

Gavdos - Journey to the southern- most point of Europe

**Everything you need to know
about the island**

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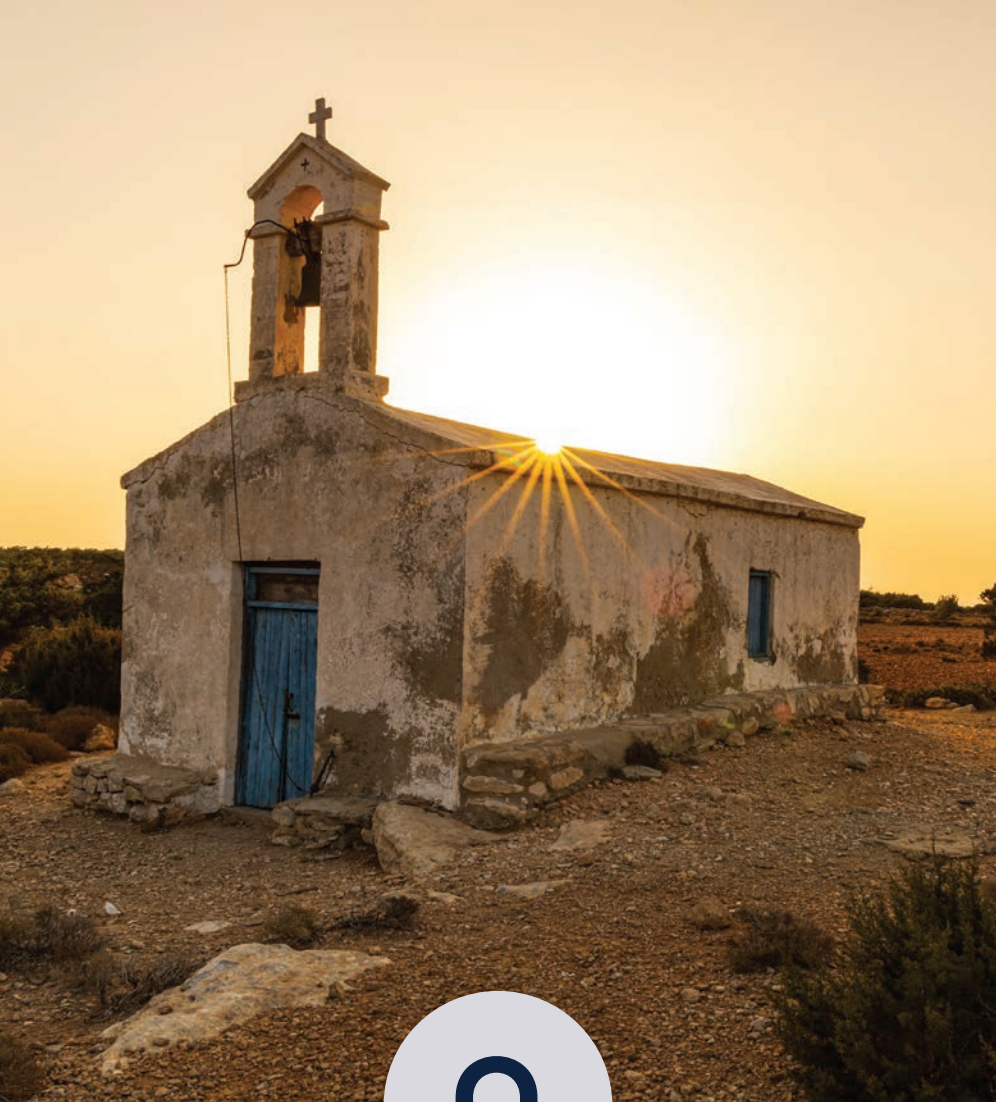
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**Foreword to the book
and author**

"Mum, where are we going this year? " - "To Greece!"

Every year, right at the start of the summer holidays, I found myself on my way to southern Europe with my family. Early on, I was gripped by a certain fascination that has stayed with me ever since. Is it the intense sun? Or perhaps the smell of the mountain herbs? Is it the people or the Greek food? Once you fall in love with the country, you will always come back. So one day I had no choice but to pack my own backpack and get on a plane. Since then, I have been to Greece several times a year - mostly to Crete or Gavdos.

