

Pelion

Little wonder that the ancient gods chose Pelion – home of the Centaurs (Kentavros) – as the place for their weddings and celebrations; for here is a near-perfect synthesis of mountain, forest and sea.



Fresh and green year-round, the peninsula is dominated by mountains reaching a height of some 1600 metres and covered with pine, oak, fir, plane and chestnut. Views are dramatic, particularly on the northeast where mountains plunge dizzily to the sea. The western side is gentler – its hills covered with olive trees and shrubs – yet still remarkably attractive.

Pelion's preserved mountain villages are a joy. Clinging to wooded slopes high above the sea, they share a unique architectural tradition and are amongst the most beautiful in Greece. The old stone-built mansions, with their grey slate roofs and overhanging balconies, blend with their surroundings. Often the only sounds are a babbling brook or birdsong. Everywhere are trees, shrubs, plants and flowers. The coastline hides some excellent beaches, often of a coarse sand/fine shingle which makes for excellent swimming in clear water. Foreign tourism is still fairly undeveloped, and the small seaside villages – quiet for most of the year, busy over weekends and local holiday periods – remain reassuringly rois Greek!

Because Pelion is still pretty virgin territory it does not have the touristic infrastructure of more

established areas. ATMs can be hard to find away from Volos (although all shops and tavernas should now accept card payments); the bus service limited and English not universally spoken. Excursions are also limited and run only subject to numbers from Kala Nera and Afissos.

With all this in mind we would strongly recommended you pre-book a car, especially for those choosing to stay in the smaller, more remote villages (i.e. those other than Kala Nera and Afissos). If you don't mind some very winding roads, it would be a pity not to discover the whole of Pelion. Even Meteora and Delphi are within reach.

A visit to Pelion will refresh the palate of even the most frequent Greek traveller. It did ours, and that takes some doing!

PELION INFORMATION

Getting to Pelion

Friday Day flight Gatwick to Volos (outbound flight via Skiathos) or Manchester to Skiathos with 30 min water-taxi transfer to Platanias (prices on request). Then $1\frac{1}{2} - 2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs by coach or taxi (Manchester pax 30-60 mins) – see resort pages. For flight details see page 267.

Multi-Centre Options All areas can combine. For multi-centre details see page 8.

Car Hire See pages 268-9 for details.

Representative

Based in Kala Nera – will visit all areas except NE Pelion (on request).

Walking in Pelion

Thickly forested and criss-crossed by stone-paved mule tracks, Pelion is a walker's paradise. For walking holidays here see page 125.

There are a couple of excellent websites full of useful information and downloadable walks www.pilionwalks.com and www.friendsofthekalderimi.org



Our chosen areas

Western Pelion Kala Nera, Afissos, Lefokastro & Milina

Transfer time 1½-2½ hours from Volos or 30-60 mins from Platanias (if flying via Skiathos)

The western side of Pelion has lovely views (and gorgeous sunsets) over the Pagasitic Gulf to the mountains of the mainland. Although heavily wooded, like all Pelion, the west is more typically Mediterranean: here olive and cypress predominate over oak and chestnut.

Although the name Kala Nera ('Good Waters') originally referred to the many springs in the area, it could equally apply to the sea here. Directly on the gulf some 18 kms to the south of Volos, the village has lush wooded surrounds and backs a gently shelving sand/shingle beach which has a Blue Flag. Kala Nera's long tree-lined promenade shades an array of restaurants and cafes, perfect spots from which to admire the sunsets here for which the area is famed. It is also not far from the start of the very scenic heritage railway which runs at weekends from Ano Lehonia up the mountain to the gorgeously traditional village of Milies. As everywhere in Pelion there are good walking opportunities - perhaps along the coast to the beach at Boufa.

Kala Nera is a relaxed seaside village with a very Greek atmosphere, a good choice of authentic restaurants and small shops, with some life to it (in a 'bustling taverna' kind of way), especially in season.

Afissos is a small, quite smart little resort village and popular with local Greeks from Volos at weekends as it boasts three good beaches. It is said that Jason called in here for freshwater supplies before setting sail on his epic journey.

The village has a small fishing harbour at its

entrance. Its long seafront is where most of the dozen restaurants are to be found, along with a few cafés, mini-markets and bakery. At its heart is a shady central square with attendant church.

