

## 12 PALEOKASTRITSA • LAKONES • MT ARAKLI • MAKRADES • KRINI • ANGELOKASTRO • PALEOKASTRITSA

See also photographs page 18-19, 31

**Distance/time:** 11.4km/7.1mi; 4h

**Grade:** moderate-strenuous, with an initial ascent of 450m/1500ft and a descent of 300m/1000ft at the end. Some of the paths can be slippery when wet; possibility of vertigo at Angelokastro

**Equipment:** walking boots, sunhat, suncream, sunglasses, long-sleeved shirt, raingear, picnic, water

**How to get there and return:** 🚗 (journey time 40min) or 🚌 to/from Paleokastritsa; park in the car park below the monastery

**Short walks** (access and equipment as main walk)

**1 Paleokastritsa — Lakones — Mt Arakli (obelisk) — Paleokastritsa:** 5km/3mi; 2h30min. Moderate-strenuous; overall ascent/descent of 450m/1500ft. Follow the main walk as far as the obelisk on the east flank of Mt Arakli (1h20min), then return the same way.

**2 Paleokastritsa — Lakones — Paleokastritsa:** 2.5km/1.5mi; 1h30min. Moderate; overall ascent/descent of 275m/900ft (the ascent to Lakones is steep). Follow the main walk up to Lakones and, when you reach the main road in the village, turn left. Walk along through the village until you reach Alki's Artist Olive Wood Production. Turn down the steps at the far side of this shop and follow the main walk from the 3h15-point (page 93) back down to Paleokastritsa.

**3 Paleokastritsa — Lakones — Angelokastro — Paleokastritsa:** 7.8km/4.9mi; 3h10min. Moderate-strenuous; overall ascent/descent of 330m/1075ft (the ascent to Lakones and the castle is steep). This is a popular route with 'Landscapers'. Follow the main walk up to Lakones and from there walk along the road through the village towards Krini. Continue past Bella Vista ('the best view in Europe') and a couple of restaurants with tables overlooking the turquoise coastline. Follow the road for 2.3km/1.4mi, and pass a convent on the left. On a long stretch of straight road, take a path on the left indicated by a yellow Corfu Trail marker. This descends into an olive grove and then a stream bed. After a few metres, leave the stream bed by taking a path to the right. Bear right and follow the path ahead, through the trees. It soon becomes a track and climbs. On a bend, take a path (by a rock), climbing gently to the main village road on the edge of Krini. Turn left here and follow the road downhill for 10 minutes, to Angelokastro. On the return leg, you could divert into Krini or visit the old threshing floor (Picnic 12b), before heading back to Lakones and Paleokastritsa.

It's hard to imagine Paleokastritsa as a humble fishing village before the onset of tourism. Set amid a sequence of turquoise bays and rocky coves, backed by tumbling green hillsides and the dominant bulk of Mt Arakli, it must have been incomparably beautiful. Although tourist development has taken a definite toll,

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## Walk 12: Paleokastritsa, Mt Arakli and Angelokastro 91

the natural beauty of the landscape can perhaps be best appreciated by venturing into the mountainous hinterland, with numerous viewpoints over the dramatic coastline. This walk makes a circuit up the flanks of Mt Arakli, giving unsurpassed views of the Bay of Liapades. It follows old stone-paved paths and donkey tracks, visiting three attractive hillside villages on the way and then, returning towards the coast, it leads you to a steep climb up to the rocky fortress of Angelokastro. The few skeletal remains have little to offer, but its sheer-sided perch will leave you in awe — if not fright — as you peer down into a milky-green sea 330m/1075ft below.

**Begin the walk** by following the notes for WALK 11



on page 86. When you reach the main road in **Lakones (40min)**, turn right. Walk along the narrow street for 200m/yds, watching out for one-way traffic which is controlled by lights at each end of the village, then climb steps up to the left (just past a butcher's shop). In half a minute, where the alley bears right, keep climbing the steps, ignoring all side-alleys. In two minutes, at a T-junction at the top of the village, turn right uphill. This path, which is partly cobbled and with shallow steps, ascends up the SLOPES OF **Mt Arakli (Picnic 12a)**. Follow the cobbled path away from the village, out onto the open hillside, with views down to the coast. After some zigzags the path levels out and soon turns inland. In 20 minutes you reach a stony track with a white **OBELISK** on your left (**1h10min**). This is the highest point on the walk, with Mt Arakli on the left. Turn left along the track and follow it downhill to the **DOUKADES/VISTONAS ROAD (1h15min)**. There is a **BUS SHELTER** on the right, and an isolated church on a small hillside opposite is a prominent landmark.

Turn left and follow the road for 25 minutes, to the outskirts of Vistonas. As you near the village, you can take a short-cut by following a concrete lane to the left: it starts just past the **Vistonas** sign, beside a **SHRINE** at the side of the road and passes a **CHURCH** on the left. Keep straight downhill and rejoin the road. On coming to the **MAKRADES JUNCTION MAKRADES JUNCTION (2h10min)**, make a dash to the right, before the stall-keepers rush out to insist you taste their local wines from the barrel!

Continue through **Makrades** until you come to a concrete lane cutting across in front of you (just past the last houses and a cafeneion; a field lies on the far side of this lane). Head right along the lane. The concrete soon turns to gravel. A few minutes down, a neat path, bordered by low stone walls, joins the track from the left. Turn left on this path (there is a sign 'SUNSET TAVERNA', just where it starts). Follow this pretty path, with a concrete surface in places, through olive trees, then garden plots and vineyards, before climbing up to **Krini (2h20min)**.

Entering the village you reach a T-junction with a narrow alley. You will turn left here, but why not first make a short diversion to the setting for Picnic 12b. Turn right and follow the alley for two minutes, to reach a beautiful stone-laid threshing floor just beyond the village. In spring this site is a mass of wild flowers, and

*Krini from the threshing floor (Picnic 12b)*



there are seats from which you can contemplate the views north along the western coastline.

When you are ready to continue, return along the alley into the village centre, hardly a square, with a small tree in the middle. Turn right here, following the road to the outskirts of the village and continue straight on down the hill to Angelokastro.

Ten minutes downhill you're at the foot of a stumpy tower of scrub-covered rock, crowned by the castle ruins. Take the path leading off the parking area, and follow it to the top, keeping right at the fork three minutes up. From **Angelokastro (Picnic 12c)** the views are superb. You look along the escarpment wall as it slides off into a bay indented with sandy coves. On a clear day you can see across the island to Corfu Town — hence the strategic importance of this medieval fortress.

On the return to Krini, you can use paths to cut out some bends in the road (the paths are shown on the map). When you reach the top of the hill, on the village outskirts (before the first house on the right), turn right, down into an olive grove. There is a Corfu Trail marker on a telegraph pole at the start of this path. Follow this delightful path, gently descending, and when you meet a track in four minutes, turn left. One minute later, when the track ends, keep straight ahead along the path. In another four minutes descend into a dry stream bed. Turn left along the stream bed and, after a few metres, follow the path up to the right, out of the gully and onto the **LAKONES ROAD (3h)**.

Turn right along the road. Some 15 minutes along (about five minutes past Taverna Bellavista — 'the best view in Europe'), descend steps alongside a shop on the right (**ALKI'S ARTIST OLIVE WOOD PRODUCTION; 3h15min**). Two minutes down, ignore a faint fork off to the left. Follow this sometimes-overgrown path down to a track. Continue down the track for some 40 minutes, all the way back to **Paleokastritsa**. The **BUS STOP** is a couple of minutes along to the right (**4h**) — or return to the **CAR PARK** at the foot of the monastery hill.