But who is writing this book? I am David, 28 years old and actually a biology teacher. When I'm not in the classroom, I put on my backpack and travel south. For me, a backpack, tent and maybe a rental car are the only utensils needed to fully immerse myself in Greek island life. Hotels and all-inclusive are not what I am looking for. I want to get to know the people and the culture. An unknown path that is not listed in every travel guide offers the greatest added value for me. And I am not alone in this. Especially in various hostels on Crete you meet many backpackers and freedom-loving people. It's a perfect place to exchange new experiences under a starry sky and a cold beer, and to constantly expand your own horizons. In conversations with other hostel visitors, some of whom have been travelling to the Greek islands for many decades, the term "Gavdos" came up again and again. I listened eagerly to the stories. An island that is supposed to be **paradisical and perfect**.



Juniperus macrocarpa- many of the trees are hundreds of years old



Sarakiniko before sunrise

Far away from the big tourism, with just over 100 inhabitants. So I heard that on Gavdos you can camp freely on the beach. Right on the sand, under the starry sky, which is supposed to be one of the best in Europe. On Gavdos you are completely free. I felt somewhat reminded of the film "The Beach" with Leonardo Di Caprio. My curiosity grew immeasurably. It was immediately clear to me: I have to go to Gavdos! I sat down at my laptop and started researching. How do you get to the island? How often does the boat go? Where can I camp or stay overnight? Are there any services? Is there even a supermarket? Are there toilets and public showers? During my search, it quickly became apparent that even in the age of the internet, only scant information is available. Apart from a short Wikipedia article and individual forum entries, only very little substantial and coherent information could be found. In part, things were contradictory. Real travel guides were also not available.

So I had no choice but to grab the tent, pack the gas cooker, buy a ticket and just head to Gavdos myself. Since then, I see the world a bit differently - that's how special Gavdos is. After my first visit in 2018, I am regularly drawn back to the island. I spent many months in the place that has become an absolute place of longing for me. I was able to experience **island life**, live with local families and celebrate festivals with them. I became an islander myself for a while, learned the secrets of the island and gradually understood how life works in this special place. Over time, the idea matured in me to write a travel guide about Gavdos, in which all the important information would be presented in a clear and concise way. Since I spent a lot of time on the southernmost point of Europe, I was able to incorporate extensive knowledge, my own experiences and a lot of **insider information** into the book - information that you won't find on the internet. The research for the book took months. I interviewed locals, restaurants and accommodation, made phone and video calls and walked to every corner of the island to gather as much and detailed information as possible.

After the book was already published in German a few months earlier, I took a lot of time and effort to work on the English version. Large parts of this book were written on Gavdos. Over the winter of 2023/24, the book was completely revised, updated, expanded and re-researched. New chapters were added and changes on the island were incorporated into the book. You will also find occasional cross-references to my new website (www.gavdos-travelling.com) in the book. On my blog, posts and information about the island will be published regularly. If you miss the island after your return trip, you can satisfy your longing there. Large parts of this book were written on Gavdos. Before my first trip to this wonderful island, I wished I had a book like this. It will serve as an ideal **basis for planning** your dream trip to Gavdos. This travel guide is modern, up-to-date and, above all, it should give you an authentic and personal approach to the island. All tips and recommendations for restaurants, websites or other things are without exception based on my own positive travel experiences. No one has paid me for anything or asked me for a placement.

As I am passionate about **photography**, this book offers a good occasion to underlay the many wonderful impressions this place has to offer with a multitude of my own photographic impressions. In addition, a map made especially for this book, which can be found at the back of the book, offers you full orientation. If you want to learn more about the mysterious Gavdos - the southernmost island in Europe - this book is just right for you. Let the journey begin. I hope you enjoy your trip!



To the Gavdos Website



Who is Gavdos suitable for?



Whether single travellers, small groups or families with children. Whether young or old. On Gavdos you will meet a wide range of people. You are offered a special holiday experience. If you are looking for a club holiday, like to go shopping and attach great importance to beach entertainment, you are unfortunately wrong there. Hotels or shopping malls are nowhere to be found. There are **six mini markets** on the entire island that will provide you with the most important utensils.

Gavdos is very small - only 30 km² in size. Theoretically, everything is within walking distance. There are small, well-maintained **roads** for motorised vehicles, but petrol stations do not exist. As Gavdos is not connected to the national power grid, diesel generators have to produce electricity. When the generators fail or are switched off, the lights go out. Unless there is a solar system on the roof.

The **journey** (→ Chapter 2) and the entire stay should be well planned. If the weather does not cooperate, it can happen that the boats do not operate and the stay has to be extended until the weather permits a crossing again. Most holidaymakers come to Gavdos to camp on the beach. However, if you want to explore the island without having to sleep in a tent, you can also rent one of the inviting accommodations. Local families offer small, cosy private flats in the traditional architectural style for a small amount of money.

Gavdos' nature needs protection!

