

AnnaHiking

Active holidays in Greece

www.annahiking.nl

**Pilion – self-guided:
10-day trekking along the ‘silk route’ on the
central Pilion peninsula 2023 (SPWT213I)**

May be extended with more hiking and/or free days.



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

(6-1-2023)



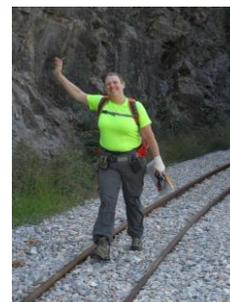
About AnnaHiking

In 1991 we visited Greece for the first time and have lived here permanently since 2009. 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.

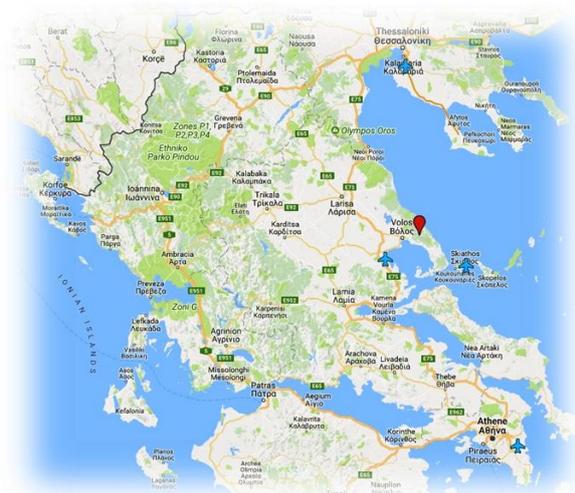
Many people are familiar with the Greek “islands with beautiful beaches”. The Pilion peninsula certainly boasts wonderful beaches, and also offers gurgling streams and waterfalls, old paved mule paths (‘kaldermimia’), classical mansions glued to the slopes and warm-hearted and hospitable people.

We’d love to introduce you to this side of Greece!

We explored several hiking routes and described them in detail. We regularly revise the routes and the description where necessary. As an individual traveller we offer you these descriptions together with GPS-tracks and marked detailed maps, so you can find your way easily. We also offer you an information package with background information, tips for the best meals and several other useful trivia.



The tour location



General tour information

You’ll be taken to Portaria where the trekking starts. Every day you walk to the next location (luggage is transferred), but you may extend your holiday with more overnight stays per accommodation. From several locations we offer more (circular) walks, see ‘Possible extensions/alterations/abbreviations’. You may also add extra days to take a rest or to relax on the beach.

Net mean walking time is 4 hours (that is excluding breaks).

You often walk on wide ‘kalderimia’ (historical mule paths), sometimes on dirt roads, sometimes on small and possibly overgrown paths. In the description you’ll find the details so you can adapt your clothes and equipment accordingly. The routes are signposted and show on the hiking map; the path maintenance is sufficient.





We advise you to start the trip trained and fit with well worn-in ankle-high hiking boots. Good shoes enable you to walk without worries about your feet so that you can fully enjoy the surroundings.

The tour is for people who like a moderate level trekking and enjoy sea views while walking.

Possible extensions/alterations/abbreviations

1. We offer extra walks from various locations, see [Possible extra walks for extended stay](#).
2. For a beach extension are most suitable: Agios Ioannis (the accommodation is situated on a wide sandy beach) and Kala Nera (lovely village and nice beach). From Kala Nera you may make a trip with the tourist train from Lechonia to Milies v.v.; transfers by public bus or taxi.
3. Agria is not much of a sight itself, but offers a regular bus connection with Volos, a lively harbour town with an excellent archeologic museum.
4. You may extend your stay on the Sporades islands; daily boats sail from Volos to Skiathos, Skopelos and Alonissos. Walks can be made on the islands, travel bookshops offer various guides.
5. Finally you can combine the arrangement with (parts of) [other tours we offer elsewhere in Greece](#). We'll gladly help you with the logistics.



For all your wishes: ask for advice and an estimate!

