



VOLOS MUNICIPALITY



it's true
VolosPelion



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Discover

Volos and Pelion at the centre of Greece



Volos is one of the largest Greek cities and one of the most important ports in the country. It is located in central Greece (320 km north of [Athens](#) and 219 km south of [Thessaloniki](#)). A natural harbour in the Pagasetic Gulf and a

stone's throw from Mount Pelion, it combines all the allure of the sea with the mystical beauty of the mountain of the Centaurs. The city is associated with the famed expedition of the Argonauts, one of the most important epics of Greek mythology.



A mythical destination

The expedition of Jason and the Argonauts

Volos is at the centre of the myth of the Argonaut expedition known the world over. The first major naval expedition of the ancient Greeks is directly related to Iolcos, the ruling city on the Pagasetic Gulf during the Bronze Age. It was from here that the ship Argo set off with Jason and the Argonauts for Colchis in the Black Sea (Russian-Georgian border) to claim the Golden Fleece.

The land of the Centaurs

In history and in art, the Centaurs are shown as having a human torso and the lower body of a horse. The best-known Centaur was Chiron, a wise teacher whose students included Asclepius, Jason and Achilles. He was the first to use herbs to treat illnesses and injuries. According to myth, Chiron belonged to the famed race of Centaurs descended from the gods and were wise, just, good-hearted, and friends and supporters of humans.



Apple of Discord, a prize for a godly beauty pageant

The wedding of Peleus and Thetis took place in the forests of Pelion. All of the gods had been invited except Eris, the goddess of discord. Feeling scorned, she threw the famous golden apple with the inscription "To the fairest one" amidst Hera, Aphrodite and Athena, who began to argue over who should get it. Zeus suggested the goddesses

be led to Paris, the Prince of Troy, so he could choose the most beautiful. And that is how the first beauty pageant came to be held. Paris gave the apple to Aphrodite and she helped him steal the heart of Helen of Troy. Her abduction led to the Trojan War.



Resort of the gods

According to Greek mythology, Pelion was the summer retreat of the 12 Olympians. By throwing boulders from here and down into the sea, Zeus created the beautiful Sporades islands (Skiathos, Skopelos and Alonissos).

No matter what you hear about Volos and Pelion, while it may sound much like a myth, it is ultimately all true. The myth talks about the Centaurs who live in Pelion - magical, half-man, half-horse creatures. It's true. The Centaurs you meet today are the image of humans mounted on horses as they explore the beauty of the forest along the mountain trails. The myth says that the ancient gods lived here in the summer. It's true. Each time you dive into the water and relax on the beaches and crystal-blue waters, you will understand why.

The myth says that Jason and the Argonauts set off on the Argo from Volos harbour to find the Golden Fleece. Even now, modern-day Argonauts experience the beauty of the sea through any number of activities on or near the water. No matter what you hear about this place, it's all true. The endless possibilities of the area, while they may sound exaggerated, are nevertheless real. It's all true. Volos Pelion, it's true.



Volos /a city next to the
sea, port of the Argonauts

Volos is a modern city with a special charm and its own particular colour, marked largely by its place between the sea of the Pagasetic Gulf and the imposing Pelion Mountain.

The sea creates a fabulously long coastline with numerous recreational centres and some of the city's countless famous little taverns, or tsipouradika, serving the traditional "tsipouro" aperitif and special seafood appetisers, or "meze".

The pedestrianised waterfront Argonaut Road, with the passenger port at its west end and the impressive view of the sea and tree-covered hill of Pefkakia, is the most popular meeting spot and ideal for a stroll for both residents and visitors to the city.





The Argo is the symbol of the city. The mythical ship became known around the world through the myth of the expedition of Jason and the Argonauts to Colchis.

A few kilometres west of the city are the archaeological sites of Sesklo (the settlement dates back to 6000 BC and is the oldest in Europe) and Dimini (the best-known prehistoric settlement in Greece and most important of the late Neolithic period).

The journey begins in Volos



The main commercial pedestrian road, intriguing buildings, public mansions, industrial installations dating to the early 20th century and historical churches make touring Volos a truly enjoyable experience.

The noteworthy cultural activity, the diverse mosaic of its inhabitants and the vibrant university community round out the city's image.

Pelion /holiday on a mystical mountain

Mount Pelion rises to the north and east of Volos, a verdant mountain of legends and Centaurs and one of the most beautiful and bewitching in Greece. With an area of about 50 km and its peak rising to 1,624 m, Pelion seduces its visitors by perfectly combining the mountain and the sea.