Gently shelving beaches lie to either side, a mix of shingle and coarse sand, which get very busy at weekends and in Greek holiday periods - there are several beach clubs, each of which offers free sun beds to its patrons.

Both Afissos and Kala Nera have a reasonable bus service to Volos. Last year excursions ran around the Pelion by coach, and there was also a popular 'around the gulf' boat trip.

An hour's beautiful walk (or a ten minute drive) south along the narrow country lanes through the olive groves brings you to

Lefokastro. This seaside hamlet is pretty as a postcard – a delightfully tranquil wooded bay, with a ribbon of houses fronting the water and a safe fine-shingle beach. Last summer a pair of local tavernas operated, joined by a third in high season.

Lefokastro offers an authentically Greek 'away from it all' holiday in unspoilt green surroundings, with good swimming and fewer visitors. The countryside is hilly and full of olive trees, so offers fine walking (gentler than in the east).

Milina further to the south is larger (not difficult!), albeit still pretty and quiet. The village enjoys fine views over a crystalline sea to the small islets of Alatas and Prasouda, each of which is home to an old (now deserted) monastery. Milina's long promenade above the sea is lined with a good choice of tavernas and cafes, and the village has a number of small shops. Narrow shingle beaches lie to either side. There is a bus service to Volos (up to 5 times daily in season), and a car will enable a visit to Trikeri island (known for its fish tavernas) just off Pelion's southern tip, as well as a thorough exploration of the beautiful south, which hides some truly spectacular beaches on its eastern side.

South Pelion Katigiorgis & Lafkos

Drive time 2-2½ hours from Volos or 20 mins from Platanias (if flying via Skiathos)

The wooded hills of the south-eastern corner of Pelion are less steep than the more mountainous north and the area more sparsely populated. The distance from Volos means it lessens the Greek holiday crowds who would otherwise flock to the beautiful sandy beaches and coves here (undoubtedly amongst the peninsula's loveliest), although day-trippers may visit from Skiathos for a few hours by excursion boat.

The pick of the places to stay is the small seaside hamlet of **Katigiorgis**. We have heard it called Kati-gorgeous as it is so pretty! Comprising simply a compact but delightfully sandy beach facing Skiathos – the bay enclosed by rocky arms sheltering the village fishing boats – and a cluster of houses, its two tavernas are known for fresh fish.

There is also a café with WiFi and a minimarket – all you should need for a complete escape. Some fine beaches lie in either direction, ranging from tiny coves to longer stretches of sand, and can be found on foot (walkers only). A car is included in our holidays here and enables you to discover more wonderful beaches to the north and south.

Inland, the pretty hill village of **Lafkos**, has a lovely traditional main square and you will find five village tavernas, as well as a traditional cheese maker, a sculpture gallery and (weirdly) a radio museum! It is a wonderful base for walking - many local stone paths start from here - and we would urge walkers to visit the excellent website by Friends of the Kalderimi. The nearest beaches are a 10 minute drive away to the west near Milina - however a very wide choice of some truly fabulous sandy beaches can be found within a 20-30 minute drive.





Pegasus Hotel Kala Nera

The friendly, family-run Pegasus is a well-liked small hotel in the heart of Kala Nera, just 30m from the sea and the start of the village's main beach. It has a lift, so would be a perfect choice for anyone with limited mobility looking for a comfortable base with everything close to hand and on the flat.

The hotel has 20 attractively furnished rooms, not large but comfortable with everything you should need. Mostley twin bedded all possess AC, TV, mini-fridge, safety deposit box, hairdryer, shower room and small balcony with sea, side-sea, village or mountain views.

Although central in the village, the hotel is set a little back from the seafront and so it is not noisy. To



Kala Nera

the front is a spacious terrace for the hotel's popular café where breakfast can be taken. There is also a seating area above the sea: the perfect spot for a traditional 'ouzo mezedes' whilst viewing the sun setting over the gulf, which is often spectacular from here.

Kala Nera means 'good water' and you will find a clean sea just a stone's throw from your room. The beach here has sun-beds and umbrellas for a small daily charge. A wide choice of local tavernas, cafes and small shops can be found within a very short walk in either direction from the hotel.

