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

## The Greek village shop (Tante-Emma-Laden)

“Pantopoleia” (Mini Market) - an experience for the senses

A article from our NLUK member *Stephanie Krips*, Gournes (Crete)



**Primary note:** “**Tante-Emma-Laden**” (village shop [UK] or mom-and-pop-store [US]) is a common name in Germany for a small store, which offers food and other convenience goods. It’s characteristic that the store is often very small that only one person, who frequently is the shop owner personally - just called “aunt Emma” – work there; therefore see also an article at *Wikipedia* [<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tante-Emma-Laden> (German) or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mom-and-pop> (English)] In Greek (and at Crete) they are known as “**Pantopoleia**” (Mini-Market). While in Western and Central Europe the “Aunt Emma shops” gave way to the large supermarket chains, we still find them in Crete in many places.



It is hard to stir in these “**Pantopoleia**”. There are a great many products housed and offered at a small space. Someone with the stature of *Bud Spencer* should not go in, the person gets surely stuck somewhere. Everyone else should treat oneself the pleasure to purchase at least once during a visit to Crete in a “**Pantopoleia**”; see fig. *Mrs. Vangelio* within her Mini-Market at Zofori.

In Crete there are still everywhere many of these small shops, even

within large cities, which offer “almost everything” (food and also a bit more); in addition they also offer what is missing in large supermarkets, this certain service: they know the customers and welcome them, missing them if someone wasn’t at the store for 2 or 3 days, then ask very worried “were you sick?”; they know what everyone prefers, which fruit or vegetables, which olive variety, which cheese, which bread, they even know the cigarette brand of customers. There is always time for them and you will find fresh, fragrant crispy bread, cheese directly from the sheepherder, what else is now lacking for a spontaneous picnic?



Maybe some fruits? If you're lucky you get, according to season, figs, apples, grapes, etc. fresh harvested from the garden. Olives? Of course not these in the glass, but the self potted. Perhaps wine? House wine from barrel, or even Raki.

During my last visit they just had fresh picked pears. Although very small but so intense in flavour, as it comes in the dream

Those who would like to have not only a picnic, but really want to shop, get e.g. flour, salt, rice, lentils, broad beans, pea, almonds etc. weighed from big bags. Want to make "Dolmades"? You get the vine leaves ready for further processing, of course not in the glass from the factory, but homemade.

Fresh eggs? Here you know, they are fresh and not from an "egg fabric" but from a local of the village. These eggs are of course not in the 6 series plastic packaging, but offered in any dish (or bags); see **fig.**



Look at one or more of these small, sometimes quite dark shops at Crete; it's an experience for the senses!



Finally a note: in many villages, the mini market is also the post office. Since there are no street names, the entire incoming mail is delivered to a collection point and every resident comes there to pick them. Pleasant for men in Crete that there very often a *Kafenion* is close to it!

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*Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling*