



Information about the mountain	
Name of the mountain	Psiloritis (Idi)
Country	Greece
Region	Crete
Altitude	2.456 m
Surface area	1.497 km ²
Surface of protected area	598,80 km ²
Name of local organization in charge of management	AKOMM-PSILORITIS S.A DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Number of municipalities	Municipality of Anogia, Milopotamos, Rethymno, Amari, Agios Vasilios, Festos, Gortyna, Malevizi
Institutional recognition	<p>Psiloritis / Idi has joined the European and Global Network of Geoparks in 2001 and was designated as an UNESCO Geopark on 17th of November 2015. The area of Psiloritis has:</p> <p>9 areas of Natura 2000 Network: GR4330005, GR4330004, GR4330002, GR4330003, GR4330008, GR4330007, GR4330006, GR4330009, GR4310009</p> <p>9 Wildlife Shelters: K772, K763, K761, K550, K759, K760, K861, K860, K705</p> <p>4 Important Bird Areas: GR1863, GR184, GR185, GR186</p> <p>3 Natural Monuments: 24.04.2012, 21.02.1980, 02.10.1985</p> <p>12 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: AT6010086, AT6011005, AT6011049, AT6020015, AT6010085, AT6010073, AT6010084, AT6011008, AT6020005, AT6010052, AT6011059, AT6010074</p> <p>5 Declared Archaeological Sites: 03.08.2007, 09.03.1967, 22.10.1990, 16.09.1965, 17.12.1962</p> <p>5 Monasteries as Preserved Monuments: 29.02.1980</p> <p>1 Historical Preserved Monument: 22-3-2000</p> <p>15 ArtWorks "Mitato": 31.12.1985</p>
	
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Idi / Psiloritis

The place where the myth inspires life, the dreams are linked to reality and the natural and cultural environment becomes a global symbol.

Mountain Idi or Psiloritis is a mythical place, a rare habitat and a very important geological formation, a set of exceptional aesthetic landscapes. It is a symbol for Crete and a sustained source of inspiration. A historic place with a rich cultural heritage. A symbol of freedom and resistance. At the same time, it is a vibrant residential and productive area where thousands of people live and work, a place of culture and recreation. Mountain Idi (a word deriving from the ancient Greek word Ida meaning the wooded mountain) is identified with mythology, legends, history, culture, production and human activities as well as the social characteristics of the wider region. People living under the presence and the shadow of the mountain Idi or Psiloritis have developed a special social and cultural identity while at the same time the mountain itself decisively contributed to the development of economic activities over time.



Proud Local People

In the area of Idi history, mythology, traditions and legends are a source of pride, courage and boldness for the inhabitants, who have created a strong and sacred bond with the mountain. Without exaggeration the mountain is in the mind of its residents the centre of the world. They believe that their mountain is the most beautiful and impressive, the most friendly and hospitable, the wildest and imposing. People of Idi cannot imagine their existence without the presence of the Mountain, that impacts them in every step of their lives. This relation of the people of Idi with their place created a peculiar simple folk culture that kept indelible its characteristics through centuries.

Reputation

Due to the particular cultural identity of the region, the particular characteristics of human resources, the morals, the customs and the traditional activities that continue to be brought up so far, the site has gained at local and national level significant reputation. A significant number of visitors come every year to see and to experience events and cultural traditions and also to taste the local cuisine. Due to the classification of the area as an UNESCO Geopark and its participation to others networks area's reputation is beginning to spread, in European as well as in global level.

Legends and Myths

Idi is connected with the birth and activity of immortal gods. At the glaci of mountain Idi, Rea hunted by Saturn, hid Zeus and the goat Amalthia nurtured the king of Ancient Gods. The "Ideon Andron" cave was the centre of worship of the Cretan born Zeus. Deservingly, the cave was characterized as the Vithleem of ancient times. According to the myth, Zeus disguised as a bull, crossed over the river Litheos and transferred Europe to the island of Crete ending up to ancient Gortina. Here is the labyrinth, the cave where in its rambling corridors lived the infamous Minotaur. The copper giant Talos was assigned by king Minoan to protect the island of Crete from any intruder. The mythic creature is linked with the mountainous bulk of the Talea Mountains that spread north of Idi.

