Zagoria Exploration in Pindos Mountain range

**Highlights**

- Walk over traditional stone bridges following the centuries old footpaths
- Cross Vikos Gorge, one of the deepest in the world
- Trek across Greek alpine landscapes
- Breathe in the unspoiled Nature

The Zagoria Exploration adventure takes you for a week into the heart of the Pindos mountain range, where the stone villages of Zagorochoria are located. Zagorochoria are 46 villages that flourished between the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries. We firstly walk along the network of footpaths that traditionally connected the villages, cross the stone bridges, listen to the sound of rivers and eventually reach the high plateau of mountain Tymfi elevating over 2000m!
Full Itinerary

While we aim to follow the itinerary as it's printed below, a degree of flexibility is necessary. This is in order to accommodate weather interference and unexpected opportunities!

Day 1: Arrival Day

Meet at Nikolas Guesthouse in Koukouli village. Zagorochoria are located high up in the mountains and we will have the chance to enjoy the tranquillity that nature can offer us away from the hustle and bustle. Today, we will check-in, settle down in our new surroundings and enjoy dinner all together!
* A free of charge mini-bus group transfer may be provided, depending on the arrival times and locations of the group. Please, check the Transfer section that follows below.

Day 2: Walk from Koukouli to Vitsa, Dilofo and Kipoi stone villages

Today we explore the heart of Central Zagoria. We cross the valleys along the rivers, pass the stone bridges and walk the old footpaths which have connected the stone villages for many centuries. This is where we grasp the real essence of what Zagoria is made of. Beautiful architecture, ancient footsteps, magical views that shape cultures and the golden quiet of Nature awaits us out there.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length: 11.5 km (7 miles)</th>
<th>Total Ascent: 500 m</th>
<th>Min. Elevation: 714 m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approx. Walking Time: 4 – 4.5 hours</td>
<td>Total Descent: 650 m</td>
<td>Max. Elevation: 942 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 3: Walk from Koukouli to Beloe viewpoint via Kapesovo and Vradeto villages. Return to Koukouli by mini-bus transfer

Today we start climbing higher on the slopes. A mini-bus will transfer us at the start of the route. Entering the Selato gorge and steadily gaining height, we reach the village of Kapesovo which hides on a small plateau above hanging cliffs. We then climb the famous Vradeto Steps, a 300-year-old paved mule path; a vertical climb up the sides of the Mezaria gorge. At the end of the day, we reach the Beloe viewpoint where we gain our first view over Vikos gorge, which is the most important geological feature of the area and our next day’s target!
Day 4: Walk from Monodendri to Vikos village via Vikos gorge. Return to Koukouli by mini-bus transfer

The crossing of Vikos gorge is one of the most esteemed hikes in Greece. It is an unspoiled place with a great diversity of flora and fauna. In the heart of the gorge is the source of the Voidomatis which is the cleanest river in Europe. This is a long day’s hike on the floor of the gorge, crossing dry river beds, passing next to bear caves (empty!) engulfed by the dense foliage. Vikos gorge has been a central feature of life in the region for the past 40,000 years and stays untouched to this very day.

Day 5: Walk from Mikro Papigko village to Astraka mountain hut via the alpine lake of Drakolimni. Sleep at the mountain hut

A mini-bus transfer will bring us at Mikro Papigko village. Today we enter the mountainous zone. We will cross sub-alpine grasslands, valleys and plateaus by exploring Tymfi Mountain, eventually reaching the highest point of the day at the alpine lake; Drakolimni at 2050m. The day lets us breathe in the mountain and embrace the glorious rocky massif. At the end of the day, we will make our home at the mountain hut of Astraka, which is located at 1930m altitude.
Day 6: From Astraka mountain hut we have different walking options to choose from depending on weather and desires. Transfer to Koukouli by mini-bus

Today we have some trekking options that varies from moderate to challenging. We could cross the main body of Tymfi mountain, walking through the alpine landscape, next to impressive vertical cliffs or going up to Astraka peak at 2436m before we come down to the villages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length: 13 - 15 km (6-8 miles)</th>
<th>Total Ascent: 430 - 850m</th>
<th>Min. Elevation: 950 - 1078m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approx. Walking Time: 5.5 – 6.5 hours</td>
<td>Total Descent: 1260 - 1785m</td>
<td>Max. Elevation: 1980 - 2436m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 7: Walk from Papigko bridge to Kleidonias bridge with optional rafting excursion on the Voidomatis River (not included). Transfer to Koukouli by mini-bus

A mini-bus transfer us to the beginning of the walk. Our target is to reach Voidomatis River and follow the path that goes along its banks, through the plane forest that spreads in the area and creating a magical atmosphere. The land which we cross today has had human presence for the past 20,000 years. Evidence of human presence can be found in several caves from before the last ice age and can also be found in abandoned churches of the mid 17th century and stone bridges of the 19th century. A very relaxing and enjoyable walk that can be extended if we choose to start from Vikos village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length: 6-9 km (3.5 - 5.5 miles)</th>
<th>Total Ascent: 120 - 150m</th>
<th>Min. Elevation: 400m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approx. Walking Time: 2.5 - 3.5 hours</td>
<td>Total Descent: 130 - 500 m</td>
<td>Max. Elevation: 450 - 770m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 8: Departure Day

Our adventure is ending after breakfast.  
* A free of charge mini-bus group transfer may be provided, depending on the arrival times and locations of the group. Please, check the Transfer section that follows below.