About the Pilion

The Pilion peninsula is curled around the Pegasitic Gulf. The sloping coastline along this bay offers lots of sandy beaches and charming villages. The coastline on the outer side, towards the Egean Sea, is more rough and consists of cliffs with hidden beaches and inlets.

A mountain range transverses the peninsula, with mysterious forests and gurgling streams. You may well imagine the roaming Centaurs, coarse creatures with a male torso on a horse's body. A rare friendly centaur was Chiron, founder of surgery and teacher of Jason and Aesculapios. One of the walks brings you to the magical spot where he supposedly stayed.

The most important town is **Volos**, sixth in size, with its harbour, train connections to Thessaloniki and (with change of trains) Athens, and an airport (Nea Anchialos). Mythologically the town is renowned for Jason and the Argonauts.



The riches of the Pilion derive from more than 200 traditional workshops that were situated in many villages, especially in the ages 1750-1850. Just like in the rest of Greece olives, wine grapes, fruit and cotton was grown. Characteristic for the Pilion though was the **silk industry**. Here the silkworms were bred and the silk harvested and processed: silk cloth was one of the main products of the Pilion in the 18th and 19th century. In Ano Lechonia still stands the building of the Kokkosli brothers, that functioned from 1860



to 1910 and where during the season 200 girls were working at waterpower-driven reels. In the higher villages, where agriculture was not easy, the women weaved the silk into cloth. Some 600-800 looms were active then and the women made a good living.

The Pilion has always been renowned for its excellent red **apples**, especially from the surroundings of Zagora, where also the apple processing factory Zagorin is situated.



The narrow track **train** that used to start in Volos connected the villages Agria, Ano Lechonia (1896) and Milies (1903) with the main town. The hinterland that until then only knew mule paths thus gained a connection to the town, which enhanced trade and wealth. Nowadays it runs from Ano Lechonia to Milies as a tourist train, first steam-operated, later diesel. In its steam days it was called 'Moudzouri', 'sooty'.



On the peninsula you'll find many historical connecting paths and kalderimia (paved mule paths). Ever more organisations started clearing, maintaining and waymarking these paths. One of the most active volunteer organisations is the **Friends of the Kalderimi**, which is supported by AnnaHiking with a contribution for every hiker that books through us.

The accommodations

You'll stay in small-scale family-run which we specifically chose for their quiet and lovely location in mountain villages or near the beach. Only in Kala Nera the standard accommodation is situated on the waterfront which may be crowded in high season (mid July until end of August).



The accommodations in Agios Ioannis, Kala Nera and Agria are situated on or near the beach. The other accommodations are in mountain villages. The hotel in Milies offers a swimming pool.



On some locations we also offer a bit more luxury accommodation, often with swimming pool; ask for an estimate if you want to use these.

Bookable

The arrangement can be booked in the period from 21 April until 20 July and from 1 September until 20 October. The dates around May 1st and Greek Pentecost (4-5 June) are often fully booked with Greek tourists, so for these dates you have to make your reservations well in advance.



Prices per person 2023

# travellers	room type	21-4 / 30-6 1-9 / 20-10	1-7 / 20-7
solo	single	€ 1470	€ 1505
2 pax	2x single	€ 1085	€ 1120
2 pax	double/twin	€ 865	€ 880
3 pax	double/twin + single	€ 810	€ 830
3 pax	triple	€ 700	€ 720
4 pax	2x double/twin	€ 670	€ 685

Note:

- Price is per person, flight excluded.
- For other group sizes, contact us for an estimate.
- In some villages alternative, more luxury, accommodation is available at a surcharge. Ask for an estimate.
- The dates apply to your tour period, not the departure day! If your tour is within more periods, the price will be calculated according to the amount of days in the respective periods.
- 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 are: € 0,50 for 2*-hotels, € 1,50 for 3*-hotels, € 3,00 for 4*-hotels and € 4,00 for 5*-hotels.

Start and finish

Volos harbour or bus station.

