



Mystras

# Hidden Greece

A fly-drive holiday on the mainland offers the opportunity to discover some of the most beautiful areas of Greece. The richness of the history, scenery and interest here is vast. A fly-drive allows you to explore areas rarely featured in holiday brochures, and will well reward the more independent traveller in search of more adventure than the normal holiday provides.



Nestor's Tomb, near Pylos

We have designed these holidays to be as flexible as possible. Although we have suggested itineraries these are for guidance only, as people invariably want itineraries tailored to their particular interests. All areas, resorts and towns can be combined in any order so feel free to choose your own route.

Prices are based on two persons sharing a twin room and include flights, BB hotels and car hire. For further details and hotel descriptions see our website.



Meteora



We will willingly quote for odd durations; for holidays into Athens and out of Thessaloniki, or v.v.; for itineraries with accommodation for only part of the time; for a combination of a fly-drive with some of the islands and resorts featured in this brochure. It's up to you – almost anything is possible!



Mani



Olympia

## The Peloponnese

We do not believe you could find an area more perfect for a touring holiday than the Peloponnese. It encapsulates the very best of Greece, where the country's history, landscape and culture come together in a heady cocktail.

The birthplace of Greek mythology (the name literally means 'island of Pelops') the Peloponnese is home to a plethora of archaeological sites. The north lays claim to the most well known – Olympia, Epidavros and Mycenae to name but three (and, linked by toll-bridge across the Corinthian Gulf, Delphi can also be easily included in an itinerary). In the south Nestor's Palace, near Pylos, is the stuff of Homeric legend – but you are liable to stumble across lesser-known sites almost anywhere.

More recent history is evident throughout the Peloponnese, from Byzantine Mystras and fortified Methoni in the south to

Venetian Nafplion and the Corinth Canal in the north. Castles, monasteries and chapels abound – there is always somewhere to explore.

Scenically the entire peninsular is stunning and often mountainous. We take the word 'Arcadian' from its central region, a beautiful area of lush valleys and hilltop medieval villages. Dimitsana is one of these villages, high on the mountain with glorious views over the Lousios Gorge to the plains below. From here Olympia is a two hour drive, a much more interesting approach than from the coastal motorway.

Another area not to be missed is the central southern finger called Mani. Serious mountains loom over a rugged landscape, lush at the top end, harsh and unforgiving in the south, noted for its distinctive tower villages and hidden painted chapels.

Elsewhere forests and mountains combine to give an alpine flavour, and the chance to purchase some exceptional wild honey!

Other attractions include one of Europe's largest cave systems at Dirou in Mani (you get taken through them by rowing boat); the charming rack and pinion railway from Diakofto on the north coast via dizzy gorges and tunnels to Kalavrita up the mountain; the fortified medieval town of Monemvasia; and the wine-growing regions around Nemea.

But there are plenty of relaxation opportunities too. The Peloponnese is technically an island, divided from the mainland by the Corinth Canal – which means it is surrounded by a very clean,



Monemvasia (© Bob Gibbons)



Itilon, Mani

sparkling sea with beaches to match those on any of the islands but, in the main, without the accompanying crowds.

In addition the Peloponnese is as traditionally Greek as you can get, and in the old farming and fishing villages rural life continues as it has done for centuries.

We do of course feature resort-based holidays in both north and south and you can see and do much from a stay-put base. A touring holiday, however, enables you to explore in your own time and discover parts other holidays simply cannot reach!



Monemvasia



Vathia, Mani



Zagori National Park



Mikro Papingo

## Epirus & Zagori

Epirus occupies Greece's north-western corner and is spectacularly beautiful. Largely mountainous, with three peaks of 2500m plus, it is (once away from the coast) one of Greece's most remote regions, and centuries-old traditions, fast-vanishing in many other areas, still flourish here.

The Epirot coast is featured elsewhere in this brochure, in the form of Parga and Sivota. But the heart of this fascinating area is inland. Here are the mighty peaks of the Pindos, forests, rivers, lakes, gorges, meadows, preserved stone villages, some 1700 species of flora, and

a wildlife which includes wolves and bears. The Vlach shepherds in the high Pindos still speak a form of Latin.

The capital of the region is the high lakeside town of Ioannina. Under Ottoman rule until less than a century ago, it has retained a flavour of the east. Above Ioannina, the large village of Metsovo straddles the mountain pass between Epirus and Thessaly, en route to the Meteora. You could be in the Alps here, and is a good place to buy mountain herbs and honey.

