

Evia Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: European Centre Based

Destinations: Greece, Greek Islands & Mediterranean

Trip code: EKLCL

2 & 4



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

A walker's delight - traditional paths between sleepy villages, beautiful Aegean coastline and an island steeped in history. Stroll through green valleys sampling the local culture, traditional villages and warm Greek hospitality. Walk to the tiny villages above Karystos, up the slopes of Mount Ochi, through green hills to unspoilt Potami Beach and down the island's impressive gorges. The island of Evia is one of the closest to Athens and yet it is one of the most unknown. It is second in size to Crete and stretches from the tip of the Pelion Peninsula all the way south to the coast of Attika. Our walking holiday on Evia is based at the charming seaside town of Karystos, which lies to the south of the island in a sheltered bay overlooked by Mount Ochi. This attractive town with neoclassical public buildings and traditional coffee and ouzo tavernas on small squares is known for its beaches, Venetian fortress, and folk museum. There are local cheeses and a type of pasta (Kourkoubines) which should be tasted. A Bavarian engineer had a hand in the original street plan in 1843, but this area was originally small trading stations along the coast set up by the Venetians until it had to be fortified against piracy. At this time, the construction of Castel Rosso (about 4km away) took place. It has long been a seat of a Greek bishop and the Venetians coveted this area for a long time until it finally did pass into Venetian control in 1366. Then in 1470 it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. Also in this area are The Dragon Houses, Neolithic monuments that have been a mystery to archaeologists since they were discovered. They are called Dragon Houses because of their size. People believe they had to have been built by a very large creature. There are twenty of them in all, most near Styra and another above Karystos near the peak of Mount Ochi.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A full programme of guided walks with 2 options every walking day
- Transfers to and from Athens Airport (see travel tab)
- All transport to and from walks
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' leaders
- Return flights from the UK on 'with flight' holidays
- 7 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half Board – continental buffet breakfast and 3-course evening meal

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Karystos, once considered as an alternative capital to Athens
- Use old tracks and cobbled mule paths to climb Mount Ochi
- Look out for unique 'Dragon' Houses
- Enjoy warm Greek hospitality from the Givisis family at the Hotel Anastasia
- Sample local produce with an authentic Greek breakfast, with a traditional coffee

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 2 and level 4 graded Activity, Easier walks: 4 to 8 miles (6½ to 13km) sometimes on rugged paths with some rocky sections. Up to 1,500 feet (450m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 6 to 10 miles (9½ to 16km) on rugged paths with some rocky sections. Up to 2,300 feet (690m) of ascent in a day.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel Anastasia. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: Walking Through Time

Today's walks introduce the rich history of the island, finishing with a tutored tasting of local wines and cheeses at the Montofoli Winery on the slopes of Castello Rosso.

Option 1 - Walking Through Time: Myli And Castello Rosso

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Total ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: The walk meanders through the villages occupying the lower slopes of the Mt Ochi Range that dominates the northern skyline. Ascending to the Castello Rosso, dating from the Byzantine period, via the pedestrian gateway of ancient times to offer extensive views back toward the Greek mainland. The route descends through the village of Myli to reach the Montofoli Winery.

Highlight: Discover the hidden gem that is the Montofoli Wine estate.

Option 2 - Ancient Quarries

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Total ascent: 1,500 feet (450m)

In summary: The walk begins in the village of Myli, ascending to the Roman Kylindroi quarry to marvel at the enormous columns left behind in the 2nd century AD. Stand in the footsteps of those masons and admire the views down to the Castello below and Karystos Bay beyond. The descent to the Montofoli Winery is on ancient tracks and paths.

Highlight: Spectacular views of Castello and Karystos.

Day 3: Mount Ochi And Its Environs

Mount Ochi (1,399m) is the highest peak in southern Evia. It hosts an excellent specimen of a Dragon House and the nearby chapel of Profitis Ilias.

