

Cycling Routes



Rethymno is one of Crete's four prefectures; its capital city, bearing the same name and built on the north coast, has a number of Venetian monuments and a very well preserved historic centre. Both seas surrounding the prefecture, the Cretan Sea to the north and the Libyan Sea to the south, form a coastline of nearly 200 kilometres which features some of the most beautiful beaches in Greece.

The inland landscape is characterized by the presence of high mountainous masses with the mythical Mount Ida towering at over 2,456 m and, together with Kedros (1,777 m), the other

great mountain of Rethymno, surrounding the evergreen valley of Amari.

The landscape is softer in the west, while a range of relatively small mountains, such as Kryoneritis, Siderotas, is situated in the south, while Vouvala lies parallel to the coasts creating, together with the constant changes of the landscape, one of the most beautiful sceneries of the prefecture. These intense contrasts of wild mountainous landscape alternating with fertile plains, and imposing rocky coasts with endless sandy beaches, are very characteristic of Rethymno's nature.



For thousands of years, people here have been reconciled with the wilderness of the landscape, forming settlements at every point, whether near the sea or high in the mountains, thus, as with every civilization, greatly affecting the natural environment. A dense network of roads of all kinds cover the prefecture, leading to villages with special colour and intense architectural interest, such as Maroulas, Chromonastiri, Pikris, Moundros, Amnatos, Argyroupoli, Spili, Margarites, Anogia and many more. Roads that climb high on Mount Ida, crossing through gorges, such as the Kourtaliotiko and Kotsifos and that end at the isolated coasts of the south. Roads that

lead to monasteries, such as Arkadi and Vosako and which cross plains scattered with Byzantine chapels, such as that of Amari. The prefecture's dense road network offers cyclists a multitude of possibilities to plan routes of all types and levels of difficulty. The narrow paved rural roads, and also the dirt tracks, create the right conditions for road or mountain biking respectively. Beautiful routes in dense olive groves, spots with amazing views, difficult climbs, beautiful scenery and a rest at the picturesque cafes in every village create an ideal setting for all cyclists.
























Before you begin...

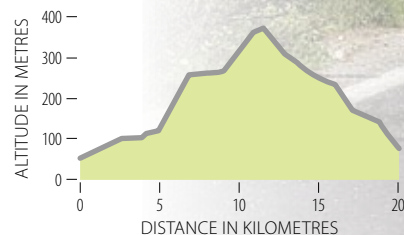
Recommended routes may naturally be taken by cyclists "as is", in as much as they follow the shape of the land, and cyclists can plan their own route based on their possibilities, in terms of physical condition or time.

The type of the road, the main sight-seeing points and the most significant settlements are displayed in each route. A series of symbols clearly specify the opportunities that each place has to offer. At the same time, each route is accompanied by a characteristic diagram which displays the altitudes, the distances in kilometres and the most signification stops.

The largest part of the trek is on tarred roads. The small sections of dirt roads which have been included are in good condition. Special attention needs to be given to isolated roads, as drivers of rural vehicles and small trucks use these for their local needs and they are not so compliant with the road traffic rules.

Always wear a helmet and make sure to have a raincoat with you, since the weather, especially during the summer months, may change abruptly. Always have water with you and condensed food, and also make sure you have the phone number of someone who may be able to send help in the unlikely event that something happens to you.

-  New National Road
-  Old National Road
-  Provincial Road
-  Rural Road
-  Point of Departure
-  Settlement
-  Archaeological site
-  Venetian monument
-  Byzantine chapel
-  Museum
-  Monastery
-  Gorge
-  Cave
-  Bird Fauna
-  Wild Flora
-  Waterfalls
-  Coasts for swimming
-  Views
-  Health Services
-  Accommodation
-  Taverns





1 Rethymno – Moundros – Argyroupoli - Rethymno

58 km. / Road Bicycle



Prophet Elias
Monastery, Roustika



After Atsipopoulo, which is a large village with beautiful architecture, picturesque streets and taverns, the wonderful rural road passes through a series of villages in West Rethymno each with a special colour, traditional architecture and beautiful natural environment. Roustika is a large capital village with Byzantine chapels and interesting architecture. The Monastery of Prophet Elias and the Greek Costume Museum are worth a stop-over. Moundros, which is further south, is a Venetian village with beautiful thoroughfares. The Church of St. Nicholas and an impressive Venetian doorframe stand out. Argyroupoli and the springs of Agia Dynami (Holy Power) attract many visitors. Last, Episkopi, the centre of Lappei, is a small town with services and shops.

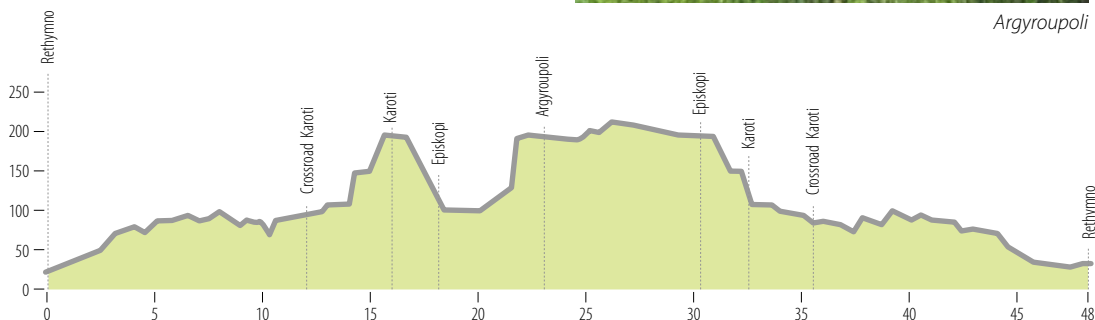


An alternative route towards Argyroupoli from the New National Road. The road follows the coast and arrives at the bridge of Petre. The large sandy beach of Episkopi begins at the exit of the Petre gorge. A small road leads south towards the village of Karoti and from there towards Episkopi and Argyroupoli. The latter is a significant settlement with impressive Venetian monuments and a special natural environment. It is built on the site of Ancient Lappas, ruins of which have been preserved in the centre of the village. The area also has many Byzantine churches.

Rethymno



Argyroupoli





The longest section of this relatively short route of 27 kms. passes through the protected forest of cultivated oaks, unique throughout Crete. It begins at Rethymno, passes through the village of Gallou where the restored Monastery of Peter and Paul is situated and continues towards the south, passing through the small village of Somatas, ending at the post-Minoan burial ground of Armeni. The route from here continues westwards to the village of Kastellos and reaches the Old National Road from where, having passed through the beautiful villages of Saint Andreas, Gonia, Prines and Atsipopoulo, it ends at Rethymno.



The oak forest at the post-Minoan burial ground of Armeni.



