

**Peloponnese – Menalon Trail – self-guided:
8-day trekking on the Peloponnese along the
ERA-certified Menalon Trail in 6 stages
2024 (MTWT314I)**



Our hiking philosophy: active during the day, and in the afternoon a warm shower, a good meal and a comfortable bed in a small-scale accommodation.

We invite you to join us!

[more information: www.annahiking.nl](http://www.annahiking.nl)



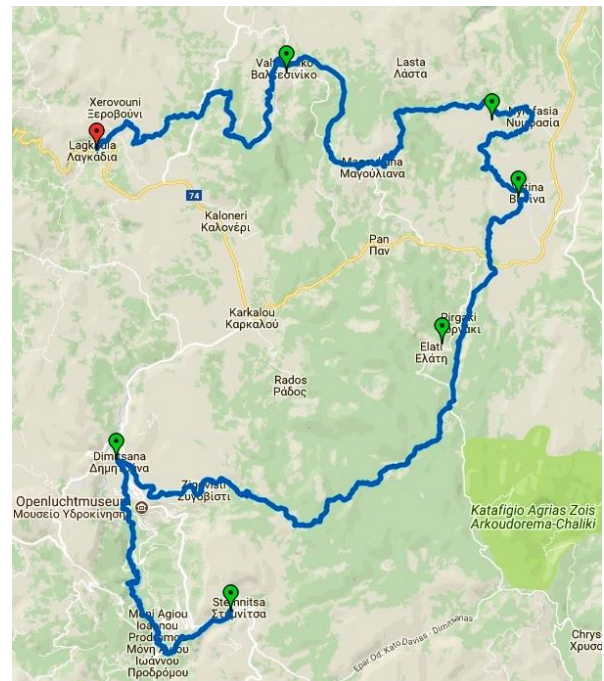
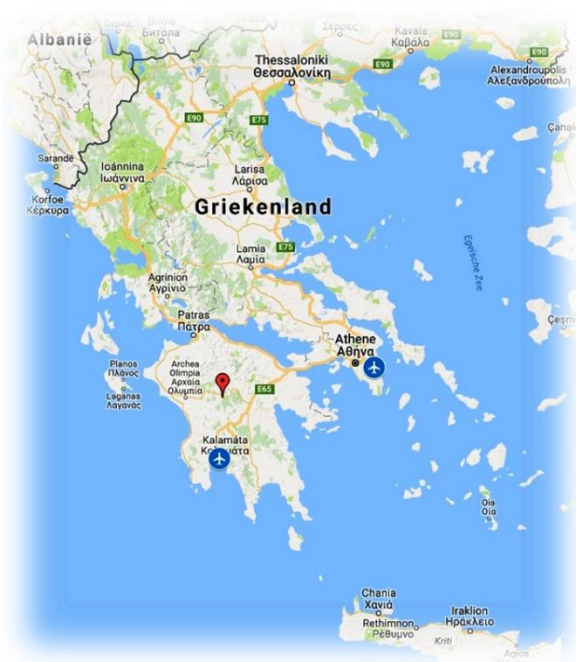
About AnnaHiking and S-Cape

In 1991 we visited Greece for the first time. Our love for the country, the culture, the climate, the food, the language and the Greek has grown ever since. We feel at home here and want to communicate this feeling to others.

Many people are familiar with the Greek beaches, but there is more! The mountainous mainland offers the traditional way of living, close to nature. Here you won't find beaches, but gurgling streams with waterfalls, small houses hugging the mountainside and welcoming people. We'd love to introduce you to this side of Greece!

Our colleague S-Cape in Athens explored the route for you. As an individual traveller we offer you a roadbook with tour descriptions, GPS-tracks and marked detailed maps, so you can find your way easily. The roadbook also offers several useful trivia and background information. Everything is also stored in the handy ActiveNav navigation app that you may load on your smartphone

The tour location



General information about the tour and the Menalon Trail

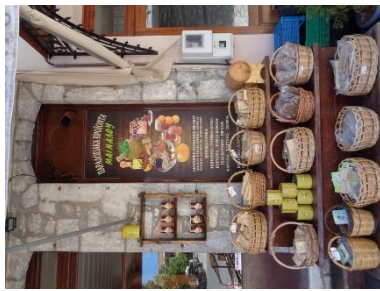
You walk in the Arkadia district on the Peloponnese, the southern mainland of Greece. The Menalon Trail is a 75 km long mountain trail, in 2015 qualified by ERA as [Leading Quality Trail/Best of Europe](#).