Power of Inspiration

Mountain Idi though looks like a wild beast at a distance, but at a closer look at its inhabitants reveals its double nature. On the one hand, the hard and steep mountain and on the other hand the hospitable and friendly to the inhabitant and the visitor. The beauty of its natural richness, the beauty and wildness of the peaks and its dominant and imposing appearance visible from almost every part of Crete, made Idi a place of inspiration for residents and visitors, for locals and strangers. Painters, musicians, sculptors, dancers, poets, writers, composers, directors etc. have created countless artistic works inspired by the legends, the myths, the natural beauty, the history, the productive and everyday life of people.

Mediterranean Cultural Identity

Over the centuries, the inhabitants, developed a peculiar simple folk culture that kept indelible its characteristics. A popular culture expressed variously in dance, singing, poetry (mantinada), in everyday life (birth, baptism, marriage, death), in architecture and art, with humour, sarcasm and fiction. Samples of this culture the visitor can experience in all villages, where the warmth and hospitality of the locals will fill the soul with the strength and aroma of old times. Guests of the mountain farm villages, where every productive animal activity becomes an endless feast, should feel particularly fortunate. During their stay will be able to have a closer look at the traditional houses of shepherds, the vaulted buildings called 'Mitata', and taste the Cretan diet, a treasure of flavours, colours and aromas.

Picturesque Landscape

The land of Idi is popped out millions of years ago. It is the highest mountain of Crete and one of the highest mountains of the Mediterranean. The water dug deep into the mountain rocks creating gorges and caves. At the same time, the breaches marked the difference between Idi and its twin brother Kouloukonas. Idi is narrow with a few peaks. Five of these peaks are over 2000 meters with the peak of Timios Stavros being the highest in Crete reaching the 2456 meters. The caves, the gorges and the table-lands are all a result of the dissolution of rocks. Water digs into gorges at the sides of the mountains, expanding the holes of the surface to form table-lands or landscapes. Many of the table-lands and the gorges of Idi consist an oasis of endemism and biodiversity gathering and protecting unique species of flora and fauna of Crete.

Sustainability and Anthropogenic Environment

The influence of the natural environment is crucial not only for human activities but also for the existence of life itself. The special features of the natural environment were the determining factor of the economy that relies mainly on livestock farming. The individual characteristics of biotic environment and especially the aromatic and pharmaceutical plants of Idi contribute in a way that all produced products, such as milk, cheese, honey, etc. are considered of exceptional quality due to the unique flora of the area. To date, livestock farming remains one of the key, if not the main, occupations. The lowlands of Idi are among the most oil producing regions of Greece. The fertile earth favors the cultivation of olives, wine yards and fruit trees. Also, beekeeping and harvesting of wild herbs is particularly developed.

Particular Ecosystem

The geotopes of Idi are widespread throughout the area. They comprise unique rock formations, fossil sites, spectacular landforms, caves etc. constituting elements of interaction between human, rocks and landscape. Apart from the visible geotopes, many others also exist that in order to be seen, one has to follow the same underground routes of the water. These are the special formations of the Earth's interior (caves). The anaglyph of Idi favored the growth of vegetation, so in some areas there are many different kinds of flora that are located on its enormous cliffs. Also, there is an incredible variety of animals. Hundreds of birds find places for nesting, relaxing after exhaustion from migration or places for hiding and mating. One of the few remaining populations of the Cretan wildcat lives here and is regarded as animal ghost.

Historic Places

The history of the area is indissolubly linked with the history of Crete. We come across Minoan habitations across the mountain with important centres. During the Archaic era, the city of Axos and Elefthema bloomed. After the Roman invasion, Crete became the district of an endless empire. The predominance of Christianity demarcates the Byzantine period of the local history. Later, the area was occupied by Turks. Similarly, to the earliest period, the residents never accepted to subject to the foreign dynasty. They were fighting for freedom with constant rebellions. During the big revolution for independence the centre of the revolution in 1866 was at Arkadi that is a humanitarian symbol of freedom and voluntary sacrifice. During the 2nd World War, resistance groups were made up and found their shelter in the gnarled tops of Idi.