4 Rethymno - Prases

28 km. / Road & Mountain Bicycle

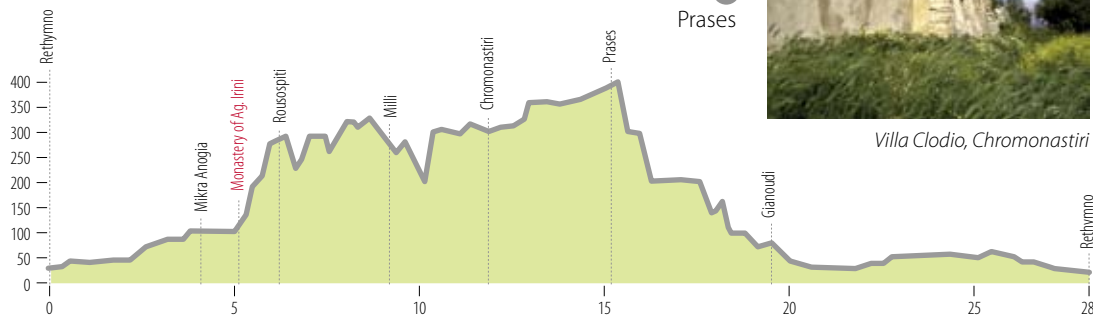


This is a relatively short route, ideal to see the villages that spread over the northern foot of mount Brysina. The road from Rethymno climbs upwards towards Mikra Anogia and Agia Irini where the monastery of the same name is situated. A little further on, at Rousospiti, a wonderful Venetian drinking fountain and the Byzantine church of the Virgin Mary have been preserved.

The route from here leads to the small, green gorge of Mili and climbs up to Chromonastiri, parallel to this, where the magnificent Villa Clodio is situated, as well as more Venetian buildings. Shortly after the village, a dirt road leads to Prases where it meets the provincial road of Rethymnos-Amari.



Villa Clodio, Chromonastiri

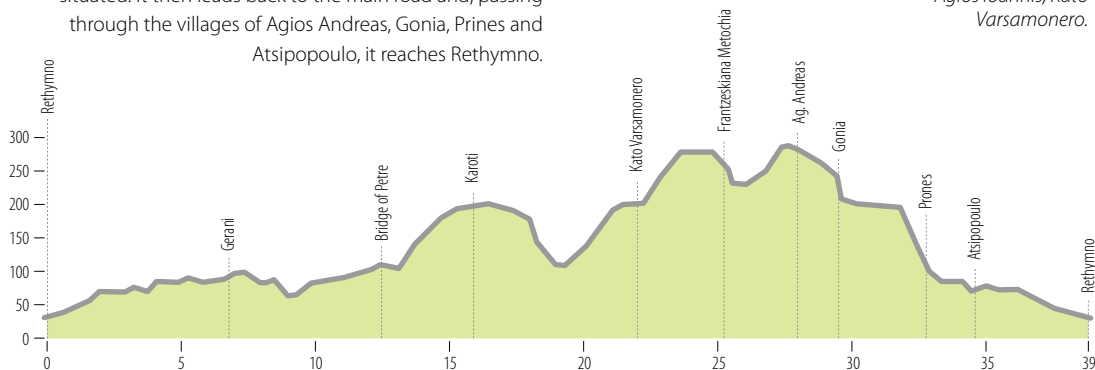




A circular route west of Rethymno, above the New and Old National roads. At the bridge of Petre and heading towards the south, the road climbs to Karoti and meets the beautiful Old National Road. A detour leads to Kato Varsamonero where the Byzantine church of St. John is situated. It then leads back to the main road and, passing through the villages of Agios Andreas, Gonia, Prines and Atsipopoulo, it reaches Rethymno.



Agios Ioannis, Kato Varsamonero.



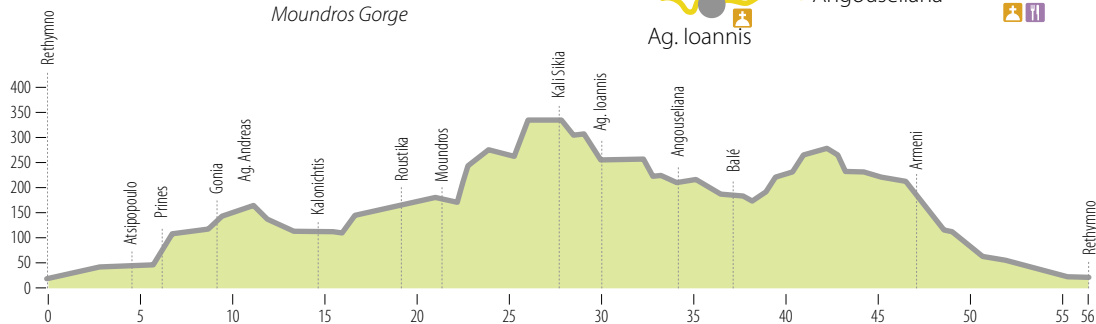
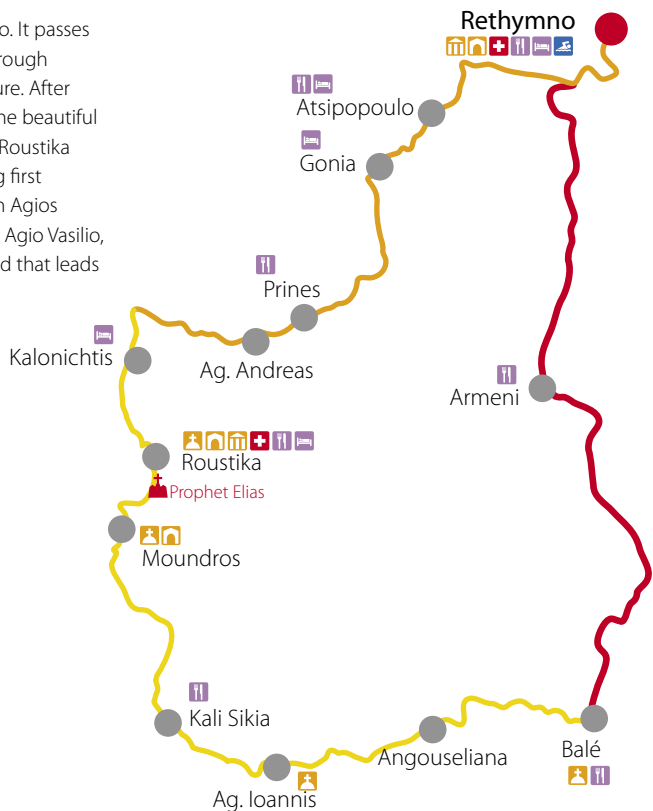
6 Rethymno – Roustika - Bale

56 klm. / Road Bicycle

This is a large circular route in western Rethymno. It passes through many traditional villages and passes through some of the most beautiful areas of the prefecture. After Atsipopoulo, Prines, Gonia and Agios Andreas, the beautiful provincial road leads southwards to Kalonycthi, Roustika and Moundros, finally reaching Kali Sykia, having first crossed a beautiful valley. It then passes through Agios Ioannis westwards, Palioloutra, Agouseliana and Agio Vasilio, reaching the crossroad of Bale and the main road that leads to Rethymnos.



Moundros Gorge



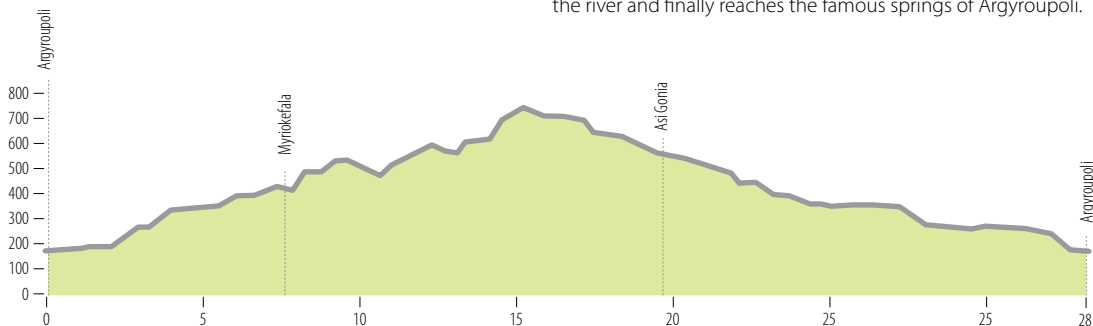


Panagia (Virgin Mary) Myriokefala

Pente Parthenes (Five Virgins), Argyproupoli

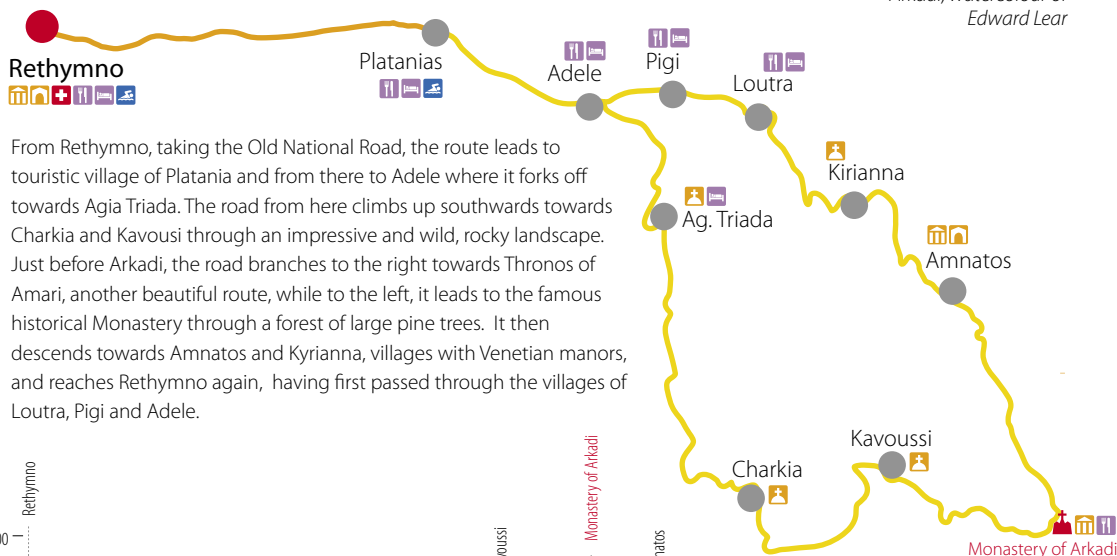


An impressive mountainous trek at the western borders of Rethymno. From Argyproupoli, a beautiful village full of traces of ancient and later civilizations, the road climbs up towards mountainous Myriokefala where the important Byzantine church of the Virgin Mary is situated and which attracts thousands of worshippers on 8 September, its celebration day. It continues to climb from here and, at the highest point, forks right to Asi Gonia, continuing downhill with a beautiful view over the valley. After Asi Gonia it continues along the river and finally reaches the famous springs of Argyproupoli.



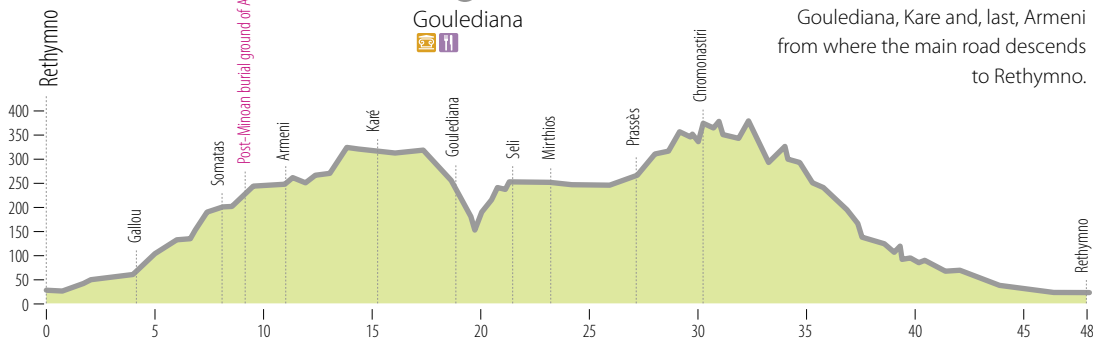


Arkadi, watercolour of Edward Lear





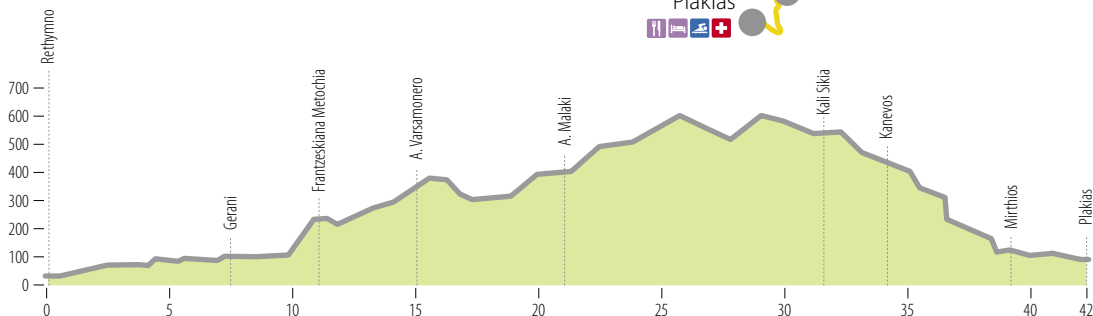
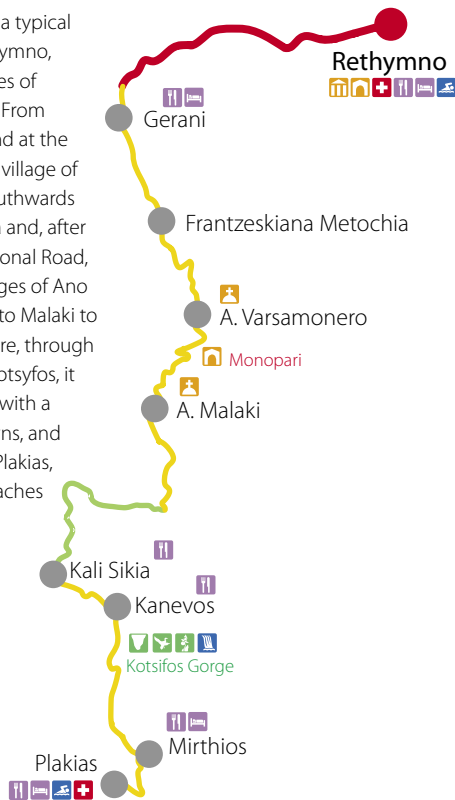
The road from Rethymno leads to the village of Gallos where the University Campus is situated, and continues south reaching the post-Minoan burial ground of Armeni. From here, a dirt road leads eastward to the north slopes of Vrysina up to Chromonastiri. It is worth stopping over at the Byzantine chapel of the Virgin Mary of Keras. The dirt road leads to Prases from where it continues south towards the dam of Potami. Shortly after the beautiful bridge of Prases, a fork to the right leads to Myrthio and then through the villages of Seli, Goulediana, Kare and, last, Armeni from where the main road descends to Rethymno.