To the north of Ioannina is the region

called Zagori, a National Park covering an area of over 1000 sq kms. The villages here are famous throughout Greece – some 46 preserved stone settlements with a stunning mountain backdrop. Mikro Papingo shelters below a dramatic craggy outcrop. It is a fabulous base for hiking. Not far away is the Vikos Gorge, one of the longest in Europe and which certainly rivals more famous Samaria (and is considerably less busy).

It is also easy to combine Epirus with a week or two by the sea in Lefkas, Meganissi, Parga or Sivota, or even a sailing holiday – please call for a costing.

## Dias House Mikro Papingo

■ 2 Stars ■ Bed & Breakfast



Dias House is a traditional stone B&B guesthouse in Mikro Papingo, high in the mountains in the heart of the Zagori National Park. It has just 12 cozy rooms, all with ensuite shower. The owner, Kostas, used to be a mountain guide so the hotel is popular with walkers. As with his rooms the restaurant here offers excellent unfussy meals (and substantial portions!) plus good local wine. Between Mikro Papingo and the larger village of Megalo Papingo, 3 kms down the road, are some rock pools where you can swim. Highly recommended.

We can also offer accommodation in Ioannina and Metsovo for those on fly-drive itineraries.



Triple Bridge, Kipi, Zagori



Vikos



Thessaloniki



Ancient Philippi

## Northern and Central Greece

Mountains and plains make up the bulk of central and northern Greece. The main draw in central Greece is of course Delphi – not only the most important ancient site in Greece but one of the most dramatically sited, on the slopes of steep Parnassos and boasting glorious views to the sea. Stay in Delphi village itself (convenient for the site and museum but unremarkable bar the views) or, for those who prefer to be by the sea, try Galaxidi – a very pretty village with coves for swimming only a half-hour's drive from Delphi.

After Delphi, the other 'must-see' is the Meteora, the collective name for some half-dozen monasteries dating from the 14th century and perched unfeasibly on the top of sheer pinnacles of rock ('Meteora' means 'rocks in the air'). They are an extraordinary sight, and have even starred in a James Bond film! The small

town below, Kalambaka, is where most visitors stay, but we prefer the more villagey feel of Kastraki just up the road.

Between Delphi and Meteora is the Pelion, one of the most naturally beautiful areas of Greece. The peninsula is well-covered elsewhere in this brochure and it goes without saying that a visit is highly recommended. If you want to visit the Meteora for the day, it can be reached from Volos in approx. 2 hours drive, as the road is fast (part-motorway) and flat.

Continuing north the coastal highway passes beneath the shadow of Mount Olympus, at 2917m Greece's highest peak and legendary home of the gods. For those who'd like to walk or explore the area we'd recommend a stay in the hillside village of Ambelakia a little to the south, which has an authentic mountain village feel yet quick access to the main road below.

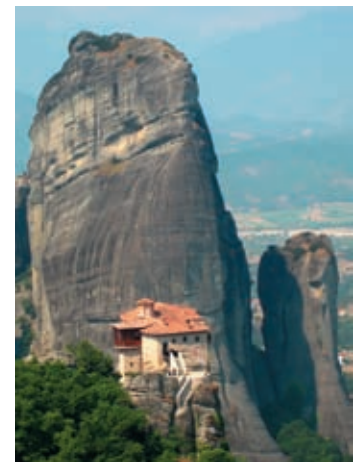


The Pelion

Macedonia was Alexander's domain. The capital Thessaloniki is now a thriving modern metropolis with a fascinating past evidenced by the many monuments and sites in the heart of the city – the archaeological museum is a highlight, as is a trip to Philip's tomb at Vergina. Western Macedonian attractions include sites such as Dion and Pella, cliff-top Edessa with its waterfall, the handsome lakeside town of Kastoria, and the Prespa Lakes for anyone with an interest in ornithology.

To the south Halkidiki is famous for the holy mountain Athos, and for stunning white-sand beaches backed by pine forests. Our chosen bolt-hole here is the small village of Olymbiada, tucked away from the crowds in the north-east corner – see resort pages for details.

To the east, the main draw is the large



Meteora



Road Block

Roman site of Philippi near Kavala, where St Paul began his European mission. Thrace borders Bulgaria and Turkey – the small town of Xanthi is a fascinating melting-pot of cultures and worth a stop, especially if you can be there for the bustling Saturday morning market. Alexandroupolis in the far east is recommended as a base for ornithologists, as it is next to the Evros Delta, and you can also drive to Dadia forest which has a raptor reserve.