Included

- 9 overnight stays including breakfast.
- All transfers and luggage transports according to the program.
- A hiking map of the tour area; sent by post. If you live within the European Union we'll send it to your home address, otherwise the package will wait for you in the first accommodation.
- GPS-tracks, detailed route descriptions and marked maps of each walk according to the program; digital, sent by WeTransfer, to be printed by you at your own wishes.
- Information package with background information and information about catering, shops and facilities; digital, sent by WeTransfer, to be printed by you at your own wishes.
- Subsidy to the Friends of the Kalderimi for paths maintenance.
- Reservation costs and telephone support.

Not included

- Flight, transfer to Volos. You may prebook a taxi (see Optional extras) or you may charter your own taxi on arrival at the airport.
- Overnight tax (€0,50-€3 per room per night).
- Lunches, diner, drinks and other personal expenses.
- Insurances.
- Transfers not mentioned in the program.
- Everything else not mentioned under "included".



Optional extras (prebooked)

You may be taken from or to the airport of Thessaloniki or Nea Anchialos (Volos). The price is per taxi, until 3 persons per taxi (or as many as allowed by the government).

- Airport Nea Anchialos – Volos: €50 one way
- Airport Thessaloniki – Volos: €250 one way

Flight and transportation to Volos

For charter flights to Volos please look on the Internet; EasyJet offers some flights from the UK.

Easy to find are flights to Thessaloniki or Athens, from there take the public bus to Volos. The seats can be booked in advance through internet.

Read more in our document [Pilion logistics](#).

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.

Before departure we send you a list with essential and advised items.





Day to day program

(You can download the elevation profiles separately.)

Note: walking times mentioned are net times without breaks.

Day 1: Arrival, transfer to Portaria



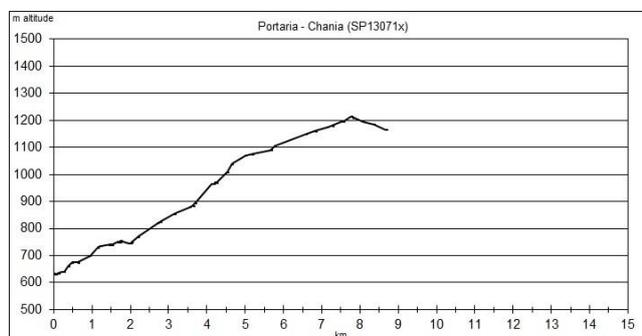
You travel to Volos from where a taxi will bring you to Portaria.

Portaria has a lovely square, shadowed by plane trees. In the village you'll find some beautiful churches, various shops and lots of cafés and tavernas.

In Portaria you may extend your stay for a circular walk along Makrinitsa and the Centaur Path.

overnight stay: Portaria

Day 2: From Portaria to Chania (SP13071x)



You'll leave Portaria by old kalderimia with splendid views over Volos and the bay (the Pagasitic Gulf). You keep ascending by kalderimia, forest routes and mountain paths. You end up in Chania, a wintersports village and one of the highest in the Pilion on the mountain range that runs along the peninsula.

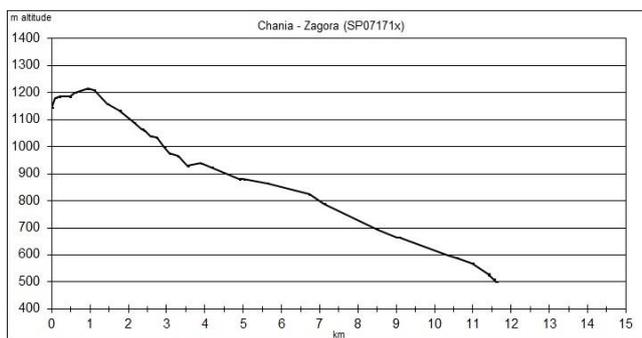
walking time/distance: 4h / 9.1km

ascent/descent: 615m / 65m

overnight stay: Chania



Day 3: From Chania to Zagora (SP07171x)



You'll leave Chania by kalderimia through dense beech forest. You descend by paths and country roads along apple orchards with regularly splendid views over the Egean Sea on the north side of the Pilion. When you've reached Zagora you descend the last part by a path until you've reached your accommodation.