Whoever comes to Gavdos must know that the nature of the island is something very special and in need of extreme protection. Many plants are hundreds of years old. The plant and animal species that occur are rare. Some of them are endangered. Everyone who comes to Gavdos must appreciate the island's nature and treat it with care. Everyone has a responsibility.

Protect nature!

Respect nature!

Please!

Be grateful for what it gives you! The nature deserves it. **Let the plants and animals live a peaceful life.** Do not break off branches. Do not throw trash in the landscape. Take everything with you. It also doesn't hurt to pick up trash if you find any. Try to avoid plastic bags, even if they are constantly offered in the supermarkets.

Plastic and plastic bags are one of the biggest problems for nature in Greece.

Throw plastic bottles into the specially made containers. Containers have been set up in the villages for this purpose. Remove the plastic bottle caps and dispose of them separately. Also try to save as much water as possible since the island is extremely dry. Avoid unnecessarily long showers.

Never forget that the whole of Greece, especially Gavdos is subject to a constant risk of forest fires. For many months, not a drop of rain falls. Even the smallest spark is enough to start a big fire. It goes without saying that open fires should not be made and cigarette butts should not be thrown into nature.

We are all responsible for preserving the beauty of this place.



02

The journey

How do I get to Gavdos?

The crossing to Gavdos is only possible by **ferry** from the island of **Crete** - more precisely from the small ports in Paleochora and Chora Sfakion. If you start from Europe, your journey is divided into 3 parts: **The flight** to Crete, **the bus ride** to the ports in Paleochora or Chora Sfakion and finally **the crossing to Gavdos** itself.

The flight to Crete

To get to Crete, you can choose from many cheap flight connections, especially in summer. I recommend the website "**Skyscanner.com**" to compare prices. You should then make the booking yourself on the respective airline's own homepage. This will save you money. If you are a bit flexible in terms of time and don't necessarily need an exact day or departure airport, you can find flights there for 30 euros, both at short notice ("last minute") and planned for longer periods. I once flew from Leipzig (Germany) to Crete for 9 euros. I usually enter "Germany" as the "departure airport" in the search bar and have the entire month in which my planned trip is located displayed. Then you can see directly which airports offer the cheapest connections. You can choose between **Chania**, **Heraklion** and **Sitia** as your destination airport on Crete. Heraklion is larger and more frequented, but not necessarily cheaper. Especially in summer, it is worth considering Chania airport. Far to the east of Crete, there is a newly developed airport in Sitia. If you can find a cheap flight there, however, you must bear in mind that Sitia is very far from the rest. To get to Gavdos later, you would have to cross almost the entire island from east to west (at least 5 hours by bus). During the "**tourist season**" between early and late summer, there are numerous scheduled flights that fly from all over Europe to Crete without a stopover. Ryanair,

EasyJet, Condor, TuiFly and Aegean Air should be mentioned here as low-cost airlines. During the winter months, this offer is massively reduced. Crete can now only be reached via stopovers in Athens or Thessaloniki. There are also significant upward price corrections. Those who would like to **avoid flying** can also get to Crete by ferry. From Athens you can get there very easily. But ferries also leave for Crete from many other locations. "Ferries.gr" is a good website to compare all ferry routes between most Greek islands.

In a nutshell

- ➔ "**Skyscanner.com**" for comparison
- ➔ Variety of **cheap flights**
- ➔ **Early to late summer:** direct flights from many European cities to Crete
- ➔ **Winter:** Stopover in Athens or Thessaloniki
- ➔ Destination airports in Crete: **Heraklion, Chania** or **Sitia**
- ➔ **Ferry** to Crete if you want to avoid flying

The bus ride to Paleochora or Chora Sfakion

The landing stages of the Gavdos ferries on Crete are located in the south-western towns of **Chora Sfakion** or **Paleochora**. Both places can only be reached by bus or car from **Chania**. Both routes are about the same length. Especially in summer, when the outside temperature is over 30 degrees, these bus journeys over endless serpentine roads are a tough test. I usually take an anti-nausea tablet with me to avoid worse. The bus connections can be found on the website of the local bus company "KTEL" (www.e-ktel.com).

In most cases, the vehicle is not insured for Gavdos, as most vehicles rented in Crete are also only insured for Crete. If necessary, you can take out additional insurance for a small amount of money. The price of car transport on the ferry is around 45 euros. You can also save yourself the trouble and rent a car on Gavdos (→chapter 9). The crossing on the ferry from Anendyk feels like a small cruise. You move comfortably across the water. During the stops on Crete, you can enjoy breathtaking views of the "Lefka Ori". Views of the Cretan south coast that you could never get otherwise. The atmosphere on board is relaxed, with good music playing most of the time. For reasonable prices you can buy cold beer or a fresh frappe.

