Eur 25 per person, to include all transport).

Summit of Vryssinas. Picnic only. Depart 10:00am. *Also available for GPS self guiding – see below.*

A great walk for putting the immediate locale in context and a chance to gently break in those “up” muscles. Magnificent views.

About 9 miles, 1600 feet ascent, 5 hours, moderate/tough.

Short drive to start point near Armeni. Walk along base of ridge via 4x4 track (good flower spotting territory). Rise steeply into small village of Oros. Through shepherd country and rise steadily to ridge plateau. Across plateau, good views to White Mountains, Psiloritis and Kedros. Eventually climb last few hundred feet (fairly steeply) to summit and chapel of Prophet Ilias. Lovely picnic stop with wonderful 360° views. Descend on shepherds tracks with views to Rethymno, returning to start point via circular route.

Terrain – road; shepherd (4x4) tracks; rocky footpath; grassy footpath.

South Coast, Preveli Beach & Monastery. Depart 9:30am. *GPS (modified route – returns via path on opposite side of river and omits monument/monastery).*

Lots of eating options – beach picnic, beach taverna, monastery taverna.

Moderate walk through pleasant open country with visits to some very contrasting sights in the south. Opportunity to swim in Libyan Sea (**Bring swimming togs/towel**).

About 9 miles, 1500 feet ascent, 5 hours. (Note walk length, but there is an opportunity to shorten by c. 3 miles).

25km drive via the spectacular Kourtaliotis Gorge and Asomatos to our start at an interesting Turkish bridge. Gradually rise up to top of gorge at Palm Beach. Pick up a 4x4 track to descend to beach – probably quite busy – for lunch stop. (Note that you will need to wade across river outflow. Sandals/flip flops useful). Stiff climb from beach (approx. 400 steps!) up opposite river bank. From here, ascend short way to road. Along road to interesting WWII monument and on to Preveli Monastery. Short stop here, then rise up along gravel road behind monastery eventually cresting the ridge and back to pick - up point at Turkish bridge.

Terrain – road; shepherd (4x4) tracks; rocky footpath.

Arkadi Monastery, Eleftherna. Depart 9:30am. Picnic only. *GPS (modified route – omits first part just after Arkadi monastery and starts at New Eleftherna).*

Easy/moderate walk, with the greatest “tick list” of antiquities. Some very interesting sites, showing the range of civilisations which have occupied Crete.

About 8 miles, 1000 feet ascent, 5 hours (time at Arkadi in addition to this).

Drive to Arkadi Monastery. Brief stop at this very moving monument to Crete’s struggles with the Ottoman Empire (see any guide book). Drive on a short way to start of walk. Walk through open limestone countryside to “new” Eleftherna via an interesting chapel built into a rock hillside. From “new” Eleftherna, descend an ancient Kalderimi (mule track) to the valley floor. Walk along the valley bottom to a

magnificent Hellenistic bridge. Picnic stop at the bridge. From bridge, ascend valley side to ancient Eleftherna, crossing Acropolis at head of ridge. Go via Byzantine defensive tower to ancient Roman cisterns, and then back to valley bottom. After a brief visit to excavations of the ancient town site, ascend back to “new” Eleftherna” and transport home.

Terrain – road; shepherd (4x4) tracks; grassy footpath; rocky footpath. Crossing limestone rock footpaths tricky if wet.

To Bonripari - Pirates & Fortresses! Depart 10:00am. Picnic only.

A beautiful walk through lovely, varied countryside. Interesting and scarcely visited ruins on the way. About 9 miles, 1400 feet ascent, 5 hours, moderate/tough.

Leave Footscapes via the front gate and turn right along the E4 footpath. Descend into Monopari village and on through olive groves and gorgeous countryside. Climb up an ancient mule track to an old Venetian hill fort. From the fort, take ancient tracks (via the oldest olive tree we have seen!) into Kato Malaki village. From KM, take another old mule track to the valley floor. Walk along the valley floor and back up to Monopari. Turning off before our original path, we walk through open countryside to the ruined 13th C fortress at Bonripari (built by a Genoese pirate). A brief stop at the top of the fortress gives a chance to see masses of flowers and, if lucky, vultures and kestrels. Back along easy tracks to Footscapes.

Terrain – road; shepherd (4x4) tracks; rocky footpath; grassy footpath. Descent from KM to valley floor is via narrow, worn mule track which can be tricky when wet.

To the Foothills of the White Mountains. Depart 8:00am. *GPS* Picnic only.