The trail head is Stemnitsa, located in the heart of the Peloponnese. Through the lush Lousios Gorge the trail straddles the Western Menalon massif and runs through the Valley of the Mylaon River until the lively town of Vytina. The long distance trail continues through lush forests, across bridges and through pretty villages with unpronounceable names like Valtesiniko and Magoulia. Being awarded with the certificate, the trail is well-signposted and well-maintained.

In this one week holiday the Menalon Trail is covered in 6 daily walks. The daily net walking time is between 3 and 7 hours (excluding the breaks). The 7-hour walk may be shortened to 5½ hours by starting in Zygovisti (taxi, own cost). The walks are mostly via rocky footpaths,



dirt roads and occasionally cobbled footpaths (kalderimia). The hiking area is situated on 1000-1500m altitude.



The area is remote and during the day you will be in pure nature, now and then encountering a local farmer. The villages where you stay overnight are of exceptional charm and beauty and offer excellent accommodation and good food.

Through the dramatic Lousios gorge, with a handful of impressive monasteries built on its cliffs, you reach

Dimitsana. Dense forests surround you on the stretch via Zigovisti, across the mountain pass Bilani to the remote village of Elati. Follows a short but great day along the Mylaon River to Vytina, famous for its black marble production.



The next day you retrace your steps for a while along the 'alternative' Trail, not to miss the pretty stone bridge of Zarziou across the Mylaon River. Back on the main trail, you continue to Valtesiniko and stay overnight in small houses overlooking the area called Mavra Lithari: Black Stone. Follows a long day through forests and along a well-hidden hermitage to Magoulia with its local cafes.

Along the river Potamia you reach Valtesiniko, an amphitheatrically built village. The last day leads you through open fields with walnut trees, threshing floors and huts towards Lagkadia, where the Trail ends.

We advise you to arrive well trained and fit with well worn-in and ankle-high hiking boots. Thus you'll get more pleasure out of your hiking holiday.

It's a tour for people who want to enjoy one of Europe's best hiking tours without any worry about pathfinding.

Trip highlights

- Monasteries in the Lousios gorge.
- The Open Air Water Power museum in Dimitsana.
- The old stone bridge of Zarziou across the Mylaon river.
- Hidden hermitage of Sfyrida.
- Pure countryside in unknown areas of Greece at altitude 1000m-1500m.



Modular set-up: extensions/alterations/abbreviations

It's possible to do the Trail in 5 stages, so it will be a 6-day tour including the arrival and departure days. In that case you walk the stages of day 4 and 5 in one day and skip the overnight stay in Vytina. No other abbreviation of the tour is possible.

You may book an extension in every accommodation for extra days to spend at your own desire.



We can also book you a hotel in Athens, with optional extras like a guided city walk or bike tour, or a self-guided 'walk & eat' tour where you stop at several tavernas for an extended dinner.

The arrangement may be extended with one of our other walking or bicycle tours in Greece. We'll gladly help you with the logistics.

From Athens you may easily reach the [Cyclades](#) for one of our hiking arrangements or the [Saronic islands](#) or [Evia](#) for a bicycle tour.

For all your wishes: ask for an estimate!

About the tour region

The Menalon Trail is situated in Gortynia, the western part of the Arkadia district in the Peloponnese. The mountaineous area consists of rugged ridges, deep river valleys and gorges, plateaus and barren summits.

The Lousios river is known as the coldest of Greece and derived its name when Zeus washed himself after his birth. On the cliffs you'll see many monasteries.

The area is bordered by the rivers Ladonas in the west and Alfios in the south; Herakles used this Alfios river to clean out the Augias stables. On the slopes you'll find dense fir forests, alternated by open meadows.



The area was already inhabited in the Ancient times, as you'll see in the many temples and ruins. Famous was Gortys and the closeby Asklepion, where Asklepios himself run a religious healing centre.

