



# Tour Information



# The Nature of Northern Greece





## 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 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of travel. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Swiss valid national identification cards are also acceptable for 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

Included with this documentation is an e-ticket, which shows the reference number for your flight. EasyJet have now replaced their airport check-in desks with EasyJet Baggage Drop desks. **Therefore, you must check-in online and print out your boarding passes before travelling.** Checking in online also provides the opportunity for you to pre-book seats, if you wish, at an extra cost.

Online check-in is available any time prior to travel using the reference number provided. Please see the enclosed e-ticket for more information or 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.

## Departure Tax

Flight Taxes are included in the price of your holiday.



## Baggage Allowance

We advise that you stick to the baggage allowances advised. If your luggage is found to be heavier than the airlines specified baggage allowance the charges at the airport will be hefty. 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). If you book an upfront or extra legroom seat you can also take an additional large cabin bag on board.

For more information please visit:

[www.easyjet.com](#)

## Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

## 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 queueing.

## 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. The transfer time to Kerkini is approximately 1 hour 45 minutes.

## 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

### **Villa Belles, Akritochori**

The hotel is situated at the foot of the imposing Mountain Belles and overlooks beautiful Lake Kerkini. Facilities include a snack-bar and café-bar. Each of the comfortable 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. The hotel has a small bar and a small library, with books on the local area. Free Wi-Fi access is available in all public spaces; magazines and board games are also available. Tavernas are within a 2-minute walk.

For more information please visit:

[www.zagoriaphiloxenia.gr](http://www.zagoriaphiloxenia.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 and then it 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 is something of an acquired taste, but it goes well with the local food. The white is usually always very drinkable, but the red varies quite a lot. 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 5 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. You will probably find you come across this whether you want to or not, as it is often served, complimentary, at the end of a meal.

### **Meals included in the holiday.**

Breakfast daily, two dinners and two lunches



## 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 it was also chosen because of 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, 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 bird watching 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 often been spotted here. 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, occasionally, grey wolves and wild boars have been spotted down at the waters edge. Everything coexists here in peace and harmony amidst this remarkably developed ecosystem.

For more information about Lake Kerkini, please visit:

[http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/nature/lakes/an\\_escape\\_to\\_lake\\_kerkini](http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/nature/lakes/an_escape_to_lake_kerkini)

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

#### Kalochoi Lagoon

The Kalochoi 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 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, but still contribute greatly 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, retaining its traditional character, dots the mountain side below Katara Col in the Mountain Range of Pindos. Metsovo is full of life throughout the year with its natural surrounding beauties. Particularly during winter, this famous Vlach village, birthplace of well-known national benefactors (Tositsas, Stournaras, Averoff), who left Greece but never forgot their roots helping to enhance the village with funds donated to make improvements. Metsovo is a favourite destination for the Greeks, especially in the winter months 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, usually sitting on the benches, occasionally in traditional costumes and holding wooden crooks chatting in

Vlach, a Romance language with its roots in the Balkans.

Metsovo is well-known for its smoked cheeses and its excellent wines, which are produced locally.

For more information about Metsovo, please visit: [http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/main\\_cities/metsovo](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 a distance of 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. Five species of wild lily flourish in the area; other impressive species that can be found are the Poet's Daffodil, the Australia tulip, the spring gentian and the saxifraga spruneri. 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 means Zagoria Village, which comprise 46 stone-built villages situated to the north and northwest of Ioannina.

During the last decade, the region of Zagorohoria 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 Turkish 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 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 makes up the majority of the Vikos-Aoos National Park and has the Voidomatis River running through it, which is also reputedly the cleanest river in Europe. The gorge is very important to scientists as it has some unique ecosystems 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 many 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.

## 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 quite 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 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 from the UK. You can use a UK debit card, using the same pin number you use in the UK, to withdrawn cash. The instructions are in English. Just look for signs on ATMs for Delta or Cirrus.

Banks open Monday to Friday 8am – 2pm.

**Please Note:** As the regions where we stay are quite remote, we cannot guarantee that cash machines will be readily available, so it is good to bring euros with you. ATM's will be available in Metsovo.

**Credit cards** – Greece is very much a cash society so credit cards are not always widely accepted, however, far more places are accepting these nowadays, but it is best to check first in restaurants and shops, if you wish to pay by card. Varying amounts of commission can be charged for credit card payments and you may like to check these with your credit card supplier before you travel. Hotels usually always accept credit cards.

**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.

**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** - In most places you can purchase stamps at the same time you purchase postcards. This is much easier than trying to find a post office!

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

**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 about 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](http://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:

0030 6977 465892 (Greek resort manager) or

00 44 7841 023807

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

If you find that you are in need of 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](mailto:information.athens@fco.gov.uk)

Open to the public - by appointment only

[Appointments.Athens@fco.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto:consular.athens@fco.gov.uk)

### Travel Editions

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AND WE CANNOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ERRORS OR SUBSEQUENT CHANGES.