



Pocket guide



Tour Packages of the mainland of Chalkidiki



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Organization For Local Development

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PACKAGES



Informations about the area



The Regional Unit of Chalkidiki occupies most of the homonymous peninsula of Macedonia. Its main body ends in three smaller peninsulas: those of Kassandra, Sithonia and Mount Athos. In the north, it borders with the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki, whereas in the west it is washed by the Thermaic Gulf. In the south, it is washed by the Aegean Sea, and in the east by the Strymonian Gulf and the Thracian Sea. Its area is 2,918 km² and its capital is the town of Polygyros.

Dense forests of pine trees, oaks, chestnut trees, popular mountain massifs (such as Holomontas and Mount Athos), mountain meadows, and breathtaking landscapes of natural beauty that combine mountains and sea, designated protected areas based on national and international legislation, areas included in the NATURA 2000 network, gastronomic resources and infrastructure, important archaeological sites and monuments, an

extensive coastline and the largest number of Blue Flag beaches in Greece, all constitute the destination “Chalkidiki”.

The Autonomous Monastic State of Mount Athos is a self-governing part of the Greek state located on the Athos Peninsula, the easternmost of the three peninsulas of Chalkidiki. It is the 2nd most important religious site of Orthodox Christians - after Jerusalem - and includes 20 Holy Monasteries, shops and services. Visits are only allowed to men according to the Constitutional State Charter, which are held annually, and throughout the year by faithful from all over the world, constituting, thus, a particularly popular religious destination. In 1988, it was included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO, while the peninsula is also recognized as a landscape of artistic value. In addition to its great cultural value, the Athonite state, has a pristine and uniquely beautiful natural environment with a wide variety of plants (1 200 species) and a mosaic of vegetation of various types.

In the area where the Development Association of Chalkidiki S.A. operates, in the “entrance” of Mount Athos, there is a particular wealth of cultural heritage, local architecture and natural beauty, with limited, yet, exploitation and interconnection with its tourist product. The promotion and exploitation of natural and cultural resources available in less developed areas, with mainland Chalkidiki as a reference point, constitutes a key objective and priority of the Development Association of Chalkidiki S.A., which is also reflected in its Local Development Strategy.

A couple of words for this guide

The guide includes two (2) "Route Packages" of four (4) days each (the 4th day is common to both packages) that can be followed as a whole from the first to the last day but also individually as day trips, depending on your starting point. The holiday packages are addressed at a wide range of travelers: individuals or groups (indicative: couples, families with or without children, friends, partners, etc.).

It also provides some additional information on: points of interest included in the routes, the opening hours of museums and archaeological sites, the climate of the area, festivals & events that take place throughout the year, local products and the gastronomy of the area. It is nevertheless recommended to search the internet for the above information to confirm, as the hours could be subject to change.

The routes that are proposed basically cover part of mainland Chalkidiki. However, they also include suggestions for activities in coastal areas so that, on the one hand, all tastes are covered and on the other hand a complete picture of the area is provided.

PACKAGE A

Day 1

Ag. Anastasia | Ag. Prodomos | Geroplatanos | Arnea

Day 2

Arnea | Megali Panagia | Stageira

Day 3

Varvara | Olympiada (Ancient Stageira) | Stratoni | Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

Day 4

Ouranoupoli | Zygou Monastery | Tripiti | Ammouliani



In Chalkidiki, there are numerous archaeological sites, monuments, museums as well as an important historical context overall (Aristotle, Alexander the Great).

Day 1

Agia Anastasia | Galatista | Vavdos | Polygyros

Day 2

Historical center of Polygyros | Taxiarchis | Olynthos

Day 3

Ormylia | Metagitsi | Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

Day 4

Ouranoupoli | Zygou Monastery | Tripiti | Ammouliani

PACKAGE B

1a

Day 1
Agia Anastasia
Agios Prodromos
Geroplatanos
Arnea

2a

Day 2
Arnea
Megali Panagia
Stageira

3a

Day 3
Varvara
Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4a

Day 4
Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani



Day 1
PACKAGE A

Agia Anastasia

Agios Prodomos
Geroplatanos
Arnea

When you start your tour in Chalkidiki, you can visit the Monastery of **Saint Anastasia** (Pharmacolytria). The Monastery is one of the most important and historical Monasteries in Macedonia. Walk inside and admire its splendor

After that, at a distance of 20', you have the possibility to visit **Agios Prodomos** at the foothills of Mount Cholomontas, a village particularly popular for its 'souvlaki' - skewers of local meat - as many of its inhabitants are involved in animal husbandry. Before you sit down for dinner, walk around its picturesque square, admire the Resetnikioti (or Olynthio) river that flows through the town and visit the post-Byzantine chapel of Agios Prodomos. Other than the Souvlaki, don't miss to try the local sweets and honey.

Agia Anastasia
Agios Prodomos
Geroplatanos
Arnea



After you have completed your walk in Agios Prodomos, drive for about 10 minutes to **Geroplatanos**. The settlement is named after a century old plane tree located in the square of the village, and it is rightly one of the most important sights in the area. The tree is very impressive because of its size and its age, which is estimated to be up to 800 years old. It is 20 metres high, and its trunk has a circumference of 15 metres, whereas there is a spring at its root. It is considered one of the largest plane trees in Greece and has been declared a protected natural monument¹.

To complete the 1st day, at a distance of 20' from Geroplatanos, you reach **Arnea**, where you can spend the night.

Agia Anastasia
Agios Prodomos
Geroplatanos
Arnea

¹ Preserved natural monuments are called protected natural areas according to Legislative Decree 86 of 1969 as amended by Legislative Decree 996 of 1971 and replaced by Law 998/1979. They are public or private areas that have natural characteristics of great ecological value.

1a

Day 1
Agia Anastasia
Agios Prodromos
Geroplanos
Arnea

2a

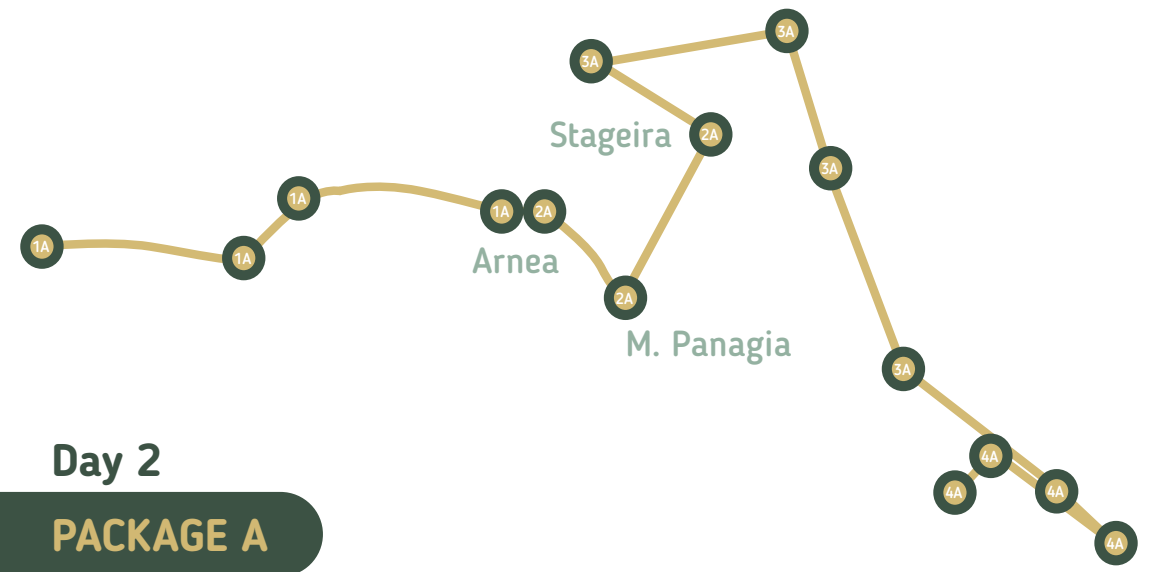
Day 2
Arnea
Megali Panagia
Stageira

3a

Day 3
Varvara
Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4a

Day 4
Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani



Arnea is one of the most beautiful mountainous areas in the villages of Macedonia; built in a privileged position, with plenty of running water coming from the mountains, and surrounded by lush green forests.