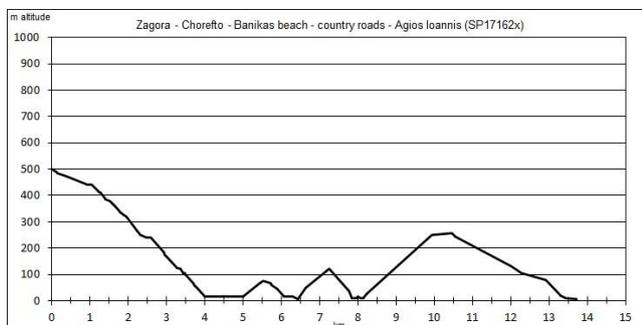
Zagora is the place where the red Pilion apples are harvested and processed. The village consists of some kernels with their own church which names the kernel. You'll stay in Agia Kyriaki, a lively village with several shops and tavernas.

walking time/distance: 3h20' / 11.2km

ascent/descent: 40m / 725m

overnight stay: Zagora-Agia Kyriaki

Day 4: From Zagora to Agios Ioannis (SP17162x)



From Zagora you descend into the fisherman's village Chorefto, past the apple processing factory Zagorin. There are places to eat in Chorefto. You walk along the sandy beach to the little harbour and start your ascent. The north-east coast is full of steep cliffs, so you'll have to pass several heights to come to the next beach.

Banikas consists of two pebble beaches with a stream in between. Past the second beach you'll ascend again by country roads and then descend until you're near the beach of Agios Ioannis. A lovely spot for an extension on the splendid sandy beach!

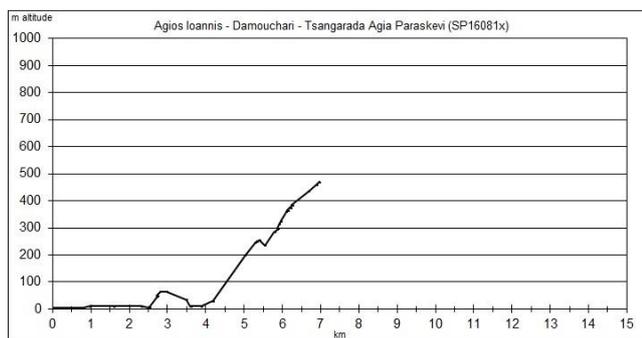
walking time/distance: 4h20' / 13.7km

ascent/descent: 425m / 920m

overnight stay: Agios Ioannis



Day 5: From Agios Ioannis via Damouchari to Tsangarada (SP16011x)



You start along Agios Ioannis beach and Papa Nero beach, then a short ascent and descent to the charming harbour of Damouchari. Here the film ‘Mama Mia’ was recorded; the beach house of Meryl Streep was on this bay. In the harbour various cafes beckon you and the sandy beach invites you to a swim.

From Damouchari a splendid and flowery kalderimi sharply ascends directly into Agia Kyriaki and finally Agia Paraskevi, both kernels of the village Tsangarada. On Agia Paraskevi square you’ll find the ‘thousand-year old plane tree’, the oldest and thickest of Greece. The accommodation is close to the square.

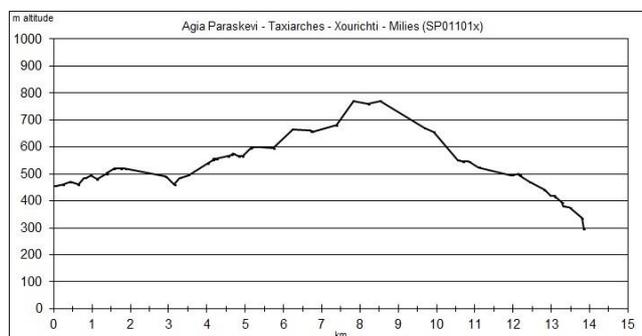
From Tsangarada you may make a circular walk when you extend your stay.

walking time/distance: 3h15’ / 7.2km

ascent/descent: 570m / 85m

overnight stay: Tsangarada-Agia Paraskevi

Day 6: From Tsangarada over the mountain ridge to Milies (SP01101x)



You walk through Tsangarada to Taxiarches, the third kernel. From there you cross a stream by an old arched bridge and start your ascent to the mountain ridge. Suddenly you see the sea on the other side: the Pagasitic Gulf. By chestnut forests you descend into Milies.

