

Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:

Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

Excursion to the Tsanis-Cave at Omalos-Plateau / Lefka Óri
Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*)

With reference to our leaflet No. [043-04/E – Excursion to Omalos-Plateau](#) this leaflet treats the so called “Gate to the underworld of Crete” at the Omalos-Plateau. Coming from north a black hole yawns right of the road immediately at the arrival of the plateau (below the rock face). The *Tsanis-Cave* is a mysterious mouth through where the mass of water flow down in the karst rock. The access to the cave is not directly visible from street; its located left of a clearly visible karst cave and covert by a smaller rock formation. The entrance which leads bluff downhill and is littered with coarse gravel takes place over boulder. The partly very sharp-edged gravel makes chasms and hollows, which easy become "mantraps"; multiple goats carcasses in the course "down" recommend extreme caution. Only 1.8 miles of the corridors, of which some lead horizontal into the mountain, are explored so far. The cave bottom could not be found so far and you must assume a multiple of its length and depth. A cave excursion without sufficient experience and equipment is not recommended; however, a view from the entrance in this "hell pit" pays off.



The figures of the upper picture row show the cave area seen from the road (left); and the cave entrance from outside (right), yellow marked at the left picture.

The picture row below show the entrance of the cave from inner (left); the coarse gravel are a "risk" that is not to be underestimated.

The fig right shows a crawl adit (60-120 cm ceiling height) with dripstone formation at its base.

**Pictures:**

H. Eikamp (2004)

Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*)

The pomegranate, out of the family of Punicaceae (Greek: Rodiá, roidiá) is a large, up to 3 m high shrub, with small, oval, glossy, leathery leaves. The fleshy, shiny red flowers are bell-shaped and have yellow stamens. The red cup at the end of the bells is becoming the fruit. Pomegranates have approximately the size and shape of oranges, a leathery skin and contain hundreds of small seeds, each with a cupule. Pomegranates do not after-ripen, i.e. they must be harvested ripe and consumable; they are long time durable even several months at 0-5 ° C. The nutritional value of fresh fruit bag of the pomegranate is 316 kj/ 100 g (74 kcal / 100 g).

The pomegranate grows on Crete both wild and cultivated. In the literature it is also known as medicated plant as therapy against tapeworm (besides amoebic dysentery). Pomegranate seed oil is primarily used in the cosmetic. The juice, based on folk medicine, is believed to help in indigestion.

HOMER reported that the pomegranate was a cultivated plant to his time and ALKINOOS, the King of the Phaiakians have systematically cultivated the shrub. Later THEOPHRAST wrote about many types of shrub from those where the edible parts of fruit contained no seeds. PLINIUS mentioned the shrub as *Malum punicum*. The old Greek called the Pomegranate Roá.



Wild pomegranate shrub (about 180 cm high). The flower picture (**top right**) comes from a cultivated form, the fruits (bottom right) of the shrub of wild variety (**picture left**). **Pictures:** U. Kluge (2004)

Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

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