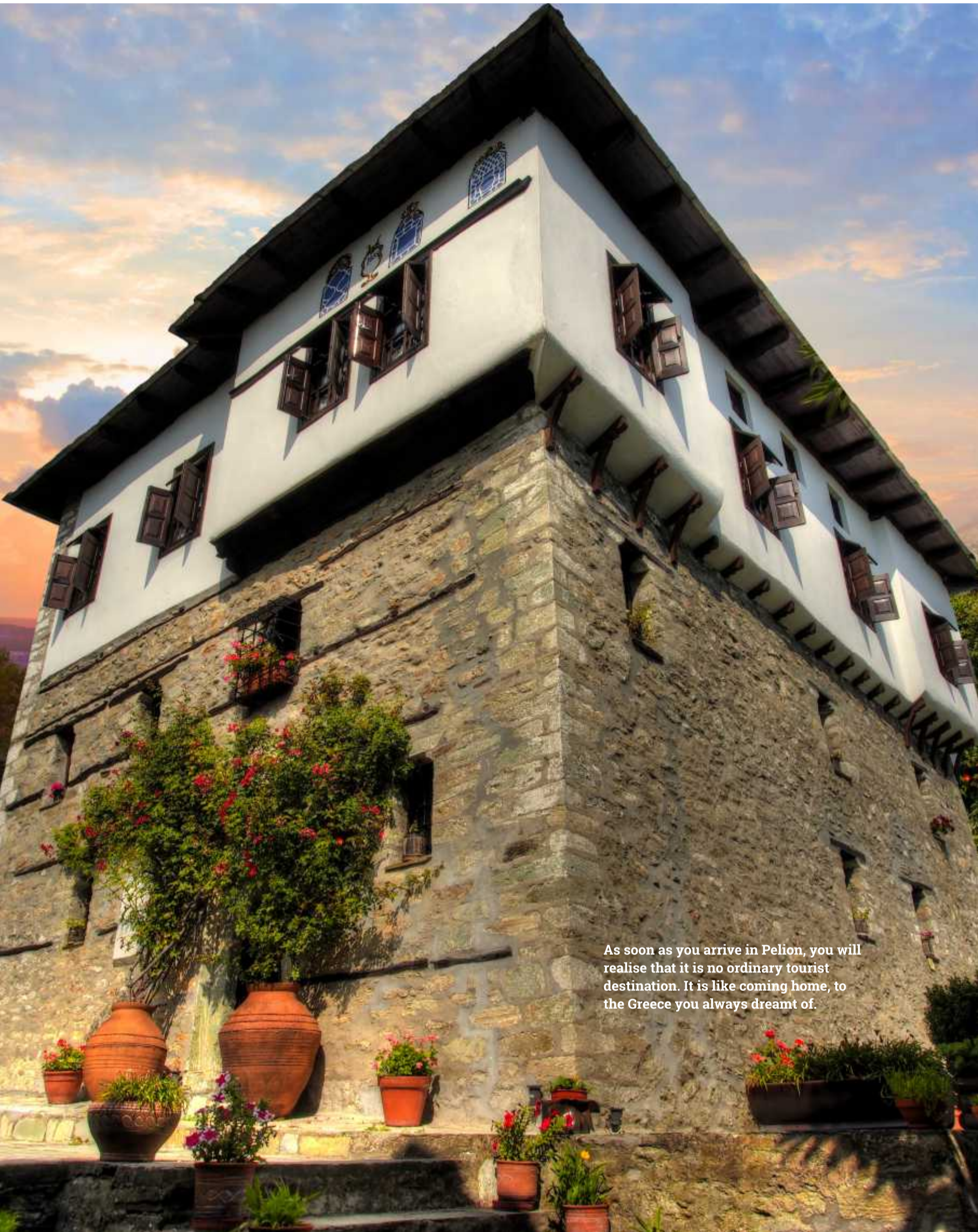
Dozens of renowned villages there have been listed as traditional settlements because of the exquisite natural landscape, unique cultural heritage and characteristic Pelion-style architecture.



The route followed through Pelion by the legendary "Moutzouris" ("smudge"), the narrow-gauge steam train in operation since 1895, will provide an unforgettable experience.

