

**Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:****Jeep tour from Gergeri to Anogia – 24 miles pure nature**
(Across the Idha Mountains towards the Nida plateau / Anogia)

The connection from Gergeri, across the Idha Mountains, towards Anogia, is often described in the Internet as splendidly constructed (and asphalted). It looks like the authors did not drive this route themselves (or full-length) because – it is not true! In the year 2006 the route existed of asphalt 6 miles at the beginning and 11 miles at the end, in between is a very narrow gravel path with often “breakneck” parts. They are travelled with a normal car in no case and a cross-country all wheeled vehicle is indispensable. Driving experience in general and experience on Crete mountain paths should be likewise present. Also you should drive the distance between November and April only if it is guaranteed that it is “free of snow”. You should likewise take “sufficient time into account”, particularly since the shaking runway is to be travelled only in the second course and unforeseeable obstacles, which you however should count (like deep washing of the runway, rocks slipped from the embankment or slope slips, which can block the runway) have to be mastered.

Coming from Agia Varvara the “Anogia-connection” starts at the village entrance of Gergeri as right turn towards the upper village and leads over a wide serpentine road around 6 miles uphill to the heights below the Ambelakia (1.472 m). You have a wonderful (back)view at this section of the tour over the valley and the villages Gergeri, Nivritos (and the surroundings of Zaros). The next mile up to the top of the pass and a “wayside cross” is already a



(still good drivable) gravel path. The “wayside cross” marks a left of the path located, new build Mitato (see fig.) and a sign made out of stone (see fig.). The path bifurcates at this road junction. The left turn-off leads to the Chapel Agios Ioannis at the top end of the Rouwas-Gorge (see leaflet No. 68-05/E at the CRETE Environment forum, navigation column Canyons); the right, narrower turn-off leads to Anogia. Here starts a 7 mile (often very bad and very narrow) uphill leading gravel path, along the west hillside of

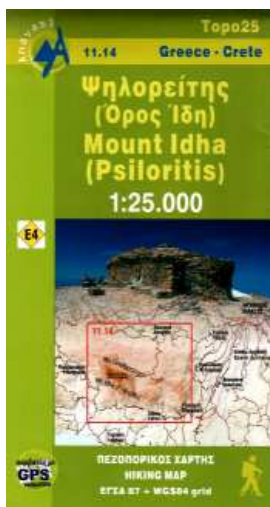


Giritsi (1.779 m) and Koudouni 1.860 m) towards North to the Skinakas.

We drove this tour on the 23rd of December 2006; the Idha Mountain was without snow and frost-free. Nevertheless there was a heavy “Ice wind” which performed “magic ice flowers and blossoms” at the scrubs and high mountains flora (see fig.). Dense fog embarrassed us to drive faster than “walking speed” at the last third of the route; even then we reached the narrow asphalt band on the street towards the observatory. The observation towers of the “Skinakas-Observatory” are located on the summit of the Skinakas.

The plant coming from the year 1986/87 was established by the physical department of the University of Crete in co-operation with the Max-Planck-Institute for extraterrestrial physics (Munich). A new tower with a 1.3 m telescope was added in 1995.





We ignored the asphalted driveway which leads to the observatory and followed the narrow band left towards the plain (past the right turn-off to S. Fanourios (Church)) until we reached a cross-road, the “main-road” from Anogia to the Nida-Plateau. Here you have the choice; left, 3.7 miles to the Nida-Plateau (see leaflet No. 17-04E) or right, 10 miles to Anogia (see leaflet No. 100-05E)

At this point completing the note for a topographic map (GPS compatible), 1:25.000: Mount Idha, 11.14 (Psiloritis), which is very helpful for Jeep excursions within this area (see fig.) This kind of map (€ 7,50/ each) is also available for Lefka Ori with single maps for the areas Gigilos, Pachnes and Sfakia or together at a CD (€ 24,80). At present available unfortunately only “locally” and in Greek language.

Pictures: *U. Kluge / H. Eikamp* (23.12.2006)