

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**Ecotourism in West Crete**
The Milia Mountain RetreatAn article from our members *Maria Eleftheria* & *Diana P. Bailey*

The village *Milia* is located 500 meters high in the mountains in the District of *Kisamos* (*Kissamos*). When coming from *Chania* or *Souda* towards *Kisamos* (*Kastelli*), is at the end of the National road a sign pointing to *Elafonisi*. Follow the signs through the villages *Kaloudiana*, *Potamida*, *Boulgaro*. Short after the village entrance of *Topolia* is a crossroads. Take the right branch to *Tsourouniana*, *Aikirgianni*, *Kaladenes* and *Sirikari*. After about 0.3 miles turn left to *Tsourouniana* and after another 5 miles right to *Milia*. The last 1.2 miles are a farm road, but the path is good for normal cars without four-wheel drive. On the above directions you also pass two other attractions, where it is worth to take a break: the volcanic lake at *Myloi* and the “**Park of Peace**”, short before *Milia*.

"The principle of Milia", so operators have verbalised it, "is the preservation of the life cycle in friendly manner affable to people as well as nature in due consideration of the Cretan tradition and the history of the place".

Here there be peace and harmony; as a sign at the entrance points out (see header).

The houses of the village nestled on a hillside. A stream that has pretty much water in winter flows through the small valley. The place is surrounded by a remarkably rich flora which be explained by good water supply, as well as different composition of the ground, which meet here. So you find stately oaks, wide chestnut trees and plane trees on slate, and a few metres away smell wild herbs, weigh flowers in the wind, and grow olive, carob and bear trees on limy ground. Impressive rocks with huge cavities emphasize accents in the landscape. About 120 hectares of nature are surrounding the settlement. With a little luck you will observe the "Kokkala" here, the Cretans so call the Lammergeyer, a meanwhile rarely vulture species (also in Crete).

Hard to believe that the area around Milia was severely damaged by fires and overgrazing in the 80s of the last century, suffering from catastrophic lack of water, karstify and Earth removal.

When 1982 some people from the area who owned land in Milia, decided to bring nature back and reconstruct the deserted medieval settlement, grew also the idea of the cultivation of this beautiful piece of ground.

After the cultivation of land and reforestation of the surrounding, an ecological farm, a restaurant, which is cooking with home-grown products also 13 original accommodations come into being. They are guest cottages which are build on the ruins of old farmhouses with the materials of the place – stone and wood – and equipped with simple, traditional furniture. In some of the houses form present rocks the walls as in earlier times. All buildings have WC and shower with hot water, terrace, garden or balcony with view over the landscape and a fireplace or wood stove for the winter months. Because the Milia mountain retreat is open to visitors all year long.



But no matter in whatever season you want to spend a few quiet days here, it is sure a good idea to arrive with a reliable flashlight in the luggage, and mobile phones so it is not switched off anyway in this idyllic place, is charge before because the settlement is powered only by some solar panels with electricity. However, there is no need to bring your own water. The water in Milia comes from a source and tastes quite wonderful.

A stay at Milia may very quiet or more actively designed to your personal needs. The place is located in the heart of Western Crete and offers with its central location a base for excursions. The beautiful beaches of *Elafonisi*, *Palaiochora* and *Sougia* are in the immediate vicinity such as *Kandanos* with its Byzantine churches. *Balos*, *Falasarna* or *Gramvusa* are also easy to reach.

But also those who seek relaxation are here in the seclusion of the mountain village in the right place. In this place once in a while, the time seems to stand still. A place of reflection without loud noise, without car noise and exhaust emissions, but with a special kindness between people.

In the restaurant only a few but tasty meals are offered: e.g. Roast pork with orange, Rabbit stuffed with quark, Zucchini casserole or curd cheese turnover. It places emphasis on quality. Also figuratively. The makers of Milia offer their guests, next to organic food and accommodation in traditional surroundings, insight into a sustainable lifestyle.

In Milia waste is almost unknown. Remains of home-grown food serve as fodder for animals that in turn produce skins, wool, fertilizer and meat or dairy products. A recycling economy that agree with land and people.

The formerly deserted village in the mountains of Crete is back to life, an ecologically meaningful, so to speak.

For more information and details see the detailed website of operators: <http://www.milia.gr/english.html>

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