Early Booking Offer

Reductions available for stays completed by 12/7 or commencing 13/9 onwards if booked by 30/4 please enquire or check our online availability for a costing.

The Hotel: Bed & Breakfast Air Conditioning Free WiFi







1 Bedroom apartment

Melograno Apartments Kala Nera

The highly recommended Melograno Apartments are very quietly situated in semi-rural surroundings, but a short 4 minute walk via a country lane (300m - no hills) brings you to Kala Nera seafront and beach. They are newly built, spacious and offer good modern standards of comfort.

The studios are on the ground floor and comprise a twin-bedded sleeping area, a good kitchenette with full cooker and fridge, a nice tiled shower room, and a generous furnished patio overlooking the garden.

Apartments are on the ground or first floor and have a double bedroom, a separate nicely furnished living room with kitchen area and sofa (an extra folding bed can be made up here if required for



a child), and large covered front terrace or balcony with fine views over the countryside to the green hills behind.

In-room facilities include AC (all rooms), TV (local channels), room safe, hairdryer and Wifi, and windows and patio doors are mozzie-netted.

All the studios and apartments are very nicely furnished and decor is light, fresh and modern.

Many of our guests have commented on the high standards here, with the bonus of occupying a lovely location with easy access to village and beach.

Early Booking Offer

Up to £100 off per room per week (max discount £200) for bookings see page 267.

The Apartments:

Self Catering Apartments for Air Conditioning Free Wifi

Agnanti Apartments Afissos

We consider the Agnanti to be amongst the pick of Afissos' accommodation. Here you will find a good levels of comfort, plenty of space and lovely views together with the services of a small hotel, including reception and breakfast (if required) served to your room.

They are just a couple of minutes' walk up from the waterfront, although the elevated location via a steep village street or steps up the hill means that they are not suitable for anyone with fitness or walking difficulties.

All units are well equipped and nicely furnished, and possess air conditioning, a kitchenette with mini-oven and fridge, a shower/wc, hairdryer, Sat TV (BBC World), room safe (€2 per day), sofa-bed and a balcony or terrace. The first floor studio has twin beds and a full sea view balcony; the cool garden studio below has a king-size double bed and side sea views from its lovely large patio terrace, which is furnished with table, chairs and umbrella and shaded by fruit trees.

The apartments have the addition of a spacious living room, also air conditioned, containing a full-size double sofa-bed. They enjoy magnificent views (and sunsets) over the rooftops and across the gulf.

Agnanti is almost exactly at the midway point of the village, so you will find a good choice of tavernas, cafes and small shops close to hand. Popular Abovos beach is no more than a 5 minute walk, and you will find two other very nice beaches -Lagoudi and Kalifteri - within a 10 minute walk in the other direction. Please note that all Afissos beaches get very busy at weekends and during Greek holiday periods.

Breakfast: can be prebooked for £56 per week

The

Self Catering Apartments: Apartments for Air Conditioning Free WiFi





Lefokastro Beach Cottage Lefokastro

This beautifully modernised fisherman's cottage is just 10 metres from the sea at the start of Lefokastro's beach.

The house is open-plan and air conditioned (included). The living room contains sofas and tv, with tiled shower room off and an archway leading to the fully fitted modern kitchen with electric oven, hob and full fridge. Other facilities include an iron and board, hairdryer and WiFi.

Steps lead up from the living room to the sleeping gallery above with a double platform bed.

The house is very nicely restored and furnished, the thick stone walls and wooden ceiling keeping it cool and combining well with the modern comfortable furnishings, high quality fittings and tasteful decor. There is no front terrace or balcony due to the age and location of the house but a large picture window in the living room does

look to the sea. Between the two is the narrow beach road, a cul-de-sac.

The rear garden patio has a BBQ, space for sunbathing and a seating area shaded by a pergola. There is natural shade on the beach to the front provided by tamarisk trees, and here sun beds are provided for quests.

Early Booking Offer

Up to £100 off per apartment per week (max discount £200) for bookings made by 31/1. Conditions apply - see page 267.

