



Green Greece.



Where the woods kiss the sea.



Forest onto the seashore

Pilion is a densely wooded low mountain range on the eastern coast of the Greek mainland half way between Athens and Thessaloniki.

Often also the peninsula south of Mount Pilion is called Pilion. Here, the landscape is characterized by pinewoods. Southern Pilion is sweeter and has lower mountains, but is also more uniform than Northern Pilion with its deciduous forests. Here, it is just like having transferred the German Black Forest to the Aegean Sea.

Our **panoramic view** shows places and beaches of Northern Pilion.

Landscape

The **trinity of beaches, forests and mountains** makes Pilion a destination for hiking and bathing enthusiasts. Reaching down to the beaches, you find olive groves and mediterranean oaks, from 500m on plane trees and chestnuts, from 700m on beeches.

On the top at an altitude of 1400m there is even a small ski resort.

Pilion is abundant in water from glacial sources. This is one of the best waters you find in Europe. It irrigates fruit growing areas and gardenias cultures.

Pilion also is a real paradise for herbalists and flower lovers.

Places

All the villages from Xourichti to Pouri are located between 400m and 500m above sea level.

This form of settlement formerly served as protection against pirates. The main road, built in 1930, runs above and below the ancient settlements.

The corresponding beaches from Milopótamos to Choreftó are not linked by cross-roads. This makes driving exhausting, but it prevents disruptive traffic.

You find good shopping facilities and nice taverns both in the mountain villages and in the beach resorts.

History

As early as 500 BC., many Mediterranean forests were cut down - for shipbuilding and construction, for the production of charcoal and for ore processing.

Pilion is so remote and without harbors and rivers that the natural forest was never destroyed. Even in ancient times it was considered a natural beauty where the gods spent the summer. Mythology says that the centaurs, half horse and half human and demigods, inhabited this paradise.

Even the Turkish occupiers never penetrated into the inaccessible forests.

Accommodations

In Damoúchari and Papa Neró outweigh apartments, in other places there are also many hotels.

The apartments cost in the high season from 60€ to 70€, if you rent more than a week.

Almost all apartments are offered in May/ June and September/ October for 50€. All have their own showers and toilets and a small kitchenette.

In the taverns you will pay seldom more than a maximum of 25 € for a dinner for two with all the trimmings, including 1 liter of wine and a free dessert.

Morning: Swim.



Wind and weather

Pelion has lower temperatures than the rest of Greece. In the morning there are updrafts from the sea, downdrafts from the mountains in the evening.

In May, during the day it is seldom warmer than 22°, in June the average is of 27°. In July and August it is seldom warmer than 30°, there are only few days with African heat coming so far to the North and temperatures going up shortly to 36°. September and October are mild months (25° to 27°). In any case you should bring a warm jacket for the evenings.

The price of the green beauty is that it may be raining in May for some days. From June to October, always a thunderstorm or a day of rain is possible.

On the other side you have the guarantee that you can hike even in July and August.

Swimming and water sports

Damouchari has a never crowded pebble beach, the small harbor is protected from waves and very suitable for children.

Swell there is more in July and August, but you can always find a beach with calm waters.

The beaches of Pápa Neró, Agios Ioánnis, Pláka, Agia Saránda and Choreftó are white and very wide and long.

The beaches of Milopótamos and Lambinú are idyllic, but quite small and crowded in summer.

The Aegean Sea is already in June 23° warm, the temperatures rise to 26° in August and the sea maintains these temperatures until mid of October.

In several places you can rent pedal boats and motor boats. Kayaks and canoes are available in Damouchari.



Hiking

Pilion is a fantastic hiking area. Even in the middle of Midsummer you can walk on shaded trails and earth ways in the mountain forest.

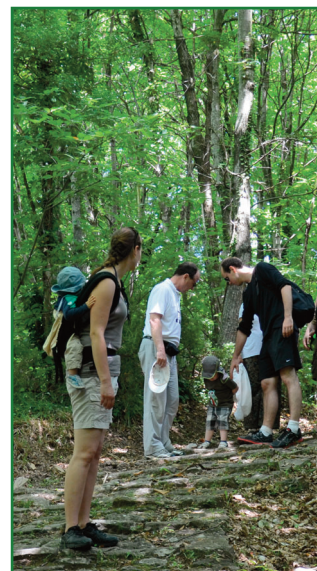
You need good footwear. Sticks are helpful. Even in summer, it is wise to have a light jacket with you.

The walks lead along the coast, on old donkey paths up to the mountain villages or as round walks in the mountains between 500m and 1450m through chestnut and beech forests.

The coastal paths are similar to the French Riviera. The mountain paths lead through forests and gorges like in the the Black Forest, but always through deciduous forests.

At www.damouchari.info you will find a Walking Guide for Pilion with the description of 13 walks.

Noon: Hike.



Attractions

Apart from a small ancient settlement at Pourí there is no excavations in Pilion. To see classical sites you have to drive to Vólos, there is also an archaeological museum.

Vólos, 1955 largely destroyed by an earthquake, is also worth a visit because of the Argonauts ship and the Tsípouro tavernas at the harbor.

It is worth visiting the squares and churches in the mountain villages. Below Zagorá, the "Greek Museum" commemorates the freedom fighter Ríga Ferréos who worked there as a teacher.

Between Miliés and Ano Lechónia a historical train runs through the mountains and over the gorges.

In July and August it runs daily, and in the remaining months on Saturdays and Sundays.

Evening: Feast.



Food

Due to its abundance in water, Pilion has big fruit-growing areas. Marmalades, jellies and all kinds of juices come directly from the region.

Pilion cuisine is everywhere good and tasty, although not exquisite. You find a lot of vegetarian dishes like stuffed courgette flowers or cooked meat in lemon or tomato sauce. On demand you will also get grilled dishes like *keftédes* (Hamburgers) or *soufláki* (kebab).

You should order *Orektiká* (Antipasti) which are very delicious. Fish dishes will be offered according to the days' fishing, so possibly some days not. But you will always get calamares, octopus and gavros (small anchovy).

Important: English will be spoken and understood in all taverns or shops.



Architecture

In Pilion there are strict building codes. Model is the classic pilion house: it has two floors with a cantilevered first floor, quite narrow windows and grey or red roof tiles. This results in a uniform townscape. Eyesores as in other Mediterranean beaches do not exist.

Many of the patrician houses in the mountain villages were built in 1900 by wealthy merchants, who returned from Alexandria and selected Pelion as a residence.

Getting There

Flight either to Athens, Thessaloniki or Volos. From there it is 4.5 hrs, 3.5 hrs. Or 1.5 hrs. to the beach resorts.

Additional information and a hiking guide with the description of 13 walks may be found at www.damouchari.info.