

TRAILS BEYOND

Hiking Exploration in the Zagoria villages



Duration: 8 days

Level: Moderate to Challenging

Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour comfort: Standard

Suitable for: All travelers

Available: May – October



Description

There are places in the world, which are hidden from the first sight, they are not on headlines and you can hardly hear from your friends about them. But after you visit **Zagoria villages**, you will be one of those who can tell about the **unspoiled beauty**, the **traditional villages** and the **stone trails** and **arched bridges** of the area. If you love **hiking** through **pristine natural landscapes** and untouched by time villages, then you should not miss this **weekly Hiking Adventure** exploration in the Zagoria!



Join us and explore on foot the **secret paths of Vikos – Aios National Park**, learn more about the myths and stories of the area, observe the unique **flora and fauna**, taste the **delicious local cuisine** and listen to the stories of the **local villagers**.

Tour Highlights

- **Hike through Vikos Gorge**, one of the deepest canyons in the world
- Explore the picturesque, untouched by time, **stone – made villages** of Tsepelovo, Vradeto, Kipoi, Papigo, wonder around their narrow cobbled streets and admire the traditional architecture
- Cross historical **arch stone bridges**
- Hike to the mythical **alpine Dragon Lake** at 2.100m!
- Admire the **panoramic views** over Vikos Gorge and take beautiful **photos** from Beloi viewpoint (1.650m altitude)
- Observe the rich **flora and fauna** of **Vikos – Aios National Park**
- Taste **delicious local food** and experience the hospitality and warmth of the **local people**
- Visit the beautiful town of **Ioannina** with its magnificent **lake**, the **castle** overlooking the town and the small **island of Ali Pasha** in the middle of the lake

Trip Itinerary

day
1

Day 1: Athens/Thessaloniki – Tsepelovo

Our meeting point is Athens or Thessaloniki International airport. From Thessaloniki airport, you transfer to Zagoria by car (around 3.5-4 hrs driving distance). If you start from Athens, we fly to Ioannina national airport (1hr flight) and then we transfer by car to Zagoria villages (50 min).

You are met and welcomed by our team and your group leader explains briefly the trip details. We then set off for **Tsepelovo**, the largest among the 47 villages in the Zagoria, where we will have dinner and overnight.



* In case you wish to fly to another Greek airport, please contact us, so we can arrange your transfer to Zagoria villages.



Dinner



Traditional Guesthouse in Tsepelovo

day
2

Day 2: Tsepelovo – Beloi – Vradeto – Tsepelovo

After a good breakfast, we start our day hiking from Tsepelovo upwards, towards the highest village of Zagori, called **Vradeto** (1450m).

From there, following a beautiful path at the edges of Vikos Gorge, we arrive to the viewpoint **Beloi** (1650m), where we have the chance to take photos and have a panoramic



view of the paths that we will follow the upcoming days.

We return to Vradeto village and from there we continue downhill to Kapesovo village through the famous **steps of Vradeto** (stone path built in the 16th century at the slopes of Vikos Gorge). Transfer back to Tsepelovo.

(Hike duration: 4 hours)



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Traditional Guesthouse in Tsepelovo

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day
3

Day 3: Tsepelovo - Kipi - Koukouli - Vitsa



After breakfast, we depart from our hotel to descend towards the starting point of the **Vikos Gorge** through the stone bridge “**Paliogefyra**”, dating back to 980. Hiking through a forest of beech and pine trees, we will reach the village of **Kipi**.

From Kipi, we walk uphill the stairs of Koukouli (stone steps like the Vradeto stairs) and we visit the center of this picturesque village.

We walk down into the Vikos gorge again, and, after crossing the “**Misiou**” bridge, we climb the old stairs of Vitsa to reach this beautiful traditional village, built just at the edge of the gorge.



(Hike duration: 5 hours)



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Traditional Hotel in Vitsa

day
4

Day 4: Crossing Vikos Gorge



Early in the morning we descend the old Vitsa stairs into the **Vikos ravine**, one of the deepest gorges in the world! This is one of the most beautiful, impressive and rewarding **hiking paths** in the area and it will take us about 6 hours to cross the canyon. Traversing the ravine, we can admire the rare varieties of wild birds and flowers that have found protection into it.

Early in the afternoon we arrive at Vikos village where we are picked up by mini bus and transferred to Aristi village for dinner and overnight stay.

(Hike duration: 6-7 hours)



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Traditional hotel in Aristi

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day
5

Day 5: Aristi - Mikro Papingo village



In the morning, we transfer from **Aristi** to **Vikos** village.

Following the old up-hill path, we traverse the beautiful ravine with direction **Papingo** village. Above us the “Towers of Papingo” are rising to an inaccessible place that no one can reach.



(Hike duration: 4 hours)



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Traditional hotel in Mikro Papingo

day
6

Day 6: Papigo – Dragon Lake – Papigo



Our **hiking exploration** for today is quite demanding, yet truly fulfilling!

Early in the morning, after breakfast, we start from **Papigo** village our ascending hiking route towards the **Astraka refuge**. The surrounding **alpine scenery** will captivate you for sure! After a short break for coffee and relaxation, we continue until the

beautiful “**Dragon Lake**”, situated at 2100m altitude. The view of this magical landscape will definitely reward you after a long hiking day.

Return to Papingo village

(Hike duration with return: 7-8 hours).

*Depending on the weather we could overnight in the refuge and return the day after to M.Papigo



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Local hotel in Papigo or mountain refuge

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day
7

Day 7: Papingo - Ioannina



This morning we transfer to the picturesque city of **Ioannina**, where you have the day free to explore the city center, the castle, the museums and the island of Ali Pasa in the middle of the lake.



Secret tip: do not miss the chance to drink tsipouro and taste the delicious accompanying mezedes (tapas)!



Breakfast



Hotel in Ioannina

day
8

Day 8: Departures



After breakfast, we fly to Athens or transfer by car to Thessaloniki (depending on your flight schedule).



What is included:

- Trails Beyond tour leader for the whole trip (for groups of 5 & more guests) and local certified trekking guide (in case you are a group of 2-4 guests, your trekking guide is also the tour leader).
- 7 days of accommodation in 3-4* hotels and traditional guesthouses, based on double occupancy
- All meals except lunch on days 1,7 & 8, dinner on days 7 & 8
- Transfer from/to Thessaloniki, Ioannina or Aktion airports
- For groups starting from Athens, the price includes airfare Athens-Ioannina
- All local transfers and luggage transfers according the itinerary
- 5 hiking days on moderate to steep trails
- All taxes

What is not included:

- International airfares
- Travel insurance, mandatory
- Hotel transfers to/from airports other than Athens, Thessaloniki or Aktion airports
- Lunch on day 1, lunch & dinner on days 7 & 8
- Any beverages or alcoholic drinks during meals
- Additional hotel nights that may be necessary due to airline schedule changes or other factors
- Optional activities that are not included in the day-to-day itinerary
- Other expenses of a personal nature and tips

Prices 2015 (private groups):

	From Athens	From Thessaloniki
Number of guests	Price per person	Price per person
For 2 guests	1.750,0 €	2.050,0 €
For 4 guests	1.300,0 €	1.300,0 €
For 6-8 guests	1.250,0 €	1.210,0 €
For 9 & more guests	1.050,0 €	1.050,0 €

***For single supplement, the extra cost is 40€ per person.**

***Please read carefully our General terms and conditions.**