Kotsifos Gorge

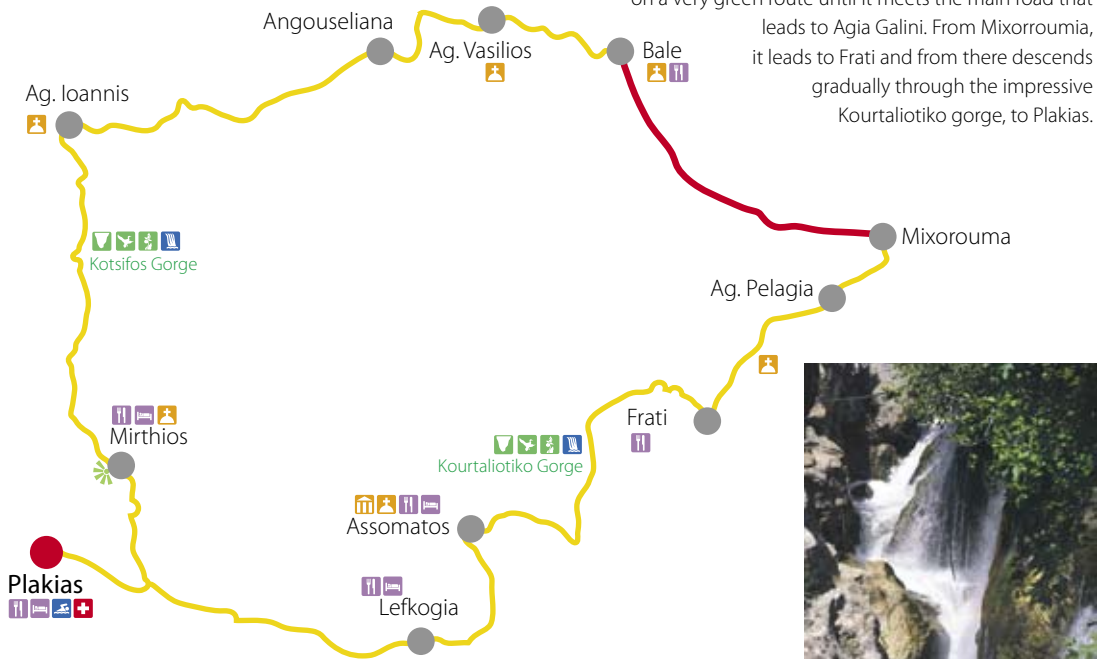
This beautiful route offers a typical view to the inland of Rethymno, as it passes through a series of relatively unknown roads. From the New National Road and at the height of the picturesque village of Gerani, the route leads southwards to Frantzeskiana Metochia and, after crossing over the Old National Road, it passes through the villages of Ano Varsamonero, Ano and Kato Malaki to end at Kali Sykia. From here, through the impressive gorge of Kotsyfios, it reaches Myrthio, a village with a panoramic view and taverns, and finally descends towards Plakias, a spot with wonderful beaches and developed tourism.



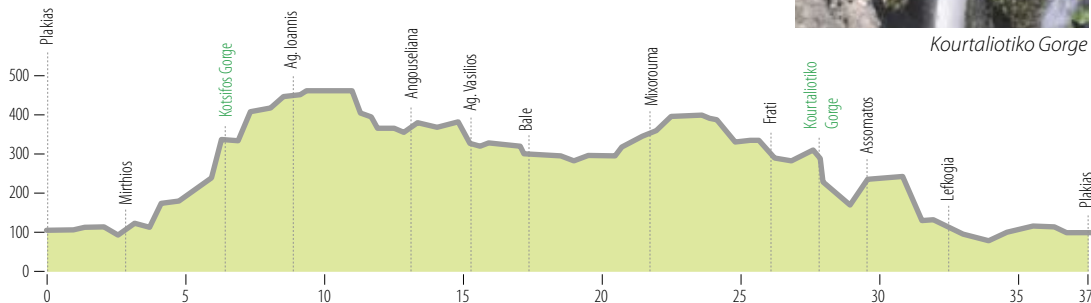
11 Plakias – Kotsifos Gorge & Kourtaliotiko

37 km. / Road Bicycle

A beautiful route for nature-lovers connecting two impressive gorges. From Plakias, the road descends towards Myrthio and the Gorge of Kotsifos. It continues eastwards on a very green route until it meets the main road that leads to Agia Galini. From Mixorroumia, it leads to Frati and from there descends gradually through the impressive Kourtaliotiko gorge, to Plakias.



Kourtaliotiko Gorge





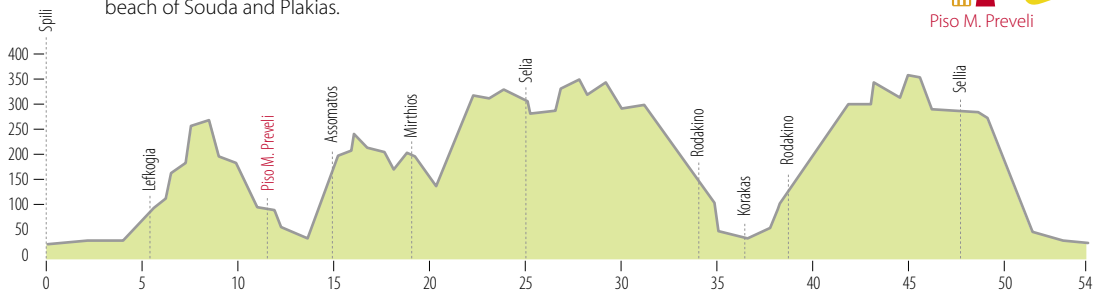
Plakias

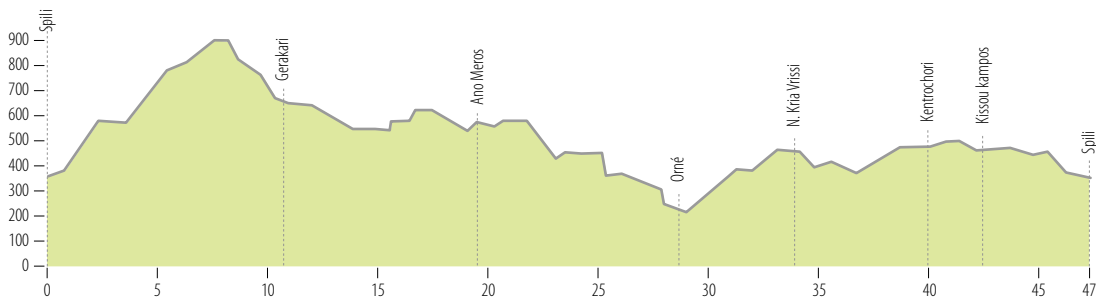
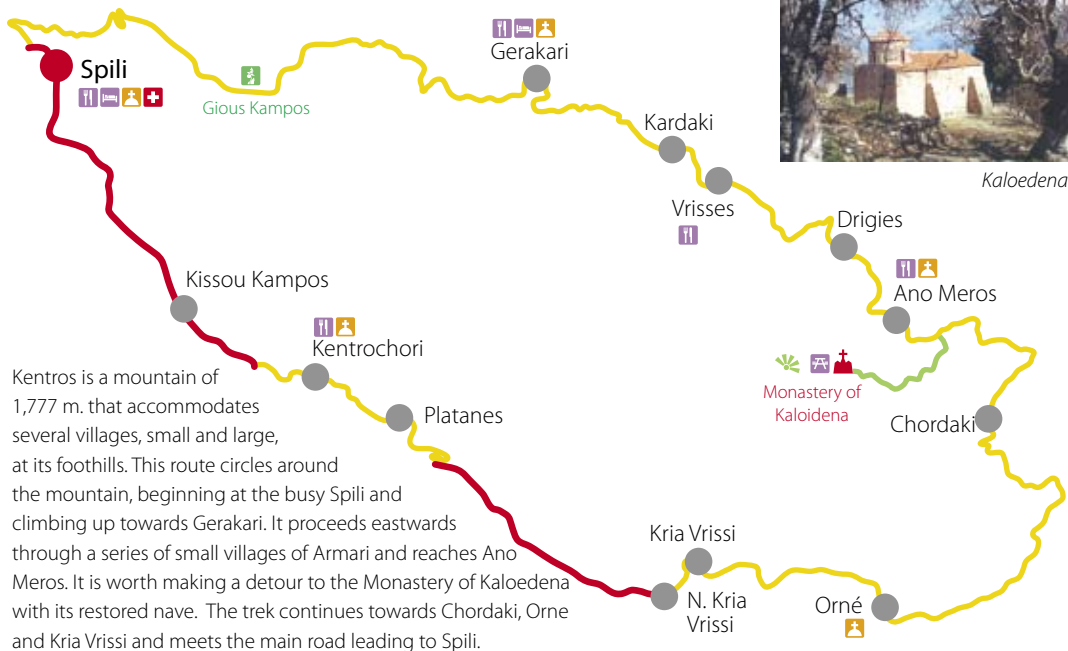


