



Municipality of Heraklion



HERAKLION TODAY is a vibrant city pulsating with life, while also concealing a rich history which began from the Neolithic period, 7000 B.C. Near to the city of Heraklion are to be found the centres of the Minoan civilization, Knossos, Malia, Phaistos which flourished in the past. Byzantines, Arabs, Venetians, Ottomans passed through Heraklion and left their mark in the current city which suffered greatly in the German bombardment in World War II. The area "within the walls" is particularly enchanting; the old city of Heraklion with its Venetian monuments, neo-classical buildings, picturesque pedestrian promenades, restaurants and cafes. Heraklion, and the entire prefecture, is the administrative, rural and trade centre of Crete. This is where the coastal touristic centres are situated with sandy beaches and large luxury hotels. This is where picturesque villages, vast valleys and three mountainous ranges exist. Heraklion is the root of Europe. Even the name Europe was heard here when, according to mythology, Zeus in love and disguised as a bull, carried Europa, the beautiful princess, on his back from the coast of Asia to Gortyna, 60 km southwest of Heraklion.

HERAKLION IS A CITY of many shades that has embraced the past, is currently impressive and looks to the future. It is a rich city as is the entire prefecture, with many sources of wealth. It is a major tourist destination with an airport and port, the main access points for millions of tourists. There are wonderful touristic enterprises and an intense night life. The Cretan earth generously offers its products which are either consumed domestically or are exported to different countries. Olive oil, wine, honey, greens and herbal plants are the basis of Cretan cuisine with their healthy attributes and their nutritional value. The main element of the Cretan Mediterranean diet is the Cretan olive oil, which is an elixir for good health. The climatic conditions in the prefecture are considered to be the most ideal for the cultivation of the olive and the production of olive oil. The wines in the area are also famous. Since the Minoan period, the area has been featured as one of the most considerable places of exceptional wines. The age long tradition of wine cultivation is evidenced by findings in the area of Archanes and Vathypetro.



THE PORT OF HERAKLION is the main and most modern commercial and passenger entrance gate to the island of Crete. It is one of the ten major Greek ports with a prominent geostrategic position, as it is situated in the centre of the South-Eastern Mediterranean Basin, at the cross-section of three continents. Lately, (since 2002), the Port has been operating as a "Home Port" together with Heraklion airport "Nikos Kazantzakis", facilitating cruise ships and, it is the second port of Greece following Piraeus offering services as points of arrival and departure for cruises. The Passenger Port of Heraklion is the third (3rd) in passenger traffic in Greece and annually serves about 2 million passengers and more than 300,000 vehicles. Three large, modern ships depart daily on a regular route towards Piraeus, while there is also a direct connection with many ports of the Aegean Islands and with the Port of Thessaloniki. There is a New Passenger Station at pier III, covering a total area of 2,500 m² with state-of-the-art facilities and services. The station accommodates stores and ticket booking offices of shipping companies. The Venetian fort of Koule dominates the west of the modern port, which used to guard the important port of the Venetian city of Chandax.

THE MINOAN CIVILIZATION, the first European, developed in the area of Heraklion. Throughout the years, the peoples that passed through Heraklion left their mark. Traces of diachronic civilizations are dispersed in Heraklion and the surrounding areas. The palaces of Knossos, Phaistos, Malia, the amazing villas of Tylissos, Agia Triada are the most significant archaeological sites. The number of monuments that attract visitors to Heraklion is considerable. Amongst those: the Venetian port with the castle and the dockyards, the Venetian walls and the Loggia. The church of Saint Titus, as well as the churches of Saint Minas (small and large), the basilica of Saint Marcus, the grave of the great thinker and writer Nikos Kazantzakis, the Venetian and Ottoman fountains, the neoclassical buildings at various points of the city adorn the city centre. The museums of Heraklion are also unique. The Archaeological Museum, the Museum of Byzantine Icons, the Historical Museum of Crete, the Museum of Natural History of Crete, the Museum of the Battle of Crete and the National Resistance 1941-1945.

