



## Gortys, Phaestos and Matala

*Minoan history and Beach*

During this tour you pass through some of the most beautiful areas of Crete full of vineyards and olive trees you will travel via the **Aghia Varvara Pass** to Southern Crete.

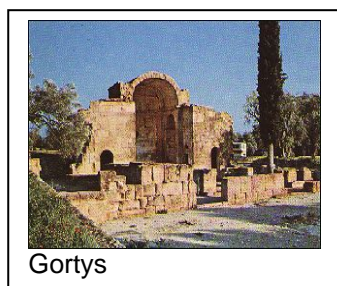
Stop at **Gortys**, the old Greek-Roman town with its famous law stones, Roman amphitheatre and the ruins of the Saint Titus Church - the first Christian Church on the island.

On to the Minoan palace of **Phaestos**, magnificently situated overlooking the fertile Messara Plain and Ida Mountain. The exact location of Phaestos was first determined in the middle of the 19th century, while the archaeological investigation of the palace started in 1884 by Italians. Phaestos was during the Minoan times a very important city-state in Crete built on a hill, at an altitude of 100 m above sea level. It is second in importance and size after the palace of Knossos. Phaestos was the centre of whole south Crete, with two harbours, Matala and Kommos. According to mythology, Phaestos was the seat of king Radamanthis, brother of king Minos. It was also the city that gave birth to the great wise man and soothsayer Epiminidid, one of the seven wise men of the ancient world.

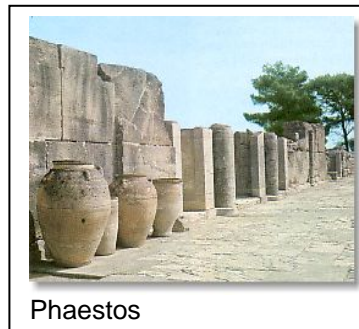
Continuing your journey on to the village of **Matala**, a former hippie village surrounded by rocks and caves. Here, you can enjoy a refreshing swim in the Libyan Sea leaving you time to enjoy a leisurely Cretan lunch at a beach tavern.



Matala



Gortys



Phaestos

### Useful information:

**Operation date:** Oct 02, 2009

**Area:** South Crete

**Distance form Heraklion:** 75 kms

**Duration:** 8-9 Hours

**Cost per person:** € 65

#### Tour features:

- ◆ Private professional English speaking guide
- ◆ Luxury A/C coach
- ◆ Entrance fees to Phaistos Palace, to Gortys Palace & Agia Triada
- ◆ Lunch in local traditional taverna overlooking the sea - 3 course meal (meat) with beverages
- ◆ Taxes & Services charges

**Note:** *The cost of the entrances fees may increase for 2009*

# Lassithi Plateau

## Scenery and History



Drive along the north coastal via the new national road up to Limenas Hersonisos, and then turn off into **Mount Dicti**. On your way to the Lassithi Plateau (850m) visit the **Kera Kardiotissa Nunnery**, a 14th century Monastery housing late Byzantine frescoes.

Continue by coach to the plateau for a beautiful drive through the fourteen-(14) villages which are located around the plain. A stop will be made outside the village **Psychro**, where a path is leading to the **Dicti Cave**. Going up a steep cobble path it is fifteen minutes on foot or by mule to the entrance of the cave, which is at an altitude of 1025m. The cave has several chambers with fine stalactites and stalagmites, and is also associated with the birth of Zeus (Jupiter).

In the main village, **Tzermiado**, you stop for a walk through the village, from east to west. This stroll is an opportunity to experience day to day life with its coffee-houses, grocery shops, and locals selling their products, such as pure olive oil, herbs and ceramics.

At **Seli**, the gate to the **Lassithi Plateau** you can enjoy a truly fantastic view over the plain and walk up a cobble stone path to see the inside of an old stone grain mill. On the return journey, travel through **Mochos** where you can revel in the wonderful view over the surrounding area of the Bay of Mallia.



### Useful information:

**Operation date:** Oct 03, 2009

**Area:** Dicti Mountain

**Distance from Heraklion:** 65 km South East

**Duration:** 8 Hours

**Cost per person:** € 56

### Tour features:

- ◆ Private professional English speaking guide
- ◆ Luxury A/C coach
- ◆ Entrance fees to Dikti Cave, to Kera Kardiotissa Byzantine Church/ Monastery
- ◆ Lunch in local traditional taverna - 3 course meal (meat) with beverages
- ◆ Taxes & Services charges

**Note:** The cost of the entrances fees may increase for 2009