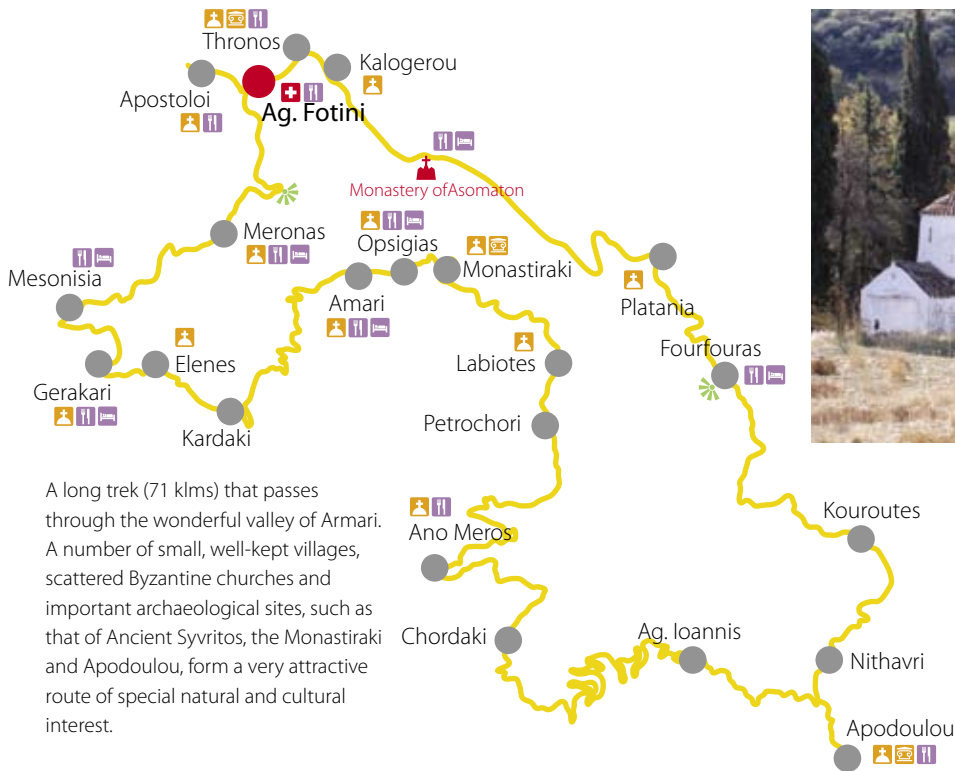
Preveli Monastery



A few of the most beautiful parts of the prefecture and the most significant religious monuments encountered on this route are situated near and around bustling Plakias. From Plakias and towards the east, the road leads to Lefkogia and Giannou and from there to the Historical Monastery of Piso Preveli and the abandoned Monastery of Pano Preveli. It continues on to Asomato, Mariou, Myrthio and Selia, offering a beautiful view to the sea throughout almost the entire journey. It ends towards the beach of Korakas at Rodakino from where it turns back to Selia to climb up towards the beach of Souda and Plakias.

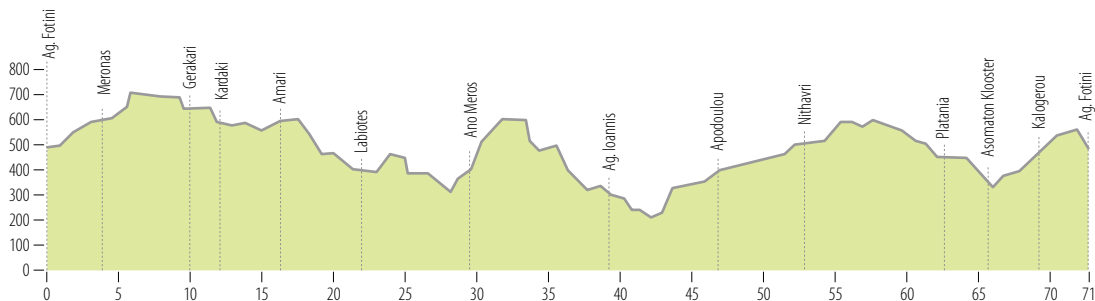






Agia Paraskevi

A long trek (71 kms) that passes through the wonderful valley of Armari. A number of small, well-kept villages, scattered Byzantine churches and important archaeological sites, such as that of Ancient Syvritos, the Monastiraki and Apodoulou, form a very attractive route of special natural and cultural interest.



Rethymno

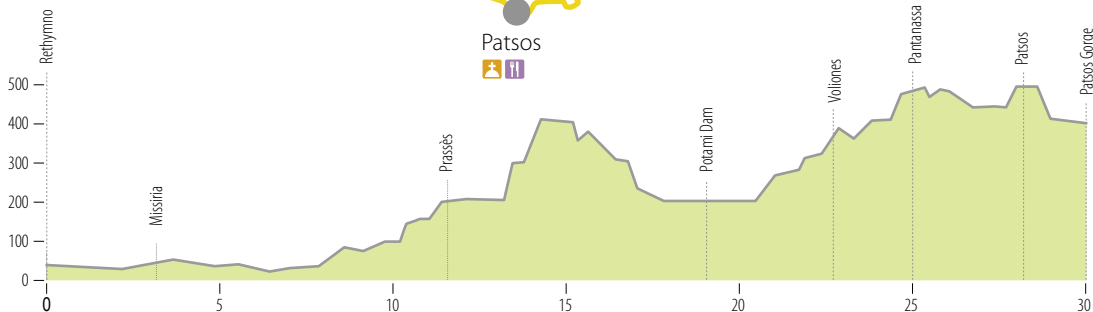
The Amariotiko road from Rethymno leads to Prases and from there to the lake of Potami Dam. The route is full of greenery and offers an impressive view towards the Prasano gorge. After the lake, it meets the villages of Voliones, Pantanassa and Patsos, all with significant Byzantine churches. A little after Patsos, the road leads to the entrance of the gorge with the same name where the cave church of Saint Andrew is situated.



