

Villages on the Ierapetra plain



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Kentri

Kentri is a village in the municipality of Ierapetra. It is built amphitheatrically on a hill 50m height from the surface of the sea, in the Centre of the Plains of Ierapetra and is 3 km from the city.

Historical sources date back to 1369. The first name of the village was Katsogianni, then Kedrio from Kedri River, Kentri during and from 1930.

Kentri was one of the four largest pottery centres in Crete. Until the mid-20th century has worked twenty or so pottery shops, which employed almost half of all families in the village. In the period 1950-1970, there was a bloom of pottery production. In the 1970s, the potters left their work, due to the appearance of cheap and aluminium or plastic utensils.

Today the profession of the Potter has disappeared. The inhabitants are engaged in agriculture and especially in greenhouse crops. The village maintains its narrow roads and although it has been renovated with the rebuilding of many new homes, there is the feeling of the old picturesque village with its small square and coffee shops.

Walk the streets, visit the small churches of the previous century, drink coffee or raki with delicious homemade snacks in the coffee shops of the square, participate in festivals of Agia Triada, Agia Paraskevi and visit the village's elementary school built in 1929 at the top of the Hill, in "Kale", as it is called. The view from there is impressive to the south over Ierapetra and villages, and beyond the vastness of the Libyan Sea.

In the west, you find the Church of Agios Dimitrios. Around there, until early last century, survived the lepers of Lasithi before transferred to Spinalonga.

In spring 2018 a farmer was attempting to park his vehicle beneath a shaded olive grove on his property when the ground gave way, forcing him to find a new parking spot. As he started to drive off, the unidentified local noticed a four-foot wide hole that had emerged in the patch of land he'd just vacated. It was an ancient Minoan grave, about 3 400 years old.



Vainia

With fantastic views of Ierapetra and built just three kilometres away from the town, lies the village of Vainia. In 1932 the name was Gianintsi, probably due to the strong influence of a Russian settler with rich charities.

In the area, there are several churches and there is a big celebration in honour of St. Panteleimonas on July 27. Characteristic of artoklasies (breaking bread), similar miracles that came with the reputation of the Church.

Above the village Vainia of Ierapetra, you will meet the top of Stavros (Cross) with the white chapel of the Holy Cross in panoramic point that controls the entire isthmus of Ierapetra. Just a few meters away from the chapel, there is an unknown and forgotten Venetian tower. Its square shape surrounds a semicircular prominence, like as artistic edging.

The tradition of the village says that this tower belonged to some notable of the medieval era whose properties went up to the Plain of Ierapetra. Water was abundant in the area from the spring approximately one kilometre southeast of the Tower and is called Vainia (this spring gave its name to the Muslim village of Vainia). Just off the great tower, there are the ruins of a Basilica which was dedicated to Agia Sophia.

This tower has a base of the rebels against the Turks of Ierapetra. Here, in mid-October 1866, the Turks attacked the rebels and forced them away.



Kato Chorio

Just seven kilometres from Ierapetra lies Kato Chorio and nearby the villages Pano Chorio (the birthplace of the poet-writer Nikos Stratakis) and Papadiana (built amphitheatrically with spectacular views). Their strategic position in combination with the climate, abundant water, and highly productive soils are the reasons why the area has been inhabited since the Neolithic era, over seven thousand years back in the past.

A miniature clay figurine whose age is estimated between seven and eight thousand years shows the history and the importance of the settlement of Kato Chorio. In the past decades, it was one of the richest villages of Ierapetra.

A gathering place of the villagers is the large square, with its huge Sycamores, eucalyptus, pines, and of course the taverns.

Attractions:

Temple Metamorfoseos Sotiros in place Mansions, built in 1831 and has great carved wooden temples of different styles.

The Church of the Holy Trinity on the South end of the village, single-Aisled, rhythm Basilica, built in the late 17th century. It has a wonderfully carved iconostasis, despotic throne and shrine of the 19th century.

The Church of the assumption of Virgin Mary, majestic three-aisled church, rhythm Royal with a dome. Kept there old icons and religious books.

The chapel of Prophet Elias dominates throughout the area, built on a hill above from the village, with views of both the Aegean sea and the Libyan sea.



Episkopi

The village was once the seat of Bishop (Episkopos in Greek) and took its name after that. The village was established during the Minoan period, probably between 2500 and 2000 B.C. Like their Minoan predecessors, the present residents are employed mostly in agriculture, in the harvest of olives and the production of olive oil. Visit the village square, beneath the rich shade trees, where one can taste amazing delicacies with raki.

The village's main attraction is a small Byzantine church which was built at 961 A.C. with stones and the gaps between them filled with shells and pieces of bricks. It has been restored. The church is dedicated to Agios Georgios (Saint George) and Agios Charalambos. It is a religious, historic, but also an architectural monument of rare beauty. The murals inside have not survived but the ornate colourful wooden temple with two dragons on the edges impresses. Close to this church, the remains of an Early Byzantine church can be found.