Lovely routes through the mountain offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy the impressive landscape, breathtaking views of the sea and magnificent villages. A modern ski centre operates near the highest settlement of Chania, with a heart-stopping view of eastern and central Greece.

There are also many spots around Pelion where organised alternative tourism activities are available, including horse-riding, hiking, ecotourism treks and others.



As soon as you arrive in Pelion, you will realise that it is no ordinary tourist destination. It is like coming home, to the Greece you always dreamt of.

Villages /Makrinitza

Makrinitza is the most representative village in Pelion. It has preserved the integrity of its traditional Pelion-style architecture and constitutes in its entirety an authentic example of local tradition. As you walk along the cobblestone lanes found everywhere, you will come across water fountains flowing with cool spring water, manor homes and hospitable people. The village is known as the "balcony of Pelion", as it offers an unimpeded view towards Volos and the Pagasetic Gulf.



The main square is among the leading landmarks of Pelion and should be included on visitors' must-see list. The Museum of Folk Art and History of Pelion is housed in the Topalis Manor. This is the oldest and largest museum operating in the villages of Pelion, offering a rich collection of exhibits on the history, art, culture and daily life of its one-time inhabitants.



/Portaria

A well-known and very charming Pelion village. A developed tourist destination with excellent accommodation and dining services, which hasn't lost its natural village beauty and local tradition. It is an ideal location to stay and use as a base for excursions to other parts of Pelion. Portaria is sure to become one of your favourite destinations and a lovely memory of the mythical mountain.



Of particular interest are its neoclassical mansions, many of which operate as guest houses, as well as the church of Panagia Portarea for which the village is named. You will also find a Historical and Folk Art Museum there. The custom of the Pelion wedding is re-enacted every year in late August.

Villages /Mountain



ANAKASIA

Anakasia is a very typical Pelion Mountain village, with old manor houses and traditional cobblestone lanes. Its major landmark is the Kontos Manor filled with works by the most important of Greek folk artists, Theophilos.

AGIOS ONOUFRIOS

This is the first village you come to as you leave Volos and head towards Pelion: impressively green, a lovely square and restaurants with Greek music.



ALLI MERIA

A lovely village on the outskirts of Pelion, it is the nearest to Volos for an escape to the coolness and tranquillity of nature. An annual flower festival takes place here in May.



ANO VOLOS

A suburb of Volos with a superb view. Older mansions mixed with newer structures retain the traditional architectural style. Landmarks include the church of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary and Episkopi Hill.



STAGIATES

A small, pretty village with gurgling spring waters and a magnificent view from the square. It is a starting point or a stop along the way to some of the most beautiful walking trails in western Pelion. A sausage festival is held there in late July every year.



KATICHORI

A village built in a verdant area, and separated into two neighbourhoods oriented to catch the breeze off the Pagasetic Gulf. It retains its traditional colour with Byzantine churches, chapels and well-tended houses. The rural character of the village is highlighted at the Chatzianni traditional olive press, in the adjoining Agricultural History Showroom, and a tsipouro festival is held every July.



DRAKEIA

Drakeia was built in 1655 by Epirote master craftsmen. It is among the few villages in Pelion which have not been subjected to tourism development, although it is an ideal spot for secluded relaxation in nature. It is among the "martyr villages" of Greece because of the execution of 115 Greek patriots by the Germans that took place there in 1943. A memorial dedicated to the victims of the massacre has been erected at the site of the execution in the village's plane-covered lower square.



AGIOS VLASIOS

Agios Vlasios is 5 km from the beaches of the Pagasetic Gulf. It is an ideal setting-off point for exploring central Pelion. It has retained its traditional character, as the old agricultural lifestyle is reflected in the homes and entertainment of its residents. The village takes its name from Agios Vlasios Church, built in the 18th century by Epirote master craftsman Dimos Zapaniotis.

AGIOS LAVRENTIOS

One of the oldest Pelion villages, it owes its name to the Byzantine monastery established by the Blessed Lavrentios. The entire village is a monument to Pelion-style art with its magnificent buildings, fountains and stone-paved lanes. It is known for the "Music Village" series of events held in August.

Villages /Sea

AGRIA

A picturesque but growing seaside settlement, just 6 km from Volos. Agria features an extensive beach with many ouzeries and restaurants where one can taste Pelion cuisine and seafood specialities. The highlight of the summer is "Fisherman's Night", held along the waterfront.