Anendyk is currently the only ferry company operating to the southernmost island in Europe. The "Gavdos Cruises" service, which offered fast crossings within an hour, no longer exists. The sailing times of "Anendyk" change several times a year. However, schedule changes are announced well in advance. You can find out about the ferry's current timetables and prices on my website "www.gavdos-travelling.com".



To the current timetables of the ferry



The boat to paradise

Accommodation

Holidays on Gavdos are symbolic of **individual tourism**. There are no big hotels, and in all likelihood there won't be any in the future - it's too much of a hassle for the masses to reach the island. You will be offered a small selection of accommodation and rooms scattered around the island. The offers can be viewed and reserved via the usual booking portals (e.g. booking.com) or for some on their own websites. It is advisable to make the booking directly with the respective accommodation, as the large booking portals now charge a substantial commission. In this way, you can also support the locals a little. Every host is happy to receive a booking by phone or from their own websites. During the **height of summer**, the large rush on the few guesthouses results in a quick booking out. So if you are planning a summer holiday in Gavdos and want to sleep in a covered room, you should book as early as possible. In peak season, room rates average €30-60 per night. In early summer or autumn, prices usually go down a bit. The apartments are usually run by local **families**. The small flats are often built in the old traditional style, e.g. a stone cottage with its own terrace or balcony. You should not expect great luxury, but a feeling of genuine Greek hospitality. Every guest is taken care of. You get the feeling of being part of the family. Most accommodation includes a private flat with bathroom and a small kitchen. A balcony or terrace is usually also included. The electricity comes from diesel generators or the solar panels on the roof. Some of them offer extensive catering in their in-house taverna. In the following list you will find a selection of different accommodations together with their services and special features.



Sofia Rooms Gavdos (near Agios Ioannis)

- Modern flats with balcony and sea view
- Rooms build with local stone and wood
- All of the rooms equipped with air conditioning, refrigerator and WiFi
- Dream beach Agios Ioannis, mini market and two other tavernas within less than 15 min walking distance
- Good bus connection
- Only bookable via own website (www.sofirooms Gavdos.com), by phone or on site
- Own taverna with excellent cuisine (best in Agios Ioannis) (→ Chapter 7)



04

Villages and civilisation

Vatsiana and Ambelos - witnesses of days gone by

The spirit of the island can only be fully understood once you have made a trip to the two abandoned villages of Vatsiana and Ambelos. Both places seem as if they have a lot to tell the visitor. Yet they remain silent. The atmosphere in the air is mystical, almost eerie. There are only few reports about these two places, both on the internet and in literature. **Vatsiana** is officially considered the southernmost settlement in Europe. The village is located on the edge of the barren and lonely southern tip of the island. It is extremely rare to meet a soul there. Sheep and goats have long since taken over. They now control the old walls. Often you hear nothing - except for the wind whistling through the cracks in the old walls or a bell from the goats that roam through the place. The church and the cemetery are among the few remaining buildings in the village today. Individual houses have been rebuilt and serve as private residences. The island pastor - a thoroughly important man on Gavdos - is one of the few inhabitants of Vatsiana. An elderly lady who lives alone in her old farmhouse is also one of them. Often she does not see a soul for several days. The doctor comes by at regular intervals to check up on her.

At the entrance to the village, the "**Tripiti Gavdos Café**" welcomes the rare arrivals. There used to be a small island museum in Vatsiana. This has since been moved to Metochi (next to the restaurant). In about 1.5 hours, you can walk along an easily accessible and scenically impressive path to the southernmost point of Europe - **Cape Tripiti** (→ chapter 8). In addition, Vatsiana is connected to Korfos via a beautiful hiking trail. Vatsiana itself is connected to the rest of the island by a paved road. Very rarely, a bus comes by to collect the hikers coming from Tripiti. Take your time, explore the place and experience the atmosphere. It's worth it!

The village of **Ambelos** to the northwest is similarly lonely and modest. Not far away you will find the old and now restored lighthouse (Pharos), which has become perhaps the most famous landmark of Gavdos and is considered the best place for sunsets on the island. Ambelos is the highest situated village and resembles a ghost town. Crumbling foundation walls and piles of stones characterise the atmosphere. But one thing stands out immediately: The church is well maintained and looks like new. Typical for Greece! Unlike all the other villages, there is no other infrastructure in Ambelos existing. Coffee, water or food will be hard to find. Only three families live among the ruins in restored houses. One of these houses was used by the Nazis as their headquarters during the Second World War. Yes, even Gavdos was occupied by the Germans. As the southernmost spot in Europe, it was considered a strategically important point. Ambelos is the ideal starting point for a hike to **Potamos beach**. From there, it takes about 1.5 hours to walk down about 300 metres in altitude. The way back requires more time, as you have to scramble back up the mountain. You should leave your flip-flops behind for once. Good footwear will be essential for this walk (→ Chapter 8).