The Cottage:

Self Catering House for 2 Air Conditioning Free WiFi Car included from Airport

Seralis Hotel Koropi

The Seralis is a very friendly small hotel in the west coast hamlet of Koropi, between the larger seaside villages of Kala Nera (3 kms) and Afissos (2 kms). With only 7 rooms here and lush green countryside all around, the hotel engenders an intimate atmosphere, and offers plenty of space in which to relax in the pretty gardens and attractive pool area.

Rooms are not large but prettily furnished in a fresh bright style and well equipped. All possess double bed, AC, TV, mini-bar/fridge, teamaking equipment, safety deposit box, hairdryer, shower room and covered balcony with country, sea, pool or mountain views.

Above the pool the hotel's snack bar serves drinks and light meals through the day, and dinner in the evenings if pre-ordered. The owner, Maria Seralidou, is a very good cook – so half board may be an idea – and also provides a rich breakfast buffet that includes many homemade specialities. In fact the way Maria looks after both her hotel and her guests, in the best tradition of small and friendly Greek hotels, ensures many guests return every year.

Lovely Paradisos beach is 600m away - a 7 minute walk - and has (in season) sun-beds and a café/snack bar. However for brighter lights and a wide choice of tavernas and shops Afissos and Kala Nera can be quickly reached by car in around 5 minutes, and the famous mountain village of Milies is a 10-15 minute drive.

Half Board: £112 per week

Early Booking Offer

Reductions available for bookings made by 30/4 - please enquire or check our online availability for a costing.

The Hotel: 2 Stars Plus Bed & Breakfast or Half Board Swimming Pool Air Conditioning Free WiFi Car included





Dimitra's Apartment Milina

This independent 2-bedroom apartment (more like a small cottage) is above the sea just to the south of Milina, and has a small shingle beach handily located just over the road. Dimitra's elevated location ensures fine views but steps up from the road means it is unsuited to anyone with mobility difficulties.

The interior comprises two double bedrooms (one with an extra single bed), separate kitchen with 2-ring mini-oven and fridge (note: cold water tap only), nice bathroom with walk-in shower, and large covered veranda for al fresco dining with lovely views to the sea and Alatas island just off-shore. There is also an open sun terrace to the side with stone table and seating under the shade of an olive, and a BBQ. Facilities include AC (both bedrooms), TV with DVD player, hairdryer and Wifi.

Dimitra's is of a very high standard, with light modern colours and well furnished with care and taste - quite artistic in many ways. Should our apartment be full we have access to a similar one next door

The pool is a little away from the house and measures 11m x 5.5m (depth 1.0-2.20m). It is shared

between the two neighbouring cottages and a small block of studios above.

The small shingle beach below has very sheltered clean waters. You will find a handy taverna restaurant and a mini-market for basics just around the corner just one minute's walk away. Pretty Milina is 2 kms up the road (a 20 minute walk) so car hire is recommended.

The Apartment: Self Catering Apartment for 2/5 Swimming Pool Air Conditioning Free Wifi



Below Dimitra's

Daisy's Place Katigiorgis

Panoramic views over the sea to Skiathos are to be had from this modern, light top floor apartment. It is less than a five minute walk down a country lane (take a torch) from Katigiorgis' sandy beach, pair of tavernas and small shop, and a ten minute walk through pines and olives in the other direction to lovely Vromoneri beach.

The apartment comprises an openplan living room with a comfortable corner sofa and a fitted kitchen containing electric oven and hob, fridge-freezer and microwave; a double bedroom (with a fan); and a tiled shower room. Well equipped, the apartment comes with hairdryer, iron and board and a washing machine. It boasts three spacious balconies - two to the front boasting marvellous sea views and one to the rear shaded by trees.



Katigiorgis

Daisy's is an excellent

accommodation, furnished to a high standard and guietly located with super views, yet close to tavernas, shop and a choice of beaches.

Please note the unmade road leading up to Daisy's from the village is rough so, other than for your luggage or booking a 4x4 car, we ask guests to park in the village and walk for 5 minutes or so.

WiFi Note: WiFi is provided by a Mobile WiFi device intended to be used for checking of emails and light web browsing. 4GB is included for each booking - you may top this up with an extra local charge.

