



Municipality of Chersonissos

Dear Visitor,
The map you are holding in your hands is about the Municipality of Chersonissos and was created because we wish you to know better the place you have chosen to spend your vacation. The Municipality of Chersonissos is a very popular tourist destination in Crete and one of the most attractive in Greece. Through a selection of images and short texts introducing the four units of the Municipality of Chersonissos (Episkopi, Gouves, Chersonissos and Malia), we invite you to discover our Municipality from the coasts up to the mountains and the countryside villages, to visit the historical monuments and enjoy the unique beauty of the untouched nature.

Live the charm of contrasts that this place offers you. Let hidden scents, the serenity of nature and the warmth of the local people follow you on this journey. Practice your favorite sport activity (sea sports, golf, paragliding, mountain bike, hiking, horse riding, rock climbing etc.), discover the culture and history of this place and taste the traditional Cretan cuisine. Let our wishes for a pleasant, relaxing and exciting stay accompany you. We are certain that, after your vacation in our Municipality, you will feel the need to come back to know this place even better.

Mayor of the Municipality of Chersonissos

RECREATION *experiences*

Recreational tourism is highly developed in the Municipality of Chersonissos since the 70s, when the first tourism accommodations opened. The Municipality of Chersonissos offers a rich and diverse leisure tourism experience aiming to advance the quality of its services and to strengthen its position by becoming a destination ideal for vacation. The four alternating colours of the Municipality of Chersonissos logo - green, blue, red and yellow - stand for nature, recreation, culture and gastronomy accordingly, uniting the four Municipal Units.

Theme Parks

There are many places to visit for completing your holiday experience, including some of the most interesting theme parks like:
Acqua Plus Water Park | **Aquaworld Aquarium & Reptile Rescue Center** | **CretAquarium Thalassocosmos** | **Dinosauria Park** | **Labyrinth & Trojan Horse Theme Park** | **Star Beach** | **Water City Water Park**

Beaches

The Municipality of Chersonissos is the ideal destination for the 35, which stand for "Sea, Sun, Sand", as its visitors can enjoy the endless sea on a wide coastal zone of 38 km with great Blue Flag beaches suitable for swimming.

Municipal beaches

Three Municipal Beaches, three different experiences. **Potamos Beach in Malia**: a huge sandy beach, well organized and quiet, with plenty of space for games or just for relaxation in the sun, located very close to the site of the Minoan Palace of Malia. The beach is known as Potamos (i.e. River), because a small stream flows at the east part of it next to the wetland of Malia, and is accessible for people with disabilities. **Sarantari Beach in Chersonissos**: crystal clear water with white sand and pebbles, located in the famous consecutive bays called "limanika". **Estavromenos Beach in Elea**: a fantastic large beach, crowded daily with people who enjoy not only the water sport activities such as swimming and surfing but also other sport activities such as beach volleyball and beach tennis rackets. Estavromenos Beach is also accessible for people with disabilities. All Municipal beaches are well organized with WC, showers and changing rooms.

Gastronomy

Combine your visit to Crete with a journey through the Cretan Cuisine! The Cretan diet is currently considered by nutritionists as a "modus vivendi" that endows people with longevity and health according to researches conducted on an international scale, while simultaneously Modern Cretans are proud of their cultural heritage - the Cretan Diet. Cretan products, being part of an old tradition, are treated with the same respect as they were inherited to Cretans by their ancestors, the Minoans. Experience the combination of delicious foods while enjoying the ongoing benefits of the ultimate gift - good health! During your stay in the Municipality of Chersonissos, don't miss tasting all the traditional recipes of the island as a large number of traditional taverns and restaurants will offer you and thus you will remember them for a lifetime.

Night Entertainment

Chersonissos and Malia are popular for their nightlife. They are considered to be the liveliest places in Crete and among of the most vivid places in Greece. You will find dozens of cafes, bars, traditional taverns, discos and night clubs, most of them located just a few meters away from the beach. You can find a place for every taste including many different kinds of music, DJ sets and parties for an unforgettable experience.

Shopping

The Municipality of Chersonissos offers a memorable shopping experience with abundant shops and department stores focusing on souvenirs and local products, due to the fact that the Municipality of Chersonissos welcomes more than 3,5% of the total arrivals in Greece! We can meet the needs even of the most demanding customers!

Water Parks

The three big Water Parks situated in the Municipality of Chersonissos give the opportunity to visitors of all ages to enjoy their vacations by having full of play activities, fun and high adrenaline rush by using the park facilities. The parks have cafes and pool bars where you can enjoy your coffee or your drink and get rest in a very pleasant environment. They offer you unforgettable moments of fun and absolute relaxation.