ANO LECHONIA & KATO LECHONIA

Two lovely villages tucked into the verdant and fertile foothills of Pelion supply the region with their excellent products. If you happen to see any pears or peaches, don't pass them up.

Several tower houses remain in Lechonia from the Turkish occupation, along with many old neoclassical manor homes. Nowadays, the little train for Pelion sets off from here on its magical journey to the village of Milies.

NEA ANCHIALOS

A seaside town built on the north-west coast of the Pagasetic. Nea Anchialos features beautiful sandy beaches, noteworthy nightlife, many summer happenings, seaside hotels and all the amenities a visitor could want. Summers are packed with events, with the wine festival being the most prominent.



Aside from its natural beauty and tourism infrastructure, it also has a rich cultural heritage. It is the location of ancient Pyrasus, the harbour of the glorious ancient city of Phthiotic Thebes, now known for the archaeological site and extensive relics from the Paleochristian era.

Sea

The sun and sea are always good reasons to visit Greek destinations, especially in summer. Even better reasons are Volos and Pelion, where the lush green mountain reaches right down to the deep blue of the sea to form a coastline of expansive and gorgeous beaches.

Many of these beaches have been awarded Blue Flags and can be found along the Pagasetic or on the Aegean side of the mountain. No matter what type of visitor you are, there are plenty of beaches to suit your fancy.

Popular beaches or reclusive bays, with expanses of sand or remote and rocky, the waters are always clean, with welcoming seaside restaurants, fresh fish, excellent hotels, some quiet and others more lively with beach bars, water sports and sailing.



Sea



All of them are accessible by car, bike or on foot after a pleasant and relatively easy walk through the forest. You can even stay in a beautiful room next to the surf, where the sand is your terrace and the sea yours for the taking. It's all true.





Sights and points of interest

If you feel satiated by the endless hours near the sea, on the sand and next to the surf, under the Mediterranean sun that you will remember all winter; if you've rested in the cool hotel room with a rejuvenating summer afternoon siesta; if you've enjoyed refreshing afternoon meanderings through the villages of Pelion along the cobblestone roads and you've enjoyed a coffee and dessert at a square in the shade of a leafy plane tree, then you're ready for even more adventures!

/Pelion train a different kind of tour



The Pelion train travels through the mountain over a lovely mountain route crossing verdant slopes for a total length of 15 km that takes 90 minutes and ends up in the large historic village of Milies.

The route is filled with nature and old but intricate construction that shaped the retaining walls, arched bridges, stone arches and tunnel entrances. The modern-day route is part of the span between Volos and Milies.



The construction of the railway line, the narrowest in the world, was overseen by Evaristo De Chirico, father of well-known artist Giorgio de Chirico who was born in Volos.

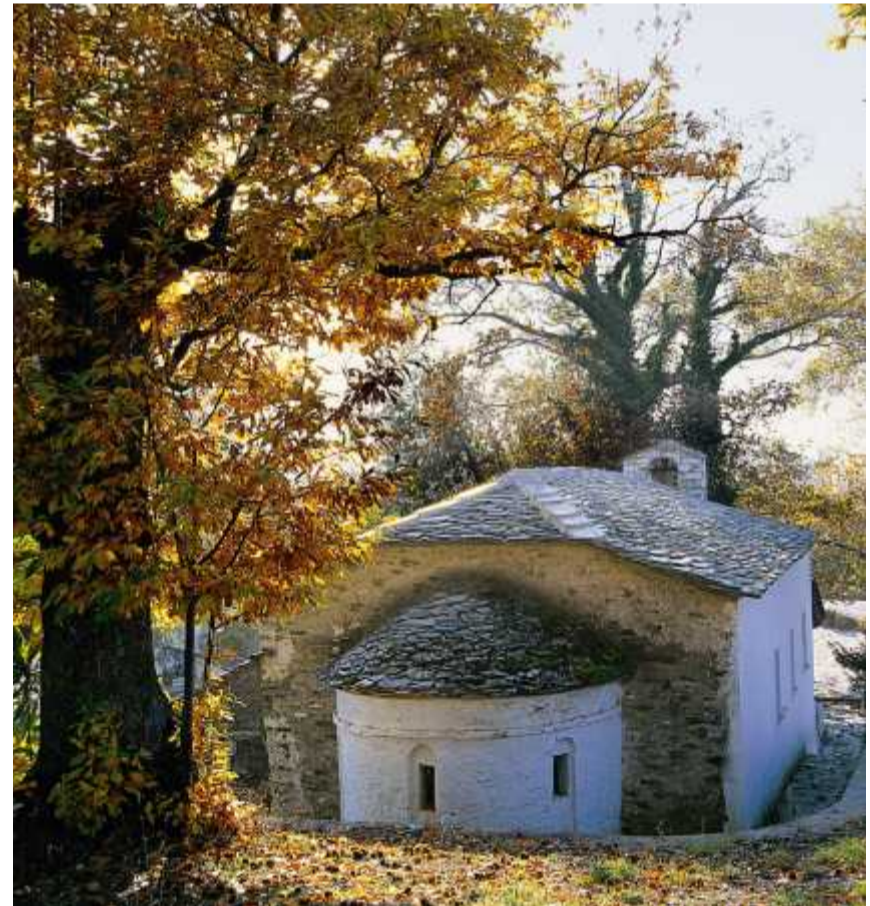
The train leaves at 10:00 from Ano Lechonia and at 15:00 from Milies, with a 15-minute stop at Ano Gatzia when travelling in either direction. It makes for an enjoyable day-trip offering a different look at Pelion.