Gortynia played an important role in the Independence war of 1821, when the Turkish rulers were driven away. Freedom fighter Kolokotronis was from this area and there were many water-driven gunpowder mills.

The accommodations

The comfortable accommodations provide excellent facilities and have fire places. They provide high quality local food.

Booking

Start can be on any day of the week, year round.

As the area is quite remote, we recommend to walk at least with 2 people.



The best spring period is after 20/04 until end of May. Also June, September and October are very suitable periods for this trip. July & August average temperature is 32° Celsius. It is also a great winter destination. Temperatures in December-February drop to 7-10° Celsius, with high chances of snow. In the winter time the villages are almost deserted.



Prices per person 2024

# travellers	room type	1-1 / 14-5 & 27-9 / 23-11	15-5 / 28-5 & 25-8 / 26-9	29-5 / 24-8
1 person	single	€ 1305	€ 1235	€ 1185
2 persons	double	€ 740	€ 710	€ 680
2 persons	twin	€ 770	€ 735	€ 710
2 persons	2 singles	€ 1140	€ 1065	€ 1020
3 persons	triple	€ 640	€ 610	€ 585
3 persons	double + single	€ 815	€ 770	€ 740
3 persons	twin + single	€ 830	€ 780	€ 750
3 persons	3 singles	€ 1080	€ 1010	€ 965
4 persons	quadruple	€ 585	€ 545	€ 530
4 persons	2 double	€ 645	€ 615	€ 590
4 persons	twin	€ 675	€ 645	€ 620

Note:

- Price is per person, flight excluded.
- The data apply to the start day of the tour; this date defines the price.
- From January 1st 2018 in Greece an 'overnight tax' is applicable. This tax has to be paid at check-in at your accommodation. The rates per room per night were until 2023: € 0,50 for 2*-hotels, € 1,50 for 3*-hotels, € 3,00 for 4*-hotels and € 4,00 for 5*-hotels. It seems they'll be lifted to: €1,50 for 2*-hotels, €3,00 for 3*-hotels, €7,00 for 4*-hotels and €10,00 for 5*-hotels. Tourorganisations are not allowed by law to pay this tax.

Start and end of tour: Stemnitsa c.q. Lagkadia.

Included

- 7 overnight stays on bed & breakfast basis.
- All luggage transfers according to the program.
- Detailed road book with route descriptions, background information and drawn-in maps; digital, sent by WeTransfer, to be printed by you at your own wishes.
- GPS tracks.
- Use of the Active Nav app for navigation with your smartphone.
- Original map of the region, Anadigit 1:25 000; handed over at the start of the tour at the information point or at the first accommodation.
- Dazer (small device that chases away dogs by ultrasound), rent for one week.
- Contribution to the Menalon Trail maintenance.
- A T-shirt from the Menalon Trail.



Not included

- Flight, insurances and transportation to Stemnitsa and from Lagkadia.
- Overnight tax (see above).
- Lunches, diners, drinks and other personal expenses.
- Everything else not mentioned under "included".



Optional services: prebooked taxi transfers and bus tickets

You may prebook the taxi transfers for a fixed price. The prices are per taxi up to 4 persons. (The maximum amount of persons per taxi may change due to government measures.)

- Tripoli KTEL bus station – Stemnitsa: €63
- Athens airport – Stemnitsa: €275
- Athens airport – Athens centre: €82
- Athens centre – Athens airport: €72
- Kalamata airport – Stemnitsa: €139
- Lagkadia – Stemnitsa: €58
- Lagkadia – Kalamata airport: €176
- Lagkadia – Tripoli KTEL bus station: €99
- Lagkadia – Athens airport: €275

You may prebook the bus tickets through us. The prices are per person.

- KTEL tickets Athens bus station – Tripoli, with return: €40
- KTEL tickets Athens bus station – Tripoli, one-way: €22

Flight and transfers from and to the airport

You'll fly on the airport of Athens or Kalamata (charter). The bus prices and frequency are from 2023 and may change in 2024.