Flights and transfers: Due to flight routings, holidays here include outbound flights to Skiathos, a short transfer (20 mins) and shared water taxi to Platanias (30 mins) to pick up your hire car for the 20 minute drive to your accommodation. Departures will be from Volos Airport for Gatwick (2-21/2 hrs drive) or back to Skiathos for Manchester and other regional flights.

The

Self Catering Apartment: Apartment for 2 Free WiFi Car included





Athina Cottages Katigiorgis

These four delightful cottages are newly built (2017) and set in private gardens at the back of the tiny hamlet of Katigiorgis. An easy walk of two minutes leads to the idyllic waterfront with its beach of golden sand, and a pair each of tavernas, cafes and mini-markets.

The cottages are built in the attractive traditional Pelion style, with sloping grey slate roofs, and spacious. Each one is open plan and can sleep 2 adults plus 1 adult or 2 small children on a double sofa bed. They are a mix of double or twin beds. A good sized covered terrace overlooks the garden area dotted with olive trees.

Furnishings and decor are light, modern and comfortable, and each cottage has air conditioning, hairdryer, iron, TV and Wifi. The kitchens are equipped with a 3-ring mini-oven, kettle, coffee machine, toaster and a full size fridge. All have a bathroom with shower.

Katigiorgis is off the beaten track and is an excellent location for those looking to escape for a quiet holiday in very pretty Greek surroundings and with access to some truly fabulous beaches.

Flights and transfers: Due to flight routings, holidays here include outbound flights to Skiathos, a short transfer (20 mins) and shared water taxi to Platanias (30 mins) to pick up your hire car for the 20 minute drive to your accommodation. Departures will be from Volos Airport for Gatwick (2-21/2 hrs drive) or back to Skiathos for Manchester and other regional flights.

Early Booking Offer

Up to £100 off per room per week made by 31/1. Conditions apply see page 267.

The Cottages: Self Catering Cottages for 2/4 Air Conditioning Free WiFi Car included

Lagou Raxi Country Hotel Lafkos

Lagou Raxi (pronounced 'Rahi') is a stylish country hotel situated on the edge of the picturesque and unspoilt village of Lafkos high amongst the green rolling hills of south Pelion. It is a wonderful location for walkers (see resort into pages) and for those who love a view, as the hotel has gloriously sweeping views over the Pagasitic Gulf.

The hotel has 20 rooms, family rooms and suites. Completed to a high modern standard, each room has its own character and decor. All possess double or twin beds (fourposters in some Junior Suites), bath or shower, ceiling fan, TV and room safe. Tea-making facilities and hairdryer can be provided on request from reception. All double rooms have a sea, pool or garden view balcony or terrace - balcony supplement for single rooms on request.

Below is the good-sized swimming pool (towels provided). The hotel has a restaurant (home grown organic local produce), a library, a cozy lounge bar, beautiful Mediterranean gardens and terraces. A 5-10 minute walk brings you to the heart of Lafkos where you will find five tavernas (see resort intro pages). With a car you are well placed for exploration of beautiful south Pelion - and the fact that the hotel's rooms are individually named after different local beaches tells you that you'll need a 3 week stay to get around every one!

Flights and transfers: Due to flight routings, holidays here include outbound flights to Skiathos, a short transfer (20 mins) and shared water taxi to Platanias (30 mins) to pick up your hire car for the 20 minute drive to your accommodation. Departures will be from Volos Airport for Gatwick (2-2½ hrs drive) or back to Skiathos for Manchester and other regional flights.

Early Booking Offers

The Hotel:

Reductions apply for bookings made before 31/3 for stays completed by 12/7 or commencing 30/8 onwards.

> 3 Stars Bed & Breakfast Swimming Pool Tennis Court Free WiFi Car included





Lafkos

Walking & Painting Holidays

We are delighted to offer walking and painting trips to this beautiful and little visited area of Greece. Participants will stay at the comfortable Lagou Raxi Hotel on a half board basis. Please note for these holidays transfers are included, not car hire. Travel will be via Skiathos flights on Fridays except on the return for Gatwick clients who will fly back from Volos (see transfer note).