Your overnight location is close to the station where the train from Ano Lechonia ends. Nowadays it’s a tourist attraction, but in the prime time of silk trade it was a main connection along the villages that were not connected by roads.



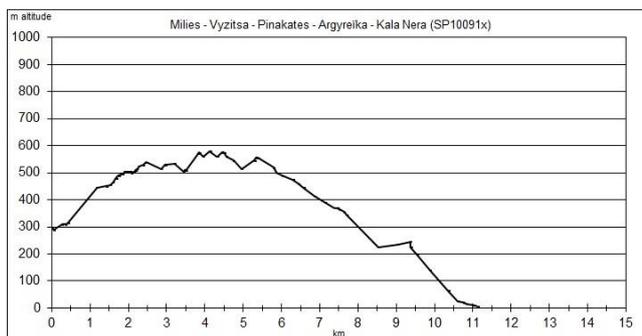
walking time/distance: 4h40’ / 14.1km

ascent/descent: 440m / 610m

overnight stay: Milies



Day 7: From Milies to Kala Nera (SP10091x)

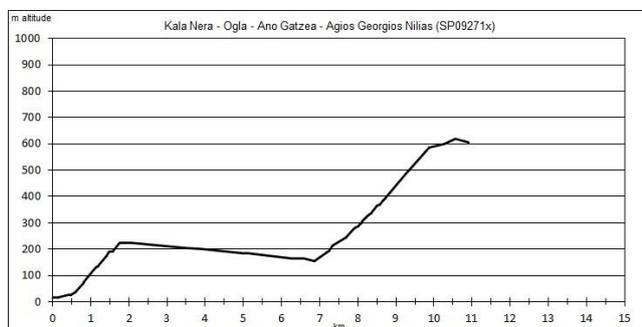


From Milies you ascend to Vyzitsa along the cave of the centaur Chiron. In Vyzitsa you'll find lots of splendid classic mansions giving evidence of past wealth. Also the next village Pinakates hosts lots of these mansions.

After both villages you descend by lovely paths and kalderimia towards the coast. You walk a small stretch of the railroad track coming from Milies and then descend further along the hamlet Argyreika to Kala Nera, 'good waters'. The village is situated next to a lovely beach and has a charming little harbour where freshly caught fish is traded every morning.

walking time/distance: 4h15' / 11.2km
 ascent/descent: 400m / 705m
 overnight stay: Kala Nera

Day 8: From Kala Nera to Agios Georgios Nilias (SP09271x)



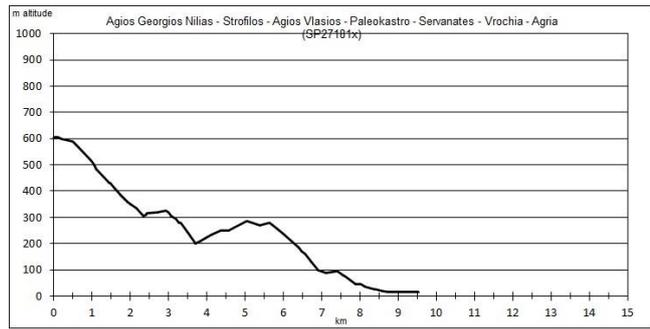
First you ascend from Kala Nera to the railroad track and then follow the track from Ogla to Ano Gatztea. At Ano Gatztea station is a café and the Olive Press museum (museum only opens when train stops). After the station you'll leave the railroad track and ascend through olive groves to Agios Georgios Nilias. On the square you'll find the museum of the sculptor Nicolas. The last part to Agios Vlasios is mostly downhill.

In the standard trip you'll be transferred back to Kala Nera by taxi. You may overnight in Agios Georgios Nilias; ask for an estimate (different room types).

walking time/distance: 3h35' / 10.9km
 ascent/descent: 675m / 85m
 overnight stay: Kala Nera



Day 9: From Agios Georgios Nilias to Agria (SP27181x)



You start in Agios Georgios Nilias with a descent to Agios Vlasios, with its lovely church square with some cafes. From Agios Vlasios you walk by old kalderimia through olive groves to Agria, a cosy suburb of Volos. There is a fisherman’s harbour, a small beach and lots of cafes and tavernas.

From Agria you may easily take the public bus to Volos to enjoy some culture at the lovely small archeological museum, to shop and to relax at the waterfront near the statue of Jason and the Argonauts. Agria is also a good spot for an extension of your holiday.

walking time/distance: 3h10' / 9.5km

ascent/descent: 120m / 710m

overnight stay: Agria

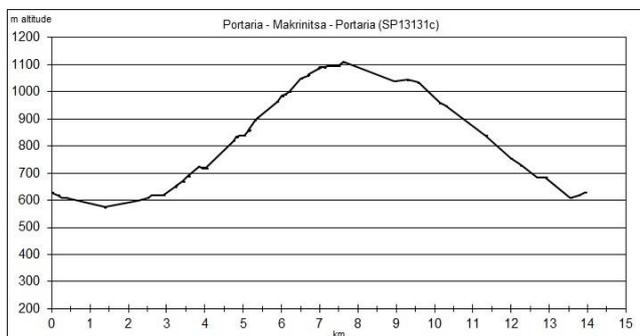
Day 10: Departure

You are brought back to Volos for your return trip.



Possible extra walks for extended stay

From Portaria: Circular walk Makrinitza and the Centaur fairy dale 1 (SP13131c)



You follow the asphalt road to Makrinitza (you may also take the public bus). This village is spread along the slope: 300 altimeters difference between the lower and the higher houses! You walk next to the gutter of three-storey houses that stands in the street below you. The square is a picture with the big plane tree, view over Volos and the Pegasitic Gulf, a lovely ethnographic museum, an old chapel and a marble fountain.

Having taken this all in you walk uphill through Makrinitza along the Agia Panagia monastery with the quiet courtyard. Then through a semi-derelict hamlet and forest until you reach Agia Paraskevi Chapel: another old monastery, in process of restauration. You keep ascending through forest and flowery meadows until you reach the dirt road on the saddle. From there it's downhill again by dirt roads with splendid views until you reach the asphalt road.

You follow the asphalt for a couple of hundred meters and then a surprises springs upon you: the Centaur path through a fairy dale. Along gurgling streams with cute wooden bridges you walk back to Portaria square.

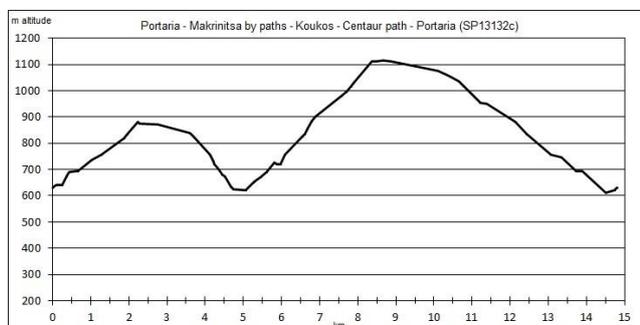


walking time/distance: 4h30' / 12.6km

ascent/descent: 565m

overnight stay: Portaria

From Portaria: Circular walk Makrinitza and the Centaur fairy dale 2 (SP13131c)



You ascend through the village Portaria towards the higher asphalt road. After 370m you leave the asphalt for a path that crosses the valley and the river 'Mega Rema' ('Big Stream'). Past the stream you ascend until you'll meet the a kalderimi with red-white markings of the



Ultra Pelion Trail; here you go left towards Makrinitza, but you may shorten your route and go directly right towards the Agia Paraskevi monastery (1h15', 2½km and 200m ascent/descent less).