Option 1 - Mt Ochi Environs And The Chestnut Forest

Distance: 4 miles (6½km)

Total ascent: 1,300 feet (390m)

In summary: Our journey, one of the longest of the week, offers not only great views, but provides an opportunity for the easier walk to reach a very remote location. Our walk follows a section of the old road, before heading eastward to ascend to a shepherd's hut. A sense of remoteness is achieved, with little evidence of human habitation to be seen. The track passes through the ancient chestnut forest of Kastanolongos, the only remaining chestnut forest in south Evia and a place for quiet contemplation before rejoining the awaiting bus at the foot of Mount Ochi.

Highlight: The ancient chestnut forest of Kastanolongos.

Option 2 - The Dragon House Of Mt Ochi

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 1,400 feet (420m)

In summary: The walk begins at the road terminus below the higher slopes of Mount Ochi, soon to pass the mountain refuge. Our ascent is steady, and the final stages are on the rock slabs that surround the summit. The chapel of Profitis Ilias is discovered in the final approach to an imposing Dragon House. The summit lies beyond, and the views are ample reward for those last few steep steps. The return is to the south via open tracks with extensive views to the village of Myli encountered earlier in the week.

Highlight: Breathtaking views.

Day 4: Free Day

Your free day offers the chance to explore the waterfront, shops and harbourside cafés in Karystos. Have a lazy day relaxing by the pool. Walk to the main beach and have a swim and then take lunch at one of the many restaurants/cafés in Karystos.

On your free day, join an optional boat trip, which takes in views of Karystos Bay and the nearby Petali Islands towards Marmari. This exhilarating excursion offers a mixture of sightseeing, a short stop on a secluded beach and it may be possible to enjoy a short introduction to snorkelling. Please ask your leader for further details.

Day 5: Dragon Houses Of Stira

Stira is 25km northwest of the hotel, but soon reached via the newly constructed highway. Ships left from this city-state to aid the rescue of Helen of Troy. This region contains a number of 'Dragon' Houses, and the walks explore three of these and nearby quarries before descending to Stira and its main square with a collection of tavernas.

Option 1 - The Dragon Houses Of Styra

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Total ascent: 1,300 feet (390m)

In summary: The walk starts in the village of Zoodochos ascending on tracks and Kalderimi (paved mule tracks) to the Dragon houses and quarries beyond. There is time to explore this area, and add to the speculation of origin and purpose of these structures before descending on good tracks to Stira.

Highlight: Discover the ancient Dragon houses.

Option 2 - Dragon Houses And The Castle Of Armena

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 2,200 feet (660m)

In summary: The walk ascends from the outskirts of Stira to explore the Dragon houses before continuing upwards through the nearby quarries to the little church of Ag. Nikolas below the Mount Klisi fortifications. Leaving the church to explore the ruins above, we then descend through the majestic limestone framed portal down to disused ancient quarries and on to the square of Stira.

Highlight: Discover the theories behind the construction of the Dragon houses.

Day 6: Petrokanalo Pass To The Sea

The pass is to the north west of Mt Ochi. To the north, the Dimosari gorge runs to the Aegean Sea. To the south, the landscape rolls down toward Karystos Bay.

Option 1 - Dimosari Gorge

Distance: 4½ miles (7km)

Total ascent: 250 feet (80m)

Total descent: 2,700 feet (810m)

In summary: From the Petrokanalo pass, the entrance gate to the Dimosari Gorge path is soon found. The route through the gorge was the only route from the north of the island peninsula to the port of Karystos, and today sections of the original stone cobbles can still be seen. The path descends steeply, sometimes with made steps, to meet the stream, soon to become a river. Even in the height of summer, water continues to flow. The path follows the gorge beneath chestnut and plain trees, passing majestic waterfalls through to the small hamlet of Lenosei and its church.

Highlight: One of the most beautiful trails in Greece.

Option 2 - Dimosari Gorge

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 600 feet (180m)

Total descent: 3,800 feet (1,140m)

In summary: After following the same route as the easier group, the route continues on Lenosei's access track then descends to an abandoned mill on the bankside, and follows the river bed to the sea.

Highlight: Discover the impressive Dimonsari Gorge with it's majestic waterfalls.

Day 7: Bridges, Poseidon's Temple & Riverside Paths To Potami Beach

Today we will explore the eastern shores with the chance to enjoy a communal meal at a delightful beachside tavern with stunning views.