- **Athens airport – Stemnitsa:** direct express bus X93 or taxi to KTEL bus station Kifissou, public bus from Kifissou to Tripoli (€16,50; appr. once per hour, 2 hours driving time), taxi to Stemnitsa. Or: taxi from the airport directly to Stemnitsa.
- **Kalamata airport – Stemnitsa:** public bus or taxi to Kalamata bus station, public bus to Tripoli (€8,90; 5x per day), taxi to Stemnitsa. Or: taxi from the airport directly to Stemnitsa.
- **Lagkadia – Athens airport:** public bus (8:00, 15:00 and 19:10) or taxi to Tripoli, public bus from Tripoli to Kifissou bus station (€16,50; appr. once per hour, 2 hours driving time), direct express bus X93 or taxi to airport. Or: taxi from Lagkadia directly to the airport.
- **Lagkadia – Kalamata airport:** public bus (8:00, 15:00 and 19:10) or taxi to Tripoli, public bus from Tripoli to Kalamata bus station (€8,90; 5x per day), public bus or taxi to airport. Or: taxi from Lagkadia directly to the airport.
- **Per (rental) car:** you may rent a car on the airport. You drive to Lagkadia and leave the car in the parking of the hotel of your last overnight stay. From there you take a taxi to Stemnitsa. After the tour you collect your car and drive to the airport or your next holiday destination.

Luggage

You carry a day pack with water, lunch, warm and rainproof clothing, possibly swimming gear, items for personal care, binoculars/camera etc.

The remaining luggage is transferred to the next accommodation.

In the road book you'll find a list with essential and advised items.





Day to day program

(Note: the scale differs per day!)

Note: walking times mentioned are net times without breaks.

Day 1: To Stemnitsa (MT-A)

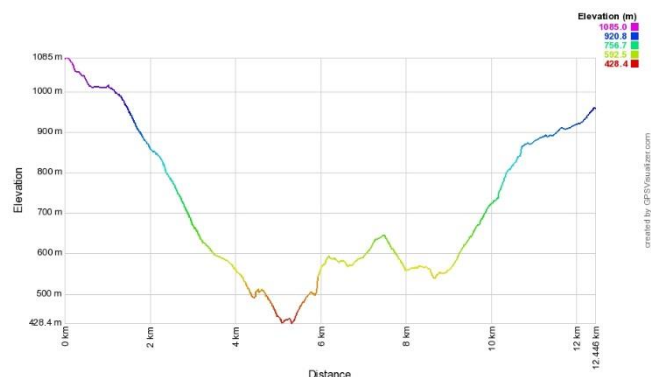


Arrival in Stemnitsa from Athens or Kalamata airport. You may visit the Menalon trail office in the central square of Stemnitsa for a briefing.

Stemnitsa is traditionally the village of goldsmiths and still houses the Stemnitsa's Silver and Goldsmith School. There is also a nice folk museum.

overnight stay: Stemnitsa

Day 2: From Stemnitsa along the Lousios gorge to Dimitsana (MT-01/GR00158)



Departing from Stemnitsa the path zigzags down into the valley and via an old mule track you reach the Prodomos Monastery hanging on the high cliffs. After a visit, you continue the path that traverses the gorge. You may ascend to the Old Philosophou Monastery dating back to 963 before continuing to the New Philosophou Monastery that was founded in 1691.

Through lush vegetation you ascend via the left bank of the Lousios River towards Dimitsana. Via the Tzani bridge you go across the river and come to the very interesting Open Air Water Power Museum. Nearby you find watermills and gun powder mills, that made the fame and wealth of Dimitsana, a town built on the ruins of ancient Theftis.

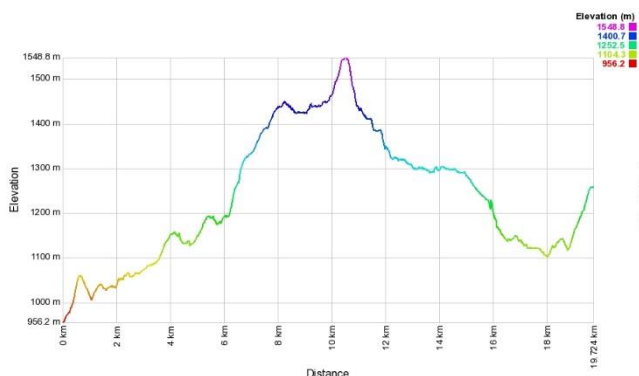
walking time/distance: 5h / 13.0km

ascent/descent: 780m / 910m

overnight stay: Dimitsana



Day 3: From Dimitsana via Zygovisti to Elati (MT-02/GR00159)



The section Dimitsana-Zygovisti ascends from the Lousios valley to the outskirts of the fir forest. The footpath ascends gently. From the church of St. Paraskevi you will enjoy splendid views of the median basin of Lousios river with the settlements of Dimitsana, Paliochori and Zatouna standing out in the wooded landscape.

