


AGHIOS NIKOLAOS THE HEARTBEAT OF CRETE



35° 11' 10" N , 25° 43' 00 E
ΜΑΡΙΝΑ ΔΗΜΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ
MARINA OF AGHIOS NIKOLAOS



The Place

Aghios Nikolaos, with 10.500 inhabitants, is the capital of the Lassithi province of Crete. It is built around a picturesque lake at the northwestern side of the Merabello bay, the biggest bay in Crete.

The beauty here is endless with the seasons succeeding one another. The climate is unique: Dry, without humidity. The area is inhabited since antiquity.

The Lake

The lake is obviously the most beautiful ornament of the city of Agios Nikolaos. It is linked to the sea by a narrow canal, which greatly adds to the beauty of the lake, while its natural surroundings (red rocks within green plants) turn it into a site of great attraction to the foreign visitors, as they can enjoy the view, while sitting comfortably at any of the coffee shops, next to the multi-colored fishing boats. According to the legend, Athena and Artemis Vritomartis were washing their hair at the deep waters of the lake.



The natives, not able to see the bottom, called the lake "bottomless" or "sunk", meaning that it has been created by a landslide, until the Christian commissioner Costas Adossidis Passas connected the lake to the sea in 1867 and its stagnant waters became clear. The English naval traveler Spratt, who was mapping the island, found its depth being 210 feet (64 meters) and said that this might be the opening of an underground river.

The light... the blue...

Marina of Agios Nikolaos - The only one in Crete Member of AEMA

All of Mirabello Gulf holds a special interest for the many visitors who enjoy deep-water fishing and diving explorations. The Marina of Agios Nikolaos is built to European dimensions and standards, and is capable of accommodating up to 255 crafts all year round that visit from all over the world. Visitors to the Marina can avail of its excellent water and electricity supply systems, and modern anchorage. Being located in the heart of the town, travelers can easily and quickly avail of the entertainment options in town, travel to see the more important archeological sights or traditional villages, or go shopping in the many and diverse stores nearby.

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The History

The city of Aghios Nikolaos is built on the location of the ancient "Lato pros Kamara" -port of "Lato Etera". Both towns formed one administrative unit, which flourished during the 3rd century. Both worshipped goddess Elithya (goddess of childbirth) and they had the same coins - with Elithya or Artemis (Diana) on one side and "Hermes Laton" on the other - as well as their own economy. The Latlans, contrary to other towns, which were almost constantly in war with other cities, were in good terms with their adjoining cities of Elounda, Driros, Milatos and Minoa.

There is not enough reference about the Byzantine period. During the Venetian occupation (1204-1669) Genoan pirates built a castle on top of the Kefali hill (prefecture hill), which was renamed by the Venetians to "Merabello" and gave its name to the whole region. The castle has been destroyed by the earthquakes and burnt during the pirate raids.

The city of Agios Nikolaos has been thrust aside during the years of the Turkish occupation and was re-inhabited in the 1860's by fugitives from Sfakla, from Kritsa and other Cretans. In 1881 it was a small picturesque village of few people and in 1900 had 500 inhabitants. However, in 1905, it became the capital of the province.

