



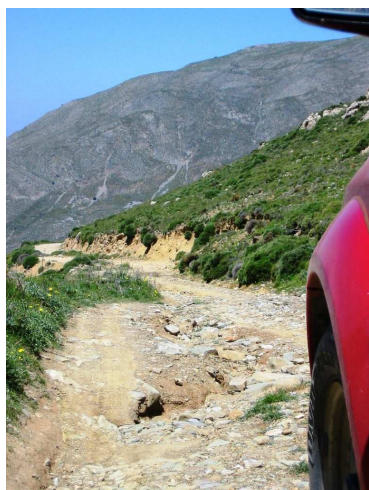
Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:



Jeep-Tour from Koutsouras / South-east Crete through the Thriptis Mountains (over Bembonas) to Kavousi / North-east Crete

This tour leads over a path of approx 17 miles (currently to cope only with a 4WD safely) through the wild and romantic mountain landscape of Thriptis (Afendis Christos, 1476 m); pure journey time (without longer stops) approx 2.5 hrs; at the end at **Kavousi** you can expect the probably **oldest olive tree in Crete**.

We begin our directions (coming on the south coast road from **Ierapetra**) in the middle of **Koutsouras** and turn here, following the sign (Post) left from the main road towards **Stavrochori** (3.6 miles) and from there further on to **Hrisopigi** (2.5 miles). Short after the village exit of **Hrisopigi** we then turn from the tarred road to the path towards **Bembonas** (3.7 miles). After approx 2.2 miles uphill you have a beautiful view of the village **Hrisopigi** and in the background (acting like covered with snow) the bright white "marble mountains" (see fig. 1). Over a summit and another 1.5 miles of path you reach then the small, located in a high valley village **Bembonas** (see fig. 2).



The path becomes worse behind Bembonas (825 m ü. sea level)(see fig. 3); it leads uphill again and after 0.6 miles you reach the first fence (ss fig. 4 on next page) and after another 1 mile a second fence (please always close after passing). On the further tour section towards **Kavousi** impress the heights of a wild mountain landscape (see fig. 5 on next page) and after 0.7 miles (after the 2nd fence) you reach a nameless, abandoned and ruined old place (see fig. 6), not far from the outlying mountain village "Melisses". From here it goes downhill again and after passing two further fences (after 0.6 and 0.9 miles), the mountain opens for a first glance at **Kavousi** and the offshore island Konida (see fig. 7). From the 4th fence it's then approximately 2.2 miles up to the largest and oldest olive tree of Crete (see fig. 8). The tree is probably a hybridization of *Olea europaea* (var. *mastoeides*) and the wild species *Olea europaea* (var. *oleaster* [SSP. *sylvestris*])



He has a trunk diameter of 4.9 m; its extent size is 14.2 m. The growth rate calculated by N. MICHELAKIS (2002) is 0.75 mm / year.



The **age of the olive tree** is specified with **3,250 years**, this means, he was probably planted here in the Minoan Postpalatial period (1400 - 1100 BC).

From the old olive tree to the northern coast road in the destination village Kavousi (over a tarred road again) it is still 1.3 miles. Here you then can turn left (in western direction to Agios Nikolaos or Ierapetra) or right (in eastern direction to Sitia).

Short info to Kavousi: The village count 2001 (together with the parts **Drakalefrion, Melisses, Panagia** and **Tsamantis**) 629 inhabitants, where the main village had 604 inhabitants. The capital (140 m above NN) is located geographically 15.5 miles east of Agios Nikolaos and about 28 miles

west of Sitia and 12.4 miles north of Ierapetra. In the Byzantine Church near the village square, which is dedicated to St. George (Agios Georgios) and the 12 Apostles are worth seeing icons from the 16th Century. Kavousi has a very large area of olive trees. The Olympic laurel wreaths for the games in Athens were cut in the surroundings of the town.

Note: see a clip about Kavousi and his old olive trees from our Member *Dagmar Harmsen* ("Jaguarle") at: [\[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyxXF2i5D3E\]](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyxXF2i5D3E).