

After we had been at Knossos on March the 24<sup>th</sup>, we drove a little detour to Archanes, which is a little further inland.

Archanes.  
Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#)



Before we came to Archanes, we drove past an aqueduct that we had to have some pictures of. The place here is called Agia Irini. The aqueduct was built to provide water to Heraklion. Now there are a jackdaw nests in all cavities in the aqueduct.

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#)



After we had been in Archanes, we drove further east. Right outside [Neapoli](#) we noticed these old windmills up on the hillside.

Towards Agios Nikolaos, we drove over the hills to [Plaka](#), located just off the island of Spinalonga. Up on the hills, we drove through the two small villages [Kasteli Fournis](#) and [Fourni](#) ([Link](#)).



Here begins the descent towards Plaka.



Spinalonga seen from the hills.



Down in Plaka we look towards the island of Spinalonga. To the we can see the Spinalonga peninsula.



It seems that tourist boats had begun to go, but we did not intend to go over there.



We thought it was sufficient to take pictures of the island from the mainland. According to Wikipedia, so this island was once firmly connected with the peninsula of Spinalonga. In 1529 it was artificially carved off from the mainland by defense considerations and a fortress was built on top of the ruins of an ancient acropolis in 1579. Spinalonga was used as leper colony from 1903 up to 1957.

[Link 1](#)

Further along the road we drove through Elounda, which was an idyllic area.

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#)



In Agios Nikolaos we spent the night on [Sunbeam Hotel](#).  
It is fairly central.



The room was OK.



Agios Nikolaos is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in Crete with 8500 inhabitants in the town itself. The city has three faces to the sea: the lake with fishing boats, Kitroplatia beach and the marina. The lake is called Voulismeni. It is connected to the sea by a narrow inlet. It is surrounded by cafes and restaurants, but now in the winter it is pretty quiet here. Here we see the lake closest with bay outside.

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#) [Link 4](#) [Link 5](#)



A cat is greeting us outside the hotel.



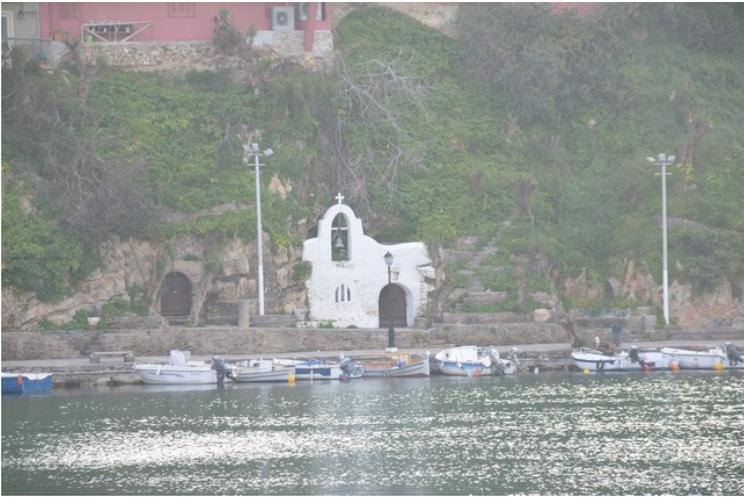
A short walk below the hotel is an open-air stage.



Below are several images from around the sea of Voulosnemi.



The bridge that goes across the inlet.



By sea there is a small chapel.



The next pictures are from the bay outside the lake.





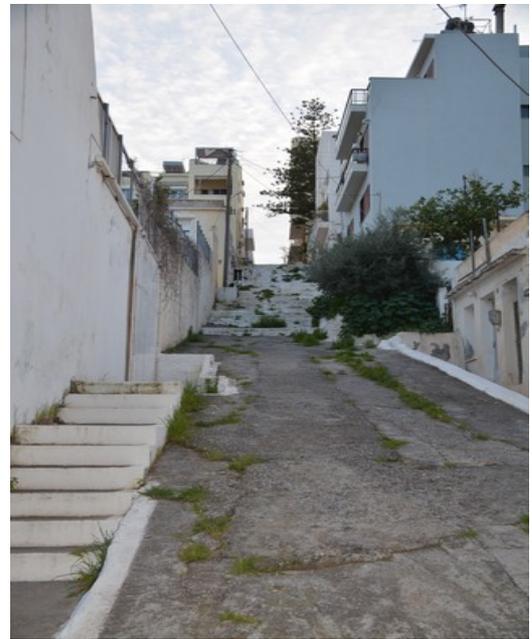
This is from a square up in the city.



Here we ate good pasta dishes. The marina is in the rear to the left.



One of the main streets above the sea.



The hotel was situated up on a hill. Here we are on the way up. Here it is steep on both sides.



On the 25<sup>th</sup> it started raining while we were down by the lake to eat breakfast. After breakfast we continued our round-trip.

This is at a mountain village called Kritsa, located just south of Agios Nikolaos.

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#) [Link 4](#)



A few kilometers north of Kritsa we had planned to look at some archaeological excavations of an ancient town called Lato. It was one of the main towns in this area. It sits on a hill and it was windy and raining, so we chose not to go into the area anyway.

