

The Natural Wonders Meteora-Zagori

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The North-West corner of Greece is known for its dramatic terrain of mountains, gorges, rivers and remote settlements. It is the most mountainous region in the country which is blessed with a lush and soaring landscape, and mountain villages that preserve their traditional architecture. One would hardly recall many places in Europe that feel so untainted by tourism.

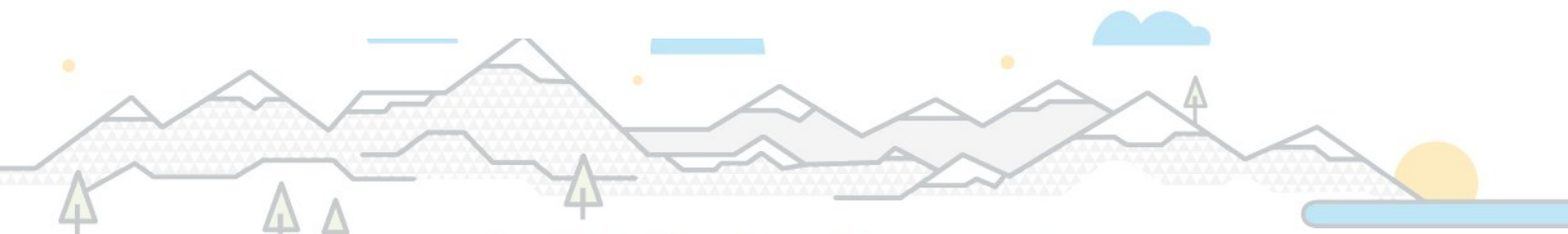
Our trip starts from Athens, with the first stop in Meteora, literally meaning “suspended in the air”. Meteora are the world-famous stunning rock pillars that rise impressively above the plain of Thessaly. The monasteries built by monks six hundred years ago on the top of these rocks, create a unique synthesis of nature and man. Moving further North, entering the “Epirus” region, you’ll discover the magnificent 12-km-long Vikos Gorge, one of the world’s deepest. A national park filled with forests, waterfalls and ice-cold mountain lakes, surrounded by the Zagorohoria, immaculate stone villages. They constitute an entity of 46 villages with clear geographic boundaries and definite historic and cultural characteristics. It’s easy to see why the Zagorians have been keeping Zagori a secret from the world for so long.



Trip Highlights

- Explore Meteora, massive world renown, monastery-topped rock pinnacles, listed as one of Unesco World Heritage sites
- Sleep in boutique guesthouses, built in total harmony with the architecture of the areas
- Hike on cobblestone paths following the footsteps of locals who have walked on them for centuries, in both Meteora and Zagori
- Sample local dishes that pay tribute to the rich gastronomic tradition of the region, and gain insight to the philosophy of the fresh local products

Map



Tour Details

Dates: From May to October

Days/Nights: 8 days / 7 nights

Theme: Family adventures /Hiking & Trekking/ Cultural

Condition grading: Moderate

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrival in Athens and welcome dinner

Often referred to as the cradle of Western civilization, Athens has been continually occupied by people for the last 7,000 years. You can't move without bumping into an ancient ruin or building, which evokes imagery of the Greek gods or the thoughts of their philosophers.

In the afternoon we meet at our hotel for an introductory talk and afterwards we have our first dinner together. Of course, Greek cuisine plays a starring role and we have spent many hours digesting countless delicacies during the research of this important aspect.

Overnight in Athens in a 4* Hotel

Dinner included

Day 2

Drive to Meteora and hike

In the morning you will depart from Athens in the direction of Meteora and you are not likely to forget the first moment the rock pinnacles come into view. The rock formations of Meteora are an extraordinary unique phenomenon and the best way to appreciate the power of the natural forces that shaped this breathtaking landscape is walking right into it. Fantastic manifestations of geological history and current processes of nature await you around every bend or rise in the trail.



Start from the village of Kastraki, which lies at the bottom of the rocks and hike up towards the monasteries. They represent a unique artistic achievement and are one of the most powerful examples of the architectural transformation of a site into a place of retreat, meditation and prayer. A testament to the harmonious coexistence of man and nature.

Overnight in Kastraki in a boutique hotel

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Hiking distance: 8 km / Hiking Duration: 3 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 580 m & 580 m

Driving distance:

Athens to Meteora 350 km / 4 hr 30 min

Day 3

Drive towards Zagori, visit Ioannina on the way and afternoon hike from Dilofo to Vitsa

We leave the escarpments and rock towers of Meteora to transfer to the Zagori, a region of pristine rivers, wild mountains, and isolated stone villages. On the way we stop in the picturesque town of Ioannina which sits on the shores of Lake Pamvotis. Originally Hellenistic, the town flourished in the late Byzantine period (13th–15th centuries) and finally surrendered to the Ottomans in 1430. Ioannina was ceded to Greece in 1913 following the Balkan Wars. The result is an intriguing mix of Ottoman and Greek Enlightenment architecture.