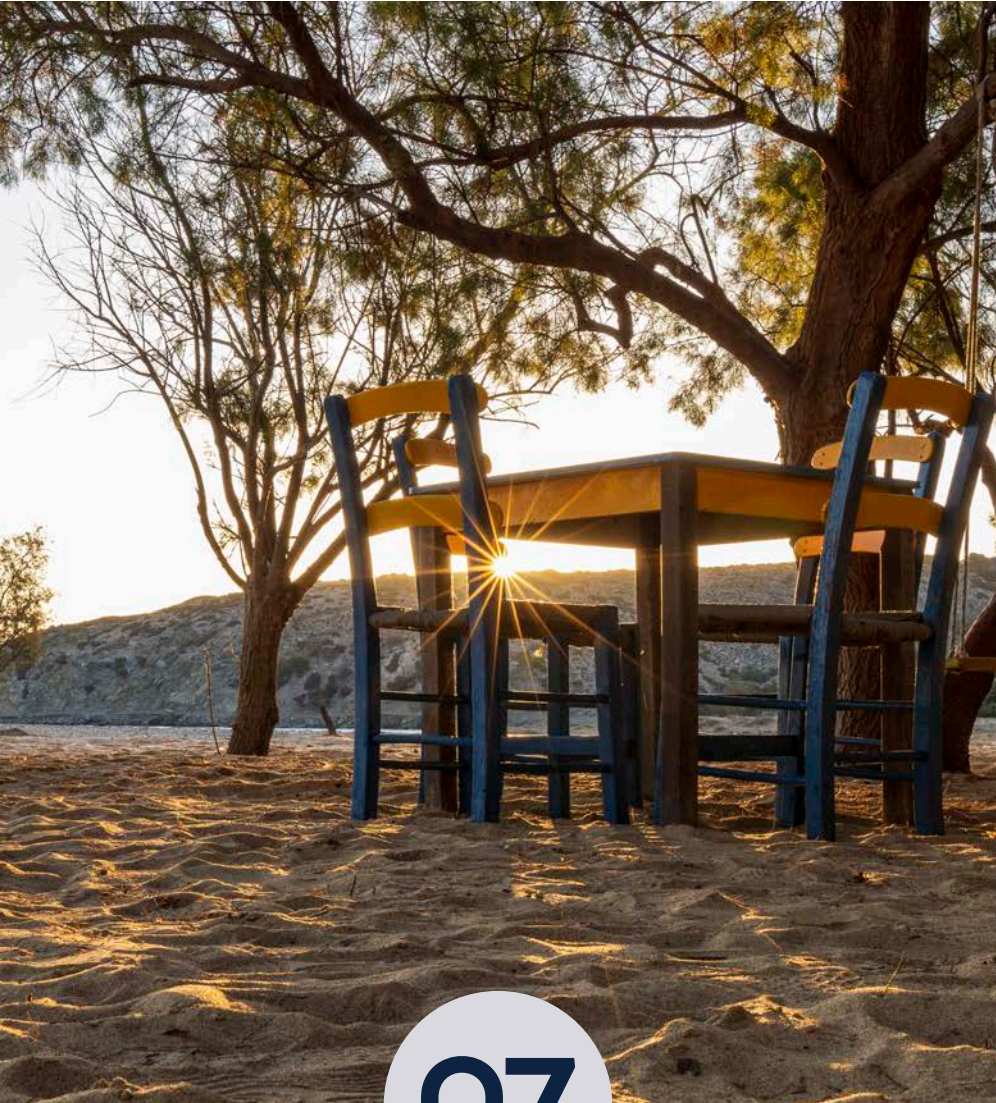


Some of the residents of Ambelos

Tripiti



A full Gavdos exploration definitely includes a trip to Cape Tripiti, the southernmost point in Europe (→ Chapter 8): Right next to the rugged rock formation is the **pebble beach** of the same name, Tripiti. The stones on the beach are quite large and sometimes difficult to walk on. When going into the water, you have to be careful not to slip. The left side of the beach is better for swimming. The water looks fantastic, is crystal clear and turquoise blue. This beach is particularly captivating because of its unique and fascinating landscape. A few minutes' walk towards the back of the beach you will find a **salt pan**. During the summer months you can easily walk through it, but in winter the water collects there. The biggest highlight of Tripiti awaits you at the southern end. The rocky **cape**, which is undercut by several imposing arch-shaped openings, closes off the island and at the same time the entire European continent at the southernmost point.