*In the context of the implementation of the Transnational Cult In Tour Programme, there took place a school competition between the high schools of the area (February 2023), in which the students of the Arnea High School highlighted their settlement as a cultural, historical and environmental point of interest - a point of excellence, that can contribute to the upgrading and promotion of the tourist product of the hinterland of the Chalkidiki Region. In particular, the following stand out as special points of the area: The folklore museum, the temple of Agios Stefanos, the temple of Agioi Anargyroi, the primary school, the fountain in the small square with the picturesque flower shop and the revival of the "Koutsmanos", which has its roots in the Turkish yoke.



Arnea Megali Panagia Stageira



Blankets, wall carpets, tablecloths, kilims, and rugs with elaborate designs along with tools - are some of the exhibits presented in the textile museum of Arnea. At the museum, the traditional method of dyeing is presented, using colors of plant origin from mulberries, shells from walnuts, peels from onions, and beetroots.

What you can do in the most beautiful village of Chalkidiki

- » You can walk around the settlement and get informed about its rich history. The local people and the President of the Community are willing to offer you a guided tour.
- » You can enjoy a coffee or a meal at Aristotelous Square which features modern and traditional cafes and catering facilities.
- » You can visit the church of Agios Stefanos, parts of the floor of which are made of glass so that you can admire antiquities of priceless historical value that were discovered after work carried out following the catastrophic fire of the church in 2005.
- » You can visit the Historical and Folklore Museum and the Museum of Weaving.

» You can walk in the grove of Agia Paraskevi located about 1km away north of the settlement and is full of oak trees. You can also have a picnic as there are tables and an enjoyable shade offered by the dense foliage of the trees.

» You can taste the popular local products of the area: honey, wine, moudovina (PGI), trachana, traditional noodles (chilopites), spoon sweets and jams.

» You can visit the largest winery open to the public (about 10 minutes from Arnea, at Stano) and taste local and foreign wine varieties grown in the area.

Useful Tips

ARNEA

Built amphitheatrically at an altitude of 600m at the foot of Mount Holo-montas, Arnea stands out, since it combines the rich natural landscape with the restored mansions and its famous local products.

In 1987 it was classified by the Ministry of Culture as a "historical site". The core of the settlement is the central square around which public services, banks, shops, traditional cafes and taverns are concentrated.



THE HISTORICAL - FOLKLORE MUSEUM OF ARNEA

On the ground floor there is the exhibition of agricultural artifacts, photographs of the period 1880-1950 and objects of everyday use of the locals as well as tools that were used in beekeeping, building and construction and ovens.

On the mezzanine floor there is a collection of carpentry tools and on the first floor a loom and weaving tools. The traditional costumes of the locals stand out and the room where the interior of a traditional house of Arnea is depicted.



Visiting information::

Daily: Monday - Sunday

Opening hours: 10:00am- 14:00pm

Ticket cost: 2€ per person | 1€ per student

*Possibility of an afternoon visit for groups after telephone contact.

Contact: +30 23723 50100, 50130, 50121

WEAVING MUSEUM OF ARNEA

The art of weaving has a long history in the region and was, in fact, until recently one of the most important occupations of the inhabitants of Arnea, closely linked to their daily lives.

The artistic value of the weavers' production made it an important center of weaving art throughout Greece. The museum contains objects and tools of weaving (roka, etc.), as well as a multitude of weavers who demonstrate in practice the local traditional treasure related to this art.



Visiting information:

Daily except Thursday

Opening hours: 10:00am- 6:00pm

Ticket price: €2 per person – €1 per student

Children under 5 years old / culture card / People with Disabilities: free

*Possibility of afternoon visit for groups upon telephone contact

Tel. contact: +30 23723 51100, 5013



Arnea
Megali Panagia
Stageira

The village of **Megali Panagia** (Virgin Mary), the second destination of the route, is popular for the “holy pilgrimage of the great Virgin Mary” located east of the village at 1.5km in a lush green location. In the courtyard of the pilgrimage and under the church, there is located the area of the holy water of the Megali Panagia, with cool running water. Walk and admire the famous stone, arched bridge, cool off and gain strength for the rest of the journey.



At a distance of approximately 30 minutes from Megali Panagia, you will find yourself at Aristotle’s Grove in the village of **Stageira**, a theme park at an altitude of 500m that was created in 2003 and is of enormous interest, since it includes experimental instruments that operate based on the physical laws mentioned in the writings of the great philosopher Aristotle and mainly in his work “Physics”. In front of each instrument, there is a sign that informs you about it and gives instructions on how it can be used. Among the instruments, you will find a compass, sundial, inertial spheres, water turbine, etc. Through the interactive instruments, visitors have the opportunity to understand the various natural phenomena that were recorded and observed by Aristotle himself. In addition to the great interest hidden in the instruments, the natural environment and the view from the grove will take your breath away. Stand at the edge of the grove and admire the bay of Ierissos and Mount Athos.

Arnea
Megali Panagia
Stageira

Useful Tips

In the grove area you will also see the tower of Madem Aga along with his mansion, which was also the administrative center of the mines of the Siderokausia area.

Also, in the same area there is an imposing statue of Aristotle, work of the sculptor Nikolas. The statue was placed in this specific location in 1956, in order to honor the ancient philosopher.

It is a popular destination with a high number of students visitors and visitors of all kinds, since it is estimated that every summer, the grove is visited from more than 15,000 people.



Visiting information:

Open daily

Opening hours: 09:00am- 19:30pm

Ticket price: 2€ per person | 1€ children 6 – 18 years old

1,5€ groups, families of 4 people and more

Contact number: +30 23760 41327



When you leave the grove, carefully cross over to see the restored Siderokausia Bath, one of the most beautiful monuments in Chalkidiki that reminds us of how important the city of Siderokausia was before it was destroyed in the revolution of 1821.



EVENT- FESTIVAL

ARNEA

Meloma of Christ



Winter

Ten days of cultural events



Summer

Arnea Cuisine



Summer

Festival in the grove of Agia Paraskevi (26/7)



