

MUST-VISIT LOCATIONS OF NORTH-WEST CRETE

A cultural travel guide

Northwest Crete is a treasure trove of picturesque villages, each offering a unique glimpse into the island's rich history, culture, and natural beauty. From coastal havens to mountain retreats, these villages promise unforgettable experiences for every traveller. This guide highlights some of the must-visit villages, providing insights into their distinctive features, attractions, and cultural significance.

Plaka & Kokkino Chorio: Rich History

Close to Almyrida (also known as Almirida), in the Apokoronas region to the east of Chania, are two very popular villages Plaka & Kokkino Chorio.

Kokkino Chorio

Kokkino Chorio is renowned for its role in the 1964 filming of *“Zorba the Greek,”* with many of the villagers participating in the production!

Since the year 2000, the village has flourished as visitors from Northern Europe have uncovered its allure, enjoying the breathtaking views and picturesque sunsets over Souda Bay. Over time, new houses and villas have been constructed, with their owners renting them out to adventurous travellers eager to experience the true essence of Crete.

At that time, the village boasted just one traditional glass workshop, a single taverna, and no shops. However, the nearby Plaka offered a couple of good tavernas and a well-stocked shop for everyday needs. Today, Plaka presents a variety of tavernas, providing enough options for you to explore a different one each night during a week-long stay!

Plaka

If you're interested in exploring local attractions, Plaka features the *Folklore Museum of Gavalochori* and the *Ancient Theater of Aptera*.



You'll find an array of traditional tavernas, delightful local cafes, and charming shops in the heart of Plaka, particularly around Plaka Square. For those seeking relaxation or sunshine, *Koutalas Beach* and *Omprogialos* are essential spots to visit.

Just north of Plaka and Kokkino Chorio lies the city of Chania, renowned for its 14th-century Venetian harbour, winding streets, and waterfront dining options.

Chania Old Town: Diverse & Vibrant Culture

Chania Old Town is an excellent example of Crete's vibrant and diverse cultural heritage. It offers a harmonious blend of architectural beauty and historical insights that help unravel the area's captivating past. The old town is a fantastic place to explore the rich culture of Crete.



As you stroll through the narrow streets, you'll encounter beautiful Venetian architecture. Be sure to visit the lively *Agora Marketplace*, which features a bustling atmosphere filled with the scents of fresh

local produce and vibrant colors. This marketplace provides an excellent opportunity to interact with locals and gain a deeper understanding of the island's traditional culinary practices and food culture.

To delve into the ancient history of the region, visit the impressive Chania Archaeological Museum, located in the former Venetian Monastery of Saint Francis.

The museum showcases a remarkable collection of artifacts spanning various periods of Cretan history.

These exhibits offer insights into Crete's past, allowing visitors to appreciate the significance of the island's cultural heritage.

The Venetian Harbour

The Venetian harbour, located in Chania, is a picturesque area rich in history. As you stroll along the waterfront, you'll appreciate the charm and ambiance of the harbour. Quaint cafés and traditional tavernas offer a taste of authentic Cretan cuisine, featuring fresh seafood dishes.



While exploring the harbour, your attention will be drawn to the *Venetian Lighthouse*, an iconic symbol of Chania's maritime heritage. Dating back to the 16th century, the lighthouse is accessible to visitors and provides panoramic views of the harbour and the town. Additionally, the *Naval Museum of Crete* is nearby and showcases an impressive collection of nautical artifacts related to the maritime history of the Venetian harbour.

Ancient Aptera: A Journey in Time

Ancient Aptera

Journey back in time by exploring the ruins of Ancient Aptera, located near the city of Chania. This archaeological site showcases the remains of a once-flourishing city. The well-preserved Roman cisterns are ancient structures, were built to collect and store water.

As you continue your exploration of the ruins, you will encounter the ancient theater of Aptaera, which showcases the vibrant cultural life that once flourished in this city. Additionally, you will come across the remnants of the city's defensive fortifications.



The well-preserved ruins of Ancient Aptaera offer a glimpse into the lives of its former inhabitants, shedding light on their architecture and the city's strategic significance. By immersing yourself in its history, you will gain a deeper understanding of the cultural richness that has influenced the region.