You continue via footpaths and dirt roads through old agricultural fields with remarkable threshing floors. Zygovisti played an important role in the Greek independence war of 1821. There is a big Memorial dedicated to this fact.

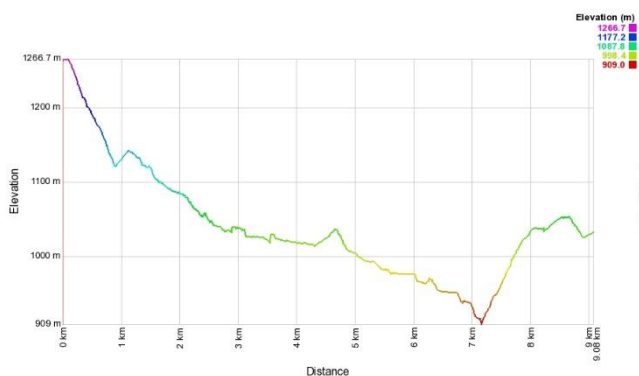
After a break at the local café the route continues and straddles the Western Menalon massif. First through a beautiful ravine to the country church of Agios Georgios and the adjacent spring. Then the tracks goes uphill through dense forests until the saddle from where you can optionally ascend the Pliovouni summit of 1643m, the highest peak of this route. After this demanding section, you descend via small roads and paths, along fountains and chapels, to the mountain settlement of Elati.

walking time/distance: 7h / 19.5km

ascent/descent: 1215m / 995m

overnight stay: Elati

Day 4: From Elati along springs and the Mylaon river to Vytina (MT-03/GR00160)



You may visit the woodcraft workshop before descending from Elati to the riverbed of the Mylaon River. You come past the Pirkaki Springs that supply Vytina with water and then the stone built Makrinou Fountain, a nice place for a short break.

Further along the river the vegetation becomes even more rich with high plane trees. You come past abandoned watermills and across a nice wooden bridge. Then you leave the valley and zigzag uphill via a path carved in rock to the Artotsi Fountain. Nearby is the Agia Paraskevi church from which you have great views over the valley and mountain. Via small



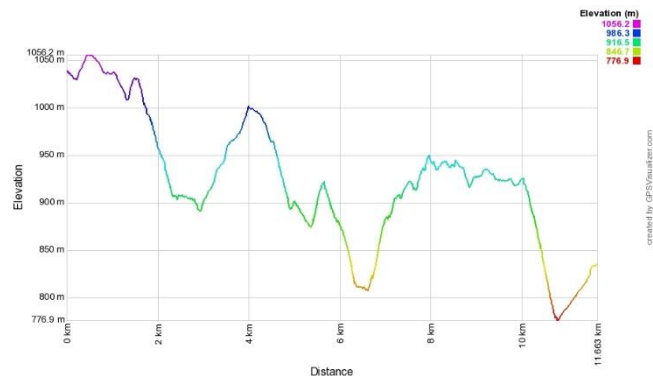
roads you reach Vytina. Serving as the center village of the region, it offers all facilities and nice local food.

walking time/distance: 3h / 9.0km

ascent/descent: 350m / 500m

overnight stay: Vytina

Day 5: From Vytina past the Zarzi bridge to Nymfasia (MT-04/GR00161)



From Vytina you head back to the Artotsi Fountain and descend via a zigzagging path into the valley of the Mylaon River. At the pretty wooden bridge, you now follow the river in northern direction. In the area called Zarzi, you see the very beautiful single-arch bridge of Zarzi with 2 relieving openings on the sides. The path takes you along a peculiar shaped limestone pillar.

Gradually you ascend and come to Old Vytina. Here you are back on the Menalon Trail that leads you to Mavra Litharia, a massive limestone boulder in the riverbed of the Mylaon River, thus creating an impressive gorge. You come to a second stone bridge that once secured the connection between Vytina and the western Gortynian villages.