Panas Adventures Ltd.  
panas@panasadventures.co.uk
Important Information

Please, do not book your flight arrangements until you have received a Guarantee to Go email, which will be delivered no later than 60 days prior to the start of the tour.

Joining the Tour

The joining place is at Nikolas Guesthouse at Koukouli village in Zagorochoria. Please inform us via email of the details of your arrival in Greece (airline, flight number, time of arrival).

Best entry/exit airports

Thessaloniki airport is the most convenient place of arrival on mainland. From Thessaloniki main bus station (Macedonia Intercity Bus Station), you need to take a bus to Ioannina (260km) which takes around 3h30’. From there a bus or a taxi (40km) can bring you at Koukouli village in Zagoria.

An alternative is Preveza airport (Aktion National Airport – PVK). From Preveza main bus station (Ktel Prevezas), you can take a bus to Ioannina (100km) and then a bus or a taxi to Koukouli village.

Athens airport is another place of arrival on mainland. From the airport you need to go to the main bus station (Ktel Kifisou). You can go there by the 24h airport Express bus X93 and then you need to take a bus (10 itineraries per day) to Ioannina (445km) which takes around 6h30’. From there a bus or a taxi (40km) can bring you at Koukouli village in Zagoria.

Alternatively, from Athens airport you can get a flight to Ioannina with Aegean or Olympic airlines (2 to 4 itineraries every day) which lasts around 35’.

If you are planning to spend a few days in Kerkyra, then Corfu airport is another alternative. From there you need to take one of the regular ferries to the mainland at Igoumenitsa (1h45’). Then you can take one of the regular buses from Igoumenitsa main bus station (next to the port) to Ioannina which takes around 1h30’ (80km) and finally a bus or taxi to Koukouli village.

There is a high possibility to provide a FOC group transfer from/to Corfu town passing via a second pick up point at Ioannina town. Please, see the Transfers section that follows.
Accommodation

✓ 6 nights in a traditional stone guesthouse at Koukouli village
✓ 1 night at the Astraka - Tymfi Mountain Hut at 1950m. of altitude

The rooms at the traditional guesthouse are en-suite rooms, consisting of one bedroom and one toilet/shower facility per room. They have been completely renovated according to the famous local architecture.

The rooms at the mountain hut are equipped with 51 bunk beds*. The shelter provides beds, pillows and blankets. Guests must bring with them a sleeping liner or a lightweight sleeping bag and a towel. The mountain hut has a restaurant, unisex toilets and one shower (no hot water).

* Although, we will make every effort to secure single sex dormitories, we cannot guarantee it. That’s depends on total number of visitors on the day.

Single Supplement

This holiday is priced on a 2-person-sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself and do not request single room occupancy, we will make every effort to pair you up with another single traveler of the same sex in the room. Depending on availability, you can ask and book a Single Supplement at the extra price of £160. Get in touch for more details.

Meals

✓ Six Breakfasts are included
✓ Breakfast is not included at the Mountain Hut but is available on site at extra cost
✓ Lunches will be picnics, or tavern stops depending on the route each day and the weather. Lunches are not included
✓ Three locally produced dinners are included.
✓ All the rest of the evening meals will be at local taverns. Those dinners are not included
Transfers

✓ All transfers, as mentioned in the itinerary, are included.
✓ Free of charge transfers* may be available from/to Corfu town airport and a second pick up point at Ioannina main bus station. The actual time depends on the transfer requests we will receive by email. If you wish to be on the transfer, it’s very important to complete and send us the Flight Details form that we supply with the ‘Guarantee to Go’ email and we will be able to inform you about the possibility to get the FOC transfers.
✓ Please get in touch with us for any questions you might have regarding your arrival/departure at/from Koukouli village and the Joining place.

* The arrival transfer will be on the same day the tour starts no later than 17:00 and departure transfer on the morning of the same day the tour ends. The ferry ticket is not included (see Budgeting for the Trip section)
**The transfers are subject to the number of people and times of arrival/departure
*** Although it’s highly unlikely, there is always a chance of bad weather creating delays on ferry crossings. In the unfortunate event that there are no ferries on the arrival/departure day, any extra cost regarding transfer and/or accommodation is the responsibility of the customer as it is something beyond our control.