Potami Dam



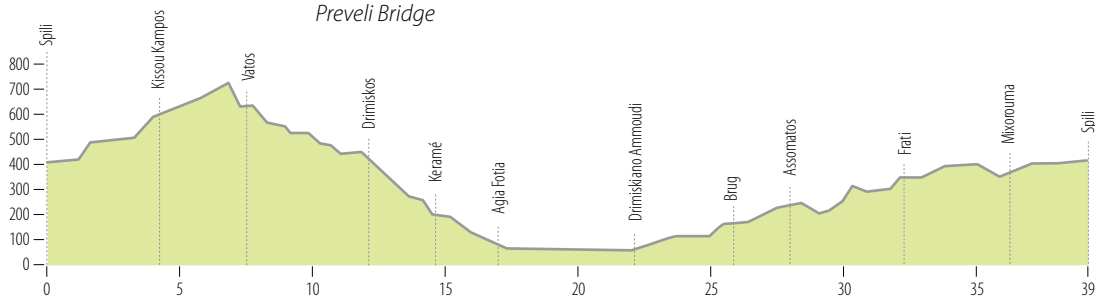
Patsos Gorge



The central road leads southwards from Spili on the Kissou Plain and passes through the villages of Aktounta, Vatos, Ardaktos and Drimiskos, ending at the traditional settlement of Kerame. From here, it heads towards the famous beaches of Kerame and Lingres, while a cross-road towards the west leads to the beach of Drimiskiano Ammoudi, next to Lake Preveli. The dirt road continues northwards and meets the paved road leading southwards to the Monastery of Preveli and northwards to Asomatos. It passes through the Kourtaliotiko Gorge and, at its exit, turns to the right towards Frati and Mixorrouma where it meets the main road that leads to Spili.



Preveli Bridge





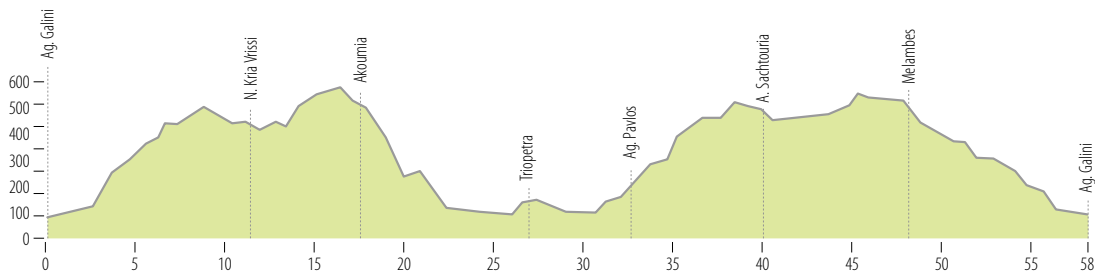
Agia Galini



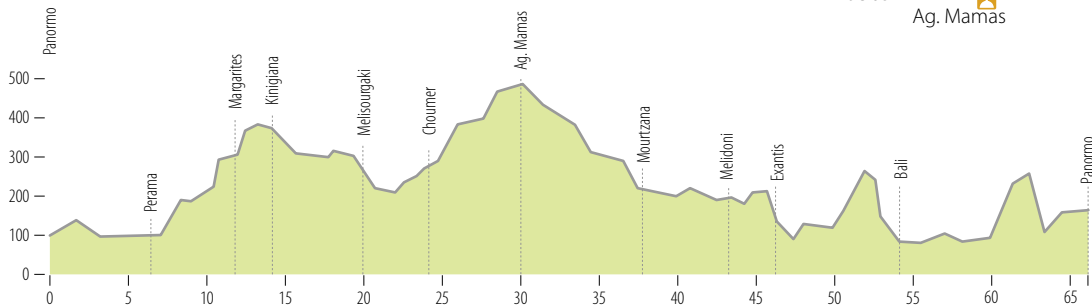
Agios Pavlos



An interesting route from Agia Galini towards the most beautiful beaches of Triopetra and Agios Pavlos. The road, from the touristic resort of Agia Galini, climbs up towards Akoumia, a beautiful village with significant Byzantine churches. The road from here descends southwards to the beaches of Akoumiani Gialia and Triopetra, offering an amazing view throughout almost the entire route. A dirt road from Triopetra leads to the cove of Agios Pavlos and from there it climbs up towards Sachtouria and then to the historical village of Melambes, from where it descends towards Agia Galini on one of the most beautiful routes of the prefecture.



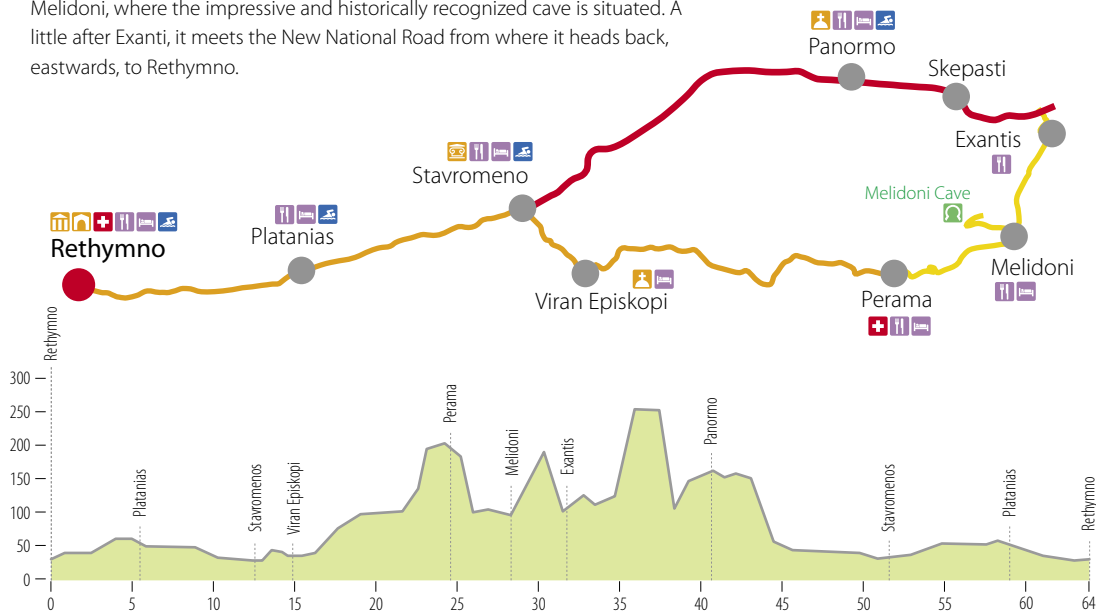
A large circular route ideal for seeing the beautiful villages of Kato Mylopotamo. The road from the coastal Panormo leads to Perama and from there to picturesque Margarites, which is a pretty village with beautiful Byzantine churches and a rich ceramic tradition. From here it passes through a number of small picturesque villages with special architecture and many Byzantine and Venetian monuments. It meets the Old National Road at Mourtzana and heads towards Agia and Melidoni, two beautiful, pristine villages. From here it emerges on the New National Road and heads eastwards to the cosmopolitan Bali or westwards to head back to Panormo.