Summer

MEGALI PANAGIA

Celebration of August 15th



Summer

LANDSCAPES OF EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL BEAUTY

• Agia Paraskevi Grove – Arnea



1a

Day 1
Agia Anastasia
Agios Prodromos
Geroplatanos
Arnea

2a

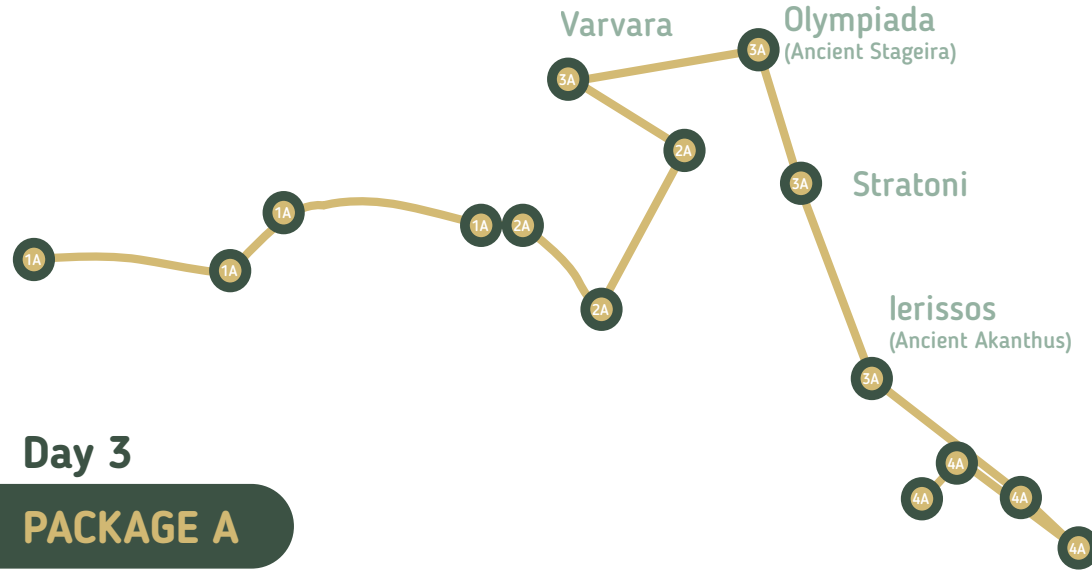
Day 2
Arnea
Megali Panagia
Stageira

3a

Day 3
Varvara
Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4a

Day 4
Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani



Day 3
PACKAGE A

Varvara

Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

The day begins with the village of Varvara and its waterfalls as the first stop. Specifically, between the villages of Varvara and Olympiada, in the dense Kipouristra forest that includes yews, beeches, oaks and chestnuts, the waterfalls of Varvara are located. There are **two waterfalls** – one on the left and one on the right – and they are easily accessible via the existing paths. Take a tour, cool off and if you find yourself in the area in early August, don't miss the annual music festival that takes place within the village. Don't forget to get local products and sweets from the Varvara women's agrotourism cooperative.



Every year, on July 7, various events are organized, the most popular being the “Mussel” festival, which attracts visitors from Greece and abroad.

Varvara

Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

The next stop of your route is in **Olympiada**, which is adjacent to Ancient Stageira, birthplace of the philosopher Aristotle and named after the mother of Alexander the Great. The village is built along the beach and on the western outskirts of the settlement you can admire the imposing mountains.

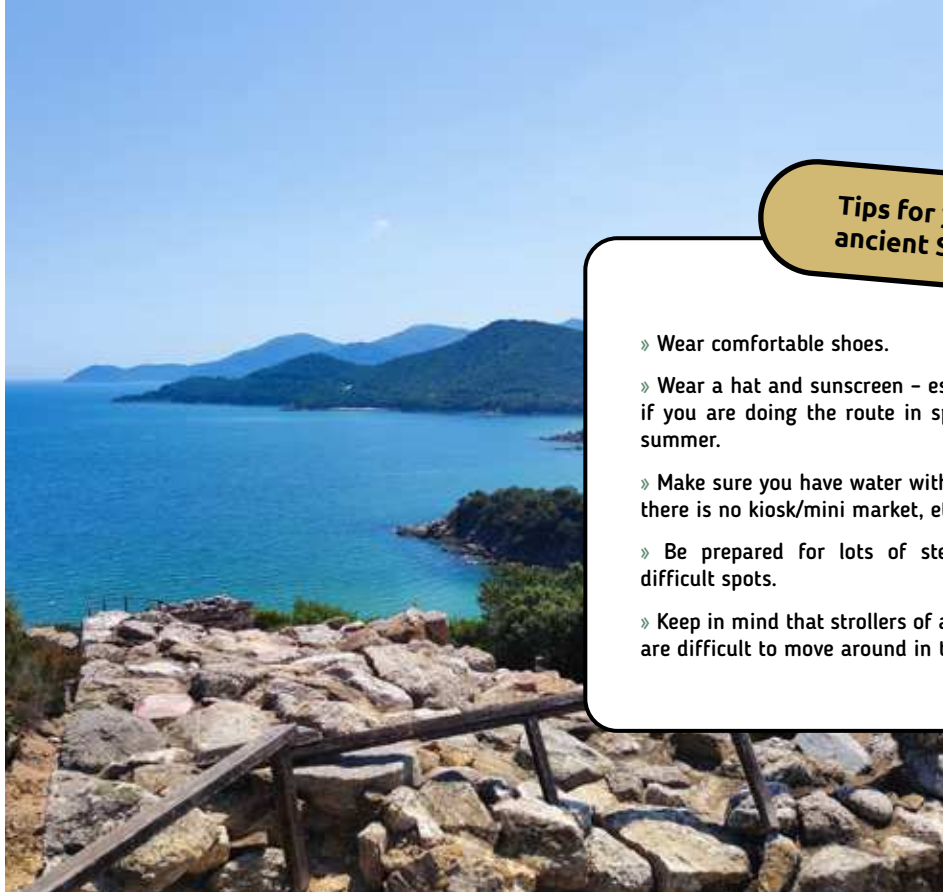
In Olympiada, you can also have a stop for food. It is famous for its mussels and their taste and you can enjoy them in the fish taverns located on its beautiful beach. You can also walk along the beach and if it is summer, you can swim in its wonderful beach.



Ancient Stageira attracts, in addition to archeology enthusiasts and hikers, visitors interested in the environment and botanical exploration, as it is part of the 15km long Aristotelian Walk. You can search for the Aristotelian Walk online.

Your tour continues with a visit to **ancient Stageira** - the most important archaeological site of Chalkidiki and birthplace (384 BC) of Aristotle. The guided tour of the archaeological site requires approximately 3 hours of walking and will give you the opportunity to walk through the neighborhoods where Aristotle spent his childhood and a small part of his adult life. The city of Stageira was founded in the 7th century BC. by Ionians of Andros.

During the tour, you can admire the acropolis - at the top of the southern hill - the agora, the political center of the city where the Stageira people gathered for public debates, the ruins of the buildings on the northern side, a small section of the Byzantine wall, residences and the "Aristotelion", the tomb - monument where the philosopher's ashes were placed.



Tips for your tour in ancient Stageira:

- » Wear comfortable shoes.
- » Wear a hat and sunscreen – especially if you are doing the route in spring or summer.
- » Make sure you have water with you as there is no kiosk/mini market, etc.
- » Be prepared for lots of steps and difficult spots.
- » Keep in mind that strollers of any kind are difficult to move around in the area

Useful Tips

ANCIENT STAGEIRA

The most important archaeological site of Chalkidiki, the homeland of Aristotle, the greatest philosopher of antiquity and teacher of Alexander the Great, is located about 500m southeast of the present-day village of Olympiada on a small, mountainous peninsula called "Liotopi". It was founded in the 7th century BC by Ionian colonists who arrived from Andros in search of mineral deposits and was an independent city with its own currency.



Visiting information:

Monday - Wednesday (Tuesday closed)
Opening hours: 08:30am - 4:00pm

Varvara
Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

Before Ierissos, make a stop at **Stratoni**, a village built in the cove of Ierissos Bay, with rich mining activity. The village's long history is reflected in the important archaeological finds, some of which are housed in the archaeological museum of Polygyros. If you are there in the summer, you can easily visit the accessible beach that has a blue flag.



Before visiting Mount Athos, make a stop by the Ierissos Cultural Center where a 3D film about the Athonite state is shown. The center also houses the Ierissos Folklore Museum.

Contact number:
+30 23770 21130

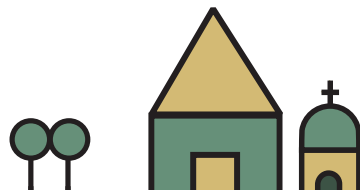
Then, continue to **Ierissos** – the oldest and largest village of the Aristotelis Municipality, which is historically a continuation of ancient Akanthus. The settlement was rebuilt when the original one was leveled after the devastating earthquake of 1932 and, as excavations have shown, it is built on the ancient cemetery of Akanthus. It is a popular resort in the wider area, with modern tourist infrastructure, award-winning beaches and a well-kept beachfront where you can take a walk and enjoy your coffee. The area is famous for its carnagia, which are an integral part of its cultural heritage and are worth visiting.

Varvara
Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)



Varvara
Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

Complete the 3rd day of the 1st Package with a tour in **Ancient Akanthus**, a city of ancient Macedonia founded in the mid-7th century BC. by Ionian colonists of Andros, said to have taken its name either from the many thorns of the area or from the thorny formation of the fortification. Its traces start from the beach of Ierissos where remains of the quay of the ancient port are preserved, however, no systematic excavation has been carried out unlike its necropolis, the research for which began in 1973 and to date over 600 tombs have been recorded. Walk along the ancient city and admire the city from the hills on which it is built.