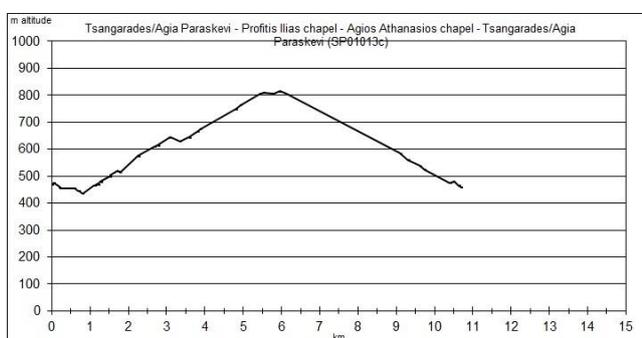
In Makrinitza you ascend through the widespread village. By forest paths, partly on the same red-white marked kalderimi, you ascend to the Agia Paraskevi (patron the saint of the eyes) monastery and chapel, a lovely spot for a break near the spring. You proceed by more ascending forest paths to the highest point and then descend by country roads: lovely views over Volos bay. The last stretch takes you through a fairy dale by the "Centaur path".

walking time/distance: 5h45' / 14.8km

ascent/descent: 770m

overnight stay: Portaria

From Tsangarada: Circular walk along the Profitis Ilias and Agios Athanasios chapels (SP01013c)



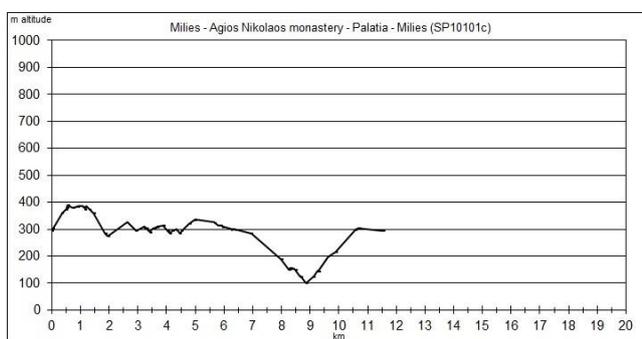
An easy circular walk through Agia Paraskevi village and along the Profitis Ilias and Agios Athanasios “in Atho” chapels. You walk east of the village with alternating views on the forest slopes and the sea.

walking time/distance: 3h40' / 9.3km

ascent/descent: 385m

overnight stay: Tsangarada-Agia Paraskevi

From Milies: Circular walk along the Agios Nikolaos monastery and Palatia (SP10101c)



From Milies you walk east on the foresty slopes to the old Agios Nikolaos monastery: a lovely stopping place with great views. You descend through the woods until you reach a country road which leads west again to the hamlet Palatia. The name means ‘palaces’, you wonder hence it came...



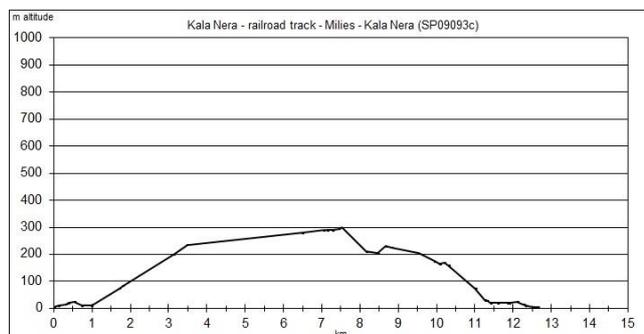
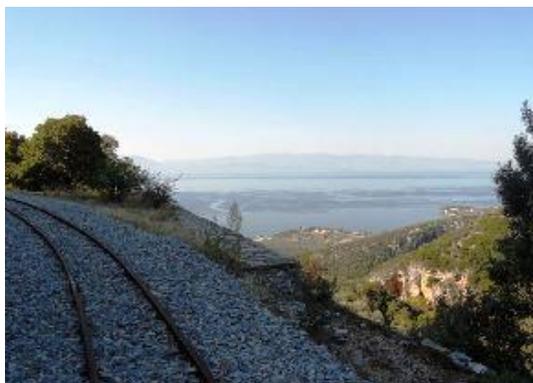
You descend further to a stream valley with a little arched bridge and then you ascend again by paths and kalderimia through olive groves back to Milies