Episkopi has been inhabited for thousands of years and is a place of great archaeological finds, which are exhibited in the archaeological museum of Ierapetra. The famous sarcophagus, with its impressive decoration, is one of the most important and best preserved from its period.

Attractions:

The Tower ' Koules ', built in 1868 by Hussein Pasha Ayni.

The Church of Panagia Eftatroylis in the Centre of the village, a large domed Basilica, built in 1900 with hewn stone.



Monastiraki

In the shadow of the imposing Canyon of Ha is the picturesque Monastiraki. A small village with a presence of centuries, with the first houses belong to monks, flourished in the 19th century, but gradually abandoned and for many years only one resident was staying in the area.

Today Monastiraki after systematic restorations of buildings and infrastructure is characterized as one of the most beautiful villages in the area. The objective was to create residences that will maintain, as much as possible, more elements of traditional Cretan architecture, based on wood, stone and steel, while simultaneously they maintain high aesthetics and functionalism. Typical old watermills and traditional taverns offer local dishes and an impressive view. Here you will find tranquillity and peace.

Its possible to stay in one of the traditional houses.



Vasiliki

Vasiliki is a small village with an old and a new part with famous cafés and the small square with a pond full of goldfish.

In the village, after systemic and long-term excavations, was found important archaeological findings that are considered of great importance for the determination of early Minoan technology. Some clay pots were both particularly and got the name of the village, having not found anything similar elsewhere.

The Minoan settlement was a typical Minoan village which, despite being destroyed by fire on a number of occasions, remained in use throughout most of the Minoan period. It's one of the first Minoan settlements with town-planning.

In the place "Venetsianos" lie the remains of a Paleochristian Venetsanos Temple (4th-6th century), who speculated that is built on the foundations of an older pagan temple.



Pachia Ammos

Overlooking the Bay of Mirabello and on the crossroad between the three major towns of the county (Ierapetra - Sitia - Agios Nikolaos), Pachia Ammos is located on the seaside.

Characteristic are the many taverns on the beach and of course, the great importance of Minoan settlement of Gournia. The blonde sandy beach that stretches in a large seafront is responsible apparently for the name with the first report in the 1630 but without recorded the village. It was created later, in the early 20th century, and evolved very quickly, with small tourist facilities and of course the famous fish taverns.

Now Pachia Ammos is known for the many events which attract crowds, especially in summer.

Pachia Ammos nowadays is the seat of the Institute for the study of the prehistoric Aegean, Eastern Crete curated systematic archaeological research in the region.

Attractions:

The Minoan town of Gournia, 2 km west of Pachia Ammos, who flourished around 1600 B.C., built regional on a little hill, on top of which there was a little palace square for the rituals.



Kavousi

It is built at the foot of two imposing at an altitude of 140 meters with a view of the planted all over with olive trees flatland and the waters of the Cretan Sea, Kavousi is a historic and really lively village that offers many activities and sights.

The exact etymology of its name remains unknown; however, in the Cretan dialect, it describes a small hole, a trough where water is gathered. The first historical registration with this name seems to have taken place in 1577, but the area has been being inhabited for thousands of years and this is obvious by the number of the Minoan settlements and rare ecclesiastical monuments that have been discovered in its surrounding area.

The square with the traditional coffeehouses at the centre of the village is a reference point and at a small distance, there are the churches of Saint Georgios and Twelve Apostles that are worth your attention.

Ascending towards the mountain of Afendis, we can see another great historical monument; an ancient and extremely impressive olive tree, almost 3 500 years old (the trunk about 5 000 years), with a huge trunk the diameter of which is more than 20 meters. It is one of the oldest trees in the world that has been declared a protected monument because of its adjacency with the Minoan settlements as well. In 2004, the inhabitants of the region of Ierapetra suggested the first female winner of the Marathon run at the Athens Olympic Games 2004 would be wreathed by a special ceremony.

The settlements of Avgos, Tsamantis and Drakalevri are the ones that are found next. They are now an excursion destination for the people of Kavousi, however, they hide memories of difficult periods since many were those who used to seek for a cover in the ratty peaks.

Just 3 kilometres from the centre of the village there is the beach of Tholo, a sandy beach with shallow waters and tamarisks. There are also evidence found about the age of the history of the village. The ruins of the Roman warehouses stand imposing next to the bathers in the summer, and after a short walk, you will find the remarkable chapel of Agios Antonios with its wall paintings.

Opposite the beach, Psira can be seen; an island that thousands of years ago formed a basic part of the Minoan civilization with a big port and a big city that was discovered at the beginning of the previous century. The only shipwreck of the Minoan era that has been found until today was there in 2006. The view of the island, and the whole bay of Mirambello, from the area of Platanos, on the east of the village, is very impressive.

More information about the sights around Kavousi <https://www.crete-today.com/kavousi/>