Useful Tips

ANCIENT ACANTHUS

Ancient Akanthus was a leading port city in eastern Chalkidiki and one of the most important in Macedonia. It is located in a privileged position between two sea coasts – next to Ierissos and on the road to Ouranoupoli – Mount Athos, while it spread over three hills, those of Mount Stratonikos. It thrived around the middle of the 7th century BC and became known for the wide circulation of its coins during antiquity. The walk offered on the three hills that ancient Akanthus extended over is amazing especially during spring when the place is lush green.



EVENT - FESTIVAL

VARVARA

Annual music festival



Summer

STAGEIRA

«Musical routes» under the light
of the full moon at archaeological sites



Summer

OLYMPIADA

Mussel Festival (7/7)



Summer

STRATONI

«Fairytale Land» (Paramythochora) of Stratoni



Winter

WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES

- Varvara Agricultural Association
- Stanos Women's Association



LANDSCAPES OF EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL BEAUTY

- Varvara Waterfalls – Olympiada



1a

Day 1
Agia Anastasia
Agios Prodromos
Geroplatanos
Arnea

2a

Day 2
Arnea
Megali Panagia
Stageira

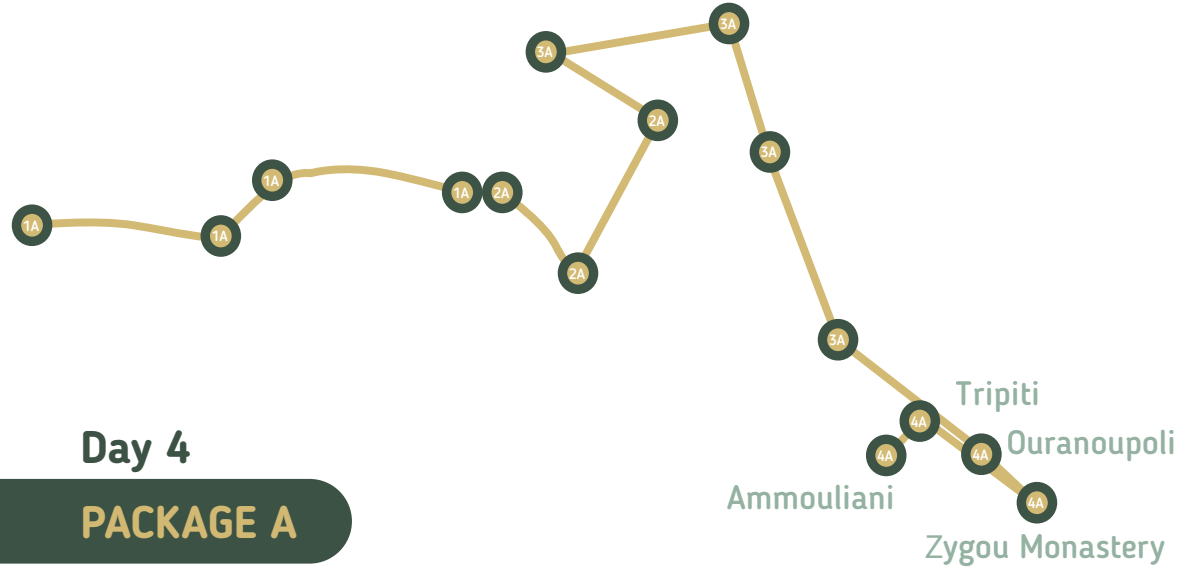
3a

Day 3
Varvara
Olympiada (Ancient Stageira)
Stratoni
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4a

Day 4
Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani

Day 4
PACKAGE A



Start your day in **Ouranoupoli**, the last village of Chalkidiki before the monastic state. Enjoy swimming on the crystal-clear beaches with the golden sand – if of course you find yourself there in the summer. Be sure to visit the Prosfhorio Tower (Byzantine Tower of Ouranoupoli), a 12th century building, the largest and best-preserved Tower of Chalkidiki. On the ground floor of the Tower, there is an exhibition with antiquities from pre-Christian and Christian Chalkidiki, while the upper floor is dedicated to the refugees of Ouranoupoli and the Loch couple who lived in the tower since 1928 and supported the Asia Minor refugees who settled there for many decades.



Ouranoupoli

Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani



The Tower is open to the public daily except Tuesday, from 08:30 – 16:00 and admission is 2€.

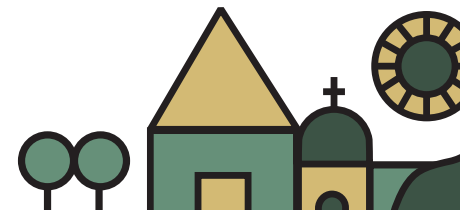


Visiting Information:

Tel: +30 23770 71389

OURANOUPOLI TOWER MUSEUM

The Tower of Ouranoupoli – an 18th century building – hosts the Christian exhibition of Ouranoupoli. In particular, on the first floor of the Tower, portable icons dating from the 18th to the 20th century, originating from various monasteries and churches of Chalkidiki, are exhibited. On the second floor, Christian findings from excavations carried out in the area are presented, while an icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ dating from 1728 attracts particular attention.





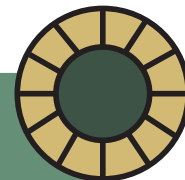
Useful Tips

BYZANTINE TOWERS IN THE AREA

The towers in Chalkidiki are many and scattered and according to testimonies, in the 14th century there were more than 70, many of them multi-storey, imposing themselves on the landscape due to their volume and height. Today, only 27 survive, either in good condition or in ruins.

Towers in Chalkidiki's area:

- » Perigardikeia Tower
- » Koutsaki Tower, Ierissos
- » Zygou Monastery - Fragokastro, Ouranoupoli
- » Prosforio Tower (Byzantine Tower of Ouranoupoli)
- » Medieval wall in ancient Stageira
- » Xylopotamos Tower, Ierissos
- » Medieval Castle of Ierissos
- » Sisirokausia (Stageira)
- » The Tower of Olynthos (Mariana)
- » Watermills of Poligiros, Metgkitsi



Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani

2km east of Ouranoupoli and just 40m outside the current boundary of Mount Athos, find the **Zygou monastery**, an old Athonite monastery founded in the mid-10th century and destroyed shortly before 1198. Walk along the coast to the monastery, on a route that passes through olive groves and vineyards. Admire the castle, the towers and the monastery's catholicon, on the floor of which there are exquisite marble inlays. After completing your walk at the Zygou monastery, return to Ouranoupoli and try fresh fish and seafood from the area.

Afterwards and before your transfer to **Tripiti**, with the aim and final destination of Ammouliani, make a passage - a stop at the Xerxes Canal since it is on the same road with Tripiti.

Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani

Useful Tips

XERXES CANAL

The Xerxes Canal is the largest engineering project carried out in Chalkidiki during the ancient era. According to Herodotus, in 480 BC, during the Persian War, Xerxes ordered the opening of a canal from Acanthus to Thermi in order to avoid the danger of the Athonite voyage. The project seems to have been an attempt to impress and demonstrate power to the inhabitants of Chalkidiki. Although detailed reports of the canal were made by Herodotus and Thucydides, it has also been the subject of controversy among historians.

Today, there is nothing in the landscape to remind us of that huge, ancient structure except for a small valley in the center of the isthmus. It is visible from a high altitude, since the terrain in the area has subsided. In 2008, British and Greek engineers carried out a survey that demonstrated the exact location and size of the canal.

Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani

What you can do in Ammouliani: :

For your passage to **Ammouliani** – the small island within the bay of Mount Athos – take the ferry boat from Tripiti and arrive in about a quarter of an hour. Ammouliani, in the last several years, has been one of the ultimate Greek summer destinations that has received rave reviews in the international press. In the past, it was popular mainly to well-informed, local travelers from nearby areas.