Botanical Parks

The Botanical Park of Crete

Situated 18 km from the town of Chania, at the foot of the White Mountains, you will find **20 hectares** of breathtaking gardens.

Here, a variety of fruit trees from around the globe coexist with a rich selection of herbs, medicinal plants, and ornamental flowers. This area truly serves as a paradise for countless species of plants and animals!

The Botanical Park offers not only a delightful hiking experience but also an educational journey through nature. It serves as an excellent alternative for a day trip away from the noise of the city and the bustle of crowded beaches. The garden features rare local flora and fauna, as well as tropical and subtropical plant varieties from across the world..

Almyrida & Kalives

Almyrida is a beautiful seaside resort located about 25 kilometers east of Chania, the main town of Crete.

This family-friendly destination features a stunning sandy beach and offers a wide range of activities. Visitors can enjoy hiking, diving, watersports, shopping, and swimming, making it an ideal location for everyone. Plus, all of this can be experienced in the warm Mediterranean sunshine!

The Beach

Almyrida is a top destination for many tourists, primarily due to its beautiful sandy beach. Each year, the beach is awarded a blue flag, indicating its cleanliness and safety, making it an ideal spot for relaxation and exploration, especially for families. With its shallow, crystal-clear waters and golden sands, it serves as a holiday paradise, allowing visitors to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and enjoy the tranquility and beauty of this hidden gem in Crete.

The beach is also famous for its water sports, offering opportunities for activities such as windsurfing, sailing, and even diving. These options add an exciting twist to your holiday, making it even more special! Whether you're a seasoned pro or a complete beginner, there are activities available for everyone, allowing you to practice your skills or learn something new.

Food

Almyrida's authentic taverns, primarily located by the beach, are renowned for their traditional Cretan cuisine. Delight your taste buds with fresh fish, salads, and more, all while taking in the beautiful views of Almyrida Bay's golden sands.

If you have a sweet tooth, don't forget to visit the local bakery, patisserie, and various mini-markets for a delicious treat! You might also consider putting together a picnic to enjoy on the lovely beach, allowing you to savor the best of both worlds!

Boat Trips

There are several boat trips available from Almyrida, including Dream Adventure Trips, which comes highly recommended on the island. Enjoy stunning views of Crete and experience the crystal-clear waters from a unique perspective.



Conclusion

Exploring the villages of Northwest Crete offers a rewarding travel experience. Each village possesses its own unique character and charm, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of Cretan culture, history, and natural beauty. Whether you're seeking historical insights, culinary delights, or simply a tranquil escape, the villages of Northwest Crete are sure to captivate your heart and leave you with lasting memories.

Explore Luxury Villas in Crete

If you're planning a visit to Crete and wish to experience the island in comfort and style, consider staying in one of our luxurious villas. Our selection of villas offers the perfect combination of modern amenities and authentic Cretan charm, providing a serene retreat amidst breathtaking landscapes.

Whether you are exploring the picturesque villages of Northwest Crete or relaxing by the pristine beaches, our villas serve as an ideal base for your adventures. Each villa is carefully chosen to offer privacy, stunning views, and proximity to local attractions, ensuring a memorable stay.

Why Choose Our Villas?

- **Prime Locations:** Nestled in some of the most beautiful and sought-after areas of Crete, our villas offer easy access to beaches, historical sites, and charming village life.
- **Luxurious Amenities:** Enjoy spacious living areas, private pools, and stunning outdoor spaces. Each villa is equipped with modern conveniences to ensure your comfort and relaxation.
- **Authentic Experience:** Immerse yourself in the local culture while enjoying the privacy and exclusivity of a luxury villa.

Book Your Dream Villa Today

Head to our website to browse our collection of luxury villas and find the perfect accommodation for your Cretan getaway. Whether you're planning a romantic escape, a family vacation, or a group adventure, our villas provide the perfect setting for an unforgettable experience. Discover the magic of Crete while enjoying the comfort and elegance of your own private villa.

www.Crete-Escapes.com