Tough walk at about 10 miles and with 2500 feet of ascent. Through very sparsely populated countryside up into the fringes of the White Mountains to the Volika climbing hut at about 4300 feet altitude. Walking boots recommended and long trousers/zip offs to combat spiky undergrowth. Take plenty of water. 6 hours walk, 3 hours travel time.

Longish drive to Kambi village – about 1 ½ hours. Walk from Kambi along rough tracks/shepherd roads until we reach a pretty ravine. Ascend the ravine to the climbing hut “Volika”. Lunch stop and spectacular views. Griffon vultures a definite possibility and, if we have been very good boys and girls, maybe a sight of the rare Lammergeier (bearded vulture). Descend along good shepherds’ tracks, eventually reaching the road. Unfortunately, we then have about 3 miles of (quiet) road walking back to our transport. (Full of fruit & nut trees in autumn if you have the munchies after your exertions!).

Terrain – road; shepherd (4x4) tracks; rocky footpath. Trickiest walk underfoot, with some sharp limestone sections. Boots/ankle support definitely recommended.

Please note that the White Mountains walk only takes place with a minimum group size of 4 walkers (plus guide).

To the Lower Reaches of Mount Kedros. Depart 9:30am.

Picnic only.

Moderate/tough walk in a lovely area high above the town of Spili. About 8 miles and 1600 feet of ascent, 5 hours.

Drive south through Spili to our start point at the small village of Kendrochori. Rise up from the village through sheep/goat farming land until reaching the base of the Kedros massif. Ascend quite steeply up rough paths until we reach the waymarked E4. After crossing a scree fall, our way becomes easier on a well-trodden section of the E4, with a lesser gradient. Eventually we reach a col at just over 3000 feet that is a crossroads for the trek up Kedros (6000 feet summit – not for today's trip!). From our vantage point with views to a wide cultivated plain, we descend rocky slopes on indistinct sheep/goat paths through scattered ruins of old shepherds' dwellings. Lunch is a picnic at a shady spring, after which we continue our descent to the plain. Picking up a clear track, we wind our way to the village of Kissos, and from there back to our start point via a disused monastery.

Terrain – road; shepherd (4x4) tracks; rocky footpath; short scree slope section.
Boots/ankle support recommended.

To the Springs at Argyroupolis and Ancient Lappa. Depart 10:00am.

Picnic only.

Easy walk in a pretty valley on the eastern fringe of the White Mountains. About 5 miles and 800 feet of ascent, 4 hours.

We drive along the “old” national road via Episkopi and our start point at Argyroupolis. Here is an enormous natural spring that supplies much of the Rethymno district with its water requirements (the 5 or 6 tavernas at our start point each have cascading water features). We walk up the old E4 (now, sadly, a tarmac road) towards Asi Gonia (home of the “Cretan Runner”), eventually crossing the river bed and ascending to the tiny village of Maroulas. Walking through the village gives a good glimpse of traditional Cretan life. From the village, we walk back towards Lappa along the top of the valley through pleasant farming country. After a picnic lunch at a shady church, we enter the ancient city state of Lappa with its well-preserved and spectacular Roman mosaic. From here, we descend the cobbled Roman road to the Roman necropolis close to our start point.

Terrain – road; shepherd (4x4) tracks.

Moundros Gorge and Vulture Colony. Depart 10:00am. Picnic only.

Moderate walk through a short but spectacular gorge, via a deserted village and pleasant open countryside. About 5.5 miles and 1000 feet ascent, 4.5 hours.

We drive to our start at Moundros, entering the gorge which houses many nests of Eurasian Griffon Vultures. Ascending the gorge, we eventually emerge and climb steeply to a ridge above the village of Velonado. From here, through beautiful open countryside (picnic en route) to the deserted village of Nissi and its interesting ruins. (Nissi, because of its remoteness, was popularly considered to be home to many bandits and refugees from the law!). Back from Nissi along a well-made path to our start point at Moundros.

Terrain – mostly rocky path; shepherd (4x4) tracks. Slippery if wet – good footwear recommended – boots preferable to walking trainers.

Goulediana Countryside & Early Christian Ruins. Depart 10:00am. Picnic only. Easy/moderate walk through open countryside, via a 5th/6th Century basilica. About 4 miles and 700 feet ascent, 3.5 hours.

We drive to the start at Goulediana (great taverna for future reference), leaving the village on foot via a track and old kalderimi (mule trail). Ascending easily to a limestone plateau, we take trails through open countryside to the remains of an early Christian basilica (some mosaic flooring still in existence). From the basilica and via a ruined Venetian dwelling, we descend to a river valley which we follow to a small farming community. Climbing back to the plateau and a natural spring, we eventually walk downhill back to our start at Goulediana.