07

Cafés and taverns

The tavernas and cafés of Gavdos are mostly very traditional and authentically run restaurants that will make your heart beat faster if you love Greek food. There is no mass processing, all guests are taken care of. Often the restaurants are run by the whole family. Every visit to the restaurant is special and represents an individual experience. In many places you don't find a "real menu". Often they cook what is available at the moment, or what fish was caught the previous night. The daily dishes are displayed on small **boards** at the entrance of the tavernas. Or simply ask the waiters and they will tell you the current dishes. Potatoes, vegetables, salads, meat dishes, freshly caught fish and, of course, lots of olive oil and Tzatziki enchant the tongue. There are also delicious desserts and traditional pastries. The standard and quality of food is very high on Gavdos! Vegetarians and vegans (like me) can also find suitable places. However, my experience in recent years has shown that some tavernas are less suitable for vegetarians or vegans, as often only meat or fish dishes were offered. In the list at the bottom of this chapter, I will mention which tavernas are suitable for people who want to avoid meat or animal products in their diet.

Almost all of these places are open all day during the summer months and serve hot meals from morning to night. You can have a good breakfast, relax with a frappe or coffee during the day and have a candlelight dinner late at night. It is quite common for some visitors to take a seat in their favourite taverna in the morning, have a coffee and an omelette, and only leave in the evening after their fifth beer and second raki. Southern Greek island lifestyle, that's what it's called! If you're not sure which meal to choose, or if you're not that familiar with Greek cuisine, some tavernas will let you peek into the cooking pot when you ask nicely! So if you're overwhelmed by the stunning selection of delicious dishes, they'll be happy to show you into the kitchen so you can see for yourself what they have to choose from.

If you haven't been particularly hungry by this point, your stomach will be growling. In July and August they are usually well frequented, but without being unpleasantly crowded. Some taverns often function as meeting places for holidaymakers of all kinds. There is music from the lyre or people sing together. So far, none of the restaurants has struck me as negative in any way. Without exception, the food is good everywhere. Nevertheless, some of the tavernas stand out in a particularly positive way, or are especially worth mentioning because of some of their specialities. In the following, some of the restaurants are presented briefly and clearly.

The Four Brothers (Sarakiniko)

- Romantic, nice and extremely inviting local family taverna, you eat with your feet in the sand directly on the beach
- The tables are placed in the sand, in the evening you eat by candlelight
- Ingredients from own production and garden
- All day there is a choice of different traditional dishes
- The meal is put together according to your wishes
- Most of the time, the mother of the family or Jorgos, the father, cooks
- The sons help in the tavern all day and give you great hospitality and service
- Hammocks invite you to stay
- They regularly prepare sweets and pastries
- Particularly suitable for vegetarians and vegans

Sarakiniko - Agios Ioannis – Lavrakas - Pyrgos

Duration: approx. 3 hours (there and back)

Perhaps the most beautiful **beach tour**. You feel as if you have been transported to a South Sea island. The hike leads mostly through sand, but is still pleasant to walk. Except for one spot behind Ag. Ioannis, the path is neither dangerous nor particularly strenuous. Furthermore, the entire trail is marked. From the beach of Sarakiniko, a small path leads at the north-western end, past the "House of Exiles", to the **paved road** to Agios Ioannis. The road is quiet, with little traffic, and offers magnificent views along the coast all the way to the coast of Crete. In about 30 minutes you reach the end of the road and turn onto a **dusty track** that finally ends at the car park of Agios Ioannis. Here you have the opportunity to replenish your water and food supplies, as there is nothing more to come. First you walk a short distance on sharp stones, then the path leads through a beautiful dune landscape, dotted with juniper trees, to the beach of **Agios Ioannis**. After about 15 minutes you reach the actual beach, which, by the way, was named after the church Agios Ioannis, which is located above the northwestern end of the beach (hiking tip!). At the western end of the bay, the path narrows and you walk on a small and steep path along a cliff. Be especially careful at this point as it is easy to slip off. To your right is an edge that goes down a few metres. If you do the hike in the evening, make sure you take a torch with you. This passage is not without danger in the dark. Gradually, the path descends again and you cross more landscapes that remind you of a dream island in the Caribbean. Plants, dunes and bays form picturesque views. After about 20 minutes you will reach Lavrakas. From there it is another 20 minutes to the beach of Pyrgos. Always stick to the path marked with wooden posts. It always leads close to the water. Once in Pyrgos, you have several options to choose from. Either you walk back the same way (especially recommended at late afternoon), or you continue on a beautiful hiking trail towards Kastri. This path can also be shortened halfway to Ag. Ioannis.