» Choose one of its beaches with the crystal blue waters and white sand that will offer you an experience of absolute relaxation. Alykes is one of its most beautiful and popular beaches, opposite the Sithonia peninsula. To the south, lies Megali Ammos and to the east the beach of Agios Georgios is located from where you can gaze at Ouranoupoli.

» Walk around the harbor and see its old shipyard, also known as “arsanas”, where the Athonite people protected their boats from bad weather.

» Walk around and tour its settlement.

» Try fresh fish in one of the fish taverns located in the town or on its beaches.

» Get on a boat and head to Drenia – the cluster of 6 tiny islands in the area, also known as Donkey islands – swim, or canoe among them.



Tips for Ammouliani:

- » The best time to visit it is from April to October.
- » For fewer crowds and to avoid excessive heat, the first months of summer and autumn are ideal.
- » The cost of the ferry boat trip is 3.5€ for passengers and 10€ for cars.
- » The trip from Tripiti takes about 15 minutes.

EVENT - FESTIVAL

AMMOULIANI

Fisherman's Festival



IERISSOS

Events at Mavro Aloni



Festival with Kourbania



Once you have completed your 4-day tour of northern Chalkidiki, it is recommended that you visit Mount Athos.



1b

Day 1
 Agia Anastasia
 Galatista
 Vavdos
 Polygyros

2b

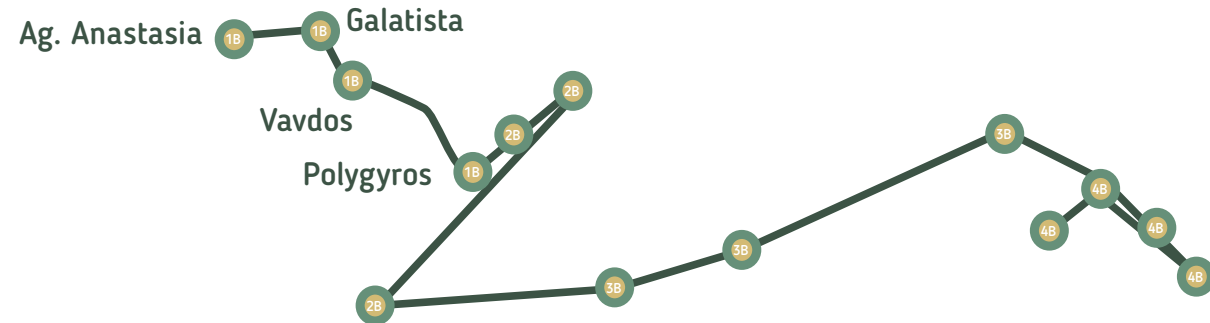
Day 2
 Historical center of Polygyros
 Taxiarchis
 Olynthos

3b

Day 3
 Ormylia
 Metagitsi
 Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4b

Day 4
 Ouranoupoli
 Zygou Monastery
 Tripiti
 Ammouliani



Day 1

PACKAGE B

Agia Anastasia

Galatista

Vavdos

Polygyros

Start having as your destination **Agia Anastasia**, a lowland village in the northwestern part of Chalkidiki, on the provincial road that connects it Thessaloniki. Attractions in the area include: the Stavropegic Monastery of Agia Anastasia of Farmakolytria, northeast of the settlement, the chapel of Ai – Lia in the northwest and the monument of Captain Hapsa, south of the settlement – a fighter of the Revolution who was killed in the long-dead battle of Vasiliko of Chalkidiki. The Monastery of Agia Anastasia of Farmakolytria is one of the most important and historic in Macedonia, founded in the early 16th century and flourished until the 17th century. However, it was burned down in 1821. Walk inside and admire its grandeur.



Head to **Galatista**, one of the oldest villages in Chalkidiki that is worth a visit since it is of great historical interest because it hosts a number of churches and preserved Macedonian mansions. In fact, the builders from the area and the region of central Macedonia were among the best of the time. The symbol of Galatista is the Byzantine Tower of Galatista, which dates back to the Venetian era. It was likely used to store water in the area, a fact confirmed by the watermills and water tanks that were found there. These, along with the raki cauldron and the olive press that were also found nearby, indicate the productive activities of its inhabitants. Wander around the village and enjoy your coffee or even your meal.

Agia Anastasia

Galatista

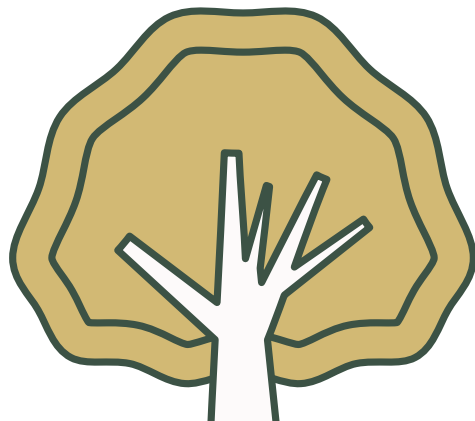
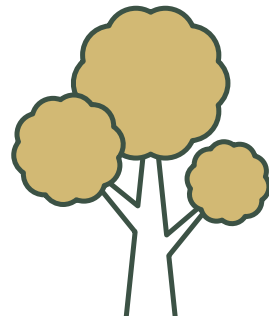
Vavdos

Polygyros

Vavdos is the next destination, a mountain village built on green hills with traditional houses and paved alleys. Tour the neighborhoods of the village, climb the mountain and reach the chapel of Prophet Elias from which you can admire the wonderful view. In the kindergarten building there is a folklore museum with exhibits from the daily life of the people of the village, which you can visit. In the central square of the village - with the tall plane trees - notice a huge plane tree that is a trademark of the area and was designated in 1976 as a "preserved monument of nature"².

If you participate in sports activities, don't miss the Vavdos Trail Run, which usually takes place in June or July.

Agia Anastasia
Galatista
Vavdos
Polygyros



Then, transfer to the capital of Chalkidiki, **Polygyros**, built amphitheatrically on the slopes of Prophet Elias at an altitude of 560m, at the foot of Mount Holomontas. You can tour its center, admire the beautiful and traditional buildings and its picturesque squares and enjoy your meal in one of the famous restaurants of the area. You also have the option of spending the night in Polygyros.

Agia Anastasia
Galatista
Vavdos
Polygyros

In January, the custom of the "Manios' Wedding" and the custom of the Camel are organized (on January 5, 6 & 7), while if you are there in August, don't miss the annual Galatista Festival organized by the village's youth.



EVENT - FESTIVAL

VAVDOS

Festival of Ai - Lia



Summer

GALATISTAS

Livestock Festival of Galatista



Autumn

Galatista Festival



Summer

POLYGYROS

Camel custom / Manios' wedding



Winter

WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES

- Galatista Women's Cooperative



PRESERVED NATURAL MONUMENTS

- Vavdos Plane Tree

Plane tree located in the mountainous picturesque village of Vavdos. It is among the largest and oldest in the prefecture, constituting its trademark. It has been designated as a preserved natural monument since 1976.