# Suggested Itineraries



P1 and P2 based on flights to Kalamata on Sundays. P3, P4, C1, C2, N1 and N2 based on scheduled day flights to Athens or Thessaloniki. E1 based on flights to Preveza on Sundays. V1 and V2 based on flights to Volos on Fridays. Non-standard durations and early/late season holidays are available using daily scheduled flights to Athens – please call us for a quote.

These itineraries are only our suggestions. Please feel free to devise your own and call us for a costing or advice – we can often book areas/hotels not listed. All accommodation can be mixed and matched in any order. Non-standard durations for most are possible via Athens or Thessaloniki.

## P1 – 1 week

2 nights Mani  
1 night Monemvasia  
1 night Mystras or Gythion  
3 nights Pylos or Methoni

## P2 – 2 weeks

2 nights Pylos or Methoni  
1 night Dimitsana  
1 night Olympia  
1 night Diakofto  
1 night Delphi or Galaxidi  
1 night Isthmia (Corinth)  
2 nights Nafplion  
1 night Monemvasia  
1 night Mystras or Gythion  
3 nights Kardamili

## P3 – 1 week

2 nights Athens  
1 night Delphi or Galaxidi  
1 night Olympia  
3 nights Nafplion

## P4 – 2 weeks

2 nights Athens  
1 night Delphi or Galaxidi  
1 night Olympia  
2 nights Pylos or Methoni  
3 nights Mani  
1 night Monemvasia  
1 night Mystras or Gythion  
3 nights Nafplion

## C1 – 1 week

1 night Athens  
2 nights Delphi or Galaxidi  
1 night Kastraki (Meteora)  
3 nights The Pelion

## C2 – 2 weeks

1 night Athens  
1 night Delphi or Galaxidi  
3 nights The Pelion  
1 night Kastraki (Meteora)  
1 night Metsovo  
1 night Ioannina  
3 nights Epirus  
1 night Kastoria  
1 night Edessa  
1 night Thessaloniki

## E1 – 2 weeks

3 nights Parga or Sivota  
3 nights Epirus  
1 night Kastraki (Meteora)  
3 nights The Pelion  
1 night Delphi or Galaxidi  
3 nights Lefkas

## N1 – 1 week

2 nights Thessaloniki  
1 night Edessa  
1 night Kastoria  
2 nights Epirus  
1 night Kastraki (Meteora)

## N2 – 2 weeks

2 nights Thessaloniki  
3 nights The Pelion  
2 nights Kastraki (Meteora)  
2 nights Ioannina  
3 nights Epirus  
2 nights Kastoria

## N3 – 1 week

2 nights Thessaloniki  
1 night Xanthi  
1 night Alexandroupolis  
3 nights Olympiada or Ouranoupolis

## V1 – 1 Week

2 nights The Pelion  
1 night Thessaloniki  
1 night Kastoria  
2 nights Epirus  
1 night Kastraki (Meteora)

## V2 – 2 Weeks

3 nights The Pelion  
1 night Kastraki (Meteora)  
1 night Metsovo  
1 night Ioannina  
3 nights Epirus  
3 nights Parga or Sivota  
2 nights Delphi or Galaxidi

## Fly-Drive Information

Flights are all by day. Depending on your itinerary they will be one of: Heathrow, Gatwick or Manchester to Athens (daily except Manchester), or Gatwick or Manchester to Salonika (daily except Manchester); Gatwick or Manchester to Volos (Friday); Gatwick or Manchester to Kalamata or Preveza (Sunday). For charter flight details and any supplements see page 173.

For two persons we include an air-conditioned Group B car, typically a Kia Picanto – larger cars are available at a supplement. Larger parties should remember that luggage space is limited.

We do not consider Jeeps suitable for fly-drive holidays.

Prices include unlimited mileage, Collision Damage Waiver insurance, Theft Protection and all local taxes. Clients with their first night(s) in Athens or Thessaloniki will usually have a transfer on arrival to their hotel and take delivery of the car the morning of leaving town. On departure the car can either be dropped-off at the Airport or your hotel. If you are nervous about finding your way out of central Athens you can book a 'pilot' service offered by our car hire company which will guide you to the right road (costs c. £15).