Section between Agios Ioannis and Lavrakas

Pyrgos - Kastri

Duration: approx. 1.5 hours

Another fantastic tour connects Pyrgos with the village of Kastri in the centre. The highlights of this hike are both **scenic** and **historical**. It is worth looking at the ground regularly, as many fossils, pottery shards and other finds are hidden among the loose stones. It goes without saying that such finds should only be looked at and not taken away. Let the island preserve its treasures! The trail is well marked and easy to walk except for a few spots. Most of the time it goes slightly uphill. Above Pyrgos Beach, a narrow path leads towards the interior of the island. The first section runs through a pine and juniper forest. On the left side of the trail, a river bed runs through a small gorge. If you leave the path a little to the left, you can enjoy great views. After a while, the path divides. On the right, it would go to Ambelos and Potamos. We follow the path straight ahead. A first waypoint is at the church of **Ag. Georgios**, which is absolutely worth a visit!

The lighthouse/ Pharos



Not far from the highest point of the island stands the old lighthouse - one of the highest located lighthouses in Europe. On most maps, the building appears under the term "**Pharos**". This is simply the Greek word for lighthouse. After its completion and commissioning in 1880, the light was visible 40 kilometres out to sea. During the Second World War, even the innocent island of Gavdos was not spared German attacks, so that the lighthouse was also bombed and destroyed. For a long time the place remained a ruin before the tower was rebuilt in 2003. However, the facility was never put into operation again. It now serves as a museum. "Pharos Gavdos" has a true historical significance. Today, the lighthouse is one of the absolute hiking and excursion destinations. You should definitely put a trip there on your planning list. The full magic of this place unfolds especially in the evening hours. Here you will experience one of the best sunsets you have ever seen. Big parts of Gavdos can be seen from the lighthouse. On the horizon, Crete stretches along the horizon line.

Particularly impressive are the white mountains "Lefka Ori", which are over 2000 metres high. Snow can still be seen on the mountain peaks until late spring. Between Crete and Gavdos, the small sister island "Gavdopoula" can also be clearly seen. In the midst of this fascinating scenery, the sun sinks into the endless Libyan Sea. Towards the south, a view into infinity opens up. One can imagine that the coast of Libya is visible. Mathematically, however, this should not be possible. From the tower you have an approximate viewing height of around 350 metres (including the mountain). According to the Pythagorean theorem, the viewing distance to the horizon is about 67 kilometres. This is not enough to reach the coast of Africa, which is almost 260 kilometres away. That would only work if you were standing on a mountain over 5000 metres high.

But what is the best way to get to this special place? Most visitors reach "Pharos" via a **bus** service in the late afternoon. At sunset, an additional bus service will be arranged so that all onlookers and those interested can easily reach the lighthouse. From Agios Ioannis and Sarakiniko you can be taken directly to your destination. The buses also cover all the other locations. Depending on your current position, you can plan an evening detour to the lighthouse and be picked up by the bus in the afternoon. In the evening, after the sun has sunk into the sea, the buses drive back from the lighthouse towards Kastri, Sarakiniko and Agios Ioannis. The drivers honk several times to attract attention. Unfortunately, you don't have much time. The buses leave about 30 minutes after sunset. There will not be a later bus. A visit to the lighthouse can also be combined with a hiking tour to Potamos beach. Walk from the beach back to Ambelos (about an hour) and then another 10 minutes to Pharos. The lighthouse is located next to the asphalt road that connects Ambelos with the other villages.



View of the lighthouse from the south



The lighthouse building with its museum- doors are open every evening

Cape Tripiti - the southernmost point of Europe

I have told you enough about the island's special geographical location in the course of this book. Many people do not know that the southernmost point of the European continent is on Gavdos. Although the Canary Islands or any overseas departments are geographically even further south, they only belong to Europe politically. Geographically, the Canary Islands for example belong to the African continent. The island rightly boasts the slogan "The southernmost point of Europe". A sensational landscape awaits at Cape Tripiti that every visitor will remember for the rest of their lives.