After Ioannina, we will transfer into the mountains to the charming Dilofo, one of the most beautiful and best-preserved villages of Zagori. We check into our lovely boutique hotel which is a restored mansion house and in the afternoon we are going to hike to the neighboring village of Vitsa to have dinner.

Overnight in Dilofo, Archontiko Dilofo

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included



Hiking distance: 6 km / **Hiking Duration:** 2 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 300 m & 230 m

Driving distance:

Meteora to Ioannina 105 km / 1 hr 45 min

Ioannina to Dilofo 34 km / 45 min

Vitsa to Dilofo 12 km / 15 min

Day 4

Hike around traditional bridges and cooking lesson

Located in the heart of Central Zagori, Koukouli has been throughout time one of the most significant villages of the area. Five amazing stone bridges connect it with the surrounding villages. The bridges are strategically located in the area ensuring their continuous usage, as the rivers of Zagori are quite often impassable during the winter and the road network is quite recent. Built centuries ago, by the craftsmen of their time, the bridges are preserved in an excellent condition, reminders of the capabilities and imagination of those people. In a 4-hour-round trip you'll have the opportunity to admire each one of them from all perspectives.

In the afternoon, we will learn about the local cuisine during a hands-on cooking lesson. The Zagorian cuisine reflects the agricultural production of our small and yet blessed country and gives us even today indirect information about the land's economy, history, social life and customs.

Overnight in Dilofo, Archontiko Dilofo

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Hiking distance: 8,3 km / **Hiking Duration:** 4 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 350 m & 350 m

Driving distance:

Dilofo to Koukouli 7 km / 10 min

Koukouli to Dilofo 7 km / 10 min

Day 5



Hike from Tsepelovo to Beloi viewpoint through Vradeto stairs

This morning we have a scenic 20 minute drive to the start of our walk that takes us up to the village of Tsepevolos. From there we will hike towards towards Beloi, a viewpoint with breathtaking views of the gorge of Vikos. On the way we will have the chance to walk the stairs of Vradeto. They are made of stones, carved by exceptional and highly experienced craftsmen, who created 1,120 large steps, covering thus 250 meters of height with a path of more than 1.5 kilometers which connects the villages of Kapesovo and Vradeto. Lunch today, is prepared by our friend Lambros in his tiny kitchen, at the village of Vradeto which lies at 1340m and is the highest in the region.

Overnight in Dilofo in a boutique hotel

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Hiking distance: 12 km / ***Hiking Duration:*** 4 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 783 m & 515 m

Driving distance:

Dilofo to Tsepelovo 18 km / 30 min

Vradeto to Dilofo 20 km / 30 min

Vitsa to Dilofo 12 km / 15 min

Day 6

Rafting in Voidomatis and hike from Megalo Papigo to a Vikos view point

Today you will raft Voidomatis, which characterized as one of Europe's cleanest rivers. We float through an impressive waterway surrounded by age-long plane trees and encounter few easy rapids, which have just enough white-water to give a little thrill without any danger, before ending at the arched stone bridge of Kleidonia.

After lunch we will transfer to the village of Megalo Papigo, which due to its preserved original state is declared as traditional settlement. The village is densely built, with numerous stone houses and enclosed courtyards typical for Zagori villages and has with great views towards



the Astraka towers. In the afternoon, we leave on foot from Megalo Papigo along ancient cobbled lanes that take us to the “sister village” of Mikro Papigo. The path leads us along the flank of the mountain to several breathtaking look-out points over the Vikos gorge and the whole of eastern Zagori.

Overnight in Megalo Papigo in a boutique hotel

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Rafting duration: 1 hr 30 min

Hiking distance: 4,7 km / ***Hiking Duration:*** 2 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 164 m & 332 m

Driving distance:

Dilofo to Aristi bridge 27 km / 40 min

Kleidonia to Megalo Papigo 16 km / 30 min

Day 7

Hike from Megalo Papigo to Vikos passing the Voidomatis springs

There is a timeless quality to Zagori, which may be due to its inaccessibility for so many years. Whichever country has claimed this territory as its own over the centuries, Zagorians have held on to their identity and traditions. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the villages were prosperous staging posts for Ottoman traders, and the paths they travelled are now ideal for hiking: routes between villages range from under two hours to all-day treks. Today grab the opportunity to realize one of them. From Megalo Papigo hike towards the springs of Voidomatis river. The rewarding hike ends at the village of Vikos where you can regain your strength with a hearty lunch.