**Road Tolls:** There is a toll-bridge linking Central Greece with the northern Peloponnese (just east of Patras), and cost 13 euros per car in 2011. There is also a tunnel just to the north of Preveza Airport which cost 3 euros in 2011. Museums and archaeological sites are often closed or operate limited hours (major sites) on Mondays.

2011 prices for road-tolls averaged 3 euros and include Athens ring road (airport to city centre and a further toll to Elefsina for Peloponnese); Elefsina to Corinth; Corinth to Tripolis or Patras for Peloponnese. Going north from Athens to exit for Delphi has 2 tolls, and for Volos 3 tolls; Volos to Thessaloniki has also 3 tolls.

## Fly-Drive Hotels

In towns and villages we feature for longer-stay holidays, the hotels we normally use will be described elsewhere in this brochure. Outside these areas we book bed and breakfast, 2 or 3 star hotels with simple, comfortable furnishings and ensuite shower/wc. Nearly all rooms have balcony and air-conditioning (note: may be seasonal). Higher category hotels can sometimes be booked at a supplement. All hotels are on a request basis and will be named at the time of booking. We know many of them personally, so please ask if you have any questions. Early booking is recommended, particularly over Greek holiday periods.

## Approximate Drive Times

From	To	Hours
Athens	Nafplion	2
Athens	Delphi	3
Athens	Kalamata	3
Athens	Pelion (Volos)	4½
Nafplion	Monemvasia	3½
Monemvasia	Sparta	2½
Monemvasia	Mani	3
Mani	Gythion	1-1½
Gythion	Monemvasia	1½
Gythion	Sparta	1
Mani	Pylos	2-3
Pylos	Olympia	2½
Dimitsana	Olympia	2
Olympia	Delphi	3
Olympia	Diakofto	2½
Delphi	Nafpaktos	1½
Nafpaktos	Lefkas	3
Lefkas	Parga	1-1½
Parga	Sivota	1
Sivota	Ioannina	1
Pelion (Volos)	Meteora	2
Meteora	Metsovon	1-2
Thessaloniki	Edessa	1½
Edessa	Prespa	2½
Metsovon	Papingo	2-2½
Thessaloniki	Philippi	2
Philippi	Xanthi	1
Xanthi	Alexandroupolis	1
Alexandroupolis	Olympiada	3
Olympiada	Thessaloniki	1

## HIDDEN GREECE FLY-DRIVE PRICE GUIDE

Prices for fly-drives without accommodation (flight and car hire only) on request.

Price shown below are for guidance only, as there are so many variants and seasonal differences. We have shown the price per person for each of two, which includes flights, BB hotel accommodation and car hire, also transfers on arrival in Athens and Salonika where required. The first price shown is a typical low season price (May), the second price is a typical high season price (August). Please ask us for an exact costing.

Please also note that fly-drives based on scheduled flights (those flying into Athens or Salonika) may also vary from the below according to the flight availability – if the seat class we have costed the holiday on is full it may well be that there are seats available at a slightly higher fare – this will be quoted at the time of enquiry/booking. Similarly, at certain times of the year we may be able to take advantage of lower fares or airline offers which will reduce the overall price.

ITINERARY VIA	BASIS	PERSONS	DURATION	LOW SEASON (price from)	HIGH SEASON (price to)
P1 Kalamata	BB	2	7	£840	£975
P2 Kalamata	BB	2	14	£1315	£1545
P3 Athens	BB	2	7	£842	£872
P4 Athens	BB	2	14	£1253	£1378
C1 Athens	BB	2	7	£806	£822
C2 Athens/Salonika	BB	2	14	£1468	£1515
N1 Salonika	BB	2	7	£823	£853
N2 Salonika	BB	2	14	£1263	£1326
N3 Salonika	BB	2	7	£815	£879
E1 Preveza	BB	2	14	£1068	£1281
V1 Volos	BB	2	7	£835	£911
V2 Volos	BB	2	14	£1240	£139
<b>Epirus Hotels (including flights to Preveza and car hire)</b>					
Dias House	BB	2	7	£750	£850

Payment by Credit or Charge Card will incur a 2% processing charge. (Note: should this change, due to the credit card companies increasing their charges to us, you will be advised at the time of booking). Flight supplements: Manchester to Preveza, Volos & Kalamata £39-£45. Some itineraries are not available very early or late season as certain flights operate only May to early/mid-October – see Flight Information on page 173. Fly-drive prices for larger parties on request. Prices include all airport charges & taxes known at the time of printing – for surcharge policy see booking conditions on page 179. To add: Travel Insurance (see page 172).