



Tour Information



Flowers and Wildlife of Northern Greece





Travel

Passports

Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. **Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 3 months or more left on it) and has at least 3 months validity remaining from the date of travel.**

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

Visas

As a tourist visiting from the UK, you do not need a visa for short trips to most EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. You will be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

Greek Consulate: 1A Holland Park, London W11 3TP. Tel: 020 7221 6467



Tickets

British Airways

The outbound ticket is booked with British Airways and, as this leg of the flight is booked on a group reference, you are not able to check-in online and will need to check-in at the airport.

For more information, please visit:

www.britishairways.com

EasyJet

The return flight is with Easyjet and for this flight you **must** check-in online and print out or download your boarding passes to your phone before travelling. Checking in online also provides the opportunity for you to pre-book seats, if you wish, at an additional cost.

For more information, please visit:

www.easyjet.com

Please check that the details on your documentation are accurate and that all names

are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your flight ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage Allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information, please visit

www.britishairways.com

Your EasyJet ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus **one cabin bag that can fit under the seat in front of you**, (maximum size 45 x 36 x 20cm, including any handles or wheels).

<http://www.easyjet.com/en/planning/baggage>

Border Control

At border control, you may need to show a return or onward ticket, show you have enough money for your stay, use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queuing.

Taking food into EU countries

Please note you are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.

Transfers

On arrival at Thessaloniki Airport, you will be met by your Tour Manager in the arrival's hall. Please look for a Travel Editions sign.

Special Requests

If you haven't done so already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Golden Star Hotel, Thessaloniki

Situated 17 kilometres from Thessaloniki and only a 10-minute drive from the airport, the four-star Golden Star Hotel provides a relaxed place to stay for the start of our tour. Set on the sea front in the small seaside resort of Perea, ensures ease of access to local tavernas, shops and the seaside promenade. The comfortable rooms all have balconies with either town or sea view (supplement applies), air conditioning/heating. The hotel facilities include a restaurant and bar.

For more information, please visit:

<https://goldenstarcityresort.com-hotel.com/>

Villa Belles, Akritochori

The hotel is situated at the foot of the imposing Mountain Belles and overlooks beautiful Lake Kerkini in the distance. The bedrooms include air-conditioning, TV, telephone, fridge, and most of the rooms benefit from a balcony with a magnificent view.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.villabelles.gr/>

Kassaros Hotel, Metsovo

This hotel is designed in keeping with the style of the village of Metsovo, where tradition abounds. A stay here provides the opportunity to enjoy the authentic feel of the village as well as botanise easily in the surrounding area. The hotel exudes a warm relaxing atmosphere, and the rooms offer comfort in their decoration that similarly recognises the authentic style of the region. Room facilities include private bathroom, air-conditioning, TV, minibar, safe and Wi-Fi. The hotel is located just 50 metres from Metsovo's central square.

For more information, please visit:

<https://hotelkassaros.gr/en/accommodation/>

Philoxenia Hotel, Monodendri

The family-run Philoxenia Hotel is a very attractive, traditionally designed, stone-built hotel situated in the upper part of the quiet village of Monodendri. Featuring wooden ceilings and floors, warm colours and dark wood furnishings; the comfortable bedrooms, with private bathrooms, are equipped with TV, fridge

and hairdryer. A breakfast buffet is served daily in a traditionally furnished dining area. Tavernas are within a 2-minute walk.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.zagoriphiloxenia.gr/>

Dining

The standard of food in Greece is excellent and offers a remarkable variety of freshly prepared and very tasty dishes, many of which use locally grown products and locally produced olive oil. When eating out the Greeks nearly always eat 'mezedes' style. This means ordering several dishes, starters and/or main plates, whatever takes your fancy, to put in the middle of the table for all to share. It is a very sociable way to eat and a great way of tasting lots of different dishes! Do not be shy in the amount you order, or if you only find yourselves ordering starters – any combination is acceptable.

When ordering fish in Greece you will find the price on the menu relates to a cost per kilo. Don't be put off by this. You are expected to go into the kitchen, choose the fish you want which will be weighed in front of you so you know what you will pay.

Nearly all tavernas sell their own 'open' wine, known as village wine. It can be something of an acquired taste, but it usually goes very well with the local food. If you are unsure, you can always ask if you can try the wine before you agree to it. Prices of local 'village' wine are usually around 6 euros per half litre.

Other local drinks are ouzo, tsipouro, brandy/cognac. Tsipouro is the local firewater! This is distilled from the residue of the grapes after making wine.

Meals included in the holiday.

Breakfast daily, one dinner and two lunches

Grading

This tour has been graded as **moderate**: Walking between sites and lots of standing for viewing.



Destination

This tour focuses on two regions of Northern Greece, Central Macedonia and Epirus, both of which are known for their exceptional nature and wonderful scenery. Our first base at Lake Kerkini is known for its abundance of birdlife but also its serenity, its harmony with nature and because it provides something 'quite unique' that makes you wonder if you really are in Greece. Epirus similarly offers something quite special, both in its astounding nature, flora and fauna, but also in its cultural elements and its absolutely outstanding scenery.

Places and sites of interest included in the tour:

Lake Kerkini National Park

Lake Kerkini is situated in Northern Greece and is reputed to be one of the most important wetlands in Europe as well as being one of the top European birding destinations.

The lake was formed in 1932 when a dam was constructed in the River Strymonas, creating a lake on what originally had been marsh land. It is said that this is one time when man's intervention in nature produced a positive result, with the lake slowly metamorphosing into a paradise of nature. Around 300 bird species have been observed here: some nestle, some winter, others stop over for rest or food on their way to warmer or cooler climes. The area is one of the most important cormorants' and herons' colonies of the Northern Balkan Peninsula. Dalmatian pelicans, one of the rarest birds in the world, have found safety here, with their numbers increasing. The rich fish fauna of the lake provides some delicious dishes in the tavernas of the area.

Lake Kerkini is also known for its water buffalo, once a dying breed but today a significant part of life here. Many tasty buffalo products, including buffalo mozzarella, yogurt and a variety of meat products can be found in the local tavernas. A caramelized custard-like sweet product called Kazan dipi, also made from buffalo milk, is a regional speciality.

Other fauna spotted in the area are otters, red foxes, wildcats, weasels, European polecats, beech martens and, very occasionally, grey wolves and wild boars have been spotted down at the water's edge.

Everything coexists here in peace and harmony amidst this remarkably developed ecosystem.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/nature/lakes/an_escape_to_lake_kerkini

<https://juliaklimi.com/the-beauty-of-lake-kerkini/>

Kalochori Lagoon

The Kalochori Lagoon is located within the Axios-Loudias-Aliakmonas Delta National Park, just 10 kilometres south of Thessaloniki. Developed in the 1960's following the construction of coastal embankments, which were necessary to protect local villages from flooding, the lagoon is fed both by the sea and freshwater and is the gateway to the national park and attracts a large variety of birds, including many waders. Large numbers of flamingos have often been seen here, due the large supplies of food found in its shallow waters. Within the protected area of the park, rivers, lagoons, salt marshes, fertile fields and the sea give shelter to more than 370 species of plants. Some are protected, like the sea daffodil, the water fern, and the water chestnut, while others are very popular across the park, greatly contributing to the conservation of the structure and functionality of this coastal water ecosystem.

For more information please visit:

<http://axiosdelta.gr/en/national-park/protected-area/>

Metsovo

This tree-shaded village, with its traditional mountain character is full of life throughout the year particularly during winter when snow arrives. The settlement's heart beats in the central square; where you see a distinctive image of Metsovo: the elders, with their handlebar moustaches, sitting on benches, holding wooden crooks chatting in Vlach, a Romance language with its roots in the Balkans. Metsovo is well-known for its wood products, smoked cheeses and its excellent wines, all produced locally.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/main_cities/metsovo

Zagoria

The word Zagoria comes from the Slavic language and means "behind the mountains", Za meaning "behind" and gora "mountain". Visiting

the region and experiencing its undulating and dramatic landscape that includes the second highest mountain in Greece, Mount Smolikas, and the imposing Mount Tymfi range, it is easy to understand why the region was given this name. The northern area of Zagoria has been designated a National Park, covering 2500 sq. km with the dramatic Vikos Gorge slicing through the middle. This status has ensured the rich flora and fauna of Epirus has been vitally protected. More than 1800 species of flora can be found here, many of which are endemic and considered endangered. Various medicinal herbs and plants can also be found; mint, sage, thyme, daphne, myrtle spurge and many others. Orchids are also prominent. Wildlife in the park includes 60 species of mammals, the most famous being the European Brown Bear with others of note including wolves, wild cats, otters, boar and badgers. 187 bird species, 30 species of reptiles, 14 kinds of amphibians and 17 species of fish are also known to inhabit the park.

For more information please visit:

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/greece/articles/why-visiting-the-mountainous-region-of-zagori-greece-is-a-must/>

Zagorohoria

Zagorohoria refers to the villages of Zagoria, 46 stone-built villages all attractively built using local stone in the very typical style of the region.

During the last decade, Zagoria has become incredibly popular among Greeks, but it is a place that only foreigners 'in the know' visit. Its cultured people, stunning landscapes, cosy guesthouses, World Heritage-protected architecture, and wonderful rivers make it a unique destination.

Most of the villages consist of the same 'arhontika' style houses - stone mansions with walls and roofs made of grey slate, taken from the surrounding mountains, and winding cobbled streets. Dotted between the villages are graceful arched stone bridges, churches with painted interiors, kalderimi (old mule trails), and forests of beech, chestnut, and pine.

