



AMARI

Discover Amari  
the heart of Crete

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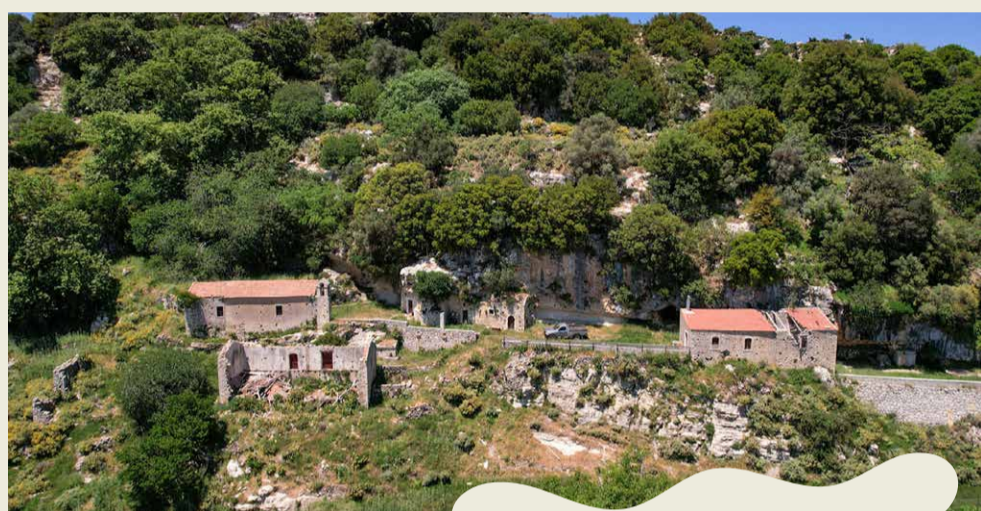


### Byzantine routes

Proto-Byzantine basilicas, Venetian period Temples with frescoes and coats of arms, Byzantine Monasteries, cave Temples, and many other Churches are scattered throughout the Amari valley.

Visit the historic Asomaton Monastery, the Byzantine Church of Agia Anna with the oldest frescoes in Crete, the Byzantine Monastery of Agios Antonios in Veni and the Monastery of Kaloidena in a green landscape with plane trees and springs, in the village of Ano Meros.

The visitor can also have a tour of the Amari countryside and discover the small chapels, built in wonderful locations with unlimited views.



### Don't miss!

- ✓ The cavernous church of Agios Antonios in Patsos, for a mystical experience
- ✓ The icon of Panagia Odigetria in the medieval Holy Church of Panagia of Meronas
- ✓ The impressive stone bell tower that dominates the center of the Nefs Amari settlement
- ✓ To discover the numerous historical chapels of Fourfouras

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### Monasteries - Temples

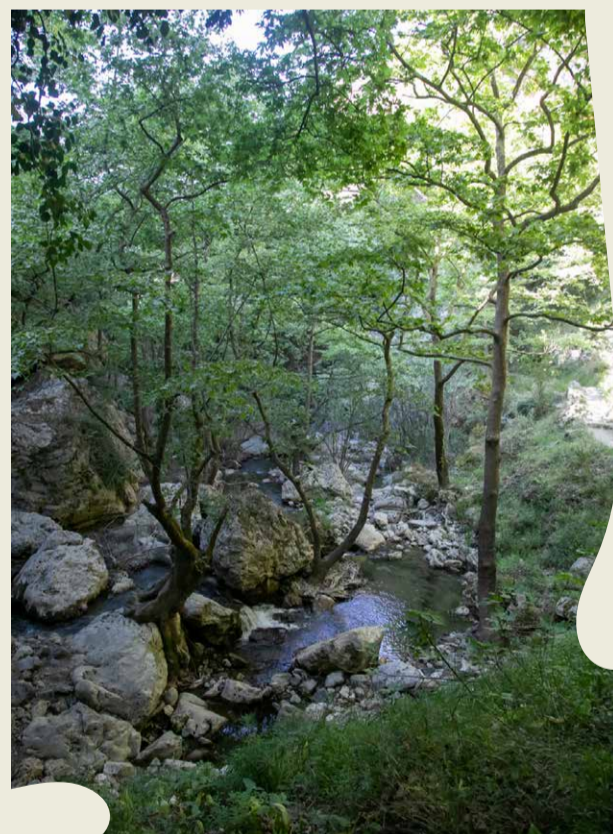


### Waterways

A special feature of the Amari area is the strong presence of water, which comes from the huge underground water collection tanks of Psiloritis and Kedros, the numerous streams, which gather in the Platis Potamos, the Dam of the Rivers and the lake reservoir of Vyzari.

The visitor of the area, during his tour, encounters numerous traditional stone bridges, water mills and traditional faucets, of special architectural interest.

The continuous habitation in the wider area of the Amari valley, but also in the area of the Rivers, since Antiquity was based on the existence of these springs, with water continuing to play a primary role in the life of the area today.