walking time/distance: 4h / 11.15km

ascent/descent: 440m

overnight stay: Milies

From Kala Nera: Circular walk railroad track and Milies (SP09093c)



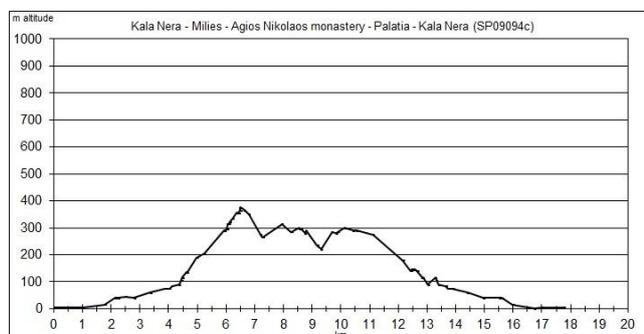
From Kala Nera you ascend gradually by dirt roads until you reach the railroad track. In the weekends this is in use by a small train from Kato Lechonia to Milies. The easy walk along the track gives you ample opportunity to enjoy the views and the flowers. You follow the track to Milies. After a break you descend by olive groves back to Kala Nera.

walking time/distance: 4h / 12.6km

ascent/descent: 345m

overnight stay: Kala Nera

From Kala Nera: Circular walk Milies and the Agios Nikolaos monastery (SP09094c)



You walk by paths and kalderimia from Kala Nera to Milies through a small stream valley and olive groves. From Milies you continue east on the foresty slopes to the old Agios Nikolaos monastery: a lovely stopping place with great views. You descend through the woods until you reach a country road which leads west again to the hamlet Palatia. The name means ‘palaces’, you wonder hence it came... Back to the stream valley and by the same route back to Kala Nera.

You may also take the public bus to Kala Nera and start your hike there.

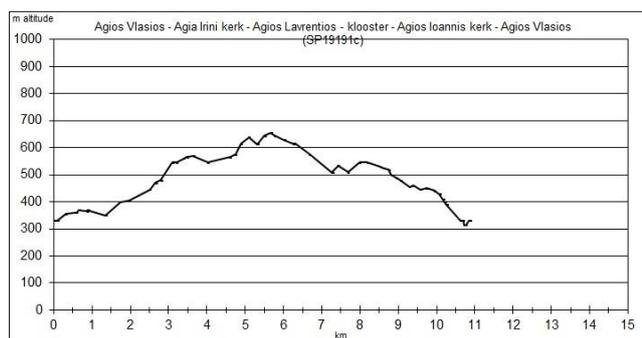
walking time/distance: 5h45' / 16.9km

ascent/descent: 575m

overnight stay: Kala Nera



From Agios Vlasios: Circular walk to Agios Lavrentios (SP19191c)



From Agios Vlasios you ascend by country roads along the cemetery to the Agia Irini chapel and cross the bridge. After the bridge a narrow forest path ascends further until you reach an old country road which you follow almost flat until the asphalt road. After a small stretch of asphalt you meet another path ascending to the Profitis Ilias chapel. From there you follow country roads until you reach Agios Lavrentios with lots of (good) tavernas.

In the village you may visit the Agios Lavrentios monastery (daily open 9.00-12.30 and 16.00-17.30, decent clothing compulsory). Then you leave the village and start your descent towards the Agios Ioannis chapel. Through ever more opening terrain you descend further back to Agios Vlasios village.

walking time/distance: 4h / 10.9km

ascent/descent: 485m

overnight stay: Agios Vlasios