The modern-day route is part of the span between Volos and Milies. Construction began in 1892 and the first part to Lechonia was completed in 1896. The rest of the track up to Milies was built later and put into operation in 1903.

Sights /Churches and monasteries



One can visit magnificent monasteries, numerous well-maintained churches and many religious feasts at a short distance from Volos and experience the devotion or cultural heritage that emanates from each place by taking a day-long religious tour (historical monasteries of Panagia Xenia, Sourvia and Flampouri, the Byzantine church of Agios Nikolaos Kanalion, and the monasteries in Portaria, Agios Georgios and Gatzea).



/Hiking



Hiking in the mountains is a fulfilling activity that is drawing the attention of increasingly more visitors. Pelion offers a variety of trails to follow and discover the true nature of the mountain.

There are many options in and around every village for anyone who wants to try some hiking. The trails of the Centaurs in Portaria and Jason's trail in Alli Meria, a walk to Makrinitza, and the Makrinitza-Stagiates route are just a few of the easier choices.

There are also options of varying difficulty, such as the climb from Volos to Makrinitza and Portaria and then up to Chania, near the peak of Pelion; from Chania along a route with lovely villages such as Drakeia, Agios Vlasios, Agios Georgios and to the seaside village of Lechonia on the Pagasetic Gulf; or from Tsagarada to the harbour of Damouchari and then to Papa Nero beach on the Aegean.

These treks require better preparation: gathering information on the internet or consulting maps, or turning to one of the many guides working on Mount Pelion.

Action and fun /Mountain



CANYONING: There are five gorges in eastern Pelion with an easy or intermediate rating. All of the gorges are completely safe and have been charted in detailed guides. Specialised companies in Volos and Pelion will guide you through the gorges of Pelion and their gurgling waters. The best time to go canyoning is from March to June.

HORSE-RIDING: Fans of equestrian tourism will enjoy one of the many options available along the Centaur trails and the forests of Pelion. Courses range from short to long, from 1 hour to 3 days, and introduce both beginner and experienced riders to the traditional villages and forested trails in the area. Riding stables in Pelion are prepared to accommodate horse-riding fans.



TREKKING / MOUNTAIN BIKING

Many of the hiking trails are also suitable for mountain bikes. These courses follow along narrow forest or agricultural roads with lush vegetation, including olive groves, plane trees, or cross through the forests of chestnut trees. There is a wide range in altitude, though routes with few downhill and gentle uphill can also be selected.



Pelion's potential has helped to develop a number of activities on the mountain and the sea that will make your experience unique.

/Sea



SAILING: Both large and small sail boats await to take you on a tour of the Pagasetic coastline. From the base port of Volos, a number of sailing schools provide an opportunity for day trips or multi-day trips around the Pagasetic Gulf or to the Northern Sporades islands (Skiathos, Skopelos and Alonissos). Most schools charter their boats with or without a certified skipper.

DIVING: There are incredible beaches along both the Pagasetic Gulf and on the shores of Eastern Pelion for autonomous and freediving. Modern, specialised diving schools in the city of Volos offer safe diving excursions with complete, state-of-the-art equipment.



SEA KAYAK:

Another interesting activity that takes advantage of the calm waters of the sheltered Pagasetic Gulf for paddling to nearby or outlying destinations. No matter where you go, you will be able to enjoy a panoramic view of Volos and the mountain of the Centaurs. Stop in at the picturesque harbours and beaches along the Pagasetic to sample some of the local flavours at the restaurants on the sea. The sea is usually calm in the mornings, and there are many small beaches for a swim along the way.



All activities are led by specialised tourist offices eager to be of service.

Ski /with a view of the Aegean

The ski centre is located on the northern side of the Agriolefkes peak at an altitude ranging from 1,200 to 1,471 m. It was established by the Greek Mountaineering Club of Volos. There are 5 ski lifts in operation at the ski centre, with 12 km of ski pistes, 3 parking areas, a ski shelter with a capacity for 80 people, a ski school run by certified ski instructors and ski rentals. There is also a first aid station, a weather station and a watchtower.



The vegetation in this area comprises mainly beech and aspen, and there is a panoramic view of the sea.

The Northern Sporades islands



A short distance from Volos and accessible via regular ferries from the Port of Volos, visitors can easily get to the Northern Sporades islands, which include cosmopolitan Skiathos, verdant Skopelos and quiet and peaceful Alonissos.

These three unique islands each offer something different to satisfy all expectations (2.5 hours by ferry, or 1.5 by hydrofoil to Skiathos, the first of the Northern Sporades islands).

Gastronomy

A taste of the local cuisine will round out your introduction to Volos and Pelion. Two types of cuisine are typical of the area: The appetisers, or meze, served at the tsipouro taverns, or "tsipouradika", and Pelion-style dishes. Tsipouro is a distillate made from the pomace of grapes after they have been pressed to make wine. This distillate is drunk all over Greece in various forms (tsipouro, raki, tsikoudia), but for a long time, it was only marketed in Thessaly.

The men of Volos and Pelion would drink tsipouro every day. The arrival of refugees from Asia Minor in 1922 introduced the accompaniment of the drink with a variety of meze, chiefly seafood. Gradually, the traditional coffee shop which also served tsipouro evolved into exclusively tsipouro taverns with their own kitchens and individual character.



Nowadays, each '25th' (the term 25th refers to the small 50 ml bottles in which tsipouro is served) brought to the table comes with a different serving of meze, a ritual that has been followed since the last century. Each customer orders a 25th as many times as they can tolerate. Each 25th is accompanied by a meze that is unique to each establishment.

This means that you sit at one of the numerous tsipouradika in the city and order a 25th for you and your friends, leaving it up to the owners of the place to select the meze they will serve, depending on the rate at which you order tsipouro. About 400 tsipouradika make up this popular form of entertainment and are the main gathering place for the local residents.

/with fresh, pure local products

The cuisine of Pelion is known for the purity of its local ingredients and the herbs used, the local recipes, the great variety of pies and the delicious spoon sweets that make use of fruit found on the mountain.

Uniquely Pelion-style dishes include spentzofai, a tasty dish with local sausage and green peppers; sautéed greens with eggs; boubari, a type of sausage containing finely chopped offal and rice; and the salads of local greens like terebinth or rock samphire - perfect accompaniments to tsipouro.



Other traditional dishes are also quite delicious and include oregano patties, wild green and pepper pies, stuffed courgette flowers, home-made noodles, and spentzofai with meatballs.

The fruit in the area is also excellent, either raw or prepared as a spoon sweet using chestnut, firiki apples, figs or cherries, or try baked apples with cinnamon and fragrant honey. These recipes use only ingredients found or produced locally and are handed down along with the traditions of local families.

Museums /a day visiting museums, archaeological sites and collections



There are many sites to visit and learn about how the area has evolved over the last 8,000 years. As a result of the continuous human presence, the area features remains of Neolithic and Mycenaean settlements, Classical and Hellenistic monuments, Paleochristian basilica and exquisite examples of folk architecture.

A number of public and private museums also feature impressive collections of valuable artefacts attesting to the local cultural heritage.

/Public archaeological sites and museums



DIMINI

The archaeological site of Dimini, 5 km west of Volos, lies next to the village of the same name and initially became known for the relics of a Neolithic settlement on the hill.

SESKLO
The second though older Neolithic settlement is Sesklo, 15 km west of Volos, along the same road past Dimini and very near the modern-day village of Sesklo. Early excavations brought to light findings that established Sesklo as one of the most important Neolithic settlements in Greece and Europe.



NEA ANCHIALOS (PHTHIOTIC THEBES)

Traces of Neolithic, Late Helladic, Early Geometric, Geometric and Classical settlements have been found in the area. The coastal city of Phthiotic Thebes was developed in this location in Late Antiquity, during the Paleochristian period (4th century AD) and up to the 6th century AD, and served as the main harbour in Thessaly during that time.

ATHANASAKEIO MUSEUM IN VOLOS
The Volos Archaeological Museum was built in 1909. Both the wealth and variety of exhibits and the manner in which they are displayed in the Neolithic gallery and the room where the tombs have been recreated are of particular interest. The most significant exhibits of the museum's collection come from the prehistoric settlements of Sesklo and Dimini and compose a comprehensive image of the Neolithic period in Thessaly and Greece in general.



/Public archaeological sites and museums



THEOPHILOS MUSEUM

The Kontos residence is one of the most notable modern monuments in the area since both the structure itself and the artistic decoration have been preserved in excellent condition. It is a unique example of a Pelion manor house which has preserved Theophilos' oeuvre intact.

VOLOS CITY MUSEUM

The Volos City Museum is the first and so far only modern city museum in Greece. It is housed in the former Papantos tobacco warehouse, built around 1920.

A section of the eastern side of the Byzantine fortification on the hill is visible in the museum courtyard in the district of Palea.



PORTARIA HISTORICAL AND FOLK ART MUSEUM

The Portaria Historical and Folk Art Museum is housed in the two-storey D. Zoulias mansion. The permanent exhibition presents details of the economic and cultural development of the area from the early 19th century to the mid-20th century, emphasising the way of life and activities of repatriated Greeks from Egypt in the region.

MUSEUM OF FOLK ART AND HISTORY OF PELION IN MAKRINITSA

The museum is housed in the Topalis Manor, which according to an inscription over the entrance was built in 1844. This three-storey mansion is a typical example of Pelion architecture.

The folk art collection includes more than 1,500 artefacts, such as folk art wall painting, housewares, ecclesiastical art objects, historic heirlooms, textile art equipment and many others.



/Public archaeological sites and museums



LYCEUM OF VOLOS GREEK WOMEN MUSEUM

The Lyceum of Volos Greek Women Museum: An impressive collection of authentic costumes of the region, jewellery and weavings housed in a uniquely representative example of urban Volos architecture of the late 19th century.

KITSOS MAKRIS MUSEUM

The museum is housed in the residence of historian Kitsos Makris and has belonged to the University of Thessaly since 1989. It includes Makris' folk art collection, with unique pieces such as 25 works by Theophilos Hatzimichail, 5 murals by Pagonis and works by folk artist N. Christopoulos.



ROOFTILE AND BRICKWORKS MUSEUM

The Tsalapatas rooftile and brickworks factory was established in 1926. From that time and until it closed in 1978, it served as an important production facility with national scope. Nowadays, it is a rare example of a preserved industrial installation in this sector.

It has been in operation as a museum since summer of 2006 and is part of the Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation network of thematic museums.

Genuine Greek hospitality

More than 300 lodgings of every category and type are located in the city of Volos, the mountain villages and coastal areas, guaranteeing a quality stay so you can enjoy every minute of your holiday. All lodgings offer accommodation with luxury, tradition and nobility. You are sure to feel that you are not visiting yet another holiday destination, but that you have come home, to the Greece you always dreamt of.

Volos is accessible by various means: by car on the main Greek motorway (E75); by rail with regularly scheduled service; by sea from the islands of the Northern Sporades and other ports during the summer, as well as by cruise ship; and by air through the Nea Anchialos National Airport (VOL), which is being continuously developed as a regional airport.



The city of Volos is near everything in the area and can meet any needs which may arise.

There are also a number of businesses in Volos and Pelion which can provide additional tourist services, such as local tourist agencies, car rental agencies, dining and entertainment establishments and alternative tourism organisations.

No matter what you hear about our region, it's all true. The endless possibilities of the area, while

they may sound exaggerated, are nevertheless real.

Wonderful, sunny days, countless kilometres of coastline, traditional charming villages, plane tree-shaded squares, stone fountains with cool water and a cuisine with fresh ingredients. From the top of the mountain, you can find yourself in any number of beautiful, cosmopolitan or isolated beaches in just a few minutes.

Volos Pelion, it's true.



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