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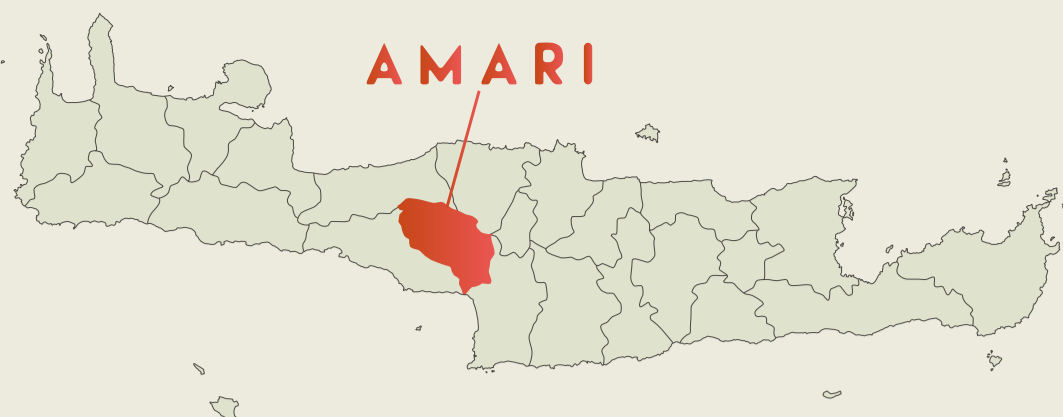
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# AMARI

## Discover Amari

Amari, the heart of Crete, is a place with a long history and culture, endowed with unparalleled natural beauty. Built on the mountain slopes and in the valley, the villages of Amari count many centuries of life and in fact, their names can be found in Venetian manuscripts. Today, in the picturesque settlements, the past and the present coexist harmoniously. The visitor here will see, next to modern buildings and squares, stone-built arched houses with arched doors and traditional fountains with running water, old churches and historical buildings, all in a pleasant coexistence with the background of the verdant Amari valley. The valley is formed by Psiloritis to the east and Kedros to the west, while Samitos rises in the center of the valley. In the area, the authentic features of the Cretan tradition are preserved unchanged, while it is famous for its hospitality and warm people.

The picturesque villages of the Municipality of Amari are an ideal destination for the visitor who wants to get in touch with authentic Crete and of course get to know the high nutritional value and gastronomy of the region.

### Don't miss!

- ✓ An organized climb to Psiloritis
- ✓ A tour in the spectacular Patsos and Platania gorges
- ✓ Visit the age-old olive trees of Genna and Monastiraki
- ✓ Admire the endemic tulips, every spring, on the Plateau Gious Kampos
- ✓ Visit the Folklore Museum of Vistagi, the Old Olive Mill of Apostoloi and the Amari Primary School exhibition

## Nature of Amari

Wild mountains and rugged mountainsides, idyllic landscapes, dominated by greenery and the water element, make up the beautiful and rich nature of Amari. To the east, Psiloritis rises imposingly, with its stony geological relief that forms steep grooves, strong relief and caves, while in the lower parts there are forests with privet. To the west, Mount Kedros surrounds the valley, on which the protected Plateau Gious Kampos is located.

In the heart of the green valley, rivers flow, which in their path create gorges of unique natural beauty with small streams and waterfalls.



## Top 10 + 1 Sights

### 1. River Dam

The man-made earth dam, which was inaugurated in 2009, is located in a wonderful location in a green valley, 25 km south-east of Rethymno, and today it has been transformed into one of the most important wetlands of the south-eastern Mediterranean, hosting numerous species of birds, many from of these endemics. In the area of the dam, there was the «Potami» settlement which was flooded and is today at the bottom of the artificial lake. The volume of the reservoir is approximately 22,500,000 m3 and covers an area of 1,600 acres and the maximum depth reaches 44 m.



### 2. Patsos Gorge

The impressive green gorge of Patsos is located in the northwestern part of the Municipality of Amari. It is a beautiful gorge, which is crossed by a small river. The visitor will encounter along it the small cave temple of Agios Antonios, which is formed on a rock roof, in a hollow of the rocks on the eastern slope of the Patsos gorge, which one encounters 400 m. from its southern entrance at an altitude of 490 meters.



### 3. Holy Monastery of Asomatos

Dedicated to the Synod of Archangels, the Monastery of Asomatos dominates the center of the extremely fertile valley of Amari. Built during the 2nd Byzantine period in the type of a fortress monastery, it was the basis of the revolution of the Hortatzis (13th century) against the conquerors during the years of the Venetian rule.



### 4. Mount Idi or Psiloritis

Mount Idi or Psiloritis is the highest peak (Timios Stavros) at 2,456 m. in Crete. Psiloritis, which is inextricably linked with Greek mythology, is characterized by a variety of landscapes, great biodiversity, the presence of many endemic species of flora and fauna, even rare endangered species. Get to know the rare beauties of the mountain and the imposing landscapes, following the hiking mountain routes from the villages of Amari.



