

Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

The monastery of Koudouma, an idyll on Crete's South coast - and worth seeing cave churches around

Detailed directions to the monastery of *Koudouma* can be found on our homepage within our info leaflet 06-04/E: - "Jeep tour to the monastery of Koudoumà" [http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/006-04E.pdf] However, please note that the road conditions meanwhile may have changed (improved); based on the Cretan passion for road works you are never safe of surprises (mostly positive).

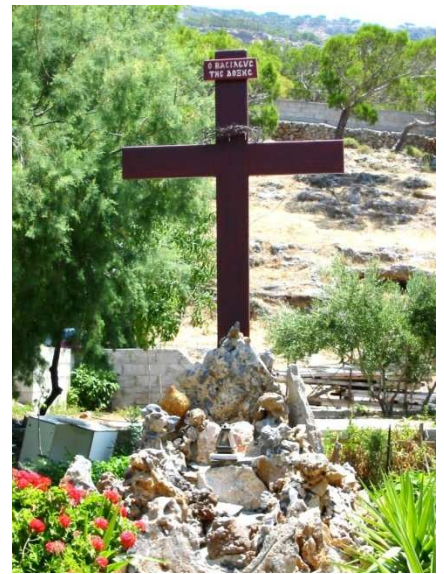
In a beautiful Bay on the southern coast of Crete, the monastery of *Koudoumà* is located between caves of hermit, on a black colour sand beach; see the following **pictures 1** and **2**.



There were monasteries and hermitages in this area since the Byzantine period. The present monastery *Koudouma* was built at the end of the 19th century. Only the ruin of a „forgotten“ monastery from neither nobody knows the name, nor which Saints was dedicated was at this place before. In the 14. Century there was although a monastery "*Koudoumas*", but is not known whether it was in the place of today's monastery or somewhere in its vicinity.

Founder of the monastery were the Blest *Parthenius* and *Evmenios*, two Cretan monks who may have been spoken blest due to their virtue and their works.

"After they walked around on the South coast of Crete to find a suitable place for the asceticism, they built the monastery in 1870" (*Psilakis*). Their fame spread quickly about Crete and many monks and pilgrims flocked to *Koudouma*. Initially the cells are not sufficient and many monks lived in the surrounding caves or stones erected shelters (see **pictures 3** and **4** at the following page). More image impressions from the Church, the monastery yard and the Chapel below. In 2004 just 3 monks were still living in the monastery.



When visiting the monastery of *Koudouma* you should also know the surrounding "monuments". **N. PSILAKIS** wrote: "On a path which leads from the monastery to the West the cave of *St. Antonios* is to be reached" (approx. 45 minutes). This church of the saints of the monks is built in a cave. In former times, the cave was inhabited by ascetics. Following the path further to the West, the old monastery *Agios Ioannis* is to be reached. (another 45 minutes). Again, the *Catholicon* is a cave church with excellent murals. A preserved inscription indicating tells that this church was renewed in 1360.

In the event of a exploration of the above described surrounding cave churches, schedule at least 4 hours of walk (with good shoes and sufficient water supply), for outward and return.

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