

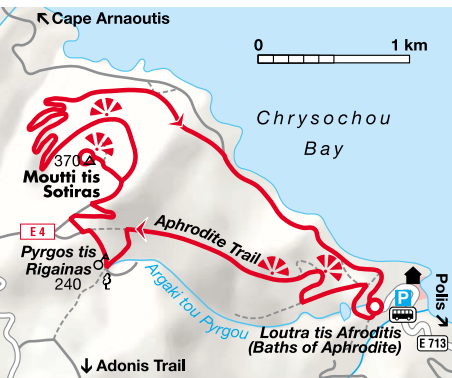
# 1 Aphrodite Trail

2.30 hrs.



## On the trail of the goddess of love

Why not begin with one of the finest walks on Cyprus? The forestry department has constructed a nature trail that runs along narrow paths steeped in myth and during the walk you can become acquainted with the varied flora that abounds in the Akamas region. From the 370m high Moutti tis Sotiras there's also a spectacular view of the peninsula lying at your feet below. In April when the meadows are covered in a carpet of yellow chrysanthemum blossom, the Aphrodite Trail is an absolute spring classic.



**Starting point:** from Polis by car or taxi via Latsi to the Baths of Aphrodite, 35m. In summer there's a bus service to the Baths of Aphrodite from Polis.

**Height difference:** 350m in both ascent and descent.

**Grade:** steep ascent on a stony path in places. You need a firm footing on the descent from Moutti tis Sotiras. Little shade.

**Refreshments:** Baths of Aphrodite restaurant at the starting point which has a terrace with beautiful views.

**Linking tip:** you can walk along the coastal path via Fontana Amorosa as far as the Cape of Arnaoutis (Walk 3).



Chrysanthemum blossoms at the Baths of Aphrodite.

An initially broad paved path starts at the car park at the **Baths of Aphrodite** on the left of the souvenir kiosk which brings you after 150m through a wooden gateway to the legendary bathing place of the goddess of love. In the dim and distant past Aphrodite is supposed to have frolicked with Akamas and Adonis in the pool here that is fed by a spring. Today a huge fig tree shades this romantic spot.

Follow the sign for the 'Nature Trail' just in front of the pool. Cross over the streambed of the Argaki tou Pyrgou and leave the 'bathing area' again through a small gateway. After 40 metres you meet the dusty coastal path to Cape Arnaoutis. Immediately before this point, turn sharp left to ascend the mountain ridge. (The official path marked with an arrow follows the coastal path for a few minutes and then meets your path later on.) After 2 minutes there's a fork in the path and again you go left. After a right hand turn you are afforded a wonderful view of the Gulf of Chrysochou from two benches

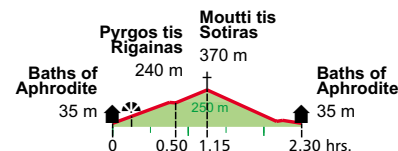
below a young pine tree and in spring, of the garish green meadows of the caravan park lying directly below.

The dirt path at first runs through a small thin juniper wood and then, in a straight line, climbs steeply up the southeastern slope of Moutti tis Sotiras. After half an hour the most difficult part of the walk is behind you. Another bench seat with fabulous views appears just in the nick of time.

The path heads straight for Moutti tis Sotiras, but swings left a good way before the table mountain and 5 minutes later at a huge Cyprus oak tree (also known as Aleppo oak, *Quercus infectoria*) reaches **Pyrgos tis Rigainas** (240m).

According to legend Aphrodite is said to have taken a rest here after bathing. A monastery was built at this spot in the middle ages of which only the remains of a few walls have stood the test of time.

Before the ruins of the monastery, at the sign for the 'Aphrodite Nature Trail', ascend the broad farm track. The path, now also signposted as the 'E4', heads straight towards Moutti tis Sotiras. At the fork 4 minutes later on keep





*The sometimes stony path runs through macchia on its way from the Gulf of Chrysochou to Pyrgos tis Rigainas.*

slightly to the left along the main path uphill. Some of the characteristic wild shrubs and plants of Cyprus can be found growing close together along the path: olive trees, carob trees, various types of gorse and the mastic tree. A wooden arrow points right to a path that winds its way up the hillside of Moutti, then runs for a short distance parallel to a farm track and eventually joins this path. Continue following the farm track uphill. 4 minutes later the narrower path leads off to the right again (waymarker), but keep following the wide path left uphill which ends at a turning circle after a few paces.

A small path brings you from there in a few minutes to **Moutti tis Sotiras** (370m). From the summit plateau you can enjoy an imposing view across the indented north coast of the

Akamas peninsula as far as the Cape of Arnaoutis. Be careful at the edge – from the plateau there's a sheer drop!

Go back to the turning circle and follow the hiking path that now leads left below it through juniper bushes across the north slope of the mountain. Another marvellous viewpoint, with a bench seat, invites you to stop for a quiet rest.

The mule path, slightly exposed, zigzags down to the coast and after the descent continues and after the descent continues, a few metres above the coastal path, running parallel to it. Ignore the left hand turn-off to the coastal path and stay at first on the nicer path until, after 10 minutes, this eventually joins the **coastal path**. Follow this path back to the **Baths of Aphrodite**. Go straight on at the point where you briefly met the coastal path coming from the baths at the start of the walk and, leaving the mobile homes on your left hand side, arrive back at the car park at the kiosk.

*Panorama from Moutti tis Sotiras of the Akamas peninsula.*