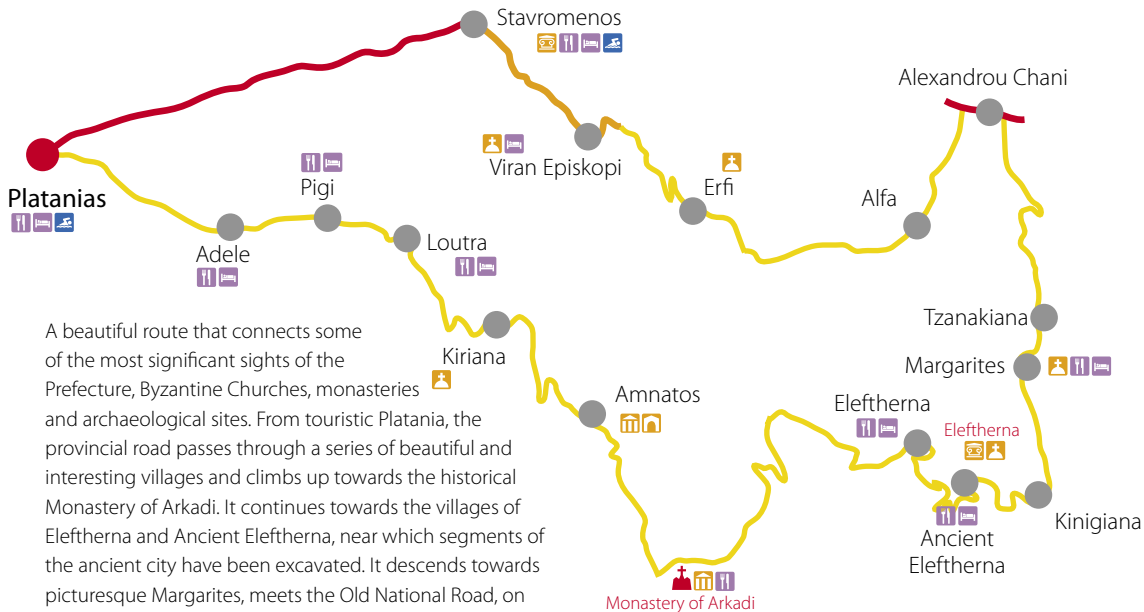




Melidoni

A large part of this trek is on the North road axis of the Prefecture. It begins from Rethymno and, via the Old National Road parallel to the sea; it reaches Stavromeno and continues towards Perama. From there, it follows the fork for Melidoni, where the impressive and historically recognized cave is situated. A little after Exanti, it meets the New National Road from where it heads back, eastwards, to Rethymno.





A beautiful route that connects some of the most significant sights of the Prefecture, Byzantine Churches, monasteries and archaeological sites. From touristic Platania, the provincial road passes through a series of beautiful and interesting villages and climbs up towards the historical Monastery of Arkadi. It continues towards the villages of Eleftherna and Ancient Eleftherna, near which segments of the ancient city have been excavated. It descends towards picturesque Margarites, meets the Old National Road, on which it continues a little further and meets the crossroads towards Alpha, Erphous and Viran Episkopi, where it once again meets the Old National Road and returns to Rethymno through Stavromeno.



Eleftherna



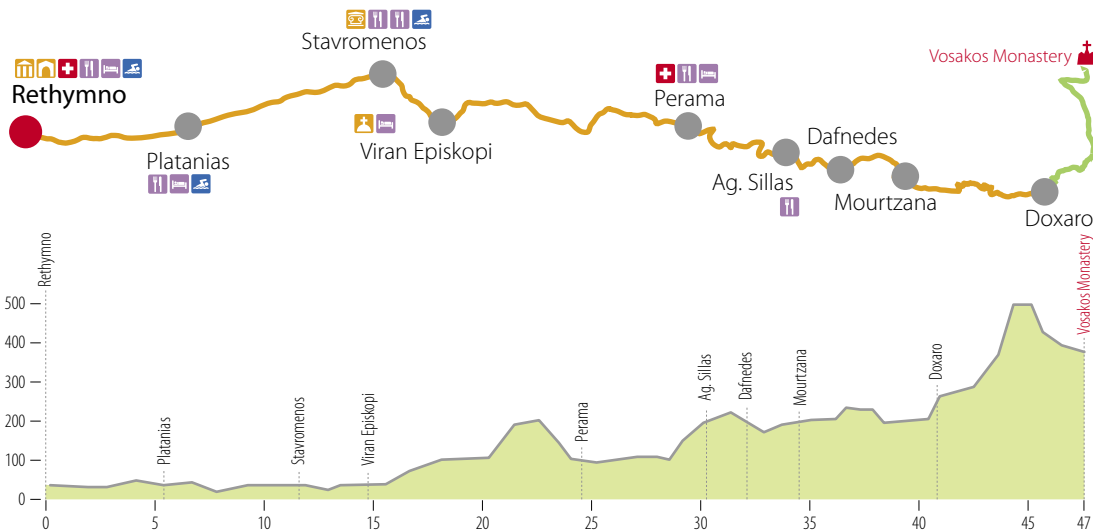
21 Rethymno – Vosakos Monastery

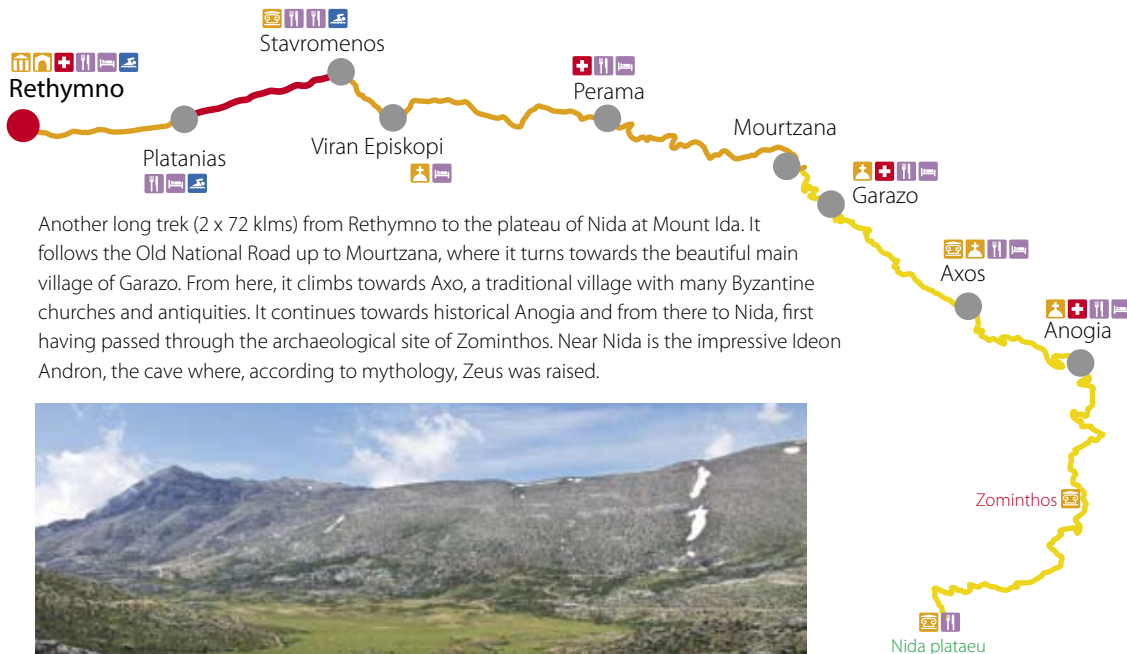
47 km. / Road & Mountain Bicycle

A long trek (2 x 47 kllms) from Rethymno to Doxaro on the Old National Road. From Doxaro, a dirt road leads to the restored Monastery of Vosakos. The furrows at the side of this road are testament to Crete's geological history. The return may be from either Aloidess or Sises and then from the New National Road.