Vikos Gorge

Although our tour does not include a walk in the Vikos Gorge, it is such a striking feature of the region that it must be mentioned.

The gorge is 12km long and spreads between the villages of Monodendri and Vikos and is mentioned in the Guinness book of records as the deepest gorge in the world. The average depth of the gorge is 700 metres, but its highest point is

1,600 metres, the width varies from 450 to just a few metres.

The Vikos Gorge has the Voidomatis River running through it, which is also reputedly the cleanest river in Europe, and possibly also the coldest. The gorge is very important to scientists as it has some unique eco-systems and endangered wildlife and plants.

The Vikos-Aoos National Park

The Vikos-Aoos National Park is named after the two Gorges within its boundaries; the Vikos and the lesser known Aoos gorge, which is around 10 km long. This amazing mountainous landscape has rivers, mountain lakes, ancient coniferous and deciduous forests, and a unique ecosystem. It is one of the last places in Europe to have wild Brown Bears, the park also has wild Cats, Eagles, Egyptian Vultures, and all kinds of rare plants.

Useful information for packing

As the days of this tour are spent in nature where the ground can be uneven at times, we highly recommend bringing walking poles, which are very useful for maintaining balance on uneven ground. It is also important to have good shoes suitable for rough ground.

On most days, lunch breaks will be in local towns or villages where there are tavernas and cafes offering local food. It is not expected that you have a full meal in a local taverna, you can order a simple salad or something simple off the starter menu, whatever you prefer.

It is essential that you carry water with you when you are out on the day trips. You can buy bottled water locally or you can bring a water bottle that you can fill up daily.

A small day sack that you carry on your back is the most useful bag to have with you to carry whatever you need on the days out.

Tour Manager

Your tour manager will be on hand during the tour to ensure that everything operates according to plan. If you have any problems or questions, please see him or her immediately and they will do their utmost to resolve any issues.



The Basics

The weather in Greece at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but evenings, and sometimes the days, can be cool, particularly in shadow, and there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared. Layers are useful as is a light rain jacket and small umbrella.

Time – GMT +3 hours (Summertime Apr-Oct); GMT + 2 (Standard time Nov-Mar). This means Greece is always 2 hours ahead of the UK.

Language – Greek

Religion – Greek Orthodox

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are available in most towns, as well as airports and other spots. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros other than bringing euros with you. You can use a UK debit card, using the same pin number you use in the UK, to withdrawn cash.

Please Note: As the regions where we stay are quite remote, we cannot guarantee that cash machines will be readily available, so it is advisable to bring cash euros with you. ATMs are not easily accessible at Kerkini or Monodendri.

Credit cards – Credit cards are far more widely accepted nowadays but it is always best to check first in restaurants and shops, especially in small villages, that they accept payment by credit card, should you wish to pay by card. Varying amounts of commission can be charged for credit card payments, you may like to check these with your credit card supplier before you travel.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink although you should check at the hotel if the bathroom water is safe to drink as it could be tank water rather than mains water. Bottled water is readily available to buy in all local shops and very reasonably priced.

Plumbing - **Unless there is information to the contrary, please do not put toilet paper down the toilet.** This is common practice in Greece due to the narrowness of the mains waste pipes. Please dispose of the paper in the bins provided, which will be regularly emptied by the hotel.

Shopping - Most villages, however small, usually have at least one minimarket. The minimarkets usually open from early in the morning until late in the evening.

Stamps – You can often purchase stamps at the same time you purchase postcards. Always ask as this is much easier than trying to find a post office!

Telephones/mobiles – The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway has ended. Check with your phone operator to find out about any roaming charges that might be applied after 1st January 2021. A new law means that you are protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you are abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

Tipping –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that, when receiving a good service, one awards with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager/guide if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor. There is normally a charge of around 60 Euros for calling out a doctor (or more, depending on the distance the doctor has to travel) and there is also a charge to visit a doctor.

Keep any receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed, or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit for Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies throughout Greece are generally well-stocked and have knowledgeable staff who, usually, will speak some English. Pharmacists will

often be able to give advice and medicine for minor ailments. Pharmacies are open Monday to Friday but not on Saturdays.



Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you have got a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you are travelling to an EU country. For further information about the GHIC please visit: <https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

0044 795 223 7156 (Tour manager) or

00 44 7841 023807

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you need consular assistance during your holiday:

British Embassy Athens

1, Ploutarchou str

106 75 Athens

Greece

Tel: +30 210 7272 600

Email: information.athens@fco.gov.uk

Open to the public - by appointment only

Appointments.Athens@fco.gov.uk. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am to 1pm.

Telephone enquiries: Monday to Friday, 8am to 3pm

Email: consular.athens@fco.gov.uk

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