Connect with the rest of the group prior to departure
If you’re interested in meeting/coordinate with others who have booked on your upcoming trip, why not request to participate in a social media (WhatsApp, Viber or Facebook) group? If you would like to do this, please tell us on the Booking Form we will send you to fill in!

Budgeting for the Trip

Food
Breakfast at Mountain Hut: 4.5€ (Continental)
Menu at the Astraka Mountain Hut
Lunch £: 8.00 - 12.00
Dinner £: 12.00 - 16.00

Drink
Bottle of Beer: £ 3.50
Glass of Wine: £ 2.00
Water: £ 0.90

Optional Rafting activity: 35€
Ferry ticket: 11€

*Please note that the above prices are general indications.

Panas Adventures Ltd.
panas@panasadventures.co.uk
Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** Cash can be drawn from ATMs from all types of cards in most areas in Greece, including the islands. Some remote areas and villages might not have an ATM facility, so it’s always good to move around with some cash on you.

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Major credit cards are widely accepted by stores in Greece. Smaller cafes and shops may not accept credit cards, so ensure you carry enough cash to cover small purchases.

**Local Currency:** Euro

**Where to Exchange:** We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

Visa Information

Visas are not required for European, UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking the tour that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday.

Dietary Requirements

In order to be able to accommodate your needs or preferences in the best possible way, we ask you to inform us about your dietary requirements. On booking, you will receive a quick and simple form where you can add the necessary information.

Medical Condition

In order to be able to take care of you in the best possible way, we ask you to inform us about any medical condition you may have. This information will be kept under the strictest confidentiality. On booking, you will receive a quick and simple form where you can add the necessary information.
Preparing for the Trip

Total Trekking Length up to: 77.5 km (48 miles)
Total Ascent: 3800m
Total Descent: 3900m
Min. Elevation: 400m
Max. Elevation: 2050m
Total Approximate Walking Time: 28h – 31h

**Climate:** Greece has predominantly hot, dry summers. Temperatures reach into the mid thirties from June to August. May, September and October can be less predictable and may have some rain and cooler evenings. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Pindos mountain range, where Zagoria are located, are the dominant mountain range of the area and the villages that we will visit are located at high elevation. This means that we need to be prepared for warm days and chilly nights, long sunny spells and passing rain.

**Clothing:** Weather is changeable in the mountains or at the coast and it can become cool, especially at night, so bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A water and windproof coat is essential at all times in case of the odd shower or quickly changing mountain weather. Also take a warm hat. Whilst walking you may prefer to wear shorts, but carry lightweight long trousers for narrow footpaths where thorny vegetation may scratch bare legs. Also, carry a long-sleeved shirt for protection against the sun, and a sunhat. Don't forget your swimming costume.

**Equipment:** Take a towel for swimming, a water bottle, sunglasses, torch and sun cream. You may find trekking poles useful for certain sections of the trek. Take binoculars if you have an interest in bird watching. You will need a sleeping liner or a lightweight sleeping bag for the one night at the mountain hut and your own towel for washing/showering.

**Footwear:** Well broken-in walking boots are essential for the tour but additionally bring comfortable shoes for relaxing in and for the evenings.

**Luggage:** On tour bring one main piece of luggage and a daypack.

**General Information**

**Time Difference to GMT:** +2 hours
**Electric Supply & Plugs:** 2 Pin Round
Greece travel FAQs

Is tipping customary in Greece?
Tipping is considered optional in Greece. Tipping extra for good service is a personal choice; please act according to the level of satisfaction for the food or service received.

What is the internet access like in Greece?
Internet access is good in Greece and internet cafes are easily found in most cities and major towns. Wi-Fi connection is available in most places.

Can I use my mobile/cell phone while in Greece?
Mobile phone coverage is generally very good on mainland Greece, but less so on some of Greece’s more remote islands or mountains. Ensure global roaming is activated before you arrive and contact with your provider to check possible charges.

What are the toilets like in Greece?
Western-style, flushable toilets are the standard in Greece. Expect to pay a small fee when using public toilets in some parts of Greece. Please make sure that you use the bins provided to deposit any toilet paper (it should not be flushed).

Can I drink the water in Greece?
Drinking water from taps in Greece is considered safe, unless otherwise marked (tap water may not be of drinkable quality on some of Greece’s small and remote islands or places).

What public holidays are celebrated in Greece?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Jan</td>
<td>New Year's Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Jan</td>
<td>Epiphany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Feb</td>
<td>Orthodox Ash Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Mar</td>
<td>Independence Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Apr</td>
<td>Orthodox Good Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Apr</td>
<td>Orthodox Easter Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Apr</td>
<td>Orthodox Easter Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 May</td>
<td>Labour Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 May</td>
<td>Orthodox Pentecost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Jun</td>
<td>Orthodox Whit Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Aug</td>
<td>Assumption Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Oct</td>
<td>Ochi Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Dec</td>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Dec</td>
<td>2nd Day of Christmas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note these dates are for 2018. For a current list of public holidays in Greece go to this [link](#).