Vosakos Monastery

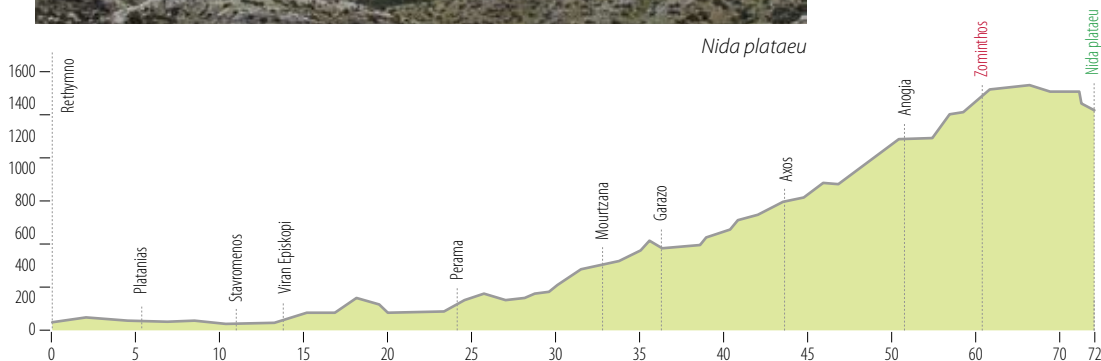



















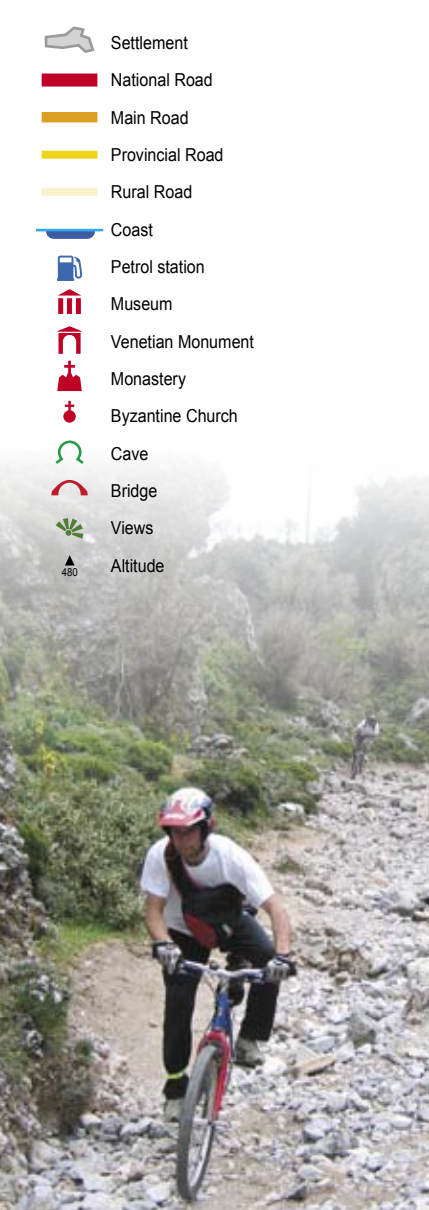
Another long trek (2 x 72 kmls) from Rethymno to the plateau of Nida at Mount Ida. It follows the Old National Road up to Mourtzana, where it turns towards the beautiful main village of Garazo. From here, it climbs towards Axo, a traditional village with many Byzantine churches and antiquities. It continues towards historical Anogia and from there to Nida, first having passed through the archaeological site of Zominthos. Near Nida is the impressive Ideon Andron, the cave where, according to mythology, Zeus was raised.

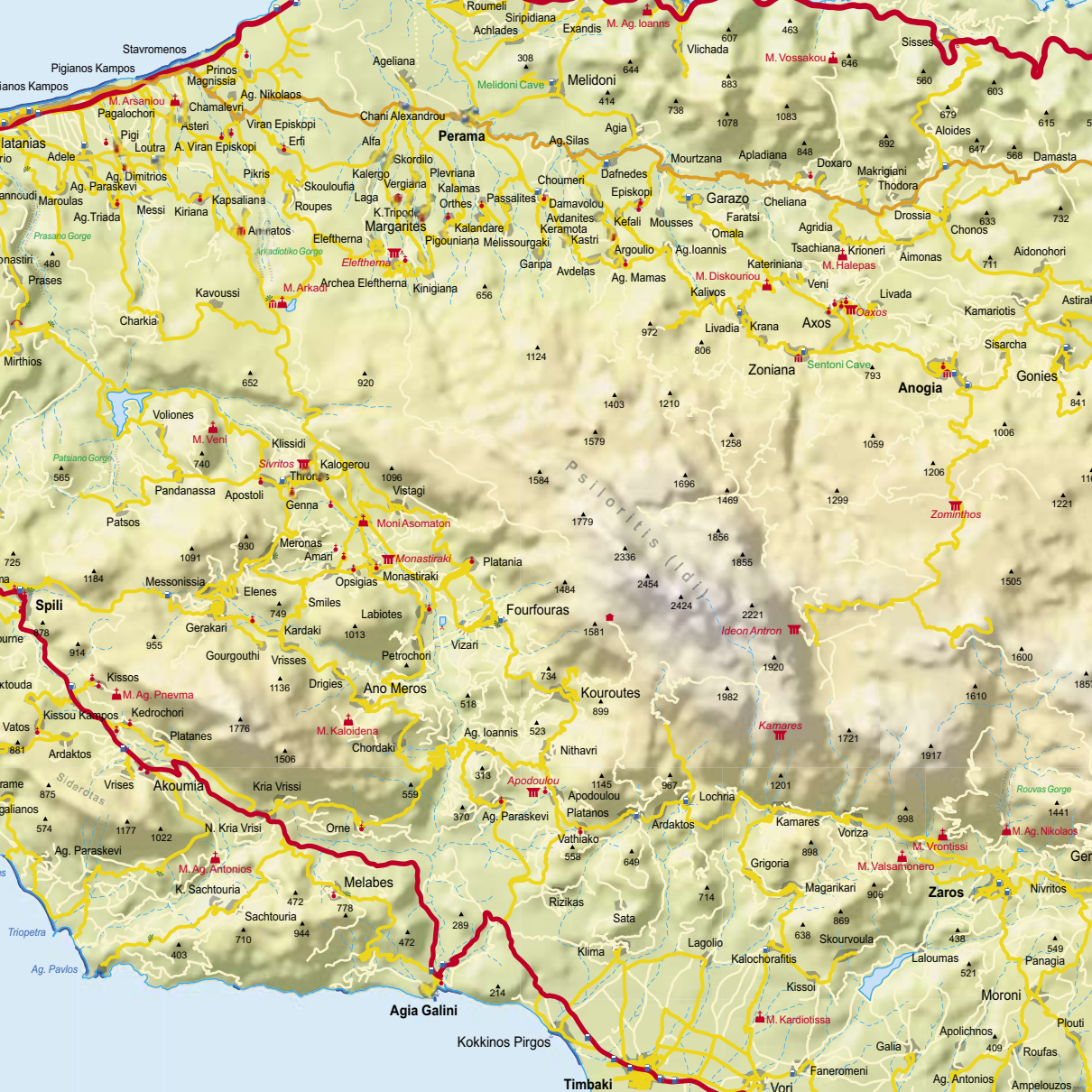


Nida plateau



-  Settlement
-  National Road
-  Main Road
-  Provincial Road
-  Rural Road
-  Coast
-  Petrol station
-  Museum
-  Venetian Monument
-  Monastery
-  Byzantine Church
-  Cave
-  Bridge
-  Views
-  Altitude





ALTERNATIVE TOURISM AGENCIES

1. Agia Galini Travel

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2. The happy walker

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3. Nature & Adventure Tourist Agency

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4. Discovery safari

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5. Tourism Office ' Odyseas the cycliste'

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