In the afternoon slow down and use your free time to rid yourself of any remaining traces of stress after a therapeutic week in the mountains. Nature after all is the best physician.

Overnight in Megalo Papigo in a boutique hotel

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included



Hiking distance: 5,2 km / **Hiking Duration:** 3 hr

Elevation gain & loss: 370 m & 542 m

Driving distance:

Vikos to Megalo Papigo 16 km / 30 min

Day 8

Say farewell to Greece or continue on your own

Today there will be a morning transfer to the airport of Ioannina where you can catch a morning flight to the international airport of Athens for return flights home or continue exploring one of Europe's oldest cities.

Breakfast included

Driving distance:

Megalo Papigo to Ioannina 57 km / 1 hr

What's included

Price includes:

All accommodations based on double occupancy

Hotel taxes and service charges

All transportation during the trip

All activities mentioned in the program

Entrance fee to one monastery in Meteora

Services of a guide throughout the tour

Transport and handling of one reasonably sized suitcase and one carry-on per person

Included meals: Breakfast, lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary

Not Included:

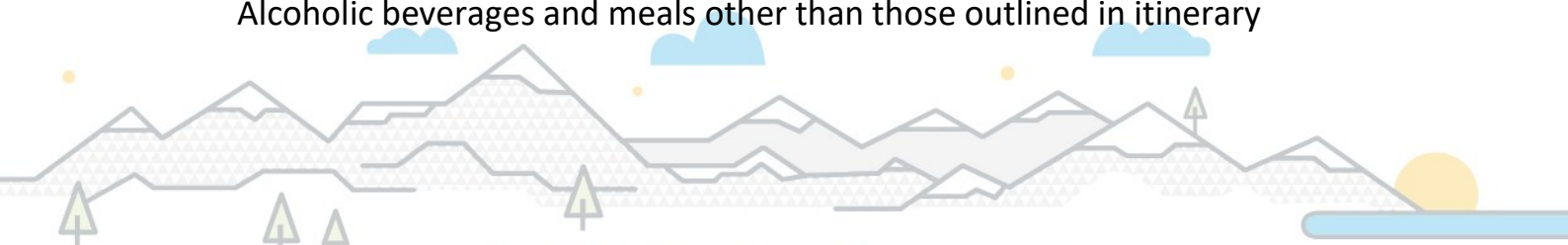
Domestic and/or international air fare

Medical expenses

Travel or emergency evacuation insurance

Gratuities for leader/guide or driver

Alcoholic beverages and meals other than those outlined in itinerary



Visas if needed
Transfer to and from the airport/port
Other items of a personal nature
Anything not mentioned in above program

Itinerary Changes

We are constantly updating our unique itineraries based on new information and experiences available. The walks, accommodations, and visits listed may be adjusted. The itineraries presented are subject to modification and change by Tripin Adventures. We reserve the right, without penalty, to make changes in the published itinerary whenever, in our judgment, conditions warrant, or if we deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience, or safety of participants.

Grade and Terrain

This trip level is Moderate and is suitable for most people that are in fairly good physical condition. Although the daily distances are not that far, it has been rated moderate as there are quite significant elevation gains and losses. The itinerary includes walking tours in cities and villages, and six days with moderate hikes of 2-5 hours. Also, a day of rafting in a Class 1 river, so no previous experience is needed. Although the paths are quite well-kept the terrain often tends to be very stony and rocky. You will mostly be walking on footpaths, mountain trails and on some tarmac roads and be prepared for few steeper passages.

Condition Grading

Moderate
Trips designated “Moderate” are more active and require a bit more endurance. Hikes and treks include occasional steep ascents. Trip



members should be experienced hikers in good physical condition, capable of walking 3-5 hours

Starting point and getting there

Starting point is: Athens.

Getting There & Away: Athens airport Eleftherios Venizelos, is about 27km east of Athens. Athens is connected with direct flights with various cities in Europe, North America and Asia.

Getting around: We can arrange for a transfer from the airport to your hotel. If you want to come by yourself, the metro and the suburban rail provide quick connections to central Athens (1 hour / 10 euro' ticket). The bus option is cheaper though it takes longer (1h 30 min / 5 euro' ticket). You can also take a taxi (1 hour / 35-50 euro').

Food

Simple, nutritious and flavorsome, the food is one of the pleasures of travel through Greece. Rustic Greek Cuisine reflects the history and bounty of its diverse regions and relies on the fresh, seasonal home-grown produce and generally simple, unfussy cooking that brings out the rich flavors of the Mediterranean.

