

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

Walking-tour through the *Imbros-gorge* / South Crete
(A article of our member *Maria Eleftheria*, *Agios Nektarios* / South Crete)



The most well-known canyon of Crete is the *Samaria*, but there are some other interesting and less overflowed gorges in the *Sfakia*, which are also worth an investigation. One of those is about 11 miles long *Imbros-gorge* (*Imvriotiko canyon*) which in the past was the way from *Chora Sfakion* to the north coast. Parts of the old, formerly paved mule path are still in good condition (**Picture left**). Spring, the time when in advance to the all-season vegetation from cypress, pine, maple and oak trees some rare plants appear (**Picture right**: “*Orchis quadripunctata*”^[1]) and a infatuate smell inspire so the bees to fly is the most beautiful time for a hike through this gorge.



^[1] Day of photograph: April.10 2008. *Orchis quadripunctata*: the circulation area of this kind of orchid covers south Italy, the south Dalmatian costal region, Greece and some the Greek islands. Thereby it is a central Mediterranean flora element. To be found at Crete are *Orchis quadripunctata* subsp. *quadripunctata*, as well as *Orchis sezekiana* with *Orchis anatolica* subsp. *Anatolica*.



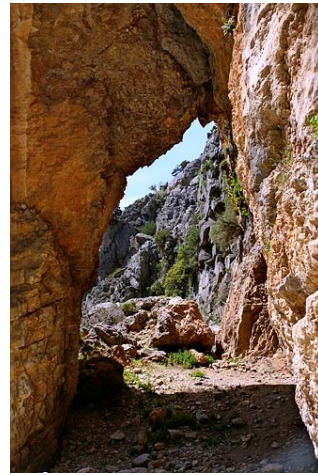
There are two possibilities to start, the relatively simple with approximately 3 hours time estimated migration. If you come from the North, between *Rethymnon* and *Chania* the road to *Chora Sfakion* branches within the village of *Vrisses* into the mountains and leads across the *Askifou* plane further on to the small village of *Imbros* which lies 780 meters above sea level. The mountain pass which in older times adventurously wound through the mountain is today a comfortable tarmac road. Already in the village there are various signs which you can follow, but the more delightful way begins outside the village after the last taverna from where a path leads down to the gorge (**Picture left**).

There is also a small stone house at which the admission fee of €2 is written down. However, if at all, the money is taken only during main season.

My company and I selected the ascent from the south coast. The entrance to the *Imbros* is here eastward briefly behind the place *Komitades*. The broad, parched riverbed is good to recognize from the road. The largest part of the way leads across loose flint and crushed stone rock, which are replaced only now and then from short distances of the old, fastened way. Therefore I recommend wearing suitable footwear. Also absolutely sufficient drinking water should be carried forward, since the cistern of the lay-by, which is on half distance, is unfortunately contaminated. Even in the summer it would be intelligent to pack up clothes for covering because with the offered place in „the taxi“, to the return trip to the starting point of the migration, it can very probably concern the open loading area of a Pickups. My companion and I made it completely the Greek way: within the village of *Imbros* we waited at the

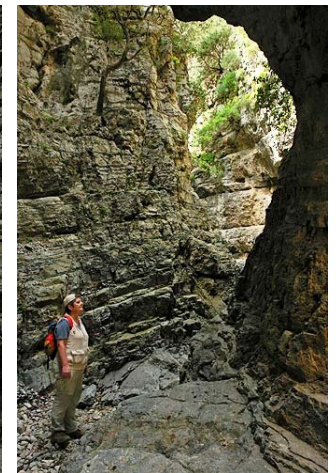
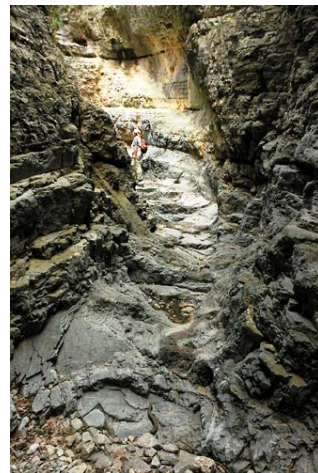
roadside, kept the thumb high at the sight of an approaching car, and were carried forward to the branch after *Frangokastello* from a friendly man of where we sauntered over *Komitades* the remaining 2 km to our vehicle.

By the way, I enjoyed the *Imbros*-gorge for the whole seven hours, since so much interest shifted me into being astonished and I had to continue and stay again and again: in order to observe the various, fascinating plant world, the bizarre, highly rising rock formations, larger and smaller caves (**Picture left**), the impressive rock-gate (**centre Picture**), the tight gorge passage (**Picture right**)



And also the lay-by at the half way point, decorated by visitors with various hotchpotch (**Pictures left & right**), was more than only worth a short view to me.

Last but not least some impressions those surely make desire on this worthwhile and much recommended walking-tour.



Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling