

## 8-day walking holiday with a rental car



Pilion, a peninsula in Greece, halfway between Athens and Thessaloniki. An area with many wells, so there's water, even in summer time. Pilion, where you find streambeds with ivy hanging like lianas from the trees, and ferns and metallic blue dragonflies. Beech forests cover the higher areas like a bright green blanket. In olive groves the greyish green foliage forms a lovely contrast with the purple blue of thyme and the pink cistus flowers on the ground. Pilion, where you stand on village squares and look out over the glittering sea from under majestic plane trees. Pilion, where according to mythology the gods took up summer residence. And where today's Greeks fortunately haven't built massive tourist centres.

In the 18th century a network of beautiful arched stone bridges and paved donkey paths (kalderimis) was built throughout Pilion in order to bring produce down from the higher areas. Through time a great deal of these kalderimis have been destroyed, neglected or asphalted, but some parts are still intact and an occasional section has been renovated. Some have been signposted as footpaths and are included on maps. For our walks we make use of kalderimis, earth paths and roads, forest paths and goat tracks and sometimes of the old railway track, where a touristic service now operates in the weekends. The eastern side of Pilion is more rugged and steeper than the western side, so walks there often span larger differences in height.

You sleep in small, special guesthouses or hotels where a personal approach is embraced. They have an attractive design and every room has its own bathroom. Breakfast is included, one of the hotels has a library, another has its own swimming pool. All over Pilion there are taverns where you can taste regional specialities and we provide you with a number of recommended places to eat. Every village has its own bakery or small supermarket where you can buy basic necessities.

We rent an economy class car with insurance for you at the airport of Thessaloniki. Your British or European national drivers licence is recognised in Greece.

All the walks we offer are circular walks, so you always return to the point where you started. We provide you with descriptions of the walks, route maps and GPS tracks you can download. The indicated time for the walks is the actual walking time, so without stops.

The best periods for walking in Pilion are April up to the end of June and September till the end of October. In July and August it can be very hot.

# Programme

Day 1. You fly to Thessaloniki, pick up your rental car and with our description you drive 270 kilometres along the quiet national roads to Pilon. You arrive at the attractive guesthouse in Aghios Georgios Nilias, a traditional mountain village. In the evening you can prepare your own meal at the guesthouse or go to one of the local taverns in the village. There are also restaurants in the nearby villages Ano Gatzea and Kato Gatzea where a lot of the local specialities are served.



Day 2. Today you make your first walk, a circular walk of 5,5 kilometres starting from the square in Aghios Georgios through the beautiful nature on the hills above the village. Total ascent and descent is 200 metres and you can enjoy the magnificent views along the Pagasitic Coast and in the direction of the Sporades Islands. This lovely first walk gives you a feel of our descriptions and the difficulty of the walks. You spend another night in the guesthouse.

Day 3. A beautiful drive is on the programme today, to Tsagarada on the east coast of Pilon. This side of the peninsula is much steeper, very green and always more shady and cool than the west coast. Tsagarada and its surrounding area offer a lot in terms of natural beauty, architecture, a hidden cave, the old plane tree on the village square and beautiful beaches. It is a lovely area to make a short trip, to relax at the sea or to read a book in the library of the exceptional hotel where you are staying tonight. Or, if you're ready for a walk, choose one of the options for tomorrow.



Day 4. Today you have the choice between two walks in the area of Tsagarada. The first one begins at the hotel and leads you through the beautiful old forests on the mountain. This walk can be highly recommended on hot days. The second walk starts in Aghios Ioannis at the coast and brings you to Mouresi which is higher up on the slopes. From there it descends to Damouchari, where the film Mama Mia was recorded. From Damouchari you walk back to the starting point along the beautiful beach of Papa Nero. You sleep in the same hotel in Tsagarada.

Day 5. A lovely drive brings you to Lafkos, a village in the more open interior of Pilon. The hotel where you stay has fabulous views and a tempting swimming pool where you can enjoy the sunsets in the evenings. In the afternoon you can make a short walk through the village, passing by the characteristic square. Or you could make a walk with lovely views from the coastal village Milina to Lafkos and back along kalderimis. Your hotel has a restaurant, but for your dinner you could also choose one of the taverns on the square of Lafkos.



Day 6. You can once choose from two walks today. The first walk starts in the coastal village Chorto and leads you past the village Metochi and the monastery of Paou, followed by a beautiful coastal path leading you back to Chorto. Here you can have a drink and something to eat in a very characteristic café. The second walk is further away, at Platania on the southern coast of Pilon. The walk there leads you along kalderimis with views to the South in the direction of Evia. You spend another night at the hotel in Lafkos.

Day 5. If you fancy a spectacular drive, make an early start and drive to Trikeri, de most southwestern point of Pilon. There from Alogoporos a wonderful walk along goat paths leads you through the rugged and isolated area. Afterwards you can cross over to Trikeri Island with a small boat to have something to eat there.

A shorter drive brings you to the other possible walk for today, a lovely circular walk from Milina through olive groves and with a beautiful view from a hilltop. You sleep in the hotel in Lafkos.



Day 8. Today you travel back to the airport of Thessaloniki.

If you wish you can extend this holiday with extra nights on Pilon, or a few nights in Thessaloniki. We will gladly inform you about possibilities and prices.

## Locations



## Summarizing, what do we offer:

- An economy class rental car
- 7 nights including breakfast in attractive and comfortable accommodations where English is spoken. The accommodations are our standard accommodations. If one of them is full at the time of the booking, you will be lodged in a similar alternative close by.
- A folder with background information about Pilon and a map. A list of suggested taverns.
- Carefully composed walks based on our long experience in the area. Accurate descriptions of the walks, as you know them from our website. Maps and GPS tracks for every walk. Most days you can choose from two walks. The walks take you along the old kalderimis (cobble paths) or along narrow paths, earth roads, forest paths or goat tracks.
- The most attractive routes to your next hotel and a description how to drive from Thessaloniki to Pilon and back
- The possibility to extend your holiday with extra days, or with a stay over in Thessaloniki before flying home

### Not included:

- Flights
- Other meals
- Insurances
- Hotel tax: 0,50-1,50 euro per night, depending on the category of the hotel

## Price from 475 euro per person

This price is based on two persons. The exact price depends on the car rent, which changes with the seasons and also depends on the time of booking.

## Concluding

Recommended maps: at <http://www.anavasi.gr/index.php?lang=en> you can order good maps, like Anavasi 6.21 Thessaly, Mt Pilion, 1:25.000 (including Aghios Georgios and Tsagarada) or Anavasi 4.3 Thessaly South Pilio 1:50.000 (including Lafkos).

We provide you with a map of the whole of Pilion: Anavasi Topo 50 Mt. Pilio – Mr Mavrovouni 1:45.000.

Health: For a walking holiday it is important that you are healthy and that you bring good walking shoes. When walking make sure you take along 1.5 – 2 litres of water per person. Also bring a first aid kit with suntan oil, painkillers, plasters and bandages, compeed and iodine. There is a hospital in Volos and a health centre in Argalasti. Toerists from EU countries are entitled to free medical care in Greece. Make sure you have a good health insurance and travel insurance because then your visit to a private clinic will be compensated.

Cancellation insurance: in case of illness, accidents or serious events you may be entitled to cancellation and compensation of (a part of) the costs.

Safety: Traffic in Greece is very relaxed. There's not a lot of traffic on the highways, and that is also the case on the Pilion roads. It is easy to avoid the bustle of Thessaloniki centre by choosing the ring road. The national **emergency number** for the police, ambulance and fire brigade is 112. Ask at your accomodation for the telephone number of the local police station or doctor.

For further information or if you want to make a booking: [info@pilionwalks.com](mailto:info@pilionwalks.com)