CULTURAL *experiences*

Cultural tourism is an experience that every visitor can enjoy in the Municipality of Chersonissos. In the Municipality of Chersonissos, there are small and large museums that depict the everyday life of a time that has passed but not lost, while others keep alive the memories of heroic national struggles. Each one of these museums has its own unique thematic exhibits that attract locals and tourists every year promoting the cultural features of the place and its history. There are numerous Museums composing the cultural network of this place:

Archaeological Site of the Minoan Palace of Malia | **Argirakelo Ethnological War Museum** in Episkopi | **Folklore Museum of Mochos** | **Gouveniotissa Monastery** | **Homo Sapientis Museum** | **Kera Kardiotissa Monastery** | **Maritime collection of Chersonissos** | **Museum of Rural Life** "Menelaos Parlamas" in Piskopiano | **Open Air Museum** Lychnostatis

Through contact, acquaintance and knowledge of the culture of the Municipality of Chersonissos, visitors gain an intense experience which follows them in their countries of origin.

Museums & Archaeological sites

The Municipality of Chersonissos is noteworthy for its prehistoric archaeological findings, such as the Archaeological site of the Minoan Palace of Malia, Chrysoskolos, the Archaeological site of Amnisos, the Minoan Palace of Miras and the sites of Kastri and Keri.

The Minoan palace of Malia is located near the sea and is the most important archaeological site in the Municipality of Chersonissos. It is the third largest Minoan palace after Knossos and Phaistos. According to mythology, the palace of Malia was served as the residence of Sargapion, brother of King Minos. In 1915, Joseph Hatzidakis began excavations in the harbor while, in 1921, the French Archaeological School continued the excavations in Chrysoskolos and the famous beautiful gold necklace with the bees discovered is considered as the most important finding of Malia.

Settlements

Cultural tourism is enhanced by excursions to the many picturesque villages of the Municipality providing a unique experience, so visitors can become familiar with the customs and traditions of traditional settlements.

OUTDOOR *adventure experiences*

Municipality of Chersonissos offers a large number of Outdoor Adventure Experiences. The landscape invites nature lovers to explore it and discover its uniqueness. It is extremely rich in fauna and flora while large areas of the region have been integrated in the NATURA 2000 ecological network such as the island of Dia and the Forest of Azilakos (Azilakodossos). On Dia, there is a number of protected creatures including snails, lizards, wild rabbits and an eagle called "naniopvrishti", as well as protected plants. Northeast of Kori village, on the northern slopes of the Selena Mount, the Azilakos protected forest is located at an altitude of 600m. It contains oaks and maples and is a natural environment for many protected kinds of birds.

Moreover, the Malia Wetland is a natural wetland in the Municipality of Chersonissos and is located at Potamos, 2.4 km northwest of the settlement of Malia. It is enclosed and registered under the name "Elios Palia Malias" by the Greek Biotope Wetland Center, according to WWF. The wetland is covered with water which springs from Mount Selena giving Malia its rich waters.



Biking

The Municipality of Chersonissos is ideal for biking experiences. The rich topography of the island creates intense alternations of the landscape. The rugged coasts, gorges and mountains in combination with the enchanting scent of Cretan herbs will turn your biking adventure into a unique experience of exploring the Cretan landscape.

Caves

Agia Anna Cave - Roza Gorge | **Eleithya Cave** - Karteros village | **Agia Fotie Cave** - Avdou village | **Kalo Chorio Cave** - Kalo Chorio village | **Skoteino Cave** - Skoteino village

Diving

Crete is one of the national destinations with the largest number of diving training centers and therefore, emphasis has been placed on this form of experience. Visitors of the Municipality can discover the secrets of the marine ecosystem of Crete, through diving. In the Municipality, diving centers operate, covering all kinds of diving activity and training, while there are specific mapped marine parks and diving zones.

Golf

The Crete Golf Club is the only 18-hole golf course on the island of Crete and one of the most impressive golf courses of the Mediterranean, which offers a unique challenge and experience for both golf players and visitors all year round, covering an area of 291,3 hectares.

Gorges

Roza Gorge - Gonies village | **Astrakiani, Karteros Gorge** - Karteros village | **Aposelemis Gorge** - Aposelemis river | **Agia Anastasia Gorge** - Kenourgio Chorio village

Horse-riding

An alternative way to discover the authentic beauty of Cretan nature is Horse-Riding and is addressed to those who like to explore nature with trained horses. In the Municipality of Chersonissos, visitors can have horse riding lessons at the modern facilities of equestrian centers located within the administrative boundaries of the Municipality as well as do horse-riding in those areas respectively.

Trekking

Escape from the cosmopolitan environment of the luxurious beach hotels and experience the virgin countryside of the Municipality of Chersonissos. Live the charming contrasts that this place offers you. Hiking in the Municipality of Chersonissos means that, with every step, the trekker discovers mythology, culture, history and archaeology in a beautiful natural environment. Enjoy the tranquility of nature through the wild Cretan landscape of mountains, gorges and caves and the coolness of the magnificent sea. All of these create a unique hiking experience full of contrasts.

