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WHERE NEXT?

A motorhomers guide to
visiting Meteora - Greece

www.ourleapoffaith.co.uk

Where next ?

A motorhomer's guide to Meteora Greece

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Acknowledgements

Please note that all the information contained in this guide, was gained from days and days of research before and hours of walking the occasional tarmac pavements during our 2017 visit to the country.

It is not and I don't feel it's ever possible to be a Complete guide, as what we look for in a destination may differ from what you are looking for, but hopefully this highlights some of the attractions and wets your appetite.

We believe that at the time of publishing the information contained was correct, although we except no liability for errors or omissions.

For a more personal view of our travels please check out out :

www.ourleapoffaith.co.uk

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Back in the day there were a total of 24 monasteries.

Today, Sadly only 6 remain standing: St. Nikolaos Anapafsas, Great Meteoron, Roussanou, Holy Trinity, Varlaam and St. Stephen's.

They all vary in size and have different visiting hours that change depending on season. They are also closed on different days of the week, so it's important to check the schedule ahead of your visit.

The largest and most popular monasteries (Great Meteoron and Varlaam) fill up quickly with coach loads of tourists, so it's best to start your day early.

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THE BASIC STUFF

Currency

Euro

Language

Languages - Greek

English is widely spoken in the tourist areas

And everybody understands mime....

Money

Cash is king !

ATMs are widely available. Credit cards are accepted in
Petrol stations and restaurants,

Visas

Passport holders of EU member states can stay indefinitely.

Borders

Part of Schengen zone

But no land borders with other Schengen countries.

So it's likely that documents will be checked.

Telephone country code

++30

Emergency numbers

112 (EU wide helpline) for Police, Fire and Ambulance

Time zone

Greece is two hours ahead of the UK.

Mobile Phones

Thanks to recent EU roaming changes, your mobile phone should work as normal

MOTORHOME TRAVEL (GREECE IN GENERAL)

We use the term Motorhome very loosely we have seen everything from camper vans, American RV converted fire truck to the humble white van. For this guide they are all motorhomes.

What ever you use to travel just enjoy !

Fuel

Unleaded and diesel were widely available with many fuel stations. Most stations had signs stating they take Visa and MasterCard cards, but we always paid in cash.

Tolls / Vignette

You will not require a vignette

Although vast sections of the motorway network operates a pay as you drive toll system.

Road regulations.

Always check the internet for the most up to date (we use the AA website, www.theaa.com)

Traffic drives on the right and overtakes on the left, so you need to ensure your headlights are deflected with stick on adapters

You must carry a high visibility jacket for each person, a first aid kit, warning triangle and a fire extinguisher.

The use of dipped headlights during daylight hours is not compulsory and the use of your horn in built-up areas it is prohibited between 10pm and 6am – unless it is to prevent an accident, or you Greek!

Winter tyres must be used between 1 November and 31 March if there is snow or ice, check your for the M+S markings.

Police can impose fines but not collect them on the spot. The fine must be paid at a Public Treasury office within 10 days.

Vehicles may be towed away if parked illegally, or if violating traffic regulations.

There are rules around who has priority on the road, but in reality it can be a bit of a free for all – especially with scooters.

At some junctions and roundabouts we weren't entirely sure so we just took our time and gave way to anyone who looked like they weren't stopping. If we're not entirely sure who has priority we just take our time and give way to anyone who looks like they aren't stopping.

Distances are all in kilometres, and so are speed limited. As you enter a town the urban speed limit of 50kph applies, unless otherwise stated, until you are out of the town.

Locals will probably choose to ignore this, but as we didn't wish to be stopped we stuck closely to the limits.

Seat belts must be worn by driver and all passengers in front and rear seats, children under 12 are not allowed in the front seats.

Road conditions

The roads in Greece are generally in a fair condition. There are quite a few miles of smooth EU funded tarmac, but even some of those now have pot-holes in them.

Motorways swap between smooth tarmac and a bumpy patchwork without any warning, especially when you encounter a bridge.

Smaller roads (some of them still on the main route) can be very bumpy.

Road signs on the main roads are in both the Greek and Latin alphabets, minor roads often only use the Greek alphabet – it's really worth trying to learn it so you can translate.

Be aware that in Greece motorways signs are green and other main roads blue – the opposite way round to most of Europe and the UK – and as most of the motorways are toll roads, it's worth trying to avoid the green signs.

Keep your speed down as pot-holes can appear anywhere, and also watch the car in front of you – if it's local it will

undoubtedly swerve to avoid them and give you a fighting chance of missing it.

Standard of driving

The standard of driving was OK.