Walking

Pelion is a walker's dream and laced with 'kalderimi' - old cobbled donkey paths that linked the villages. In recent years a restoration programme has led to many being opened up for walkers, and in early 2019 the final part of the



South Pelion Trail - some 55 kms of linked paths via inland villages - is planned to be completed. This holiday allows you to explore the whole but in manageable chunks over 5 days, with transportation to and from the start and end points each day. It is self guided (maps and directions will be given by the hotel) - however a walking guide is strongly recommended and can be provided on request at a reasonable £40 per day.

Departures weekly throughout the season. Prices are from £1130 per person in a double room and include flights, transfers, half board (breakfast and dinner), 5 walking days with packed lunch, transportation to and from the walking trails. Min. 2 walkers prices for non walkers on request. See our website for further details.

Painting

These courses are led by experienced tutor Maggie Niagassas. They are suitable for beginners and intermediates and comprise 6 painting days (watercolour and sketches) based at the Lagou Raxi Hotel with some local excursions. Materials (including board) are provided but feel free to bring your own.

07/6-14/6 & 30/8-06/9: Botanical Painting - wild and garden flowers of south Pelion 28/6-05/7: Nature's Summer Bounties

05/7-12/7:

Pelion Village Watercolours - secret mansions and shady corners

Prices are from £1244 per person in a double room and include flights, transfers, 6 days painting with tuition, half board (breakfast plus 6 dinners and 1 lunch). Balcony supplement for single rooms £40 per week. Non-painters are welcome and reductions apply - please enquire. See our website for further details.

THE PELION	Guide prices per person in £s departing during											
ACCOMMODATION		PERSONS BASIS		Low Season (May - early Jul & mid Sep - Oct)				High Season (mid Jul - early Sep)				
			BASIS	Fri 1 Wk	m 2 Wks	To 1 Wk 2 Wks		Fr 1 Wk	om 2 Wks	1 Wk	o 2 Wk	
Agnanti	Studio	2	SC	808	988	895	1144	895	1148	922	1176	
		3	SC	750	872	814	983	814	985	840	1011	
	1 Bedroom	2	SC	848	1069	976	1306	976	1312	1004	RQ	
		3	SC	777	926	868	1091	868	1094	894	RQ	
		4	SC	741	855	814	982	814	985	839	RQ	
Athena Cottages	1 Bedroom	2	SC	876	1166	900	1202	906	1219	941	1254	
(incl car)		3	SC	794	1001	816	1041	830	1064	862	1096	
		4	SC	744	900	765	935	775	952	805	982	
Daisys (incl car)	1 Bedroom	2	SC	916	1214	940	1251	946	1270	1008	1306	
Dimitra	2 Bedroom	2	SC	870	1064	948	1284	1029	1370	1102	1418	
		3	SC	802	929	861	1082	914	1139	986	1186	
		4	SC	768	861	816	980	857	1023	928	1069	
		5	SC	748	821	790	920	822	954	893	999	
Lagou Raxi	Standard Room	2	BB	925	1276	968	1397	1022	1458	1051	1486	
(incl car)	Junior Suite	2	BB	954	1332	1000	1469	1062	1538	1091	1567	
	Suite	2	BB	1006	1438	1105	1785	1272	1962	1306	1996	
Lefokastro Beach (incl car) Cottage 2		2	SC	928	1238	953	1276	959	1296	1020	1332	

ACCOMMODATION		PERSONS BASIS		Low Season (May – early Jul & mid Sep – Oct)				High Season (mid Jul – early Sep)			
		PERS	BASIS	Fn 1 Wk	om 2 Wks	1 1 Wk	io 2 Wks	Fr 1 Wk	om 2 Wks	1 1 Wk	0 2 W
Melograno 1	Studio Bedroom Apartment	2 2 3	SC SC SC	785 824 765	914 994 875	808 848 787	942 1024 901	808 848 787	950 1034 908	864 907 842	98 106 93
Pegasus	Standard Room Standard Sea View	2 2	BB BB	789 822	966 1030	840 872	1080 1146	872 904	1116 1182	898 931	114 120
Seralis (incl car)	Standard Room	2	BB	844	1114	903	1244	933	1278	960	130

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Not included: Overnight Stay Tax of \pounds 0.50 to \pounds 4 per room, apartment or villa per night payable locally – the amount varies according to the category of the accommodation (i.e. most self catering and 1-2 star hotels = \pounds 0.50, 5 star hotels = \pounds 1.