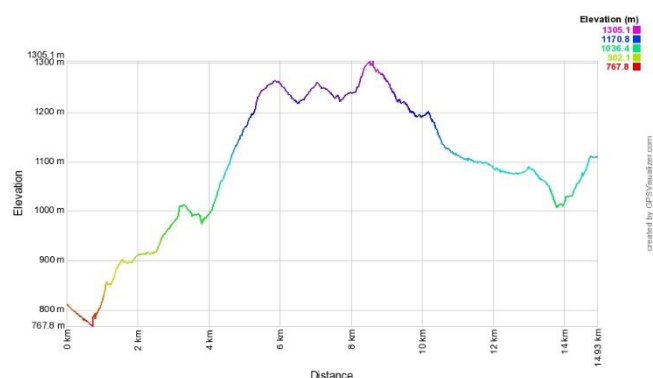
The trail descends to a short gorge before ascending gently through a rock-and-shrub landscape. Leading through oak and spruce forests, the trail descends to Nymfasia, a small village. You follow the route towards Kernitsas Monastery and just before the monastery head to your accommodation.

walking time/distance: 4h / 11.9km

ascent/descent: 280m / 480m

overnight stay: Nymfasia

Day 6: From Nymfasia via Magoulia to Valtessiniko (MT-05/GR00162)



You walk to the Kernitsa Bridge and ascend via a steep path to the Kernitsas Monastery, a big monastic complex surrounded by well-maintained terraced fields. After a visit you cross a



dense fir forest and arrive at the Sfyrida Hermitage with a spring in front. Imagine how ascetes must have isolated themselves from the community in this mystic atmosphere.

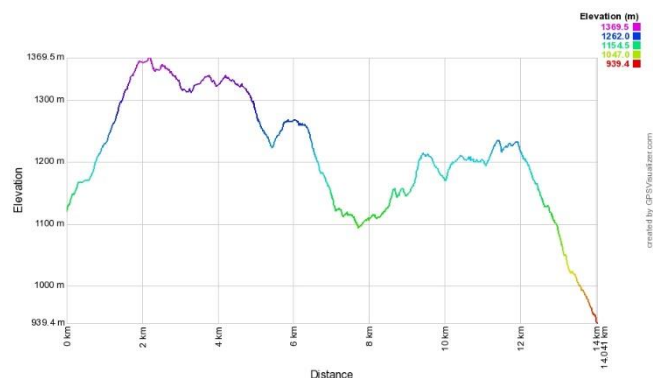
You traverse the foot of the long steep slope of Kastro. An old pathway leads you along the Gavros Spring. You enter the small settlement of Magoulia where you may find a tavern or café. Leaving Magoulia behind, you come to a point of splendid views, surrounded by stone built threshing floors. You descend toward the old sanatorium, known as the Mana Sanatorium. A good path leads you in a gradual ascend to the nice village Valtessiniko. In the center of this village, well-known for its woodcarvers, there are many nice taverns to choose from for your evening meal.

walking time/distance: 5h30' / 15.0km

ascent/descent: 690m / 410m

overnight stay: Valtessiniko

Day 7: From Valtessiniko to Lagkadia (MT-06/GR00163)



From the upper peripheral road of Valtessiniko Village, we have splendid views over the northern plains. Via a cement road you walk up to 1250 meter. Via a footpath you walk along the ridge where the Byzantine Fortress of Valtessiniko is nested. Then you descend through open landscape with stunning views until the church of Agia Triada.

The route now traverses an extensive fir forest and you gain some altitude before going down again until the Krya Vrysi fountain. You ascend the path to the saddle and then, finally, on the western edge of this zone, you will see Lagkadia ahead. Through fields and along a small spring you come to the outskirts of Lagkadia where the Rapi Watermills are situated.

The Menalon Trail ends in the center of Lagkadia, the village of the stone builders.

walking time/distance: 5h / 14.3km

ascent/descent: 450m / 600m

overnight stay: Lagkadia



Day 8: Departure from Arkadia (MT-V)



After breakfast your arrangement comes to an end. Travel to Athens or Kalamata Airport.