1b

Day 1

Agia Anastasia
Galatista
Vavdos
Polygyros

2b

Day 2

Historical center of Polygyros
Taxiarchis
Olynthos

3b

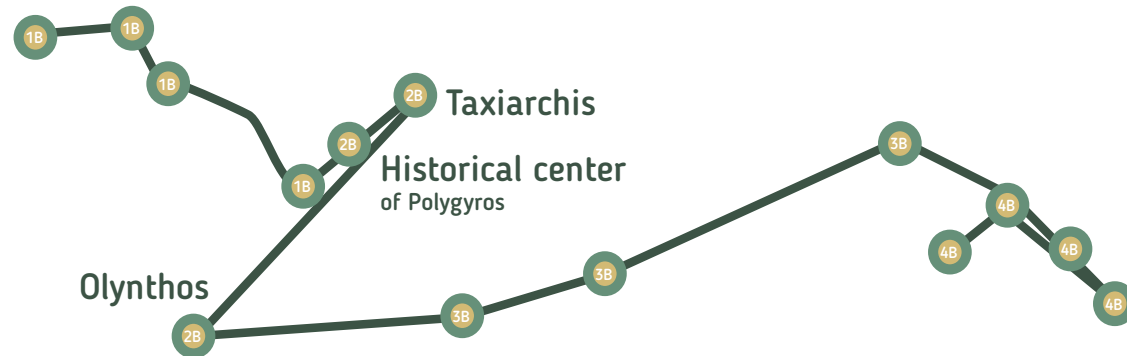
Day 3

Ormylia
Metagitsi
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4b

Day 4

Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani

**Day 2****PACKAGE B**

Historical center of Polygyros

Taxiarchis
Olynthos

To start the 2nd day, visit the **archaeological museum of Polygyros**, in Iroon Square, which hosts findings from all over Chalkidiki, from the Bronze Age to the Roman period. The museum's exhibits include ceramics and metalwork products from the late archaic and classical periods, sets of offerings from the cemetery of ancient Akanthus, findings from Olynthos, tombstones from Potidea, etc. Continue your tour with a visit to the folklore museum of Polygyros, housed in the home of the former Mayor of the area, Athanasios Karagkanis, and then to the historical and folklore museum / Kotsianos Home in order to admire its unique architecture.

Useful Tips

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF POLYGYROS

It is the most important archaeological museum of Chalkidiki, located in the center of Polygyros, in Iroon Square. It hosts representative archaeological findings from the entire region that convey a great history, dating back to prehistoric times. The museum's exhibition is developed in 4 thematic sections: 1. Place and History, 2. Prehistoric Societies, 3.



Historical Times, 4. Collections and Donations. The museum presents findings from the most important prehistoric settlements and cemeteries of Chalkidiki, Agios Mamas, Olynthos, Toroni, Kriaritsi, Nea Skioni.



Visiting information:

Daily except Tuesday

Opening hours: 08:30am - 3:30pm

Contact phone: +30 23710 21330

Address: Iroon Square, Polygyros

FOLKLORE MUSEUM OF POLYGYROS

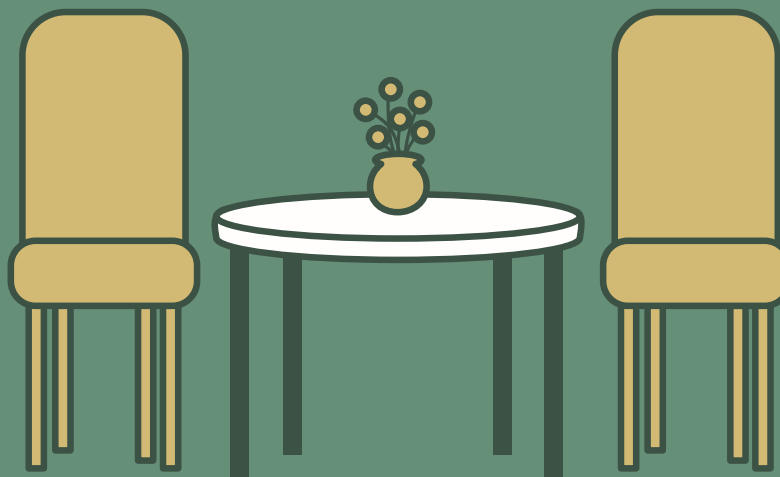
The museum was created in 1995, it is located in the center of Polygyros and is housed in the two-story home of the former Mayor of the area, Athanasios Karagkanis, who donated it for this purpose. All the exhibits of the museum have come from donations from locals and concern a variety of objects such as traditional furniture, everyday objects, tools used in agricultural work. The Women's Voluntary Association for Community Development of Polygyros contributes decisively to the creation and maintenance of the museum's operation.



Visiting information:

Address: Karagkanis House, Polygyros

Contact Tel: +30 23710 21420



HISTORICAL AND FOLKLORE MUSEUM / KOTSIANOS HOUSE

The Kotsianos house is located opposite the Metropolitan Church of Agios Nikolaos and is a characteristic urban example of Macedonian architecture. After its reuse, it operates as a Historical and Folklore Museum. It is worth visiting to admire its great architecture.

The next stop is **Taxiarchis**, a village located at an altitude of 670m in the heart of Holomontas. It is built on two slopes, one western and one southeastern and between two natural springs: Sipotura and Kato Pigadi. It is famous for its mushrooms, wild herbs, mountain tea and agro-food products such as local potatoes and beans.

The destination is ideal for all seasons of the year for hiking and, for the more adventurous, for mountain biking. Within Taxiarchis, there is the Taxiarchis University Forest, which occupies an area of 58,000 acres on the southern and western slopes of Holomontas. It is a representative forest of broadleaf species of the Greek territory and regenerates naturally.

Historical center
of Polygyros
Taxiarchis
Olynthos

The local women's
cooperative produces
local products such
as jams, pickles and
preserves.



Interesting
information:
Olynthos is
mentioned in the
song "Demosthenous
Lexis" written,
composed and
sung by Dionysis
Savvopoulos.

Historical center
of Polygyros
Taxiarchis
Olynthos

The final stop of your tour is ancient **Olynthos** - a city of Chalkidiki built in the cove of the Toroni Gulf - the capital of Chalkida and the most important economic - military center of the region from the last decades of the 5th century BC until its destruction by Philip in 348 BC. The city was designed based on the Hippodamian urban planning system, with wide streets and had an excellent water supply and sewage system. The excavations showed that despite the financial comfort that some of its residents may have had, they could not build as they wanted since there was a clear urban plan that they followed. Cross the archaeological site and then go to the museum from which you will receive additional information about Olynthos using audiovisual media.

Useful Tips

ANCIENT OLYNTHOS

It is the only example of an ancient Greek city that has been excavated in its largest part and in general one of the most important. Built on the coast of the Toronean Gulf, it was the capital of Chalkida and before its destruction by Philip in 348 BC, it was the most important economic and military center of the region. The archaeological site includes the two hills and the area at their foot, where the outpost and the building that houses the infrastructure areas for visitors whereas it also hosts a photographic exhibition are located.

During four excavation periods at the site, its largest part was investigated and one of the best examples of urban planning based on the Hippodamian system of residential architecture from the classical era came to light.



Visiting information:

Opening hours: 08:00 am - 15:00 pm

Ticket price: 4€ / reduced: 2€

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF OLYNTHOS

It is located near the village of Olynthos. It features exclusive audiovisual material that represents the history of ancient Olynthos and aims to give visitors a comprehensive picture of the archaeological site, starting from the history of the city and ending with the excavations that took place in the area.



Visiting Informations:

Address: Archaeological site of Olynthos, Chalkidiki

Contact number: +30 23730 91000



End your day by returning to Polygyros to enjoy a special meal cooked with fresh, local products at one of the famous tavernas in the area.

EVENT - FESTIVAL

POLYGYROS

Polygyros Carnival



Winter

Polygyros Local National Fest



Spring

Cultural August



Summer

Taste - tradition - culture



Summer

Polygyros Festival



Summer

TAXIARCHIS

Mushroom Festival



Autumn

OLINTHOS

Olive Festival



Summer

Festival of the Holy
Apostles - Ormylia

Summer

WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES

- Polygyros



NOTABLE TRADITIONAL SETTLEMENTS

- Paleokastro – Municipality of Polygyros
- The area of the historical center of Polygyros from the “Exi Vrises” park to the “Makedonomachon” square has been designated as a historical site