The name of the **rock cape** is derived from the three mighty arches that hollow out the long rocky peak. These openings can also be swum through - a special experience! The cape can be hiked to its southernmost end. No one will miss this spot, because an unusual and striking landmark awaits visitors: an oversized **chair** made of wood, fixed to a concrete foundation. Engraved inscriptions remind you what matters in life. "Happy", "Relax", "Love" and other short anecdotes are written in the wood of the artwork. The chair was built by several islanders of Eastern European origin. One could probably write a book about the "**Russians on Gavdos**". You can find a short version of their story in this travel guide.

Cycling and bike rental

During my last visit to Gavdos, I met a Swiss man who was traveling by bike. However, he didn't rent his bike on Crete or Gavdos, but came all the way from Switzerland to the southernmost island in Europe. We both quickly agreed that Gavdos is an island that is ideal for exploring by bike. Fortunately, you don't have to cycle from Switzerland to enjoy the pleasure of exploring the southernmost island in Europe by bike. There are certainly more comfortable alternatives. Since last year, Gavdos has had a bike rental service for e-bikes only. The rental company is called "Gavdos Eco Adventures" and rents out bikes for 35 euros per day. The price per day is reduced for longer rental periods. One charging cycle of the rental bikes lasts for 40 to 65 kilometers. The bikes can be booked online at www.gavdosadventures.com. There you will also find a telephone number and e-mail address. The rented bike can be picked up at the port of Karave or you can have the bike delivered.

Alternatively, you can also hire a bike on Crete. In Paleochora, for example, some rental services are open all year round. However, you should ask the rental company whether the rented bike is also insured for the island of Gavdos. Gavdos is generally very bicycle-friendly. Many of the roads are paved and even the unpaved roads are suitable for cycling. The island is small and almost all corners can be reached by bike. This means you don't have to stick to bus timetables and can explore the island as you wish. Even if Gavdos appears small and flat at first glance, the island's inclines should not be underestimated, especially in the summer months. The road to Kastri and Ambelos leads steadily uphill and will make you sweat#. The compensation: On the way back to Sarakiniko or Agios Ioannis, you can let the bike roll and enjoy the southern Greek sea breeze on your face.

There are no other free-standing toilet facilities to be found in Sarakiniko. The situation is different in **Agios Ioannis**. Next to the lower taverna "**Kantina**" there is a toilet available for free use. However, this bathroom is often occupied and, in my experience, not particularly clean. If possible, I prefer to avoid this place. Alternatives can be found at "**Livykon**" and "**Sofia**". As these are in-house taverna toilets, the same rules apply as in Sarakiniko. This also applies to the tavernas on the beach of Korfos or in the centrally located main town of Kastri.

ATMs and payment on Gavdos

Not so long ago, something revolutionary happened on Gavdos: an ATM was installed. A small machine that made a big change. Visitors and islanders became more independent. A few years ago, anyone travelling to Gavdos had to think carefully in advance about how much money they would need for their stay. One's own cash supply always had to be watched. Once the cash reserves were exhausted, the only option was to return to Crete and withdraw money.

The cash machine is located slightly above the harbour of **Karave**. It is an ATM of the Greek "Piraeus Bank", which is supposed to be open 24 hours a day throughout the entire year. Before that, a "Euronet" machine was located near Sarakiniko. However, this machine was not very reliable and was often out of service. Nevertheless, it is advisable to take a sufficient cash reserve with you to Gavdos. At best, enough so that in an "emergency" all costs incurred on the island could be paid with the money brought along. I would not blindly trust the ATM.

Animal protection on Gavdos

Anyone who has been on holiday in Greece will have noticed the large number of free-roaming cats and dogs. Unfortunately, these animal populations are often out of control. Unsterilised cats and dogs reproduce almost exponentially. This results in great animal suffering. While free-roaming animals are regularly fed by tourists in summer, the great depression sets in during winter. The tourists leave the islands and the animals are left alone. Cats born in spring do not learn how to feed themselves and become completely accustomed to humans in their first months of life. After the tavernas empty again, the animals usually have no choice but to search for leftovers in the trash bins. Many of the strays fall ill and starve to death. Unfortunately, there is also animal suffering on Gavdos, although not comparable with the neighbouring island of Crete. There are two large free-roaming cat populations: in Sarakiniko and in Agios Ioannis all the way to Lavrakas. In Agios Ioannis in particular, part-time or permanent residents of the beach try to give the animals a good life. A small group of residents and travellers look after the cats all year round (even in the important winter months) with heart and dedication, feeding them, buying and giving them medication. There is a lack of funds, which is why every small donation in cash or goods is valuable. Before every trip, I buy kilos of dry food and several months' worth of medicines in Paleochora and give the supplies to the local people. If you would like to support the cats in Agios Ioannis, you can find a donation link on my website www.gavdos-travelling.