

## The City Of Hersonissos

Hersonissos, also transliterated as *Chersonisos* and *Hersónisos*, is a town and a municipality in the north of Crete, bordering the Mediterranean / Aegean Sea. This community is about 25 kilometers east of Heraklion and west of Agios Nikolaos. What is usually called Hersonissos is in fact its peninsula and harbour. It is part of the Heraklion regional unit. It is situated 25 km from the Heraklion airport and 27 km from the Heraklion port.

Hersonissos is oriented towards tourism industry, and popular with Dutch, Irish, Serb and German nationals. The strip near the harbour is heavily themed with Dutch snackbars and Irish pubs. On the eastern side are large hotels and the Star Beach with slides, bars, pools, games, bungee jump, go-karts, like a day time club. There is also a lot to do for children. In the main street there are many souvenir shops, as well as other shops and restaurants, some of which are near the sea. There is also a small aquarium called Aquaworld Aquarium featuring local sea life and reptiles, most of which are rescued animals and many of which visitors and their children can hold. The Lychnostatis Open Air Museum,<sup>[4]</sup> with its recreation of a traditional Cretan village, is another interesting place not only for those with children. Nightlife is also important, and feature discos, clubs, bars and pubs. One can take a sight-seeing train that runs down the main street along the sea, and provides access to the surroundings of Hersonissos.

People who like to rest and sunbathe on holiday can enjoy Hersonissos, for it has beaches, and excursions to other places on Crete can be made from here as well. Like many communities on Crete, the local economy is not only based on tourism, but also on agriculture. In the fall, when most of the tourists have left, many people normally employed in the tourism industry earn money with the olive harvest.

At the modern settlement of Hersonissos is the site of the ancient town of *Chersonesos*, an important seaport from Classical Greece through Byzantine times that served the city of Lyttos. The contemporaneous pleasure port is built over the remains of the Roman port. Some traces of those remains, most of them submerged, are still visible in some places. On the seaside street there is a pyramidal Roman fountain with mosaics of fishing scenes. On the top of the rocky hill behind the port stand the ruins of an early Christian basilica with floor mosaics.

The vicinity of Hersonissos is noted for its prehistoric archaeological finds. On the coast approximately one kilometre to the east of Hersonissos was an ancient temple dedicated to the goddess Britomartis.