### 5. Archaeological site of Monastiraki

Just outside of Monastiraki and at a distance of 40 kilometers south-southeast of the city of Rethymno, at the site «Kokkinos Charakas», an important Minoan palatial center of the palaeopalatial period 1900-1700 BC has been excavated, which seems to have been closely connected with Phaistos. Excavations have revealed its storerooms, places of worship as well as rooms that were probably the archives of the palace, as a large number of ceramic seals were found there.



### 6. Archaeological site of Apodoulou

Approximately 1 km northwest of the settlement of Apodoulou and at a distance of approximately 15 kilometers northwest of Phaistos and southeast of Monastiraki, in the location «Gournes», on the slope of a hill, archaeological investigations have brought to light the remains of an important Minoan settlement of the palaeopalatial period 1900-1700 BC. X. In a strategic mountainous position with great visibility in the wider area that reaches to the southern Cretan Sea, the settlement spread over the «road», which connected the palace of Phaistos with the large old palace center of Monastiraki and probably operated as an intermediate station. Archaeological findings confirm the connection and contacts of the settlement with these large Minoan centers.



### 7. Plateau Gious Kampos

It stretches northwest of Mount Kedros at an altitude of 750 m and is accessible from the villages of Gerakari, Patsos and Spili. Although it is a small plateau, it is a very global ecosystem and has even been declared protected. Every spring the plateau is flooded with thousands of crimson endemic Tulipa doerfleri tulips.



### 8. Platania Gorge

Platania gorge is located on the western outskirts of Psiloritis and its entrance is in the village of the same name. It is a small, but impressive canyon, with rich vegetation of endemic and other plants, birds of prey that find shelter here, sheer vertical rocks and caves. One of these caves is the cave of Pana, where, according to mythology, the ancient god was born and rock paintings probably from the Minoan era can be seen.



### 9. Holy Church of Panagia Merona

In the center of the settlement of Merona, the church of the Dormition of the Virgin, a three-aisled, vaulted basilica, which was erected in the 14th century, is preserved to this day. Inside, the temple is covered with high-quality frescoes and belonged to the Kallergis family, one of the most famous and powerful Greek families of the time. In the church, an excellent portable icon of Panagia Odegetria is also preserved. Complete your visit to the traditional settlement by discovering its picturesque alleys and crystalline springs.



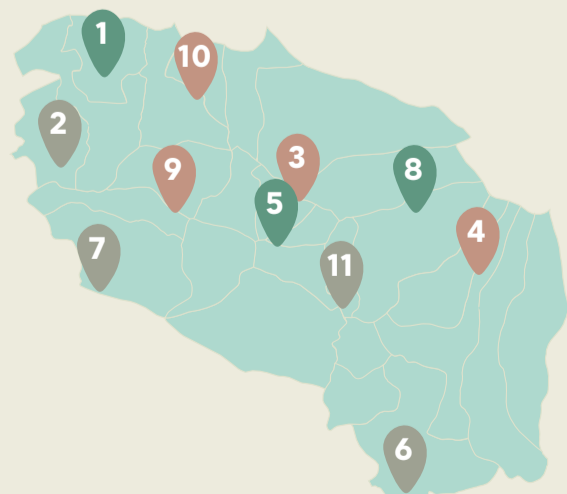
### 10. Holy Church of Panagia Throniotissa

The existence in the center of the settlement of Thronos, remains of an early Christian basilica, was further illuminated by a partial excavation in 1983. A simple, three-aisled, wooden-roofed church with a narthex was then revealed. The eastern part of the central aisle has been occupied since the 14th century. The small, single-aisled church of Panagia Throniotissa that has been built on the remains of the arch of the Holy Step. Inside the newer church, parts of the early Christian mosaic floor are preserved, as well as in the south aisle and the narthex, which date back to the 6th century. West of the village of Thronos, on the hill «Kefala», the ancient city of «Syvritos» flourished during antiquity. Its privileged and naturally fortified position allowed it to control the communication between the northern and southern parts in the area of Rethymnon. Enjoy the unlimited view of Amari from there.



### 11. Early Byzantine Basilica of Byzari

West of the settlement of Vyzari, there is an important archaeological site with ruins from Roman times. Among them are preserved at a great height the remains of a very large Basilica, the excavation of which was completed in 1956-1958. It is a three-aisled, wooden-roofed basilica, with a narthex to the west, while to the east it ends in three semicircular arches. The evidence suggests that this is a 6th century building, who received subsequent interventions. The basilica seems to have been permanently destroyed by the Arab raids of the 9th century.



### Map

Navigate to the sights of the Municipality of Amari by scanning here



### Routes

Discover the natural trails of the Municipality of Amari by scanning here

