

Five great kafenions for cheap drinks and great mezes

Once upon a wonderful time ago mezes were standard fare in Cretan restaurants. Served with your drinks, whether you ordered raki or red wine, they varied from a simple dish of olives, to sapid meat nibbles soaked in succulent sauce.

Well here's the great news: if you know where to go here in East Crete you can still get mezes served with your drinks.

Here's our top five list of kafenions where drinks come served with savoursome Greek snacks.

One warning tho': apart from Kostas at Xerocambos, none of these traditional taverna-owners speak more than a few words of English...

1) Kafenion Armeni, near Handras. This little no-name kafenion down a side street of this typical mountain village on the way to Xerocambos beach is easy to find. Head for the main square (*plateia*) with its windmill. When you're facing the large kafeneion on the square, the small street alongside it leads to the smaller kafenion, which serves a wonderful variety of mezes snacks.

Sample price one beer, one ouzo, snacks included, 3,50 euros.

2) [Kostas Taverna in Xerocambos](#) this pretty, rustic taverna with views of Xerocambos salt lake serves succulent homemade food. Mezes vary according to season, but if you mention Eastcretomagazine you are sure to be served some nibbles when you order a drink here. Sample price one beer, one ouzo, snacks included, 4 euros.

3) Small kafeneion, Goudouras. Another no-name venue. To find it, hire a car from [Stelin Tours in Makrigialos](#), take the road to Goudouras from Kalo Nero. When you arrive in Goudouras, take direction Aghia Triada/Ziros. After the small supermarket on your right you will see a wooden fronted kafeneion. Stop and enjoy! Sample price one beer, one ouzo, snacks included, 3-4 euros.

4) Kafeneion, main square Sikia, on the road between Lithines and Agios Georgios. Run by a wonderful couple who've had this place for 40-odd years, you can be sure of a warm welcome in this traditional kafeneion. To find it head for the square in the centre of the village. There are three kafeneions. AVOID the one down steps behind the fountain which practises 'tourist prices' (sic). Choose the very simple affair opposite the fountain and pay a lot less. Sample price one beer, one ouzo, snacks included, 3-4 euros

5) Kafeneion, Ziros. On the road from Armeni to Xerocambos you'll pass through the mountain village of Ziros. The second taverna on your left, which is also a small hotel, is run by a wonderfully kind couple who dole out great mezes with drinks. Sample price one beer, one ouzo, snacks included, 3-4 euros

Kali orexi!