

# Strouboulas

A little bit further of "Koumpedes" in Heraklion, in the feet of Strouboulas, next to the old highway, in the 14th kilometre to Rethimno, there is a big circular ditch known as the "Threshing Floor". This extraordinary settle was always causing the justified curiosity of passerbies, because the place around is rough, almost inhospitable, full of hard stones and a little dust.

At what time, therefore, they wonder, and for what reason did this circular piece of ground settled down? And does its name has any relation with what the word expresses or it is owed only to its shape? The experts say that this was formed by a collapse of an underground cavern, but people from the around regions support that in this place really existed a regular threshing floor that was lost with its owner. That threshing floor, none has ever seen it, but the tradition does not allow any doubts.

With an altitude of 800 meters and a geographical position next to the town of Heraklion Mt Strouboulas seems to be uninteresting for most of the hikers-climbers. However, when you stand on top of it a lot of thoughts will probably cross your mind. What is important for the hiker is the short time needed to reach the top - 30-45 min from the dirt track road or 1.5 hours from the old national road. As a result one can walk to the top even on weekdays or in an afternoon after work. Let's talk more analytically now.



From Heraklion you must get the old national road to Rethymnon. Then the only thing you have to do is to drive carefully until you see the sign to Voulismeno Aloni. It should take 15-20 min to get there - the marking is very good. From there and 500 meters on the left there's a dirt track road starting that goes uphill and leads to a small plateau at the bottom of the mountain. As soon as you arrive at the plateau, you'll see a small chapel. From that point you can drive on straight ahead for a while and then take the first turning to the right (uphill again) to the end of the road.

That's the point where your walking to the top starts (see photo). The difference of altitude you have to cover is just 380 meters. The whole of the county of Heraklion as well as the highest peaks of Mt Dikti - Spathi and Afentis Christos - can be seen from the top of Strouboulas. At the top there is the church of Timios Stavros, which is very well preserved. Next to it there are some other buildings and remains of a World War II military observatory, since the view from here is unique.

Apart from the route described, there is a longer one -about 3 hours -, which starts from the gorge of Almyros almost at sea level and ends on Strouboulas. This specific route can be usually found among the activities of the Alpine Club of Heraklion and it is ideal even for children. If you have just finished work, a little walking will surely be great, especially when you have the chance to get in a very short time onto one of the most beautiful peaks of Crete.

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