Other Experiences

The Municipality of Chersonissos offers experiences of any kind and constantly follows new trends and features of the modern tourism demand. We constantly develop new activities and the corresponding infrastructure, such as climbing and paragliding that the visitor can experience in the municipal units of Gouves and Chersonissos.

RELIGIOUS *experiences*

Seeking the majesty of the divine in Crete.

Crete has a centuries-old spiritual tradition, which is reflected in historical and religious monuments, temples, monasteries and chapels.

Crete is a land of saints. It has a long spiritual tradition, which includes its historical monuments, churches, monasteries and country churches.

Religious tourism is not a new idea, something thought up recently. It is the oldest, the most important form of "tourism" in the history of mankind. Religious travel has its roots in the pilgrimages. Since antiquity, the desire to embark on a journey for religious purposes has inspired people to express their religious sentiments, their deep faith and their reverence for God. The Municipality of Chersonissos emphasizes the enhancement of the direct link between religion, as a cultural phenomenon, and tourism.

In the Municipality of Chersonissos you will find a considerable number of Churches. The village of Avdou is dotted with Byzantine churches with frescoes, such as the Church of St. Antonios, the Church of St. Georgios, the Church of the Annunciation and the Church of St. Constantinos. In the village of Potamies, there is also a remarkable church monument - the Monastery of Panagia Gouverniotissa (dedicated to the Virgin Mary) and in the village of Kera, there is the famous and picturesque monastery of Kardiotissa, which is dedicated to the birth of the Virgin Mary.

The village of Episkopi has many interesting Byzantine churches located in the vast area. Within the village, the Byzantine churches of Archangel Michael, St. Paraskevi, and St. Ioannis are located. On 11th of November, there is a public holiday for the celebration of St. Minas, the patron saint of Episkopi and it is a very popular event for the visitors.

In Kastri, at the harbour of Chersonissos, you can find the remains of three early Christian churches reminding the existence of one of the oldest Metropolis in Crete, the Metropolis of Chersonissos.

Churches

In the outstanding countryside and charming towns and villages of the Municipality of Chersonissos, there is a great number of holy sites (dozens churches and chapels) which reflect the religious character through the ages.

Monasteries

The monastic heritage of Crete is immense and reflects the passion with which Cretans have celebrated their Orthodoxy for over 1600 years now. Monks and Nuns still practice a monastic life in hundreds of Monasteries and Convents around Crete. Visitors are welcome to visit most of the monasteries and convents while the visiting hours are usually displayed at the entrance of the monasteries. In the Municipality of Chersonissos, there are over 10 monasteries: Monastery of Kardiotissa in Kera, the Monastery of Panagia Gouverniotissa in Potamies, Monastery of Kera Eleoussa in Vortisi village, the Monasteries of Panagia Theogenitorissas in Mochos, Monastery of Agia Ioannis Theodoros in Anopolis and Gennesis Theotokou Monastery in Spourkofali. These monasteries are some of the most remarkable ones in Crete and one can admire the architecture, sculpture and religious painting.

EVENTS & CONFERENCES

The competitiveness of the destination is considered one of the first strategic objectives of the Municipality of Chersonissos. The Municipality of Chersonissos provides rich traditional and cultural social programs in perfect climate conditions all year round and all these near the largest airport of Crete (25 km). During the summer, there are many festivals taking place in many of the villages, including modern and traditional music nights.

Conferences

Greece is the birth land of science. Recognizing the important academic background of Crete, the Municipality of Chersonissos has given priority to the development of congress tourism. The Municipality of Chersonissos combines ideally infrastructure and location for the development of a conference tourist destination. It offers modern facilities and convention centers and it can accommodate events up to 5000 people. Every year, the local academic institutions organize international conferences with high requirements in service and infrastructure, in hotels located in the Municipality of Chersonissos, and more than 60 national and international conferences are hosted.

Exhibitions

The International Exhibition Center of Crete is located in the Municipality of Chersonissos. It addresses all businessmen, companies, co-operations and organizations based in Crete as well as in other regions of Greece wishing the facilities of the center to be utilized. It offers the best possible accommodation for a wide selection of events.

Its modern infrastructure is ideal for organizing presentations intended for company representatives or customers and can be used as showrooms and for fashion shows, movie screenings, music concerts or other events.

Wedding Ceremonies

A civil ceremony is also feasible in the Municipality of Chersonissos. Town Hall is located in a modern building. There is a spacious wedding hall and the friendly personnel will help you create festive and warm atmosphere. Plan your wedding in the Municipality of Chersonissos - Crete and you will have the chance to celebrate the most romantic day of your life on a beautiful and historic island making it an unforgettable experience.



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