People were generally courteous and would thank us when we indicated that it was safe for them to overtake us. Most of the time We went slowly due to the random pot holes, so we were overtaken a lot. On some of the dual carriageway roads people would sometimes drive in the centre lane as it was often the smoothest.

Do not be surprised if drivers overtake on corners as this seems the norm.

Traffic on the roads once outside the main city was not limited to cars and lorries, there were also a good few horse and carriages. These tended to stick to the edge of the road, leaving as much space as possible for people to pass, do remember horses scare easily.

Driving to the monasteries

Driving around the monasteries is a simple enough affair, but no remember that they are mountain roads which you will be sharing with numerous coaches !

Nightly Stopover Spot

Vrachos Camping
Kastraki

GPS
N39.7133
E21.6144

www.campingkastraki.com



DRESS CODE

The monasteries have strict dress codes so women will need to wear a long skirt, dress or sarong. It's not enough to keep your knees covered so no trousers or shorts.

However, all the monasteries have wrap skirts at the entrances that you can borrow.

Shoulders should also be covered but we noticed that they are far more strict about the long skirt.

Men should wear trousers but I saw a few people who got away with wearing shorts that hit below the knee.

Remember that the monasteries are places of worship, so be respectful and conduct yourself properly.



1

MONASTERY OF HOLY TRINITY

METEORA

Monastery of Holy Trinity

Agia Triada or Holy Trinity was founded by the monk Dometius in the 15th century

It was this one featured in the 1981 James Bond film For Your Eyes Only, which really set Meteroa as the tourist destination is today.

Whilst James used ropes you can you walk up 140 steps cut into the rock, past the church of Saint John the Baptist with its wall paintings from 1682

It is decorated with wall paintings from the 18th century by the brothers Antonios and Nikolaos..

Monastery of Varlamm

Founded in about 1517 by Theophanis and Nektarios Apsaradas from Ioannina though the first to establish a monastery here was an ascetic anchorite named Varlaam.

The monastery houses an important collection of relics, intricately carved wooden crosses, icons and many other ecclesiastical treasures. It also contains frescos by the well-known post-Byzantine iconographer Frangos Katelanos.

It also still has an original rope-basket, which until the 1930s, was the method for hauling up provisions and monks.



2

MONASTERY OF VARLAMM

METEORA



3

MONASTERY OF AGIOU NIKOLAOU

METEORA

Monastery of Agiou Nikolaou

Agiou Nikolaou is the nearest monastery to Kastraki, just 1.6km walk from the village square to the steep steps leading to the monastery.

Many people bypass this, but they shouldn't, it has a rustic charm, the least commercial of the famous 6.

Climb to its bell tower for the ultimate views over the valley.

The monastery was built in the 15th century and the exceptional frescoes in its katholikon were painted by the monk Theophanes Strelizas from Crete.

The most beautiful is the 1527 fresco The Naming of Animals by Adam in Paradise.

Monastery of Roussanou

Roussanou Monastery was founded in 1545 by Joasaph and Maximos, two brothers from Epirus who built it on the ruins of an even older church.

To get to this monastery you cross a small bridge from another peak.

The church contains outstanding wall paintings, wooden panel icons and icon stand bars.



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MONASTERY OF ROUSSANOU

METEORA



5

MONASTERY OF GREAT METEORON

METEORA

Monastery of Great Meteoron

Megalo Meteoro or Metamorphosis, the first church of the Transfiguration is the best known of the Monasteries and is built upon the highest rock.

Founded by Athanasios the Meteorite, one of the most well-known figures in Orthodox monasticism, work was begun before 1382 and later completed by the Monk Joseph.

Because the Serbian Emperor Symeon Uros gave the monastery all his wealth and became a monk it became the richest and most powerful of all the monasteries and contains some of the most beautiful wall paintings and post-Byzantine Mural art that can be found in Greece as well as a museum collection in the refectory.

The Catholicon has a twelve-sided dome 24 meters in height with a striking series of frescos by Theophanis.

Monastery of Agios Stefanos

Agios Stefanos is the only convent in Meteora and has an unimpeded view of the plain towards Kalambaka. It is not known when the old church was built but the present catholicon dedicated to Saint Haralambos was built in 1798.

The saint's skull which was given to the nuns as a gift from Prince Vladislav of Wallachia is kept here.

The Church of Saint Stefanos has a timber roof and wall paintings by the priest Ioannis from Stagoi painted in 1545.



6

MONASTERY OF AGIOS STEFANOS

METEORA

Conclusions

Meteora -Wow !

What can I say?

Spiritual, inspiring, magical, breathtaking, mystical, immense, and impressive.

There really are no words to truly capture the effect Meteora has on it's visitors.

This majestic spot in Central Greece is surely unlike any place I've ever visit.

If you get the opportunity do make a trip to unearth like landscape.