



**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

**A journey of discovery in the Sfakia**  
(Mitado's at lonely mountain ranges)

An article from our member *Maria Eleftheria*, Agios Nektarios / Crete



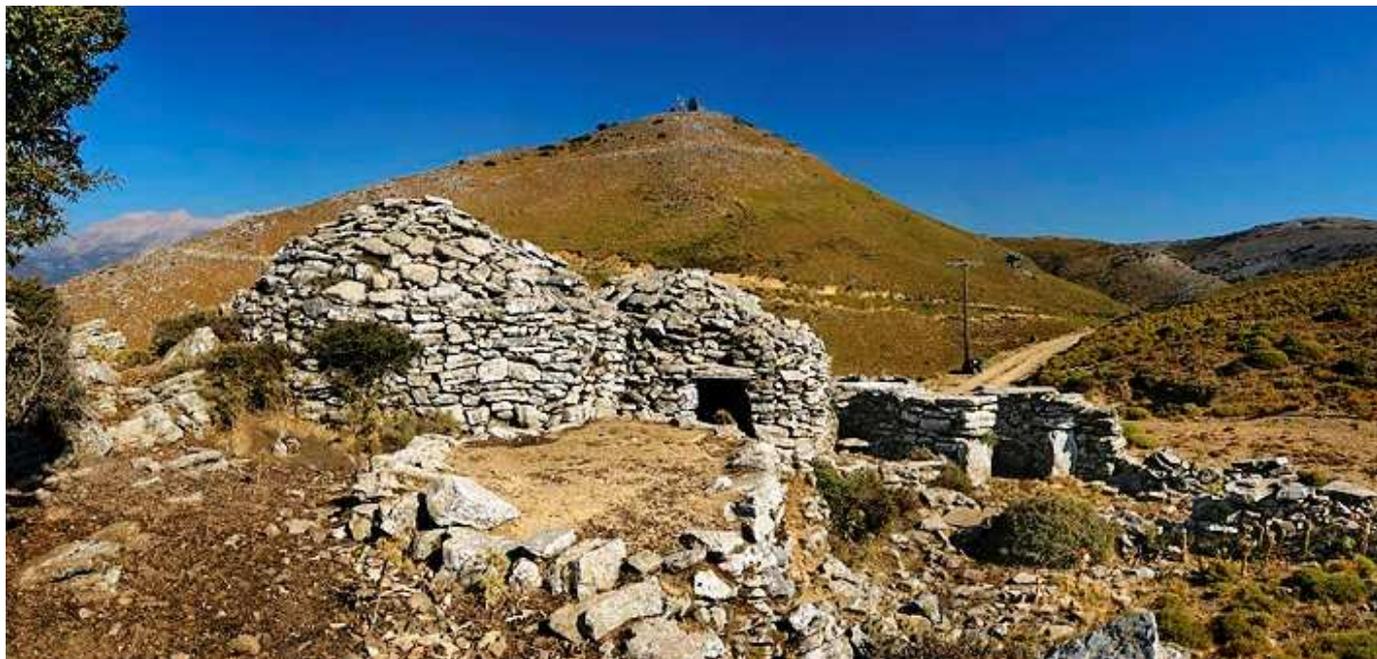
This tour leads in the almost deserted, barren mountains of Eastern Sfakia, where in the past the shepherds lived during the summer with their flocks of sheep on lonely mountain ranges to escape from the heat of the lowlands. Today, in the evening men go after work in the mountains with their pickup trucks home, down to wife and children.

But on the hills we meet stone monuments that bear witness of a time when the life for the keepers of animals was hard and full of privation.

From the North, on the road from Vrisses to Chora Sfakion, shortly before the village of Imbros, a narrow asphalt road branches off left towards Kallikratis. At the beginning of the winding road you have a good view of the village of Imbros and its surroundings, where in the country lots of landscaped terraces are visible, which farmers wrest from the mountain. Only a view bends later extends a desert-like, rocky countryside where just every once in a while a bent by wind tree provides some shade. On the left, on the 1239 meter high mountain Akones, a telecommunications station of OTE's is visible (see title bar).



The second path, going to the right, is blocked with an iron chain attached to two poles, an obstacle that you can easily bypass. The way behind leads you to an old shepherd shelter, a round, very well preserved Mitado. There are about 200 meters up to the stone building which blends perfectly with its two domes in the Rocky surroundings. The arrangement of space for the various activities of the shepherds is good to see. Milking sheep were driven into the outer ring, called 'kourta'. Through the, remote of the prevailing winds, south-eastern located entrance you get into the main building, which served the cheese making in the front part, on the other hand was used as a bedroom and living room.



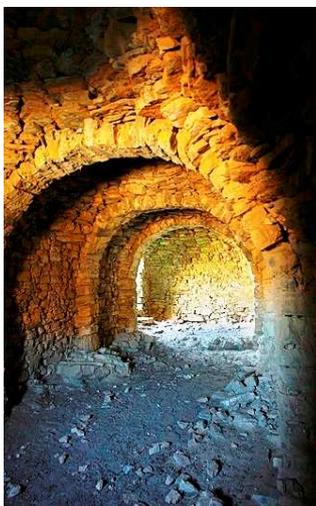
In the rear, windowless area, called 'koumos orimansis', ripened the cheese. Afterwards the cheeses came for storage in a separate cooler space, the 'koumos syntirsis', which was built for this purpose deepened in the Earth. Elsewhere, if nearby available, also caves were used. There were smaller shelters in the area of Mitado as outpost, called 'katafygia', which had just enough place to stay for one shepherd. From here is to recognize such an accommodation on the next Hill in a south-westerly direction.



On the way back to the street, a building is visible on the opposite hill, which can easily be kept from afar for a house. It is also a worth visiting Mitado. It is larger than the previously described, and laid out as rectangle. On the main street leads left from the pen, a path high above the hilltop to the building.

It appears strange that the front part of the building collapsed while the rear, large storage space is intact with four domes and three arches which give additional stability, but also elegant design. Masterly stone on stone was layered. It almost seems that work on the different parts have been made by different people.

The air up here is fresh, there is a room to breathe deeply and pause while overlooking the gentle rolling hills to the sea.



While continuing the journey you pass the plateau and the village Asfendhou and reach the vast prairie of Kallikratis. Here you have the ability to continue the journey towards North through the heartland over Asi Gonia to Rethymno, or finish the tour with a daring downhill to Frangokastello. To do so you must keep right on the main road in Kallikratis, until this crosses a dry stream course and then turn right there. Then follow the paved road that runs above the Kallikratis Canyon and then wind in tight hairpin bends down to the coast to the village of Patsianós. From here you can turn right to Frangokastello, or left towards Plakias.