Option 1 - Poseidon's Temple And Riverside Paths

Distance: 4 miles (6½km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

In summary: Starting in the village of Platanistos we descend to the restored packhorse bridge, featured in most postcards, crossing the stream whose source is in the ancient chestnut forests explored earlier in the week. The descent is interspersed with an exploration for the remains of Poseidon's temple, before descending through the river meadows and olive groves behind Potami beach.

Highlight: Lunch at a beachside tavern with the opportunity for a swim or a wander along the seashore.

Option 2 - Waterfalls, Bridges, And Artefacts

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Total ascent: 600 feet (190m)

Total descent: 1,300 feet (400m)

In summary: From Platanistos we continue inland to visit one of the few waterfalls of the area, before continuing downstream to join the route of the easier walk from the packhorse bridge.

Highlight: Sample a traditional Greek lunch at the beachside tavern.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Anastasia - Evia

The 4-star Hotel Anastasia enjoys a beachfront location in the charming coastal town of Karystos. Winner of several HF Hotel Awards in 2018 for its fantastic staff, abundant breakfast and mouth-watering evening meals. It's conveniently situated just 300m from the town center, allowing you to explore the local shops and culture, enjoy the harbourside cafés, or enjoy an exhilarating boat ride to the beautiful Petali Islands with a chance to visit an island beach.

Accommodation Info

Rooms

There are 29 stylish and spacious en-suites bedrooms all with:

- King size or Twin beds
- Air conditioning
- Private balcony
- TV
- WiFi (free of charge)
- Hairdryer
- Room safe
- Mini-bar
- Non-smoking rooms available

Facilities

This hotel has:

- Outdoor pool
- Pool/Lounge bar
- Restaurant that has delightful Aegean Sea views

Beauty and massage facilities are also on offer for guests.

Food & Drink

Holidays on Evia are Half Board and the hotel is proud to serve a specially recognised 'Greek Breakfast' as well as a 3-course evening meal.

Breakfast

This hotel offers a self-service buffet that includes fruit juices, cereals, fruit, cold meat and cheeses, home-made preserves, some traditional Greek items and Greek coffee and teas are available.

Lunch (Payable Locally)

This hotel offers picnic lunches at a small additional cost. Alternatively, ingredients can be purchased from the local shops and on certain days it may be possible to eat in local cafés, your leaders will advise you of these options.

Evening Meal

A 3-course evening meal is served with a combination of local specialities and international cuisine. Vegetarian and special diets are catered for, we ask you to speak to the management of the hotel on arrival.

Drinks

The hotel has a well-stocked bar serving beer, wine and spirits.

Your Evenings

The friendly atmosphere of our Guided Walking holidays continue into the evening.

Enjoy a glass of wine or local beer whilst listening to our leaders outlining the next day's walks.

After dinner, you can join your group in a walk into the resort for a coffee just have a relaxed conversation with your fellow guests.

Your leaders will be checking for local events going on nearby.

Travel Details

THE HASSLE-FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' from Heathrow to Athens airport (UK connections via British Airways shuttle available from Manchester, Leeds Bradford, Newcastle, Glasgow or Edinburgh. £139). For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

Return transfers between the airport and the hotel are included.

Due to ferry crossing times our transfer from Athens airport will depend largely on our departure time from the airport.

Time permitting we will transfer straight to the ferry via coach (approx 40 mins) where we shall enjoy a scenic one hour crossing followed by a 30 minute coach journey to the hotel.

Alternatively if we miss the ferry crossing we will take the coach all the way to the hotel via the Chalcis Bridge. The journey takes in some beautiful coastline views and will take approx 3 hours (plus a comfort stop).

THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

Return transfers are included in the price for Evia holidays. We would recommend you take advantage of this due to the length of the transfer and ferry journey. Transfers are timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Please check your travel arrangements are compatible.

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

What To Bring

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).
- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

Useful Information

The local language is Greek.

Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044
To dial a Greek number 0030

Local Currency

The local currency is the Euro.

Electricity

220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

ATM Availability

There are several ATM machines in Karystos where you can obtain money.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

ASSOCIATE'S FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying an Associate's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full life membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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