1b

Day 1
Agia Anastasia
Galatista
Vavdos
Polygyros

2b

Day 2
Historical center of Polygyros
Taxiarchis
Olynthos

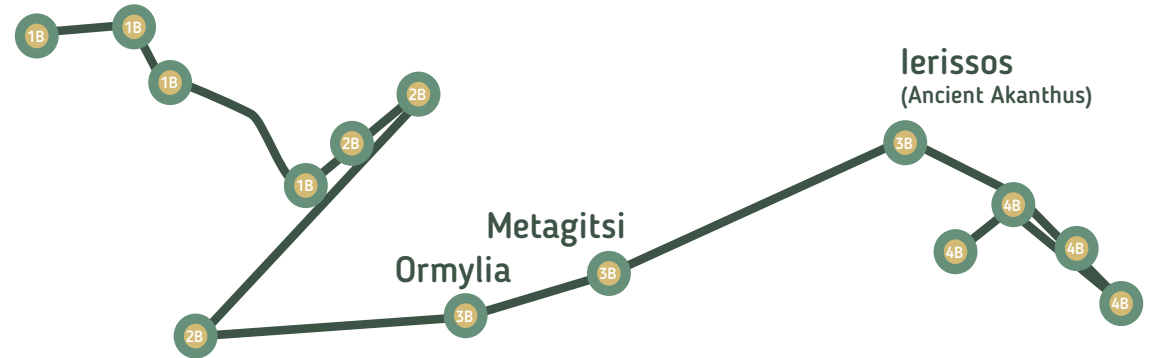
3b

Day 3
Ormylia
Metagitsi
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4b

Day 4
Ouranoupoli
Zygou Monastery
Tripiti
Ammouliani

Day 3
PACKAGE B



Ormylia

Metagitsi

Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

Starting from Polygyros and at a distance of about 20', head towards **Ormylia** to visit the monastery of Ormylia/ Metochion of the Holy Monastery of Simonos Petras of Mount Athos (Holy Convent of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary), the largest monastery in Greece with about 120 nuns, which is visited by thousands of pilgrims on an annual basis. The monastery's facilities are amazing, while the mosaic floors and murals are hand-painted by the nuns themselves. It has been characterized as one of the most valuable traditional post-Byzantine monasteries with important scientific staff active in areas such as iconography, social contribution through medical services, etc. Find out about the social work carried out by the monastery through the center that deals with medical prevention and research and the field of diagnosis of works of art.



Continuing north, through a lush green path and with a view at the bay of Mount Athos, the next stop is **Metagitsi**, a semi-mountainous village built at an altitude of 150m. In this small village, you can visit the famous Metagitsi watermill, a masterpiece of architecture that was once a metochi of Mount Athos. You can also taste delicious dishes in one of the taverns of the settlement.

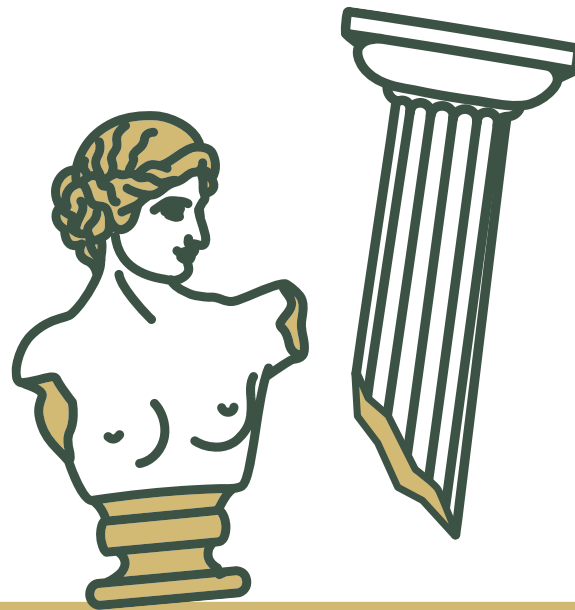
Ormylia

Metagitsi

Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)



To complete the 3rd day you can go to **Ierissos** – the oldest and largest village of the Municipality of Aristotelis which is historically a continuation of ancient Akanthus. The settlement was rebuilt when the original one was leveled after the devastating earthquake of 1932 and as excavations have shown, it is built on the ancient cemetery of Akanthus. It is a popular resort in the wider area, with modern tourist infrastructure, award-winning beaches and a well-kept coastal front where you can take a walk and enjoy your coffee. The area is famous for its 'karnagia', which are an integral part of its cultural heritage and which are worth visiting. You can also visit the Folklore Museum of Ierissos which is located within the Cultural Center of Ierissos.



Ormylia
Metagitsi
Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

Next, it is recommended that you visit **Ancient Akanthus**, a city of ancient Macedonia founded in the mid-7th century BC. by Ionian settlers of Andros and said to have taken its name either from the many thorns of the area or from the thorny formation of the fortification. Its traces start from the beach of Ierissos where remains of the quay of the ancient port are preserved, however, no systematic excavation has been carried out unlike its necropolis, the research for which began in 1973 and to date over 600 tombs have been recorded. Walk along the ancient city and admire the city from the hills on which it is built.



ANCIENT ACANTHUS

Ancient Akanthus was a leading port city in eastern Chalkidiki and one of the most important in Macedonia. It is located in a privileged position between two sea coasts – next to Ierissos and on the road to Ouranoupoli – Mount Athos, while it spread over three hills, those of Mount Stratonikos. It developed around the middle of the 7th century BC and became known for the wide circulation of its coins during antiquity. The walk offered on the three hills that ancient Akanthus extended over is amazing especially during spring when the place is lush green.



EVENT - FESTIVAL

VARVARA

Ετήσιο μουσικό φεστιβάλ



STAGEIRA

«Musical routes» under the light
of the full moon at archaeological sites

OLYMPIADA

Mussel Festival (7/7)



ORMYLIA

Festival of the Holy Apostles



WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES

• Varvara Agricultural Association

LANDSCAPES OF EXCEPTIONAL
NATURAL BEAUTY

• Varvara Waterfalls – Olympiada



1b

Day 1
 Agia Anastasia
 Galatista
 Vavdos
 Polygyros

2b

Day 2
 Historical center of Polygyros
 Taxiarchis
 Olynthos

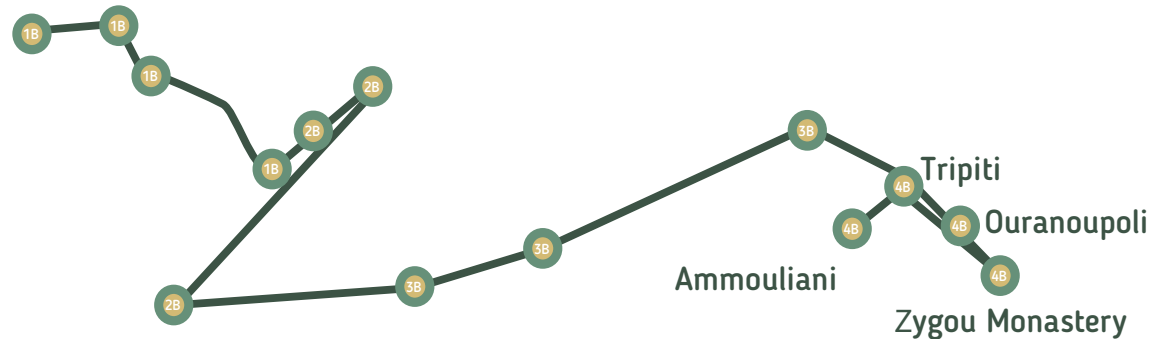
3b

Day 3
 Ormylia
 Metagitsi
 Ierissos (Ancient Akanthus)

4b

Day 4
 Ouranoupoli
 Zygou Monastery
 Tripiti
 Ammouliani

Please refer
 to the **4th route**
 of the **1st package**
 as it is a common
 route!



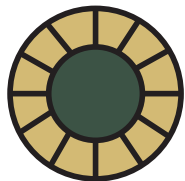
Day 4

PACKAGE B

Once you have completed your 4-day tour of
 mainland Chalkidiki, it is recommended that you
 visit Mount Athos.

General Information

Holomontas Walking routes



For those who want to get to know the mountainous Chalkidiki, they can follow the forest trails that have been carved in the area. The rich forest of Holomontas, in the provinces of Arnea and Polygyros, is usually covered with snow in winter, but offers unforgettable tours throughout the year.