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#) [Link 4](#)



When we drove down again we have the view to Kritsa at a distance.



We also thought to visit Gournia, located on the main road further east, but there it was closed, so we had to just drive on. We got some pictures of the area from the main road. This is one of the few Minoan towns that has been completely excavated. This was a city of ordinary people. Not a fortress. It appears that it was inhabited from 3000 - 1200 BC

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link2](#) [Link 3](#)



On the road eastward toward Siteia, we drove through multiple small places:

- Pachia Ammos: [Link 1](#)
- Kavousi: [Link 1](#)
- Sfaka: [Link 1](#)
- Skopi: [Link 1](#)

Views towards Siteia.

We did not stop in Siteia in the first place. We drove further east.



We made a stop at Toplou monastery.

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#) [Link 4](#) [Link 5](#) [Link 6](#)



A windmill outside the monastery.

It was founded around the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, probably on the ruins of a former monastery. The monastery was sacked by the Knights of Malta in 1530 and crushed in 1612 in a powerful earthquake. The Venetians agreed to build it up again because of its strategic position. The monastery flourished until the surrender of the eastern Crete to the Turks in 1646, after which it was abandoned for a long time. In 1704 it received special privileges from the patriarch and was inhabited again.

The monks were slaughtered by the Turks in 1821 during the Greek Revolution, and it was left deserted to 1828. In 1866, under the massive Cretan rebellion against the Turks, it was once destroyed. During the German occupation of 1941-1944, the monastery gave shelter to resistance fighters. When this was discovered by the Germans, the abbot and two monks were tortured and executed.



A group of statues.



A church on the other side of the main road.



After we had made a stop at the monastery, we drove on towards Vai. On the heath over there the vegetation is very sparingly, as we see here.



So we arrived at Vai. It is the largest palm forest in Crete.  
[Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#) [Link 4](#)



Restaurant.



The beach.



Palms.



A lot of palms in the valley behind the beach.

After we had been here, we drove through Palaikastro: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#) [Link 4](#) back to Sitia.

Sitia is the largest city in eastern Crete with approximately 9000 inhabitants.

Links: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#)



This was our driving route that day.



Here we see Sitia in the distance.

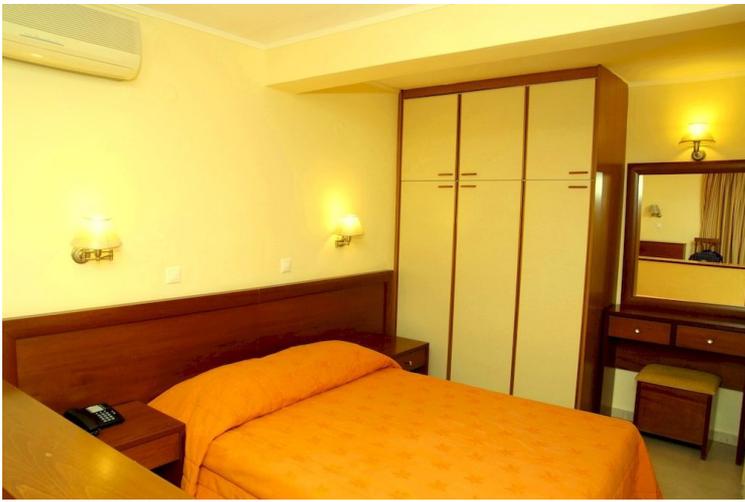


The hotel.



The reseption.

In Sitia we had booked at Hotel Elysee.



The room.



A large sofa in the room + a huge roof terrace outside.



Some images taken from the roof.





Next day we had thought to look at the castle in Sitia, but it started to rain, so we changed our mind. Here is a picture of the fortress.  
[Link 1](#) [Link 2](#) [Link 3](#)



Then we drove further south through tiny villages: [Piskokefalo](#), [Maronia](#), [Agios Georgios](#), Lithines ([Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)), [Pilalimata](#), [Analipsi](#)



A church on a hilltop at a little place called Sikia.



Here we come to the south of the island. We have just driven through Makrighalos([Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)).



The road further west.



We are arriving at Ierapetra([Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)), which we can see in the distance.

Between Makrighalos and Ierapetra there are small beach resorts along the coast, such as [Koutsoras](#), [Mavros Kolibos](#), [Achlia](#), [Galini](#), Ferma ([Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)) and [Koutsounari](#).

After we have passed Ierapetra there are more beach resorts, such as [Gra Lygia](#), [Nea Anatoli](#), [Kopanes](#) og [Myrtos](#).

Behind Myrtos the road goes inland through mountainous landscapes.

Small villages are scattered along the road, such as [Pefkos](#), [Amiras](#), [Viannos](#), [Martha](#), [Skinias](#), [Demati](#), [Pirgos](#), [Asimi](#), [Agii Deka](#),



Here we are looking towards [Viannos](#).



View from Skinias towards [Demati](#).



We had booked at a hotel in [Moires](#), [Hotel Olympic](#).



This was our driving route that day.

The following day was still gray and rainy. We didn't like to go sightseeing in weather like that so we went the quickest way back to Almyrida.