Greece's relaxed and hospitable dining culture makes it easy to get into the local spirit. Greeks love to eat out and share impossibly big meals family style. Given the long summers and mild winters, alfresco dining is central to the dining experience. Service could be slow by Western standards, but why be in a rush either way.

As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There's no obligation to do this though. Wherever possible we will cater for dietary needs for any included meals, but there may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own. Note that alcohol and soft drinks are not included.



Weather

Spring, summer and fall in Greece are sunny and warm. The daytime temperatures average 25-30 C though temperatures in the 35s are possible in the summer months. Nighttime temperatures cool off slightly to 20° C. Rain showers are rare on the islands, but it's often breezy and rainy on the coast.

Gear Checklist

Greece has a temperate climate. Base your clothing on the “layering system”, if it is hot you can “peel off” layers quickly, if it is cooler and windy you can quickly “dress up”. The lighter you travel, the easier you travel. Use your best judgement and pack as lightly as possible. You will appreciate light luggage towards the end of your trip

Please consider taking along the following items on your trip.

Official Papers

- ✓ Valid passport
- ✓ Airline tickets

Luggage

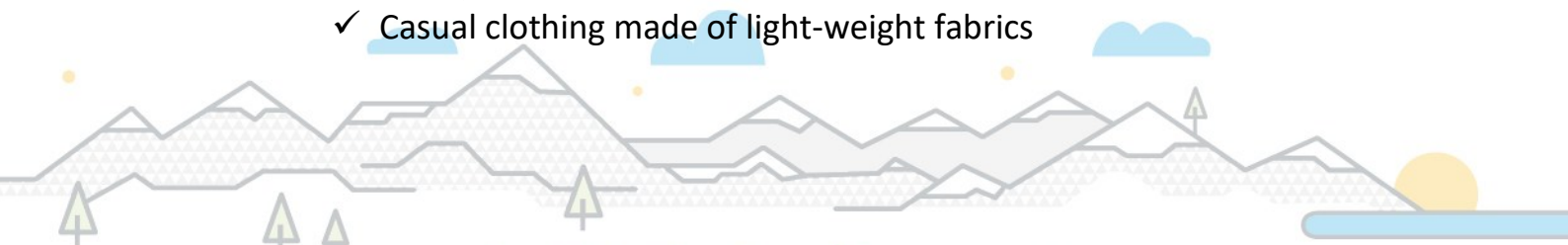
- ✓ Duffel bag or rolling luggage
- ✓ Daypack to carry camera, water bottle and snacks etc.
- ✓ Luggage locks and tags

Outerwear

- ✓ Midweight polar fleece sweater
- ✓ Rain jacket and rain pants, or poncho

Clothing

- ✓ Hiking shorts
- ✓ Casual clothing made of light-weight fabrics



- ✓ T-shirts
- ✓ Long-sleeve shirt
- ✓ Hiking pants, loose and easy to move in
- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Swimsuit

Clothing Accessories

- ✓ Sun hat or baseball cap

Footwear

- ✓ Lightweight and supportive hiking boots, broken-in with good ankle support
- ✓ Beach sandals
- ✓ Casual, comfortable shoes for evening

Accessories

- ✓ Sunscreen and lip protection
- ✓ Sunglasses and retainer strap
- ✓ Beach towel

Optional Accessories

- ✓ Security pouch or money belt
- ✓ Trekking poles or walking staff
- ✓ Camera, memory and batteries
- ✓ Reading and writing materials
- ✓ Watch with alarm or travel alarm
- ✓ Travel pillow
- ✓ Motion sickness remedies
- ✓ Personal first-aid kit
- ✓ Insect repellent (lowrisk)
- ✓ Electric adapter plug/converter

This is not a fixed list, but more of a guideline, so feel free to add and remove items as you see fit.

Currency & Banking

Greece has adopted the Euro as its currency. The easiest way to obtain local cash is from an ATM. Greek ATMs accept cards bearing the Cirrus, EC, Euro card, Visa and Plus symbols. If you take cash, US or Canadian Dollars can be easily exchanged at banks. Most major credit cards, Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted.

It is advisable to have some Euro with you upon arrival to be used for a taxi if necessary.

You may want to check the website www.xe.com for current exchange rates.

Passports

You must have a passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the conclusion of your trip. Please make sure that you have blank pages in your passport for your visa (if required), entry and exit stamps (one for each). Please make a copy to take with you in the event yours is lost or stolen and keep it separate from your actual passport.

Visas

Currently a Greek Tourist Visa is not required for citizens of Canada, United States, Britain and Australia. If you hold another passport, please check online <http://visacentral.com/visas.php>

