

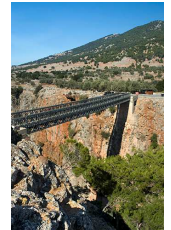


Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

The chapel Agios Ioannis

Hiking to the Kormokopos-Cave at the Sfakia (South Crete)

An article from our NLUK members *Diana P. Bailey* and *Maria Eleftheria*, Crete



The picture within the title bar shows the [also to be used by car] bridge to *Aradena*.

Explore the southwest of Crete, if you want to feel the elementary power of the island, if you love seclusion and silence, and besides are interested in fresco painting.

The chapel of *Agio Ioannis*, one of the lesser-known places of worship in the *Sfakia*, and the associated village of same name can be reached from the small coastal town *Chora Sfakion*. You best supply yourselves at the latest here, because good opportunity hardly exists later.



It goes uphill to the plateau of *Anopoli* in numerous serpentines and further on towards *Aradena* (see fig. left). In the settlement, once abandoned due to a blood feud, live in the meantime a few people. *Aradena* can be attained with the car exclusive across the structural steelwork occupied with solid planks, which stretches itself over the *Aradena-gorge*. Until the building of the impressive bridge in the year 1986, the way to the villages *Aradena* and to the further west lying *Agio Ioannis* led through the deep cleft (therefore see our leaflet at: [<http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter/03-04E.pdf>]).

Behind the bridge the driveway branches to the left, towards *Agio Ioannis*. The place is reached after approximately 10 driving minutes.





The entrance to the village (picture first page bottom left) is usually guarded by multi leashed dogs. The few residents are rarely to be seen. An asphalted road leads left to the surrounded by trees, two-bay church which is unfortunately locked (picture first page bottom right). Neighboring is an obviously quite large cistern. From here the partial bordered with stones footpath leads first downward and then uphill. Knobby, old Olive trees line the way on the right side.



The chapel of Holy John (Agios Ioannis) is reached after about 15 minutes. The place offers a wonderful prospect. A tomb is located behind the unimpressive building. The year 1889 is to be recognized on the stone above the entrance of the praying house.



The inside of the chapel surprises with well received frescoes. Deep cracks cross the brick-work, but it is spanking clean. Someone fastened blooms with wax to a mural short before we attend.

Who is free from giddiness and light on his feet, can now make a hiking to the Kormokopos cave, a former rebel bolt-hole.

Therefore drive or walk the main street a bit into the village. Short after another right-hand bend is right upside the street, behind a assembly of high cypress trees, a small locked chapel. The first blue marker with arrow is to be seen on the driveway (see at page 4, 2nd picture row right)

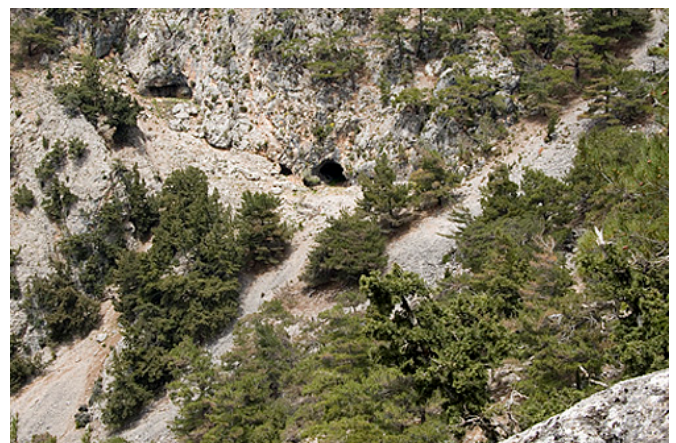


The path leads downhill from here.



After half of the walk the cover of a cistern hardly stands out against the environment (picture above right). The further way leads through almost bosky territory. Altogether the route is very well marked. Stone manikins engage the attention again and again. Umpteen orchids ¹⁾ give pleasure to the eyes in spring.

Then the way becomes steeper (picture left); this is not a path for anxious person. After well 10 minutes a first view of the cave.



It is a leafy bower which also preserves from storm; thus the cavern still serves also in our days as shelter for shepherds and herds. It goes well 15 meters into the mountain. Fortunately little garbage is to be found here. Bleating is to perceive from far. Otherwise silence.



The clear water of a source beguiles to drink from the hollow hand only a few meters away from the cave entrance. This is a magic place. Hardly surprising that the Kormokopos cave is gladly used by many native families with children for an adventure weekend in the country.



Also we spend some time here, rest, empower ourselves, before we go back the way in reverse direction.



1) About the orchids of Crete see our homepage at: [\[http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/en/pflanzen_en.htm\]](http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/en/pflanzen_en.htm); here you will find leaflets with descriptions to 61 of about 65 orchids occurring at Crete.