- Route that starts from Polygyros and continues in the surrounding hills in a magnificent natural landscape at an altitude of 942m.
- Route that starts from Taxiarchis, passes through dense forests and ends at Vrastama at an altitude of 600m.
- Route that starts from Vrastama, passes through the cave of Agios Efthymios and ends back at Vrastama, at an altitude of 540m.
- Route that starts from Paleochora, passes through Holomontas and ends 4km before Taxiarchis.



Walking routes in coastal locations which retain a strong interest are also suggested:

- A short route that starts from Olympiada enjoying the beautiful view of the sea. You will have the opportunity to see the archaeological findings located in Stageira. It is characterized as one of the most interesting areas of Chalkidiki from an archaeological point of view.
- Starting from Ouranoupoli you can follow an accessible route along a forest path and reach the Borders of Mount Athos.
- The tour of Ammouliani



Stop at intervals to enjoy the view of the Aegean Sea and the peninsulas of the Regional Unit of Chalkidiki.



The routes are recommended by the Chalkidiki Hotels Association.





Useful Tips

HOLOMONTAS

Holomontas dominates the central and northern part of Chalkidiki at an altitude of 1,165m and is the second highest mountain after Athos. In ancient times, it was famous for the quality of its timber, which was particularly valued by shipbuilders. Its vegetation is impressive: oaks dominate at lower altitudes, pines, firs and walnut trees at higher altitudes and the fauna is rich: roe deer, wild boars, hares and ferrets find refuge in the forest. The variety of wild herbs and mushrooms is also great. Holomontas is also popular for the paths and routes that start from Polygyros, Paleochoira and Taxiarchis, throughout the year.



FOR GASTRONOMY LOVERS

The cuisine of Chalkidiki has a distinct gastronomic identity, varying from village to village and influenced by Mount Athos, Asia Minor, Pontus and its coastal and mountainous areas. It attracts food lovers from all over the world who can taste the local dishes in its distinguished restaurants that provide the visitor with high-level gastronomic experiences and high-quality catering services, as well as in traditional taverns.

In the region there are produced many popular agri-food products such as honey, wine, sausage, goat cheese, fresh fish and seafood from Ammouliani, etc., and products certified with PDO quality labels such as green olives and green olive oil from Chalkidiki, as well as PGI such as moundovina. Vineyards and PDO and PGI wines, resources and wine tourism activities (wine routes of Northern Greece), such as visitable wineries enrich its tourist product.

A key feature of its cuisine are pies, filled with cheeses and herbs from its mountains and in their sweet versions with honey, a popular and prominent product of the region.

The quality and uniqueness of the cuisine of Chalkidiki – as well as Central Macedonia as a whole – are confirmed by the existence of the “Macedonian Cuisine” brand initiative, which aims to connect the agri-food sector with tourism, to highlight traditional gastronomy, promote gastronomic tourism and certify catering businesses that serve dishes made with local ingredients and dishes based on traditional recipes.

Search for the certified catering businesses in the region!

Quality & Local Responsibility Mark of Central Macedonia

The Quality & Local Responsibility Mark is addressed to businesses in the tourism system of the Region of Central Macedonia. Participating businesses gain benefits from their participation in it, whereas at the same time an informal network of cooperation is created between them, which promotes and disseminates the Region of Central Macedonia as a tourist destination. The main objective of the initiative is to improve the offered tourist products and services.



Search for the certified
tourism businesses in the area!

LOCAL PRODUCT LIST

Popular agri-food products

- Honey
- Tea and herbs – in the area of Holomontas
- Truffles and wild mushrooms
- Cheese – traditional goat cheese
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Wines
- Tsipouro
- Jams and spoon sweets
- Seafood
- Traditional souvlaki and bread - Agios Prodromos
- Arnea sausage



- Chalkidiki Green Olive Oil
- Green Olives



- Moundovina – honey distillate
- Wines

Other popular local products

- Baked goods – particularly popular to visitors
- Forest products – raw materials for wood processing businesses, fuel
- Pottery – original and creative
- Woven – Arnea has been a weaving center of Greece

Accessibility – Connectivity

ENTRANCE

GATES:

- Thessaloniki International Airport “Macedonia”
- Border stations
- Promahonas
- Evzonoi
- Dojran
- Exochi
- Niki
- Krystallopigi

URBAN / INTRA-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY:

- Chalkidiki Bus
- Road network

ROAD ACCESS:

- Highway 16
(A16 | Thessaloniki –
Polygyros – Ierissos –
Arnea)

We recommend that you check the opening days and hours of museums, archaeological and visitor sites, as well as ticket information, before every visit as they might be subject to change.

Residence

www.halkidiki-hotels.gr

The areas of the route packages have a large number of traditional and/or agro-tourism accommodations. Many of them are located in Polygyros, Arnea and Ierissos. The location of Arnea and Polygyros is convenient for accommodation and a point from which the proposed routes can start.



Useful Websites

visit-centralmacedonia.gr/el-gr/

www.visit-halkidiki.gr

www.apostaseis.gr/loc_ap/odigikes-apostaseis.asp

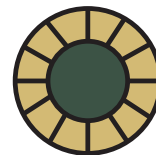
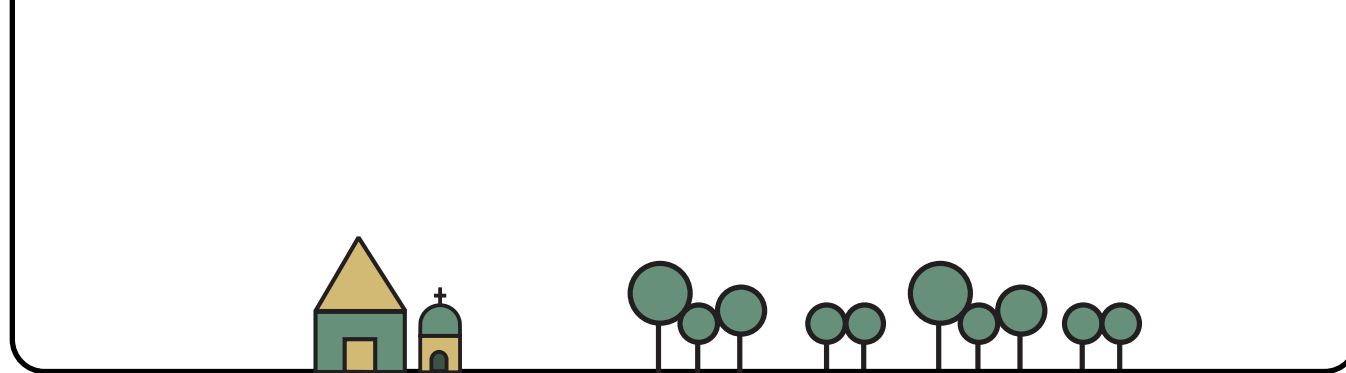
Type “apostaseis.gr” into Google and enter the locations you want to travel from and to get to, to get a complete picture of the time and distance for each transportation.



The Climate In Chalkidiki

The climate of the Regional Unit of Chalkidiki is coastal Mediterranean in the low areas and inland Mediterranean in the higher ones as well as humid continental in the areas with higher altitude. It is the warmest of the Regional Units of Central Macedonia, with an average annual temperature of 14.28°C. The lowest temperatures occur from December to February (average temperature 9°C) where the mountains are covered with dense snow. The temperature begins to increase from May and usually remains high until October, with the warmest month being July.

Climate data
comes from
the Regional
Climate Change
Adaptation
Plan (PESPKA)
(PeSPKA) of the
Region of Central
Macedonia



The useful Pocket Guide was created within the framework of Action 1d. Creation of Tourist Packages for the selected areas (points), of the Transnational Cooperation Project (TCP) titled "CULT IN TOUR" implemented in Greece and Poland, by the LAG ANETXA S.A. for Chalkidiki and the LAG PUSZCZA BIALOWIESKA for the Bialowieza Forest respectively.

The Transnational Cooperation Project titled "CULT IN TOUR" is implemented within the framework of Sub-Measure 19.3: Support for the preparation and implementation of cooperation (transnational and inter-territorial) of the CLLD/LEADER initiative of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020.

OPSAA Code: 0030380479