Terrain – shepherd (4x4) tracks; grassy footpaths; some indistinct paths through the valley.

Koumi – Valleys and Fossils. Depart 9:30am. Picnic only. *GPS*

Moderate/tough walk through 2 lovely valleys with some impressive fossils showing that this part of Crete was once under the sea. About 8 miles and 2000 feet ascent, 5 hours.

Our start point is the village of Koumi, only an 8km drive from Footscapes. Leaving Koumi via an old Kalderimi (mule track), we descend to the valley floor. After half an hour, we have ascended the other side of the valley to overlook the village of Fotinos. Rising easily out of Fotinos, we find a limestone outcrop with some very well – defined fossils of sea urchins and shellfish. From Fotinos, we descend into the next valley (with fantastic views to Psiloritis and Kedros) to the small village of Agios Vasilios. (Home to a very traditional Kafeneion). From A.V. we ascend steeply to the ridge top overlooking Koumi, and further wonderful views to the north west of the island. After a brief rest stop (in a meadow full of orchids, anemones and iris in spring), we walk easily down to our start point at Koumi.

Terrain – shepherd (4x4) tracks and grassy footpaths.

Frescoed Churches Around Mourne and Frati. Depart 9:30am. Picnic or taverna. *GPS (modified return via river valley, slightly shorter)*

Moderate walk through a lush valley with several Byzantine churches en – route. About 8 miles and 1800 feet ascent, 5 hours (more if taverna lunch option).

Short drive to our start at “New” Mixorrouma and from there we climb steadily to the pretty village of Mourne and our first church. (Agios Georgios, with wonderful early 14C frescoes). From here, through open countryside above the river valley to our second church, another Agios Georgios. Descending further into the valley, our third stop is at the Church of the Panagia (Virgin), with more important frescoes (optional picnic stop). From here, we descend to the valley floor, cross the river and ascend quite steeply into Frati village (optional taverna stop). From Frati, we have an easy 3

mile walk back on tracks above Kourtaliotis Gorge, through Agia Pelagia, and then back to our start point.

Terrain – road and shepherd (4x4) tracks. Steep descent to river on very worn track.

Moundros and Kato Poros Gorges. Depart 9:30am. Picnic only. *GPS*

Tough walk through 2 lovely and very different gorges. About 7 miles, 1500 feet ascent, 5 hours.

First part as Moundros Gorge walk, above, as far as the ridge above Velonado. From here we descend into the start of Kato Poros gorge, which we walk until its exit near the village of Kato Poros. The middle and end sections of this gorge are very dramatic, with huge rock/boulder falls and steep, narrow ravines. From the end of the gorge, we ascend to the deserted village of Nissi and then back to Moundros (see Moundros Gorge walk, above).

Terrain – rocky footpaths; shepherd (4x4) tracks and a very boulder strewn river bed in K.P. Gorge. Difficult underfoot and good walking footwear (preferably boots) definitely recommended.

Kalderimia (Donkey Trails) Around Zouridi, Kato Poros and Argyroupolis. Depart 9:30am. Picnic or Taverna. *GPS*

Moderate/tough walk on ancient donkey trails through beautiful valleys and ridge top villages. About 6 miles, 2000 feet ascent, 6 hours.

Departing from the village of Zouridi, we descend our first ancient donkey trail to the valley floor and cross the river, eventually rising into the village of Kato Poros. From KP, we take another beautiful trail arriving at the village of Argyroupolis (ancient Lappa) in time for lunch. Leaving Lappa via the Roman spring and necropolis, we follow another lovely track, gradually rising back to our start point at Zouridi.

Terrain – worn, rocky donkey trails, with some narrow sections encroached by vegetation. Difficult underfoot in places and boots/ankle support definitely recommended.

GPS Walks

Walks marked “*GPS*” are also optionally available for GPS self – guiding. You will need your own GPS unit, and we can supply the following:

- a) GPX walk file for upload to your GPS. The file was created using a Garmin Etrex and contains track data, waypoints and a route created from the waypoints. If you load this file into an editor (such as “Easy GPS”), you will also be able to see guidance notes.
- b) KMZ file of the walk for input to Google Earth. Simply load this into Google Earth, and you can see your walk and the terrain on your computer.
- c) Printed diagram of each walk, along with route guidance notes for the tricky sections.

Please note that there is no charge to our guests for supply of GPS data. You do, however, use these files entirely at your own risk. You must supply your own GPS unit, along with some means of file input, and we offer no advice or guidance on how to use a GPS for routefinding.